

Caught In-between: The Life History of a Japanese Canadian Woman Deportee

(日系カナダ人女性のライフ・ヒストリー：
カナダと日本の狭間で)

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SUMMARY IN JAPANESE: 本論文では、第二次世界大戦後、カナダ政府の政策によりカナダから日本への送還転住を余儀なくされた日系カナダ人約4,000人の一人であるAさんのライフ・ヒストリーを対象とする。Aさんがこれまで辿った足跡を、幼少期、強制移住期、日本での滞在期、カナダでの再出発期に分類し、それぞれの局面における経験と境地を分析する。調査方法としては、自由面接調査法を採用しAさんとのインタビュー調査を3回行った。さらに複数回に渡るAさんへの質問状に対する回答をもとにAさんとライフ・ヒストリーを整理した。これまでの日系カナダ人の歴史については、第二次世界大戦での強制移住体験やその後の再建に焦点が置かれ、日本へ送還転住された日系カナダ人が辿った足跡についてはあまり注目されてこなかった。カナダと日本に挟まれ居場所を失ったAさんの経験と境地を詳細に描くという質的調査を行うことで、日系カナダ人史に新たな一側面を提示することが本論文の目的である。

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Introduction

Most research on Japanese Canadians has focused on two segments: from the early stage of migration to the period of internment and from resettlement after World War II to the present. In the first segment, researchers have studied how early immigrants developed and supported their lives in Canada and also have examined the isolated life in internment camps during World War II by looking into official materials about internment and by interviewing internees.¹ In the second, resettlement after World War II, research has focused on how Japanese Canadians rebuilt their community and assimilated themselves into the Canadian mainstream. The redress movement developed by Japanese Canadians during the 1970s and 1980s in particular has attracted scholarly attention.²

During World War II about 21,000 Japanese Canadians were branded as “enemy aliens” and interned by the government. In 1945, when the war was coming to an end, Japanese Canadians were forced to choose between deportation to Japan or dispersal east of the Rocky Mountains. As a result, some 4,000 individuals were exiled from Canada in 1946. However, there has been little focus on these Japanese Canadians who were expelled from Canada right after the war as a result of the Canadian government’s deportation policy. At present, there are a few scholars specializing in the history of the deportees.³ Tatsuo Kage, one of these scholars, has revealed the hardships of these expelled people by interviewing deportees. It is true, however, that the number of deportees who have been covered by the research has been limited. For that reason, this field of research remains relatively unexplored.

Canada by and large has been recognized as a generous country, for it has received millions of immigrants and accepted them as members of the national community. Canada has also accepted a large number of refugees and displaced people coming from all over the world. It is undeniable, however, that some politicians and other individuals wished to create a “White Canada.”⁴ As labor was needed for nation-building, Canada chose to recruit a large number of Slavs and Asians in the latter half of the 19th century. At present, Canada is committed to a goal of creating a diverse society based on multiculturalism, and it still attracts many migrants. The fact that innocent Japanese Canadians were interned during the war seems to be broadly recognized and deplored by Canadians. So far, however, little public attention has been paid to the plight of deportees. Their narrative has been barely mentioned compared to the mainstream narrative of

Japanese Canadians.

This paper focuses on a woman who was deported from Canada to Japan right after World War II, and later repatriated to Canada. As the woman disclosed her extraordinary experiences, buried facts came to light. Thus, her life history sheds light not only on Japanese Canadian history but also on the grand narrative of Canadian history. While it is essentially a personal history, Ms. A's life also constitutes a significant fragment of Canadian history in relation to the government's treatment of minority citizens in times of war. It is important to remember that, although Ms. A was one of the Japanese Canadians branded as "enemy aliens," she was nonetheless among a large number of Canadian-born citizens and later expelled to Japan.

I met with the woman, Ms. A, at Nikkei Place⁵ located in a suburb of Vancouver in July 2003. She voluntarily worked at a reception desk once a week. As I talked with her, I was amazed at what she had experienced both in Canada and in Japan. Having been victimized by the Canadian government during the war, she later found herself caught between two countries and struggling to find room in a marginal space. What she has experienced in both countries merits scrutiny, and this paper explores how she led her life in both displaced, dislocated spaces—Canada and Japan—by mapping her life from her childhood to the present.

I had an interview with Ms. A at Nikkei Place on July 25, 2003. After I came back to Japan, I sent her letters asking more questions about her life in both Canada and Japan. Ms. A kindly agreed to accept my requests, and letters from her provided valuable additional information for me to understand firsthand the complex vicissitudes of her life. I had another interview with Ms. A on September 6, 2009, which reinforced each segment of her life history. This paper is thus mainly based on my interviews with Ms. A and several letters sent by her, in response to my queries.

Born in Canada

Japanese immigration to Canada began in 1877. The first immigrant was Manzo Nagano who was from Nagasaki Prefecture in western Kyushu, and the number of immigrants increased over the next three decades.⁶ One prominent pioneer among the Japanese immigrants was Gihei Kuno from Wakayama Prefec-

ture, in southwest Mainland, who started salmon fishing in the Fraser River. Japanese fishermen became known for their skill at catching salmon. The Canadian government permitted them to be naturalized since they were not allowed to own a boat without naturalization. However, they were not given the right to vote. The number of Japanese immigrants increased year by year, settling on the west coast of Canada and creating their own ethnic enclaves.

In Vancouver, Japantown was created on Powell Street, which was adjacent to Chinatown. Japanese immigrants living in this area created a close-knit community, with Japanese schools, Buddhist churches, and sports teams for baseball and the like. White workers did not welcome immigrants from Asia, either Chinese or Japanese, as they feared that the immigrants would work for lower wages. Indeed, it was not uncommon for Japanese workers to be paid one-half to two-thirds the wage that white laborers earned for the same type of work, while the range of employment opportunities was considerably narrowed by social prejudice.⁷ Even apart from the area of labor, Asian immigrants were subject to many other forms of discrimination. This was particularly the case in the western coastal province of British Columbia, where the majority of immigrants settled. Among Asian immigrants, persons of Japanese origin were subject to severe animosity, particularly after Japan won the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 and expanded its military power. Discrimination against Asian immigrants became so severe that some politicians, including even British Columbia's premier, supported the proposal that Asian immigrants living in the province be repatriated to their countries of origin.⁸ Animosity against Asian immigrants increased to the point where a riot broke out among white laborers in Vancouver in 1907. The riot was started by the Asiatic Exclusion League, which was organized to promote agitation.⁹ After the riot, Minister of Labour Rodolphe Lemieux was sent to Tokyo to discuss immigration controls, which resulted in a diplomatic agreement the following year, limiting the number of Japanese migrants to Canada to 400 per year.

Ms. A is a Japanese Canadian, born in 1929 on Galiano Island, a remote island off Vancouver, British Columbia [Map 1]. Her parents were Issei (first generation Japanese immigrants) who had come from Wakayama Prefecture. Ms. A's father came to Canada in June 1905, and earned his living as a fisherman while her mother remained at home to tend their children. During her eight years on the island, fewer than 1,000 people lived there. All of the Japanese immigrants on the island congregated in their own enclave and most of them were fishermen or

workers connected to the fishing industry, working at canneries, and the like. According to Ms. A's recollection, the Japanese population in Galiano was around 70 persons. During the cannery season, however, it would explode to 150 or more. Ms. A grew up on this small island and attended an elementary school there. The education was very poor due to the fact that the pupils ranged in age from 6 to 17 years and were divided into only two classes; that was the reason why her parents decided to move to another island where their daughter could receive a better education. The new place, Salt Spring Island, was mostly inhabited by Caucasians of English descent. There were only six or seven Japanese families living on the island, so Ms. A's life was instantly transformed into Canadian ways. Her teacher was a Caucasian and her friends were mostly whites. Living in a small community, Ms. A did not feel discriminated against until the tragedy occurred at the end of 1941.

When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, animosity against Japanese immigrant communities escalated, and all individuals of Japanese origin, regardless of their nationality status, were looked upon as "enemy aliens" and great threats to Canada. Within a few months the Canadian government, operating under the authority of the War Measures Act,¹⁰ uprooted all residents of Japanese ancestry living within 100 miles of the Pacific Coast and sent them to internment camps. Japanese Canadians living in Salt Spring Island were no exception. Residents, including Ms. A's family, were forcibly moved to a holding pool, set up in an animal exhibition barn in Vancouver. Although the place was initially arranged for temporary detention, the internees were forced to stay there for as long as six months, enduring unsanitary conditions and the stench of farm animals. Thereafter, the internees were moved to a crudely built camp in the cold interior of British Columbia—the so-called internment camp, which the Canadian government named "interior centres," though in reality they were more like shacks [Map 2]. The government went so far as to seize Japanese Canadians' assets, such as homes, fishing boats, and cars, which were subsequently sold without the owners' consent. Out of 21,000 internees, 17,000 had already obtained Canadian citizenship.¹¹ The Canadian government incarcerated Canadian citizens on the pretext of their being "enemy aliens."

The British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) was charged with managing all the internment camps. Most internment camps were established in the Rocky Mountains where the climate and general living conditions were extremely harsh. Ms. A spent approximately four years in Lemon Creek, one of the intern-

ment camps [Map 3]. In winter, the temperature dropped to minus 20 C. The shacks, built of only one layer of thick tar paper, were not designed to protect against the freezing cold.¹² It is no exaggeration to say that Japanese Canadians were not “evacuated,” but rather “incarcerated” in a totally isolated place; their rights and freedom to live as Canadians were stripped away. Full of uncertainties, Japanese Canadians were forced to live under these extreme circumstances for more than three years. Despite the egregiously severe conditions, internees attempted to live as comfortably as possible. For example, they sought to heal their psychological wounds through entertainments such as the Summer Festival, and the newspaper *New Canadian* helped to keep Japanese Canadians tight-knit despite the total isolation of the place.¹³

As the provincial government refused to exercise the responsibility of educating internees, elementary education was provided free by the BCSC. In reality, however, children could not receive a proper education. In the first year of each internment camp, there were no educational facilities. Soon, 130 young Japanese Canadians in the internment camps were recruited as teachers and trained to manage classes.¹⁴ In Lemon Creek and Bay Farm, two of the internment camps, 1,200 children received no schooling until April 1943.¹⁵ A school was eventually built, as demanded by the parents, and after losing a year of education, Ms. A was back in school. Ms. A reflects on the following:

As we were a child, making friends at school was a lot of fun, but our parents, Issei, must have been worried about everything, such as an order in our small isolated community.¹⁶

Child as she was, the pressure was perhaps less for her than for the adult internees who felt hopeless after having their possessions and belongings taken away, leaving them no guarantees for the future.

The most vivid memory from this period that still haunts Ms. A is the death of her father. He became ill at the beginning of the war, but his condition worsened once they were incarcerated in the internment camp. He passed away in December 1942 after a brief internment of three months. The BCSC was not prepared for a funeral and just left the matter to the internees' community. Most of the young men had been taken away to work camps. Young men were required to register with the National Selective Service. Those who registered were often required to labor at public works projects, on farms, or wherever else help was

needed. The elders in the internment camp had to go up the hill and undertake the task of cremating Ms. A's father. It was the first death experienced by Ms. A. After the funeral, her father's remains were put into a tobacco can and taken to Japan to be reunited with his deceased family. Despite the sorrows and uncertainties, Ms. A stayed in the camp until 1946.

Had it not been for the war, Ms. A and her family could have stayed on the small island safe and sound. There is no doubt that life in the internment camp was indeed a hardship for all internees. However, Ms. A's life in the camp was different from the others'. It was the death of her father that made the members of her family depressed. The scene of his very inadequate funeral was so vivid in the eyes of the little girl that she could hardly erase it from her memory even after she became an adult. One of the reasons internees survived under the harsh conditions must have been the ties that bound the family together. Losing her father certainly caused her great grief; however, I think this incident made her tough and independent in her arduous situation, which helped her to cope with the difficulties she had after she got out of the internment camp.

Deportation: Life in Japan

In early 1945, as the war was coming to an end, Japanese Canadians were issued an ultimatum to either relocate east of the Rocky Mountains or be repatriated to Japan. *New Canadian*, the above-mentioned newspaper published by Japanese Canadians, condemned the egregious policy, but with little effect. Although most internees believed that they would eventually be permitted to return to their West Coast homes, things did not turn out as they expected. They were required to respond to a survey:

A "loyalty survey" was conducted throughout the detention of British Columbia during April and May of 1945. Proof of loyalty consisted of "volunteering" to remove oneself east of the Rocky Mountains. Those unwilling or unable to make such a move were to be classified disloyal, divested of citizenship and nationality, and banished to Japan ¹⁷

The Canadian government passed the deportation orders in December 1945. In February 1946, the Supreme Court of Canada did indeed rule that the govern-

ment had the legal right, under the War Measures Act, to deport Japanese Canadians, but with one condition: wives and dependent children who had not signed for “repatriation” were exempt.¹⁸ But “repatriation” was not at all an appropriate word for Japanese Canadian Nisei (second generation Canadians of Japanese ancestry). Nisei were born in Canada, and therefore, had Canadian citizenship by birth. Since some Nisei were still too young to be independent of their parents, they reluctantly signed away their birthright rather than break with their parents. Ms. A was one of those Nisei, and she thus followed her mother’s decision. Since they had never been to Japan, they were not “repatriated” but rather “expelled” from Canada. Some Japanese Canadians had no choice but to go to Japan against their will because they were totally unfamiliar with eastern Canada and did not have enough money to rebuild their lives in an unknown place. Also, there seemed to be a more serious reason which lay deep inside Japanese Canadians’ minds:

Still others signed because they believed the Canadian government would ultimately deport them all to Japan, and the Japanese government, they thought, would not look kindly on those who did not sign up for “repatriation.”¹⁹

It was evident that the Canadian government schemed to wipe away all persons of Japanese origin from British Columbia—the elimination of a whole ethnic group. In an interview, Norman Robertson, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, commented as follows:

Canada had done rather a poor job with the whole matter of the Japanese ever since they have been in Canada, so therefore, it might be better for them in their own interest to go to Japan.²⁰

Since Japanese Canadians were not criminals, the deportation policy had nothing to do with national security but was politically designed to disperse Japanese Canadians from British Columbia. This policy was strongly encouraged by Prime Minister Mackenzie King during that period and supported by many politicians and individuals in British Columbia:

For the future protection of those who have remained loyal, as well as to eliminate those who have shown that their true allegiance is not to Canada

but to Japan, the government is of the view that persons of the Japanese race, whether Japanese nationals or British subjects by naturalization or birth, who have shown disloyalty to Canada during the war, should not have the privilege of remaining in Canada after the struggle is terminated.²¹

The Prime Minister also asserted that the soundest policy for Japanese Canadians themselves was to spread their numbers as widely as possible throughout the country where they would not create feelings of racial hostility.²² The voice of Japanese Canadians was not influential enough to counteract the operation of the deportation policy. There was some confusion in Japanese Canadians' minds because when they received repatriation forms, they were advised that they could change their minds later on even if they signed.²³ Ms. A relates the following:

It was quite easy for the Canadian government to intern and disperse Japanese Canadians because we were brought up to be law-abiding citizens. We were so vulnerable that we could not but consent to what the government decided to do.²⁴

As a consequence, some 4,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry left Canada, including 2,000 who were Canadian-born, of which one-third were dependent children under the age of 16.²⁵ Of those going to Japan, by nationality 34 percent were Japanese nationals, 15 percent were naturalized Canadians, and 51 percent were Canadian born (18 percent 16 years of age and over, 33 percent dependent children under 16 years of age).²⁶ Ms. A's mother decided to go to Japan, for her husband was dead and she had no relatives living in eastern Canada. Ms. A, in her mid-teens, was resigned to the fact that this was war, and although she had been born in Canada, the feeling of "*Shikataganai*"—it cannot be helped—always came to mind. Those who were expelled from Canada were victimized by Canadian government policy twice: first, they were incarcerated in internment camps, and second, they were coerced into leaving Canada. These two measures, authorized by the government, were firmly based on racism and racist presumption of guilt.

Transportation to Japan was arranged five times from May 1946 to December 1946 [Table 1].²⁷ Before Ms. A went to Japan, her image of the country was confused because during those years most information was through word of mouth. Following defeat in World War II, the Japanese, having been both men-

tally and physically exhausted, experienced the depths of despair. Japan was subject to the Allied Occupation, mainly under the purview of the United States. This status lasted until the implementation of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951. Those six years were a period of extreme upheaval, involving reconstruction as a democratic nation. Many drastic changes were instituted under the Allied Occupation: turning the emperor into a symbol, drafting a new constitution, creating a democratic educational system, land reform and increased rights for women.

In June 1946, Ms. A boarded the ship S. S. General Meigs.²⁸ Ms. A and her mother arrived in Japan and headed for Takui village,²⁹ Wakayama Prefecture, harboring lots of misgivings. The village was her father's birthplace. The Japanese people, as well as Ms. A, experienced a drastic structural shift from a militarized society to a democratic one. Though Ms. A had signed away her birthright before she was deported to Japan, the Japanese government regarded these Canadian-born people as Canadian citizens. Her status was a registered alien. It was preposterous, however, since her nationality was not guaranteed by any country. Japan had no obligation to these Canadian-born deportees. Thus, the Japanese government decided to apply *jus soli* and categorized them as aliens.³⁰ As a result of this strange situation, she became displaced, dislocated, floating between two countries, caught somewhere between Canada and Japan. Ms. A was 16 years old when they restarted their life in the village. Being a small community, everybody around them treated them kindly, because most people in the village had relatives in Canada. Therefore neighbors felt sympathy for those who returned from Canada no matter what their reasons were. So long as they lived in the village, their life remained quiet even though it was right after the war. Although Ms. A's education was interrupted by the war, it was more urgent for her to search for a job than to pursue higher education. The only crucial problem was that there were no jobs in the small village, where most residents were involved in the fishery. Ms. A and her family decided to go to Osaka where one of her relatives lived.

Osaka was the second-largest city in Japan and was a center of commercial and trading activities in western Japan. As with other major cities such as Tokyo, Osaka was targeted for intensive bombing during the war so that the city was completely demolished. Suffice it to say that, plunged into the lowest pitch of poverty, the people suffered from hunger and malnutrition. Ms. A looks back on the turbulent years in Osaka and comments in retrospect:

It was more miserable than life in the internment camp. For the first two years or so, life in Osaka was full of despair due to massive turmoil. Though I suffered from hunger, nobody but my relatives gave me a helping hand. What made me feel more miserable was that some Japanese people looked down on me because I did not look like a local girl.³¹

Her unhappiest memory was of being referred to as a prostitute for the Occupation army soldiers, what they called a “pan pan” girl at that time. Being at a vulnerable age, she was terribly hurt by such misguided comments. Although Americans were no longer the enemy, Japanese people disdained women who socialized with Americans.³² The low status of Japanese women was another shock to Ms. A. During that period women by and large were regarded as inferior to men, most of them were strictly educated to be good wives and good mothers. Since women’s happiness was believed to come from supporting their husbands and bringing up their children, those women who deviated from the framework of “a good woman” were subject to discrimination. Japanese soldiers who returned to Japan particularly took out their anger on those “pan pan” girls since they fraternized with ex-enemies. From those girls’ point of view, on the other hand, they had no means of supporting themselves except going around with American military men.

In this period, Japan maintained a society emphasizing conformity and frugality, and the outward appearance posed another problem for Ms. A. It was quite common for boys to have very short hair and girls bobbed hair. Clothes were commonly plain with a simple design. The appearance of the children was much the same. Through no fault of her own, the clothes Ms. A brought from Canada were flashy in the eyes of Japanese people. She exchanged some of her clothes with the neighbors, but even in dark navy blue her appearance somehow seemed different from that of the local girls. Not being recognized as Japanese pained her greatly. She was regarded as a stranger from an unknown place. This plunged her into the depths of despair, having few ideas how to find her own space to live in. It was in such difficult circumstances that Ms. A had to find a job to support herself.

During the war, a large number of Japanese women worked in the domestic industries, as most men were recruited by the army. Following the war, some three million Japanese soldiers returned to Japan from overseas and began to restart their life. In 1946, the new Japanese Constitution was proclaimed. Article

24 stated that marriage should be based on the consent of both individuals, implying that women were to be emancipated from the old patriarchal system so pervasive throughout Japan. The emancipation of women was one of the major reforms designed by the Allied Occupation. Women's enfranchisement was declared immediately after the war, and then in 1946, 39 female candidates were elected in the first general election. However, this brought little actual change to male dominance in Japanese society, and women, even when they were well qualified, had fewer opportunities when they applied for a job. Even if they successfully got a job, women seldom expected to receive a promotion in a company; they were often hired for clerical work, mainly as a support for men's work. In 1952, the number of employed women was 3.9 million while the number for men stood at 10 million.³³ The average monthly salary of female employees was 7,533 yen, which was less than half that of male employees.³⁴

Ms. A eventually found a job which required bilingual communication ability. Japanese commercial firms were looking for qualified persons who had proficiency in both English and Japanese. At that time, there were not many Japanese who had a good command of English because the opportunity for learning English was limited during wartime. When Ms. A lived in Canada, she basically spoke in English and often communicated with her family in Japanese. Ms. A spoke both languages with fluency and could write *hiragana*, *katakana* and some simple *kanji*. She was hired by one of the major commercial firms in Osaka. She worked at the company as a typist for eight years, with a decent salary. Being a typist was regarded as one of the most admirable occupations for women. She approved of the job because her wages were almost as high as those who had a college degree. One day, when Ms. A volunteered to clean a restroom in the office, she was stopped by another female worker. She was told that since she was hired as a typist, it was not her duty and was told to go back to her desk. It was obvious that she received preferential treatment in the office. In spite of her poor educational background due to the internment in Canada, Ms. A's proficiency in both English and Japanese enabled her to work at the company. So long as she was in the office, she was able to avoid discrimination. Ms. A comments:

I felt safe surrounded with gentle colleagues. While I was in the office, I was so happy doing my work as a typist. That is really an asset to my life.³⁵

However, Ms. A became conscious of her estrangement from mainstream society

She found that the office was the only comfortable place for her—a tiny haven from the pains of discrimination.

As we have seen, Ms. A's life in Japan was a tangle of complication owing to her background and to the drastic changes in Japanese society. She experienced a number of the unforeseeable events that made living in Japan require a lot of toughness to survive. There is no denying that she was able somehow to get through the difficulties by finding a place that required bilingual ability.

Repatriation: Life in Canada

Following internment, those who chose to stay in Canada experienced another phase of hardship. The Japanese Canadian community was completely scattered across the continent due to the dispersal policy implemented by the Canadian government. Japanese Canadians tried to remain inconspicuous in order to assimilate into the Canadian mainstream. Those who were dispersed all over Canada were barred from occupations such as public servant, lawyer, and the like, and were even denied the right to vote.

It was in April 1949 that restrictions imposed under the War Measures Act were lifted and Japanese Canadians gained full rights of citizenship. They became free to move anywhere in Canada. From that year, some of those who were dispersed elsewhere in Canada returned to British Columbia and restarted their lives; others voluntarily chose to settle in eastern Canada, including Ontario and Quebec, for they were in the process of adjusting themselves to their new lives and did not want to have to move and resettle all over again.

Those who had been deported from Canada were also allowed to come back to Canada. This was quite unexpected news for those who had been deported to Japan. Since being deported, Ms. A had made every effort to adjust to life in Japan, enduring the unsatisfactory social environment in which she found herself. Since she had no other choice but to stay in Japan, changing her behavior to suit Japanese ways was a necessary means of survival. The possibility of repatriating to Canada forced her to decide whether to stay in Japan or return to Canada. Ms. A still believed Canada was her motherland. No matter how hard the circumstances, she had a strong desire to return to Canada. The feeling became much more intense when her mother would stridently criticize her, saying that if Ms. A behaved in her own way, no Japanese man would ever marry her. She just could

not transform herself into “a nice, decent Japanese girl”; the traditional Japanese ways were too hard for her to learn. Ms. A found Japanese women’s conduct gracious, ladylike, and unquestioningly obedient with regard to men and their family.

Ms. A made up her mind to go back to Canada while her mother decided to stay in Japan. It took her eight years to save \$280 (equivalent to ¥100,000) in order to make the trip home, and her long-awaited voyage was finally realized in June of 1954.³⁶ She boarded a passenger ship, the *Hikawa Maru*, with a great sense of relief and joy. In 1930, the *Hikawa Maru* had embarked on its varied career, serving as a cargo and passenger ship.³⁷ The ship survived World War II and played a major role in repatriating Japanese settlers from foreign countries, and was later assigned to the North America-Pacific Line in 1950 [Figure 1].

Ms. A finally got a ticket home. As the ship began to set sail, a lot of colored tape was thrown from the ship to families and friends on the shore. In those days it took two weeks to cross the Pacific Ocean, and Ms. A experienced seasickness the first week. As she became accustomed to the rolling sea, she offered to help in the ship’s office by typing passenger lists and other documents. The officers got together and gave her five dollars. When she boarded the ship, she had no dollars because yen could not be exchanged for dollars, and thus the five dollars that she earned on board the ship was a financial boon to her. The ship’s first stop was Seattle and she went ashore directly and spotted a small store near the dock. She took out her precious five dollars and treated herself to a double decker chocolate and strawberry ice cream cone which cost about 15 cents. The next stop was Vancouver, her final destination. The *Hikawa Maru* had at last taken her back to her homeland, Canada, which had previously cast her aside. It has been estimated that about half of the 4,000 deportees eventually returned to Canada.³⁸

Ms. A restarted her life in Vancouver all by herself. She was well accepted by the Japanese Canadian community. The community bonded together because discrimination still existed. But Ms. A herself felt that she did not need any special help from the community.³⁹ Nonetheless, I think bonds among internees were strengthened when they were in the camp, because they spent more than three years in an isolated small place with a lot of restrictions. For that reason, Japanese Canadians who remained in Canada kindly accepted those who had been deported from Canada and then returned.

The only jobs available to Japanese Canadians in the 1950s were domestic or cannery work and other low-paid positions. Ms. A went directly to a doctor’s

home as a domestic worker, working from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. She stayed there for seven months until she saved enough money to look for work elsewhere. Subsequently, Ms. A was hired by the local agency for the Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha (NYK), a major Japanese shipping company, despite a rumor that the company did not hire Asians. There was indeed tenacious discrimination against people of Japanese origin in Canada, so it was still hard for Japanese Canadians to find success in the Canadian mainstream. As the Japanese company needed someone proficient in both English and Japanese, the agency decided to hire Ms. A and put her to work in the office at the harbor. Her duty was to look after passengers and assist the captain and the officers of the *Hikawa Maru*, the same ship which transported her back to Canada.

One of the pleasant events on the *Hikawa Maru* was a *sukiyaki* dinner—a traditional Japanese dish made of thinly sliced beef and vegetables cooked in a hot iron pot. That event attracted many Canadians, and no invitations were declined. Ms. A attended one of the parties in a traditional Japanese *kimono* and accompanied the captain. Among the guests there were newspaper reporters, and she remembers that they were all excited to be invited to their first Japanese dinner on the ship. Later, this event was reported in a local newspaper. It is quite intriguing that Ms. A chose to wear *kimono*, after relocating to Canada. While Ms. A was in Japan, she might have had few opportunities to wear *kimono*. Evidently, she still had some feeling of attachment to Japanese tradition even after repatriating to Canada.

Ms. A mended her broken past by working at the *Hikawa Maru* agency. It was noteworthy, however, that she could not cut herself off completely from life in Japan even though she had been mistreated by the Japanese. The *Hikawa Maru* played a significant role in enabling her to retain her dual heritage. The ship symbolically represented a node, which tied together her two displaced space—Canada and Japan. Ms. A confessed that every time the vessel arrived, it made her proud to go down to the dock to welcome the passengers. Among them were people who had been deported from Canada and were just now being repatriated to their homeland. Those people shared similar experiences and memories with Ms. A. She reflects on the following:

It was indeed my most delightful and emotional moment when I met them as they got off the ship. I felt proud and comfortable while I worked at the agency.⁴⁰

The office was the only place where she felt a sense of peace and contentment, and it was, for her, the closest point to Japan. As time went by, jet planes rapidly took the place of ships, and in 1960 the *Hikawa Maru* took its final voyage. Ms. A left the agency and began to work at a travel agency in Vancouver.

In 1956 Ms. A married a man of Japanese origin. In those days, marriage prospects were limited to the Japanese Canadian community. During the courtship, Ms. A's husband was very proper and respectful of her wishes. However, after they got married, he became a different person and was difficult to live with. Ms. A decided to divorce him and she has lived with her three children since 1981. She managed to weather the circumstances with the help of her children.

The year 1977 marked the centennial of the first Japanese immigrants to Canada, an opportunity to celebrate their history and heritage. The Japanese Canadian Centennial was celebrated in major cities throughout Canada. Ms. A's daughter joined the *Nikka Festival Dancers* and gave a marvelous dance performance in major cities including Vancouver. In addition to the Centennial, the Powell Street Festival was held in Vancouver as a part of the Centennial.⁴¹ The name of this festival stems from the location of Japantown in Vancouver. There were several other events which celebrated the culture of Japanese Canadians as a symbol of the cultural diversity of Canada.

After the Centennial, Japanese Canadians became better organized and began to seek an apology and compensation from the Canadian government for the violation of their rights during and after World War II. In 1984, the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) published a report, *Democracy Betrayed. The Case for Redress*, which disclosed the fact that policies of internment, deportation, and abolition of property rights were not based on national security but on racist beliefs encouraged by politicians.⁴² In 1985, the NAJC entered into negotiations with the Canadian government regarding reparations over the wrongs committed by the government during and after World War II.

While the redress campaign was going on, Ms. A constantly hoped for an early solution because Issei were getting older. Many Issei passed away before the redress agreement was passed. On one occasion, a group of Nisei including Ms. A handed in a petition to politicians in Vancouver. In September 1988, Japanese Canadians eventually obtained redress after long negotiations with the government, which officially acknowledged that the treatment of Japanese Canadians during World War II was unjust and violated the principles of human rights. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney addressed the House of Commons:

I think all Members of the House know that no amount of money can right the wrong, undo the harm, and heal the wounds. But it is symbolic of our determination to address this issue, not only in the moral sense but also in a tangible way. In that spirit, we will accept applications for the granting of Canadian citizenship to eligible persons of Japanese ancestry who were expelled from Canada or had their citizenship revoked during these years.⁴³

The government provided \$21,000 to each individual who was interned or otherwise deprived of his or her rights. Ms. A shared a portion of the compensation money with her three children. She then used the rest to pay off her house mortgage:

As symbolic redress for those injustices, the Government offers: e) subject to application by eligible persons, to grant Canadian citizenship to persons of Japanese ancestry still living who were expelled from Canada or had their citizenship revoked during the period 1941 to 1949, and to their living descendants⁴⁴

It should be noted that in this statement, the Canadian government chose to use the word "expel" instead of "repatriate," thereby acknowledging the injustice of the deportations of Japanese Canadians after World War II. Those who were expelled from Canada, including Ms. A, eventually obtained redress, and the stigma was officially and finally wiped away. The redress money could not fully compensate for Ms. A's pain, but it was at least a start.

It is obvious that what she experienced in her teens and early adulthood at the hands of the government caused her great turmoil, and her youth can never be returned to her again. As seen in Ms. A's statements, after arriving in Japan, the deportees were shocked at the war-torn conditions of the country. Even worse, they were discriminated against by the Japanese because in a time of poverty, some Japanese were not generous enough to support those who had once left Japan. The Japanese Canadians were seen as outsiders, and people in Japan had very little information about the hardships the Japanese Canadians had experienced in being incarcerated and later forced to leave Canada. Ms. A asserts:

My earlier education on the small island where I attended school with my Caucasian classmates instilled my life as a Canadian. I recall that every-

thing, from the Canadian anthem and the flag to the smells of the store on the little island where I grew up, was “home.”⁴⁵

That time when Ms. A grew up on a small Canadian island was the only peaceful period in her life before the wartime tragedy befell her. The nostalgia for a carefree childhood may have been one of the reasons why she decided to repatriate to the country where she was born and to live the rest of her life as a Canadian. Viewed from a different angle, however, it is also true that Ms. A, as a young woman still in her early twenties, knew that she had managed to survive such a hard time in Japan by maintaining her Canadian cultural identity and making the best use of her bilingual ability. When the door to Canada was unexpectedly opened to Ms. A, it was perhaps the first time she had had a real choice, though an extremely difficult one to make. The eight years when she saved money on her own to return to Canada was a critical period in transforming Ms. A from a helpless victim of her time to an individual ready to be dislocated again and take a chance again in the country that had betrayed her more than once.

Conclusion

Ms. A had an incredibly difficult life, as she was caught between Canada and Japan for a large portion of her life. She was forced to leave Canada against her will. Even in her parents' motherland she had to endure a great amount of hardship. Though Ms. A was deported from Canada, she still identified herself as a Canadian, hoping to return to her birthplace. While she stayed in Japan, she became conscious that she did not have the desire to live as a Japanese. Ms. A was not always recognized by the Japanese as their compatriot. The longer she stayed in Japan, the more intense her attachment to Canada became. Though Ms. A attempted to accommodate herself to the Japanese way of life, she could not find her own personal space there. If she had married a Japanese man, she might have stayed in Japan for the rest of her life. However, in her mind Ms. A was conscious of being a Canadian wishing to return to a Canadian way of life. It is certainly true that Ms. A made a momentous choice affecting her whole life by deciding to return to Canada while she was living in Japan. After returning to Canada, she worked at an agency for the *Hikawa Maru*. Every time the vessel arrived at the harbor, Ms. A looked back to Japan and of course her mother.

Though she decided to live as a Canadian, she kept a familiar link with Japan.

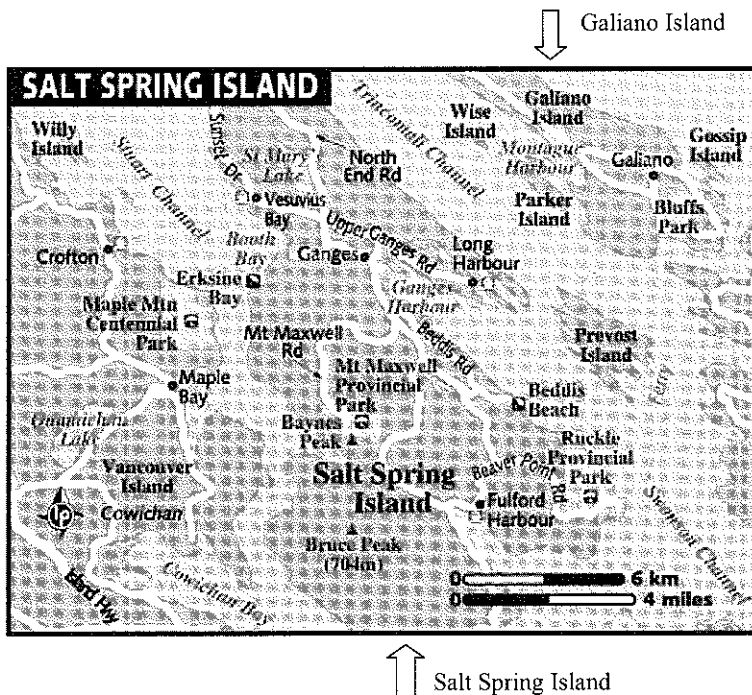
No one can help her efface those events from her tumultuous memory. Having been at the mercy of war politics, however, Ms. A describes her philosophy of life as turning adversity into something positive. Despite her deportation to Japan and the discrimination she experienced there, her bilingual skills enabled her to hold professional positions in both Canada and Japan.

In this article, I have focused on an individual life history that implicitly reflects an important segment of Japanese Canadian history. A foreseeable extension of this research would be to compare not only Ms. A's life in Japan with other deportees, but also to compare the lives of those deportees who chose to continue to stay in Japan and those who went back to Canada. Further research would enable a comparative study of the two types of deportees.

There are about 98,900 Japanese Canadians living in Canada today.⁴⁶ They are only one of the many ethnic and cultural minorities within Canada's diverse multicultural society. The redress campaign in 1988 forced the Canadian government to acknowledge the violation of human rights, apologize and pay compensation. In doing so, it helped remove a dark cloud in the memory of Japanese Canadians and reminded other Canadians of dark moments in the nation's past. However, the little known stories of individuals who were deported from Canada should be incorporated into the history of Japanese Canadians and also into the broader narrative of the Canadian nation. Recognizing the hardships of this group, as well, would be a small but significant step towards creating a Canada that is respectful of the diverse yet painful histories of all of its people.

Caught In-between

Map 1

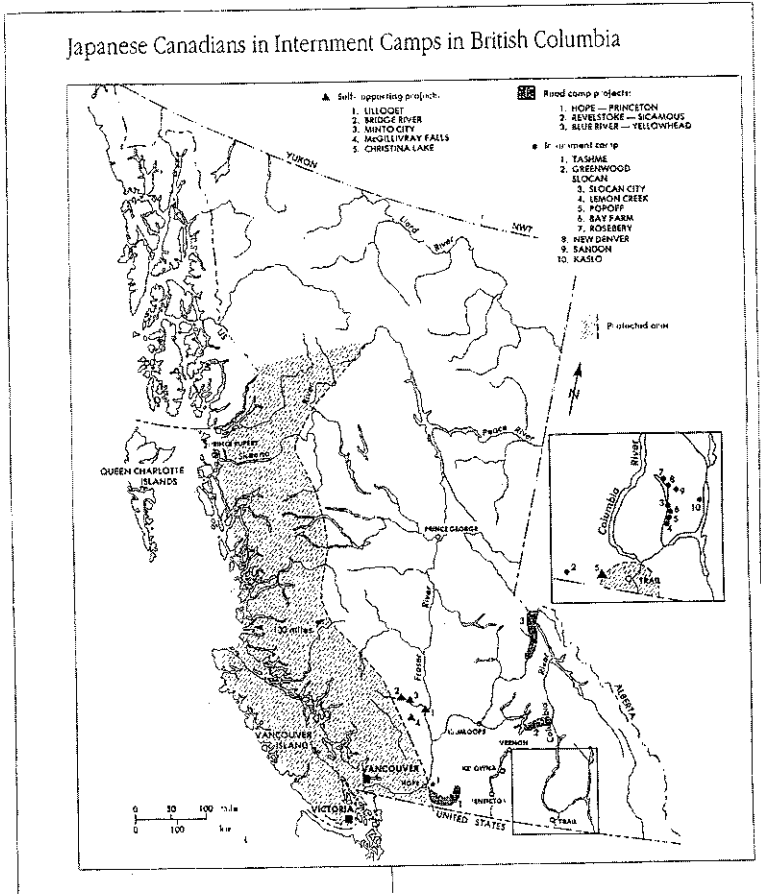


Source:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/north-america/canada/salt-spring-island/>

(Accessed on June 18, 2010)

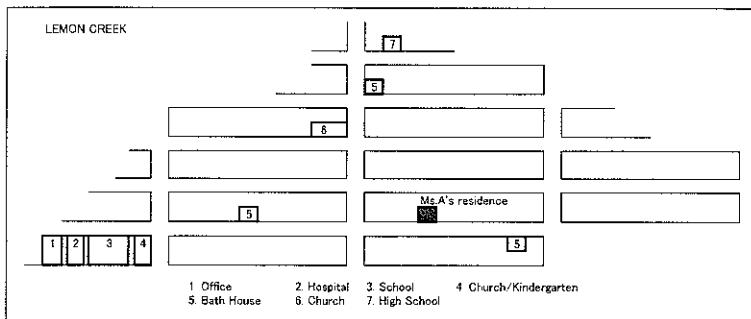
Map 2



Source: Roy Miki and Cassandra Kobayashi, *Justice in Our Time* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991), 30.

Caught In-between

Map 3



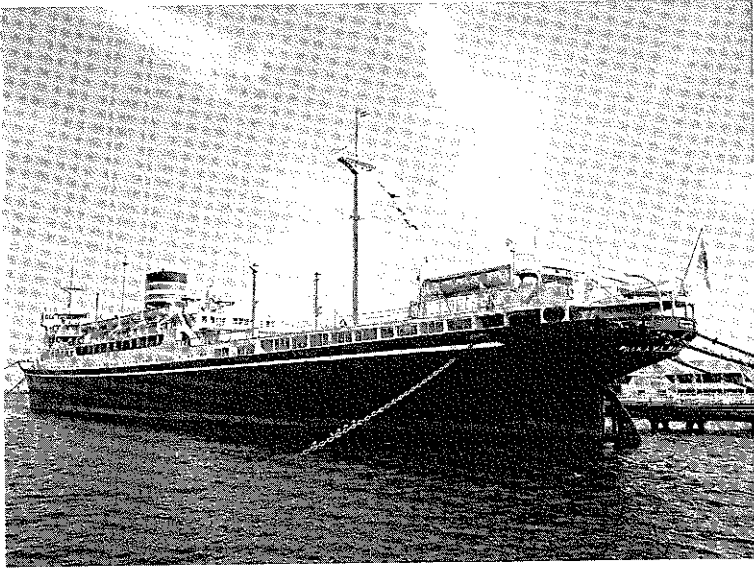
Source: Lemon Creek Reunion (Rearranged by the author)

Table 1

| DATE | NAME OF A SHIP | NUMBER |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| May 31, 1946 | S S <i>Marine Angel</i> | 668 |
| June 16, 1946 | S. S. <i>General Meigs</i> | 1,106 |
| August 2, 1946 | S. S. <i>General Meigs</i> | 1,377 |
| October 2, 1946 | S S <i>Marine Falcon</i> | 523 |
| December 24, 1946 | S. S. <i>Marine Falcon</i> | 290 |
| TOTAL | | 3,964 |

Source: Canada, Department of Labour. *Report of the Department of Labour on Re-establishment of Japanese in Canada 1944-1946* (n p.: n p., 1947), 15.

Figure 1



The *Hikawa Maru* (Taken by the author)

Notes

- 1 For a detailed analysis of this topic see Ken Adachi. *The Enemy That Never Was. A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1976); Patricia E Roy, J. I. Granatstein Masako Iino and Hiroko Takamura. *Mutual Hostages. Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Mary Taylor. *A Black Mark. The Japanese-Canadians in World War II* (n p : Oberon Press, 2004) For political analysis of the politics of internment see Ann Gomer Sunahara. *The Politics of Racism. The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1981)
- 2 For detailed accounts of the redress campaign see Roy Miki. *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991); Maryka Omatsu. *Bittersweet Passage. Redress and the Japanese Canadian Experience* (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1992); Momoye Sugiman ed. *Japanese Canadian Redress. The Toronto Story* (n p : Webcom Ltd 2000)
- 3 For details see Tatsuo Kage. *Nikkeikanadajin no Tsuihou (Deportation of Japanese Canadians)* (Tokyo: Akashishoten, 1998); Patricia Roy, J. I. Granatstein Masako Iino and Hiroko Takamura. *Mutual Hostages. Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990)
- 4 W Peter Ward *White Canada Forever Popular Attitudes and Public Opinion toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen s University Press, 1978). 18
- 5 There are the National Nikkei Heritage Centre and Japanese Canadian National Museum in Nikkei Place There are also living facilities called the Nikkei Home and the New Sakura-so for seniors
- 6 Nagano succeeded in the trading business and his name became known to Japanese immigrants
- 7 W Peter Ward. *The Japanese in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1982) 8-9
- 8 Ninette Kelly and Michael Irebilcock. *The Making of the Mosaic. A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998). 290
- 9 Members of the Asiatic Exclusion League beat their way through Chinatown and Japantown Fortunately no one was killed in the riot
- 10 The law was ratified in 1914, resulting in persons of Ukrainian origin being incarcerated during World War I
- 11 Roy Miki and Cassandra Kobayashi. *Justice in Our Time* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991). 16
- 12 Some internees had to live in a tent during the first winter due to a lack of shacks
- 13 The paper was the only newspaper permitted to be published during internment It was published in both English and Japanese
- 14 Canada, Department of Labour. *Report of the Department of Labour on the Administration of Japanese Affairs in Canada 1942-1944* (n p : n p , 1944) 15
- 15 Japanese Canadian Centennial Project. *A Dream of Riches—The Japanese Canadians 1877-1977* (Toronto: Dreadnaught 1977) 94
- 16 Interview with Ms A (25 July 2003 Nikkei Place, Burnaby BC)
- 17 National Association of Japanese Canadians. *Democracy Betrayed. The Case for Redress* (n p : n p , 1984), 6

- 18 Miki and Kobayashi 55
- 19 Roy Miki *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books 2004), 102
- 20 *Nisei Affairs*, 23 August 1945
- 21 Canada House of Commons *Debates*, 4 August 1944 5915-16
- 22 Canada, Department of Labour 50
- 23 *New Canadian*, 26 September 1945 At the beginning about 10,000 Japanese Canadians signed up for deportation
- 24 A letter from Ms A to the author (Received on 23 September 2003)
- 25 Miki and Kobayashi 55
- 26 Canada Department of Labour *Report of the Department of Labour on the Re-establishment of Japanese in Canada 1944-1946* (n.p.: n.p., 1947) 15
- 27 *Ibid.*, 15
- 28 207 internees (65 families) left Lemon Creek for Japan on the second vessel *The New Canadian* 22 June 1946
- 29 The place is known as Hidaka-machi at present A large number of people living in the district left Japan for Canada as emigrants in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries
- 30 Miki and Kobayashi 49
- 31 A letter from Ms A to the author (Received on 23 September 2003)
- 32 Some of these women got married to American servicemen and went to the US They were frequently called war brides
- 33 Rodosho Fujin Shonen Kyoku *Fujinrodo no Jitsujō (Status of Female Workers)* (Tokyo: Rodosho 1952), 5
- 34 *Ibid.*, 12
- 35 Interview with Ms A (25 July 2003 Nikkei Place Burnaby, BC)
- 36 From 1949 to 1970 the fixed rate of exchange was 360 yen per US dollar
- 37 NYK Line Corporate Communication Group, *Ripples in Time: Collection of NYK History* (Tokyo: Tokyo News Service, Ltd., 2004), 24 In 1941, the *Hikawa Maru* was levied by the navy and turned into a hospital ship After the war as a survivor, it was engaged in repatriation and carried goods to Japan After retirement the ship was put on display in Yokohama harbor, attracting many sight-seers
- 38 Tatsuo Kage, "Japanese Canadians Exiled to Japan" A Speech given at Nikkei Week Discussion: "After the Tumult," 21 September 2004
- 39 A letter from Ms A to the author (Received on 22 September 2010)
- 40 A letter from Ms A to the author (Received on 18 January 2005)
- 41 Powell Street Festival has been held in Vancouver every summer attracting not only Japanese Canadians but also non Japanese Canadians
- 42 National Association of Japanese Canadians, 24
- 43 Canada, House of Commons, *House of Commons Debates* 22 September 1988, 19500
- 44 *Nikkei Voice* 2, no 5 (October 1988)

Caught In-between

45 A letter from Ms. A to the author (Received on 23 September 2003)

46 Statistics Canada 2006 Census