

The Izumi Family Revisited: Living as Japanese Canadian Exiles in Postwar Japan

Stanley KIRK

Abstract

この論文は、第二次大戦中にバンクーバーの住居と財産を剥奪されスローカン地区の強制収容所を転々とし終戦時に日本へ追放され日系カナダ人夫婦ジョン・イズミとメイ・イズミ及びその家族のライフヒストリーのケーススタディである。初めに一家の背景とカナダにおける戦前と戦中と暮らしを要約する。そして、引き揚げ後のジョンの故郷である和歌山県での日系カナダ人としての暮らしや2人がアメリカ占領軍の基地で働いた間の暮らしを述べる。次に、占領軍との仕事が終わった後で彼らの生活がどのように変わっていったのかに述べると同時に、子供達の持つジョンとメイの思い出や戦後の日本社会で成長した経験、12歳でカナダに帰った兄との再会の話についても触れる。最後に彼らのライフヒストリーが他の日系カナダの亡命者のライフヒストリーとどう比較され裏付けとなるか、また現在の日系カナダ人の歴史研究にどのように貢献するのかを考察する。

This paper is a life history case study of the John and May Izumi family, Japanese Canadians who were uprooted from their homes and livelihoods in Vancouver during World War II and incarcerated in several internment camps in the Slocan Lake area before being exiled to Japan at the end of the war. First it summarizes the family's background and life in Canada before and during the war. Then it focuses in more detail on their lives as Japanese Canadian exiles in John's ancestral hometown in Wakayama prefecture and later in the Kyoto area where John and May were employed by the American Occupying Forces. Next it describes how their lives continued to unfold after that employment ended. It also narrates the memories of the children about John and May, their experiences growing up in post-war Japan, and their eventual reunion with their brother Basil who had returned to Canada alone at the age of twelve. Finally, it discusses how the life history of this family compares with and corroborates the life histories of other Japanese Canadian exiles and how it contributes to our knowledge of this aspect of Japanese Canadian history.

Key words: exile to Japan, the General Meigs, Holy Cross Anglican Mission, internment camp, Japanese Canadian history, Kyoto Notre Dame University, life histories, life in postwar Japan, Shimosato in Wakayama

Introduction

At the end of World War II, almost 4000 Japanese Canadians were exiled to Japan by the Canadian government. Some ended up returning to Canada years later, while others stayed permanently in Japan. What became of those who stayed in Japan has been a somewhat neglected aspect of Japanese Canadian history. This began to change thanks to the pioneering research of Tatsuo Kageⁱ who interviewed many of them in his role as part of a delegation sent to Japan by the Canadian government to explain to Japanese Canadians in Japan how to apply for redress money offered by the Canadian government to compensate for the injustices they had suffered during and after the war. Inspired by Kage's pioneering work, this writer started researching some Japanese Canadians in Japan and writing their life histories, of which this paper is the fifth.

A previous paper by the writerⁱⁱ presented the life history of Basil Izumi, a second-generation Japanese Canadian born on April 25, 1937 in Vancouver who, with his family, experienced incarceration in various internment camps during World War II, was exiled to Japan following the war at the age of nine, and, at the age of twelve returned alone to Canada where he lived with relatives. That paper also described his career as a high school teacher and then in the fish packing industry as well as his role in the Japanese Canadian Anglican Church (Holy Cross Church) in Vancouver. It additionally described his childhood memories about his parents, especially about his father, John Tadao Izumi, who had immigrated from Wakayama to Canada at the age of 19, trained as a photographer, and took numerous photos of the various internment camps where the family lived during the war.

However, the research for that paper had a serious handicap. Because Basil had returned to Canada alone in 1949 and subsequently had no direct contact with his father and only reconnected with his mother and sisters many years later, the information he could offer about their lives as exiles in Japan after his return to Canada was limited.

Fortunately, after publication of that paper, through the intermediation of Basil, the writer was able to make contact with his two sisters, Megumi and Emiko, and his half-sister, Junko, who presently live in Japan. They readily agreed to cooperate with the writer's research. The writer was also very fortunate to receive the help of Professor Masumi Izumi of Doshisha University who twice visited and conducted detailed video-recorded interviews in Japanese with the sisters—the first one with Megumi, Emiko and

Junko (their half-sister), and the second one with Megumi and Emiko—and then gave the writer free access and permission to use the recordings of those interviews as the core source of data for this research. She subsequently helped the writer understand some particularly difficult parts of the transcript. The writer also received valuable assistance from Satoshi Shiraki, an English instructor at Konan University, who transcribed the interviews and helped the author with some difficult expressions in the Kansai dialect. From the information gathered through the interviews of the sisters emerged a fascinating account of their parents' lives as Japanese Canadian exiles in Japan and what it was like to grow up as children in a Japanese Canadian exile family in post-war Japan. Their life histories are interwoven in this paper, which is essentially a sequel to the previous paper on the life history of Basil Izumi and should be read in conjunction with it.

This paper will first briefly summarize the family background of the Izumi family, their life in Vancouver, and their incarceration and exile. It will then describe in more detail their family's story as Japanese Canadian exiles in in their father's hometown of Shimosato in Wakayama prefecture and later in Kyoto. It will also describe the daughters' recollections about their parents' lives and personalities, about what it was like to grow up in an exiled Japanese Canadian family in Japan after the war, and about the re-establishment of contact between the sisters and their brother Basil after many years of separation. It will conclude by briefly discussing how the life history of this family compares with and corroborates the life histories of other Japanese Canadian exiles and how it contributes to our knowledge of this aspect of Japanese Canadian history.

Background of the Izumi Family

The mother, May (Ume) Shiga, was a second-generation Japanese Canadian born in Vancouver in 1915 to Japanese immigrants from Kochi prefecture. They arrived in Canada sometime between 1910 and 1912 as a married couple with a small son and ran a store in Vancouver. At some point they converted to Christianity and became active members of the nearby Holy Cross Anglican Mission where May's father served as a custodian and her mother played the piano in the church services.

Their father, John (Tadao) Izumi, was born in 1910 in Shimosato, a small coastal village in Wakayama where his parents engaged in farming. He came to Canada alone at the age of nineteen, following a friend from the same village, James Shingo Murakami, who later would become a well-known photographer. John's first job was fishing for the Celtic Cannery, but he soon started looking for photography work and was introduced by Murakami to Campbell Studio where he apprenticed as a photographer. Murakami also introduced John to the Holy Cross Anglican Mission where he converted to Christianity. It

seems that he and May met while attending the mission activities as both were active members of the mission and it played a central role in their lives.

John and May lived at various locations in Vancouver including Powell Street, Cordova Street, and Nelson Street. On April 25, 1937, May gave birth to their first child, Basil. It appears that they had many friends and generally enjoyed their life within the Japanese Canadian community. They actively participated in church social activities such as picnics and home Bible studies and Basil attended Sunday school and kindergarten at the Holy Cross Mission.

Uprooting and Internment

When the uprooting and internment of Japanese Canadians occurred soon after the start of the war, John was initially sent to work in a road construction camp while Basil and his mother were sent directly from Vancouver to the Slocan City internment camp. Soon John was released from the road camp and joined them, and they moved to another nearby camp at New Denver.

Cameras were officially banned from the camps. However, apparently some officials became lax in enforcing the rules against the possession of cameras and taking photos. John wanted to photograph life in the camps, and it seems he received permission to do so, and the Izumi family lived in various camps in the Slocan Lake area. Both Megumi and Emiko were born during this period; Megumi, on April 22, 1944, and Emiko on August 6, 1945.ⁱⁱⁱ

Exile to Japan

John and May were among those Japanese Canadians who made the difficult choice of exile to Japan at the end of the war rather than forced dispersal to eastern Canada. Their reasons for doing so, and which of them made the final decision, are still rather unclear. The eldest daughter Megumi speculates,

I'm not sure why. Perhaps it was Father who decided as Mother had been born and raised in Canada. She had siblings there. She had neither close relatives nor acquaintances here in Japan.... Father's parents were still alive in his hometown... It is written here in his diary... It was not because of his parents. Every day he was wrestling with the decision whether to stay in Canada or return to Japan, and finally made a sudden gut-decision to return. He wrote about it here in his diary. I think he really wrestled with the decision and wasn't sure what to do.

Basil has no recollection of John ever explaining the reasons for this choice, nor even talking about it. However, many years later, May told him that she was the one who had

made the decision, and Basil speculates she did so out of anger at how Japanese Canadians had been unjustly treated by the Canadian government. It is known that her sisters and mother did their best to persuade her not to go, but without success.

The Izumi family were taken to Japan aboard the General Meigs, the largest of three ships chartered by the Canadian government for the deportations of Japanese Canadians. Basil was 9 years old at the time, Megumi was 2, and the youngest child, Emiko, experienced her first birthday during the trip. The ship arrived at the repatriation center in Yokosuka, where they stayed while arrangements were being made for transportation to John's home village, Shimosato. Basil recalls that the weather was very hot and the quality of the food they received was extremely poor. Megumi has a vague memory of the repatriation center, specifically being surrounded by a lot of people whose way of speaking seemed very strange to her. She even remembers the people's faces though she does not recall the bad food. She also recalls looking up at the moon, longing for Canada and crying. Several days later they made the journey by train to Shimosato.

Early Childhood in Shimosato (Wakayama)

After arriving in Shimosato (summer of 1946), they lived with John's parents. May experienced an extremely difficult relationship with John's mother. Megumi recalls her mother trying hard to please her mother-in-law, and in particular an occasion when May dressed herself and her daughters up in kimonos, perhaps in an attempt to win her approval. These efforts failed, and within a few months May left the family in Shimosato and went to work as a translator, simultaneous interpreter, and typist for the American Occupation Forces at various bases in Osaka, Kyoto and Otsu.

John continued to live with the children but was often away from the home due to his photography business and other activities. Basil remembers his father "coming and going" but does not recall specifically what kind of work he was doing. John had enjoyed a successful career as a photographer in Vancouver and had taken numerous photos of life in the internment camps, and he was able to continue his work as a photographer after returning to Shimosato. In those days, cameras were precious items, so people with money requested his services and paid him well. The sisters recall that he converted a closet in his parents' house into a photo developing room. He was good at taking photographs of people in natural settings but was not qualified to take formal portrait photographs. Megumi explains,

He could not do formal portraits such as weddings because that required the photographer to be able to specially arrange the bride's kimono...Japanese photographers must be able to pay attention to small details such as arranging the

hem and sleeves of the kimono and doing so in such a way as to properly show the pattern and so on, but Father did not know how to do that. So, instead he was hired by various people to take photos that showed them in natural situations. He took color photographs and he added colors to black and white photographs, and he received high satisfaction from his customers.

Apparently John was very strict and short-tempered towards the children. The daughters vividly recall him angrily scolding them when they tried to enter his photo developing room. He was often out of the house due to his photography business and his frequent drinking with relatives and friends. Megumi says, "It was really hard for us kids. Father, although he was busy with his work, often went drinking with village people. Many of his relatives lived nearby and he would take them by train to Katsura, which was several stops away. I heard they would go there to drink and spend money."

Some of Megumi and Emiko's earliest memories concern their paternal grandmother. To them she was a stern and frightening figure and did not help much with their care. At first, most of her anger was directed at her daughter-in-law May, perhaps due in part to the strict expectations Japanese mothers-in-law in that time had of their daughters-in-law. When May left the family and went to work for the occupying forces, her mother-in-law became more upset and directed much of her anger at the children. Basil recalls her being prone to angry outbursts. Emiko recalls often being scolded by her for just eating food and remembers her even refusing to give the children treats sent to them by their mother: "Grandmother would not allow us to eat even one of the canned cookies mother sent for us after she had left for Osaka. We had cousins in Katsura, so she gave the cookies to them instead, even though mother had sent them for us. We never forgot that."^{iv}

In contrast, the sisters' early memories of their older brother Basil are very fond. Because May had left and John was often out of the house, Basil took on much of the role of a surrogate parent, such as standing in line to receive food rations for the family, feeding his sisters, and even changing and washing their diapers. Megumi specifically recalls Basil mixing a flour-like material with water to make a chewy substance and giving it to her as a kind of chewing gum. "Basil really took care of us, really! ...We remember receiving sweets and so on from Basil. Basil always went to receive the rations. Once, as a prank, he tricked us into biting into some soap he had received that he pretended was a kind of sweets."

Basil enrolled in elementary school, but due to his limited Japanese (especially reading and writing), was moved back to grade one although he didn't have a particularly difficult time communicating with teachers or classmates. Even as a nine-year-old child-exile in Japan, he was proud of being Canadian, and his trademark was his maple leaf sweater. He

says,

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.

He found that his baseball skills gained him some respect from the other kids.^v

Basil's Return to Canada

Perhaps because he was several years older than the girls, Basil struggled the most adjusting to life in Japan. The sisters often noticed him reading English books by himself and believe that he was having an especially difficult time fitting into village society. They feel this was exacerbated by the severe treatment he received from both his father and his grandmother as the oldest child. Apparently both parents eventually realized he was not fitting in well and decided to send him to live with relatives in Canada. Megumi recalls,

Japan seemed to Basil totally different from Canada. The pressure on him was severe. We (his sisters) were still really small...but Basil was 7 years older than me so I'm sure it was much harder on him. There was no one to protect us, and mother had left... Mother and father were both absent, so Basil used to wander around aimlessly among the adults. He could understand when someone was angry at him, but not when he was being praised. At that time Father was very strict toward Basil. I remember him being angry... Basil had nowhere to go.

His maternal grandmother and aunts, who were living in Vernon (a town in the interior of British Columbia), sponsored his return to Canada. He recalls his father saying he thought it would be a good idea for him to return to Canada before he forgot English and became too entrenched in Japan.

Hence, in 1949, at the age of 12, after three years of living with his father and younger sisters in Shimosato, Basil returned to Canada. At that time Megumi and Emiko were 5 and 4 years old respectively. Basil stayed with his aunts and grandmother in Vernon from 1949 and moved with them to Vancouver in 1954. Not long after, 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 eventually graduated from university, spent several years as a high school teacher, and then had a long and successful career in the fish packing industry.

He never saw his father or had direct contact with him again. However, during his time in Vernon, he met his father's old friend, James Murakami, who had set up a new photography studio there. Basil occasionally visited with Murakami who was in contact with his father and gave Basil news about how he was doing. His grandmother and aunts maintained correspondence with his mother, and Basil exchanged a few letters with her at the beginning, but he would not see her again until she visited him in Canada in the mid 1970s. Likewise, he would not meet his sisters again until almost 45 years later in 1993.

Over the years he heard less and less about how his family members in Japan were faring. The sisters recall that both parents kept in touch with their relatives in Canada, and it was through that correspondence that they would get occasional news about how Basil was doing in Canada.

We did not have contact with Basil directly. We missed him, but there was also our parents' divorce, and perhaps that all the more widened the distance between us... We heard from mother what kinds of work Basil was doing—that he got married, that he became a teacher, that he quit that job, that he moved and got a new job—we heard those things from Mother.

Life in Kyoto

Shortly after Basil returned to Canada, John and his two daughters moved to Kyoto to live with May close to the American base located near what is now Shimazu Seisakujo, and the family started a new phase of their lives together.

Despite having lived in Japan from their earliest childhood, Megumi and Emiko had a strong sense of being different from other children in school and feeling like they belonged to "a strange family." Megumi recalls, "[We were different] in lots of ways. Somehow we felt so. We felt it keenly. As we gradually grew up, we still felt unusual and strange. Thinking about it now, perhaps we should not have felt that way."

This feeling of being different was partly due to some of the 'foreign' items they had brought from Canada and were using in Japan. For instance, although they were sleeping on futons, they were using large feather quilts they had brought from Canada to stay warm. They recall feathers being everywhere when these quilts frayed and developed holes. They also recall their mother using a Singer sewing machine they had brought from Canada. In addition, they received some coats with fur collars from relatives in Canada.^{vi} When the children around them saw them wearing these coats, they teased them and called them Americans.^{vii} Likewise, they were similarly teased because May had their hair permed for a school entrance ceremony. They also noticed that their mother stood out as different from the Japanese women around her. Specifically, they recall feeling 'foreign' at

large school activities such as sports events due to their appearance and the conspicuous appearance of their mother. Megumi says,

We were said to look like foreigners when we went to school sports competitions. At the competitions, all the parents would come to see the kids. At those events Mother kind of stood out, perhaps because of how she dressed. Maybe it also had something to do with our clothing. Or [we looked different] because we had been in the internment camps, I wonder. We were told that we had the air of foreigners.

She also relates a particularly amusing anecdote about how the English words spoken by their parents at home affected them in school:

When we were in school, there was a katakana^{viii} spelling test [about English words in Japanese], and I spelled the word 'cup' in katakana closer to its English pronunciation (カ ッ プ = *kuppu*) rather than how it is pronounced and spelled in Japanese (コ ッ プ = *koppu*), so was marked wrong. Mother complained that カ ッ プ (*kuppu*) is the correct answer, because in our home we pronounced it that way. There were other similar situations.

Another language-related memory is of their feeling embarrassed because their parents would speak English to some friends when they would go as a family to the local *sentō* (public bath) in Kyoto. Megumi explains,

At that time there was a *sentō* nearby. We didn't have a bath in our house. [Our parents] used to speak English with a woman named Miyauchi san when they were at the *sentō*. I had the feeling they were friends with Miyauchi san, and I wondered if they had been in the camp together although I didn't hear that they had been friends in Canada. They would suddenly start speaking in English. For us children it was embarrassing. Thinking back on it now, I feel sorry for us children at that time. Mother also spoke English in her sleep.

Sadly, their being different and conspicuous invited envy and discrimination from people around them. For instance, the western clothing worn by the family caused envious reactions from others:

We had aunts in Canada, and they sent us western-style clothing. ...We also received old leather shoes from them, although in those days, leather shoes were not worn in Japan. *Geta* (traditional Japanese wooden sandals) were still worn in schools in those days, and kids ran barefoot in the playground. We had leather shoes sent to us from our aunts in Canada, and when we wore them we were bullied... Although we were poor at that time, when we wore coats with fur attached to school, people would say, 'Americans!'. When we experienced such things, we came to realize that we were somehow really different from other people.^{ix}

Memories of Their Mother May

After being joined by John and the girls in Kyoto, May continued working as a simultaneous interpreter, translator, and typist at various bases. It seems she was exceptionally skillful as a simultaneous interpreter and could switch seamlessly between English and Japanese. Megumi recalls hearing from May that she had won first prize in several simultaneous interpretation contests held at her workplace. She did well financially as long as the bases remained open.

However, her employment there ended when the occupation ended and she went through a period of economic hardship. At some point around this time John divorced her and left her and the daughters. He remarried and had a third daughter, Junko. May also eventually remarried briefly and had a second son named Katsumi. Her daughters recall her being an extremely hard worker who endured her hardships with fortitude. Megumi explains about this period of May's life and speculates about possible causes for the divorce as follows:

She was together with us and we endured all our hardships together, always, until she died, right until the end...She was working endlessly from when we first came to Japan from Canada. Things were good when she was employed in the occupation forces camps. There was a big camp at what is now Shimazu Seisakujo (in Kyoto)... We moved from Wakayama to a place close to it. At that time, all four of us lived together... Father was working as boiler man at the occupation forces camp. Mother was working as a simultaneous interpreter and a typist. After that she worked at the camp at Otsu, then the camp at Uji. We moved around to various places. Then Father left and mother was alone.... [Soon] that employment [for the occupation forces] disappeared, so she did various kinds of work...she worked as a door-to-door insurance salesperson, did embroidery—she was skilled with her hands, so she did some work for an embroidery company. She was lonely, I think, but she had a relatively calm and optimistic personality. And she was quite tolerant. She endured hardship, when you consider how Father used to go out drinking and so on. I wonder, if we had stayed in Canada, things would not have turned out this way. After the war ended, everyone became a little strange. After they came to Japan, something (in their relationship) changed away from normal.

In addition to being a hard worker, May also was known for having strong compassion for others and a sense of social justice. Apparently she was fired from one of her part time jobs because she spoke up on behalf of other workers who were being treated unjustly.

Megumi also remembers occasionally attending church with her mother as a child although May's activities as a Christian became more sporadic later in her life. She

particularly recalls May taking her to a church on a street corner in Kitadairo in Kyoto, though she does not recall whether it was Anglican like her church in Canada. Many years later Megumi attended the Japanese Anglican church in Vancouver while visiting Basil and recognized the melodies of some of the songs because as a child she had heard them being sung by her mother and at church.

May visited Canada twice and stayed with Basil's family in Vancouver, once in the mid-seventies and again around 1985. While there she expressed her wish to stay in Canada, but according to Basil the family decided against it as she also had family members (and particularly grandchildren) in Japan, and they worried she would change her mind and decide to again move to Japan, so it seems she gave up on the idea. On September 16, 1991, she passed away in her sleep at the age 76.

Memories of Their Father John

John's daughters have various memories of his very active life. From their earliest childhood they were impressed by his athleticism and competitive spirit. Emiko recalls him doing various kinds of competitive sports such as swimming and wrestling and telling the girls how important it is to be able to protect oneself. She says, "He told us that, from when he was small, he got into quarrels with people from various countries, and he won. He entered swimming meets and didn't lose—At least, he said so!" She also remembers seeing him doing bar gymnastic exercises when she was in elementary school, and he continued to do so at least into his fifties.

After the American military bases closed and John lost his employment there, he was hired as a custodian by Kyoto Notre Dame University^x where he continued working for the rest of his life. His daughters recall him doing various kinds of work at the university. Emiko explains, "He was a boilerman, and he could do simultaneous interpretation. Around that time the chef and some other employees at Notre Dame were foreigners, and he was qualified to be an interpreter.... He (also) worked with garden shrubs and plants, caring for animals, and things like that, kind of like a custodian." Junko adds, "Notre Dame university moved from Shishigatani to where it is now (Sakyoku). When it moved, Father planted all the trees one by one. Nowadays they would use an outside contractor for many of the jobs such as painting...but he did all of that."

Apparently he was in high demand at the university due to his various job skills. Junko recalls,

At that time, Father was the only person at the university who carried a calling bell in case they didn't know where he was...He always carried the bell. If there was some matter needing attention, they would ask, "Where is Izumi san?" and

would try to find him. He was a really hard worker. He kept working well past retirement age.... He was kind toward people, kind to animals. When he took trips far away, he would be called back, for example, to take care of a sick cat. He would even get phone calls while on holiday in Wakayama. He was that kind of person.... He died when he was 73, I think. But he kept working right up to the end.

As noted above, John had divorced May not long after moving to Kyoto to join her and his daughters, remarried, and had another daughter, Junko. Interestingly, Megumi and Emiko noticed a significant change in his personality following the divorce. Megumi recalls, I don't know if it was because he felt guilty after separating from Mother, but he was kind—after the divorce. Before then, he was short-tempered. They divorced before I entered elementary school, I think. He often came to meet us. Each year on August 16 there is the Daimonji Okuribi Festival^{xi} in Kyoto. At that time, there was a certain place—we knew that if we went to a certain bridge we could meet him. Without fail he would come there on the 16th. He would look for us while we were watching the burning letters. I remember it, every year. And, as we got older, he often came to our house.

Junko explains how he continued to work even after being diagnosed with terminal cancer:

After surgery, he recovered; however, the cancer came back...[but] to the very end he rode to work on his bicycle, his bicycle! The distance to the school was very far. At the end he lived in Saga, which is at the very west edge [of Kyoto]. Even from there he would ride his bicycle all the way to Sakyoku. He really paid attention to his health. He himself never thought that he would die that way. He said that he would be okay because he had trained his legs by mountain climbing and other kinds of exercise.

As in the case of May, it is not clear to what degree John continued to practice his Anglican faith after returning to Japan. It appears that he became a practicing Catholic while at Notre Dame, a Catholic university. Yet, the woman he remarried with was a practicing Zen Buddhist, and it seems that he was also strongly influenced by her beliefs. Junko recalls the following banter between him and her mother (his second wife):

My mother was Buddhist, a Zen Buddhist. At the end, when he was old, partly in jest she would say, "Will your funeral be in a church or a temple? Do you want a Japanese [or western] ceremony?" He replied, "Either is OK." He used to say, "All religions are the same. Let's respect the ancestors. All the religions say similar good things."

In 1983, at the age of 73, John passed away. His funeral was conducted in a typical Zen

Buddhist manner by a priest at Tenryu Temple in Arashiyama^{xii} but was attended by many Catholic nuns from Notre Dame University. The importance of the role that he had played at Notre Dame was demonstrated by the principal, Sister Beatrice, setting up a picture of him and holding a memorial service for him every Easter.

Why John and May Did Not Move Back to Canada

It remains a mystery why John and May never returned to Canada despite their English skill and diverse range of work skills. May stayed in contact with her mother and sisters and would have known that the conditions in Canada were much better than those in postwar Japan. Unlike May, John did not have family in Canada but his close friend James Murakami had established a successful photography studio in Canada and stayed in close contact with him. John's former employer, Mr. Campbell of Campbell Photography Studio in Vancouver, continued to send him Christmas cards and stayed in contact with him for many years. So, it would seem that there were good reasons for the family to return.

Basil has no recollection of John ever raising the subject during the three years they were together in Wakayama. His sisters also have no recollection of the subject being discussed by him. Megumi wonders if she and Emiko, especially after they were settled in school, were a hindrance to their parents moving back to Canada. Both sisters recall becoming naturalized Japanese citizens and renouncing dual citizenship when they were in grade 6 of elementary school as a requisite for entering junior high school.

Megumi does think John perhaps had thoughts of returning to Canada as he grew older. And, according to Junko, on at least one occasion he said so. She explains, "When he remarried with my mother, he said Japan was no good and that he wanted to go to Canada. But my mother had never lived outside Kyoto and she said she would not go with him, so he did not go."

In her later life, May did express her wish to return to Canada on several occasions. Megumi vaguely recalls her complaining about life in Japan to her relatives in Canada and saying she wanted to move back there. While visiting Basil's family in Canada she clearly stated that she wanted to move to Canada and live with his family, although Basil and May's sisters doubted that she would have wanted to stay once she started to miss her children and grandchildren in Japan.

Attending Redress Explanation Meeting

After the Canadian government's apology in 1988 for Canada's unjust treatment of Japanese Canadians during the war and offer of financial redress, May, Megumi, and Emiko attended a redress explanation meeting at the New Otani Hotel in Osaka. They had

been previously contacted by Basil who informed them about the redress movement in Canada, and that they could apply for redress compensation. They took some photo albums with them and showed them to one of the delegation members. At his request, they handed him two photo albums of which he made photocopies and then returned them at the end of the meeting. Megumi recalls feeling very happy when they were informed that they were eligible for the compensation.

Reestablishment of Communication Between the Sisters and Basil

After Basil left his family in Wakayama to return to Canada in 1949, his sisters did not see him again until 1993, when both visited Canada. Basil rented a van and took them around to the various camps in which they had been incarcerated as children. Emiko recalls feeling surprised because the houses in the camps felt smaller than they had imagined from seeing the photos of when they had lived there, and it was hard to imagine that this was really the place where their family had lived.

Basil had always been hesitant to visit Japan, partly due to indignation that Japan had started the war and had never clearly admitted its responsibility, and also because he held some complicated feelings towards his parents. However, his daughter Seiko and a cousin visited Japan in 1992 and were shown around by Megumi and Emiko. Basil felt his attitude begin to change as a result of that visit. In 1994, he himself and his son finally went to Japan and visited Megumi and Emiko. He says he was glad that he made this visit in spite of his earlier misgivings.

Present Situation of Megumi, Emiko, and Junko

Both Megumi and Emiko married Japanese nationals and live near Osaka. In 1964 Megumi married Shigeo Totani, whose family had a business making futons (Japanese mattresses) in the city of Hirakata. They have two sons. Shigeo passed away in 2018. In 1971 Emiko married Shingo Wakabe, whose family business was designing baseball caps. They also had two sons and reside in Sakai city. John's daughter from his second marriage, Junko, is married and lives in Kyoto.

As far as Megumi and Emiko know, none of their close relatives are presently living in Shimosato although they think the family house is still standing and they do have some relatives living in a nearby town called Nikawa. Their grandmother was their last connection to Shimosato and they occasionally used to visit her there with their children while she was still alive. Interestingly, they point out that she became a 'kind grandmother' and they blame the stress of the war and the dire conditions following the war for her severe treatment of them as children. Megumi says, "That is war—everyone becomes a

devil, perhaps.”

Megumi notes that, like John and Basil, several of John’s grandchildren became involved in education. One of her sons teaches in the high school of Kyoto Gaidai and is leader of the swimming club there. The other son teaches in a special needs school in Ishikawa prefecture. Previous to that he was working in a special needs school affiliated with Kanazawa University. Her granddaughter Haruka is aiming to become an English teacher and several years ago went to Vancouver and worked at a Japanese school there for several months. Junko’s son also visited Basil’s family in Vancouver in 1996, and again with Junko and her mother. Megumi and her husband visited Basil again in 1998. These days Basil and his sisters occasionally communicate by email in Japanese using Romaji (English alphabet).

Discussion

Megumi and Emiko Izumi are quite different from the Japanese Canadian exiles previously researched by the writer, mainly because they arrived in Japan at such a young age—two and one respectively—and hence have no memories of life in Canada with which to compare their childhood in postwar Japan. However, their recollections still provide some extraordinary glimpses into the reality of growing up as members of a Japanese Canadian exile family in postwar Japan. In addition, they provide previously lacking information about their parents’ lives as exiles.

Their recollections about their parents, May and John, indicate some typical similarities shared with many other exiles: They first lived with relatives in John’s ancestral village where they experienced hardship, discrimination, and relational stress with relatives and other villagers. As in other cases, this was largely due to extreme shortages of food and the perception of them as foreigners who looked different and appeared to be better off materially than the other village members and, despite that, became an additional economic burden on the village during extremely difficult conditions. This resulted in resentment and in some cases outright bullying and persecution. May experienced particular difficulty getting along with her mother-in-law and soon moved away to find employment with the American Occupying Forces. John seemed to do better in his home village where he was able to successfully continue his photography business but later joined May in Kyoto and like her worked for the occupying forces. After the bases closed down, May, like many other exiles, went through a period of economic hardship, while John was able to transition to a fulfilling career at Kyoto Notre Dame University. Although both expressed some desire to return to Canada, they both ended up staying in Japan, perhaps due to gainful employment and their daughters becoming settled in Japanese

schools. John remarried with a Japanese national which further prevented him from returning to Canada. Despite their hardships, they achieved success in Japan. All of the above are typical of what many (though not all) other exiles who stayed permanently in Japan experienced.

Even their family breakdown and divorce a few years after arriving in Japan after having experienced an apparently happy family life in Canada seems not to have been an uncommon experience among the Japanese Canadian exiles. It is impossible to know the precise reasons for the divorce, but it is difficult not to believe that it was largely the result of the ongoing tension from the repeated upheavals in their lives (uprooting and incarceration in Canada, exile to Japan, and the extreme hardships they experienced in Japan including the severe hostility May and the children received from John's mother). While there are no statistics on the proportion of exile families that broke down after exile to Japan, we know there were others (e.g. the parents of Kazuko Makihara^{xiii}).

There were also some aspects of the Izumi family's experiences that were quite distinct from those of most of the other exiles. One difference was the ambiguity of why they chose exile over dispersal and who made the decision. Other exiles researched by the writer had clear motives for choosing exile: fear of continued discrimination and lack of confidence in their ability to start their lives again in an unfamiliar part of Canada, anger at the Canadian government, concerns about the welfare of family members in Japan, and having property in Japan while having lost everything they had owned in Canada, etc. In the case of John and May, while it appears that both agreed to move to Japan, there is not a clear consensus among their children about the precise reasons they did so.

Another peculiar characteristic of the Izumi family's situation was the unusually extreme degree of hostility May and the children experienced from John's mother. While being somewhat explainable by factors such as the dire shortages they were experiencing and the high expectations toward Japanese daughters-in-law in that period, it seems to have been unusually severe and exacerbated by the fact that May, who was born and raised in Canada, had a relatively strong and individualistic personality, in addition to being culturally disadvantaged and unaware of how to fulfill her mother-in-law's expectations. And, as Megumi notes, "Perhaps war makes everyone a devil"

Another remarkable point is the degree of difficulty that Megumi and Emiko had fitting into Japanese culture even as young children. One would expect that, having arrived at such a young age, they would have adjusted much more smoothly; yet, in reality they were made to feel very different and even foreign by those around them. Part of the reason was their Canadian-born-and-raised mother's strong personality and also how conspicuously she dressed her children and herself, but their experience also illustrates how inherently

xenophobic and hostile some parts of rural Japanese postwar society were toward anyone they perceived as outsiders. This was of course magnified by the scarcity of food and other resources.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of the life story of the Izumi family is that, despite their severe hardships and personal tragedies, they were finally able to transcend their difficult circumstances and lead successful lives in Japan. One cannot resist being moved at how both May and John persevered and succeeded in rebuilding their lives after the hardship and tragedy they had experienced, and how they were able to contribute to Japanese society. Likewise, the daughters, despite their own childhood traumas and difficulties fitting into Japanese society as children, eventually married, participated in their husbands' family businesses, successfully raised families, and are now taking pleasure in the accomplishments of their children and grandchildren.

The dramas of reunification and restored relationships is also an impressive aspect of this story. It is heartwarming to read how John's personality changed after the divorce and he became a kind attentive father and made such efforts to meet with his daughters. Even more remarkable was their paternal grandmother becoming kinder in her old age and enjoying her grandchildren. Perhaps most deeply moving is the story of the sisters reuniting with their older brother Basil after a separation of almost 45 years.

The original goal of researching the Izumi sisters was to get more detailed information about the life histories of May and John Izumi in Japan as such information could not be provided by their son Basil who left the family in Japan and returned to Canada as a 12-year-old. However, the recollections of the Izumi sisters provide much more than this—they also give extraordinary insights into postwar rural Japanese society and what it was actually like to grow up in that society as children of Japanese Canadian exile family. Additionally, they provide yet another example of Japanese Canadian exiles enduring extreme hardships and tragedies and eventually transcending them to successfully rebuild their lives and make significant contributions to their families and to the society around them.

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Endnotes:

ⁱ Kage first published the results of his research in Japanese in Kage, Tatsuo. *Nikkei Kanadajin no Tsuiho* [Banishment of Japanese Canadians]. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten Publishers, 1998. An English translation was published in 2012: Kage, Tatsuo (transl. Kathleen Chisato Merken). *Uprooted Again: Japanese Canadians Move to Japan After World War II*. Victoria: TI-Jean Press Press, 2012. About the same time, a collection of brief life stories of several Japanese Canadians in Japan was published by Jean Maeda and Nobuko Nakayama: *Japanese Canadian Stories from Japan* (Compiled by Nobuko Nakayama and Jean Maeda, Tokyo: 2011. More recent research has been conducted by Masako Iino, Hiroko Takamura, and Kunihiro Haraguchi: "The Japanese Canadians Who Were Repatriated to Japan Immediately after World War II." In *JICA Yokohama Kaigai-Ijuu-Shiriyoukan, Kenkyuu-Kiyo* 11, 2017 (38-60) <https://www.jica.go.jp/jomm/kiyo/pdf/pdf11/iino.pdf> and Haraguchi Kunihiro. "Japanese Canadians Who Were 'Repatriated' to Japan Immediately After WWII: Issues surrounding Re-Entry to Canada and Domiciliation in Japan." In *JICA Yokohama Kaigai-Ijuu Shiriyoukan, Kenkyuu-Kiyou* 13, 2018 (49-70). <https://www.jica.go.jp/jomm/kiyo/pdf/pdf13/Haraguchi.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Kirk, Stanley. "A Japanese Canadian Child-Exile: The Life History of Basil Izumi." *The Journal of the Institute of Language and Culture* (Vol. 22), Konan University, March 2018, (71-108). <http://doi.org/10.14990/00003109>

ⁱⁱⁱ For a more detailed description of the family's background, uprooting, and incarceration in the internment camps, see Kirk, 2018.

^{iv} For a less severe example of tension between an exile family and village relatives, see Kirk, Stanley. "Life Histories of Japanese Canadian Deportees: A Father and Son Case Study." *The Journal of the Institute of Language and Culture* (Vol. 21), Konan University, March 2017, (p. 26). <http://doi.org/10.14990/00002283>

^v For a fuller description of Basil's experiences, see Kirk, 2018 <http://doi.org/10.14990/00003109>

^{vi} Since it was not allowed to send money from Canada until 1949, friends and family sent goods such as "cloth, yarn, and other goods" from Canada, which could be sold on the Black Market (Timmons

82).

^{vii}Timmon quotes Sho Numata, sixteen at the time, who said that the villagers made his life miserable by taunting him, at times surrounding him and screaming “*Gaijin, gaijin*” (foreigner, foreigner). Timmons 81

^{viii}Katakana is the Japanese phonetic alphabet used for spelling foreign words that have been adopted into the Japanese language.

^{ix}Timmons mentions the example of Marie Kawabata who reported that, that when she took walks in her village, “curious children and adults followed her and stared at her strange clothing. For this reason, she simply stopped going for walks.” Timmons 87

^{*}Present website of Kyoto Notre Dame University: <https://www.notredame.ac.jp/english/>

^{xi}For a description of this festival, see <https://www.discoverkyoto.com/event-calendar/august/daimonji-gozan-okuribi-ritual-fires/>

^{xii}Home page of Tenryu Temple: <http://www.tenryuji.com/en/>

^{xiii}For the similar example of the parents of Kazuko Makihara, see Kirk, Stanley. “A Japanese Canadian Teenage Exile: The Life History of Kazuko Makihara.” *The Journal of the Institute of Language and Culture* (Vol. 23), Konan University, March 2019, (3-20). <http://doi.org/10.14990/00003339>

Note: As this issue of The Journal of the Institute for Language and Culture is dedicated to Professor Nobuo Tsuda on the occasion of his retirement, the writer would like to express his gratitude to Professor Tsuda for his many years of service in the Genbun Center and wish him a happy and fulfilling retirement.