

## Lest We Forget: Rediscovered Artifacts\*

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### Abstract

Lest we forget, artifacts exist all around to help us remember who we were and how we have changed. They are the markers of history. Artifacts can take almost any form and tell us their stories in varying degrees. Some are clear, like the daily accounts written in a diary where names, dates and observations can all be verified. Others require more interpretation. All have something to say. In this paper, two artifacts from one of Canada's WWII concentration camps for *Nikkei* (Japanese-Canadians) are presented in the hope that by understanding more of their story a small part of Canadian wartime history can be brought further into the light. The artifacts in question are a handmade replica Japanese language elementary school reading textbook and part of a diary, both the work of Masayuki Yano (1909 – 1989), a Canadian *issei* (first generation Japanese immigrant). The artifacts are part of the Yano-Shuttleworth collection.

Keywords: *Nikkei*, concentration camp, Japanese language text, diary, racism

This paper aims to uncover a part of the educational life that took place in Popof, one of the WWII concentration camps that held the *Nikkei* (Japanese-Canadian) community in British Columbia, Canada, by analyzing two historical artifacts from the period, a handmade replica Japanese language elementary school reading textbook and part of a personal diary. In the first section, a brief introduction to Masayuki Yano, the maker of the textbook and the writer of the diary, will be given, followed by a summary of the events that lead up to the imprisonment of Canada's entire *Nikkei* population between 1942 and 1945-6. Translated excerpts from the textbook will be introduced, along with a consideration of the cultural values inherent in the writing. The conclusion will consider the value of preserving and

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unraveling artifacts for both special communities, like Canada's Japanese-Canadians, and the society in general.

Introduction to Masayuki Yano: Masayuki Yano was a Kagoshima prefecture man, born in Meiji 41 (1909). He immigrated to British Columbia, most likely in 1928, and up to December 1941, he worked in various places in the province. At one time both he and his wife had a laundry business in Vancouver. According to a 1931 census he also had a greengrocer's shop called Yano Yasaeten in Vancouver. Then he worked in lumber in Port Alice, on Vancouver Island's northwest coast. In addition, he had a fishing boat that was confiscated by the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property, the wartime government office responsible for keeping, and later disposing of, the private property of *Nikkei* while they were imprisoned. On November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1934, he married Martha Inoue, a *Nikkei* born in Canada. They had eight children, the first, Tokuo, born in 1937 and the last, Micheal, born in 1959. Two of the children, Shoji and Mitsu, were born in Popoff, the concentration camp where Masayuki and his family were forced to live.

The Pre-War Years (The following summaries of events affecting *Nikkei* in the pre-war and war years were based on the following sources; Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was*, Takata, *Nikkei Legacy*, Shannon, *Finding Japan*; Early Canadian Encounters with Asia, Walker, *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada*): Masayuki's story is not unusual. After America's Commodore Perry forced open Japan's ports in 1853 for the purpose of trade and a new era began in 1868 with the enthronement of the Meiji Emperor, a great deal of social and economic upheaval took place with the new government's policy to push rapid industrialization, militarization, international trade and land reform. As a result, tens of thousands of Japanese from all classes were displaced and many left to find work and economic success overseas. For the first time in over 250 years, Japanese were legally permitted to leave their country and many seized the opportunity. The first Japanese person to reach Canada was Nagano (family name), Manzo. He arrived in New Westminster, British Columbia, in 1877. Few Japanese made the ocean voyage to Canada's west coast in the beginning, but by 1900 new

arrivals were coming regularly and in 1907, after U.S. immigration restrictions prohibited Japanese from entering the continental U.S. from Hawaii, Canada bound immigrants dramatically increased until a “gentlemen’s agreement” was reached between the Canadian and Japanese governments in 1909 whereby the Japanese government voluntarily restricted the number of immigrants to Canada to 400 a year. Later, the number was further reduced.

This pre-war period of Japanese settlement in British Columbia was not without hardship for Masayuki Yano and all of the other *Nikkei*. In addition to the usual hurdles faced by many immigrant communities, such as the first generation’s lack of English language fluency which restricted interaction with the dominant Anglo-Canadian society and cultural differences that made them stand out, racist anti-Asian laws also targeted the *Nikkei* community. Full citizenship rights were not granted to either Japanese or Chinese, even to those who had taken Canadian nationality or been born in Canada. Neither Japanese nor Chinese immigrants, nor their Canada born families, could vote in elections at any government level, or hold political office of any kind. There were no laws to protect people from discrimination; therefore, employers and professions could easily refuse jobs and/or membership to persons belonging to ethnic groups they did not like without any explanation.

Racism sometimes lead to violent, physical harassment. The most infamous example of this took place in September, 1907, in Vancouver, when a large anti-Asian mob made up of between 5000 to 9000 Caucasian members, lead by the Asiatic Exclusion League, rioted and attacked businesses in the original Chinatown, near East Hastings street, and then Japtown (as it was frequently called), on nearby Powell street. Despite these extremely hostile social conditions, a Japanese-Canadian community did establish itself and by 1941, about 22,000 *Nikkei* lived in British Columbia, primarily near the coast in Vancouver and Steveston.

The War Years: The *Nikkei* community was shattered when the Japanese military attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii on December 7, 1941. All *Nikkei* suddenly became suspect war

criminals and enemy aliens. Hardship from racist attitudes and policies already held by many Canadian citizens and their government would soon be compounded by the addition of mass wartime fear and paranoia. Just how fast the fear and paranoia spread can be seen in an excerpt from Masayuki Yano's diary, written in December 1941, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbour. At the time, he was working in Port Alice, on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island.

1941/December: There are waves rocking the world but now there are even greater waves that will make rougher seas. The situation moves inevitably like a clock. Amongst everything else, Pearl Harbour was bombed by Japan on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

We Japanese have one decision – *illegible* -. I can't express the disastrous feeling I have about the treatment we will receive in the future. I cannot help but wonder how I am to make the biggest decision of my life. In Port Alice and around the world the radios are blaring, reporting the Japanese attacks one after another. As if the bombers are right above us, there is a blackout.

All the boats owned by Japanese have been taken over and put under control of the Navy. The bear that has been sleeping until now has awoken (*referring to Canada probably*). The bear is roaring and is shocked and is lost. They even took the rowboats and when it is night there is blackout. Police with guns patrol the town. A curfew has begun. However, ordinary Japanese are working the same as always. In addition, there are reports of planes bombing submarines near Seattle. I heard that about 20 planes came to Seattle and Vancouver.

Diary of Masayuki Yano, translation by Kihira, Michiko and author

In The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada, Peter W. Ward untangles the often-confusing series of events that followed after Pearl Harbour. There were heated demands made by both the Provincial Government of British Columbia and supported by the majority of B.C.'s Caucasian population. They wanted the *Nikkei* to be immediately apprehended and isolated. The responses and actions of the Federal Government, lead by Mackenzie King and the security forces, made up of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the military, were slower than they desired. News of Japan's rapid military advances however, particularly the taking of Britain's colonies in Hong Kong and Malaysia, added to the fearful belief amongst many that an attack upon North America's Pacific Coast was imminent and that the *Nikkei* community might be concealing secret conspirators of the Japanese military, a fifth column. Hence, Masayuki Yano's mention of talk of Japanese submarines near Seattle, Washington, just south of the Canadian border, so soon after Pearl Harbour. Rumours were rife; feeding not only the fear of invasion, but also the anti-Asian racism that pre-dated the war. The provincial

government's demands for the federal government to take action grew ever louder, and then came the plan. All *Nikkei* from the coastal region of British Columbia were to be moved to locations at least 100 miles away from the ocean. This mass incarceration was announced on February 26, 1942. By the end of April, all *Nikkei* had been removed from Vancouver Island and other communities and were incarcerated at the makeshift, detention centre at Hastings Park in Vancouver. By September 1942, the job had been completed. The entire Japanese-Canadian community had been dismantled, processed through Hastings Park in Vancouver and banished away from the coast.

All men over 16 years of age, single or married, were initially sent to remote areas to work as labour camps. Roughly 4000 people chose the option of working on Prairie sugar beat farms, mostly in Alberta and Manitoba. For men that spoke out in protest, or who were considered uncooperative, there was the prisoner-of-war camp in Angler, Ontario. However, by far the greatest numbers of *Nikkei* were placed in concentration camps in the Interior region of B.C., a sparsely populated area between the Coastal Mountains and the Rocky Mountains in the southeast, just north of the U.S. border.

Masayuki Yano became a resident of Popoff, one of nine concentration camps in the Kootenay region. As in all the camps, living conditions were harsh, even life threatening. During the first few months of the camp's existence, in the late winter of 1942, the snows were exceptionally heavy and the early "internees", for the most part women, children, the sick and elderly had only canvas tents to protect themselves from the elements. In the spring and summer small cabins, about 14 by 28 feet (4.27 by 8.53 metres), with a single stove, without insulation, or personal privacy were built. The camps did not have running water and two families, consisting of at least six people, shared each cabin.

To help themselves establish new lives in this difficult environment the prisoners were permitted to bring a very limited amount of personal belongings. For adults the limit was 150 pounds, or 68 kilograms, and for children the limit was 75 pounds, or 34 kilograms (Righting Canada's Wrongs). This limitation had made the selection of goods a very important task for each individual. They would bring

only what they believed was absolutely essential to survival and nobody knew how long that time would be.

The Textbook: One item that an internee believed essential to internment camp life and that was thus brought to Popoff was a fourth grade, elementary school Japanese language reading textbook, published by Monbusho, the Japanese Ministry of Education, in Showa 9 (1935). The original textbook is lost but there is undeniable proof of its presence in the internment camp because Masayuki Yano made a faithful copy of the entire book by hand, and his replica is identical in text and images to an original copy kept in the library of the Japanese Institute for Educational Research in Tokyo (call number K130.8/4.A/4). Masayuki Yano's replica remains today in the collection of his daughter, Michiko Yano of Toronto. He concealed, or protected it from the elements, with the cover of a Chapman's Regulation Science Note Book. Perhaps concealment is the more likely motive for using such a cover, because Japanese textbooks and the teaching of Japanese in camps were more or less against prohibited. In one of the few references to this educational activity in the camps, Toyo Takata, in Nikkei Legacy, has this to say.

Although banned outright following Pearl Harbor, undercover Japanese-language schools held furtive sessions in the B.C, detention camps, attended not only by children but also by adult Nisei. They were formed, not only out of defiance but out of fear. With their future in Canada under a cloud, many decided that their children should prepare for the likelihood of deportation.  
p. 134

Further evidence of Japanese language teaching within the concentration camps can be found in Teaching in Canadian Exile (Moritsugu, 2001). Chieko Takasaki, who was a child resident of Popoff, recalls studying Japanese in a classroom that was hidden by being made to look like a simple extension of one of the cabins so that the RCMP would not find it (p. 290). However, sometimes these secret language classrooms were discovered. The response appears to have been to maintain observation but not interfere.

The textbook by Masayuki Yano contains 21 stories (see appendix for complete title list) varying in length and content. The early stories, like "*Fuji no Yama*", covers part of just one page. The later

stories, like “*Yuri Waka*”, run five to seven pages long. The content consists of comments on the beauty of nature, folk tales, samurai legends, anecdotes extolling family life and, in two special anecdotes, the glorification of nationalistic militarism. These two stories could have caused considerable trouble with the authorities if they had been able to read Japanese. They would have been declared pro-Japanese propaganda and could easily have been used as evidence to justify the incarceration of the entire *Nikkei* community in the internment camps. One of these stories is called “Big Brother Joins the Army” (ニイサンガ入營) and the other is called “Big Brother in the Navy” (海軍のにいさん). Following are translations of these two stories, plus three less controversial stories that express cultural and social values, which could have also been a goal of teaching Japanese to the children in the camps. Many of the families in the camps had been broken up and this accelerated the weakening of traditional Japanese values. In the textbook stories the children read about certain values that Japanese society has long held to be important, such as showing respect for elders and authority, stoic determination when faced with adversity, serving one’s country and bravery.

#### Big Brother Joins the Army

Today is the day my older brother joins the army. He changed into his school uniform. Mother said, “Have you forgotten anything?” She also did many things to help him. Then father came and he asked, “Are you ready?” Big brother replied, “Yes, I’m all ready.” Meanwhile, in the front room, some relatives and neighbors had gathered and they talked excitedly.

At 8 o’clock, everybody got up together and went outside. First they went to the neighborhood shrine and after that they went to the bus stop. At the bus stop the town leader, the school principal, the reserve army soldiers and people who trained on the marching ground, many, many people, gathered. When they saw older brother everybody shouted, “Congratulations! Congratulations!” Older brother smiled and bowed to everybody.

Soon, the steam train arrived and older brother boarded it and shouted, “I’m going now!” I shouted in a loud voice, “Goodbye!” Father said, “Do your best!”

The train began to move quietly and everybody shouted ecstatically, “Hurray! Hurray!” Older brother put his head out the train window and waved his hat over and over again.

#### Big Brother in the Navy

While I was studying at home I heard the sound of footsteps and then somebody entered the house. I went to look and it was my big brother who is in the Navy. He entered the room smiling, and greeted Father. While taking off the towel wrapped around her head, Mother came in from the vegetable garden in the back, saying happily, “Oh, you’ve come home!” My big brother looked more tanned and stronger than before. While pouring tea Mom said, “It’s been such a

long time, hasn't it? Please drink some tea." He drank it all up. I was glad he was home and jumped around excitedly. Then he said to me, "Isamu, you've grown up! You've become a good boy." I replied, "When I become big too, I'm going to join the Navy." "Really? Joining the Navy is great," he said while patting me on the head. I was beyond happy. I put big brother's Navy hat on my head and Dad said I looked like a really cute Navy sailor. In fact the hat was way too big and I looked silly. He laughed. There was writing in gold letters on the hat. It said, "Great Japan Army", but after that I could not read it. Big Brother read it, "Great Japan Army Naval Ship, Kaga".

After taking a bath everybody ate dinner together. Big Brother was always smiling. Then he told us many interesting stories about naval ships and airplanes. Big Brother's ship, the Kaga, carries many planes and they take off easily from the deck. "It's like a moving airport, isn't it", said Big Brother. He laughed and father showed, that he was impressed while he listened. When it was time to go to bed I slept next to Big brother.

### Uncle's House

Uncle's house is in a village across a river. Yesterday I went on an errand. I took Mom's homemade *ohagi* [a sweet of mochi and sweet red bean paste] to uncle's house.

When I got to the house I found that the yard was covered with rice in husks, spread out to dry. There was no room to even step.

Nobody was home, except grandmother, who was sitting in a sunny spot of the *engawa* (a corridor running the length of the sunny side of a house) and darning. Grandmother is hard of hearing so I greeted her in a loud voice, "Grandmother! Good day!" and she turned around and said, "Oh! Sho-chan. It's good of you to come." I handed her the package of *ohagi* and she replied, "Oh, thank you." as she received it. Then she brought out a tray piled with boiled chestnuts and offered them to me.

Next a chicken came out and walked on the rice spread out on the straw mats. Grandmother said "Ho! Ho!" to shoo away the chicken but the sparrows flew away before the chicken did.

I said that I had to return home. Grandmother said that because the rice in the husks was drying outside, Uncle and Aunt would come home early. "Stay a little longer and play," she said, so I stayed. Soon I thought it was getting late though so I took the boiled chestnuts that she had offered to me and went home

### Yuri Waka

A long time ago there lived a great samurai called Yuri Waka who was skilled with the bow. One year, hordes of foreign soldiers came from afar by ship and attacked the land. The Emperor sent for Yuri Waka and commanded him to drive out the enemy. Yuri Waka took his great iron bow and iron arrows and set off with many of his brave men.

Yuri Waka shot arrows at the enemy ships and sank many of them. The boats that weren't sunk escaped in all directions. Then Yuri Waka's men launched their own ships and chased after the foreigners and destroyed them. It was a great victory. After the battle the soldiers decided to return to their own homes. However, on their way home they found a beautiful island.

Yuri Waka and the two Kumotaro brothers landed on the island and explored it. A beautiful plant grew all over the island. There was also a delightful bird that sang a lovely song. Yuri Waka said, "This is a good place. Let's rest here for a while." He lay down on the grass and



became very tired and fell into a deep sleep. Three nights and three days passed and his eyes were still closed. The Kumotaro brothers saw this and devised an evil plan. They would abandon Yuri Waka on the island and then become the new leaders.

They returned by boat to the waiting soldiers and told them that Yuri Waka had been wounded by an arrow and died on the island. The brothers took charge of Yuri Waka's men and returned home with them. Then they reported to the Emperor that Yuri Waka had died in battle fighting the enemy and that it was they, the Kumotaro brothers, who had driven away the rest of the enemy forces. Just as they had hoped the brothers were given permission to take over Yuri Waka's great castle.

Many years passed and a fisherman in a damaged boat drifted onto *Oni* (Demon) Island. He found and caught an oni on the island and returned with it. The Kumotaro brothers heard of this and commanded their soldiers to bring the *oni* to them.

The *oni* was brought and he was a sight to behold. His hair and beard grew wildly, he was covered with dirt as if he had been buried in the ground and he seemed to have moss growing all over his body. He looked part demon and part man. The Kumotaro brothers thought that if they took him to Kyoto people would say he was strange and interesting. They named him Moss Man.

For a while they kept him in the castle. During the New Year's celebrations the Kumotaro brothers gathered all the soldiers and held an archery competition. One of the brothers picked up a bow. Suddenly there was a laugh and a voice that said, "What's this? You're going to use that bow?!" It was a great demon voice and they saw that it came from Moss Man. The Kumotaro brothers were furious. "Say that one more time, Moss Man!" they cried. The oni replied by saying that even a baby could pull the bow and he laughed some more. This made the Kumotaro brothers even angrier and they shouted, "Impudent creature! If it is so easy you pull the bow!" He passed the strongest bow to Moss Man who pulled and broke the bow right away. Then the Kumotaro brothers had the powerful iron bow and arrows of Yuri Waka brought. "Try this", they said. "This is Yuri Waka's bow and arrows. If you can not pull this bow then your life will end."

Moss Man smiled and picked up the great iron bow and then he set an arrow in it. He drew the bow very hard until it was the shape of a half moon. Suddenly he aimed the arrow at the brothers and said, "You have forgotten me. I am Yuri Waka. Prepare to die!" The two brothers were shocked and made a dash to escape but Yuri Waka was faster than them and the arrow killed them both. .

### Hagoromo / The Feather Robe

There is a white beach with a pine grove and the waves come in and go out. The seagulls soar effortlessly in the sky. Beyond is misty Mount Fuji. A lone fisherman comes to a place called Miho no Mabara. He says, "Oh my! The weather is so good and this scenery is so beautiful!" The fisherman walked along the beach, fascinated by the scenery and soon fell asleep. Then there was a wonderful aroma. The fisherman looked up and saw something beautiful hanging on pine branch. The fisherman wondered what it was, went to the tree to look and discovered that it was a kimono. It was more beautiful than any he had ever seen before and he said, "I will take it home and it will be the treasure of my house." He took the kimono and was about to leave when a woman appeared from behind the tree and she said, "Excuse me but that is my kimono. Why are you taking it away?" He replied, "No. I found it and now I am going to take it home and it will be the treasure of my home." She explained further. "It is the clothing of an angel. It's not for your use. Please return it." When he heard that he said, "Since it is from an angel I really cannot return it. It will become the treasure of the entire country!" "But..." she said, "If I do not have the robe I can not return to heaven. Please return it." He would not give in though. He said, "I cannot return it. No, I can't do that." He would not return it for any reason. With a sad face the

angel stared up at the sky. The angel looked so discouraged and the fisherman felt sorry for her and said, "I feel sorry for you so I will give you back the robe." "Oh, thank you so much." replied the angel. "Please give it to me." "Wait a minute," he said. "First, in exchange for the robe, you must show me an angel's dance." The angel answered, "Because of your kindness I can return to heaven so in exchange I will indeed show you a dance. However, without the robe I can't do the dance so please give it to me." The fisherman did not trust the angel and said, "You say that but if I return the robe you will leave without dancing, won't you?" The angel refuted him, saying, "No. That's not true. Angels never lie." The fisherman realized his mistake and apologized. "Oh, I was impolite. I am sorry." He gave the robe to the angel and she put it on and began to dance.

She sang, "If all the angels from the moon wore black robes and danced together, The moon would become dark as the night. If the angels of the moon wore white robes together and danced, The moon would be as round and bright as the harvest moon."

As the angel danced she gradually rose higher and higher. The sleeves of the robe that fluttered to the right and left were beautiful. The pine grove was on the white beach and the waves came in and went out. Before you know it, the angel was hidden by spring mist. The seagulls flew effortlessly in the sky and on the horizon was the shape of Mount Fuji.

Translations by Michiko Kihira and author

In Big Brother Joins the Army we see, not only a family's pride, but also the pride of an entire community when one of its young men leaves to join the army. The big brother is already treated as a hero and he has not even gone to war yet. In Big Brother in the Navy we see a young hero returning home with wondrous stories to tell an adoring family. In particular, the younger brother, the narrator, is star struck. His big brother has gone away and now comes back super-hero like because he is taller and stronger and everybody shows him respect (Unfortunately, respectful language and honorifics do not feature as clearly in English translation). In Japanese respect for the big brother is further emphasized by the use of formal verb forms and the way even the father shows deference to his son's new experiences and knowledge.

In Uncle's House nothing much appears to take place. A small boy visits his Uncle's house to deliver a gift of *ohagi*. His uncle and aunt are out so he gives the gift to his grandmother, who in turn, gives him a treat of boiled chestnuts. She tells him to stay for a while because his uncle and aunt will come in from the fields soon and so he does but then, finally worrying about the time, he returns home with the chestnuts. Here again, in the language of the young boy, there is respect for elders. He is polite to his grandmother and he also shows obedience to his parents by not staying away from his home too long. The other striking feature of this little story is the wondrous bounty of food from the land. There

is delicious, homemade *ohagi*, the rice that has just been harvested, the chestnuts, and the chickens will provide meat or eggs. This is an image of plenty, suggesting that Japan can provide for all its own needs.

The last two stories, Yuri Waka and Hagoromo are Japanese legends that present exploits not so different from those found in the cartoon worlds of Superman or Disney that *Nikkei* children would have read or seen at the cinema. Yuri Waka is a super-samurai warrior. He leads the counter-attack on a group of foreigner invaders and through patience and cunning he outwits the evil men who betrayed him and left him abandoned on a deserted island. He is stronger than any other man, the perfect (samurai) warrior for all boys to admire. In Hagoromo a lucky fisherman encounters a rather neglectful angel taking a bathing break, and by stealing the angel's robe he tricks her into giving him a dance performance. In the bleak environment that the camp provided the fantastical tales may have provided a pleasant and imaginative distraction to the students. It is possible that the *Issei* (first generation Japanese immigrants) residents of Popoff would have been happy, knowing that these reading lessons were also passing on the traditional values.

Conclusion: It is not clear how long Masayuki Yano and his family stayed in Popoff. In addition to his diary, he also kept three notebooks and in one of them he mentions a meeting in the Popoff community hall, dated October 1946, which was about a year after Japan surrendered. For many families, leaving the camps must have presented a challenge. On the one hand there would be a strong desire to leave the camps and rebuild broken lives. On the other hand, all *Nikkei* property had been left with the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property for "safekeeping" during imprisonment, but had been sold without permission for far less than its market value, leaving the *Nikkei* community impoverished. To make matters worse, the provincial government of British Columbia would not permit any *Nikkei* to return to their previous places of residence until April 1, 1949. As they were almost all forced to move east and no longer able to rely on the support of the close-knit communities that existed in pre-war British Columbia. It was impossible for them to know what their new lives would be like. Masayuki decided to take his family to Chatham, Ontario and later, to Toronto.

During his stay in Popoff, Masayuki Yano constructed a storage box with cedar wood and that is where he kept his diary, notebooks, the replica Japanese reading text and other documents. It traveled with him to his new life in Ontario. He did not speak of these records of the family's life in the camp and his children, ironically, never learned to read Japanese script. For decades the contents remained a mystery. These artifacts from Canada's WWII period survived and they can still speak to us. From the replica of an elementary Japanese reading text and one diary it is possible to gain a better picture of education within the camps. No doubt, more can be learned about other aspects of camp life when the diary is completely translated.

The past does recede and artifacts, such as the documents left by Masayuki Yano to his family, do age. They grow brittle and the print fades but their relevance to our lives today does not diminish. Despite being relatively short, Canada's history is full of information gaps and the *Nikkei* history in Canada contains a great many gaps because for many the experience of life in the internment camps and the enforcement of a scattered post-war resettlement destroyed bonds of both community and continuity. The entire period, from internment to the early post-war years can be seen as a shocking and disruptive event that accelerated and widened the rift between the identity and history that the *Issei* brought to Canada and the rapidly transforming identity and emerging history of their descendants who were born in Canada. In the post-war years many of the elders focused on rebuilding lives and did not talk much about the past to their children. This is true of Masayuki Yano. Perhaps they wanted to simply forget or they felt that passing on such knowledge would be a burden. This is a struggle that many immigrant communities contend with. In this case however, the war and the way the Canadian government and society imprisoned the *Nikkei* community during the war, and then dismantled the community after the camps were shut down created a particularly harsh struggle. The documents left by Masayuki Yano were a mute memorial to his wartime life, but they are no longer mute. As they are translated they will help to fill in the gaps. Tucked away in boxes in attics, basements and archives across the country there are surely many, many more diaries and documents and objects waiting to tell stories and fill in the gaps. For example, *Nikkei* Place in Burnaby archives a great deal of material that awaits translation. Masayuki Yano's voice is emerging from the page. Hopefully it will be joined by more voices over the years.

## Appendix: 1935, Fourth Grade Japanese Reading Text Table of Contents

1. Fuji no Yama
2. Hayadori
3. Kaigun no Niisan
4. Kakeko
5. Kaguyahime
6. Tanuki no Haratsuzumi
7. Tsuki to kumo
8. Oji-san no Uchi
9. Yamagara
10. Yamagara no Omoide
11. Ooe Yama
12. Onigoko
13. Yubin
14. Niisan no Nyuei
15. Suzume
16. Shiro Usagi
17. Mame Maki
18. Yuriwaka
19. Hina Matsuri
20. Kita Kaze to Minami Kaze
21. Hagoromo

\*A note about the title, Lest We Forget: For citizens of Canada, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, “Lest We Forget”, immediately brings to mind November 11, also known as Remembrance Day. On this day brave soldiers who gave up their lives to protect their country are honoured. Originally

it referred to soldiers who fought in WWI but it now refers to all soldiers who fall in battle. On November 11 people also pause to ponder the folly of war. The phrase is a line that, through custom, has been added to the fourth stanza of Lawrence Binyon's poem, For the Fallen, published in 1914.

Some people might take offense to the use of "Lest We Forget" in the title of a paper about the experiences of Canadian *Nikkei* during WWII as Japan and Canada were on opposing sides of the war. It is hoped though, after reading the paper, that the reader will see that the *Nikkei* community in Canada was also a victim of war. There was great loss and suffering. It is the author's opinion that they too deserve to be remembered, along with the soldiers.

\*\*A note about some vocabulary: In much writing about the experiences of Canadian and American *Nikkei* during WWII the following terms have been frequently used; internment camp, relocation centres, internment, internees, residents, evacuation, evacuees. These terms were initially used by government officials when explaining their actions and eventually, the terms fell in to general use, even amongst academics for a great many years. The Redress campaign in the 1970's and 80's brought stronger language that reflects the historical truth into the public forum and today this more explicit and accurate language is used. Following this development, in this paper the terms, "concentration camp, incarceration, imprisoned" and "prisoners" are used. For anybody interested in the changing politics of terms and WWII *Nikkei* history, please see Roger Daniels paper in [Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest](#).

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