

A Japanese Canadian Child-Exile: The Life History of Basil Izumi

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Abstract

この論文は日系カナダ人バーゼル・タダシ・イズミのライフヒストリーのケーススタディである。彼は日系カナダ移民の第一世代の父と日系カナダ人の第2世代の母の間に生まれ、カナダのブリティッシュコロンビア州ヴァンクーヴァーで幼少期を過ごした。この論文の中では第二次大戦中に西海岸でカナダ政府が行った日系カナダ人強制退去や強制収容での彼の思い出と、大戦終了時に約四千人もの日系カナダ人が日本へ追放されていった際の経験に触れる。次に十二歳の少年としてブリティッシュコロンビアに帰ったこと、そしてヴァンクーヴァーにある日系カナダ人の聖公協会の一員として精力的に働いていたその後の生活を述べる。第一章では、関連のある歴史的背景や聖公会教会と日系カナダ人の複雑な関係を示す出来事を提示する。主節となる第二章では、バーゼル・イズミのライフヒストリーを語り、結びの第三章で彼と同じように追放された日系カナダ人の体験を比較して、彼の歴史的な重要性とヴァンクーヴァーの Holy Cross Anglican Church で果たした役割を考察する。

This paper is a life history case study of Basil Tadashi Izumi (name used with permission, hereafter referred to as 'Basil'), a Japanese Canadian who was born to a first-generation Japanese Canadian immigrant father and a second-generation Japanese Canadian mother and spent his early childhood in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. It relates his memories of the forced uprooting and internment of Japanese Canadians from the west coast by the Canadian government during World War 2 and his experience of the subsequent exile of almost 4000 Japanese Canadians to Japan at the end of the war. It next describes his return to British Columbia as a twelve-year-old boy and his life in Canada, including his role as an active member of the Japanese Anglican Church in Vancouver. The first chapter gives some relevant historical background and incidents related to the relationship between the Anglican Church and Japanese Canadians. The second (and main) chapter narrates the life history of Basil, and the third (and concluding) chapter compares his experiences to those of other Japanese Canadian exiles and discusses his historical significance and role in Holy Cross Anglican Church.

Key Words: Anglican, church properties, dispersal, dispossession, exile, Holy Cross Church, Holy Cross Mission, internment camp, Japanese Canadian, uprooting, Yokosuka

Introduction

Stimulated by the Japanese Canadian redress movement which led to an official apology and compensation from the Canadian government in 1988 as well as by the Canadian government's conscious efforts to foster multiculturalism since the 1970s, there has been an increasing amount of scholarship and literature over the last 40 years about Japanese Canadian history, especially regarding their uprooting, dispossession and internment during the war, their dispersal following the war, and related human rights issues. However, although the events leading up to the exile of almost 4000 Japanese Canadians to Japan after the war are often discussed in the literature, there has been less research into what became of these exiles after they were sent to Japan although recently this has been changing.

Tatsuo Kage, who participated in delegations that went to Japan during the late 1980s to contact and assist Japanese Canadians in Japan with their individual applications for redress compensation from the Canadian government, later interviewed several of them and summarized the interviews in his book, *Nikkei Kanadajin no Tsuiho* [The Banishment of Japanese Canadians] (1998). This book was later translated into English and titled *Uprooted Again* (2012). A more recent work, *Japanese Canadian Stories from Japan, compiled by Nobuko Nakayama and Jean Maeda*, was published in 2011 and contains the stories told by actual exiles living in Japan. Presently a new research project on exiles still living in Japan and led by Prof. Masako Iino has so far interviewed more than 30 subjects and in 2016 issued a positive interim progress report.¹ So, it appears that there has recently been a new and growing interest in this topic as an important aspect of Japanese Canadian history.²

This paper aims to provide a case study of the life history of a Japanese Canadian named Basil Izumi who was born into a Japanese Canadian Anglican family and as a small child was uprooted with his family from their life in Vancouver, was subsequently interned in several camps near Lake Slocan, then exiled to Japan after the war, and three years later at the age of twelve returned

1 Iino, Masako et al. "The Japanese Canadians Who Were "Repatriated" to Japan Immediately after World War II," (2016).

2 For a short general summary of mainstream Japanese Canadian history including the internment and the exile, see my previous case study paper on the exiles: Kirk (2017), especially pages 5-16. For a more detailed overview focusing on the factors leading up to the exile, see Sunahara (2000) and Timmons (2011). In Japanese see Kage (1998), especially his useful historical overview and discussion of factors behind the exile (27-66). For a clear and comprehensive description (in Japanese) of conditions in the internment camps and a good discussion about implications for human rights in Canada, see Izumi (2013).

alone to Canada where he still lives. Because the Japanese Canadian Anglican church in Vancouver, particularly Holy Cross Church (called Holy Cross Mission until 1970), has played such an important role in his life all the way from his earliest childhood to the present, the first chapter gives a very brief historical overview of the relationship between the Anglican Church and Japanese Canadians and focuses on some events that are particularly relevant to this life history. The second chapter narrates Basil's life history. The third (and concluding) chapter briefly compares his recollections of his experiences with those most commonly reported by other Japanese Canadians who were likewise uprooted, interned, and exiled to Japan, and finally discusses the historical significance of Basil's role as a layperson leader in the Holy Cross Anglican Church.³

The gathering of the personal data for this life history case study mainly utilized semi-structured and unstructured oral interviews. First a semi-structured oral interview was conducted using a written questionnaire that was given to Basil in advance, followed later by a second oral interview (unstructured) conducted while he showed and described his large collection of family photographs which were mostly taken by his father in pre-war Vancouver and the internment camps, as well as the exile in Japan. This was followed several months later by a third semi-structured interview which followed up the results of the previous two interviews, and was also based on a shorter ad hoc questionnaire given to Basil in advance of the interview. An interview was also conducted with a married couple who, as former members of the same church, both personally know Basil very well, and one of whom has also researched in cooperation with Basil and published regarding the historical relationship between the Japanese Canadian Anglicans and the Anglican Church. It is very fortunate that, due to Basil's father having been a professional photographer who actively recorded the life of Japanese Canadians before, during and following the war, a large number of photographs related to his life history remain well-preserved and available for

3 For a specific comparative reference, see my previous case study (Kirk 2017) about another very young exile, Mikio Ibuki, who was 2 years younger than Basil. While not born into an Anglican family, Mikio, like Basil, was interned at Slocan and attended the Anglican kindergarten there which was run by Margaret Foster and other teachers who had taught Basil in the Holy Cross Anglican kindergarten in Vancouver. Mikio's father was also a photographer, who, although not a professional, like Basil's father left a large number of interesting photographs of the pre-war and internment periods. In contrast to Basil who returned to Canada at age 12, Mikio, while initially intending return to Canada, stayed permanently in Japan.

research.⁴ As this paper was written, various drafts were sent to Basil for fact checking as well as to elicit any further details he might think of.

Chapter 1: Historical Background

— The Anglican Church and Japanese Canadians

In order to set down a historical context in which the life history of Basil Izumi can be more easily understood and its significance appreciated, this chapter provides a brief overview of the origins and history of the Japanese Canadian Anglicans in BC, the dispossession of their church properties near the end of and after World War 2, and some crises that have affected the Holy Cross Japanese Anglican Church congregation in more recent times.

Historical Overview of the Japanese Canadian Anglicans to the End of World War 2

The earliest known missionary activity among the Japanese immigrants to Canada was conducted by an itinerant minister from the United States, Matsutaro Okamoto, in 1892. Three years later he was succeeded by Goro Kaburagi, who eventually affiliated with the Methodist church. It seems that Christianity spread rather quickly and almost one third of the Japanese Canadians came to identify themselves as Christians, although it is arguable that there were various levels of devoutness and commitment.⁵ The Methodists, who from 1926 amalgamated into United Church of Canada, were to become the largest Christian group in the Japanese immigrant community, followed by the Anglicans.⁶

4 Regarding the role of non-oral data (including photographs) not only for corroborating and enhancing oral data but also for stimulating the memory of an informant during an interview and hence helping the informant provide more detailed information, see, in Japanese, Kawahara (2006). For an interesting discussion in English of this issue from an art historian's perspective, see Kunimoto (2004), who interviewed Basil Izumi regarding his family photo collection and specifically discusses its significance in helping to mediate Japanese Canadian history.

5 Roy (2016/2017, 106) suggests that many of those who utilized the various church outreach programs were more interested in the "social services than in Christianity". However, there clearly were genuine conversions and a growing core of devoted and active adherents which included the parents and maternal grandparents of the main subject of this paper, Basil Izumi.

6 For a more detailed description of the history of Methodist attitudes toward and missions to the early immigrants (and particularly to the Japanese immigrants) as well as a good summary of previous literature on the subject, see Yoshida (1992). Two interesting historical overviews of the Anglican Church and Japanese Canadians are Nakayama (1966, 26-48) in English, and Ogawa (2011, 1-17) in Japanese.

The Anglican Church of Canada seems to have begun its work among Japanese Canadians about ten years later than the Methodists. Despite ambivalent feelings among its white British membership about the influx of Japanese into the province of British Columbia (BC), it established its first mission (Holy Cross Mission) to them at St. James Church in 1903. A second mission was started in 1909 in the Fairview district and ministered mainly to the growing number of Japanese women and children. The Holy Cross Mission grew steadily and was soon seeking space to expand. In 1914 F.W. Cassilis Kennedy, formerly a missionary in Japan, came to Vancouver to assist with the Japanese Canadian missions.

The ambivalent attitude of the Anglican Church toward the Japanese immigrants continued. In fact, while a small minority of Anglican leaders advocated on their behalf, some of the most famous leaders of the anti-Japanese movement in Vancouver also happened to be prominent members of the Anglican Church. Missionary outreach to the Japanese was supported, but they were unwelcome in the white Anglican churches.⁷ However, the Anglican missions to the Japanese continued to grow. The Provincial Board of Missions to Orientals (PBMO) was established in 1915, and by 1927 there were five missions to the Japanese in BC, all under the leadership of Kennedy.

Kennedy, despite frail health, was an outspoken and respected advocate for the Japanese and other oriental immigrants. He passed away in 1930 and was succeeded in 1931 by William Gale, also a former missionary in Japan. Gale was less outspoken than Kennedy but served the Japanese immigrant community tirelessly, and growth continued under his leadership. By 1941 there were about 1500 Japanese Canadian Anglicans in the Vancouver area. Yet their diocese (New Westminster) still remained very ambivalent towards them. Ironically, one of the most outspoken leaders of the anti-Japanese movement in Vancouver was alderman Halford Wilson, a very prominent leader in the Anglican Church as a member of the Executive Committee and PMBO, and whose father, a former priest of St. Michael's Anglican Church, had also been a leading antagonist against Japanese and other Asian immigrants. Fortunately, his anti-Japanese campaigning was not completely unopposed by some of the other PMBO members. After Canada declared war on Japan and announced its plan to forcibly displace

7 Nakayama, 5: "On the one hand there was a genuine anxiety on the part of officials and Church people generally to minister to the Japanese. But, on the other hand, there was a reluctance to mingle with them firsthand. Japanese missions should be undertaken but not in ordinary parish churches which were considered occidental preserves."

Japanese Canadians from the west coast, the PBMO, while not condemning it, did go so far as to urge the government to treat the displaced Japanese Canadians in a just manner and to allow unfettered access to them by Christian missionaries.⁸ This was in some contrast to the even more ambiguous and almost silent stance of the diocese.

When the internment began, many of the Anglican missionaries and teachers who had been working among the Japanese immigrants on the coast voluntarily followed them to their life of hardship in the camps. The Anglican Church cooperated with the Roman Catholic Church, United Church, Salvation Army, and Buddhist Church in allotting camps to the care of each church. The Anglican Church was assigned the camps in the Slocan area, where, under harsh conditions, the missionaries and teachers soon set about various church activities including establishing kindergartens and high schools.⁹ Even as the war was drawing to a close in 1945 and the government was proceeding with its policy of forced dispersal of the Japanese Canadians to eastern Canada, the Anglican missionaries continued to follow and serve them.¹⁰

Realization That They Had Lost Their Church Properties

In April, 1949, approximately four years after the end of the war, the ban on Japanese Canadians returning to the coast was lifted and some started moving back to the Vancouver area. Unlike before the war when most lived in or near Steveston or the Powell Street area, many of these returnees ended up living scattered in various parts of the city. Consequently, some of the Anglicans among them began to attend non-Japanese Canadian Anglican churches located near their homes,¹¹ while yet others attended churches of other Christian groups. Those Anglicans who did move back to their pre-war neighborhoods soon discovered that their former church properties (Church of the Ascension, Holy Cross Mission, and Holy Cross Extension Property) were no longer open to them. Reverend Gale returned to Vancouver in 1952 and began the difficult task of locating the scattered Anglican returnees and gradually reorganizing the church work. Eventually he

8 Quoted by Roy, 116

9 The provincial government had refused to provide any education in the camps apart from elementary schools.

10 For more detailed descriptions of how the Anglican missionaries and teachers served the Japanese Canadians during the internment and dispersal periods, see Nakayama (especially 11- 15), and Ogawa, 7-13.

11 Roy, 106.

was allowed to hold services on Sunday afternoons in the basement and later in the chapel of St. James church. Later, services for Japanese Canadians were also held in St. George's Church. In 1955, the Diocese of New Westminster gave the building of the Catholic Apostolic Church, which had been recently donated to the diocese, to the Japanese Canadian mission. It was old and in constant need of maintenance. While supervising repairs to this building, Gale suffered a heart attack and soon passed away.

Although startled by the loss of their previous church buildings, the Japanese Canadian Anglicans were understandably hesitant to ask for information about their fate. However, in 1953, Timothy Nakayama, a young theology student who was doing field work under Gale, happened to ask the diocese bishop and treasurer what had happened to the church properties. He received a very abrupt reply: "They were relinquished". Not wishing to make trouble, he did not follow up on this answer, and a long period of silence regarding the issue continued.¹² However, in 1988, Trevor Bamford, a student at Vancouver School of Theology (VST), wrote a master's thesis that dealt with this issue. His was followed by that of another VST student, Michael Hemmings. Neither was able to determine exactly what had happened to the church properties and the proceeds from their sale, why they were sold, and why the diocese kept silent about it. Bamford concluded with the sentence: "Why this has remained a secret for 40 years is a question that needs to be answered".¹³ Bamford's thesis was eventually read by the Reverend John Shozawa, and this led him to raise the matter with the bishop, Michael Ingham. Like Nakayama, he was unable to get a satisfactory reply.¹⁴

Years later, Gregory Tatchel, a retired businessman and student of VST, was chatting with longtime Holy Cross Church member Basil Izumi, who, in the course of the conversation, briefly expressed his lingering bewilderment about what had happened to the churches.¹⁵ The conversation eventually spurred Tatchel to choose this question as the topic for his master's thesis titled *Relinquished: The Seat of Deitei Supream Us Dispossesst*.¹⁶ To support his investigations, he formed a committee of ten Japanese Canadians, which called itself the JC-VCC (Japanese Canadian Vancouver Consultative Committee) after an ecumenical committee

12 Rev. Timothy Nakayama's affidavit in Tatchel, Appendix IX, 4.

13 Quoted by Tatchel, 50

14 Rev. John Shozawa's affidavit in Tatchel, Appendix VIII, 8-9

15 Tatchel, personal conversation with the writer.

16 Tatchel, 2009.

which had advocated strongly for the human rights of Japanese Canadians during the war. Three members of this new JC-VCC had actually been members of the two churches that had been sold: Joy Kogawa and Timothy Nakayama had spent their early childhood in the Church of the Ascension of which their father was priest, and Basil Izumi had attended the Sunday school and the kindergarten at Holy Cross Mission. The specific focus of Tatchel's research was the sale of the Japanese Canadian Anglican properties during and after World War 2, and what was done with the proceeds from those sales.

After months of persistent and meticulous research during 2008 and 2009, Tatchel and the committee made the following startling findings: The three Anglican Japanese Canadian properties (Holy Cross Mission, Church of the Ascension, and Holy Cross Expansion Property), all of which had been paid for by the Japanese Canadian Anglicans themselves, were transferred to the Diocese of New Westminster in 1937, 1938, and 1941 respectively. In 1945, the year the war ended, two of the properties (Holy Cross Expansion Property and Church of the Ascension), were sold by the diocese, and the third property (Holy Cross Mission) was sold in August of 1949. These sales were conducted at prices far below the appraised value of the properties, and without consulting or even informing the Japanese Canadian Anglicans. The stated rationale was that the Japanese Canadians would not be returning to Vancouver, and therefore the need for these properties was "nil". In the case of the Church of the Ascension, it was also stated that the building was "obsolete", in spite of the fact that it was just over ten years old and clearly in good condition.¹⁷ The sale of the Holy Cross Mission property was particularly shocking as it had occurred four months after the Japanese Canadians had received legal permission to return to the west coast (some were already arriving). Perhaps the most shocking finding of all was that the proceeds and accrued interest from the sales had been placed in the Bishop's

17 The good condition of the Church of the Ascension building after the war and the sense of loss that would have been felt by the Anglican Japanese Canadian returnees at the loss of the church buildings that were so closely linked to their childhood memories is corroborated by Joy Kogawa's poignant anecdote regarding her unplanned visit to the building while taking a walk in 1957: "I found the church still standing. There was no one around and the door was not locked. I entered the large beautiful space which was empty and stripped of all furnishings, but I was able to savour happy memories of being in the church with my mother, sitting in the pews, putting a nickel into the collection plate, or holding a Lenten box. The lovely wooden floor and walls were in such contrast to the old building used by Holy Cross on East 11th or the simple re-erected kindergarten building from Slocan which became the new building of the Church of The Ascension in Coaldale, Alberta" (Tatchel, Appendix X, 2).

Endowment Fund, from which the Bishop's salary is paid.¹⁸

Based on these unusual transactions and the history of "virulent racism" which had existed not only in BC society at large but also within the Anglican Church and its leadership, Tatchel strongly made the case that these sales were motivated by institutional racism within the church and were intended to help ensure that the Japanese Canadians would not return to the west coast. He additionally demonstrated that the church leadership had tried to hide the facts through a 'code of silence', as was particularly exemplified by the fact that there was absolutely no mention of the 1500 Japanese Canadian Anglicans who had been uprooted from the BC coast or of their church properties in *Pacific Pilgrims*, a publication in 1979 celebrating the centenary of the Anglican Church in British Columbia. In short, the Diocese of New Westminster had committed a serious historic and racially motivated injustice against its Japanese Canadian members, and had consciously covered it up.¹⁹

On November 10, 2009, the committee formally presented its findings to the diocese, and soon received an apology from Bishop Ingham. On March 14, 2013, a formal apology was made by the Anglican Church of Canada for its treatment of the Japanese Canadians and their church properties.

Other Issues Faced by the Japanese Canadian Anglicans in BC

The unjust sale of their Vancouver church properties was not the only adversity that Japanese Anglicans returning to the coast in the early 1950s had to deal with. Another was the outright hostility and rejection that some faced when they tried to return to local non-Japanese Canadian Anglican churches where they had worshiped and to which they had even contributed financially before the uprooting. In some extreme cases they were denied communion, marriage ceremonies and other church rites. In one well-known case, a family was explicitly told that they were no longer welcome in their previous church because they were "seen as an evil people."²⁰ One has to wonder how many Japanese Canadians faced such reactions and consequently either left the Anglican Church or even quit Christianity altogether.

A scandal that shook the Japanese Canadian Anglican church in more recent

18 For a more detailed summary of the various transactions and findings, see Tatchel, 68-9, and Appendix IV, 107-115.

19 Tatchel, especially 91-98.

20 Murakami, 2005, 33.

years was the revelation that Reverend Gordon Nakayama, who had been priest of Church of the Ascension before the war and was revered by many Japanese Canadians for his unstinting support and devoted pastoral care during their harsh internment and forced dispersal, had sexually abused numerous boys. Although he initially confessed this abuse to the Anglican church in 1994, the church did not report it to law enforcement but instead tried to keep the matter quiet. Although Reverend Nakayama and many of his victims are no longer alive, anger was expressed especially at how the Anglican Church of Canada had failed to deal with this issue appropriately when he first confessed and apologized to the Church authorities in the Calgary Diocese. The Anglican Church finally acknowledged their failure and issued a formal apology to the victims on June 15, 2015.²¹ Despite the continual efforts of Reverend Nakayama's children Joy and Timothy, together with leaders in the Anglican Church and some community leaders, to honestly acknowledge the harm done and seek reconciliation, the repercussions of this scandal continue in some parts of the Japanese Canadian community.

Another issue recently affecting Japanese Canadian Anglicans was the fierce debate in the Diocese of New Westminster over how to deal with members of the LGBT community.²² The fallout from this very public controversy caused serious harm to the diocese generally and directly posed a critical existential threat to Holy Cross Church in particular. According to two former members interviewed by the writer,²³ the issue initially did not appear to directly concern the Holy Cross congregation. However, this changed when the priest of Holy Cross, Reverend Dawn MacDonald, declared that she had previously been a lesbian but had stopped her lesbian lifestyle due to her religious beliefs against homosexuality. This itself was not a problem for most congregants, but it appears to have become a very divisive issue when she strongly opposed the controversial diocesan decision in 2002 to allow priests to bless gay marriage unions. Many congregants of Holy Cross Church, exhausted by the ensuing turmoil, left and went elsewhere.

21 CBC News (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/anglican-church-of-canada-apologizes-for-keeping-priest-s-sexual-abuse-quiet-1.3114877>). Accessed on August 31, 2017.

22 For a detailed chronology of this controversy, see http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_ang3.htm

23 Details about how this controversy directly affected Holy Cross church come from an interview by the writer with two former Holy Cross members who now worship at a different Anglican church. For an anti-liberal perspective that strongly supports Macdonald's actions (and includes her own version of events) while harshly criticizing the position and actions of the Diocese of New Westminster (particularly Bishop Ingham), see the *Anglican Essentials Canada Blog* (April 20, 2010) at <http://www.aecblog.net/anglican-church-of-canada/two-versions-of-what-happened-at-holy-cross-church-diocese-of-new-westminster/>

In 2005, Reverend MacDonald took Holy Cross Church out of the New Westminster Diocese, and finally she herself left Holy Cross and took with her those remaining members who agreed with her position. As a result of this strife, the congregation of Holy Cross was almost completely decimated. The small remnant who remained rejoined the diocese and began the process of trying to rebuild the congregation almost from nothing.

The church is gradually recovering, and while the majority of the congregation now are Japanese Canadian and worship services are conducted bilingually in Japanese and English, it identifies itself as multi-ethnic and has several non-Japanese Canadians among its members.²⁴ Its current priest (as of 2017), Daebin Moses Im, is a Korean who spent part of his childhood in Osaka and took his theological training in Tokyo. Two members of this remnant who are presently continuing to play key leadership roles in the rebuilding efforts of Holy Cross congregation are Gwen Lamacraft and Basil Izumi, who was mentioned above as a key member of the JC-VCC. The remainder of this paper will narrate the life history of Basil.

Chapter 2: Basil Izumi Life History

Basil Izumi is a rather unique example of those Japanese Canadians who were exiled to Japan after the war but eventually returned to Canada. His story is of particular historical significance as he is the only remaining member of the Holy Cross Church who was born to members of the original Holy Cross Mission, attended the Holy Cross kindergarten and Sunday school before the internment, and is currently actively participating as a member of the present Holy Cross Church congregation. The rest of this chapter will describe his family background and relate his memories of his earliest childhood in Vancouver, his incarceration with his family in various internment camps, their exile to Japan following the war, his life during the next three years in Japan, his return to Canada at the age of twelve, and what has occurred in his life since that time.

Birth and Family Background

Basil was born April 25, 1937, in Vancouver General Hospital. The doctor who

24 See Holy Cross Church homepage at <http://holycross.vcn.bc.ca>

delivered him was Dr. H. M. Shimokura, who later would earn the trust of Japanese Canadians for his treatment of numerous patients in the harsh living conditions of Hastings Park and then at Tashme internment camp. Basil has two younger sisters, both of whom were born during the internment. The first, Megumi Grace, was born on April 22, 1944, in New Denver hospital, and the second, Emiko, on August 6, 1945, in Lemon Creek. Basil remembers her being taken to Slocan hospital, which was the closest hospital to the Lemon Creek camp.

Mother's Family

Basil's mother, May Ume Shiga, was born in Vancouver in 1915. Her parents were from Kochi Prefecture on the island of Shikoku in western Japan. Her mother was from Samurai stock, and her father was a farmer. Basil is not sure precisely when his mother's parents came to Canada, but it was sometime between 1910 and 1912. They were already married and had one child, a son, when they arrived.

It is unclear exactly why they came to Canada. Basil was told by an aunt that some family members had also gone to Brazil, but does not know the details of exactly when or why they went. He is not sure what kind of work his mother's parents did when they first arrived in Canada, but eventually they were living in the Powell Street area in east Vancouver where many the Japanese immigrants settled. Her father became a janitor in the nearby Holy Cross Anglican Mission and her mother played the piano there. They learned to speak English to some degree although not very fluently. Basil remembers talking to his grandmother in English and her answering back in Japanese.

Father's Background

Basil's father, Tadao John Izumi, was born in 1910 in Shimasato, a small coastal village in Wakayama.²⁵ His parents owned land near Shimasato and did small scale farming. He came to Canada by himself when he was nineteen, but he had a friend from the same village, James Shingo Murakami,²⁶ who had previously gone to Vancouver and was working there as a photographer. Basil does not know why his father decided to leave Japan and go to Canada ("I never asked and he

²⁵ Shimasato is located quite far from Mio Village (where most of the Wakayama immigrants originated) but very near a traditional whaling village called Taiji, which has become internationally famous and controversial in recent years due to its annual dolphin hunt.

²⁶ For a concise bio of Japanese Canadian photographer James Murakami, see *Postview: The Newsletter of the Vancouver Postcard Club*, December, 2011, p. 5. <http://vancouverpostcardclub.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Postview-Dec-2011.pdf>. Accessed September 17, 2017.

never said”), but thinks it was most likely to improve his economic standing, as was the case with many of those who emigrated from Japan at that time. He speculates that it might also have been partly due to his keen sense of adventure.

Conversion of family members to Christianity through the Holy Cross Mission

Although the details are unknown, Basil’s mother’s parents converted to Christianity and were baptized in the Holy Cross Anglican Mission soon after coming to Canada, so his mother was born into an Anglican family. The conversion of Basil’s father occurred after he had been invited to the Holy Cross Mission by his friend, Shingo Murakami, who was already a member there. Basil speculates that his parents probably met at one of the Anglican mission activities as they were both active members and the mission played a central role in their lives.

Basil’s Family and Their Life in Vancouver before Uprooting and Incarceration

As far as Basil knows, his father did not go to school after arriving in Canada but rather immediately began working. His first job was fishing for Celtic Cannery. This work did not go well, so he started to look around for photography work, asking for help from his photographer friend Shingo Murakami. Shingo did not hire Basil’s father himself but instead directed him to Campbell Studio. He was hired by the owner, Mr. Campbell, who was very friendly and taught him photography.

Basil’s mother, having been born in Vancouver, was educated in the public school system from elementary school on. He doesn’t know whether she attended an Anglican kindergarten. He assumes she got a good education and finished high school due to the fact that later on, after the family was exiled to Japan, she was immediately able to get a good job with the American occupation forces.

Basil’s parents lived in various places during their time in Vancouver including Powell Street, Cordova Street, and Nelson Street (east of Granville). It appears that they generally enjoyed their life within the Japanese Canadian community in Vancouver, and there are photos of both of them happily pushing Basil around in the baby stroller. As far as he can recall, they had a good family life, and they had a lot of friends. His father’s friends often came to their home to visit, and his parents also played active roles in the church and participated in church social

activities such as picnics and home Bible studies as portrayed in several photos of them with church groups.

Basil attended Sunday school and kindergarten at the Holy Cross Mission. Naturally he doesn't remember many details from this period, but does recall commuting by streetcar to kindergarten and has one particularly pleasant memory of meeting his kindergarten teacher (and godmother), Miss Margaret Foster while going to the kindergarten on the streetcar. Although he has several pictures of his kindergarten classmates, he does not remember them by name as he never got to see them again after they were uprooted from Vancouver. He also has memories of playing with some South Asian children in his neighborhood. Specifically, he recalls eating "with gusto" a spicy snack they offered him. Apparently, the resulting spicy odor on his breath so shocked his mother that she washed out his mouth.

He doesn't recall his family experiencing economic hardship or shortages in Vancouver, nor does he have any recollection of them facing overt racial discrimination, perhaps because they tended to stay mostly within the Japanese Canadian community. As he was very young at this time, he doesn't recall ever noticing the problems the adults were facing.

Uprooting and Internment

Basil had just graduated from kindergarten when the uprooting and internment started. His father was initially sent with the other able-bodied young men to work on a road camp while Basil and his mother were sent directly from Vancouver to the Slocan City internment camp in eastern BC. He clearly remembers getting on the train to go to the internment camp. It was his first train trip, so it was exciting for him, but he had no idea of why they were getting on the train or where they were going.

Their lodgings at the Slocan City camp were not yet ready, so at first they had to sleep in a tent. He doesn't recall how long they lived in the tent, but thinks it was only for a short period. Basil, who had never seen snow before, recalls his amazement at waking up on the first morning in Slocan City, going outside the tent and finding his surroundings "white with snow". Then they lived for a while in a hotel room that was "kind of bare and stark." They didn't stay there very long and moved again soon after his father came from the road construction camp and joined them.

Cameras were among the property items that the government had confiscated

from Japanese Canadians before the internment, and they were also officially banned from the camps. However, as time passed some of the officials in charge of the camps tended to become lax in enforcing these rules and turned a blind eye to some minor infractions, including the possession of cameras and taking photos.²⁷ Mr. Campbell, the photography shop owner who had trained and employed Basil's father in Vancouver, brought Basil's father's cameras to the camp and gave them to him. Basil's father wanted to move around and record life in the various camps with his cameras, and it seems he was able to receive official permission to do so, so over the remainder of the internment period the Izumi family moved from camp to camp. Due to more and more people leaving the camps to move east of BC, it was not difficult to find lodgings and move between the various camps.

First, the Izumi family moved to the camp at New Denver where they lived in a little shack and stayed just long enough for Basil to start attending the school there. Next, they moved to the nearby Nelson Ranch camp where they lived in a huge two-story bunkhouse for about half a year. They ate together with everyone else in a mess hall, and as far as Basil recalls, his mother did not need to do any cooking there. During this time he continued to walk to the same school he had attended while in New Denver. The long walk seemed normal to him, and he remembers chasing squirrels along the way. Then they moved to the Harris Ranch camp, where they lived in a shack at the top of the hill. They stayed there for about one and a half to two years. Basil remembers noticing that the walk to and from school was longer than when he lived in Nelson Ranch. Then they went to Lemon Creek, but that was only for a short time as well, during the summer months. Their last stay was at the Bay Farm camp, which was located next to the Slocan City camp where they had first arrived in 1942.

Memories of Childhood Play in the Camps

Like many other Japanese Canadian children who were in the camps, Basil's memories of this period are very positive and mostly revolve around enjoying school and nature and playing with his friends. His most vivid memory is about an incident with his father: "Summer was hot, so everyone used to go to the Slocan River to swim. I followed my Dad to the river one time. There was a nice wide area where the current was very slow so you could swim across. You could see

27 Kunimoto (2004), 135-6 describes some possible reasons for this.

guys jumping off the cliff into the river on the other side, and I wanted to do that too. So, I tried to swim across. My father saw me following him and got mad and told me to go back. So, I swam back. I was being carried downstream toward the rapids but somehow made it across to the other side ok.”

He also recalls that he and his friends used to devise and improvise many games in order to amuse themselves. One of the most popular games was called ‘Aunty-Aunty’, in which two teams would stand on opposite sides of a building and throw a ball over the roof. First, one team would shout ‘Aunty Aunty’ and throw the ball over. The team on the receiving side would catch the ball and run around to the other side and try to tag or hit an opposing member with the ball. The tagged person would then have to join their team. The team with the most members at the end was the winner.

Another game resembled cricket. They would stand up three sticks at each end of the playing area. Then they would throw the ball toward the sticks of the opposing team, and a batter with a regular baseball bat would try to hit the ball away in order to keep it from hitting the sticks. If you could hit the other team’s sticks with the ball you would score.

He also recalls watching older kids playing baseball, and playing it himself a little bit. Those who had ice skates would skate when the water froze over. The area around Harris Ranch especially had nice hills for skiing and sleighing. He remembers making homemade skis from the slats of wooden barrels. They even made sleighs, and joined two sleighs together to form a bobsled. They improvised like this in order to make a lot of the toys that they played with. Generally, Basil had a good time as a child in the camps. He does not recall his parents revealing any grief or anguish to him during this time, although he adds, “If they did, it was way over my head”.

Memories of school in the camps

He likewise has some interesting memories of attending elementary school in the camps. There was a Japanese Canadian lady who was the main teacher, and she trained Japanese Canadians who were already high school graduates to teach elementary school students. School was a lot of fun. Basil has one particularly vivid memory about the Bay Farm elementary school, a two-story building. While Basil’s class was studying in the classroom upstairs, there was a fire in the home economics classroom downstairs, so they “had a real fire drill”. Fortunately, they were able to put it out before it caused major damage. Basil thinks the teachers in

the camps did very well under extremely difficult circumstances.²⁸ They did not have enough materials, and the textbooks they did have were very old. He remembers using the ‘Dick and Jane’ reading textbooks that were common at that time²⁹.

Basil has no memories of personal racial discrimination during the internment as the internees had little contact with outsiders. Slocan city had its own school system, but the Japanese Canadian kids were not allowed to enroll, so they only attended the schools set up for them inside the camps.

Exile to Japan

Reason for Choosing Exile Rather Than Dispersal

Basil was nine years old when his family was exiled to Japan. He was never told the reasons why his parents chose to go to Japan rather than move to eastern Canada. He does not recall them being particularly worried about the fates of relatives in Japan, which was a compelling reason for many other families to choose to go to Japan. However, his mother did tell him much later that she was the one who made the decision, and he speculates, “I guess she chose to go to Japan because she was pissed off (angry) at how the Canadian government had treated us. No matter how hard my two aunts and grandmother tried to stop her from going, unfortunately we went.” She had a strong personality and was quite outspoken, whereas his father was more soft-spoken. Basil also doesn’t know whether his parents later regretted the move to Japan as they did not talk about it with their children, although many years later his mother did indicate during a visit to Canada that she wanted to stay with Basil’s family in Vancouver rather than return to Japan.

Boat Trip to Japan

Basil’s family were taken to Japan aboard the General Meigs, the largest of three American ships chartered by the Canadian government specifically for the deportations of Japanese Canadians. He recalls being sea sick during the voyage to Japan. One day, after he began to feel better, he wandered up to the galley and

28 Moritsugu (2001) contains numerous testimonials from students and teachers about the hardships and the good memories regarding the schools in the internment camps, and how well the teachers did in spite of their challenging circumstances.

29 Coincidentally, the writer also remembers reading the Dick and Jane reading textbooks in elementary school (in rural Alberta) in the mid 1960s, so they obviously were commonly used for many years in Canadian elementary education.

met a black man working there who befriended him. Subsequently, Basil would occasionally go up and see him late at night and he would give Basil something to eat. “Whenever I missed my meal, he was there and I just had to go and see him and he would feed me. It didn’t happen very often.” Basil doesn’t remember much else about the voyage.

Arrival in Yokosuka

When the ship arrived in Yokosuka, they stayed there for several days while arrangements for transportation to his father’s home village were being made. Basil remembers seeing the wreckage of airplanes and ships which had been bombed and sunk in the harbor. It was quite hot as it was summer. The quality of the food they received was extremely poor. He recalls, “The part that scared the hell out of me was seeing wiggly bugs in the food. It was a kind of stew with rice, and on top of that they had fukujintsuke pickles—my first time to taste fukujintsuke which I still make from time to time. We were fed biscuits that were really hard like dog biscuits—it was a good thing I had strong teeth back then. We survived the food and fortunately did not get food poisoning or anything like that.”

Train Journey to Father’s Village

They travelled by train to his father’s village, Shimasato. Basil has few memories of the trip or the conditions in the train, but does recall that when the train went through a tunnel there was a very strong unpleasant smell of coal smoke which came in through the windows. He also recalls making one stop somewhere during the journey and transferring to another train. After arriving they lived together with his father’s parents.

Life in the Village: Family Tensions, Catching Seafood

His mother soon left for Osaka where she was quickly able to acquire good employment with the American occupying forces³⁰. Basil remembers his father ‘coming and going’ but does not know what kind of work he was doing. He doesn’t recall much tension generally between his family and relatives in his father’s home village, but clearly remembers the personality of his paternal grandmother who often got angry, particularly at his mother. Although Basil does

30 Basil is not sure exactly what kind of work it was, but due to her native English and strong education, it can be assumed that it most likely involved translation and interpreting.

not recall the specific reasons why, he thinks it may have been partly because his mother had left the family in Wakayama while she went and worked in Osaka. He says, “There was some resentment shown by my grandmother; she blew her top quite a lot. My mother was not of much help as she went to Osaka to look for a job right away, so it was just my dad, my two sisters and me. Dad’s mother was pretty headstrong.”

Basil does not recall experiencing any shortage of food during this time, which might help explain why he has no memories of his family being resented by his relatives and other people in the village as many other exiles were. He says, “If my relatives resented us, it went over my head. I didn’t pay too much attention — I just did my usual things — went to school, went fishing, swam in the ocean, did some skin diving, made a homemade spear gun, and caught *issei ebi* (a kind of shrimp). I was able to feed myself with seafood. Sometimes I caught abalone. I was able to swim and catch a lot of stuff. Another time I went fishing in the river. I noticed that I’d caught something and brought it up, and at first I thought it was a snake, but the people around me told me that it was an unagi (eel), so I took it home and ate it.”

Going to Elementary School

When Basil’s family moved to Japan, his Japanese speaking level was still not very high, and he couldn’t read *kanji* (Chinese characters). Studying Japanese had been officially forbidden in the camps although done secretly. He recalls that they did have “a sort of underground Japanese schools” in the internment camps which used really old school textbooks, but he didn’t progress beyond the primary level. Due to his limited Japanese, he was moved back to grade one although he was nine years old (at that time Japanese kids started grade one at eight years of age, so he was only one year behind). He says, “I was ok at math, but soroban was a lost cause for me and I never used it again.” He doesn’t think he had a particularly difficult time communicating with teachers or classmates: “I was more English orientated, but held my own in Japanese”.

Even as a nine-year-old child-exile in Japan, Basil felt very proud of being Canadian, and his trademark was his maple leaf sweater. He says, “At school they knew I had come from North America. In those days they did not distinguish between Canada and America and called me an American. I resented being called an American rather than a Canadian, and at least once got into a fight about that. At that time I had long hair, so I had my dad cut it off and I became a *bozu* (shaved

head) like the other kids because the other kids could pull my hair in a fight if it was longer. I got into the normal fights that normal kids get into, but I do not recall being picked on for being a foreigner. I just resented being called an American.”³¹

He also recalls playing baseball: “The thing I enjoyed was playing baseball. The ball that that was used there was not the kind that we use here. They used a very hard rubber ball. I could hit better than the other kids, and I was slightly bigger than the other kids. My baseball skills helped me then.”

Return to Canada

When Basil was twelve, his maternal grandmother and aunts, who had stayed in Canada and were living in Vernon, a fruit-growing town in the interior of BC at the north end of Lake Okanagan, began the process of sponsoring him back to Canada. He does not remember whether he himself had a strong desire at that time to return to Canada, but he believes that his parents initiated it. He does recall his father telling him that he thought it would be a good idea for Basil to return to Canada before he forgot English and became too entrenched in Japan. However, Basil never heard anything from his father that indicated his father himself also wanted to come back to Canada. After three years of living together with his father and younger sisters in Japan, Basil returned to Canada and stayed with his aunts and grandmother in Vernon.

His mother had made arrangements for him to travel with three young men who were going to Kelowna, which is located near Vernon. That arrangement apparently worked out well as he would arrive in Vernon safely. The ship stopped over for one day at Hawaii, then landed in San Francisco. During this voyage, Basil experienced the very surprising coincidence of meeting the same black man who had worked in the galley and had befriended and fed him during the voyage to Japan on the General Meigs several years earlier. Amazingly, he still remembered Basil. Basil and his three companions stayed in San Francisco for several days until they could get a booking on the train (Southern Pacific Line) from Oakland to Portland, where they transferred to Northern Pacific Line and went on to Vancouver, and finally on to their destinations in Kelowna and Vernon.

31 Basil seems to downplay the discriminatory and racist nuance of being an ‘America-jin’, perhaps because of his young age at the time. Older child-exiles who were called this strongly took it as an intentional bullying insult and some were severely traumatized and avoided going to school, for example, George Kawabata (Tanaka, 21).

Life in Canada

Life with Grandmother and Aunts in Vernon

Basil stayed with his grandmother and aunts in Vernon from 1949 till they moved to Vancouver in 1954. He says, “At first, during the internment, they had been at Mento Mine outside of Lilloet, BC, at one of the *self-supporting sites*.³² My other aunt had stayed in east Lilloet along with my grandmother and grandfather. My grandfather had passed way from old age in Lilloet in 1944. When the war ended, both my aunts’ families and my grandmother moved to Vernon, BC. There were quite a few Japanese Canadian families there before the war working as farmers and orchardists and growing fruits of all sorts.” While living in Vernon, Basil, his aunts and grandmother used to attend All Saints Anglican Church and walked about an hour and a half to get there.

During his time in Vernon, Basil learned that his father’s old friend, James Shingo Murakami, who, like Basil’s aunts and grandparents also spent the war years in Lilloet, had recently moved to Vernon where he had set up a new photography business. Basil occasionally went to the shop and visited with Murakami, who gave him news about how his father was doing in Japan.

Basil recalls that there were also some Japanese Canadians living outside Kelowna, a larger town not far from Vernon. There, in contrast to Vernon, anti-Japanese sentiment was much stronger. One of them later told Basil that he didn’t go into town unless necessary due to the severe racism which was even worse than in Vancouver.³³

Move to Vancouver and Work in a Sawmill in Devine

When Basil’s aunt and grandmother moved to Vancouver in 1954, he moved with them, but soon found well-paying work in the forestry industry in the town of Devine and dropped out of high school. He explains, “The sawmill there was worked by a lot of Japanese who had come from the camps around Lilloet³⁴ as well as some who came to Canada after the war. Later they built a planer mill in Devine. In 1954 I went up there and started working. I was seventeen years old, it

32 While the vast majority of Japanese Canadians were forcibly uprooted from the coast and moved to internment camps, a smaller number with sufficient financial means were allowed to move themselves to less restrictive locations which were hence called “self-supporting sites” . Here they were allowed to engage in agricultural and forestry-related work.

33 See Tatchel, 29-34. This was also said to the writer by Ross Tamagi, a member of Holy Cross Church who grew up near Kelowna.

34 These had also been “self-supporting sites” during the internment period.

was my first major job, and I stuck it out for five years.”

Return to School to Complete Education

In 1959, Basil stopped working in the mill and left Devine for Vancouver in order to finish high school in a school that specialized in adults who had interrupted their education. He completed the remaining two years of high school in one year, then went to North Vancouver High School to take his senior matriculation (grade 13). Then he enrolled in the teacher's college in UBC. He earned his teacher certificate after two years, then took a third year and got his EA certificate (elementary advanced). He got his first teaching job in Chetland in the Dawson Creek school district (Peace River area), where he taught elementary school for two years, after which he again returned to Vancouver.

Love and Marriage

Basil got married in August of 1967, the same year he returned to Vancouver. His wife Etsuko (maiden name is Kokubo) is also Japanese Canadian and has roots in Shiga Prefecture, near Hikone City. Coincidentally, her family and Basil's family had both been on the same ship (*General Meigs*) going to Japan, but did not know each other at that time. She was still a baby when her family had gone to Japan, and had stayed in Japan longer than Basil, eventually returning to Canada with her whole family in 1952.

Basil first met Etsuko at church one summer while boarding in East Vancouver and taking a summer course. He had gotten together with his father's old friend Shingo Murakami, who invited him to a church service and then to his garden party which was usually held after the church services. Shingo mentioned to Basil that he was going to introduce him to a lady who would also be at the party. When Basil arrived, he noticed a young lady arranging flowers, immediately felt attracted to her, and they were soon dating, so no introduction was needed.

Basil has a very vivid memory of surviving a scary car accident shortly after their engagement. At the time he was teaching in Creston, a town in eastern BC. He had made arrangements to meet up with Etsuko in Penticton, which was a good midway meeting point located in central BC. Unfortunately, while driving to Penticton to meet her, he lost control of the car and it plunged about 100 meters into a ravine, rolling over several times. Basil was not wearing a seatbelt but somehow was able to hold onto the steering wheel and stay inside the car until it stopped rolling. Amazingly, he had only “cuts and bruises” and, while waiting in

the hospital to be treated he was able to phone Etsuko's family in Vancouver to inform her of the situation and cancel the rendezvous. He notes that his survival of this accident caused him to "believe strongly in the existence of guardian angels."

Elementary School Teaching Career

After they got married, Basil and his wife stayed in Vancouver, and he went to work at Eburne Sawmill at the foot of Marine Drive. This sawmill paid much better than the BC interior sawmills. Meanwhile he was phoning around various school districts in BC looking for teaching work. One of the school districts he had applied to (Ashcroft district in south Caribou) called him, and they moved to nearby Cache Creek. From the very start, Basil found himself working as a relief teacher for the principal of Ashcroft Elementary School in the mornings and also as a relief teacher for the principal of the Cache Creek Elementary School in the afternoons. Soon there was a full time opening in Ashcroft, then an opening in Spences Bridge, where they stayed until their two children started school. He resigned from that position and moved back to Vancouver due to concern about the education of their two children, a girl and a boy. As he puts it, "We didn't want our kids to start school in a two-room rural school." Unfortunately, he found that once they were back in Vancouver it was hard to get back into a fulltime teaching career again, so he worked as a substitute teacher for several years.

Basil enjoyed playing sports such as baseball and soccer with his students. His own background as a minority and his past hardships contributed positively to his teaching career. As many of his students were indigenous peoples, he was able to use his difficult experiences as a Japanese Canadian to encourage these students to rise above their circumstances by working harder and not giving in to discouragement.

Career in the Fish Canneries

One day he learned a fish cannery company (Canada Packers at Steveston) was looking for someone who could speak Japanese to work in the salmon roe operation. Japan was their main export market. Basil successfully applied for this position and continued for a long time until Canada Packers closed, at which time he transferred to a cannery operated by Canadian Fish at the foot of Main Street in Vancouver. He continued there for about 20 years. He retired when he was 67, two years later than normal retirement age as the company requested him to stay on.

Return to Holy Cross Church and Continuing Role as a Member

As noted above, Basil's parents had both been active members of the Holy Cross Anglican mission, and as a small child he had attended Sunday school and kindergarten there before the internment. Upon returning to Canada from Japan, he attended the Anglican Church in Vernon with his aunt and grandmother. When they moved to North Vancouver³⁵ in 1954 they began attending a nearby Anglican Church, Saint John the Evangelist. In contrast to those Japanese Canadian Anglicans who were excluded from worshiping at Anglican Churches after returning to the west coast after the war, Basil does not recall feeling any discrimination there, and has good memories of being involved in the various activities of the church youth group. Specifically, he recalls going berry picking with them in order to raise money to buy a heifer for an Anglican missionary in Japan who was trying to establish a dairy farm there. This involvement continued until he left Vancouver to work in the sawmill in Devine for five years.

He does not recall exactly when he realized that the Holy Cross Mission was no longer located in its original place, but thinks he probably noticed and became curious about it for the first time when he was taking his mother-in-law to a massage appointment on Cordova Street near where it had been located. However, because he had been such a small child when he had attended Holy Cross Mission before the war, he did not think about it very deeply at the time. If the older Japanese Canadian Anglicans at that time were thinking about it, he did not hear them talking about it, just as they did not talk with the younger generation about what they had suffered during the war. His curiosity about it was stimulated many years later while talking about the history of the church with other church members including Greg Tatchel, who would soon start his research about what had happened to the Japanese Canadian Anglican church properties that had been taken away from them (see previous chapter).

At some point Basil began to gravitate back towards the church of his earliest childhood, Holy Cross Mission. Even while working as a teacher in eastern BC, he would occasionally spend a weekend in Vancouver and attend Holy Cross at its post-war location. He was married there in 1967, and later had his two children baptized there. When he and his family moved back to Vancouver permanently

³⁵ North Vancouver is relatively distant from the Powell Street area and is also separated from central Vancouver by a strait. This would explain why Basil and his aunt and grandmother chose to attend a nearby Anglican Church rather than rejoin the Holy Cross Mission which at this time had just been reestablished by Rev. Gale.

(around 1985), he was able attend more regularly, except for the summer holidays when he would go salmon fishing with his father-in-law who owned a trawler in Steveston. After the church moved to its present building in 1989, he steadily became more involved in administration of the building and property.

Due to the uprooting, internment, dispersal, dispossession of church property and various other trials that Holy Cross has gone through in more recent years, Basil is the only remaining member who was involved in Holy Cross (albeit as a small child) before the war. He is known by other members as a constant “pillar” of the church, playing a key role as it has struggled to survive the more recent upheavals mentioned in the first chapter. In the 1980s a memorial garden containing a columbarium was built next to the church, and Basil was placed in charge of it in about 1990. Since then he has made its care his special responsibility, coming early every Sunday morning and opening it before the other congregants arrive. He still continues to be deeply involved in administration of the church and the memorial garden.

His active role in the JC-VCC, the committee which supported Greg Tatchel’s research on the dispossession of the three Japanese Canadian Anglican church properties, was described in the previous chapter. As was also mentioned earlier, Holy Cross Church was almost completely devastated by the LGBT dispute, and after it was over and the church had rejoined the diocese, only a handful of members remained to rebuild, two of whom were Gwen Lamacraft and Basil. Due to their particular abilities and continuing perseverance, both were appointed Bishop’s Wardens (laypersons in charge of church administration and leadership in the Anglican Church). Since then they have played key complimentary administrative roles as the church has been recovering and going through the difficult rebuilding process. Greg Tatchel describes Gwen, who comes from a career in banking, as the church’s “maestro” and Basil as its “Rock of Gibraltar who has always been there.”³⁶ Joy Kogawa, who also served on the JC-VCC committee with Basil, describes him as well respected and liked in the church because he is “quiet, thoughtful, gentle, steady and stalwart.”³⁷

In 2010 the Diocese of New Westminster presented Basil with the ODNW (Order of the Diocese of New Westminster), the purpose of which is to “honor and give special recognition to members of the Diocese who have given outstanding

36 In an interview with the writer on March 7, 2017.

37 In an email to the writer on May 23, 2017.

service over a significant period of time in their volunteer ministry.” In announcing the award, the Diocese home page contains the following statement: “Basil has been a faithful member and leader in the parish for many years. When the parish went through a very difficult time, Basil was one of the few who chose to remain with the parish. He accepted the appointment by the Bishop to the position of Bishop’s Warden of the parish, a position he still holds today.”³⁸

When asked why he did not leave the church as most other members did when it was almost destroyed by the LGBT controversy, he replies that he does not recall even thinking about leaving. While he acknowledges that one reason might have been the fact that he had been involved with Holy Cross from his earliest childhood, he says the most conscious reason was his feeling of responsibility and mission for maintaining the memorial garden and columbarium as well as his concern about what might happen to it if he were to leave since there was almost no one else remaining to take care of it.

Interactions with His Family in Japan Over the Years

When Basil returned to Canada in 1949 at the age of twelve, he left the rest of his family behind in Japan. At that time his younger sisters were just four and five years old. He occasionally corresponded with his mother, who also corresponded with her sisters and mother with whom Basil was living in Canada. He did not have direct correspondence with his father, but used to visit with Shingo Murakami, his father’s old friend, who occasionally informed him how his father was doing. He also recalls receiving some news of his father from the daughter of Mr. Campbell, his father’s previous boss at Campbell Photography Studio.

At some time after Basil came to Canada, his parents divorced. Because this information was kept from him by his mother, aunts and grandmother, he did not learn about it until several years after the fact. He is not sure whether the divorce was primarily due to the stress of what they had been through in Canada (the uprooting, internment and deportation), their long separation while his mother was away working in Osaka, her conflicts with her mother-in-law, or some other reasons. In any case, both of Basil’s parents became romantically involved with other partners and consequently Basil has a half-brother on his mother’s side and a half-sister on his father’s side.

After coming back to Canada at age 12, Basil never saw his father again. He

38 Diocese of New Westminster homepage: <http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/diocesan-ministries/the-odnw/pages/odnw-recipients-for-2010>

became ill and passed away in 1983. When Basil learned that his father was very ill, he wrote him a long letter, expressing among other things his regret for not having been in direct contact with him since leaving Japan and mentioning that he had been receiving news about him from Mr. Murakami and the daughter of Mr. Campbell. The letter was read to his father in the hospital by Basil's mother and sisters who then conveyed back to Basil that tears welled up in his father's eyes and he seemed heartbroken. Later his sisters sent him his father's diary and photograph collection.

Basil's mother visited Canada twice and stayed with Basil's family in Vancouver, once in the mid-seventies and again around 1985. During her visits, she expressed a desire to stay permanently in Canada and live with his family. However, both her sisters strongly advised Basil against it. As she was frequently talking about her grandchildren she had left behind in Japan, and due to her headstrong personality and the fact that she had been the family member who strongly wished to go to Japan after the war, they were concerned that there would be various problems if she stayed in Canada permanently.

Both of Basil's sisters still reside in Japan. Megumi married into a family known for making futons and now lives in Hirakata, a small city near Osaka. The husband of Emiko worked designing baseball caps and they live in Sakai City which is also near Osaka. Both sisters' husbands are now retired. Basil did not have much contact with them right after he came back to Canada, but through his correspondence at that time with his mother was kept informed of what was happening and how the family members were doing in Japan. Both sisters visited Canada in 1993 and Basil rented a van and took them around to the various camps in which they had been incarcerated as children.

Basil himself was never enthusiastic about going back to Japan even for a visit and thinks that this may have been partly due to some form of resentment against Japan for how it started and conducted the war, as well as the fact that Japan has not yet wholeheartedly apologized to the world. However, he felt his attitude change somewhat when his daughter and a cousin visited Japan in 1992. In 1994 Basil visited Japan himself with his son and stayed with his sisters, who showed them around various places including Shimasato, his father's home village. He felt glad afterwards that he had made this trip despite his earlier misgivings.

Chapter 3: Conclusions and Discussion

Basil Izumi's recollections of his experiences as a small child in Vancouver and the internment camps, as well as his short period as an exile in Japan and then as a returnee to Canada, provide some interesting corroboration and additional insights into the commonly reported experiences of those Japanese Canadians who were exiled to Japan after the war. This chapter will briefly compare Basil's reported recollections of his life experiences with those often reported by other Japanese Canadian internees and exiles in his age group.

Similarities with Other Internees and Exiles His Age

Basil's vague but interesting memories of life as a small child in Vancouver before the uprooting and his more vivid memories of life in the internment camps are very reminiscent of the recollections of others who were about the same age. During the uprooting and internment, he was successfully kept unaware of the trauma the adults were experiencing and has good memories of attending school and having fun playing various games and enjoying the outdoors with his friends, echoing the memories reported by many others who were small children in the camps.

Like other very young exiles he remembers little about the boat trip to Japan, apart from the lasting impression of the kindness of the black man who worked in the galley of the ship and took care of him.³⁹ However, he has starkly vivid memories of his first impressions of postwar Japan, particularly the wreckage of ships and planes that had been destroyed in the war. Likewise, his description of being scared by the bugs crawling in the food they received at Yokosuka closely resembles the extremely adverse reactions which others reported about that practically inedible food. Although he does not remember details of the train ride to his father's home village in Wakayama, his clear recollection of having to breathe the pungent smoke of the train engine while going through tunnels adds an interesting detail to what others described about the terrible discomfort of those train rides from Tokyo to their ancestral villages.

One more similarity with his age-mate exiles was his relatively easy adjustment to life in postwar Japan even though he initially could speak only a

³⁹ This bears both striking similarity and contrast with the memory of another very young exile, Mikio Ibuki, who likewise does not remember much about the ship journey to Japan but very vividly recalls being overtly discriminated against by a white woman who, while handing out balloons to children on the ship, refused to give one to Mikio merely because he was Japanese (Kirk 2017, 24).

little Japanese. While this contrasts strongly with the unpleasant and often unsuccessful adjustment experiences of older children, it is similar to what has been reported by children around his age, and shows how even a few years of difference in age determines how the young exiles reacted and adapted to their strange new surroundings.

In addition, like many other uprooted and exiled families, the once happy Izumi family eventually fractured following the ordeals of uprooting, internment, and the pressures of adjusting to the life of exiles in the ruins of postwar Japan. Although various more immediate reasons were given, such as his mother's long absences from the family while she worked in Osaka combined with her headstrong impetuous personality in conflict with a likewise headstrong mother-in-law, it is hard not to believe that these factors were secondary and to and perhaps exacerbated by the ordeals mentioned above. One can speculate that an additional stress on the family was the father's loss of his profession as a photographer that he had enjoyed and done so well at while in Canada. Apparently, while his wife was able to find a good job in Osaka, he never became a photographer in Japan and ended up doing various odd jobs instead. In this regard, it is puzzling that, even after his divorce he did not return to Canada and pick up his old profession. Basil's account of his loss of direct contact with his father after returning by himself to Canada, his only letter to his father which he wrote after learning that he was seriously ill, and the emotional reaction of his father that was reported back to him add further pathos to this example of a once happy Japanese Canadian family ultimately fractured by the stress of their experiences as internees and exiles.

Contrasts with Other Exiles' Experiences

Basil's experience also has some significant differences with what was reported by many others. One such difference was that, due to his father's occupation as a photographer and his wish to record photographically the daily lives of Japanese Canadians in the various camps, he moved around between camps a lot during the internment had the unusual experience of living in all the camps in the Slocan area. This perhaps gave him a broader perspective of the internment experience than most kids his age who stayed in one camp or moved around far less. Negatively, one wonders if it also made it more difficult to form lasting relationships in each place they lived and added yet more stress on their already strained family.

Another significant contrast was the reason the Izumi family chose exile rather than dispersal within Canada. The most compelling reason for many to choose exile, namely extreme anxiety regarding loved ones in Japan with whom they had lost contact, apparently was not an important factor in their decision. In fact, it was his mother, who had strong ties to Canada (having been born in Canada) and less attachment to Japan, who made the decision to go to Japan, and her primary motivation seems to have been her deep anger at how they had been treated by the Canadian government. While this choice seems almost irrational, it illustrates how deeply some adult Japanese Canadians felt that they had been unforgivably betrayed by the Canadian government.

A further unexpected contrast is the basically positive memories Basil has of life in his father's ancestral village in Japan. While most exiles reported extreme conditions after arriving in Japan including lack of shelter and the necessity to live in storage sheds or makeshift buildings, the Izumi family was able to immediately live in the home of Basil's paternal grandparents. Furthermore, unlike many others, he has no memories of the near-famine conditions reported by many or even of ever being short of food. Perhaps there were geographical reasons for this—instead of an inland village depending on agriculture, they lived in a small coastal fishing village which made it possible for Basil to catch much of his own food directly from the ocean and the river which flowed through the village. Hence, while other exiles experienced severe tensions with relatives and family members due to space and food shortages, he does not recall the existence of any such tensions. Rather, those tensions he does recall were personal family tensions due to the difficult relationship between his mother and paternal grandmother which seems to have been exacerbated by his mother's decision to leave the family in Wakayama while she went to work in Osaka.

One more unique aspect of Basil's experience was his unusually strong Canadian identity even as a small child in Japan. While his story of getting into a fight over being called an American is amusing, it is also unusual that such a young child who was doing quite well in Japan would feel such a strong Canadian identity, and also illustrates how he was too young to experience the bitterness and betrayal that the older children and teenagers felt towards Canada. While Basil does not recall initiating his return to Canada himself, the fact that his parents thought it would be a good idea and made the necessary arrangements suggests a strong perception on their part that he would be much happier in Canada than in Japan. This perception additionally suggests that he showed an unusually strong

identity as a Canadian even as an elementary school aged child who had settled down quite successfully in Japan.

His Unique Historical Significance as an Anglican Japanese Canadian

In addition to the historical usefulness of Basil's recollections of his experiences as a child internee and exile to Japan, his memories of his experiences after his return to Canada provide a unique example of what it was like for those young exiles who returned to Canada from Japan to re-adjust to Canadian culture and life. While most of these young returnees went to live with Japanese Canadian relatives and friends in eastern Canada, Basil was one of the few who returned to Vancouver after first living in the interior of BC for several years with his aunts and grandmother.

His positive experience of attending a non-Japanese Canadian Anglican church in North Vancouver as a teenager and his active involvement with the church youth group is noteworthy. In contrast with those returning Japanese Canadian Anglicans who returned to the BC coastal areas only to suffer various types of discrimination and even outright rejection from the churches they had belonged to before the war, Basil reports that he was readily accepted in the nearby Anglican church that he attended in North Vancouver, and in fact enjoyed being an active member of the youth group. This is another illustration of how, both before and after the war, the attitudes of Anglicans towards Japanese Canadians were not monolithic but varied widely depending on the church involved. One wonders if his positive acceptance by this church when he first returned to Vancouver was one important factor that influenced him to continue as a loyal member of the Anglican church for the rest of his life.

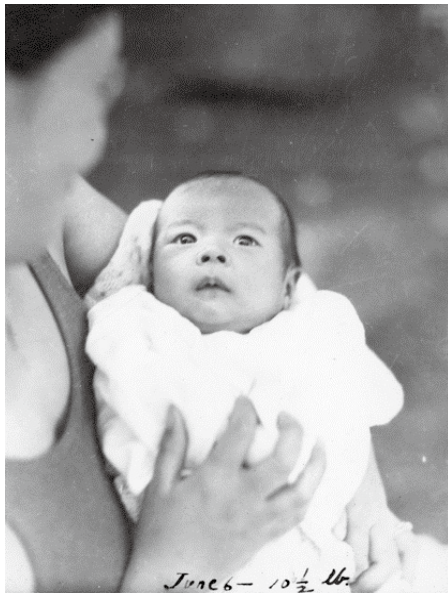
Perhaps the most striking thing about Basil's later life is his continuing strong identity as a Japanese Canadian Anglican and his firm commitment and loyalty to Holy Cross Church, not only in spite of the way the New Westminster Diocese betrayed the trust of Japanese Canadians by dispossessing them of their church properties, but also despite the more recent upheavals that have rocked the New Westminster Diocese and virtually wiped out the previous congregation of Holy Cross Church. While almost all previous members of Holy Cross congregation made the decision to leave and move elsewhere, Basil stayed on and now is playing a key role in the rebuilding of the church. He is now the only surviving Japanese Canadian Anglican who was originally born into a family belonging to the Holy Cross Mission before the war and is today still an active member of Holy

Cross Church. As such, he is a remarkable ‘living historical relic’ of the history of Japanese Canadian Anglicans in Vancouver. Or, as he himself put it more lightly, “I am not hysterical — just historical”.

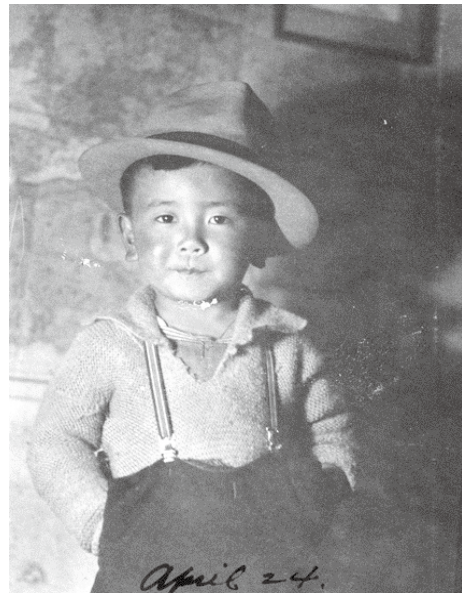
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***Dedication:** The writer also wishes to dedicate this paper to colleague and friend Professor Koji Nakamura on the occasion of his retirement from the Institute of Language and Culture at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year. Koji has been an enthusiastic voice for peace studies and an influential contributor to humanistic education at Konan University. His daily presence in the institute will be missed by all of us, and we wish him the best in his ‘semi-retirement’.*

Appendix: Photos



**Basil as a baby with mother, Ume
(Nikkei National Museum
2012.29.2.1.16)**



**Posing for father's camera
(Nikkei National Museum
2012.29.2.1.82)**



**Basil (right) playing with South Asian
children
(Nikkei National Museum
2012.29.2.1.81)**



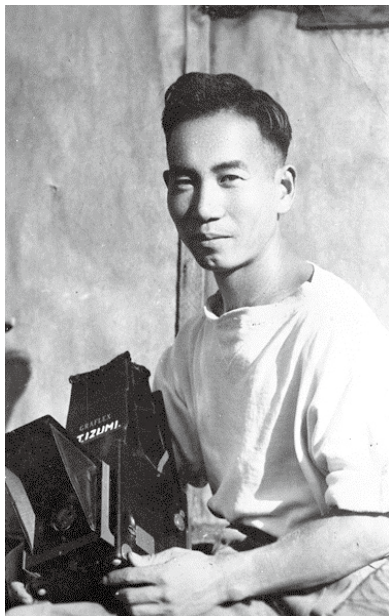
**Posing with the phone
(Nikkei National Museum
2012.29.2.1.100)**



Kindergarten days in Vancouver just before the war and uprooting.
(Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2.1.107)



Kindergarten with Ms. Foster at Holy Cross Mission. Basil is 2nd from left.
(Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2.1.107)



Basil's father John Tadao with camera
(Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2.2.3)



Basil on a sled near Harris Ranch internment camp
(Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2.2.23)



Skiing near Harris Ranch internment camp (Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2.2.28)



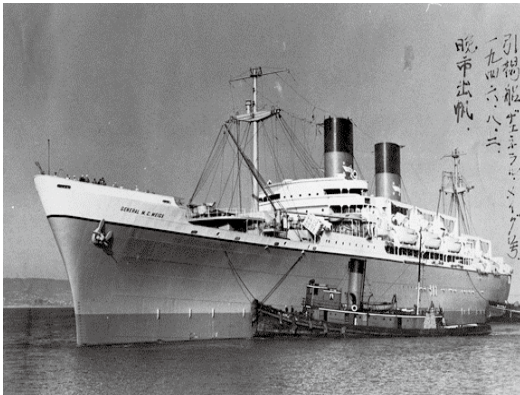
Basil's younger sisters at New Denver camp (Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2.2.2.35)



Elementary Class at Bay Farm camp. Basil is 4th from left (back). (Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2.2.44)



Internees preparing to leave Slocan internment camp by train in 1946. Most would go to eastern Canada, and some, such as the Izumi family, to Japan. (Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2.2.43)



**The General Meigs which took the Izumi family to Japan
(Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2. 2.41)**



**Ume Izumi and her kids at crowded train station after 'deportation' to Japan. Basil is on her left.
(Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2.2.52)**



**Basil's father in Japan (1960)
(Nikkei National Museum 2012.29.2.2.60)**



**Basil, Rev. Moses Im, Gwen Lamacraft
(Vancouver, 2017)
(used by permission of Basil Izumi)**

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