REMAKING AN INSTITUTION AND COMMUNITY: THE VANCOUVER JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL AFTER THE WAR

by

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Abstract

This present thesis is a study of the re-establishment of the Vancouver Japanese Language School (first established in 1906), and the Japanese Canadian community in Vancouver after World War II. Focusing on the reopening of the school in 1952, this study attempts to discuss how the school's reopening influenced the rebuilding of the Japanese-Canadian community in post-war Vancouver, where Japanese Canadians had had a large ethnic community before 1941. By regarding the Japanese-language school as a means to comprehend trends in the lives of Japanese Canadians, this study seeks to understand how and to what extent the Japanese Canadians in Vancouver were able to reconstruct their ethnic identity: how much they acculturated into anglo-Canadian society after the devastation of their ethnic community; and how differently each successive generation has perceived the significance of ethnic cultural retention, such as the Japanese language.

Until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, the Vancouver Japanese Language School was the largest such school on the Pacific coast of North America, and served the Japanese Canadian community as a transmitter of their ethnic culture and traditions to the next generation. However, after the destruction of the ethnic community by the World War II evacuation of Japanese Canadians in 1942, the leadership of the Japanese Canadians shifted from culturally "Japanese-oriented" issei (first generation) to "more-Canadianized" nisei (second generation). Consequently, demand for fluency in the
Japanese language and an understanding of the ethnic culture was replaced with the demand for English and the anglo-Canadian culture. Despite such a huge change in the community, the Vancouver Japanese Language School was reopened, though reduced in size, and continues to operate to the present.

This study draws evidence from several works by a long-time principal and teacher of the school, Tsutae Sato, and his wife Hanako, a variety of primary sources from the Sato Collection at the University of British Columbia, and the Japanese ethnic press, as well as the author’s interviews with six people who have historical connections to the school reopening and management. By using these sources, this study attempts to examine what the meaning of the school reopening was for the Japanese Canadians after the devastation of their pre-war communities; how the school’s function and roles changed from the pre-war to the post-war period; how language education and the Japanese language influenced the formation of Japanese Canadians’ particularly that of the nisei ethnic identity as heirs to a Japanese tradition in Canada.
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As a final notice of this acknowledgment, I wish to express my thanks to my parents, who have always encouraged and cared for me from a distance.
Introduction

Schooling is an efficient, formal way to instill values in individuals. The development of schools and school curricula, therefore, to some degree reflects society's expectations of its future citizens. Ethnic schooling through foreign-language schools in Canada has functioned in the same manner: to convey ethnic culture, traditions and values to future generations, and to help individuals achieve a solid and clear sense of identification with their cultural group.\(^1\) Thus, ethnic communities created ethnic schools. The ethnic school has served as an important institution to influence group adherence to the ethnic culture. Introducing Kurt Lewin's study in 1948, Leo Driedger explains that language use is an important factor in building ethnic cultural identity. Additional factors are endogamy,\(^2\) choice of friends and participation in religion, and parochial schools, and/or voluntary organizations.\(^3\) In this context, Japanese-language schools, like other ethnic schools, have offered children of Japanese immigrants and their descendants a place to experience their native culture through language education. By supporting Japanese-language schools, Japanese-Canadian community activities have also served to remake cultural identities.

Ethnic-school policies always reflect relationships between ethnic groups and mainstream society. The policies of Japanese-language schools have been founded on two principle questions: what “Japanese origin” should mean and how it should be reflected in the curriculum. In short, Japanese-language schools have had to interpret the needs and trends of the Japanese-Canadian community in relation to the host society. In this light, histories of Japanese-language schools can provide useful insights into how

\(^{1}\text{Driedger, Leo “Alternative Models of Assimilation, Integration and Pluralism” in (ed) Dwived, O.P., D’costa, Ronald and Stanford, C. Lloyd, Canada 2000 Race Relations and Public Policy, Department of Political Studies, University of Guelph,1989 p. 353}

\(^{2}\text{Marriage within a particular ethnic or cultural group.}

\(^{3}\text{Driedger (1989) p. 353} \)
Japanese Canadians and their communities have tried to adjust to the host society and also how Japanese Canadians have tried to identify themselves through their "Japaneseness," which is defined through language and culture.

By 1941, over 4,000 students attended 53 Japanese-language schools in Canada. All of these institutions were ordered to shut down immediately after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Because of the Canadian government's evacuation and relocation policies, Japanese-Canadian communities, which were concentrated on the Pacific coast, disappeared. As a result, Japanese Canadians were demographically and geographically dispersed throughout Canada. After their cohesive, self-supporting communities dissolved, Japanese Canadians were encouraged to assimilate into mainstream anglo-Canadian society at an accelerated rate. Because of the geographical dispersal of Japanese Canadians across Canada, the mandate of the pre-war Japanese-language schools to reinforce ethnic solidarity became untenable. Japanese-language schools would start up after the war without the strong support of the tight-knit communities of the pre-war period.

The research for this project concentrates on the earliest and most prominent Japanese-language school in Canada: the Bankuba Nihongo Gakko, or the Vancouver Japanese Language School (VJLS). My reason for investigating this school is that the influence of the honorary principal and teacher, the late Tsutae Sato, and his wife Hanako Sato, on Japanese communities across Canada was considerable. Sato sought ways for the Japanese in Canada to become good Canadian citizens during his almost half century of devotion to Japanese-language education. In order to develop Japanese-language education, Sato and his wife conducted several research projects into Japanese-Canadian

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5 Driedger (1989) p.352  
6 In the Hepburn system of Japanese alphabetic writing, "Gakko" is written "Gakkō." Due to the fact that Mr. Sato himself omitted the use of the macron in his writing, this study also does not use it when transcribing certain proper nouns, such as "Bankuba Nihongo Gakko" or "Kyoritsu Go-Gakko."
demographic and occupational distribution, and studied other Japanese-language institutions in North America. Furthermore, Tsutae Sato, as the principal of the largest Japanese-language school, became a liaison between the VJLS and Japanese Canadians and between Japanese Canadians and the larger society. So great was his contribution to Japanese-Canadian education and community that he received the Canadian Centennial Medal in 1967, and the Order of Canada in 1978. By investigating a history of the VJLS, this study also evaluates the Satos’ achievement as Japanese-Canadian educators and contributors to the Canadian communities as a whole.

The VJLS was established as the Bankuba Kyoritsu Nippon Kokumin Gakko (the Vancouver National Japanese School) in 1906 to educate children of Japanese immigrants to become good Japanese citizens. The school had changed its focus to language by 1922 and became the Bankuba Nippon Kyoritsu Go-Gakko (the Japanese School of Languages). The present name, Vancouver Japanese Language School, has been used since 1960 and, in order to avoid any confusion, this study uses the term “VJLS” (the Vancouver Japanese Language School) consistently.

The school had developed into the largest Japanese-language school on the entire Pacific coast of North America by the time it closed in 1941 with the announcement of Pearl Harbour. More than 10 years after being shut down, the VJLS reopened in 1952. It was the first Japanese-language school to open in post-war Vancouver, as it occupied the only public building that remained under the same Japanese ownership throughout the internment. Other schools had had to give up operation and sell their properties, since it

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7Piles of questionnaires remain in the Sato Collection at the University of British Columbia, Special Collection.(uncatalogued).
8Sato (1969) p.54
was difficult to expect to reopen the schools after the dissolution of Japanese-Canadian communities.\textsuperscript{11}

The re-opening of the VJLS in 1952 raises two questions. What motivated the reopening of the school, and what was the meaning of learning Japanese for Japanese Canadians in the unfavorable social climate in B.C. after the dissolution of the original community? Looking at this Japanese-language school is a means to understand how Japanese Canadians tried to rebuild their ethnic cultural identity in the context of post-war Canadian society.

A number of studies on education in Canada have focused on minority-group education. Concerning the education of Japanese Canadians in the pre-war period, Mary Ashworth, in her \textit{The Forces Which Shaped Them}, describes the situation of second-generation Japanese Canadians (\textit{nisei}) in public schools in British Columbia by comparing them with other minority groups such as Natives, Chinese, East Indians, and Doukhobors.\textsuperscript{12} She argues that Japanese Canadians and the host society had different values, customs and culture. These differences are visible in a comparison of essays by Japanese-Canadian students with the results of a survey which was designed for public-school teachers and Japanese parents. Jorgen Dahlie, in his two articles, "The Japanese in B.C.: Lost Opportunity?" and "The Japanese Challenge to Public Schools in Society in British Columbia," also comments on Japanese-Canadian education in British Columbia. From a host society perspective, he relates discrimination against the Japanese-Canadian communities with public-school education and Japanese parents' (first generation = \textit{issei}) attitudes toward education for their children.\textsuperscript{13} Harold K. Hutchinson also deals with the educational aspects of Japanese Canadians in relation to Japanese-language schools and

\textsuperscript{11}Sato (1969) p.120-121
public schools in his MA thesis, *Dimensions of Ethnic Education*. These four studies illuminate the relationship of Japanese-Canadian communities to the ‘outside,’ anglo-dominated society from an educational aspect.

Japanese-Canadian schooling in the internment camps during the war is a specialized topic for which two articles are useful. Patricia E. Roy’s “The Education of Japanese Children in the British Columbia Interior Housing Settlements During World War II” describes how the Japanese-Canadian schooling system was organized under trying circumstances, such as a severe shortage of instructors and the prohibition of Japanese-language use in the class. Roy provides beneficial insights towards understanding the influence of government evacuation policies on the educational aspects of Japanese-Canadian life. Jacqueline Gresko, in her unpublished paper, “Catholic Sisters and the Japanese in British Columbia: Opportunity and Grander Dreams,” examines how Catholic Sisters contributed to providing educational opportunities for Japanese Canadians in the internment camps. Both Roy and Gresko investigate Japanese-Canadian schooling only from an anglo-Canadian standpoint, whereas this study looks at the relationship between Japanese Canadians and their ethnic identity.

From a Japanese-Canadian perspective, Ken Adachi’s classic study, *The Enemy That Never Was* provides a general idea of Japanese-Canadian education and schooling in the context of a comprehensive ethnic history. His work thoroughly covers significant historical events for Japanese Canadians from the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to Canada in the late 19th century through to the 1970s. Although Adachi does not particularly focus on education in his work, he helps us understand the place of education
for the Japanese-Canadian communities. Shinpo Mitsuru's various studies about Japanese Canadians are also helpful. His *Kanada Nihonjin Imin Monogatari* (*The Story of Japanese Immigrants in Canada*),18 *Kanada no Nihongo Shinbun* (*Japanese Newspapers in Canada*),19 and *Nihon no Imin* (*Japanese immigrants*)20 explain what Japanese Canadians expected from schools, both public and Japanese, in relation to the Japanese-Canadian communities and outside society. Shinpo's *Kanada Nihonjin Imin Monogatari* devotes much space to defining *nisei* character in education and family relations. Through his works, Shinpo emphasizes the significant influence of education in constructing ethnic identity, especially for *nisei* in the pre-war period.

The above studies, in focusing mainly on the pre-war period (before 1941) and internment during the war, avoid a comprehensive discussion of post-war Japanese-Canadian education. Midori Ota, in her MA thesis, *Japanese Schools Overseas: Their Development and a Case Study of a Supplementary School in Vancouver*, describes the role of the post-war Japanese-supplementary school for children of Japanese business people overseas.21 Since her study focuses on the *Hoshikō* (Supplementary school) in Vancouver as one of many such Japanese schools all over the world, and does not look at the school in the context of Japanese-Canadian studies, it is not very useful here. The only studies that cover the post-war Japanese-language schools in great detail are institutional histories edited by language-institution figures, such as Tsutae and Hanako Sato's several studies of the VJLS, and school anniversary books from other institutions.22

22For example, *The Vancouver Japanese Language School* (ed) *Gakko Saikai 20 shūnen Kinenshi: 20th Anniversary of the Vancouver Japanese Language School*, and *30 nen no Ayumi: 30th Anniversary of the*
As primary sources, the Sato Collection, most of which is kept in the National Archives in Ottawa, is the most useful. Eleven boxes of Sato materials, primarily in Japanese, are temporarily housed at the UBC library in its Special Collections, but have not been classified or catalogued. This Sato Collection will be sorted by the Japanese Canadian Archives in Vancouver shortly. Although quite informative, such studies and documentary collections focus on specific institutions. These materials would not allow one to view the phenomena of Japanese-language schools as anything more than limited institutional histories.

Not just in education studies but even in general histories, studies of post-war Japanese Canadians in Vancouver are still scarce. W. Peter Ward, in his White Canada Forever, investigates sociological and psychological aspects of why and how the pre-war anti-Oriental circumstances were created in B.C. Patricia E. Roy also describes the relationship between Japanese Canadians and anglo-Canadians in B.C., in her A White Man's Province. Both do, however, focus on the pre-war and do not examine the post-war period. Concerning post-war Japanese Canadians, Ken Adachi devotes fewer than 10 pages for those in British Columbia, in his History of the Japanese Canadians in British Columbia, 1877-1958. Others histories of post-war Japanese Canadians are about eastern Canadian cities, such as Toronto and Montreal. Because of this lack of secondary sources, the ethnic newspaper, The New Canadian, a bilingual publication that

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was the only one issued throughout the war, is the most useful for finding trends in post-war Japanese Canadians' ideology. For the dispersed Japanese Canadians, *The New Canadian* played an important role as a liaison and offered a place for discussion. Whereas post-war Japanese-Canadian studies have to depend on primary sources such as the Sato Collection and *The New Canadian*, the transition of the ethnic identity and cultural construction of Chinese Canadians in post-war Vancouver has recently been researched by Wing Chung Ng, in his Ph.D. dissertation, *Ethnicity and Community: Southern Chinese Immigrants and Descendants in Vancouver, 1945-1980*.  

My research attempts to follow Wing Chung Ng's lead. I trace Japanese-Canadian community formation in post-war Vancouver through the reopening of one of its most culturally and historically significant institutions, the Vancouver Japanese Language School. By utilizing the bilingual ethnic newspaper, *The New Canadian*, from the late 1940s, and my own interviews with former VJLS students and school supporters, as well as using the Sato Collection in UBC, this study aims to overcome the deficiency of secondary sources. Through expanding the historical resource base in this manner, it is possible to identify and evaluate both the role of Japanese-language schools in the acculturation process and the influence of language education in the formation of identity for Japanese Canadians, whose status and relationship with mainstream anglo-Canadian society changed dramatically across the generations and over time.

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27 Ng, Wing Chung *Ethnicity and Community: Southern Chinese Immigrants and Descendants in Vancouver 1945-1980* Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, the University of British Columbia, 1993.
The Japanese Community in Canada Before Pearl Harbour

Before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, Japanese communities were concentrated in B.C. coastal areas. A 1941 survey shows that 95.1 per cent of the Japanese in Canada lived in B.C.\(^2\) The pre-war Japanese communities in Canada were organized much like typical Japanese villages. "Little Tokyo," the Japanese section of Vancouver located east of what is known today as Gastown, is a good example. The *issei*, who established Japanese communities in Canada, were mostly from the rural areas, which had strong community ties. At that time, every town and village in Japan had its customary associations organized into different age and sex groups.\(^3\) The *issei* brought Japanese group-oriented ideologies to Canada and by 1934, established 230 religious and secular associations, such as the *kenjinkai* (prefectural organization).\(^4\) Ken Adachi, in his book *The Enemy That Never Was*, also illustrates Japanese group-preferences: “they thought of the family and of the group as realities more concrete than the individual; their family system, supported by strong traditional ties, was quite unlike the system they encountered in Canada.”\(^5\) Dr. M. Miyazaki’s recollection, *My Sixty Years in Canada*, describes the pre-war Vancouver scene: The area between the 200 and 500 blocks of Powell Street in Vancouver was “fairly filled with Japanese rooming houses, stores, restaurants, bath houses and trust companies.”\(^6\) In her *Bittersweet Passage*, Maryka

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\(^3\)Oomatsu, Maryka. *Bittersweet Passage: Redress and the Japanese Canadian Experience*. Toronto: Between the lines, 1992. p. 57
\(^4\)The leaders of these organizations tried to establish equal relationship with whites and cooperate whites workers. See also Ibid. p.57
\(^5\)Adachi (1976) p. 110
Omatsu quoted Young's study written in 1938 to describe the Japanese town in those days;

One cannot live for weeks in the midst of a Japanese community without being impressed by their unusual loyalty to other members of their family, living or dead, and by the influence of this sentiment in determining their daily conduct. This solidarity is partly a result of the belief in 'family pedigree' which ensures the continuing influence of the family on all its members in spite of passage of time or of separation by travel. . . 33

In these strongly interrelated Japanese associations and communities, Japanese language and traditions were essential. The nisei were expected by the issei to speak Japanese in order to maintain Japanese culture and also to remain close to their parents and community. It was natural for issei parents to make their children go to Japanese-language schools. Adachi's study, in fact, shows that because of their awkward Japanese and limited understanding of traditional Japanese social hierarchy, even though they had been studying the Japanese language since infancy, the nisei still had a difficult time growing accustomed to the issei world.34 Japanese-language schools, therefore, naturally played very important roles in the Japanese communities in providing Japanese language and cultural training for nisei children.

The Bankuba Kyoritsu Nippon Kokumin Gakko, or The Vancouver National Japanese School, initially opened in 1906 as a daytime school using curricula prepared by the Japanese Ministry of Education which emphasized moral and patriotic education.35 The Iji-kai (the School Maintenance Association) was organized in 1912 to encourage the Japanese community to support the school administration financially. Tsutae Sato came to Canada in 1917 and became the principal of the school in 1921; he kept this position until his retirement in 1966. His wife, Hanako, crossed the Pacific in 1921 to marry Sato.

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33Omatsu (1992) p.99
34Adachi (1976) p.174
35Sato (1969) p.627
She worked for the VJLS until her retirement, also in 1966. Without the Satos’ consistent commitment and enthusiasm, the VJLS probably could not have survived to today. The Satos’ work for the VJLS was significant, not only for education, but also in forming ethnic identity among Japanese Canadians. As a liaison between Japanese-language schools and Japanese communities, and between Japanese communities and outer society, Sato endeavored to create ideal circumstances for his philosophy “to raise good Canadian citizens of Japanese origin.”

When Sato arrived in Canada, the VJLS underwent a shift. Because more and more Japanese immigrants remained in Canada as permanent residents, school policy changed from making good Japanese citizens to making good Canadian citizens. According to Sato’s Bei Ka ni okeru Dai Nisei no Kyoiku (Education for Nisei in North America), his 1932 study of education for Japanese in North America, the VJLS adopted a resolution in 1919 making it a supplementary school to teach the Japanese language and support students who attended Canadian public schools. To reflect this change, the school’s name changed to the Bankuba Nippon Kyoritsu Go-Gakko (the Japanese School of Languages) in 1920; by the school year 1922-23, all VJLS students spent their days at public schools and only after school attended language school. The VJLS developed a new school policy in 1934 based on the following three revisions: the aim of education for nisei children should be raising good Canadian citizens; the core of the school’s education should be attained through public schools; the VJLS should teach students Japanese language with emphasis on ethics and virtue.

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36 Ibid. pp.620-621, 630-631
38 Sato (1932) p. 25
39 Ibid. p.27.
41 Sato (1954) p. 89, pp.30-31
The significance of the VJLS for the Japanese community did not change even after it became a supplementary language school in the 1920's. In this decade, *Issei* parents continued to expect their children to understand Japanese language and culture and to take pride in being Japanese. In addition, although Japanese immigrants began to regard Canada as their permanent home, they remained on the margins of Canadian society. Educated *nisei* had mostly to find jobs within their own communities because B.C. law prevented them from working as civil servants, lawyers, pharmacists and nurses. There were also informal restrictions in engineering, architecture and accounting. Furthermore, there were federal restrictions against their participation in the Pacific fishing industry and in enterprises funded by federal contracts. Japanese Canadians had to maintain their Japanese-styled self-sustained communities to survive in the anti-Asian environment of B.C. For Japanese in Canada in the pre-war period, Japanese communities functioned as a haven from the outside and providers of sustenance for their ethnic livelihoods.

Both *issei* parents and the Japanese communities were very concerned about Japanese-language education for their children, and considerable resources were invested to support Japanese-language schools through the *Iji-kai*. The *nisei* education was both a parental and community issue because of the predominantly Japanese-speaking community. In 1928, a new Japanese hall was built in the VJLS with abundant assistance from the Japanese community. By offering this building as a community centre, the VJLS reinforced its ties with the Japanese community. This supportive environment enabled the VJLS to continue teaching children Japanese morals and ethics. In order to maintain close ties to the students' families, the VJLS issued a school newsletter, "*Katei Tsūshin* (Family Communication)," biannually from 1921 to 1941. Sato, from 1931 to 1941, published several pamphlets and calendars for moral education,

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42 Adachi (1976) p. 128  
43 Shinpo (1986) p.174  
44 Ibid. p. 148  
such as "Kotoba no Tsukaikata, Aisatsu no Shikata (How to Use Proper Words and Greet in a Proper Way)" and "Dōtoku Karenda Shūkun (Weekly Moral Calendar)." The Satos were involved in various associations both in and out of the school. They developed the Gaku-yū kai (the alumni association) established in 1917 and founded the Bo-shi kai (directly translated as "the mother-sister association," which functions like the PTA) in 1923. Tsutae Sato became an executive of the Kanada Nihongo Gakkō Kyōiku-kai (the Japanese Language School Society in Canada) in 1923, which boasted of other influential members such as the Japanese Consul from Ottawa and people from the Japanese newspapers.

In order to obtain approval from the Department of Education in Victoria in 1941 to continue as a foreign-language school, Sato, as a principal and as a representative of 53 Japanese-language schools in Canada, endeavored to develop and maintain good relations with Dr. S. J. Wills, the Superintendent of Education. Other Japanese-language schools followed Sato and applied for permission to operate their schools legally.

Even though the relationship between Japanese Canadians and anglo-Canadians was already tense because of Japan’s imperialism and militarism during the 1930’s, the VJLS was successful in receiving approval from the Department of Education as a foreign-language school in 1941. It was enjoying its most prosperous period when the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941 changed everything. The Satos were very concerned about maintaining good relations with the public schools and the Department of Education, to avoid agitation between Japanese communities and others. Therefore, with the outbreak of war between Japan and Canada in December 1941, Sato decided to close the VJLS voluntarily and recommended that the other Japanese-language schools do likewise even before receiving an official notice to close down from the Department of Education on

46 Sato (1969) p. 627
49 Sato (1969) pp. 101-103. See also, Appendix III, p. 47. A letter from S.J. Willis to Sato: List of Items for Permission to Operate Japanese Language School, the Sato Collection, UBC Special Collections
December 9. In his letter to Dr. S. J. Willis, which explains the voluntary closing of the school, Sato wrote that "we are simply taking care not to prejudice any further the feeling of our Occidental neighbors." On the school-closing day, December 8, Sato also gave his students a notice in English, which stated:

> As Canada and Japan are neighbors, we shall always strive to promote goodwill and friendship between the two nations. However, regretfully and sadly, the war in the Pacific has temporarily brought an end to our work. [...] We are loyal Canadians and always will work for the good of our country. We regard this as our duty and our essential policy.  

Adhering to school policy, which aimed to raise good Canadian citizens, Sato and the other principals of Japanese-language schools emphasized their fidelity and obedience to the government by closing the schools on their own accord. The Canadian government legislated an evacuation and relocation policy for Japanese Canadians. On February 26, 1942, over 21,000 people of Japanese ancestry in the "protected zone," a strip of the Pacific coast that ran 100 miles inland, were forced to move. It would be ten years and require a great deal of will and sacrifice on the part of the Satos and others before the school would open its doors once again. When it reopened, it did so on a new basis in a new society.

**The Rebuilding of Ties: Post-War Canada-Japan Relations**

International relations between Canada and Japan were rebuilt from a commercial and economic perspective. In 1947, the Canadian government appealed to Japan to lift the ban on trade with Japan, expecting the early conclusion of the final peace treaty. Responding to this warming of relations, Japan's Diet members visited Ottawa in 1950,

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50 Appendix IV, p.49. A letter to Dr. S.J. Willis from Sato, dated December 8, 1941, the Sato Collection, the UBC Special Collections.
and showed an interest in establishing trade with Canada. In the next year, a Japanese trade mission arrived in Canada to negotiate for Canadian raw materials for the Japanese manufacturing industry. In this way, Canadian-Japanese economic ties gradually tightened and Japan became Canada's fourth largest export market by 1953. Japan bought close to $120 million worth of Canadian goods and sold less than $14 million of Japanese ones. In the next year, Japan became Canada's third largest trading partner, following the United States and the United Kingdom, and kept this position for the next twenty years.

The Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, summarized Canadian-Japanese relations as follows: “One of our best customers. . . we must aid Japan in her trade . . . I suppose Japan has the right to expect us to do our part. . . to show that her choice of friendly association with us is wise from the point of view of enlightened self-interest.” On June 13, 1952, Japan's first ambassador to Canada after World War II, Sadao Iguchi, arrived in Ottawa. Japan also established consulates in Vancouver in 1952 (originally established in 1889), Toronto in 1954, and Winnipeg in 1956. Iguchi recollected his tenure in Canada positively. He greatly enjoyed his stay, according to Klaus H. Pringsheim's study Neighbors Across the Pacific, since he did not feel he was treated as the ambassador of a defeated nation. During his tenure, Crown Prince Akihito (the present emperor of Japan) visited Canada on May 28, 1953. In 1954, the Japanese and Canadian Prime Ministers, Shigeru Yoshida and Louis St. Laurent, visited each other. In this way, Canadian-Japanese relationship strengthened through

54 The New Canadian, 1950 March 1, p.1
55 Pringsheim, Klaus. H. Neighbors Across the Pacific: the Development of Economic and Political Relations Between Canada and Japan Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983, p.113
56 Ibid., p.117.
57 Ibid., p.121.
58 Ibid., p.117.
59 Ibid, p. 117. In the post-war period, there was no official Japanese body in Canada until then. The New Canadian functioned as a liaison between two countries and provided necessary information with Japanese Canadians. See also, The New Canadian 1951, April 14, p.1
60 Pringsheim. p. 7, pp.119-120
61 Ibid., p.117.
trade throughout 1950's and 1960's. With the new economic ties established between the two countries, the Japanese-Canadian community was seen as a prospective bridge or cultural liaison between Japan and Canada.\textsuperscript{62}

Reflecting the national trend was B.C., which played a key role in developing Canadian-Japanese relations. B.C. also developed its primary industries as Canada's gateway to the Pacific. Because of the Korean war, which started in 1950, B.C. exported to Japan natural resources such as copper concentrates and coal.\textsuperscript{63} Through the inauguration of the Canadian Pacific shipping line between Tokyo and Vancouver in 1949, and the reopening of regular trans-Pacific shipping service by Nihon Yusen Kabushiki-gaisha in 1951, B.C. began to recognize more fully both her post-war role as an international port on the Pacific and the importance of newly-built economic ties with Japan.\textsuperscript{64} Concomitantly, the anti-Asian atmosphere of B.C.'s pre-war days began to subside.

For most Canadians, 1945 marked the victorious end of World War II. To Japanese Canadians, however, there was little to celebrate. For them, “post-war” did not start until 1949, when they were finally allowed to return to the Pacific coast and obtained the right to vote in federal elections. However, achieving full status as Canadian citizens was in fact a Pyrrhic victory. The effects of internment and seizures of property and possessions during the war devastated Japanese-Canadian communities on the Pacific coast. There was nothing to go back to. Japanese-Canadian experiences during the 1940's brought significant change to the community: Japanese Canadians were now widely dispersed and, as a result, the acculturation of Japanese Canadians into mainstream-Canadian

\textsuperscript{62}Ambassador Iguchi says that \textit{nisei} can help bridge the gap between Japanese and Western culture in the interview with \textit{The New Canadian}. See, \textit{The New Canadian} 1952 June 21, p.1. and also: Pringsheim (1983) p.120
\textsuperscript{64}\textit{The New Canadian} 1951 August 11, p.1
society accelerated. This was the social, and political, reality facing Japanese Canadians in their attempt to reopen Japanese schools after the war.

In the 1940's, eastern Canada offered Japanese Canadians more opportunities than did the B.C. coast. In the east, the social atmosphere was generally tolerant toward Japanese Canadians. In fact, government relocation policy encouraged Japanese Canadians, especially young *nisei*, to abandon British Columbia. In the east, particularly in Ontario, legislation banning racial discrimination was introduced during the late 1940's and the early 1950's. Ontario passed the Racial Discrimination Act of 1944, Canada's first such legislation. The *New Canadian*, a *nisei* bilingual newspaper which was the only Japanese-Canadian newspaper to have survived the war, encouraged Japanese Canadians to move east and capitalize on opportunities to work and live in a better environment. The paper frequently carried attractive stories about eastern Canada, such as one promoting Montreal as a favorable destination for Japanese Canadians that was published in three installments. Because the Department of Labour began to encourage Japanese Canadians to migrate eastward and *The New Canadian* continued to feature stories about the east, many Japanese Canadians moved away from the west.

The Japanese communities in Vancouver in the immediate post-war period lost their vitality. *The New Canadian* documented this trend. Little Tokyo had been taken over by Chinese, earning it the new title of "Little Shanghai." Kasey Oyama, writing on "Powell Street Today" in 1945, says that "this area was my hometown. But it's not worth getting excited about now... One person I met on the street said there was no 'life' on Powell Street... I have no hometown." Along the entire Pacific coast, anti-Asian
sentiments among local people lingered, making it even more difficult for Japanese Canadians to forget bitter war-time experiences there. *The New Canadian* thus predicted that most people who relocated to the east would not come back and warned of renewed Japanese discrimination if people returned. Without doubt, local residents on the coastal area in the late 1940's were still not ready to have the Japanese Canadians back and local newspapers such as *The Vancouver Sun* carried sensational articles instilling fear of their return. In 1949, Canada allowed Japanese Canadians to return to the coast without RCMP permission, but by 1951, only 33 per cent of them had returned to B.C. whereas 95 per cent had lived there before the war.

From about 1947, *The New Canadian* began to provide articles about Canadian citizenship law and Canadian history, presumably to help Japanese Canadians to understand their country and to assimilate. Especially popular were articles about how to gain Canadian citizenship and, concomitantly, how to renounce Japanese citizenship. Not surprisingly, leadership in Japanese-Canadian communities was facing a transition from *issei* to *nisei*. Giving up *issei* culture, which was represented by rice, Buddhism and community-supported Japanese-language schools, Japanese Canadians had to depend on *nisei* cultural icons such as bread, Christianity and English, in order to survive the hardship of evacuation and relocation. This fact indicated the arrival of a *nisei* era and encouraged both *issei* and *nisei* Canadians to abandon their Japanese-ness. *The New Canadian*, May 3, 1947, explains that mis-communication between *issei* and *nisei* was caused by *issei*'s ignorance of Canadian culture, customs and language. *Nisei*, thus, should teach *issei* about Canada, to help them to “Canadianize”. It also carries a letter-to-the-editor which argues that *issei* have to understand and show their sympathy to *nisei*.

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70 *The New Canadian* 1947 January 11, p.5  
71 *The New Canadian* 1947 January 25, p.4  
73 *The New Canadian* 1947 February 8, p.6, February 22, p.6, and March 22, p.4  
74 *The New Canadian* 1952 August 2, p.5  
75 *The New Canadian* 1947 May 3, p.9
if *nisei* are facing any difficulty in growing up to be good Canadians.\(^{76}\) While *issei* struggled to Canadianize, *nisei* succeeded in obtaining reputable jobs in the anglo-corporate world. This ideological shift was appropriately symbolized by the recurring banner on the front page of *The New Canadian* that announced "The First *Nisei* Lawyer" or "The First *Nisei* C.A. (Chartered Accountant)."\(^{77}\)

As young *nisei* took over leadership from retiring *issei*, the dominant language also shifted from Japanese to English in the Japanese-Canadian communities. In an article about the decline of Japanese-language use among young *nisei* in Hawaii, February 2, 1949, *The New Canadian* comments on Canada's situation:

> [t]he great majority of *nisei* and *sansei* (third generation) children in eastern Canada are growing up without even speaking acquaintance with the Japanese language . . . Up till now there has been surprisingly little interest in this question, and community leaders interviewed by *The New Canadian* were careful to stress one point: that even if Japanese language were to be taught, it should not be through a school system like that which existed in B.C. . . Some *nisei* parents are mildly concerned about this while others see it as an inevitable process.\(^{78}\)

An editorial in *The New Canadian* also mentions that parents should choose English over Japanese in the education of their children, pointing out the poor attendance of reopened Japanese-language schools in Hawaii.\(^{79}\) An objection about pre-war Japanese-language education style was also carried in a letter-to-the-editor.\(^{80}\) While to a certain degree accepting the idea of Japanese-language education, the reader says that the

\(^{76}\)[*The New Canadian* 1951 November 24, p.5]

\(^{77}\)For example, first *nisei* lawyer in Ontario, Lucien C. Kurata was introduced in *The New Canadian* 1948 November 24 p.1 and first *nisei* C.A. in Ontario, Albert S. Takimoto, in *The New Canadian* 1951 February 17 p.1

\(^{78}\)[*The New Canadian* 1949 February 2, p.1]

\(^{79}\)[*The New Canadian* 1949 February 5, p.3]

\(^{80}\)[*The New Canadian* 1949 February 12, p.3]
pre-war school used textbooks published by the Japanese Ministry of Education for students in Japan and it was deplorably inappropriate for *nisei* who were born and raised in Canada.81 In those days, English schools started in many places exclusively for Japanese *issei*. Since most of the *issei* did not have to use English in their everyday life before and during the war, their English-language skills were inadequate.

In this way, until 1950, Japanese Canadians tended to assimilate into a Canadian way of life as much as possible and not to pay attention to preserving or exploring their cultural origins. Tsutae Sato, in his unpublished essay, “Bankuba Nihongo Gakko to Watashi (The Vancouver Japanese Language School and I)” complained that everyone had been so busy reestablishing their lives that they had no time to consider the future of the Japanese-language schools, all of which had been closed in 1941. Furthermore, the practical need for the Japanese language had declined.82

With the decrease of the Japanese-language use in their daily lives, Japanese-Canadian acculturation into the larger Canadian society entered a new phase in which Japanese Canadians did not feel obligated to learn and understand the Japanese language and culture. Unlike before the war, the demand for Japanese language in the post-war period was extremely low. Gone were densely-populated Japanese communities, such as “Little Tokyo.” Consequently, Japanese-language education became less essential than it had been during the pre-war period.

81Ibid. p.3
82Sato, Tsutae, “Bankuba Nihongo Gakko to Watashi (The Vancouver Japanese Language School and I)” Sept. 16 1974, the Sato Collection, UBC Special Collections
Along with the development of economic relations, however, Japanese-language training was in growing demand for business purposes. During the Japan Peace Treaty Settlement in San Francisco in 1951, the existence of *nisei* American interpreters was noted in *The New Canadian*. Canadian Pacific Airlines (a regional airline at that time) also began to seek *nisei* women who were bilingual as stewardesses for its growing number of flights to Asia.

With the increase of business and trade contacts with Japan after W.W.II, the western world, including Canada, developed a new interest in Japanese culture, forcing a reevaluation of educational policies. In Canada, *The New Canadian* charted developments. The University of Toronto expanded its Department of East Asiatic Studies (later renamed East Asian Studies) during the 1950’s, and the University of Montreal launched the Department of Oriental Philosophy (presently Études est-Asiatiques programme) in 1950. The University of British Columbia started its Asian Studies programme in 1956. News about Japanese cultural events, such as *kabuki*, tea ceremony, and *sumo* shows, was frequently reported in *The New Canadian*. According to that paper, a *judo* training hall was opened for both Japanese and non-Japanese Canadians in Alberta in 1950 and a Japanese flower arrangement school in London, Ontario in 1951. In the same year, a classic of Japanese literature, *The Tale of Genji*, played on CBC radio. Japanese movies such as "Rasho-mon", "Seven Samurai" and "Ugetsu," which have since become classics, received international acclaim and were popular in

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83 *The New Canadian* 1951 September 1 p.6
84 *The New Canadian* 1953 June 3 p.1
85 *The New Canadian* 1950 February 15 p.5 and, 1951 July 25 p.8
86 *The New Canadian* 1951 August 4 p.7
Canada. These events were held not only for Japanese Canadians but also for other Canadians. It might have been a superficial “boom,” but the image of Japan and the Japanese had begun to change favorably. It was in this element of post-war recovery and change for Japanese Canadians that the debate about the need to reestablish Japanese-language schools in Canada took place.

The Reopening of the Vancouver Japanese Language School in 1952

Because the government evacuation and relocation policies had devastated the Japanese communities and dispersed Japanese Canadians throughout Canada, no official Japanese-language schools operated in the country until 1950, when the first, new Japanese-language school opened at a Buddhist church in Toronto. In the internment camps, Japanese Canadians were not allowed to have a Japanese-language school since, as Patricia Roy explains, the government decided that in the camps, “all teaching would be in English.” Consequently, Japanese Canadians could not maintain an official Japanese-language education programme during this period, although the language was, of course, widely spoken in the internment camps densely populated by Japanese Canadians.

With the VJLS closing of 1941, Sato and his wife Hanako, and the Iji-kai members, such as Ritsu Ide, Yoshio Nakazawa, and others, protected and maintained the school property, school buildings, legal documents, and the Japanese library. The Satos relocated to Lacombe, Alberta, a small prairie town, in June 1942, but even then they continued their involvement in school management, for example, by renting out the school

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87The New Canadian 1951 September 15. p.6
88The Japanese Canadians call old Japanese Buddhist temples in Canada “Buddhist church.” See also, Sato (1954) p.35
They rented the school buildings to the Department of National Defense until 1947, then to the Army and Navy Department store from 1947 to 1952. During this period, school buildings were damaged by the tenants. Sato negotiated with the occupants through a legal firm and succeeded in obtaining compensation. In 1947, the Satos and Iji-kai members sold the old school building in order to maintain the new one.

Although Sato was devoted to protecting school properties despite Government suggestion to sell it, post-war Japanese Canadians were not always or uniformly supportive of preserving the VJLS. Some Japanese Canadians advocated doing as had been done in other cases: selling the buildings and using the money more efficiently by donating it to other Japanese-Canadian organizations and war refugees in Japan. Sato, however, never gave up the school. He held several meetings with executives of the Iji-kai from 1944 onwards in the B.C. interior and Toronto to discuss the future of the VJLS. In 1951, Sato obtained support from the Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens Association (JCCA, a nation-wide Japanese-Canadian organization) for reopening the school. After deciding to maintain the school building and confirming the need for a Japanese-language school in Vancouver, the Satos returned to Vancouver from Alberta to resume school operations in 1952. Sato worked in earnest from that time, supported by the Saikai Kyōgikai (The Reopening Committee), which consisted of Sato, and Iji-kai members, such as Tomekichi Motomochi and Kamejiro Natsuhara, JCCA executives, such as Kinichi Iwata and Koji Tasaka, and JCCA educational department members, such as, Kiyozo Kazuta and Yaichi Fukui.

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90 Sato (1969) pp.137-8
91 Ibid. pp.138-141
92 Ibid. pp.133-143, See also correspondence between Sato and real estate company, and lawyer in the Sato Collection at the UBC Special Collections
94 The New Canadian 1949 January 5, p.5
95 Sato(1954). pp.109-123
96 Ibid. (1954) pp.125-135
Their collective efforts and enthusiasm towards the school and Japanese-language education established a legacy that exists to the present day.97 As Sato said, "for the school to remain, it must require the efforts of everyone."98 The VJLS became the only Japanese organization to keep its own building throughout the war. Today, the building at 475 Alexander St. Vancouver has been categorized as a Class 'B' Heritage Building.99

In the 1950's, in eastern Canada, several Japanese-language schools were established for the nisei and the next generation.100 Following the opening of the first Japanese-language school in Toronto, in 1950, a Catholic group in Montreal started a Japanese-language school in the same year. The VJLS, as the first Japanese-language school in post-war Vancouver, reopened in 1952, followed in 1953 by schools in Kelowna and Kamloops in B.C., and Lethbridge in Alberta.101

When reopening the school in the post-war period, Sato produced a pamphlet, "Sengo no Jōsei to Nihongo Gakkō (The Post-War Situation and Japanese Language School)," which established school aims. In the pamphlet, he explains the need for Canadians to learn the Japanese language for purposes of cultural communication between Canada and Japan, summarized as following:

[Asia is getting a center of the world in terms of culture, economy and politics. Among Asian countries, Japan is most developed and stable. Concerning Japan and Canada, the relationship between two countries became much stronger than before. In addition, Canada, as a melting pot country, needs its people to contribute to the country by demonstrating their diverse character, in order to create and enrich Canadian culture. Vancouver, a port to Asia, is an important place for cultural communication between Japan and Canada. In this context, we, Japanese Canadians, have to carry out

100The New Canadian 1952 April 9 p.5
101Sato (1954) p.36
our duty as Canadian citizens; We can understand Japan and Japanese people better than other Canadians; Therefore, we can promote mutual understanding between Japan and Canada.  

Sato also describes his dream of developing the school into an Asian-language school and establishing an Oriental cultural centre in the future. Although the practical need for Japanese language in Canadian society was at a low ebb, Sato foresaw the potential and necessity of strong ties between Canada and Japan and ethnic-language training for the future.

After reorganizing the *Iji-kai* with 50 new members, the VJLS resumed classes on September 18, 1952, first at a temporary location in the former Little Tokyo. The school reopened its original structure in 1953. The VJLS had 140 students, only 13 per cent of pre-war school enrollment, and a diverse age range, unlike before, which included university students and workers between the ages of 16 and 28. The *New Canadian* reported that Japanese Canadians in Vancouver were more supportive of Japanese-language schools than Japanese Canadians in the east were.

The newly-reopened VJLS, however, encountered several problems. Sato, in his pamphlet published in 1966, “Nihongo Gakkō Kyōiku no Shomondai (Problems of Japanese Language School Education),” indicates that despite an increased demand for Japanese speakers in society, the monolingual English environment of his students provided a difficult context in which to learn Japanese. In the 1950’s, the VJLS began to have more *sansei* (third generation) whose parents used English as their first language than *nisei* whose parents spoke Japanese. The *nisei* parents were not as enthusiastic to have Japanese-language education for their children as the *issei* parents in the pre-war period had been. In this way, not only at public school and in the work place, but also at

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102 Sato (1954) pp.129-134
103 *The New Canadian* 1954 July 16, p.2. See also, Sato (1969) p.142
104 *The New Canadian* 1952 October 18, p.4
105 *The New Canadian* 1952 July 5, p.6
home, the opportunities to use Japanese language were actually decreasing. In the pre-war period, it had been natural to send Japanese-Canadian children to Japanese-language schools — but not anymore. Japanese-Canadian students were more encouraged to participate in public-school activities after class. Furthermore, the diversified backgrounds of students in terms of age and knowledge of Japanese, made it difficult to establish teaching methods in the VJLS.\textsuperscript{108} A former student of the VJLS, Mr. K, who was 12 years old when he began in 1952 and attended for about five years comments: [In the school] when talking to teacher, we use[d] Japanese. But after when we talk[ed to] each other, it [was] English. We never talked to each other in Japanese. [To use Japanese between friends was] sort of “not right.” You [didn’t] feel like it. . \textsuperscript{109}

The Demographic dispersal of Japanese Canadians in Vancouver was a special obstacle for school operations. In the pre-war period, the 53 Japanese-language schools in Canada were mostly in B.C.\textsuperscript{110} Since those schools had been built within Japanese communities, it was easier for the schools to gather students and conduct regular classes. With the dispersal of Japanese-Canadian residences after the war, the VJLS attracted students from more than twenty different public schools in Vancouver.\textsuperscript{111} The first students began classes around 3:30 p.m., and the last ones, at 4:00 p.m.\textsuperscript{112} This meant the school could no longer operate classes as it once had. However, under a policy that placed more priority on public schools, the VJLS had to adjust to the public-school timetable and overlook students who were late or absent from class.\textsuperscript{113}

Furthermore, some people still regarded Japanese-language school as unnecessary; they said that as Canadian citizens, Japanese Canadians had no reason to stick to the Japanese language; it is enough to learn the language from issei generation, since the

\textsuperscript{108}Ibid. pp. 15-16
\textsuperscript{109}From interview by the author of Mr. K June 2, 1995. This interview was conducted in English.
\textsuperscript{110}Sato (1969) pp.635-637
\textsuperscript{111}Sato (1966) p.15
\textsuperscript{112}Ibid. p.15
\textsuperscript{113}Ibid. p.16
Japanese language was dying in the community. *The New Canadian* stated that people should make their children Christians instead of sending them to Japanese-language school if they were worried that public school did not teach ethics to children.114 There was also criticism concerning financial support: *The New Canadian* reported that Japanese communities spent more than $57,600 per year to maintain pre-war Japanese-language schools. However, most *nisei*, who learned Japanese for seven or eight years at Japanese-language schools, could not use it fluently. It was a waste of money for the community and an unnecessary burden for the children.115

Around this time, McGill *nisei* students had a debate on the Japanese-language school issue. They suggested that learning Japanese fostered better communication with *issei* elders, the transfer of cultural heritage and international communication. However, their conclusion, despite reaching an affirmative decision, was: “we are one generation behind time and no matter how vital the purpose, our efforts will result in futility.”116

For the VJLS students, school and Japanese learning were not especially enjoyable. Although he appreciated going to the Japanese-language school, the former student mentioned earlier, Mr. K, says that he had to sacrifice the normal enjoyments of childhood:

> I hated it. I [didn’t] wanna’ go to Japanese school. Your own friends [were] playing baseball, foot ball and running around park. In the beginning I was always angry and didn’t wanna’ tell anybody that I had to go to Japanese school. My idea was that ‘Gee, I got to learn Japanese, what for? Get out there. Forget it. Don’t go to Japanese school. Let’s go and play.’ [But] my mom was forcing me to go to school.117

Despite such criticism, the VJLS continued to develop and even achieved modest success. A students' demonstration of Japanese culture and language was held in January 1955 before an audience of 400. *The New Canadian*’s report of this event was quite

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114 *The New Canadian* 1954 April 17, p.5
115 *The New Canadian* 1953 August 26, p.5
116 *The New Canadian* 1952 November 15 p.1
117 From interview by the author of Mr. K June 2 1995.
favorable; “the 65 nisei and sansei carried through a two-hour programme entirely in fluent Japanese. The writer was much impressed with the students accomplishment and with the successful tutoring of Sato.”

School publicity and the author’s own interviews in 1995 with several Japanese Canadians who have historic connections to the school strongly indicate that the VJLS reopened and functioned as a Japanese-community centre in which the school was only one, albeit important, function. The school building was continually used to hold various kinds of events such as movies, plays, dance parties and cooking classes. The events were mainly organized by the Iji-kai and the Boshi-kai and aimed at fund raising for the VJLS. Furthermore, several Japanese groups such as the Seicho-no-ie (a religious group) and the Shodo-kurabu (the Calligraphy club) rented space from the school for their community activities. Although pre-war Little Tokyo had disappeared, Japanese Canadians returning to the coast came back to former Japan town first, and then found a new place to settle down. According to an elderly couple, Mr. and Mrs. F., who contributed to the reopening and running of the school as a member of the Iji-kai and the Boshi-kai respectively, and Mr. I., a son of the first chair of the resumed Iji-kai who founded a prominent Japanese Canadian travel agency, the VJLS, located in the centre of former Little Tokyo, provided the only public facility, having survived the war, and served as a meeting place and venue for various community events. Mrs. S, who went to the VJLS night school in the reopening period when a university student, and subsequently sent all her children to the school, explains the role of the school;

In the 1950’s, the Japanese school and the Buddhist church, they were the places to go for the people. ... They just had come back to the coast and had

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118 The New Canadian 1955 January 23, p.1
119 The VJLS account book (1953-54) listed names of these organizations as users of the school facilities. See, the Sato collection, the UBC Special Collections.
120 From interview of Mr. and Mrs. F., May 23, 1995. This interview was conducted by the author in Japanese. And also interview of Mr. I, May 27, 1995. This interview was conducted by the author both in English and in Japanese.
to start with [sic] scratch. So, everybody went down to the school and they met people down there. 121

Mr. and Mrs. F. also remembered those days;

Everyone was eager to raise good children... If the school needed any help, Mr. Sato gave us a call. Everyone but teachers were volunteer. If we had time, we went over to the school anytime to help. For fund raising, we rented Japanese movies from Los Angeles and had movie shows. We also organized sushi dance parties. These volunteer activities originated from the Japanese spirit of mutual aid and interdependence. Although Japanese people in Vancouver were scattered geographically, they still maintained these Japanese traditions. . .122(Translated from Japanese)

Besides reactivating the Japanese community, the various community events were very effective in recruiting new students. Children, prospective students, attended community events at the school with their parents. According to Mr. I, special fund-raising tours to Japan aroused interest in learning Japanese, especially among nisei who did not speak Japanese well.123 Thus, the VJLS volunteer fund-raising movement was beneficial in helping both the school and the community to revitalize.

In this respect, the post-war reopening of the VJLS represented more than the reopening of a Japanese-language school, it also symbolized unequivocally the re-establishment of the Japanese-Canadian community on the Pacific coast.

Japanese Canadian Acculturation and Role of the School

In the pre-war period, nisei who were expected to be "good Canadians of Japanese origin," attended two different educational institutions, public and Japanese, and were exposed to obtain two different sets of values. In a discriminatory society, nisei were very cautious about showing their Japaneseness to non-Japanese friends at public school and

121 From interview of Mrs. S June 14, 1995 This interview by the author was conducted mainly in English (partly in Japanese)
122 From interview by the author of Mr. and Mrs. F May 23, 1995.
123 In those days, travel agency chartered an airplane by organizing tour group. Thus, Mr. I.'s father collected tour group registration fee from tour participants and donated that money to the school. From interview by the author of Mr. I. May 27 1995.
endeavored to be good pupils and upstanding Canadians. Most *nisei* were eager to fill the gap between the *issei*-Japanese world and anglo-Canadian world even though they knew that they could not integrate into anglo-Canadian society. Their motto, “work hard and make yourself such fine citizens of Canada that you would be respected everywhere,” explains *nisei* efforts and enthusiasm toward being accepted as Canadians in the larger community.\(^{124}\) In this respect, the *issei* mentality represented in the Japanese community and Japanese-language schools, was, for *nisei*, symbolic of their inferior minority status in society at large and reminded them of their dilemma: they had to identify themselves with repugnant *issei* culture but not with agreeable anglo-Canadian culture.\(^ {125}\) For *issei* parents who expected more Japanese values, such as *giri* (duty), *on* (obligation) and *enryo* (modesty), from their children, *nisei* who learned democracy and free will at public school seemed “cheeky” and “impertinent.”\(^ {126}\) This difference of values and culture between *issei* and *nisei* deepened the generation gap in the decade before World War II.

For those *nisei* who wanted to get out of the Japanese community and assimilate into mainstream society, the government’s evacuation and relocation policies were a breakthrough, or as some *nisei* called it, “a blessing.”\(^ {127}\) With the destruction of the Japanese communities in Canada, they gained greater opportunity to leave *issei*-dominant spaces and enter the longed-for Canadian world. It was natural that *nisei* who had been struggling with an inferiority complex integrated into anglo-Canadian society in the post-war period. Mrs. S, mentioned before, explained *nisei*’s lack of knowledge about Japan after World War II: “Because of discrimination against Japanese, lot of people hated being Japanese. They wanted to do everything in Western style. . . So whatever


\(^{125}\)Ibid. p.69


\(^{127}\)Adachi (1976) pp.361-362
Japanese, they put aside.”¹²⁸ The trend away from Japanese learning was a growing but largely silent movement inherited from the pre-war period.

Canada's new immigration policy in the late 1940's encouraged a racially milder climate. An influx of refugees from Europe who had higher skills and professions began to change the image of non-British/non-French immigrants and promote cultural pluralism by showing that “there is not just one way to be Canadian, and one is no less Canadian.”¹²⁹ Sato argues that post-war Canadian society began to respect foreign cultures, unlike pre-war society.¹³⁰ This environment and the presence of Japanese-language schools more or less provided Japanese Canadians with the opportunity to reassess their mother culture. A reading of *The New Canadian* suggests that by the 1950's some Japanese Canadians gradually began to seek a way to contribute to Canada as Canadians of Japanese origin, rather than as “anglo-Canadianized” Japanese Canadians.¹³¹ The rise of a culturally-pluralistic ideology and the growth of Canadian-Japanese relations after the war created an opportunity for Japanese Canadians to reconsider, once again, what it meant to be “good Canadians.” Reverend Tsuji of the Toronto Buddhist church, argues in his article in *The New Canadian*, entitled “A New Field of Nisei Endeavor,” the wrong-headedness of a school policy which stressed assimilating into anglo-Canadian culture and discarding Japanese background “because it regarded Canadian culture as complete.” He went on to say that Oriental sensitivity should be more appreciated by Canadians since Canadian culture is still young and will have to grow, absorbing many aspects of Canadian diversity.¹³² He emphasized that Oriental culture, including Japanese-Canadian culture established by mainly *issei*, was important to enrich a young Canadian culture.

¹²⁸From interview by the author of Mrs. S June 14. 1995
¹³⁰Sato, Tsutae “Vancouver Nihongo Gakko to Watashi” 1974 p.2
¹³¹*The New Canadian* 1950 October 25, p.5
¹³²*The New Canadian* 1950 December 23, p.1
From the early 1950's, stories in *The New Canadian* began to criticize nisei's lack of knowledge about Asia, including the Japanese language. *The New Canadian's* first page of the 1951 Christmas issue dealt with the topic that nisei knew little about the homeland. It stated that "only 10 per cent of the adult nisei would be able to read Japanese newspapers" and only slightly more, perhaps, could speak the language. "The nisei are non-Japanese culturally and if they still have anything seemingly Japanese in their mental make-up, they are elements which are quickly disappearing."  

For nisei, except a few, there was no advantage in learning Japanese. Although language schools were established, the Japanese language had already become a foreign subject for nisei.

Around the same time, the Japanese Canadians Citizens Association held a seminar for nisei called "What Do We Think of Ourselves?" in order to discuss how nisei should behave as Japanese Canadians in the post-war society. In the seminar, Muriel Kitagawa, author of *This Is My Own*, a nonfiction book based on her letters to her brother explaining her experience as a nisei Canadian, pointed out nisei's negative traits as Japanese, such as lack of initiative, lack of humor and, as a result, sense of inferiority. Likewise, young nisei's lack of spirituality and absence of old-fashioned virtues were pointed out in *The New Canadian* in 1953. What was called "cheeky" or "disobedient" now became a "state of rebellion against authority common to all seventeen year olds." The article conveys a sense of shock because "the young nisei of today are not exactly what we would have them be." In Hawaii, a similar phenomena occurred. Japanese parents who could not handle their children's juvenile delinquency asked the Japanese-language schools to teach ethics as the pre-war schools had. Thus, the Hawaii Japanese Education Association decided in 1952 to put moral education back into the curriculum and to include the indoctrination of ethical values in the students as one major aim of the

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133 *The New Canadian* 1951 December 24, p.1  
134 *The New Canadian* 1952 August 6, p.2  
135 *The New Canadian* 1951 January 31, p.2  
136 *The New Canadian* 1951 February 14, p.2  
137 *The New Canadian* 1953 May 20, p. 2
Japanese-language school. In 1954 the VJLS, the Boshi-kai began to hold lectures and meetings about health and family and gradually organized its facility as a community centre.

A well-known nisei architect, Raymond Moriyama, commented in a letter-to-the-editor in The New Canadian in 1955 that issei ought to prepare a history of Japanese Canadians for the community. In the letter he says that there are many nisei and sansei who do not try to understand beautiful Japanese traditions and those people lack qualifications to be Canadians in present society. Moriyama queried, “why do nisei not write anything about Japanese Canadians? Now, I would like to ask issei pioneers to preserve our history (translated from Japanese).” What struck readers about Moriyama’s letter was that it was written in Japanese by a man who had succeeded in acculturating into anglo-Canadian society in Montreal. A new standard of evaluation for Japanese culture, inside and outside the Japanese Canadian community, was created, moving Japanese Canadians to review their roots both in Japan and in the Japanese communities in Canada that issei pioneers had established. Mrs. S, the former student at the VJLS, reflects on why she resumed Japanese learning in the post-war period;

You could never change the colour of your skin...When people look at you, you are considered as an Asian right now...[Then] if you are Japanese, I want to retain my Japanese culture...I should know something about Japanese. I don’t want to be ignorant...It’s natural that you know your own culture.

It was difficult, however, to stop Japanese Canadians from assimilating into the mainstream culture. For nisei who were released from the pre-war issei-made Japanese communities, Japanese learning increasingly meant going against the times. An

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139 Japanese Hall and VJLS Maintenance Association (1992) p.21
140 The New Canadian 1955 March 19, p.5
141 From interview by the author of Mrs. S. June 14 1995
anonymous essay in *The New Canadian*, Oct. 27, 1954 explains this situation in terms of a generation gap among Japanese Canadians:

The *issei* claim that the language is the greatest and strongest ties to the land of fathers. We must preserve a knowledge of our cultural heritage, which is language . . . The *nisei* vacillate between renunciation of the language and approval of its furtherance in this country . . . The *sansei* argue the uselessness of Japanese language. The *issei* should stop lamenting the loss [of Japanese language and culture]. *Sunda koto wa shikata ga nai* [what is done cannot be undone]. The Japanese language may not die, but in this country, slowly, but surely, [it is] fading away.\(^{142}\)

Although some *nisei* Japanese Canadians were concerned about their cultural heritage, the majority of them related strongly to the ideas expressed above. Instead of reassessing their cultural heritage, they were eager to be accepted as anglo-Canadians rather than Japanese Canadians. In this way, many *sansei* lost access to the *issei* culture through *nisei*, who had inherited it whether they were willing or not.

Under these circumstances, the function of Japanese-language schools in Canada changed to provide students from various cultural backgrounds with opportunities to understand foreign cultures, rather than preserve the cultural heritage of Japanese Canadians. Hideo Mimoto, in his essay "On the Japanese Language School," serialized in three parts in *The New Canadian*, called Japanese-language schools a place to culturally enlighten people in general, since "Canada's cultural tradition was not established enough."\(^{143}\) Although he was doubtful about claims regarding the potential of the school to bridge the two countries, Mimoto accepts the idea of a new role for the

\(^{142}\) *The New Canadian* 1954 October 27, p.1

\(^{143}\) *The New Canadian* 1952 August 13 p.2
school, one in which people, Japanese Canadians and others, could acquire another culture through learning a new language.

When interviewed, Mr. K. emphasized how school influenced him to develop his way of thinking, recalling the VJLS classes that offered him a venue to access a foreign culture:

> I [did] learn a lot [of Japanese culture and spirit in the school]. I'[d] never thought too much about Japan. Even though I’m Japanese, I’m Canadian. We’ve got nothing to do with Japan. . . But still I did learn quite a bit. Both [about] Japan and what kind of culture they have and what they do stuff like that. That was really educational. . . It changed my thinking of Japan. [Before] I had a negative image of Japan. I thought that Japan was a bunch of earthquake islands and those people [were] different . . . they [did] think for themselves but not for others. [But] [the teachers] [taught] us about Japan. . . We learned a quite a bit. 144

Although Mr. K. hated the school at the time, he now regards himself as lucky to have had a chance to go to it. Identifying himself strongly as Canadian, he thinks that Japanese Canadians should learn Japanese and be bilingual to maintain ethnic heritage. Otherwise, “people [Japanese] would fade down and would be nothing” and “Japanese would be wiped out.”145

Supported by teachers and anonymous volunteers, the VJLS will celebrate its 90th anniversary in 1996. Mrs. H., the present school principal explains that today, the VJLS has around 300 students ranging from three-year-old children to adults of many ethnic backgrounds and offers every level of Japanese instruction, complementing each student’s background and knowledge of Japanese.146 The current approach at the VJLS is to have students learn and enjoy Japanese, and to introduce Japanese culture to new students through annual school events.

144 Interview by the author of Mr. K June 2 1995
145 Ibid.
146 Interview of Mrs. H, March 9, 1995. This interview was conducted by the author in Japanese.
The diverse level of classes in the curriculum reflects the present Japanese-Canadian situation: although technical terms such as issei, nisei, and sansei are used, it is quite difficult to define each term and categorize Japanese Canadians accordingly. Typically, the new immigrants from the 1960’s and their descendants have, to a certain extent, maintained the Japanese language at home, whereas the descendants of the earliest immigrants mostly use English as their first language. Depending on individual circumstances, such as the nature of the family, the degree of cultural retention is quite different.

While about 80 per cent of the graduates in 1995 were Japanese Canadians, the VJLS has become very flexible regarding its students’ diverse language and cultural backgrounds by offering multi-level classes. In his interview with the author, Mr. I. mentioned the present issue of the VJLS holding classes for students of different abilities and age levels:

We have new immigrant children [as well as descendants of old immigrants, like sansei]. They [new immigrants’ children] speak Japanese, those children [of old immigrants] no Japanese at all. But their ages are the same. So [it is] very difficult to separate them. If they are in the same age, they like to be together . . . We lose some of our students. [There are many Japanese schools in Vancouver] This school is for [children of] new immigrants. Hoshůko [Japanese supplementary school] is for [children of] company people. We don’t have identity. We are in between. We can be more successful in introducing Japanese to everybody in the community.147

This variety in the school curricula and the appearance of different categories of Japanese schools show that the needs of Japanese-language education have diversified. In this respect, the trends of Japanese-language education have continued to mirror the cultural trends of Japanese Canadians and the larger Canadian society.

147From interview by the author of Mr. I May 27 1995.
Conclusion

The reopening of the Vancouver Japanese Language School in 1952 was a significant event in a number of respects. In one sense, it symbolized the rejuvenation of Japanese Canadians in the wake of the difficult war period. In another, the school represented the energy, fortitude and resilience of the Japanese community. Although Japanese Canadians were dispersed throughout Canada and their former communities were broken up, and people did not try to rebuild the pre-war-style Japan town yet, the Japanese spirit, as represented by mutual aid in the community, survived the war. That spirit helped to reopen the VJLS and helped it to continue to the present. The school’s reopening in the post-war period reflects the survival of ethnic-community ties from the pre-war period.

This study looked closely at the central figures, Mr. and Mrs. Sato. The Satos for almost a half century devoted themselves to the school. Their life-time commitment and contribution to the school and to maintaining the ethnic heritage of Japanese Canadians, has been acknowledged. In addition to the achievements of the Satos, this author encountered many unsung volunteers who contributed to reopening and maintaining the VJLS with the Satos, such as the people interviewed in the course of preparing this study. Even though the community was physically destroyed by the war, community consciousness continued with volunteer spirit. In this respect, the anonymous volunteers’ devotion to the VJLS is a cultural inheritance from the earlier generation of Japanese Canadians.

The key to the survival of the VJLS in the post-war era has been its ability to endure the various transitions of the Japanese-Canadian community while maintaining volunteer support. The pre-war VJLS had functioned as a school for teaching the Japanese language as well as Japanese values and ethics. This degree of instruction was necessary for nisei to survive in Canada, where racial and nativist barriers did not allow
Japanese Canadians to integrate into mainstream society. Compared to the pre-war period, the post-war VJLS focused on providing young generations of Japanese Canadians with a place to experience their ancestral culture, then eventually broadened to include students of other backgrounds as well. These differences in policy reflect the history of Japanese Canadians; how the distance between Japanese Canadians and Japanese culture has changed; and perhaps more significantly, how Japanese things have become extrinsic for the Japanese Canadians and of interest to other Canadians. Like other Canadians, most Japanese Canadians today need an introduction to approach and understand Japanese things. Their ancestral culture has become foreign to them.

Daily use of Japanese among Japanese Canadians has decreased since the post-war period. According to Sato's study, 60 per cent of Japanese Canadians could speak Japanese in 1961, but only 45 per cent in 1971 (except those who immigrated since the 1960's). About one-third used Japanese at home in 1971. According to research by Audrey Kobayashi in 1989, only 23 per cent of Japanese Canadians were made up of immigrants. Out of those immigrants' children, only 10 per cent spoke Japanese during their childhood. These surveys show that Japanese speakers are predominantly issei and only a few are young, Canadian-born Japanese speakers.

Along with the decrease in Japanese-language use among Japanese Canadians, the number of Japanese-language schools has not reached the pre-war level. By 1974, B.C. had only eight Japanese-language schools, 478 students and 16 teachers. In 1994 Greater Vancouver housed 13 Japanese-language schools, and none in Victoria. This is only 60 per cent of the number of schools in the pre-war period. Furthermore, except the VJLS, most schools were renting classrooms from public schools or other community centres.

148 Sato (1980) P.143
149 Kobayashi, Audrey. A Demographic Profile of Japanese Canadians and Social Implication for the Future. A report prepared under Contract PCS-8-00374, Department of the Secretary of State, Canada, 1989, p.44
and were not well equipped.151 With Japan’s success in demonstrating its economic influence in today’s world, the demand for Japanese-language instruction has increased dramatically. This demand, however, is not always met by the existing Japanese-language schools. While the rebuilding of Japanese-language schools has not proceeded smoothly, marginal gains have been realized with the Japanese-language courses offered by universities such University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, and also by B.C. high schools.152 Mr. K. described to me the irony of the present state of Japanese Canadians and the Japanese language: “Caucasian people speak Japanese. Some of them, they could speak a lot better than Japanese. Nowadays, they embarrass Japanese Canadians. They are not Japanese but can speak Japanese much better than Japanese Canadians.”153 In fact, most of the people interviewed for this study were more comfortable speaking English than Japanese.

In addition to decreasing Japanese-language use in everyday life, about 90 per cent of Japanese Canadians, mainly sansei, are intermarrying into other ethnic groups.154 In this light, acculturation of Japanese Canadians into Canadian society is virtually complete.155 Japanese Canadians today do not emphasize their Japaneseness despite the multicultural nature of present-day Canada, which encourages people to deepen their understanding of their cultural roots. David G. Delafenetre argues that Japanese Canadians have chosen to become “voluntarily invisible” and remained “anglo-Canadianized-Japanese Canadians.”156 While being “invisible” in the context of Canadian ethnic structure, Japanese facilities such as the VJLS have preserved aspects of Japanese culture and offer a crucial cultural meeting place for Japanese Canadians and others.

151Sato (1980). p.156, 165
152Ibid. P. 157
153From interview by the author of Mr. K. June 2. 1995
154Kobayashi, Cassandra and Miki, Roy (ed.) Spirit of Redress: Japanese Canadians in Conference
155Ibid. p. 102
1994 pp. 12-13
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Books


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Niyekawa-Howard, Agnes M. "History of the Japanese Language School" in *Educational Perspectives Vol. 13 (1) March 1974* pp. 6-14


**Periodicals**

*The New Canadian* 1945-1955
Unpublished Papers and Thesis


Pamphlet


Manuscript Collections
Interviews

Mr. and Mrs. F., former chairman and chairwoman of the *Iji-kai* and *Boshi-kai* respectively. Mr. F is *kika nisei* (Japanese Canadians born in Canada but have lived in Japan), who was born in 1909 in Canada and stayed in Japan until he returned to Canada in 1925. Mrs. F. is *issei*, born in Japan in 1912 and came to Canada 1927. Interviews by author, May 23, 1995. This interview was conducted in Japanese.

Mr. I., a present chief secretary of the *Iji-kai*. He was born in Canada in 1935. *Nisei*, he is a son of the first chair of the *Iji-kai* in the reopened VJLS who founded a prominent Japanese-Canadian travel agency in Vancouver. Interview by author, May 27, 1995. This interview was conducted both in English and Japanese.

Mr. K., a former VJLS student. *Nisei*, born in Canada in 1940. He started attending the VJLS from 1952 when he was 12 and continued until around 1957. Interview by author, June 2, 1995. This interview was conducted in English.

Mrs. S., a former student, *nisei*, born in Canada in 1933. She went to the VJLS for a year before the war and resumed learning Japanese at the VJLS night school in 1952 when she was a university student. She sent all her children to the VJLS and served for four years (1977-1981) as a chairperson of *Boshi-kai*. Interview by author, June 14, 1995. This interview was conducted mainly in English and partly in Japanese.

Mrs. H., principal of the Vancouver Japanese Language School. She was born in 1953 in Japan, and immigrated to Canada in 1976. Interview by author, March 9, 1995. This interview was conducted in Japanese.
## Appendix I: Distribution of People of Japanese Origin in Canada

Total No. (and %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Atlantic Provinces</th>
<th>Quebec</th>
<th>Ontario</th>
<th>Prairies</th>
<th>British Columbia</th>
<th>Northern Territories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1 (-)</td>
<td>9 (0.2)</td>
<td>29 (0.6)</td>
<td>18 (0.4)</td>
<td>4,597 (97.0)</td>
<td>84 (1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>4 (-)</td>
<td>12 (0.1)</td>
<td>35 (0.4)</td>
<td>309 (3.4)</td>
<td>8,587 (95.2)</td>
<td>74 (0.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>6 (-)</td>
<td>32 (0.2)</td>
<td>161 (1.0)</td>
<td>635 (4.0)</td>
<td>15,006 (94.6)</td>
<td>28 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>4 (-)</td>
<td>43 (0.2)</td>
<td>220 (0.9)</td>
<td>817 (3.5)</td>
<td>22,205 (95.1)</td>
<td>53 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>5 (-)</td>
<td>48 (0.2)</td>
<td>234 (1.0)</td>
<td>725 (3.1)</td>
<td>22,096 (95.5)</td>
<td>41 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>19 (0.1)</td>
<td>1,137 (5.2)</td>
<td>8,581 (39.6)</td>
<td>4,722 (21.8)</td>
<td>7,169 (33.1)</td>
<td>35 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>49 (0.2)</td>
<td>1,459 (5.0)</td>
<td>11,870 (40.7)</td>
<td>5,297 (18.2)</td>
<td>10,424 (35.8)</td>
<td>58 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>160 (0.4)</td>
<td>1,745 (4.7)</td>
<td>15,600 (41.9)</td>
<td>6,110 (16.4)</td>
<td>13,585 (36.5)</td>
<td>55 (0.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendix II: Destinations of Japanese Canadians Uprooted in 1942

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROAD CONSTRUCTION CAMPS</th>
<th>945&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue River - Yellowhead</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelstoke - Sicamous</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope - Princeton</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schreiber</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Spur</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUGAR BEET PROJECTS</th>
<th>3,991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>2,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>1,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario (males only)</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DETENTION CAMPS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA</th>
<th>12,029</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenwood</td>
<td>1,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slocan Valley</td>
<td>4,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandon</td>
<td>933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaslo</td>
<td>964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tashme</td>
<td>2,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Denver</td>
<td>1,505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Voluntary self-supporting sites in British Columbia | 1,161          |
| Special permits to approved employment             | 1,359          |
| Repatriated to Japan                               | 42             |
| Uprooted prior to March, 1942                       | 579             |
| Interned in Ontario                                | 699             |
| In detention, Vancouver                            | 111             |
| Hastings Park Hospital                             | 105             |

**TOTAL**                                           **21,460<sup>2</sup>**


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<sup>1</sup> Between March and June, 1942, a total of 2,161 Japanese Canadians were placed in road construction camps. Many of them subsequently were allowed to join families in the interior detention camps by October, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> Ninety-two persons, representing Japanese Canadians married to Non-Japanese Canadians and their children, were issued permits on April 11, 1942, exempting them from uprooting orders.