

# Yellow is mellow



By Bill Marutani

Every so often a reader of this column will send in an item for possible discussion in these columns. Recently, a Chicago reader sent in a clipping from the *Wall Street Journal* on ethnic folklore and culture in Pennsylvania. According to the article: "When the blacks started saying 'Black is beautiful,' the Poles started saying 'Polish is beautiful,' Japanese Americans said 'Japanese is beautiful!'"

Well perhaps. The ethnic slogan that this writer heard among the Nikkel youth in California was: "Yellow is mellow." Indeed, while on the election campaign trail a few years back, we had an occasion to use this slogan, particularly among fellow Black Americans: "Black may be beautiful, but... Yellow is mellow." It was a light touch that invariably generated a delightful reaction of understanding. Now, I don't know what Polish Americans' sloganeering is, but I would guess that it's much more imaginative than that writer would ascribe in his column in the *Journal*. If I were a Pole, it might be something such as "Polish is polished." Well,...

The writer in that *Journal* article proffers the conclusion that: "All this proves is the failure of the melting pot. These groups never melted." I would eliminate the term "failure," and with that add a hearty "A-men." For by retaining the strength of their respective ethnic cultures do these varied groups make a contribution to the renewed strengthening that is the beauty of America. If nothing else, it all lends interest to what otherwise may degenerate into an indistinguishable blandness.

From this layman's point of view, we suggest that the Nikkel, and the Nisei in particular, have retained or adopted very little of the Japanese culture. At least outwardly. For example, I know of very few Nisei who play the *samisen* or that beautifully gracious instru-



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## Anglican Canon Nakayama "Man with the Camera" celebrates 50 years of ministering



By DWAYNE JANKE  
COALDALE, Alta. — This community is more than 1,100 kilometres from Vancouver, where Canon Gordon Nakayama was ordained an Anglican minister half a century ago.

But this is where the 82-year-old, semi-retired clergyman came recently to celebrate his 50th anniversary of ordination with the congregation at the Anglican Church of the Ascension.

"When I look back all these 50 years, God has been very, very good to me and I'm very happy to come back here," a beaming Nakayama said in an interview recently.

That is hardly surprising, because he ministered here for 33 years, part of a fascinating life. The Japanese-born Nakayama arrived in Canada a Buddhist, converted in Vancouver, and was swept into the B.C. interior and then to Southern Alberta as part of the Second World War evacuation of the Japanese.

Nakayama came to Vancouver in 1919 with aspirations of becoming a doctor, but poor health halted his studies and he changed plans to teach in a Japanese language school.

It was while attending a Good Friday service at Vancouver's St. James Anglican Church in 1920 and hearing about Christ's words from the cross forgiving and loving his enemies and "saving dying sinners," that Nakayama was converted.

Baptized a Methodist, Nakayama later became an Anglican, because wife Lois, whom he married in 1926, had missionary ties with the church.

The couple's stillborn son three years later jolted Nakayama into the ministry.

"That caused me to think about life and the future," he said. "So I offered myself to God if I could be of any help to the people who suffered so much."

He was ordained Sept. 26, 1932, and pastored in Vancouver's Church of the Ascension.

In 1942, the tragic Second World War evacuation of thousands of West Coast Canadian Japanese into the province's interior and other parts of the country "changed the entire Japanese Christ-

ian work," he said. Federal government orders, issued in note form and delivered by RCMP to each Japanese household along the West Coast, suddenly made them aliens, forcing families to evacuate within 24 and 48 hours, Nakayama recalled.

"We had to leave everything. We trusted the Canadian government so we registered everything to their custodians. But unfortunately, they sold everything — property, houses, furniture, everything — without our consent for a low price. That's the greatest mistake the Canadian government ever made."

While many Japanese Christians accepted the persecution as an unavoidable fact of wartime, the incident actually caused some to forsake their faith, Nakayama

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### Memories . . .

LETHBRIDGE, Alta. — Canon Gordon Nakayama, an 82-year-old clergyman who returned recently to Lethbridge to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination, brought with him memories of the tragic evacuation of Japanese Canadians from the West coast during the Second World War. While many Japanese Christians accepted the persecution as a fact of wartime, others forsook their faith, he said.

### Patents imported

TOKYO — Japan is still an importer of technology and must make greater efforts to develop its own creative thinking skills, says a government report.

The annual report by Science and Technology Agency

said that in the financial year ended last March 31, Japan imported technology — much of it in the form of patent payments — worth \$1.53 billion U.S. compared with technology exports of \$483 million.

### Jpnz. nickname Trudeau "Kramer Shusho"

A popular Japanese magazine called Focus, similar to People or US, has named Pierre E. Trudeau "Kramer Shusho" (Kramer prime minister), a nickname derived from the movie Kramer vs. Kramer. In Japanese, Kramer has come to mean a man who is divorced or separated and has custody of his children.

Accompanied by a page and a half picture of Trudeau and son Sacha, the lead article in the January 28 issue commends Trudeau for raising his sons while suffering through his marriage to (and divorce from) Margaret Trudeau, who is described as a woman "crazy about rock music and drugs," who "appeared nude in a porno magazine and caused a "world scandal in 1977."

"Yet," the article continues, "Trudeau had three sons with such a woman." Such a man!

### New mansion ready for discontented Prince

TOKYO — A new mansion for Prince Tomohito, 36-year-old nephew of the Emperor, and his family has been recently completed on the Imperial grounds in the centre of Tokyo.

The seventh in succession to the Emperor, Prince Tomohito aroused controversy earlier last year by expressing the wish to leave the Imperial family to serve as a social worker.

The new whitewalled, ferro-concrete building, with a total floor space of 833 square meters, was built for some 390 million yen within the 5,000 square-meter palace grounds of his parents — Prince Takahito and Princess Yuriko.

Most of the ground floor of the split-level mansion is for official purposes, but the prince has eight rooms, including five bedrooms, for his private use.

Local realtors estimate the site and structure to be worth more than 5 billion yen.

Prince Tomohito will move to the new home from an annex of the Imperial Household Agency with his wife, Princess Nobuko, and daughter Akiko early this year.

He returned to official work in September after recovering from bad health following his Imperial succession statement.

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**"Man with Camera"**

said.

"Some Japanese couldn't separate the Canadian government and Christianity."

Like 7,000 other Japanese, Nakayama's family was evacuated to the ghost town of Slocan City, B.C., where he ministered to Anglicans there, numbering about 1,500.

Subsequent relocations of Japanese to the sugar beet farms of Southern Alberta caused the Anglican church to send Nakayama and family to the area to start a mission in 1945, although there were only about half a dozen Anglican Japanese scattered throughout the region.

Restrictions on the Japanese prevented the family from settling in Taber and Lethbridge, but Coaldale was kind enough to open its doors, and the Nakayamas moved into living quarters atop a town store.

However, Nakayama met obstacles attempting to buy property on which the current church is situated.

"The owner said 'we can't sell it to you because you're an enemy alien,'" Nakayama recalled.

A Calgary bishop then bought the property in his own name and turned it over to Nakayama, who moved a small shack onto the property. The first Christmas service held in the building had

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an attendance of just six, including the Nakayama family of four.

The tiny group then bought an old kindergarten building in B.C. It was dismantled and hauled by train to the area, then rebuilt in spring, 1947, and used as a church. The current A-shaped facility was built in 1964, after Nakayama convinced the congregation — which wanted to keep him from moving back to Vancouver — to build a church instead of a house for his family.

Nakayama ministered to the Japanese — many non-Christians — in the area.

"I rode a bicycle as far as Magrath in the southwest to Vauxhall in the northeast."

Nakayama converted and baptized 350 Japanese to Christianity in his first decade in Coaldale. Many had been Buddhists.

"They were suffering so much from the hard sugar beet labor and had no one to help them," he said.

After the war, many Christian Japanese returned to the West Coast, drastically cutting the size of the local congregation. Nakayama was made vicar of the Anglican parish of Coaldale and the doors of the Church of the Ascension were opened to an Occidental membership. Today, a quarter of the congregation is Japanese Canadian.

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**Marutani . . .**

ment, *the koto*; or the haunting *shakuhachi*. Probably more non-Nikkei are adept at the art of flower arrangement than Nikkei; very few of us know the art of *kendo*, and only here and there is there a Nikkei who has any mastery of the skills of calligraphy.

By this, we do not mean to suggest, even for a moment, that the Nikkei is uncultured or incapable of absorbing culture. Speaking for the Nisei, the fact of the matter was that we were so preoccupied with working on the farm (or the shop, whatever) and trying to get our academic accomplishments on line — that we had very little time for "frills." Besides which, purchase of a *koto* or a *kendo* outfit — not to mention the time and cost of taking lessons — involved that commodity which was in short supply: money. As between eating and buying an instrument, the former took precedence. And then there were families who were husband-

**Cont. from page 1**

ing spare, financial resources to send to Japan to support some aging grandparents or some other relative.

We've had occasion also to make the observation that the Nikkei, unlike many other ethnic groups in North America, manifest very little — indeed, practically none that we're aware of — affinity for Japan in ways that other groups do toward their ancestral country. For example, while other ethnic groups display the flag of their ancestral land, or sing the anthem of their ancestral land, the Nikkei do not. The Nikkei are from these standpoints, very much integrated. It may well be that if there had been any inclination on the part of the Nisei for closer affinity for things Japanese, such was summarily snuffed out by the trauma of the uprooting of 1942 and all that that tragically involved.

For whatever it's worth, that's the thesis of this laymen.

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