

—Nisei—Sansei—Yonsei—

**Intergenerational Communication of the Internment**

**and the**

**Lived Experience of**

**Twelve Japanese Canadians**

**Born after the Internment**

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
The University of Manitoba  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

Faculty of Social Work  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg

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## **Abstract**

The Internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War was a blatant act of racial-based injustice in Canadian history. In this study, I have used the term Internment to encompass all the events that resulted from the abrogation of Japanese Canadian rights of citizenship—mass uprooting from their homes and communities in British Columbia (BC), dispossession, forced relocation to internment camps in interior BC, road camps, and sugar beet farms in Alberta and Manitoba, followed by forced exile from BC to Japan, or forced migration and assimilation across Canada. To explore the intergenerational influence of this historical trauma on those who did not experience it directly, I interviewed twelve Canadians of Japanese heritage whose parent(s) or grandparent(s) experienced a form of Internment. Using a hermeneutic, phenomenological approach, the participants and I explored the lived experience of growing up in the aftermath of the Internment, and intergenerational communication of the internment experience, including what participants would communicate to following generations. The findings revealed alternative responses and outcomes to historical trauma. Threaded throughout these intergenerational stories and responses were prevailing themes reflecting values of *gaman* and *enryo*, in addition to resilience and empowerment.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the goodwill and generosity of spirit  
of those who provided this project with lift and loft –

To all the participants in this study - Alan, Andrea, Crista, E, Greg, June, Keith, Keri, Kiyō, Misa, Patti and Steve (pseudonyms) - for your invaluable contributions which made this research possible.

To the Manitoba Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association for distributing my letters of invitation electronically to their membership, and to the Manitoba Buddhist Temple and Manitoba Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre for allowing me to place posters there.

To the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Judy Hughes (Advisor), Dr. Michael Hart and in particular, Dr. Pamela Sugiman, External Member, for your guidance throughout this academic process.

I am grateful for being here, in this time and place, because of the perseverance, dignity and grace of my grandparents, and the Issei pioneers who arrived in Canada with a spirit of courage, adventure, and enterprise. They contributed to the growth, wealth and development of Canada, breaking new ground in so many ways, creating goodwill and understanding, and working through racial barriers and discrimination.

I am grateful to my parents, and the Issei, Nisei and Sansei who endured the experiences of the Internment, for their inner strength and belief in the future.

## INTRODUCTION

Sparks for my research query were ignited at a gathering of the 20th anniversary of Redress, wherein the Canadian government acknowledged its wrongdoing in the expulsion, internment and abrogation of rights of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War. Young Japanese Canadians made oral and visual presentations about their family histories, speaking about how and why their older family members came to Manitoba due to the Internment and presenting family photographs on a large screen. While there were commonalities of history and experience within each story – the pioneers who came to Canada and settled in BC, their grandparents' Internment experiences – they presented their own unique, personal family stories and experiences. All narratives ended on an uplifting note on how these family members were enjoying life today.

As a Sansei, I admired how they were able to speak so openly and matter-of-factly about these traumatic events in their family and collective history. Listening to them, I wondered how Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei have been influenced by the memories of Internment within their families. This question led me to two related questions. What was the lived experience of growing up not knowing/partially knowing/or knowing about the internment as part of family history. How have the facts of this historical trauma, the transmission of it, and the meaning of it become integrated into a sense of identity, in relation family, community and society in general? These questions comprised the basis

of my research query. In a qualitative study, using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, twelve participants and I explored these questions together.

To create a context for this study, the historical background of Japanese Canadians in Canada is discussed in Chapter One, followed by the literature review in Chapter Two. Chapter Three discusses the Research Design, including the steps taken in choosing the hermeneutic phenomenological approach for this qualitative study, and the methods and procedures in gathering and analyzing information. This is followed by Chapter Four which covers the findings and discussion of the themes that emerged from the interviews and Chapter Five which discusses conclusions from the research, as well as challenges and limitations that arose from this undertaking and implications for future research.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JAPANESE CANADIANS**

#### **Introduction**

In 1942, the community of Japanese Canadians living in British Columbia was destroyed by the governments of Canada and British Columbia (BC). On the racist-based assumption that they posed a threat to national security when Canada declared war on Japan, approximately 22,000 Canadians “of the Japanese race” were forced by the government to abandon their homes, livelihoods, and communities on the West Coast of British Columbia (BC). They were kept in detention under squalid conditions, often for months at a time, while waiting to be sent to isolated internment camps in the interior of BC, road camps or prisoner-of-war camps as far away as Ontario, or farms in Alberta and Manitoba to fill the labour shortage. This forced expulsion, which the BC government euphemistically named an “evacuation,” implying that it was a means of protection, removing them from a hostile environment for their own good (Miki, 2004), was in fact, part of a strategy to eliminate the presence of Japanese Canadians in BC, and was the culmination of racism in BC (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

Historical trauma has been referred to as a collective trauma inflicted upon a population that shares a distinct group identity through ethnicity, nationality or religion and whose members experience similar reactions to the traumatic events (Evans-Campbell, 2008). But it is not isolated to a particular time or place. According to Danieli (1998), multigenerational transmission of trauma is an integral part of human history. Transmitted in word, writing, body language, and even in silence, it is as old as

humankind. It has been thought of, alluded to, written about, and examined in both oral and written histories in all societies, cultures, and religions (p. 2).

The historical trauma of this study refers to the mass expulsion, incarceration, internment, and abrogation of rights of 22,000 Canadians of Japanese heritage during World War II. While it has only recently been acknowledged as a part of Canadian history, it has always been a part of human history.

The generations of Japanese Canadians who directly experienced this trauma were the Issei, Nisei and to some extent the Sansei. Each generation of Japanese Canadians is given a name, beginning with the Issei, the pioneers from Japan, who are known as the first generation. Their Canadian-born offspring, the Nisei, are the second generation. The third generation, the Sansei are the offspring of the Nisei. Following them are the Yonsei, the fourth generation, and Gosei, the fifth generation (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991). While recent Canadian research has been conducted with Nisei, often eighty years or older (McAllister, 2010; Oikawa, 1999, in press; Sugiman, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009), little evidence has been found on research with other subsequent generations.

In this qualitative study, I used a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to explore with Nisei and Sansei the lived experience and meaning of growing up in the context of this historical trauma that was not experienced directly, the not knowing/partial knowing/or knowing about this aspect of family history, and how this historical trauma and lived experience may have influenced them in terms of identity, life choices

and how they saw themselves in relation to family, the Japanese Canadian community, the community in which they live and work, and society in general.

The historical background of Japanese Canadians in Canada will provide a context for both the interview process and for understanding the narratives of participants by way of the hermeneutic circle, in which small pieces of data from the narrative are compared and interpreted within an increasingly larger context that moves from the individual, to the family and to the community (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000). Beginning with the establishment and development of roots in Canada, the historical background moves to the first uprooting and destruction of the community in 1942 during the Second World War, and then to the second uprooting, with dispersal and exile at the end of the war, followed by the losses incurred as a result of this historical trauma. The time period just prior to, including and immediately after the war that includes expulsion, loss and the violation of human rights, is largely based on a collective narrative that tends to be seen as the dominant narrative, written while the Japanese Canadian community was petitioning the Canadian government for redress of their wartime losses and acknowledgement of the violation of their rights (McAllister, 1999; Sugiman, 2006;). Sugiman (2004) "caution(s)...against the colonization of our thinking about Japanese Canadians and their communities by one (perhaps dominant) story. It is important to search for and listen to many different narratives, drawn from a wide array of sources" (p. 56).

The term "evacuation" was a euphemism used by the BC government for the mass uprooting and forced migration of Japanese Canadians (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

For the purposes of this study, I followed the lead of Pamela Sugiman (2009), Roy Miki (2004) and Mona Oikawa (1999, in press) in using the term “internment” to replace the term “evacuation.” While “internment” refers to the incarceration of people from enemy countries, it more closely describes the treatment of Japanese Canadians (Miki, 2004). The term, internment, will refer to the events that resulted from the abrogation of Japanese Canadians’ rights of citizenship – mass uprooting from their homes and communities, dispossession, expulsion and dispersal from B.C., and exile from Canada (Miki, 2004, p. 2). Following Mona Oikawa’s (1999, in press) example, I will capitalize the word “Internment” to emphasize its significance as a catastrophic event (p. 23).

### **Establishing and Developing Community Roots**

Since 1877, with the arrival of Manzo Nagano, the first settler from Japan to establish roots in Canada, pioneers from Japan have contributed to the growth and development of Canada despite the lack of acknowledgement from historians (Takata, 1983). Early pioneers from Japan came from various socio-economic backgrounds—from agriculture and resource industries to those who were well-educated, highly-skilled or from the ruling hierarchy or aristocracy (Takata, 1983). They established themselves in resource industries such as fishing, farming, logging and mining. Businessmen and entrepreneurs owned hotels, barbershops, restaurants, shipyards, and factories or had export-import businesses. In addition to dry goods and grocery stores, there were florists, tobacconists and jewellers. Although the BC government barred Japanese Canadians from certain professions, there were doctors, dentists, masseurs and midwives

as well as newspaper editors, ministers, and teachers in Japanese language schools (Takata, 1983).

Community organizations were established such as farmers' cooperatives, fishing associations, bathhouses, social and gambling clubs, and recreational and competitive sports clubs. Community institutions included churches and a hospital. By 1942, there were 59 Japanese language schools and four newspapers - three published in Japanese, and one in English to represent the Nisei (Takata, 1983).

While the community appeared to be ghettoized, this was, to a great degree, due to discriminatory attitudes and government policies. In 1895, the BC government added a clause to the provincial elections act which disallowed Japanese Canadians the right to vote (Adachi, 1976). Anti-Asian factions in BC were calling Japanese Canadians "unassimilable" or incapable of being assimilated (Adachi, 1976, p. 78), while at the same time blocking them from becoming assimilated, and ensuring that they would not be able to assimilate by sanctioning laws which prohibited them from being listed on the provincial electoral list. This had far-reaching implications as it applied not only to naturalized citizens, but to their Canadian-born children as well. Not having the provincial franchise placed them in a vulnerable position, politically and economically, and hindered them from becoming a part of mainstream society. The federal voting list was compiled from the provincial list, from which Japanese Canadians were excluded, which meant they were also disenfranchised in federal elections. Not being on the provincial voting list also disqualified Japanese Canadians from voting in municipal elections or for school trustees, from being elected to positions in provincial and

municipal office, or for school trustee and from serving jury duty (Adachi, 1976). While discriminatory practices in employment were not sanctioned, the provincial voting list was used as a de facto qualifier for certain types of employment, further restricting Japanese Canadians from obtaining licenses to cut Crown timber or sell liquor, and from entering the fields of law and pharmacy (Miki, 2004), mortuary science (Takata, 1983), medicine, teaching and accounting (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991). De facto restrictions also prevented their employment in areas of civil service such as the post office, public health nursing, police or forestry (Adachi, 1976).

Japanese Canadians were further ghettoized and not allowed to assimilate when the government put them together in internment camps, away from the general population. At war's end though, this unassimilative population was expected to disperse and blend into the hostile communities to which they were forced to move. Mackenzie King's justified his dispersal policy by stating that "(t)he sound policy and the best policy for the Japanese Canadians themselves is to distribute their numbers as widely as possible throughout the country where they will not create feelings of racial hostility (Debates, House of Commons, August 4, 1944 as cited in Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

Despite these political and economic restrictions, Japanese Canadians contributed greatly to increased economic development within BC and the expansion of overseas markets (Takata, 1983). By 1942, over 95 percent of Japanese Canadians resided in BC (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991), with more than 8,500 individuals, (or about 35% of the population), residing in Vancouver (Takata, 1983). Other areas of BC populated by Japanese Canadians were farmlands in the Fraser Valley and Okanagan, fishing

settlements along the West Coast of BC, or sites on Vancouver Island. Communities thrived through enterprise and diligence, as the Issei established themselves economically and socially, raising their children, the Nisei, in this new environment. These increasing economic gains were seen as a threat to the Caucasians, and provided them with more momentum to remove the Japanese Canadians from BC.

### **The Shattering of Community**

After the attack on Pearl Harbour by Japan on December 7, 1941, both Canadian and American governments declared war on Japan. This event was to alter the lives of all Japanese Canadians, putting their lives in limbo for many years, until they were allowed to return to British Columbia in 1949. The Canadian government's immediate reaction was to take "precautionary measures" concerning the Japanese Canadian population. Thirty-eight Issei men, whom the RCMP deemed as "security risks," were arrested, separated from their families, and incarcerated. Approximately 1,800 Japanese Canadian fishermen lost their livelihoods when their fishing boats were impounded. All Japanese-language schools were closed, the three Japanese-language newspapers ceased printing, and trading companies with connections to Japan were locked, with their assets frozen (Takata, 1983).

Fanning the flames of wartime hysteria, BC politicians who opposed the Japanese Canadian presence in the province, raised the issue that they posed a "threat" to national security, with the potential for collusion with Japan. Under the auspices of the War Measures Act, orders-in-council were passed that restricted Japanese Canadians even

more. Referring to them as individuals "of Japanese racial origin" was a sleight of phrase used by the government to include Canadian-born and naturalized citizens with Japanese nationals or "aliens," thus putting all under the blanket term of "enemy aliens." (Miki, 2004; Miki & Kobayashi, 1991). The ramifications of the phrase meant that, despite birthplace or citizenship, they were defined or "framed by race" (Miki, 2004).

On December 16, 1941, registration was made compulsory for all persons of Japanese origin living in Canada, even those who were Canadian-born. This meant that each person had to show proof of registration on request. Penalties for not registering were fines or imprisonment. On January 16, 1942, the federal government issued Order in Council PC 365, which ordered all male Japanese nationals between the ages of 18 and 45 to leave the "protected zone," defined as the area along the west coast and within 100 miles inland of the west coast of BC, including all islands. This affected about 1,700 men, most of whom were married. They were sent to road camps, leaving dependant family members behind. The next Order in Council, PC 1486, which was passed on February 24, 1942, caused an even greater upheaval in the community, in that all persons of Japanese origin, even Canadian-born, were ordered to leave this protected zone. The BC Security Commission (BCSC) was a government-created civilian office that was established on March 4, 1942, to oversee this mass expulsion. As individuals were restricted in bringing only what they could carry, an administrative office called the Custodian of Enemy Property was created to hold "in trust" all the property and possessions which they were forced to be leave behind (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

While still residing in this 100-mile zone, however, the Japanese Canadians had to



relinquish all motor vehicles, cameras, radio equipment or firearms in their possession. RCMP were allowed to search their premises without a warrant. A dawn-to-dusk curfew was in place, curtailing business hours as well as social and recreational activities (Takata, 1983).

Communication with the outside world was blocked or limited. Japanese Canadians were not allowed radio equipment, and only the English-language newspaper was allowed to publish as it would be a vehicle for the BCSC announcements. Letters were censored, and long-distance calls were monitored, with admonitions not to speak in Japanese (Takata, 1983).

### **The First Uprooting: Internment**

The time frame between the order to move and the opportunity to dispose of property before moving varied from a few hours to a week (Adachi, 1976). Families and individuals were restricted in bringing only what they could carry. They were detained in Hastings Park, site of the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver, often months at a time until it was decided where they would be sent. The family unit was split apart. Men were housed dormitory-style in one building, while women and children were housed in the livestock building, which hadn't been cleaned in time for their arrival. Living conditions were deplorable, filthy and unsanitary, with the air reeking of manure. There was no privacy in sleeping areas or in the latrines. Eating and sleeping quarters were large communal areas (Takata, 1983).

Families in the first groups to arrive were split apart. BCSC policy ordered not just the Japanese nationals, but all men of military (ages 18-45), whether Canadian-born or

naturalized citizens, to be sent to work in road camps as far away as Northern Ontario. Women, children and elders were left behind to fend for themselves (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

A group of men who opposed this policy of breaking up families formed the Nisei Mass Evacuation Group. These men accepted internment, but requested that family units remain intact during that time. When the BCSC turned down their request, they refused to leave the detention centre as a form of resistance. For this act, they were interned in a prisoner-of-war camp in Ontario, often for the duration of the war (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

From Hastings Park, the BCSC dispersed the Japanese Canadian population to three major areas. The majority, or about 12,000 individuals, were sent to ghost towns in remote areas of BC while about 1,000 men were sent to road camps in BC, Alberta, and Ontario. In order to fill a labour shortage on the prairies, the BCSC suspended its policy of separating families and allowed families to remain together if they would work on prairie farms. About 4,000 Japanese Canadians came to work on sugar beet farms in Alberta and Manitoba. In addition to primitive and substandard living conditions in all these internment sites, they also had to adjust to the new climate. Accustomed to mild coastal weather, they were unprepared for the cold, harsh winters of interior BC, northern Ontario, or the prairies (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

All their property, except what they could carry to the internment camps, was to be kept in trust by the Custodian of Enemy Property. However, without their consent, the Custodian breached this trust by liquidating their homes and land, businesses and

inventory stock, machines, equipment, tools, furniture and household good at a fraction of their value, the proceeds of which went towards paying their own living expenses while being interned (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991). Under the Geneva Convention, even prisoners of war or enemy nationals were given better treatment (Adachi, 1976).

The Japanese Canadian community was kept in limbo, uncertain about their future while confined to internment sites, prisoner-of-war camps and prairie farms. At war's end in 1945, dispossessed of property, homes, farms, businesses, and their livelihoods, they had nothing to which to return (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

### **The Second Uprooting: Dispersal or Repatriation**

When the war ended, it was evident that the BC government intended to continue the elimination of Japanese Canadians from BC. Although Mackenzie King acknowledged in the House of Commons in August 1944 that "(it) is a fact no person of Japanese race born in Canada has been charged with any act of sabotage or disloyalty during the years of war" (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991, p. 46), war time restrictions on Japanese Canadians were not lifted, thus preventing them from returning to their former homes and communities on the West Coast of BC. This ban was not removed until 1949. Japanese Canadians internees were treated much more harshly than Japanese Americans interned in the United States, who were allowed to return to their former homes on the west coast as early as spring of 1945 (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

The government also devised two policies to force the removal of Japanese Canadians who were still detained in internment camps in BC's interior. Presented as "choices," the two options were dispersal or repatriation, that is, to move east of the

Rockies or "return" to Japan (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991). Written into the dispersal policy were the implications of loyalty to Canada and a hidden threat should they not comply (Miki, 2004). According to the Dispersal Policy, agreeing to leave BC would demonstrate their cooperation with the government and thereby their loyalty to Canada, while not complying "may seriously prejudice their own future by delay" (Miki, 2004, p. 102).

The second policy provided the choice of repatriation, a misnomer, since 75 percent of internees were born in Canada. Repatriation was actually a form of "forced exile" (Miki, 2004; Miki & Kobayashi, 1991). The small percentage of Canadian-born Nisei who went to Japan, often with their Issei parents, were without a country, considered to be "enemy aliens" in Canada, their birthplace, and "aliens" in Japan (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991). There were no options to remain in BC or for family members trapped in Japan during the war to rejoin their families in Canada. About 4,000 individuals, half of them children, were deported before this order was removed in 1946 due to public protestation (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

Families were again torn apart – conflicted between staying in Canada, a familiar but hostile country or going to Japan, a war-torn country where the Canadian-born children did not know the language (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991). And again, the question of loyalty arose, having to prove one's loyalty by following government orders yet not having any guarantees of better treatment (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991).

## **Losses incurred**

“The entire social and economic fabric of this Japanese Canadian community was dismantled by the actions of their government” (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991.) Expulsion, internment, forced migration and exile to Japan as a result of Canadian and British Columbian racist policies brought about sustained losses for Japanese Canadians on many levels, such as loss of livelihood and business, sense of home and community, citizenship, family relationships, life development markers, and loss of trust. Those in the prime of life who had built up a business had the greatest economic losses (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991). The “complex infrastructures” of the communities they established in BC were destroyed (Miki, 2004). It was assumed that they would return to their homes once the war was over and that there would be something to return to because the Custodian of Enemy Property was in charge of storage of their property and belongings (Miki, 2004). The Custodian’s liquidation of properties of Japanese Canadians, without their prior knowledge, was a monstrous breach of trust. Developmental life stages were disrupted – education from pre-school to post-graduate was interrupted and suspended; careers were stopped in mid-stream (Takata, 1983).

The historical background of Japanese Canadians in Canada covers the establishment of community, the destruction of community as a result of two uprootings, beginning with expulsion and internment followed by dispersal or exile, and the losses sustained as a result. This background material provides the basis for the literature review to follow.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Given the history of Japanese Canadians up to and including the early postwar years, and the intentional government involvement in the shattering of their community in 1942, the literature review provides a context from which to view these circumstances and events, as well as a context for the research interviews. It begins with the experiences and perceptions of the Internment by Japanese Canadians through research literature, historical, biographical and fictive writing, as well as other art forms.

As historical trauma was chosen for the theoretical framework of this study, the literature review covers various aspects of trauma, historical trauma and collective trauma. The politically-devised, racially-motivated Internment of the Japanese Canadians could be considered a historical trauma, that is, an oppressive trauma that was experienced collectively by a population identified by ethnicity or race (Evans-Campbell, 2008). It has been said that trauma intentionally designed and precipitated has more far-reaching and longer lasting effects than, for instance, accidental or naturally caused trauma (Loo, 1993) in that trust in the social world is shattered (Janoff-Bulman, 1997). The first generation's responses to historical trauma may be transmitted to subsequent generations, which may lead to intergenerational trauma or an empowering response to it (Wise, 2007). However, it is not the intent of this research to explore intergenerational experience of historical trauma from a pathological perspective.

Other topics reviewed were assimilation, acculturation and ethnic identity.

Theories of assimilation and acculturation list very neatly the processes of one culture meeting and interacting with another culture, but this was not the case with the Japanese Canadian population prior to the Second World War and including the early postwar years. Assimilation was a moot point in the early history of Japanese Canadians living in BC's xenophobic environment. Assimilation theory did not address the situation of a host group blocking the assimilation of a newcomer group. Acculturation and ethnic identity were also included in the literature review as most research in these areas has been conducted from the generational perspective (Phinney, 2002) and may provide a relevant context during the interview process of my research. This study will attempt to address some of the gaps in the research literature concerning intergenerational responses to Internment as historical trauma within the Japanese Canadian community.

## **The Japanese Canadian Experience of internment**

Japanese Canadian experiences and perceptions of Internment have been researched, documented, and expressed through various art forms. These three areas will be discussed separately.

Research on the Internment experiences and perceptions of Japanese Canadians, particularly by other Japanese Canadians, while not widely covered, has been represented in the areas of sociology (Sugiman), sociology and anthropology (McAllister, 1999, 2010; Oikawa, 1999, in press; Kobayashi, 1999), and cultural geography (Kobayashi). The most recent and extensive research has been published by Pamela Sugiman (2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). Her research, thus far, is based on approximately 75 oral history interviews with Nisei women and men. Sensitive to the diversity of experiences that may otherwise be silenced by the dominant collective narrative of Internment, Sugiman (2004) situated these personal narratives within the engendered and racialized environments in which they took place. Contrary to the stereotypical image of Japanese Canadian women as 'silent, unresisting, and uncritical' (Sugiman, 2004; Oikawa, 1999, in press), these oral histories contained narratives of resistance, survival and resilience (Sugiman, 2004, 2006).

Situating herself as a Sansei, within the collective narrative, her own family history, and in response to the individual Internment narratives of the Nisei, provided an intergenerational component to the research (Sugiman, 2004), as did the inclusion of her daughter's story as a Yonsei (Sugiman, 2007). Sharing a bond with these Nisei through "racial" identity and family history includes her in a "cross-generational community of



memory" (Sugiman, 2004), a community that is created by a particular memory (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994, as cited in Sugiman, 2004.) Memory is a "living" and "shared" phenomenon of an event whether or not it was experienced directly. Intergenerational memories of internment may evoke a different meaning in each generation, depending on the context of their location in society (Sugiman, 2007).

Other research has examined the Internment from the areas of collective remembrance (McAllister, 1999; 2010), intergenerational transmission of knowledge and narratives of resistance and resilience (Oikawa, 1999, in press), a life course-emergent ethnicity perspective, ethnic identity and intergenerational transmission of values (Kobayashi, 1999), social memory and intergenerational transmission of values and traditions (Ide, 1997), and cultural and ethnic identity of Sansei (Tanaka, 2003). McAllister (1999, 2010) examined how collective remembrances of acts of violence may be part of a healing process in a historically persecuted group, such as Japanese Canadians who were interned in New Denver, BC. Through interviews with Japanese Canadian elders, fieldnotes and other documents, she traces the steps by which community members manifested their collective remembrance of Internment in New Denver in the planning and construction of The Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre. This site became a "public statement" of the violation of their rights as well as an acknowledgement of their achievement in building a local community (p. 428-9). Built on collective remembrances of Internment in New Denver, the Memorial Centre became a source of collective remembrance for those who visited it.

Working from the perspective of Internment as a form of national violence, Oikawa (1999, in press) examined how mothers, who were interned, transmitted their knowledge of this violence to their daughters and granddaughter. She challenged the notion of the Japanese Canadian "silence" about the Internment. The dominant society places the responsibility of "telling," or the transmission of knowledge, on the "victim" who may be in a hostile or unreceptive environment, or on the parent-child dyad. Silence, however, may be seen as the result of power relations between the teller and the dominant society that perpetrated the violence and perpetuated the silence in order to maintain the image of being a benevolent society.

Through the life-histories of a Nisei mother and her Sansei son, Daein Ide (1997) studied the role of memory in the intergenerational transmission of values and traditions, and how individuals contribute to the making of social memory. She differentiated between social memory and collective memory. The term "collective," which implies a self-sufficient group that is autonomous from other groups, no longer applies to Japanese Canadians because they have not lived as a community since they were dispersed during the Second World War (p. 8). Social memory is more inclusive because it is a combination of collective memory, the memories of individuals who contribute to and are affected by the shared memory, and the autobiographical memory of the self (p. 9)

Midori Kobayashi (1999) studied three aspects of the parent-child relationship between older Nisei and their adult Sansei children from a life course-emergent ethnicity perspective. Areas examined were contact and the exchange of social support, ethnic

identification, and the cross-generational transmission of values. Shaun Naomi Tanaka's (2003) quantitative-qualitative study examined factors that shaped the personal and collective cultural identities of Sansei, and that provided continuity of ethnic identity despite lack of proximity.

The history and lives of Japanese Canadians has been documented by Japanese Canadians in the form of history, first person accounts, essays, autobiographies and biographies. While not a comprehensive list, the following is a sampling of the variety of works that have been written. The earliest documentation of the comprehensive history of Japanese Canadians was written by Nisei. These works include The Enemy That Never Was by Ken Adachi (1976), Nikkei Legacy: The Story of Japanese Canadians from Settlement to Today by Toyo Takata (1983) and Issei: Stories of Japanese Canadian Pioneers by Gordon G. Nakayama (1984). Roy Ito wrote about Japanese Canadians who served in the First and Second World Wars (1984) as well as a history of Japanese Canadians (1994); Robert K. Okazaki (1996) documented the formation of a resistance group during Internment and the subsequent incarceration of its members in a P.O.W. camp in Ontario. Issues on redress have been written by Roy Miki (2004), Roy Miki and Cassandra Kobayashi (1991), and Maryka Omatsu (1992).

In addition to formal research, hermeneutic phenomenologists often use literary and non-discursive forms of art as resources for reflecting on lived experience (Van Manen, 1994). Thus the lived experience of a phenomenon may be found in textual resources such as literature and poetry, biographies, autobiographies, and personal life histories, diaries, journals and logs.

Writings on the lived experience of Internment include first person accounts by Muriel Kitagawa (Roy Miki, Ed.) (1985) and Takeo Ujo Nakano (1980), essays by Roy Miki (1998), and an autobiography by David Suzuki (2006). Biographies have been written by Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi (1976) and Art Miki, Henry Kojima and Sylvia Jansen (2007).

Artists express their lived experience in their chosen art form such as painting, sculpture, music and cinematography. These non-discursive mediums have their own non-verbal language with their own grammar, and the works of art produced become “visual, tactile, auditory, kinetic texts” and are, in themselves, “lived experiences transformed into transcended configurations” (Van Manen, 1994, p. 74).

Fictive writing about, or in reference to, the Internment may be considered a form of response to the historical trauma of Internment. The semi-autobiographical novel, Obasan, written by Nisei author, Joy Kogawa (1981), was a seminal work about Internment which was published during the early days of redress activism. Evoking the emotional aspects of the lived experience of Internment, this novel gained acclamation in Canada and abroad. Children’s books dealing with Internment have been written by Shizuye Takashima (1971) and Joy Kogawa (2008, 1986). Internment and issues related to Internment such as identity and loss may be found in the poetry of Joy Kogawa (2003, 1977, 1974), Baco Ohama (2002), Roy Miki (1991, 2001, 2006); Roy Kiyooka (1997), Terry Watada (1995, 2001, 2006), and Kevin Irie (1992, 2003). Internment has been referenced in the short stories of Gerry Shikatani (1996) and drama by Rick Shiomi (1984).

The Internment has been referred to by visual artists such as Baco Ohama, Cindy Mochizuki (2006), Aiko Suzuki, Roy Kiyooka, and Bryce Kanbara (1988, 1991), Louise Noguchi and filmmakers such as Linda Ohama (1992, 200), Michael Fukushima (1992), and Fumiko Kiyooka (1986, 1988).

### **Assimilation and Acculturation**

Assimilation and acculturation provide an understanding of the relationship between a new culture and a host culture, and a context for the history of Japanese Canadians. Assimilation was an ongoing issue of contention in the history of Japanese Canadians. The xenophobic environment of BC did not appear to be conducive to either assimilation or acculturation of Japanese Canadians. While calling them "unassimilative," the BC government ensured that they would, indeed, not become assimilated into its mainstream society (Adachi, 1978). One of the major strategies by which the government effectively blocked their social and economic opportunities, and their means to assimilate, was by not granting them the franchise. Ironically, after the war, the BC government reversed its stance, and dispersed these formerly "unassimilable" citizens away from BC, forcing them to assimilate into unknown and potentially hostile environments (Miki & Kobayashi, 1991). Under these new living conditions, the Nisei encouraged their Sansei children to become culturally assimilated to guard against the racial hostility that they themselves had experienced (Sugiman, 2004b). This learned assimilation meant dis-identifying with cultural markers of being Japanese and resulted

in loss of the usage of the Japanese language, loss of contact with other Japanese Canadians, and loss of appreciation for traditional Japanese arts (Sugiman, 2004b).

The interchangeable usage of the terms “assimilation” and “acculturation” has been a source of confusion (Sam, 2006; Trimble, 2002) in addition to the fact that one is often used as a subset, or phase, of the other (Sam 2006, p. 12). Sam (2006) believes it is important to differentiate between the two terms as the subtle distinctions between them may have a significant impact on interpretations of research findings and the development of theory. While assimilation and acculturation both describe a change that occurs when one culture comes in contact with another, they diverge on two issues which are salient to acculturation research and theory – direction and dimension (Sam, 2006).

### **Assimilation**

From the assimilation perspective, change is unilinear (Berry, 2002) or unidirectional in that change occurs in one direction, with one group changing and becoming more like another group that remains static (Sam, 2006). Assimilation is also unidimensional in the assumption that individuals, in acquiring a new cultural identity, will lose aspects of their original culture (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993 as cited in Sam, 2006). As an example, one’s heritage language might be spoken less often as proficiency in the new language is acquired (Arends-Toth and van de Vijver, 2006). It is assumed that the two contacting groups are mutually exclusive, where a group can either become assimilated into the new culture or remain separate by retaining its

original cultural values (Sam, 2006). Adding to the confusion of interchangeable term usage, while the unidimensional approach has been described as a characteristic of assimilation, it has also been included as one of the aspects of acculturation (Kohatsu, 2005 as cited in Kohatsu, Concepcion, & Perez, 2010; Rivera, 2010).

Gordon (1964 as cited in Sam & Berry, 2006) described assimilation as a progression of seven phases – cultural or behavioural, structural, marital, attitudinal reciprocal, behavioural reciprocal, civic and identificational assimilation, with the end goal being “a self-image as an unhyphenated American” (p. 18). In terms of assimilation theory, as foreigners have more contact with the host culture over a length of time, they will become more like the host members (Sam, 2006).

### **Acculturation**

The following definition of acculturation has served as the basis for acculturation theories and perspectives (Sam, 2006) - “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton and Herskovits, 1936, p. 149, as cited in Sam, 2006). Acculturation has been described as “social change” (Trimble, 2002) and is generally accepted to be bidirectional and bidimensional.

The bidirectional perspective acknowledges mutuality or reciprocal influence in the contact between two individuals or groups, with the assumption that change can

take place on both sides. According to Sam (2006), this is more widely accepted in acculturation psychology than the unidimensional perspective.

The bidimensional perspective works from the assumption that change may occur on two dimensions which may be independent of each other – the maintenance or loss of the original culture and the adoption of, or involvement in, the new culture (Berry, 1980 as cited in Sam, 2006). For instance, speaking the heritage language does not influence speaking the language of the new culture (Arends-Toth and van de Vijver (2006). Two bidimensional models (Berry's Acculturational Model and the Interactive Acculturation Model) and a multifaceted model (Relative Acculturation Extended Model) will be described below.

### **Ethnic Identity**

Ethnic identity is a construct of how one defines and makes sense of oneself in terms of one's ethnic group of origin and a new cultural group (Sam, 2006). Ethnic identity has been described in terms of cultural identity (Sam, 2006), social identity, shared values and attitudes with one's ethnic group, and a sense of belonging and commitment to an ethnic group (Liebkind, 2001 as cited in Liebkind, 2006). As a dynamic and fluid construct, ethnic identity may change, given factors such as time, aging, life stage development, different contexts such as social environment, and even within generations in a new culture (Phinney, 2002). Changes in ethnic identity that occur over time as a result of prolonged contact with a culturally different group may be considered part of the acculturation process (Sam, 2006).



Changes in ethnic identity may occur along two time frames, not only during the lifetime of the current immigrant generation and their offspring, but in different generations as well. In the former instance, two points to consider in the acculturation process are the age of those when they immigrated and the amount of time spent in the new culture (Phinney, 2002).

Most research on ethnic identity and acculturation has been conducted from the generational perspective (Phinney, 2002). Acculturative changes in ethnic identity have been studied in the areas of self-identification, strength and valence (how strongly and positively one feels about being a member of their ethnic group), and the development of one's ethnic identity (Phinney, 2002). Self-identification, or self-label, may change and/or disappear over time as succeeding generations become distanced from the country of origin. For instance, the first generation in contact with a new culture may be more likely to self-identify, and/or be identified by others according to the national origin such as Mexican or Russian (Phinney, 2002). The second generation is characterized more by the usage of a compound or bicultural label, such as Mexican American, or not using the ethnic label at all and identifying as American (Phinney, 2002). In a study of three generations of immigrants, (Buriel and Cardoza (1993, as cited in Phinney, 2002), there was a more noticeable change in self-label between the first and second generation than in succeeding generations.

Ethnic labels may persist beyond the third generation that have little to do with acculturation, but more to do with ethnic markers such as one's surname or family name, or visual aspects of ethnic and/or racial phenotype. An ethnic surname may be used as a

means of self-identification, or of being identified by others (Phinney, 2002). The Canadian government used racial phenotyping as a reason to expel and intern all individuals of Japanese descent (Sugiman, 2004a), regardless of their place of birth and citizenship. Sugiman (2004a) notes that Canadian-born citizens of Japanese descent were caught in an outward/inward dichotomy of appearing to be Japanese based on their racial characteristics, but feeling Canadian based on their place of birth. As an example, she provides an archived letter, written in English, from a Nisei woman to a friend:

They call us "Japs" and think of us in the same light that they think of the native Japanese. I think there are very few people that really consider us as 'fellow Canadians"...even among our occidental friends. I suppose it all boils down to the fact that we have black hair and oriental features and we look so different from the other races that we can never become quite as Canadianized as the rest....

Even today, based on phenotype, fourth and fifth generation Japanese Americans have been mistaken for immigrants, despite speaking flawless English (Uba, 1994 as cited in Phinney, 2002).

## **Aspects of Trauma**

Trauma has been defined from a number of different perspectives - medical, clinical, and sociological, and contextualized by different events and within different populations. The term "trauma" originated from the Greek language, meaning "wound" and referred to an injury inflicted on a body (Caruth, 1996). Later usage in medical and psychiatric fields broadened the definition to include injury to the mind (Caruth, 1996, p. 3). Trauma may also refer to the event itself (Webster's, 1973). Erikson (1995) provides a sociological perspective of trauma as being the harm done to the body or mind as a result of an acute event as well as from "sustained exposure" or stress from an ongoing traumatic event (p. 185).

### **Definition of a Traumatic Event**

Traumatic events are unexpected events which are "outside the range of usual human experience" (American Psychiatric Association, as cited in Janoff-Bulman, 1997, p. 53) and "are directly experienced as threats to survival and self-preservation" (Janoff-Bulman, 1997, p. 53). Examples of traumatic events are "rape, criminal assaults, natural disasters, life-threatening illnesses, serious accidents, combat, and torture" (Janoff-Bulman, 1997, p. 52). A traumatic event may also affect those who did not experience it directly. Witnessing physical violence towards someone, whether a loved one or stranger, is considered to be a form of direct experience (Janoff-Bulman, 1997) and a traumatic event (Loo, 1993). A community member, absent from the community when a collective trauma such as massive flooding occurs, may be traumatized by loss of a "sustaining

community" (Erikson, 1995, p. 188). Other situations such as marital conflict, chronic illness, business losses, and simple bereavement may be perceived as traumatic, but are not considered to be traumatic events since they are part of normal life experience (American Psychiatric Association, as cited in Janoff-Bulman, 1997, p. 54).

### **Categories of Traumatic Events**

Traumatic events may be categorized as being natural, accidental, technological or of intentional human design. Natural disasters, such as floods, tornadoes and earthquakes are considered to be "acts of God or whims of nature" (Erikson, 1995, p. 191), not "human-induced" or produced within the social system (Janoff-Bulman, 1997). Technological disasters may be a combination of the accidental, the natural world or of human manufacture. They refer to events such as leakages, breakages, collapses, and explosions where there is a breakdown of design concept, systems, or machinery created by humans that causes a crisis in the natural world (Erikson, 1995). Compared to the randomness of natural disasters or "acts of God," the participation of humans in technological disasters often involves negligence and raises expectations of accountability (Erikson, 1995; Janoff-Bulman, 1997). Rape, criminal assault, terrorism, torture and atrocities of war are examples of human-induced trauma which are intentionally designed with malicious intent (Janoff-Bulman, 1997).

## **Dimensions of Traumatic Experience**

Trauma may occur in different dimensions of experience - physical, psychological, social and racial, historical, ongoing, and vicarious – singly or in combination with others (Wise, 2007). Trauma may also occur not only as an individual experience but as a collective experience, as well. Physical trauma may be the result of critical injury or shock to the body from an external source such as a physical and/or sexual assault, transportation accident or natural disaster (Wise, 2007). Psychological trauma from a traumatic event may be experienced in the way of strong emotional reactions such as terror, anxiety, and helplessness, and may also include physiological changes and/or impairment in daily functioning (Cash, 2006; Wise, 2007). Vulnerable populations may experience social trauma through oppressive, social conditions such as physical and verbal abuse, hate crimes, discrimination, and war, and/or by social institutions which condone and perpetrate such conditions or blame the victims of oppression (Wise, 2007, p. 7). Race-related trauma is the repeated and cumulative experience of being racialized, either overtly or covertly, over a period which may last a lifetime. The Internment of Japanese Canadians may be considered a cumulative race-based trauma (Nagata & Cheng, 2003).

Historical trauma refers to both the traumatic and oppressive events of the past and to the impact of those past events on members of the culture oppressed by the dominant culture (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Grant, 2008). An example of historical trauma is the physical and cultural genocide in the Jewish Holocaust (Kidron, 2004). Historical trauma may not only affect those who experienced it but also subsequent generations

who were born after the historical traumatic event (Danieli, 1998) and may lead to intergenerational trauma (Wise, 2007). Historical and intergenerational trauma will be discussed separately in sections to follow.

Trauma experienced, not from one critical event, but from “sustained exposure” or a “persistent condition” (Erikson, 1995, p. 185) such as chronic illness, poverty, prejudice and discrimination due to, for instance, ethnicity, religion and gender, is described as ongoing trauma (Wise, 2007). Vicarious trauma, or secondary traumatic stress may result from empathetic responses in those who assist survivors of trauma (Bussey & Wise, 2007) and/or are repeatedly exposed to survivors’ stories (Armstrong, 1996; Saakvitne & Pearlman, 1996). The term “compassion fatigue” also applies to secondary trauma. Those affected may be helping professionals, family, friends (Bussey & Wise, 2007), journalists and researchers (Saakvitne & Pearlman, 1996).

### **Perceptions of Trauma**

How one perceives a traumatic event is key to the impact of the trauma. The traumatic quality of an experience may be defined more by how people react to the cause of trauma than by what caused the trauma (Erikson, 1995, p. 184). Whether survivors consider an event to be traumatic or not depends on their understanding and interpretation of the event, as well as the meaning they ascribe to the event (Janoff-Bulman (1992). Perception of a traumatic event also plays an important part in whether one develops symptoms diagnosed as post traumatic stress disorder (Cash, 2006; Van der Kolk, McFarlane & Weisaeth, 1996).

Danieli (1998) noted two differing perspectives regarding the effect of prior trauma on subsequent trauma responses. From the perspective of vulnerability, trauma is seen as permanently damaging to the psyche, leaving the survivor more vulnerable to future extreme stress. From the perspective of resilience, the ability to cope well with extreme trauma builds resiliency in dealing with future trauma. However, these two perspectives share similarities in recognizing that individuals respond differently to trauma, that an extreme trauma may overwhelm one's disposition and earlier experience of trauma, and that the post trauma environment can affect adaptation.

### **Theoretical Perspectives of Trauma**

**Post traumatic stress disorder.** Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a long-term response to a traumatic event that affects psychological, social and biological functioning (Cash, 2006; Van der Kolk, McFarlane & Weisaeth, 1996). PTSD was first included in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition (DSM-III) in 1980 (Cash, 2006). A diagnosis of either Acute Stress Disorder (AST) or PTSD is based on two major criteria, a qualified stressor, that is, the individual has directly experienced a traumatic event that involved threat of death or serious injury, or has witnessed said traumatic event, and a qualified reaction in which the response involves intense fear, helplessness or horror (American Psychiatric Association's DSM-IV-TR, 2000 as cited in Cash, 2006). Factors which may increase the predisposition to developing PTSD are the trauma experiencer's perception of the event (Cash, 2006), the impact and duration of the trauma, the number of occurrences of

trauma, human-induced trauma and negative reactions from family and friends (Foa et al., 1999 as cited in Wise, 2007).

**Empowerment Perspective and the Trauma Response.** Where the American Psychiatric Association categorizes certain reactions to trauma as pathological, abnormal, and part of a disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2000 as cited in Cash, 2006), trauma specialists working from the perspective of the empowerment framework name trauma reactions that don't fit into the diagnostic scheme of AST or PTSD as a "trauma response" (Everstine & Everstine, 1999 as cited in Wise, 2007). This term acknowledges these reactions as a natural response to trauma, and as part of a healing or "restorative" process in which the trauma survivors learn how to make sense of the trauma and integrate the event and the meaning of it into their lives (Wise, 2007). The post-trauma healing process involves the telling and retelling of one's "story," and encompasses both movement towards growth and integration of the trauma as well as stasis where one appears to be "stuck" in the process. This process takes into account the resilience of those who experience trauma, the empowerment perspective of the individuals and community that work with those who experience trauma, and the possibility of transformation (Wise, 2007).



## **Aspects of Historical Trauma**

Trauma is seen as both the event and the response to the event (Erikson, 1995). The trauma experienced by a community and passed on to other generations has been described by various terms such as historical trauma (Kidron, 2004), transgenerational trauma (Felsen, 1998), multigenerational trauma (Danieli, 1998), intergenerational trauma (Nagata & Cheng, 2003) and collective trauma (Evans-Campbell, 2008). In addition to these terms, the transmission of trauma between generations has been referred to as intergenerational PTSD, historical grief (Denham, 2008) and the colonial trauma response (Evans-Campbell, 2008).

Historical trauma has been referred to as both the traumatic, oppressive events experienced by an earlier generation and to the impact of those past events on succeeding generations in a population which has been, or continues to be, oppressed by the dominant culture (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Grant, 2008). However, Denham (2008) suggests a differentiation between the events and the responses to these events. He finds the term "historical trauma" limiting in that it infers a dysfunctional or pathological outcome, and doesn't allow for alternate responses such as the expression of resilience and resistance. Denham (2008) proposes that it would be more accurate to conceptualize "historical trauma" as "the conditions, experiences and events that have the potential to contribute to or trigger a response" and to refer to the reactions to this historical trauma separately as the "historical trauma response," which would allow for a broader range of responses that would be inclusive of both suffering and resilience (pp. 410-411).

For the purposes of this research, the term “historical trauma” will refer to the historical conditions or events that affect a community or group of people. The term “historical trauma response” will refer to the myriad of ways in which responses to historical trauma are manifested.

Historical trauma has been described as a collective trauma inflicted on a population that shares a distinct group identity through ethnicity, nationality or religion and whose members experience similar reactions to the traumatic events (Evans-Campbell, 2008). Examples of historical trauma are the forced relocation of North American First Nations and forced acculturation of First Nations children in residential schools (Grant, 2008), the bondage of Africans and African-Americans (Kidron, 2004), and the Internment of Japanese Americans during World War II (Brave Heart, 2007; Wise, 2007). Compared to trauma which may occur from accidents or naturally caused disasters, trauma from events such as these, which were intentionally-designed and precipitated by humans, has a stronger, far-reaching impact on those who experienced it (Loo, 1993). In experiencing a natural disaster and the arbitrary, impersonal force of nature, survivors are confronted with their own human vulnerability in the natural world. In experiencing a traumatic event intentionally designed by humans, survivors are confronted with the evilness of their fellow humans in the social world. Where the natural disaster may be a humbling experience, the human-induced event may be seen as humiliating (Janoff-Bulman, 1997).

Historical trauma has been studied from a number of perspectives such as political activism (Danieli, 1998; Kidron, 2004), human rights (Danieli, 1998;), cultural

studies and collective memory (Caruth, 1995; Kidron, 2004) as well as psychology and post traumatic stress disorder (Loo, 1993), family studies (Danieli, 1998), identity formation (Kidron, 2004), social construction (Grant, 2008) and also from the perspective of healing on a community and national level (Brave Heart, 2007; Danieli, 1998). Research has shown that historical trauma may affect not only those who directly experienced it, but subsequent generations as well, (Danieli, 1998), and may lead to intergenerational trauma (Wise, 2007).

The Internment of Japanese Canadians has not been researched in terms of trauma and PTSD. McAllister (1999) refers to traumatic events (as noted in PTSD) as 'violent acts" (p. 42). Whereas traumatic events are linked to the personal experiences of trauma survivors, acts of political violence refer to dominance and power (p. 34). In reference to the Internment of Japanese Canadians, McAllister (1999) defines political violence as

systematically deployed measures that damage or destroy the capacity of a community to continue to function as a social collective. This form of political violence can include programs that either inadvertently result in, or have been intentionally devised to dismantle a community's socio-cultural, economic and political institutions. It might include uprooting a community from its settlement or forcing its members to physically disperse and then assimilate into the dominant population (p. 4).

Oikawa's (1999, in press) usage of the phrase "acts of national violence" (p. 6) denotes the socio-political events and conditions of Internment. The term "national violence" emphasizes the complicity of not just politicians and the state (as in political violence) but also the "nation of citizens" (p. 7) that brought about this violence which secured the position of white supremacy and benefited white Canadian citizens.

## **Impact of Historical Trauma**

The impact of historical trauma has been described as “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the life span and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences” (Brave Heart, 2007, p. 177). Grant (2008) described the effects of historical trauma as “a sense of unresolved and ambiguous sense of loss and grief that is associated with damage to culture (and) the experiences of ancestors,” “a psychological absence of family members,” “loss of emotional and psychological connection with one’s heritage,” and the lack of or injury to a healthy sense of cultural identity” (p. 127).

## **Intergenerational Transmission of Responses to Historical Trauma**

One of the impacts of a traumatic event is that it may disrupt one’s worldview, leaving one feeling vulnerable and unsafe. Janoff-Bulman (1997) suggests our perceptions and understanding of the world is developed through a conceptual system or schema, which is based on three fundamental assumptions of the external world, ourselves and the relationship between the two (p. 6). These assumptions are: (1) the world is benevolent (2) the world is meaningful and, (3) the self is worthy. The benevolence of the world refers to one’s expectations of positive outcomes in events and positive interactions with people, as people are assumed to be good and helpful. The world is seen as meaningful in that events are believed to happen for a reason, based on social laws and justice where a person’s behavior influences the outcome of an action, or on religious beliefs where a person’s moral behavior is deemed good or bad by a higher

being or god, and awarded accordingly. Individuals have control over events by the behavior they choose. In the third assumption, individuals tend to see themselves as being good, moral and capable (Janoff-Bulman, 1997).

This conceptual system develops over time, beginning with early interactions with caregivers and becomes a fixed entity that guides future interactions. Trauma may shatter any one or all of these assumptions, but even the breakdown of one assumption may affect one's sense of personal security and well-being in the world (Janoff-Bulman, 1997).

According to Ancharoff, Munrow and Fisher (1998), Janoff-Bulman's (1992, 1997) theoretical framework of trauma and the shattering of basic assumptions has been used to understand the communication and transmission of trauma survivors' disrupted beliefs and assumptions to their children and how survivor parents influence their children's beliefs, basic assumptions and worldview.

Research on the intergenerational transmission of responses to historical trauma from the perspective of traumatic stress is fairly recent. It was pioneered in Canada in the 1960's as increasing numbers of children of survivors of the Jewish Holocaust sought clinical treatment, followed by studies in the United States and then Israel (Danieli, 1998). This has led to intergenerational studies of other populations who have lived through mass trauma such as Armenians who survived the Turkish genocide in the early 1900's (Kupelian, Kalayjian, & Kassabian, 1998). While the magnitude of the Jewish Holocaust cannot be compared with all populations, the research conducted with this population

has been acknowledged as adding credence and validity to the study of other populations that have experienced mass trauma (Brave Heart, 2007; Nagata, 1998).

Trauma directly experienced by one generation may be transmitted to the next generation, intentionally and/or unconsciously, overtly and/or covertly. The intergenerational transmission of trauma between the survivor generation and subsequent generations refers to behavioural, emotional and cognitive patterns emanating from the survivors' experiences which may be transmitted to, and mirrored in the next generation (Munroe, Shay, Fisher, Zimering, & Ancharoff, 1993 as cited in Ancharoff, Munroe, & Fisher, 1998).

### **Mechanisms of Transmitting Trauma**

The four basic mechanisms of transmission – silence, overdisclosure, identification, and reenactment – are not necessarily conducive to discussion among family members (Ancharoff, Munroe, & Fisher, 1998). For instance, identification and reenactment are considered to be nonverbal in nature and, as such, are not taken into account in this study. Deciphering intergenerational messages transmitted by any of these four mechanisms may be difficult at a conscious level until they can be verbalized.

Silence is one of the ways in which the experience of and responses to historical trauma in one generation is communicated to the next. In many populations that have experienced mass trauma, silence has been both the response to historical trauma in the generation that experienced it and a covert transmission of that response to subsequent generations (Liem, 2007).

Within the family system, there are two ways in which silence may develop, from family members and from parents (Ancharoff, Munroe, & Fisher, 1998). For instance, family members may be “empathically attuned” to the emotional distress of a parent and avoid discussion of issues which they believe may cause more distress. A parent’s reaction to certain issues may inhibit discussion if those issues trigger strong emotions such as anger and anxiety, or flashbacks. Where there is a tendency for children to feel responsible for a parent’s distress, they will avoid mentioning situations, thoughts or emotions that disturb the parent.

Danieli (1998) describes the silence surrounding the experiences of Holocaust survivors as a “conspiracy of silence” between Holocaust survivors and society in general, including mental health professionals and between Holocaust survivors and their children. Because survivors’ experiences were of such a horrific magnitude, it was easier for society to deny or ignore their stories, tell survivors to forget and get on with their lives, or to blame them for their own victimization. Even those who were interested or concerned avoided asking too many questions, afraid of opening up more wounds, when really, they were protecting themselves. Due to this societal reaction, Holocaust survivors became silent about their experiences to nonsurvivors, believing that only those who had experienced the same things would be able to understand. This imposed silence not only magnified their feelings of isolation and mistrust of society but also hindered their mourning process and reintegration into familial and sociocultural environments.

Underdisclosure is a variation of silence, in which only fragments of parental trauma are known (Ancharoff, Munroe, & Fisher, 1998). For instance, whether or not

Holocaust survivors told their children born after the war about their war experiences, the children felt the presence of the Holocaust in the home and internalized their parents' Holocaust experiences (Danieli, 1998, p. 5).

The "conspiracy of silence" has also been used to describe the experiences of many other populations such as Korean-Americans about the Korean War (Liem, 2007). Liem (2003) describes silence as "an important carrier of the unspeakable past—a medium harbouring subliminal dread and fear, the object of projected assumptions and expectations, and a source of miscommunication among the generations" (p. 113).

However, there may be populations where "conspiracy of silence" may not be a universal or culturally appropriate concept (Denham, 2008). While this concept assumes that talking about trauma is beneficial, Denham (2008) suggests that this "may be counterintuitive to non-'western' models of transmission" (p. 398). As an example, he provides a case study of men in an Inuit community who were working through trauma. The process of healing occurred while "being in the silent company of another understanding person, often while out on the land or engaging in an activity" rather than "explicitly talking about problems" (Fletcher & Denham, 2008, as cited in Denham, 2008, p. 398).

Another mechanism of intergenerational communication is overdisclosure. Parents' appropriate disclosure of personal experience to offspring depends on their child's age, awareness and ability to process the information. Traumatized parents who have not developed coping skills or integrated their experiences may be unaware of the appropriateness of their disclosures and may be unable to monitor their communications



with their child (Ancharoff, Munroe, & Fisher, 1998). However, in particular situations, such as the aftermath of the Holocaust, the children may have been the only ones in which the Holocaust survivor parents could confide (Danieli, 1998). From a learning perspective, parents' communication about their trauma may be a means of teaching their children about their worldview and preparing them to engage with the world (Ancharoff, Munroe, & Fisher, 1998).

### **Collective, Community, Cultural Trauma**

In addition to individual trauma, trauma may also be discussed in terms of collective experience, in which a community as a whole is traumatized. Erikson (1995) describes trauma from a sociological perspective, in which "(t)rauma...has a social dimension (p. 185). Whereas individual trauma may signify a "blow to the psyche," a collective trauma may signify "a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality" (Erikson, 1976 as cited in Erikson, 1995, p. 187). He describes a community in general as "'the locus for activities'....whereby the community offers a cushion for pain...offers a context for intimacy...(and) serves as the repository for binding traditions" (p. 188). Loss of their community as they knew it, leaves its members without an effective, sustaining source of support (Erikson, 1995).

Communities may be traumatized by natural disasters such as floods, by technological disasters such as the leakage of a nuclear power plant in Chernobyl, Ukraine or by intentional human design such as the Armenian genocide.

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

To prepare a context for my research, the literature review covered Japanese Canadian experiences and perceptions of Internment which have been researched, documented, and expressed through various art forms. The literature review also covered areas of assimilation and acculturation, ethnic identity, and aspects of trauma, particularly collective trauma and historical trauma. This research will attempt to address some of the gaps in the literature concerning intergenerational responses to Internment as historical trauma within the Japanese Canadian community.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN

A hermeneutic phenomenological approach was used for this qualitative study. Phenomenological research studies the meaning of lived experience. With the hermeneutic approach, the interpretation of the meaning of lived experience becomes another significant factor, as hermeneutic phenomenological research seeks the understanding of how people interpret their world (Steeves, 2000) within the contexts of their history, politics and culture (Lopez & Willis, 2004). The hermeneutic phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study because it validated the lived experience of the participants in the context of the history and politics of the Internment and the cultural heritage of being Japanese Canadian.

Phenomenology has been used in relation to Internment issues in two studies conducted by self-identified Sansei. In her dissertation, "Remembering political violence: the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre," Kirsten Emiko McAllister (1999) used a phenomenological approach to explain the concept of "lifeworld," in relation to the Japanese Canadian community prior to Internment, in order to show that the government's destruction of that lifeworld was a political act of violence. Karen Mayeda (1995) conducted a phenomenological study with three generations of Japanese Americans (Nisei, Sansei, and Yonsei) from five different families to study the intergenerational effects of Internment in terms of lifestyle goals.

A discussion of the methodological framework of this research will be followed by an explanation of methods and procedures undertaken in gathering information and addressing ethical concerns. Thematic analysis included transcribing interviews verbatim, the process of analyzing for themes, and understanding the material using the concept of the hermeneutic circle.

### **Methodological Framework**

The section provides the philosophical steps which led me to choose the hermeneutic phenomenological approach for this qualitative study. Explanations of qualitative research in general, phenomenology and the role of theory in phenomenology, and hermeneutic phenomenology provide the philosophical underpinnings of the hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

### **What is Qualitative Research?**

Qualitative research is the study of human experience that is based on first-person accounts gathered through interviews and dialogue (Moustakas, 1994), as well as the description and interpretation of information/data from these interviews (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). The purpose of qualitative research is to understand the social reality and lived experience of individuals and groups (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010).

Qualitative research may be characterized by the following features. It is data-driven, rather than theory-driven. The data, or information provided through interviews, takes precedence over theory. In other words, the research project is guided by the

information collected through interviews, rather than predetermined by a theoretical framework or hypothesis as in quantitative research (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010).

In qualitative research, process is as significant as the outcome (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). This process involves the researcher in relationship building with participants, gaining familiarity with the context of the phenomena under study, and practising reflexivity.

Qualitative research depends upon the quality of information provided by participants. The research relationship between researcher and participants is an integral part of qualitative research. If the relationship is approached from a non-judgmental perspective, and is built on mutual trust and a sense of equality, an open atmosphere may be created where thoughts and feelings may be more freely expressed (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010) contributing to what is known as rich, thick data – personal, detailed descriptions of the thoughts, feelings and experiences of participants' lived experiences (Langdrige, 2007).

Another salient process in qualitative research is contextualization. The researcher familiarizes herself with the context of the individuals and the phenomena being explored as well as the context of their lives as a whole within the social and political spectrum in which they occur (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010).

In the analysis of data, qualitative research is inductive in nature, moving from the specific, such as the information provided through interviews, to the more general and abstract where themes and patterns begin to emerge as more information is collected (Creswell, 2007), Upon further analysis, the information gathered may lead to the

construction of a new theory, contribute to earlier theories, or reveal insights into lived phenomena (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010).

Another aspect of qualitative research is the writing of “thick description” which is a detailed composite of factual, theoretical and analytic information. It is developed from the rich and in-depth information provided by the interviewees as well as the context of the situation or phenomena. It includes a detailed description of the phenomena, verbatim narratives of interviewees’ thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to the phenomena and the meanings they ascribe to it, in addition to thorough discussion, interpretation and analysis of the data. (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010).

### **What is Phenomenology?**

Phenomenology is a branch of philosophy that seeks to explore the human experience of a particular phenomenon, discover the meaning ascribed to that experience, and find the universal essence of that experience among those who have experienced that phenomenon (Van Manen, 1994). Two key influences in the development of phenomenology are Husserl (1859-1938) and Heidegger (1889-1976), a student of Husserl (Cohen & Omery, 1994).

Husserl is considered to be the founding father of the phenomenological movement (Langdrige, 2007; Morse, 1994). Husserl wanted to return to a traditional form of philosophy based on the Greek idea of a “search for wisdom” (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). He believed that the basis of all knowledge began with the world of lived experience through human consciousness (Cohen & Omery, 1994; Langdrige, 2007), rather than history or theory (Stapleton, 1983 as cited in Ray, 1994). This led to the development of

his main concepts which were intentionality, essences, and bracketing (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010) in addition to the life-world (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000).

Intentionality refers to being conscious of, or aware of, an object that could be another person, an animal or even an idea (Langdrige, 2007). It is not meant as an intent to carry out an action, such as going for a walk. When we are conscious or aware, there is always an *object* of consciousness, which means our consciousness is “turned out on to the world, as it intentionally relates to objects in the world” (Langdrige, 2007, p. 13). Intentionality, then, refers to our consciousness *of* the world and *in* the world. Consciousness of the world is “the relationship between a person’s consciousness *and* the world” and it is this relationship that is studied in the form of experiences in the world (Langdrige, 2007, p. 13).

Bracketing is the process of suspending one’s presuppositions and assumptions about a phenomenon in order to examine it from a fresh perspective (Langdrige, 2007, p. 17). It is a concept that was developed from Husserl’s belief that humans experience the world via a “natural attitude,” that is, through our everyday assumptions about the world, without paying close attention to them, or examining them critically (Langdrige, 2007, p. 21). Bracketing is used to counteract these basic assumptions as it requires one to identify one’s preconceptions and biases.

Essences are the universal aspects, or “essential structures,” of lived experience among those who have in common the lived experience of a particular phenomenon. Through the process of bracketing, essences are “without preconceptions or prejudices

(historical traditions)" (Husserl, 1970 as cited in Ray, 1994). These essences form the basis, or origins, of knowledge (Cohen & Omery, 1994).

The concept of lifeworld was developed later in Husserl's career (Langdrige, 2007). This is "the world as concretely lived" (Langdrige, 2007, p. 39), which Husserl believed should be "the basis of all philosophy and human sciences research" (Langdrige, 2007, p. 39). While the lifeworld concept contradicts the transcendental perspective, Husserl maintained that it was still "possible to transcend our subjectivity, to bracket off aspects of consciousness and reveal the world as it really is" (Langdrige, 2007).

Heidegger, a student of Husserl, moved Husserl's phenomenology in a different direction. Husserl believed the basis of phenomenology to be epistemological, (Cohen & Omery, 1994) which refers to the theory of knowledge or "how we know" and is concerned with the relation between "one who knows and that which can be known" (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010, p. 214). Heidegger, on the other hand, believed the basis of phenomenology to be ontological, which explores the question "what is being?" and is "concerned with the nature and relations of being" (Cohen & Omery, 1994, p. 140).

While building on Husserl's concept of the lived experience, Heidegger was critical of the descriptive and transcendental aspects of Husserl's phenomenology. Heidegger believed that phenomenology should be based on understanding the lived experience, rather than focusing on the description of it as Husserl intended (Langdrige, 2007; Lopez & Willis, 2004). Heidegger's phenomenology followed the hermeneutic tradition which is



based on the interpretation of text (Langdridge, 2007) and the search for meanings in the narratives of lived experience (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

Husserl's concept of bracketing to attain transcendental subjectivity was incongruent with an integral aspect of Heidegger's philosophy - Dasein, or being-in-the-world (Langdridge, 2007). Heidegger believed that phenomenology should focus on the individual's relation to his lifeworld, which has a cultural, historical and political context (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Bracketing, as a way of removing oneself from the world, in the form of one's perceptions and preconceptions, was not viable to Heidegger who believed it was not possible for the individual to separate himself from his lifeworld and its context (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Langdridge, 2007).

### **What is the Role of Theory in Phenomenology?**

Given that Husserl believed that the basis of all knowledge (Cohen & Omery, 1994; Langdridge, 2007;) begins with the world of lived experience through human consciousness (Langdridge, 2007), rather than history or theory (Stapleton, 1983 as cited in Ray, 1994), the role of theory in phenomenology is a contentious issue. Theory is considered to be the antithesis of phenomenology (Van Manen, 1994, as cited in Ray, 1994). Cohen (2000) posits that phenomenological research is empirical because experience is studied from observation, not from theory (p. 11). Holloway and Wheeler (2010) claim that qualitative research is guided by data, rather than theory, meaning that a research project is not predetermined by a theoretical framework but is based on data

that will be collected. Knowledge of some theories beforehand may be confirmed or contradicted depending on the data.

Three areas of concern about the role of theory in phenomenology are identified— whether or not there is a place for theory in phenomenology, whether theory that arises from reflective analysis of data is appropriate, and whether theory can be the driving force of a phenomenological study (Ray, 1994, p. 123). Ray argues that there is a place for theory arising from reflective analysis of the data and that theory can, indeed, guide the research process. In the first instance, Ray (1994) believes that taking a “theoretical position” resulting from reflective analysis links what may be considered subjectivity, that is, the phenomenological study of a few persons with the universality of human experience, as represented by the objectivity of theory. This fits with the concepts of Heidegger and Gadamer who acknowledge the historical and cultural context of experience. Van Manen (1994, as cited in Ray, 1994) accepts the inclusion of interpretive theorizing that may arise from analysis of the text. Cohen and Omery (1994) believe the use of theories is appropriate as part of the interpretation of material or to illustrate how the phenomenological research might contribute to the theory. However, they believe that the role of theory in guiding phenomenological research is inconsistent with phenomenological philosophy in which the researcher approaches phenomena directly, going “to the things themselves” rather than through concepts or theories (Cohen and Omery, 1994).

Ray (1994) posits that it is appropriate for theory to guide phenomenological research. The theoretical preconceptions of the researcher, in combination with the

process of data analysis, such as the hermeneutic circle, opens up new possibilities of understanding where small pieces of meaning data are viewed within an expanding context of meaning that can be seen in relation to theory or as a means of advancing theory and this fits with Gadamer's "horizons of meaning" (Langdrige, 2007).

### **What is Hermeneutic Phenomenology?**

Gadamer (b.1900 – d. 2002) furthers the ideas of Heidegger and the role of hermeneutics in phenomenology by expanding on one of Heidegger's notions of hermeneutics which is "the attempt to understand how it is we go about understanding the world as it is presented to us" (Cohen, 2000, p. 5). Gadamer's focus is on how phenomena is interpreted; hermeneutic phenomenological research is the means by which to understand "how people interpret their lives and make meaning of what they experience (Cohen, 2000, p. 5). Both Heidegger and Gadamer believe that this understanding is the "core of human existence" (Langdrige, 2007, p. 42).

The understanding of how we interpret and make sense of our lives comes about through text, or language, and by situating it in a historical and cultural context (Langdrige, 2007). According to Gadamer, hermeneutics is not only the art of interpretation (Langdrige, 2007), but also the study of texts that he broadly refers to as language. His sense of language includes conversation and meaningful activities as well as the written word (Cohen, 2000). Language is significant to understanding because it provides the means by which we come to an "interpretive understanding of our

existence” and it leads us to the possibility of a shared or mutual understanding of existence with another person (Langdrige, 2007).

Self-understanding is also integral to Gadamer’s concept of the understanding of human existence (Langdrige, 2007) and is derived from our position in “time and place,” history and culture, our prejudices and pre-judgments, and accumulated knowledge. While self-understanding may be limited by these factors, Gadamer believes it may also be broadened by a “fusion of horizons” or dialogue with another (Langdrige, 2007).

### **What is the Hermeneutic Phenomenological Approach?**

The hermeneutic phenomenological approach is based on concepts of phenomenological philosophy developed by Husserl, Heidegger and Gadamer (Cohen, 2000) that were discussed earlier. It is also based on philosophical assumptions from a constructivist paradigm such as there are multiple interpretations of reality rather than one single reality, theory should be based on interpretations, subjectivity and context are valued, biases are identified, and the evolution of ideas occurs over time (Cohen, 2000). This approach has been applied in other disciplines such as nursing (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010) and education (Van Manen, 1994).

The hermeneutic phenomenological approach diverges from Heidegger’s philosophy in the area of bracketing. Where Husserl sees bracketing as a means of seeing a topic from a fresh perspective, unencumbered by preconceptions and assumptions (Moustakas, 1994), Heidegger opposes the use of bracketing with the belief

that an individual cannot separate himself from his lifeworld and the context of it (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Langdridge, 2007).

Based on Husserl's phenomenological belief that the basis of all knowledge (Langdridge, 2007; Cohen & Omery, 1994) begins with the world of lived experience through human consciousness (Langdridge, 2007), this research began with the lived experience, or lifeworld, of Nisei and Sansei who were born after the Internment, and whose parents or grandparents were interned during the Second World War. Guided by Heidegger and Gadamer's hermeneutic concepts of interpretation and meaning of lived experience (Langdridge, 2007), and the validation of political, historical and cultural contexts relative to the lifeworld (Lopez & Willis, 2004), reflective analysis of the data was undertaken to come to an understanding of the interpretations and meanings of their lived experiences.

## **Methods and Procedures**

This qualitative research study used a phenomenological hermeneutic approach to explore the lived experience of Japanese Canadians born after the Internment in terms of learning about the Internment through intergenerational communication and living in the aftermath of the Internment. Research proceeded upon approval from the Research Ethics Board, University of Manitoba.

Twelve participants volunteered to share their personal information in one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. As the population of Japanese Canadians in Winnipeg is quite small compared to Toronto and Vancouver, anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained. Participants' identities were protected by the use of pseudonyms which they chose or asked me to choose at my discretion.

### **Gathering Information**

Prior to gathering information, requests were made to organizations for permission to post or distribute my invitations to participate in this research. Posters were placed at the Manitoba Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre and the Manitoba Buddhist Temple (Appendix A), and Letters of Introduction (Appendix B) and Invitations to Participate (Appendix C) were distributed electronically by the Manitoba Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association to its members with email addresses. An invitation to participate was placed in The Bulletin, a publication of the University of Manitoba (Appendix D). Prior to being interviewed, each participant in this research reviewed and signed an informed consent form (Appendix E) signifying that they understood the

goals of this study, what their participation entailed, and how their privacy and anonymity would be protected. Each participant indicated it they would like to receive a copy of their transcript and/or a research summary.

Research tools consisted of an interview guide (Appendix F), a questionnaire (Appendix G), and an audio recorder. The interview guide is a flexible outline consisting of open-ended questions on salient topics and issues to be covered in the interview. It provides some structure and focus to the interviews to ensure that the same material is covered with each participant.

In constructing an interview guide, Langdrige (2007) suggests that one should consider the broad range of issues to be covered and then identify those issues which would form the basis of the overall structure of the interview (p. 67). To that end, this interview guide was developed to explore participants' impressions and perspectives on learning about the Internment, intergenerational communication about the Internment, how they experienced their external environment growing up in the aftermath of the Internment, how Internment may have influenced them in terms of identity formation and life choices, and how what they have learned and integrated could be applied or taught to future generations, within and beyond the Japanese Canadian community.

The questionnaire consisted of six questions pertaining to family history, intergenerational communication about Internment, self-identifying factors, and age group. I included a questionnaire in order to have a demographic context for the information from the interviews, to have a sense of the time period in which they grew

up, and where they might be in terms of life development and relevant concerns during this time period.

**Participants.** Twelve participants, eight females and four males, volunteered for this study. According to Padgett (2008), a sample size of five to ten individuals is quite common in a phenomenological study as the purpose of this approach is to gain depth, rather than breadth of knowledge. The nature of qualitative research, in general, is to gain depth of understanding about a particular concept or phenomenon through in-depth, one-on-one interviews with a small sample, rather than to gain a breadth of knowledge using standardized measures and questionnaires with a large sample as in quantitative research (Padgett, 2008). While a phenomenological study may include only one participant, sample size has ranged from a recommended number of three to ten participants (Dukes, as cited in Creswell, 2007) to 325 participants (Polkinghorne, 1989 as cited in Creswell, 2007).

Participants were self-identified Nisei and Sansei with at least one Japanese Canadian parent or grandparent who was forced by the federal government to leave British Columbia during the Second World War and was either interned in a ghost town camp in interior B.C., forced to work in labour camps or pressured to work on farms on the prairies. These participants did not have direct experience with internment themselves.

I kept the inclusion criteria as open as possible to increase the possibility of reaching volunteer participants. My concern in not finding participants stemmed from



being told, while working on my research proposal, that “no one would want to speak to me” about my topic. If my criteria were too limiting, the possibilities would decrease.

Of the twelve participants, one was self-identified as being a Nisei and eleven identified themselves as Sansei. No one identified themselves as being Yonsei. The age groups of participants ranged from 30-35 to 60-65 years. No one from the age groups of 20-25 and 25-30 years responded to my invitation.

In terms of self-identifying ethnicity and /or nationality on the questionnaire, six identified themselves as Japanese-Canadian, one as Japanese Canadian (no hyphen), one as Canadian, three as Canadian of Japanese heritage, and one as a mixed race Canadian. Four participants each had one parent whose heritage was Japanese and another parent whose heritage was not Japanese.

**Interviews.** Information was gathered through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, using an interview guide that consisted of open-ended questions and a questionnaire. Kahn (2000) suggests the use of an unstructured, conversational interview in hermeneutic phenomenology. However, while Langdridge (2007) acknowledges that unstructured interviews may provide a greater opportunity for rich information than semi-structured interviews, he cautions that unstructured interviews are difficult to manage and usually take much time and practice to master.

As a way of creating a context for the interview, helping the participant focus on the topic, and as a means of warming up to the other questions, my first question was introductory - “I wonder if we could begin by talking about some early family history.

Could you please tell me about the pioneers in your family - the first ones who came from Japan? How did you learn about all this?"

Each interview ranged from one to two hours in duration, and was conducted in person or by telephone. In-person interviews were held at a location chosen by the participants, where he/she felt comfortable and safe and where there were few, if any, privacy issues or distractions. Interviews were recorded with the use of an audio recorder. I transcribed the audio tapes verbatim myself in order to strengthen my connection with the material and to allow me to re-experience the nuances in voice and speech, pauses and silences, which are integral aspects of dialogue that contribute to the meaning of what was voiced, but may not be fully captured in text. A transcript was sent to each participant who had requested one in order to confirm the content and intent of what they wanted to express. Material in the transcript was changed, deleted or expanded as requested by the participant.

**Ethical Concerns.** Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. Audio tapes and transcriptions were stored in a locked metal filing cabinet to which only I had access. Participants' identities were protected with the use of pseudonyms which they chose or asked me to choose on their behalf. These pseudonyms were also used on their audiotapes and transcriptions. This list of participants' names and pseudonyms were kept in locked storage, but separate from the audiotapes and transcriptions. Any personal details identifiable to members of the Japanese Canadian community were deleted by me or at the participant's request.

During or after the interview, issues may be raised which participants have not dealt with, or have not reflected upon for a while. In the event that emotional distress might occur as a result/outcome of these interviews, I compiled a list of resources for them.

### **Thematic Analysis**

In hermeneutic phenomenological research, the overall process of analysis moves between the field text, which covers the material generated during data collection and the narrative text, which deals with the researcher's writing and interpretations of the material (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000). In this process, the researcher becomes immersed in the data, transforms or reduces the data to obtain relevant information, analyzes the data for themes, and comes to understand and interpret the data via the hermeneutic circle (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000).

In my research, analysis actually began during the interview process and the gathering of information. While listening, I began to think about the meaning that the participant was trying to convey about his/her lived experience and memories of that experience. In subsequent interviews, I began to notice how certain things, phrases or events kept cropping up, and named these as emerging themes. Conversely, I also noticed how certain experiences were unique or differed from other interviews (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000).

Immersion in the data is a characteristic of qualitative research in general, and in hermeneutic phenomenological research in particular. In my research, it began with the

interview process and carried through the full spectrum of the research process of transcribing the audio-recorded material, analyzing the data for themes, and writing the findings and discussion. Transcribing was a form of immersion which involved listening intently to an interview tape many times to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the interview.

In the next phase of analysis, after transcribing interviews, I followed what Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves (2000) refer to as “data transformation” or “data reduction.” This is a form of editing in which irrelevant data, such as digressions that are off topic, are winnowed out. Colloquial expressions, such as “you know,” are removed to simplify the text while maintaining the unique character of the interview. Although they suggested that interviews may be reorganized so that discussions of the same topic are placed together, I did not follow that procedure, as I felt it interrupted the organic quality of the interview.

In addition to repeated listening of the interview tapes, I read and re-read each transcript several times in order to immerse myself in the data and to familiarize myself with the material. This reading process is referred to as an “orienting gestalt” (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000) in which the researcher attempts to intuit a phrase, or phrases, that encapsulates the essential meaning of the text (Van Manen, 1994 as cited in Langdridge, 2007). At this stage, these phrases or meanings guide subsequent stages of analysis and interpretation. As well, significant characteristics of each interview are identified. (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000). Using this approach allowed me to gain an

overall understanding of the text while being receptive to themes that were emerging as well as “exemplars,” which are “bits of textual data in the language of the participant that capture essential meanings of themes” (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000).

For the process of thematic analysis, I incorporated the suggestions of Professor Roberta Woodgate, Faculty of Nursing, University of Manitoba, who has worked extensively on phenomenological research in health care, as well as the suggestions of Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves (2000). Using a landscape orientation, I created four columns, one each for comments, line numbers, the interview itself, and themes. In this way, each interview was formatted for line-by-line coding, and allowed me plenty of space to add comments and emerging themes. I worked from a hard copy, writing comments, underlining text, and highlighting passages, and then transferred this to the computer.

After transcribing several interviews, I began to analyze them for emerging themes. This enabled me to note themes more quickly in subsequent transcriptions. However, I was also conscious of not closing off the possibility of finding new themes along the way. When themes started to emerge, I created a tentative template of themes emerging for each individual, and began to insert passages from each individual interview that were relevant to an emerging theme. The number of themes emerging increased as interviews were transcribed, and even the last interview offered a new theme. Themes emerging from each individual interview were compiled into themes emerging as a group. Individual passages from each theme were gathered together into a group compilation of passages for each theme.

The concept/ or metaphor of the hermeneutic circle was quite appropriate for my research, taking into account the individual's lived experience, the individual's experience within his/her family, the individual's and family's experience within both the Japanese Canadian and mainstream community, and the "collective voice" or "mythologizing" that has been developed within the Japanese Canadian community.

An understanding of the data and how it may be interpreted is developed by using the hermeneutic circle, which is a metaphor for the ongoing dialectic process of understanding and interpreting the data in increasingly larger contexts. The dialectic process is the constant, returning flow of movement between the particular and the whole and from the whole back to the particular. Small, particular bits of data and their meaning are continually compared and interpreted within a context that spirals into larger contexts, for instance, from the whole text to the individual, to the individual's family and to the community (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000).

Because hermeneutic phenomenological research validates the political, historical and cultural contexts of lived experience (Lopez & Willis, 2004), this research incorporates the individual's lived experience within the context of the family and community's experience of Internment during the Second World War in addition to the dispersal and forced assimilation after the War.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Life experiences of participants, in relation to intergenerational communication of the internment experience and the influence of internment, were richly textured in similarity and diversity. While sharing common threads of having a family member who experienced internment and sharing a Japanese heritage, similarities and diversities depended on such factors as age of the participant, age of the family member when they were interned, and whether both parents were Japanese Canadian or if one parent was non-Japanese Canadian. The findings from interviews with these twelve participants were grouped together in areas such as openness of family discussion, how descendants learned about and reacted to learning about the Internment, and how stories of Internment are being communicated to the next generations. Participants were identified by pseudonyms which they chose or asked me to choose on their behalf. One participant preferred to be identified only by an initial.

A questionnaire was used to provide an opening for the interview, if needed, as well as providing some demographic information. While the answers to the questionnaires gave a very general, overall picture, the interviews provided a deeper look at what was behind those answers in the questionnaires.

## **Intergenerational Communication of Internment Experience**

This section deals with how openly participants felt that the Internment was discussed in their families. One of the questions on the questionnaire was to get a sense of how much the participants felt they knew about the Internment when they were growing up, and another question was to get a sense of how open family discussion was about the Internment. While I realize this is not a quantitative study, I quantified the number of participants who had similar experiences so as not to give the impression that everyone shared the same experience in how much they felt they knew about the Internment and how openly it was discussed. This is congruent with hermeneutic phenomenological presentation of findings. According to Steeves (2000),

Sometimes, it is useful to tell the reader how many informants contributed to each of the categories or even which informants contributed to a certain cluster of categories. This can be a matter of establishing the relative robustness of a category, in the first case, or demonstrating different patterns of experience, in the second case. Both can be useful ways of making the findings more understandable or demonstrating the complexity of an experience (p. 97).

Combining the answers to the two questions, one participant said she knew a lot about the internment growing up and it was discussed fairly openly in her family. Of the two participants who said they knew a fair amount about the Internment, one said it was discussed fairly openly, and one said it wasn't discussed very much. Of the three participants who said they knew a little about it, two said it was discussed fairly openly, and one said it wasn't discussed very much. Of the four who said they didn't know very much about the Internment while growing up, two said it was not discussed very much, one said it wasn't discussed at all and one didn't provide a direct answer. Two participants said they grew up not knowing about the Internment at all as it was not



discussed in their family. The presentation of findings will begin with participants who said the Internment was discussed fairly openly in their families. The findings from participants who said the Internment was not discussed at all or not very much in their families when they were growing up will follow under the section "Silence, reticence, reluctance to talk, reluctance to ask."

### **Learning about the Internment and family discussion**

Five of the twelve participants felt that the Internment was discussed fairly openly in their families when they were growing up. Aspects of openness of discussion about the Internment included being told about family and community life prior to 1942, what the situation was like just prior to being interned, experiences in the Internment camp, be it from a child's or an adult perspective, what it was like coming to Manitoba and settling in to a new life, and being told about the racism they had experienced (refer to socialization section.) Other aspects of openness in sharing Internment life experiences included being shown certain artifacts such as identity cards which Japanese Canadians had to carry during and even after Internment, as well as family photographs of camp life, and visiting the places where family members had lived prior to the war. Several underlying themes in being told about the Internment were: "this was a situation over which they had no control," "this is what happened, we need to move on from this experience," and that "there was nothing to be ashamed about." For instance, Keri (Sansei) says:

I would say that my family talked about it quite openly. It was never a secret, it was not something that was taboo to talk about, it was not something that was

so painful that you just didn't talk about it. My parents wanted us to know about it because it's a part of our heritage and our history. We needed to be a part of that.

A theme that emerged from participants' comments on the stories they were told was the noticeable lack of bitterness or anger from their family members in the telling of the stories. Participants were empathetic, acknowledging the hardships experienced by their families and community, and appreciating their inner strength and the strength of the community to persevere under such harsh conditions.

Some participants learned about what life was like for their families before they were interned. Steve (Sansei) says:

I learned the most about my family history from my mom....She...told me little bits about what my grandparents did, but she really understated their accomplishments.... She also explained to me about how both of my grandmothers were picture brides. She did not have family photos, of course, all of that having been left behind during the "relocation" and so it was very much an oral history sort of thing, with almost daily anecdotes that made it all come alive for me.

Kiyo (Sansei) felt that she knew quite a bit about her mother and there were some photographs from the time period before the war.

My mother was a very open person, who shared a lot of her life.... (She) was always acknowledged for her cooking ability. One of the things she did as a single woman, was work as a domestic in a doctor's home where she learned a lot about Western cooking. I think many of her creative abilities came out in presentations of Japanese cuisine as well as North American cuisine.... (S)he also worked in the canneries. My father had come from Japan as a young man and somebody introduced the two of them, and they got married. They had a fairly modest service, but I always knew it was a formal one, and my mother has lovely wedding pictures of their special day. They went to Seattle for their honeymoon. She has a lovely picture of my father and her on the ferry to Seattle, something I have fond recollections of, about their lives before the war.

From her grandparents, Misa (Sansei) learned about what their lives were like in BC before the war, living in a Japanese community in North Vancouver, where her Grandmother worked in the cannery, and her Grandfather probably worked in the lumberyard. She was also told about what the situation was like before they were moved to the internment camp:

I remember my Grandfather telling us all the stories of how, when the war started, and the government approached the Japanese community, saying, if all the young men come and help us, and help build the railway, help build the highways in the mountains, your family and wives and everybody will be able to stay in their homes in BC. So they believed them. And off went all the young men, and before they knew it, well, that was a lie (laugh). They moved from the highways, um, and the railways, into building camps and prepping the camps for the arrival of the families and the wives and the children. That was my grandfather... he and all of his friends were more than willing to go, and no complaints, just go, if that meant that everybody else could stay home. So uh, so off they went. But before they knew it, you know, the families were rounded up ....they just rounded them up in the stalls and stuff, and all the rooms were divided by sheets. All the women and children were moved there until the camps were ready. I have pictures of my Grandfather building the camps, and then working with all of his friends.

Keith's (Sansei) mother told him, that prior to being moved from their homes,

(T)he Japanese people would all get together quietly and talk before this all happened, lots of hush-hush voices, and then the parents, I think she said she could remember her mother weeping at night because they were so scared about, there was a lot of uncertainty about what was going to happen. "

Keri learned about the Internment through stories from her Mother and her Aunt, who was "pretty honest about the whole thing," and by helping a sibling with research. She described her father as a quiet person and not very talkative, but she believes that "if I had really sat down with him and asked him he would tell me things."

From her Aunt, Keri learned about the attitudes, behaviour and sense of community in the Internment camp to which her Aunt, Uncle and their children moved.

One thing she did tell me about was the Japanese people were very – I don't know if accommodating is the word – but they didn't plan an uprising, they didn't fight it. They chose to be very obedient, and civil and polite, which is the nature of their culture. And they felt that if they took the high road they would be treated better and looked upon better, rather than rioting and trying to escape and running away, and those kinds of things. Another thing she told me about was my uncle was one of the first to organize the men at camp, to agree to help out with the running of the camp and making conditions better for the residents there, and they were actually very agreeable to working on the road camps. They didn't want to leave their families, but they felt if they were cooperative, things would go easier for them.

Experiences of life in the internment camp were told from both a child's and adult's perspective, depending on the age of the family member at the time of Internment. Keith, Kiyō, and Patti (Nisei) heard about experiences in internment camp from a child's perspective.

Although Keith felt that the Internment was not discussed very much in his family, he says "...but when it was discussed, it was discussed openly." Referring to the internment camp experience:

It wasn't something that they were ashamed that it happened, looking back on it. They realized they didn't have a lot of control on it, it wasn't a fair thing, but this is what happened and we made the best of it, right? So it wasn't talked about a lot, but when it was talked about, it was fairly open, and if we had questions, they were answered, and they were answered in an honest way.

Keith recalled his mother telling him stories about her time as she a child in Internment camp, and noted:

(M)y Mom is recounting her stories through a child's eyes, reflecting her age at the time. And she said, you know, we looked on it as a big adventure. Your

friends, the kids are still there, the families are still there, although the Dad and the older brothers were gone but she said, we still had our friends, we still had our community. But she said it was very, very difficult on the adults, she realized after, it was extremely stressful on them. Because, I mean, it was their families who were getting uprooted, right? Whereas the kids were adaptable, they're going to have fun wherever they go, they're going to try to maintain the part of, and I think probably the community had a big part in trying to maintain their childhood, right? but for the adults, she did mention that, I remember her saying that it was very, very stressful.... I think the men were sent off to work at another camp. And I remember my Mom telling me how difficult that was for everybody, that the men were separated from the women.

Kiyo learned two versions of what life was like in the internment camp – her older sister's perspective as a child growing up in camp, and her parents' perspective. Of her sister's stories, Kiyo says:

She was always telling stories about the Internment and what she remembers. So I think most of my recollection of what they did was actually through (her).... And she tells many, many memorable stories of growing up in the Internment camp, and how she was feeling such freedom and such joy in having no restrictions on her, being able to come and go as she pleased.... She has an impeccable memory about everybody's house and where everybody lived, and who lived where, and what kind of games they played, so yes, I think the fact that she grew up (there), her memory of that time was a very joyful one. So she looks back on the Internment as a tremendously gifted time. And that's from a child's eyes. She didn't see the limitations, the restrictions, the unnaturalness of people living in a confined area. She never saw that. She saw it only as a village, as a community.

Of her parents' experience of internment camp, Kiyo says,

I think their stories were more of a utilitarian nature, you know.... My Father always had community in mind, and he was always willing to be a part of a team, part of a group that was going to help a larger group. And so they would make different things in the Internment camp that people needed, things like furniture, and chest of drawers, and cedar chests and things like that.... I knew my Dad had gone away, he was on the Alberta road camp and I didn't quite understand that but they just said they had to send some of the men away. And my mother talked a lot about her parents, and how her parents, as well as her siblings were all in the same Internment camp, so they all felt they were together as a family. And I think my mother always felt very safe, knowing that her family was around her. And they would talk about times of what they did, like, you know, my father was a performer. He liked doing the shibai, (which is) a Japanese play, where they

dance a particular play. It's sort of like the Noh theatre... There would be music, and times when there would be dialogue. They did a lot of that in the Internment camp. They made their own entertainment. I think my father always felt very proud that he was a performer (chuckling).

About the adults' perspective, Kiyō says, "My parents were always very pragmatic about their time in the internment camp. I knew it was something the government imposed on them, and was not their choice, but I didn't sense from them, any revenge or negativity. They were stoic and had to accept what happened to them. "

Misa's source of stories about the Internment came from her maternal grandparents, with whom she has had a close relationship. From them, she learned about their lives in BC prior to the war, and what the situation was like before being moved to the internment camp, and she also learned about what life was like in the camp. But she says, "We heard about the good times.... The theatre and the productions they would put on....The parties in camp. Um, you know, my grandfather put on these productions, he was a performer, and you know, to make everybody laugh, lift their spirits, dress up as women as they did (laughter).

Relocating to Manitoba to work on sugar beet farms was yet another upheaval in the Japanese Canadian community. Greg (Sansei) recalled that "(T)hey always said the first winters were very difficult in Manitoba." Of this period in his mother's life, Steve recalled, "(M)y parents met at the YWCA only because their families had both opted to keep their families together and had "volunteered" to work on sugar beet farms in rural Manitoba. (My mother) didn't talk much about those years except that the work – and the first winter especially – was hard. It must have been."

From her Grandparents, Misa heard about the hardships they experienced on coming to Manitoba, as well the strength of community bonds.

You know, they banded together (with other families)... they all had to make a decision. When they're leaving the camps, they all had to decide ... and tell (the government) where they were going, so, out of their group of friends who were in camp together, they made the decision to come to Manitoba. I don't know why (laugh), someone must have known somebody, or whatever. (They lived in a communal type setting and pooled all their money together)... And until they all had money to start a new life, they all stayed. They all stayed. So, you know, right there, that's why it's such a, that's why that generation has such a strong bond, the sense of community, the shared history, and working together for a common goal, for all of them, you know? They wanted the same for everyone, every one of them.

Other aspects of openness in sharing Internment life experiences included being shown certain artifacts, such as the identity card. Keri says, "My Aunt kept all that stuff. I found some of my Mom's stuff and my Dad's stuff, too – where you had to actually carry an ID card saying who you were and you could be jailed if you were caught walking around without it. And these were Canadian born people." When asked if they talked about how they felt, being required to carry this card, Keri replied,

"I recall my Aunt telling me....They weren't disgraced, that's not the word. They certainly felt it was not right, for the Canadian government to do that. They certainly felt that there was no need for it because they were Canadian-born, and Canadian first, and that there were never any acts of treason, or planning or plotting to overthrow them or to go to the other side or anything like that.

Openness of discussion about the Internment was also reflected in being shown family photographs of camp life. Misa recalls photos of her Grandfather working with his friends in building the internment camps, of theatrical productions, and of residents playing baseball.

Visiting the site of the internment camp or places where family members used to live in BC also seemed to signify an openness to discussion of the Internment. Misa first learned about the Internment when she was about 12 years old. Her grandparents drove out to Vancouver with Misa and two other young family members and also took them to view the Internment camp where they had lived. Misa recalls, "There were a few broken down shacks...leaning over. They said, 'this is where they sent us.' They wanted to show us.... *it was never a big secret or anything.*" [emphasis added] About this experience, Misa says:

Well, you know, I wish I was older. I remember going there and going....I didn't quite understand. I mean, we hadn't taken it in school yet. You kind of take your Canadian history in high school, so I didn't understand the whole story of...why did they gather you up? Why did they take you away from your homes? And yet there was no bitterness...there was no anger, when they talked about it. With both my grandparents, there was never any bitterness, they're just not that way, you know. It was life, we got over it, now we're doing this..(laugh), you know? It's amazing. It's cultural, I think, it's cultural not to carry that bitterness and anger with you, you know? So yeah, that, I think, was the beginning of me learning about it, and then more came up, of course, when Redress... 'cause my family was involved in getting the Redress.

When asked how her Grandparents felt, talking to her about the Internment, Misa replied, "I think they were...no reservations, let's put it that way. No reservations, no shame, like I said, no bitterness, no anger, it was like, "This is what happened to us," you know?"

Greg went on a family trip to visit the place where his mother used to live. They visited a town resident who had some old photos of the area. Greg says, "so we looked at some of the old photo albums and you can tell before the relocation, you had



Japanese kids in the class. After relocation, it's all white. The class pictures, yeah. So that's what I remember seeing."

Keith had difficulty remembering any stories his parents told him about life before the Internment camp, as they were both fairly young when they were uprooted. And then it came to him.

Oh, you know, I do remember. My Dad was telling me the story of his father's farm. (W)e took a trip out there, and he showed me this gigantic field, which was totally open and in the middle of this very, very heavy BC forest and my Dad was telling me, yeah, your grandpa cleared this with a horse, a plough, and a box of dynamite. And I couldn't, I couldn't, and I was probably about 15 years old, and I could not believe it.

### **Prevailing Themes: Gaman and Enryo, Resilience and Empowerment.**

Interwoven throughout the family stories of their Internment experience were themes of gaman and enryo, resilience and empowerment. Gaman (perseverance-suppression of emotions) and enryo (self-restraint, reserve) (Kitano, 1969 as cited in Nagata & Cheng, 2003) are values associated with the Japanese culture, and would have been practiced by the Issei and older Nisei. These values represent inner strength and self-control and are discussed in the subsections of "Silence, reticence and reluctance," "No bitterness, no anger," and "Blessing in disguise."

**Silence, Reticence, Reluctance to Talk and Reluctance to Ask.** In families where the Internment wasn't discussed very much or not at all, an underlying theme on the part of family members who were interned seemed to be silence and reluctance to talk about Internment, particularly when the participants were growing up. Conversely, on the part of participants, there seemed to be a certain reticence or reluctance to ask formerly interned family members about their Internment experiences, out of respect for their feelings and well-being, and respect for an elder. However, discussion of the Internment within the family increased during and after Redress, and when participants were adults.

In Andrea's family, the internment wasn't discussed at all when she was growing up; in Crista's family, it wasn't discussed very much. Andrea (Sansei) and Crista (Sansei) consider themselves to be of mixed race and biracial, respectively. Their mothers are Japanese Canadian and their fathers are Euro Canadian. Growing up, they knew much more about their fathers' side of the family, as their mothers didn't talk too much about their Japanese heritage or family history.

Andrea grew up knowing more about her Euro-Canadian paternal grandparents than her Japanese Canadian maternal grandparents. But she didn't feel that information was being hidden from her, only that something seemed to be missing.

I don't remember hearing many stories about that part of my grandparents' life, about "How did we end up in Manitoba?" There was sort of just a gap of knowledge. But there wasn't any sense that it was a secret. So it wasn't as though, I always thought what's not being told. It was just more of a, "I don't really know the full story." Whereas, I guess for me, when I compare it to my other grandparents, my Dad is white, he's from Manitoba, that was always knowledge, of the full history of those grandparents. I never felt as though I was missing something. It was like, oh, that Grandma and Grandpa lived in rural

Manitoba and they farmed and they were always here, they moved here and had their family, whereas, I guess on my Mom's side, there sort of was the sense of "Oh, I don't really know why we ended up in Manitoba."

In hindsight, Andrea believes the gap in knowledge may have occurred because there were no photographs of the internment camp or of that time period in their lives.

Most of the photos are from when they were already in Winnipeg with their family, so those ones, as I said, it's interesting growing up. We can talk about those, it's already after the Internment, so there's lots of stories, about "oh, this is what your Mom was like as a child," but then when you're older, looking at stuff, there aren't as many photos from BC, just the wedding day photos. I do remember that would trigger talking about the wedding day. But of course, there are no photos of the Internment, so that's where it was easier to have that gap, because there were no photos where you could say, "Oh, where were you here?" like "what is this place?" (both laughing)

In her family, as well, Crista also noticed that there was more discussion about her father's European heritage than her mother's Japanese heritage. "(M)y father always seemed very proud of his history, and his parents' country of origin, and telling us about that country, and my mother didn't really talk about Japan, or Japanese... you know, it was a little bit different? So, I could see a difference between my parents."

Two participants, E (Sansei) and June (Sansei), noted that family history in general was not really discussed. E did not know her family members' involvement with Internment until she was an adult; June didn't know about this part of her family's history until her later teen years. As a child, June often wondered why her parents didn't talk much about their early lives. She couldn't recall when she first heard about Internment, or from whom. When she started to ask her parents about it, information wasn't freely forthcoming.

One time when I learned about the Internment and that, and I would ask questions, they weren't, especially my Dad, was not very open to discussing it,

and my Mom very little, and I wondered, as a teenager, was the reason that they were ashamed? Or was it that they were angry that this had happened to them? But, in retrospect, I don't really think so. I think it was just more the case of, um, you know, they didn't talk about it, for whatever reason.

Even though June didn't refer outright to respect for her parents' feelings, she was cognizant of their feelings and their reluctance to speak about the Internment. The fact that she didn't learn more stories until much later in life seems to indicate that she didn't question them further. She explains:

(O)ur parents didn't talk very much about their early life. It was only later, when we became adults, that we questioned them more. I chatted with my Mom around her 85th birthday. So, by asking her questions at that time, we, I have three siblings, and we all learned so much that we did not know before that she never, ever talked about and it wasn't until I said, "Mom, let's sit down and talk because we would like to know more about your life." So, that way, we did find out quite a bit about their early life.

In E's family, there was no discussion of her family's experiences of the Internment when she was growing up. "No, I heard no stories whatsoever," she says. It wasn't until Redress was getting media attention in the 1980's that "I was even made *aware* of the concept of Internment." E was a young woman when her Grandmother, who had been interned, received the Redress compensation package from the Canadian government. Curious to know what it was, she asked her Grandmother, but was silenced by her response.

I remember speaking specifically to my Grandmother, who was interned in BC, and you know, I was young at the time, a curious granddaughter, and I said, 'Oh, what was that all about? What was that for?' And she said, 'Well, I don't want to talk about it.' That's exactly what she said. And basically from that point on I knew nothing.

Her Grandmother's reaction had a strong impact on E and seemed to deter her from asking more questions of her Grandmother or any other family member. Being a

young woman, she was respectful of the older woman's age and feelings. E goes on to describe further her Grandmother's reaction to her question, as well as her own reaction to her Grandmother's response, and explains why she didn't pursue this any further.

I could tell from my Grandmother's reaction, when I asked her it was obviously something that she personally found so....It was something that she didn't want to remember, basically, is what it was. She said, 'It happened a long time ago, and the money... it's something that happened a long time ago and I want to forget it,' is what she said. Yeah, so I was young and I'm not going to say, because there's a certain respect for your Grandmother, you're not going to say, 'why not?' You know? You're not going to say something like that, right, so that's basically...I have no information, personal information, I should say.

Explaining how she felt when her Grandmother said this to her, E says:

I think part of it, too, is, my Grandmother was a very *proud* person and a very strong character. And um, I was curious, but just the fact that... I must have assumed it was something that she didn't...It was so bad that she didn't want to talk about it anymore. I guess, out of respect for her that's why I didn't pursue it.

Although many years have passed since her Grandmother passed away, E still hasn't asked her father and his sibling, the remaining family survivors of Internment, about those experiences. She is still holding back out of respect for their feelings and well-being, "... I feel, again out of respect for their well-being, I don't feel I should....have the right to ask them straight out, 'What was it like in camp?'" The time of day was also a factor, as she felt it wasn't appropriate to start a discussion at night. Although she hasn't asked her father directly about his Internment experiences, she believes that he would be willing to talk about them with her. She has recently learned more, indirectly, in sorting through old photographs, saying, "He had no qualms about me looking at them.... Like, I said, "Where's this taken?" and he said "that was taken wherever." When asked if he spoke matter-of-factly, she said:

Yeah, that was it. (laughter) He didn't go into any depth, right? Course, you know, I never asked either. And it wasn't exactly the most appropriate time. It was later in the evening. It wasn't the time to be discussing something like that, I guess.... Yeah, I guess unless I *directly* [emphasis added] ask him, he's not going to say anything. You know, I'm sure he would say, if I did ask him, I'm sure he wouldn't have a problem talking about it now...

Patti acknowledged her mother's reluctance to talk about her Internment experiences and also seemed to show respect for her mother's feelings by spreading her questions over a long time period.

(S)o, over the ensuing years I'd ask her questions here and there. I know she didn't really want to talk about it a lot, but gradually, like I say, over many years, I sort of picked up enough that...you know, I'd ask her a question here, a question there, whatever, and she wasn't that...I know there were some people who really didn't want to talk about it, and I'm not going to say that she really wanted to talk about it, but she also didn't....She would tell me enough to answer my questions although I knew that it wasn't something she wanted to talk about, or that she got any, whatever from it, but she did talk about it.

Alan (Sansei) was also reluctant to ask family members about their Internment experiences. When he was growing up, no one really talked about Internment or even what life was like before Internment. His father had been born in an Internment camp and he had no extensive memories of that time period. At one point, when Alan did try to talk to some relatives about the Internment, he found they were extremely reluctant to talk about their experiences. Because of their reluctance, Alan felt it must have been a difficult time for them, and was very empathetic. "So they never really gave me stories about their lives, but I think just by not talking about it, that kind of said a lot." He acknowledges the difficulty in learning more from them. "Yeah, it's like pulling teeth trying to find out information, or just, how it was." Even though he would like to learn more about their experiences, he does not ask them out of respect for their feelings:

Thinking about the experience that people had in the Internment, I can see why my relatives wouldn't want to talk about it. And for me, I'm not going to push them to talk about something that they don't want to, do you know what I mean?...For me, I want to get an understanding about it, but I don't want to do that at the expense of forcing a family member to talk about something they don't want to talk about.

Because Internment had not been discussed in his own family, Alan believed this reluctance to talk about it was a cultural trait within the Japanese Canadian community, as well.

(N)o one ever really talked about it before. And I think that's obviously, I'm sure you know, part of the culture, right? Typically, you know, at least in my family, no one really wants to open up about things like that ....And I think that's the generation that I would think is just not inclined to talk about it, just thinking of my aunts and uncles, you know. Just the way they are. And it seems like it's like that, I guess from what I've seen in the community that everyone's like that....

While Alan attributes his family's silence and reluctance to talk about the Internment as a cultural phenomena, E explains her father's lack of explanation about places where he lived during Internment to gender and culture. "And also being male and Japanese, he's not going to expand on that ... (laughter) There's that, too, because they're not chatty." June's brother explained their parents' reluctance to talk about their early lives as a generational trait:

[M]y brother and I were talking one day and he said that, you know, in those days, when we were children, parents didn't share a lot with their children. It was like the adults had their separate interests and lives and their job was to look after and raise the children but we weren't, I mean when their friends came over, we didn't sit with them, we had to go to another room and, you know, like nowadays, children participate more in making family decisions...and they seem to know about their family's finances, and all about aunt so-and-so's ailments, you know, whereas when we were children, we didn't know anything about that, you know? Our place was to go to school and do our chores and it was a good life, we had a very happy childhood but...the adult part was separate.

Silence surrounding the topic of Internment, or the reluctance to talk about it on the part of those who were interned, left the descendants wondering about the “gaps in knowledge” or why family members didn’t want to talk about it. While each participant respected and accepted family members’ silence and reluctance, they placed their own meaning on that silence and reluctance. From E’s perspective, her Grandmother’s abrupt response to her question about the Internment indicated that it must have been a terrible experience because she didn’t want to talk about it and would rather forget it. Going by his family members’ silence and reticence to talk about the Internment, Alan had the impression that the Internment must have been a really difficult time, and that even their silence spoke volumes about their experience. In retrospect, June thinks that the reason her parents didn’t talk much about the Internment when she was growing up wasn’t due to feeling ashamed or angry about what happened to them, but that “I think it was just more the case of, you know, they didn’t talk about it, for whatever reason.”

Being silent is also an act of agency, choosing who to tell, and when. Sugiman (2009) provided an example of a Nisei woman’s perspective on choosing whom, and when, to talk about her personal experiences. Connie chose to speak to a public audience during the 1980s Redress campaign about the hardships she encountered coming to Manitoba and working on a sugar beet farm. Approximately twenty years later, however, she still had not spoken about these experiences to her daughter who expressed an interest in knowing about them several years ago. Connie’s reason was, “Well, it’s such a sad thing. I don’t want to repeat this anymore.” She preferred, instead, to write them down so that her family could read about them after her death (p. 197).



There are limitations to what we may learn about another's experience - limitations on how the stories are conveyed, verbally or non-verbally, how they are interpreted, the choice of words, or the choice of silence (Sugiman, 2003). While being empathetic and receptive to family members' experiences, the Nisei and Sansei participants accepted the boundaries of knowing/not knowing. In the eurocentric perspective, to "not speak" is viewed as a weakness or liability. From the perspective of gaman and enryo, it is a way of being, a sign of inner strength, and a means to protect the self and the next generation from feeling pain / the Internment.

Silence goes beyond intergenerational communication. Mona Oikawa (1999; in press) contended that the onus of speaking the silence, speaking about the Internment, should not rest solely on the "victim" or parent/child dyad, but should be directed towards the societal context and power dynamics in which it occurred. Who is being silent or being silenced? Who is silencing? The dominant society that perpetrated the political act of violence, the Internment, also perpetuated the silence in order to maintain the image of being a benevolent society.

**"No Bitterness, No Anger."** These words were used by five participants to describe the manner in which family members told them about their Internment experiences. One participant expressed what her mother had told her about why it was not good to harbour feelings of bitterness or anger, not from her personal experience, but from a collective perspective. None of the twelve interviewees mentioned a family member who said they were bitter or angry about the Internment and how they were

treated by the Canadian and BC governments. Three, however, were told that “it was not right,” referring to the actions of the Canadian government and its treatment of Canadian citizens. Two participants wondered why there was no expression of anger, bitterness or resentment, given what their family members had gone through and provided their own explanations or interpretations of the absence of bitterness or anger.

All but two participants referred to how their family members told them about their Internment experiences in terms of something positive that resulted from it. The other two participants were in families in which Internment was not discussed very much, and there weren't many family stories. Two participants, who worked in the Redress campaign, spoke of how Japanese Canadians were the collective victims, and the government was the perpetrator of injustice, but they did not speak of victimization with reference to their own personal family stories, or their own life experiences. Not one related a story of being personally victimized.

Six participants said the stories they were told were conveyed in a matter-of-fact way. Steven said his mother “did not sound bitter or angry. She just communicated about how things were.” He describes the context that could have been justifiable cause for bitterness, expanding her personal experience to the collective experience of her generation.

(N)obody from that generation seemed bitter about what had happened to them, that they were only teenagers at the time of the “relocation”, having their education disrupted, and several years later not only having to start with nothing, but also needing to support their parents who were clearly too old to start over.

Keri describes why her parents and aunt and uncle “chose” to remain in Manitoba, rather than return to BC, even after the government allowed Japanese

Canadians to return. "It's not like they were bitter, they just felt they had started a new life here and they were going to go with that, rather than go back to somewhere that had a lot of sad memories for them." Yet she stated that her mother wished Japan had won the war. Some time after the interview, when I asked Keri what her mother had meant by that, she replied by email:

I really can't say why she said she wished Japan had won the war. I believe that there must have been a lot of Issei and Nisei who were hurt and angry about how they were treated during the war but they kept quiet for the good of the collective whole. I cannot believe that the magnitude of what happened could not invoke some anger and bitterness but those it affected just chose to remain quiet and get on with life. Just because one does not act out or voice their objections, does not mean that they do not harbour feelings of anger and bitterness. I think the fact that a lot of them did not return to B.C. proves this point.

Kiyo speaks of how her parents were stoic about their situation.

My parents were always very pragmatic about their time in the internment camp. I knew it was something the government imposed on them, and was not their choice, but I didn't sense from them, any revenge or negativity. They were stoic and had to accept what happened to them.... I don't think they said things in a really overt way, but you know, the messages that I felt from my family was that it was wrong, what the Canadian government did. But it was sort of like, we need to move on from there. You know, you can't deliberate and be angry and hostile and revengeful. You need to move on. Because the best thing you can do is to be a good citizen. And to make your family proud of you.

Although Greg made no direct reference to "no bitterness, no anger," in showing me a photograph of camp life, he says, "you can see sort of like, you know, the life of the camps, it looks like, *it wasn't always a bitter moment* [emphasis added]. I think people had a chance to socialize....like I say, *not every day's a bitter day* [emphasis added], right?"

Both Misa and Keith wondered why family members who were interned didn't express any bitterness or anger, given their situation and how they were treated. They both attributed this absence of expression of bitterness or anger as a cultural trait, that is, Japanese culture, even though they refer to their family members as Canadian-born citizens. When Misa's grandparents told her about the Internment, she said:

There were no reservations, no shame...there was no bitterness...there was no anger, when they talked about it. With both my grandparents, there was never any bitterness, they're just not that way, you know. It was life, we got over it, now we're doing this, you know? It's amazing. It's cultural, I think, it's cultural not to carry that bitterness and anger with you, you know?... Maybe I just don't understand *their culture*, [emphasis added] like you just think, There's got to be a sense of anger in there somewhere, or a little bit of... "Why?," so that's why I thought they were hiding something, no one would show, I always felt maybe they didn't want to show that they were really angry.... ...so... I don't know, I just thought, maybe the whole frustration and anger of it all, wasn't ever fully discussed with us."

She acknowledges that they didn't speak about their feelings, how they felt about the situation, saying that they spoke in

*Factual tones. Factual tones*, not how that made them *feel*, 'cause they're not that way. Like, you know, not how that made them feel, as a person, as a Canadian citizen. They never talked about how that made them feel, right? So there's that whole back of the wall, emotional wall, *protecting themselves, protecting their children, protecting us*, [emphasis added], you know? that's kind of what they do. (laughter)

Showing restraint in not talking about their feelings about the hardships they encountered may be seen as a means of protecting the next generation from vicarious feelings of distress or trauma (Apfelbaum, 2000 as cited in Nagata & Cheng, 2003).

Keith, as well, wonders about the lack of emotional expression or understated emotional response about the whole experience.

"I was always amazed, as I got a little bit older how come there wasn't this huge...huge resentment of the whole Japanese community towards the Canadian government. It was always very, I mean they were upset that it happened, they wanted to make sure it didn't happen again, more importantly, they wanted the government to recognize that it was incorrect in doing that. But there wasn't this big sort of violent, angry tide you know of, "We were wronged and damn Canadians are going to pay" and all that. I was sort of surprised by that and then I realized as I got more mature, my attitude became broader, by that I mean, they just had a different way of approaching things, you know?... I think it's a part of the Japanese culture, you know, being reserved.

Patti's mother gave her an explanation about not being bitter or angry, not from her own personal experience or perspective, but rather, from a collective perspective.

Recollecting her mother's words, Patti felt

that it was an unspoken thing within the Japanese Canadian community, or at least a good 99% of the people, not to express their bitterness or anger about their wartime experience. Yet there was one family, one man who did not fit into this pattern. I asked her why he always seemed angry, really mad. She said to me, "He's very bitter. He's very bitter about having had to come to Winnipeg....He's still very bitter and angry about what happened during the war." And she basically said to me, "that's not good. We.....'we, meaning the majority of Japanese,' "We can't pass this on....any feelings of anger, bitterness, even sadness onto our children. That's not going to help them. We're in Canada right now."

The postwar period in Canada was a precarious time for members of the Japanese Canadian community who were exiled from their homes in BC and forced to disperse and assimilate into virtually unknown and potentially hostile territory. While the majority of them were citizens, either Canadian-born or naturalized, they still did not have the right to vote. Few had financial or material collateral since the government had taken everything and required them to pay for their own internment expenses. Communities were destroyed which meant social and emotional support was weakened through lack of social contact. Every family basically had to start from scratch to build up

their resources, while finding accommodation, employment, raising families and looking after the elderly. In admiration, Patti stated, "Yes, our parents and grandparents were truly trailblazers! As well, they had to do it without perpetuating the "victim" state in their children and sustaining anger against the Canadian (hakujiin) community. "

("Hakujiin" is a Japanese word signifying white person(s).)

**"Blessing in Disguise."** Filling the void of "no bitterness, no anger" were stories that led to a positive outlook or perspective, where trying experiences were reframed and named, such as "a blessing in disguise," or "the silver lining in a dark cloud." These were stories of how they dealt with their situation – resilience, keeping community spirit alive, and to "move on" past this experience and "get on with life" – and seemed to serve as guidelines or models of behavior on how to conduct your life and comport yourself through a difficult situation under circumstances which are beyond your control. Two participants referred to gaman ((perseverance-suppression of emotions.)

Patti found similarities in the way that Japanese Canadians comported themselves during Internment and the behavior and attitude of the Japanese people who experienced the earthquake and tsunami in Japan of March, 2011.

Just like what's happening in Japan right now.... They just do things, they just do it, in a very organized....there's no looting.....people are very honest.....so... they just carry on and I think that sort of thing, there's an expression for that...Gambatte ... it's that determination that...so I think that the Japanese people who came here from the internment camps or wherever, they all sort of...it's almost like it was an unspoken thing. 'We know what we have to do. We don't have to talk about it. We know we have to assimilate. We can't pass this on....any feelings of anger, bitterness, even sadness onto our children. That's not going to help them. We're in Canada right now.

Steve's mother referred to the saying "every cloud has a silver lining" – in finding positive aspects of the Internment. For instance,

because Japanese Canadians were not allowed to enlist in the military, the Nisei generation largely escaped being killed on the battlefield. And of course, my parents met at the YWCA only because their families had both opted to keep their families together and had 'volunteered' to work on sugar beet farms in rural Manitoba.

June's mother referred to her Internment experience as a "blessing in disguise."

I know in later years, when we did talk about it, my Mom did say, "Yes, it was a terrible thing to have to go through," but, she felt in the end it probably turned out to be a blessing in disguise because they were able to move here and start a new life together, you know, work, and buy a house and educate their children, and live a happy, good life here whereas if they had stayed in BC, she wondered probably they would have stayed on the farm and maybe not had as many opportunities.

June related positive experiences that her Mother had told her about her Manitoba experience of the Internment. For instance, her Mother spoke very favourably of the people who chose them to work on their farm and treated them well, and of a kind landlady in the city.

Andrea spoke of her Grandmother's positive attitude about her Internment experience, saying twice that this was always pointed out as an important part of her Grandmother's story – it seemed easier for her grandparents to get chosen for work because they didn't have children when they came to Manitoba. Her Grandmother even seemed to convey a sense of gratitude in how people treated them. She says,

My Grandmother felt fortunate that they got work quite quickly, that they didn't have to spend a lot of time wondering what was going to happen. (She) would point out that she felt that the family that took them on was very kind, that they never felt like slaves, or that they were being exploited, that they had a family that seemed sympathetic to what was happening to them, and she was very thankful for that.

Naming a traumatic event in one's life as a "blessing in disguise" may denote a willingness or readiness of the person who experienced it to lend closure to that event or time period, signifying "a sense of completion, the feeling that one does not have to dwell on the distressing event from the past. It is experienced as a resolution which allows the event to become integrated into the psyche" (Klempner, 2006, as cited in Sugiman, 2009). While the expression "a blessing in disguise" does not necessarily imply "forgiveness and forgetting....it constitutes an attempt to bridge the past and present in a way that conveys recovery and survival rather than victimization and defeat (Sugiman, 2009, p. 201).

In this study, older family members used such expressions such as "blessing in disguise" and "every cloud has a silver lining," in the telling of their Internment experiences to their descendants, or spoke with gratitude about the hakujin (Japanese word signifying "white" person[s]) who were kind and helpful to them during this time period. By choosing to describe their experiences from this perspective, they are resisting the victim stance in a time when their rightful citizenship was denied by the government. Their sense of agency is conveyed by the descendants who are telling their stories in terms of, "This is how we chose to act and how we chose to respond in a situation which was beyond our control." In turn, these stories of agency and resilience are the ones which participants chose to tell me.

However, I would not want to diminish the reframing of the trauma as something positive. For those who are not familiar with the history of Internment, it would be facile to assume that the use of these expressions denote instant recovery from such a race-



related trauma. Mona Oikawa (1999, as cited in Sugiman, 2009) cautions that it should not be implied that Japanese Canadians actually benefited from the Internment, that is, “multiple exclusions and exclusions during the 1940s (p. 19)

### **Racial and Cultural Socialization**

The Canadian Internment was a political act of violence based on racial discrimination of Japanese Canadian citizens, the majority of whom lived in BC, and were forced from their homes and communities to be confined in Internment camps in interior BC, relocated to work on farms in Alberta and Manitoba, or road camps in northern Ontario. Thus, in learning about the Internment, participants were also learning that their race/ethnicity was a cause of hatred, or something that set them apart, whether or not they initially understood the political and economic ramifications of that historical event. As the generation following those who experienced internment directly, the descendants grew up, unsuspectingly, in environments which were potentially hostile to them and still racialized to some degree.

Nagata and Cheng (2003) refer to race-related trauma as the repeated and cumulative experience of being racialized, either overtly or covertly, over a period which may last a lifetime. The Internment of Japanese Canadians may be considered the culmination of cumulative race-based trauma (Loo, 1993) beginning with their early settlement in Canada. As with other populations who have experienced race-related trauma, the parents determine the timing and manner in which to convey experiences of racial discrimination, if at all, in order to prepare their children to live in a hostile or

racialized environment. This communication may take the form of cultural socialization, in which parents foster pride in one's race or ethnicity, culture and traditions, or racial socialization, in which parents prepare their children for racial bias by telling them about racialized situations and attitudes they may encounter in society and how to deal with these situations. Where open discussion of racialization may be seen as instructive or preparatory, no discussion of racialization may be beneficial, as well. For instance, the child would not be encumbered by the parents' experience of racialization and become overly sensitive to racialized situations, and could figure out their own ways of dealing with discrimination (Nagata & Cheng, 2003).

In this study, stories of racialization were not about victimization, containing instead stories of perseverance, resilience and community strength. Even as participants said they were told the stories in a matter-of-fact tone, they themselves were also expressing the stories matter-of-factly. Phrases that participants used were often similar, "this is what it was," "this is how we dealt with it", and participants, themselves, seemed to convey the manner in which those who were interned dealt with their circumstances.

Steve related his mother's stories of racial discrimination towards the Japanese Canadian community, and how they had to "perform better than the white kids to be considered equal to them." In terms of racial socialization, he said:

She would tell me stories about what it was like for her growing up as a kid, the prejudices at the time in BC, about how the Japanese kids had to perform better than the white kids to be considered equal to them. She did not sound bitter or angry, she just communicated about how things were.... she would talk about this one math teacher that she had who would talk about how, like really give the white kids shit by saying, "look at these Japs, they're doing better than you are."

(She) explained how difficult it was around the turn of the last century for arriving Japanese, how they could not be accountants or lawyers or doctors or work for the government, basically they only could fish or farm, and even then, how they could not buy just any farm land, for example, and how when they finally broke the land by hand and eventually got their produce to market, how there was a Jap price and a white price.

When asked if he was teased or called names because of his Japanese heritage, Steve replied, "I never had anything like that. I remember my Mom would tell me stories like that that happened to her and I think she was trying to explore whether I was being teased, growing up like that and if I was, I was completely oblivious or insensitive to it. That's also a possibility."

Keith's impression, while growing up, was that it was more important to assimilate than to even maintain one's Japanese identity, due to the racial prejudice his father experienced in Winnipeg and Manitoba after the war. Racial socialization was conveyed in his father's experience with discrimination, as well as his father's cautionary conversation to make him conscious, and cautious, of his "visible minority" status. His father told him that he and his brother were interested in buying a particular business that was for sale.

So we're driving by this place and he said, "you see that business there?" "Yeah." "Well, your uncle and I tried to buy that." And I said, "Yeah, so what happened?" "So we went to talk to the guy about it and as soon as he saw we were Japanese, he said "I'm not selling it to any Japs and turned around and walked away from us." You know. So I said, "Well, what did you do?" "Well, what could we do? We came back, and said we'll do something else, then."

When asked about his reaction on hearing this story, Keith said (in a lower tone of voice and speaking more slowly), "Uh, well, you know, I've been called names like that, too, but you know, when you see your father, who's the strongest member of the

family... and to endure that....it's not very flattering for him. I'm sure he wasn't very proud of it, but he felt it was important to tell us." Rather than having this become a story of defeat or giving up, Keith interprets this as a story of agency (his voice returning to its regular pitch and pace),

Yeah, okay, well. He realized, I think, I'm not going to change this person's mind, um, and maybe this person's mind isn't worth changing, so I'm going to, you know.... .... It wasn't a point of just saying I'm going to give up and do something else. It was like, you know what? I'm going to devote my energies where they're probably going to get, put me further ahead. And my energies are not going to get, well, arguing with this redneck guy (wry laugh) about why he should sell me the business.

Keith's father warned him about staying out of trouble because he was visibly different from his friends.

I can remember my father very clearly telling me, "Listen, if you're in a group of kids and somebody does something wrong, you're the one they're going to single out because you're Japanese and you look different. You're the one who's going to stand out. So you have to be very careful that you're not the one who does something wrong. So I can remember that. He said, "Don't forget." I remember him telling me so-and-so is Polish, yeah, you know what, they were discriminated against... so-and-so is Ukrainian, they were discriminated against...but he said you're not an *invisible* minority, you are a *visible* minority. When you walk down the street, everybody looks at you and you look different from everybody else. So that was, I can remember that very, very clearly being told "You are a visible minority."

In this instance, Keith's father seemed to be preparing him on how to comport himself in mainstream society, in effect, to be seen as a good citizen, even approximately twenty years after the war. While acknowledging that his son shared a history of discrimination with his friends from the Polish and Ukrainian populations, he differentiated that Keith was more noticeable because of his phenotype, his physical appearance, and therefore could not visually "disappear" in a crowd of hakujin as his

friends could. Feelings of vulnerability (Sugiman, 2009), self-consciousness and sensitivity about one's status may be experienced by those who have suffered race-related trauma and injustice (Ferren, 1999; Loo, 1993, & Stangor, 2000 as cited in Nagata & Cheng, 2003). Kiyo also referred to these reactions in the stories that she heard in the community:

Well, you know, I think about some of the stories that happened, and there's no question, many people at that time felt discriminated against, and felt a certain negativity. There was an identity that you were not really a Canadian. A lot of people felt ashamed of being Japanese. A lot of people took on anglicized names and tried to sometimes separate themselves from creating any kind of ghetto. I think people were very aware that everybody had to be dispersed across the city and not be ghettoized in any one locale, you know? So I think *there was a real hypervigilance* [emphasis added] about always being seen as a *good citizen* [emphasis added], but being aware also that people were discriminated against but, not feeling in many ways that you had a voice, that you could speak out against people who discriminated against you.

Even today, June feels she may be treated differently sometimes because of her Japanese appearance.

(I)t's probably my problem of oversensitivity...you go somewhere and the store clerk is rude to you, and you think, is it because I'm Japanese?...And I don't know if it's always true. Probably not, but I guess we just have that feeling that maybe it's because, you know...One of my closest friends is Jewish, born in Winnipeg, and it's interesting how we share a lot of the same kinds of stories, about how *she* felt discriminated against because she's Jewish, and the subtle things...and I'd say, "Well, I used to feel that way sometimes, too!"

Being encouraged to be a "good citizen" may also be considered a form of racial socialization, borne as it was from the need of Canadian-born citizens of Japanese heritage to prove they were worthy of their natural born citizenship, to erase the stigma of being branded "enemy aliens" by the government. This was emphasized in June and

Kiyo's stories, with emphasis also placed on attaining a good education and not drawing negative attention to oneself or one's family. June says,

Our parents tried to raise us to be "extra good" citizens. They never wanted us to draw attention to ourselves in a negative way because they were trying so hard to "blend in" and put the past behind them. For my parents, education for their children was very important. I think they felt that a good education would lead to a good job and a better life.

Kiyo's parents conveyed to her a sense of how to conduct herself:

If I think of anything like life lessons that my Father and Mother said, in different ways, not in overt ways, but it was that sense of "That was a time in our life that was difficult, it was a time that we had no control over, but we learned something from it. And the best we can do now is move on, and to make a good life for ourselves. I think my father was always aware that all of us kids had to be better prepared to live in this country. And not be seen in any kind of shameful way. That was the biggest thing about my Father, and probably the Japanese culture because you know the whole, saving face is a big thing in Japanese culture. And being able to hold your head up with dignity. You'd never do anything that is going to shame your family. ... the best thing you can do is to be a good citizen. And to make your family proud of you. So, I think, from a very early age, I knew that I would always go to university.... There was no question in my parent's minds or ours that we would be properly educated.

In explaining what her father meant by "having to be better prepared to live in this country," Kiyo said:

I think he felt that Japanese people had to be more than your average person. You had to show that you could do more in order to prove that you were doing due diligence, and you were going to contribute to the country and you weren't going to be a bad person. So you had to do, you had to show more effort, more commitment to do the right thing....I think that came from the internment experience, and being discriminated against.... The value of education was very high for my father. I think he saw that as the ticket to do better and to be accepted in a more formal way, because you had education, therefore you could compete on a level field and not have to be a second class citizen.

Compared to participants' memories of family stories of racial socialization, there were fewer instances where participants related stories from family members that

directly or indirectly reflected or conveyed pride in their heritage. This does not imply that there were no stories or messages of cultural socialization, or a lack of pride in Japanese culture or heritage. Rather, this would be due to my own limitations in not perceiving these qualities in the interviews and/or in not asking/wording my queries appropriately. Cultural socialization may have occurred on levels which I did not have the ability to recognize, or outside the realm of words, or in participation in cultural activities such as odori (Japanese dance), where emphasis is not on verbal expression. Words sometimes cannot convey the nuances of working side by side with someone you feel close to but with whom you do not share the same language.

Kiyo's father was proud of being a Canadian citizen, and was also proud of his birthplace, Japan. Even when Kiyo was growing up, he hosted visitors and groups from Japan who represented cultural, academic and sporting activities. In hindsight, Kiyo realizes how much he influenced Kiyo and her siblings' awareness and appreciation of different aspects of their Japanese heritage.

(I)n retrospect, I really appreciated the fact that my father exposed us to so many things, not only visitors from Japan, but also, you know, making us aware of our Japanese culture.... my Dad was a community builder. He was always in the community, right? and so we went...to all the activities, to all the events, and my Dad was also, I would consider, an informal goodwill ambassador....from day one, always tried to embrace visitors from Japan, and our house was an open door. I don't know how many people, I can't think of how many people from Japan actually stayed with us, either when they were visiting, or when they were studying....my Dad was a big judo person. I volunteered in judo tournaments... I remember when this Japanese dance group came for the Red River Exhibition, and we entertained them in our house! And there were about twenty of them, right? (both laughing) and they showed us different parts of Japan, different sides of Japan, and they would send us gifts and they would come and they would visit and you know, at the time, I don't know that I appreciated the full impact of that, but I think, when I grew up, I did. My father was always so proud of being

Canadian, but he was proud of his birth country, and he wanted to embrace people and visitors from there, and he did. And so we always had people coming and going all the time in our house!

Cultural socialization was also a strong factor in Steve's upbringing. Although he was aware of the discrimination towards Japanese Canadians in BC, he felt his mother wanted him to feel proud of his heritage, in telling him about the Japanese Canadian students being better at math than the other children, and enhancing the image of his Japanese Canadian swimming instructor. Steve identified strongly with his heritage, "but I still always thought of myself as Japanese." When asked in what ways he was identifying himself as Japanese, Steve replied,

I think it was my Mom again, like talking about how she, how they would have to be better than the whites in order to be [considered] as good as they were. Then she'd build up Dave, my swimming instructor, you know....She would have me... just feel proud that I was Japanese and I think she got teased as she was growing up and she didn't want me to feel badly about who I was, so I, I have a very strong sense of being Japanese, and I know my daughter thinks of herself as Japanese, my sons think that's cool.

Steve's storytelling, and the way he is passing on the stories to his children, mirror some of the qualities of his mother's storytelling.

I tell....all of my kids know all of my Mom's stories, about her growing up and I tell them about the time their grandmother, my mother, when she was their age or whatever was always the last one picked at school, all of those stories, so they know all those, plus,....another one of the stories I tell my kids is about how I could always win the track events at my schools, but this other Japanese kid from [another school] would always show up at the MJCCA picnic and beat me on alternate years (because we were 1 year apart, and it was categories like eight - nine year old boys). So I would tell them if they think they are fast, try running against a Japanese. I'd tell them about those stories. So, I just build up people, Japanese people, larger than life, like my swimming instructor, Dave, he was just like....I made him out to be like an Olympian or something, eh, he was just a normal guy but my kids think he's awesome.



I have passed all of the family stories down to my own children, adding my own stories of growing up in a world of reverse discrimination, where just because of my outward appearance, people always assumed I was honest and hardworking and loyal.

Steve is passing on stories that foster messages of pride in his Japanese heritage and of other Japanese Canadians, building them up "larger than life." In telling them about his experience of reverse discrimination, and the positive attributes associated with his outward appearance, it appears that he is mitigating the stories of racial discrimination of the previous generation, just as his mother had told him that the "evacuation" was a mistake made by the government.

Because the focus of this research was on the transmission of memories and influences of the internment from the generations that experienced Internment directly, rather than the transmission of culture, the limitations of this study meant that I did not explore aspects of cultural socialization with participants, that is, their remembered stories of what their family members thought or felt about their Japanese heritage and culture, as it was conveyed from the Issei, the pioneer generation.

However, what did emerge from participants remembered stories of family Internment experiences were stories that the participants themselves were creating that conveyed in both tone of voice and words, their pride, amazement and appreciation for the older generation, and their cultural values. "Their culture" referred to that of the older generation and a different time period, one that was closer to the Issei or pioneers from Japan. Thus, participants for the most part referred to these cultural attributes as belonging to "their" culture, something they didn't quite understand, rather than "our" culture. The traits and values they named as belonging to "their culture" were "be(ing)

very obedient, and civil and polite, which is the nature of their culture," "being reserved" and "being very Japanese and docile" in not creating an uprising at the way they were treated, "not carry(ing) that bitterness and anger" about the Internment, and not talking about their own losses or feeling sorry for themselves. Going by the "cultural" qualities that participants used to describe how their family and community comported themselves during the Internment, it appears that they are describing the Japanese values of gaman (perseverance-suppression of emotions), enryo (self-restraint, reserve), and maintaining harmony (Kitano, 1969 as cited in Nagata & Cheng, 2003). These qualities, for the most part, seemed "foreign" to many descendants born after Internment and unsuspectingly assimilated into mainstream Western environments and culture. While these cultural values may appear as liabilities in Western culture, they are considered strengths in the Japanese culture.

Having a strong work ethic and a strong sense of family and community were also perceived by participants as cultural traits belonging to the older generation. Keri described the stories her Aunt told her about the Internment and how the community comported themselves with civility and cooperation while being confined in the exhibition grounds and in the camps. Learning how and why the community acted in the manner that it did was a form of cultural socialization, which Keri attributed to the Japanese culture.

(M)y Aunt told me a lot of stories and she told me about when they were interned, when the war broke out and they were rounded up and they had very little time to gather all their belongings, and then they were literally herded into the PNE, Pacific National Exhibition grounds in Vancouver. Each family had one horse stall to live in and this is where they were initially processed, and from there they were dispersed into interior BC. So things were very hard for them

because they had lost their livelihoods and they had lost their properties and all their belongings. They could only take with them what they could carry. A lot of them had young children. At the time my own parents were not married yet, they hadn't met each other yet. But my Aunt had three or four of her children...by then, so they were all with them when that happened. Then they moved to the interior and life was very hard in the camp. One thing she did tell me about was the Japanese people were very – I don't know if accommodating is the word – but they didn't plan an uprising, they didn't fight it. They chose to be very obedient, and civil and polite, which is the nature of their culture.

And they felt that if they took the high road they would be treated better and looked upon better, rather than rioting and trying to escape and running away, and those kinds of things. Another thing she told me about was my uncle was one of the first to organize the men at camp, to agree to help out with the running of the camp and making conditions better for the residents there, and they were actually very agreeable to working on the road camps. They didn't want to leave their families, but they felt if they were cooperative, things would go easier for them.

Participants often wondered at the lack of bitterness or anger, or even hatred towards the government and Canadians and attributed that response to being part of "their culture." Keith described this response as "a different way of approaching things" and attributed this to being Japanese and being reserved.

I was always amazed, as I got a little bit older how come there wasn't this huge, huge resentment of the whole Japanese community towards the Canadian government. It was always very, I mean they were upset that it happened, they wanted to make sure it didn't happen again, more importantly, they wanted the government to recognize that it was incorrect in doing that. But there wasn't this big sort of violent, angry tide you know of "We were wronged and damn Canadians are going to pay" and all that. I was sort of surprised by that and then I realized as I got more mature, my attitude became more broader, by that I mean, they just had a different way of approaching things, you know?...I think it's a part of the Japanese culture. You know, being reserved.... I mean, if this happened now, you know, this isn't a third world country we're living in. People are educated. Why wasn't there more of a sort of, well, "we're not doing that," you know? ... we're Canadians like everybody else, we're not doing that. That I was a little surprised about and when it happened, everybody sort of went on with their lives after and well, you know, it's not going to change anything if we do this now, or this is sort of, being very Japanese and docile and that's the way they played it, right?

Only Kiyō and Patti, both over the age of fifty, referred to Gaman. With Patti, it was in terms of comparing the quiet determination of Japanese Canadians to just carry on with their lives during and after Internment with the way that Japanese people in Japan are carrying on with their lives after the destruction and upheaval of the earthquake and tsunami. Kiyō felt a strong sense of gaman, or gambatte, from her parents' stories that also conveyed the values of enryo, and working in harmony.

What would stand out for me, more than anything, was the need for people to stand together. I can remember many people talking about some of the dissidents in the camp, and they ended up in the prisoner-of-war camps in Ontario. And there was some sympathy for that. But I think the Japanese culture is a passive one, certainly a Japanese-Canadian one, where people don't want to make too many waves. So the people who did make waves and refused to be interned, were then sent off to Angler prisoner-of-war camp. Although there was a sense of "Good for you, you stood up to them!" there was a sense of "We all have to come together to make this work for us for the next few years, and we need to move on....we need to stick together and not create any waves," so in the camp, there wouldn't be any kind of people trying to protest or refusing to do things and stuff like that. There was a sense of civility, we had to get through this together, so everybody had to be cooperative and compliant.

So I think if there's any significant impact, it would have been like, people have to just be stoic, and I think that's the big thing, the story, and the thing that I remember the most is Gambatte. Like if I say to you, gambatte kudasai, that means please endure this with dignity and patience. I'm sure there was a lot of dissent in the camps, people disgruntled and all that. I don't think everybody was pleasant and compliant and everything like that, I don't think that happened. But I also think there was a certain culture and value placed on just staying the course ... that's probably what saved the community, this great sense of stoicness. And I certainly felt that from stories that my parents would talk about, you know. When they talked about things, it was "you know, we tried to do this to survive, we had to grow some vegetables," or "we had to have concerts to keep our spirits up," that kind of thing, you know? So it's doing things for yourself to make everybody feel strong. I think that's the biggest story.

Stories such as this have influenced Kiyō's sense of community and work ethic.

What I think it has done for me, is instilled a sense of duty and responsibility to the community. I have been an active volunteer in the Japanese Canadian community for many years and have always felt a need to stay the course, no matter what challenges and changes are occurring. I try to put the best effort into a project or activity .

Participants have been influenced by the previous generations' stories of hard work, and a strong sense of family and community, working together for the common good – traits which they attribute to the generations of Japanese Canadian before them. Steve believes the Nisei work ethic played a positive influence in how he was perceived in the workforce.

I think if anything I was faced throughout my life by a reverse discrimination, the result of the Nisei work ethic on people they had interacted with. By the time I entered the workforce the general assumption was that if I was Japanese, I must be honest, hard working, loyal, etc, and I was given the benefit of the doubt before I had done a single thing to earn that reputation for myself.

Patti had a sense of the strength of family and connections with Japan. Her father came to Canada as a young boy and, like many in his generation, sent money to Japan to help his family there. Patti was proud of her parents for being able to continue sending money, even after being interned, raising a family, and then having to relocate to Winnipeg.

The thing was, it was difficult, too.... He was still sending money back to Japan. His family really relied on....and actually in a sense they tried to pay it back to my mother because they knew that if it weren't for my mother agreeing to that and basically having to put up with a lot of hardship herself so that he could send money back to Japan, so they appreciated the fact long after my father died. And, of course, by that time they weren't in need of money but in those first 10 to 15 years whatever, he sent money. They really needed that money and appreciated it. After my father died, I know when my mother, sister and I went to Japan...I remember my mother saying the reason why they were so, well aside from the fact that she was the in-law, it was my father who was the sibling. But because she was instrumental and sacrificed a lot in order that my father could send money to Japan so it was...They're still grateful to this day. They know what my

mother did. So they've always been super nice with her and showered her with gifts and money, whatever.

Misa was influenced by her Grandfather's strong sense of family, his sense of community, and her Grandparents work ethic.

My Grandfather really instilled that it was family first, and I still use that to make my decisions.... And I don't see that in other friends of mine, or even within my, my sibling who's not the same as me, that family is the most important... You know, my Grandfather set a very wonderful example of giving back to community, you know? working so hard in his own business and then making time for community, you know? community work, and that's a cultural thing too....I think my time will come, I'm hoping, when I'm not so busy, which hopefully will be in about five years, put in some time." She was also influenced by her Grandparents' work ethic. "You work hard and....if you're going to do something, you do it well, or don't do it. If you're going to do something, you do it well. You do it well.

Participants spoke of community – the sense of community, the strength of community and working together for the common good – as emblematic traits of the Japanese Canadian community, in evidence throughout their stories. In addition to describing her father as a community builder, Kiyo spoke of her father as

"always ha(ving) community in mind, and he was always willing to be a part of a team, part of a group that was going to help a larger group. And so they would make different things in the Internment camp that people needed, things like furniture, and chest of drawers, and cedar chests and things like that. I always knew what my Father did in the Internment camp.

## **Stories Constructed Relationally**

In her interviews with Nisei women who shared their experiences of Internment, Sugiman (2003) noted that their memories of the internment were often constructed relationally, that is, they compared their personal experiences with the experiences of others who were also interned, whether those experiences were similar or different. These comparisons often took the perspective of seeing an aspect of their own particular circumstance as “lucky” or “fortunate,” or looking at the experiences of others who “had it worse” than they did, rather than dwelling on their own situation. This reference to others who had it worse is a means by which “to temporarily withdraw themselves from the traumatic past—take an emotional breather, of sorts, from their own painful memories. And they disassociate themselves from the narrative” (p. 61).

In this study, stories that are constructed relationally revolve around “relocation” and “repatriation” after Internment, with comparisons to the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, March 2011, as well as comparisons with historical trauma in other populations.

Although Misa was aware of the personal, economic, material and cultural losses of her family and the Japanese Canadian community due to Internment, she said her grandparents never spoke about their losses, or what they had to leave behind. Instead, they would refer to, or turn the focus of attention, to other people’s losses or, as Misa said, “they deflect it to others.” She acknowledged that sometimes it seemed as if they were emotionally disconnected from what happened, when they referred to other’s

losses, instead of talking about their own, but accepted “that they just don’t talk about themselves... that’s just the way they are” and wondered if that was a “cultural” attribute.

No, they never talked about it....Yeah, they never talked about what they lost, except for, you know, those other people. They never talked about their own loss. “Gee, you know, so- and -so, they had a really nice car, and they had to leave that and they lost it and so and so...,” they deflect it to others. Not themselves, right? Like, they’re *emotionally disconnected* [emphasis added] sometimes (laughing) in that way, you know? They would always say that about other people, not about themselves. “Oh, he lost...” They never want to, again, I don’t know if it’s just a cultural...they don’t want to say, Well, it was me, pity me....Yeah, they don’t talk about themselves. Well, this is what happened to them. Well, you were there, too! (laughing). That’s just the way they are, I think. So, no, they never discussed missing what they had to leave, you know? I never heard anything.

Misa’s Grandparents constructed their memories relationally in not talking about themselves or their own losses, but by deflecting attention away from themselves, or by referring to the losses of others, instead. In doing so, they also distance themselves from the loss, which Misa referred to as being “emotionally disconnected.” This detachment, in those who have experienced trauma, has been explained as a means of disallowing self-pity into one’s narrative (Des Pres, as cited in Sugiman, 2009).

Both Misa’s Grandmother and Patti referred to the issue of “relocation” and “repatriation” after Internment, that is, the situation of those who remained in Canada but were exiled from BC and were forced to relocate away from that province, and those who went to Japan as part of the government’s “repatriation” policy, rather than relocating elsewhere in Canada. While being from two different generations, their stories were similarly constructed. They acknowledged that while it was difficult for those who were forced to relocate across Canada during and after Internment, it was even more difficult for those who went to Japan after the war.



In telling Misa about her friend's "repatriation" experience in Japan, Misa's Grandmother constructing it relationally to her own "relocation" experience in Canada:

...the disillusionment of a lot of the Japanese Canadians and the Japanese Nationals, you know, after the war, like my Grandma said some of her friends, and my Grandfather's family, they didn't want any part of a country that would do that to their own citizens. So they went back. But their life was horrible. What are they doing going back to Japan? And they didn't realize they would be viewed as these defectors, and they couldn't get jobs, it was really hard for them in Japan, you hear those stories too, eh? As hard as it was for people here, I remember...her best friend went back to Japan and she showed me the letters of the hardships and how hard it was in Japan and how they weren't accepted. And my Grandmother said, telling me, "We made the choice to stay, and as hard as it was, and we had nothing, and we're starting over again," she says, "I'm glad we stayed, but *she had it much harder than we did.*" {emphasis added}

While visiting Japan many years after the war, Patti learned about the "repatriation" experience of her Canadian-born cousin who went to Japan with her family as part of the "repatriation" process and lived with relatives there. Comparing the "relocation" experience of the young people in Canada and "repatriation" experience of her cousin, she said:

I was asking her what it was like when they went back to Japan, because she would have been old enough to remember what was happening. And that was really a sad story, too. As much as we sort of... obviously the young people who stayed, remained in Canada had a difficult time.... it certainly wasn't exactly a bed of roses for the people who went back to Japan, thinking that.... I guess they were upset by the treatment they received from the Canadian government and I think that's one of the reasons why they decided to go back to Japan and of course they wouldn't have known what it was like there, either.

(M)y cousin...said Japan was basically devastated after the war. They had used up all their resources for the war and it was very poor.... So my cousin was now living amongst her cousins. And I guess too, because they were so poor and struggling to get food and everything else, that having another family come in, and of course they had to be accepted, you know, they were family, very close family, but they just sort of felt like.... more mouths to feed and more people to worry about and what thin resources they had now had to be shared with another family. So my cousin said she felt there was a lot of resentment from her cousins

because of that.... And I guess, too, having been born in Canada, she might have understood Japanese, but she would have had a different accent from what they had, and that was sort of another thing where they looked upon her as being a foreigner, in a way.

Although Patti is of a different generation than Misa's Grandmother, and did not experience Internment directly as Misa's Grandmother did, her telling of the story has also been constructed relationally.

Similar to the way in which family members construct their memories relationally to other Japanese Canadians who were interned, participants construct and expand the stories of internment in relation to other populations. For instance, Patti and Steve compared how Japanese Canadians comported themselves during the Internment with the way Japanese in Japan comported themselves in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. While Internment was an event of political violence, and the earthquake was a violent act of nature, both events summoned similar responses in those who experienced them. Patti explains:

Just like what's happening in Japan right now. I got this email. They just do things, they just do it, in a very organized....there's no looting.....people are very honest.....so... they just carry on and I think that sort of thing, there's an expression for that...Gambatte...it's that determination that...so I think that the Japanese people who came here from the internment camps or wherever, they all sort of.... (just carried on). "We know what we have to do. We don't have to talk about it. We know we have to assimilate."

Steve expands the relationally constructed story of how Japanese Canadians carried out their lives during Internment by comparing it with Vietnamese people in Viet Nam during the 1990s, as well as the Japanese people in Japan after the earthquake.

I have also been inspired by the Vietnamese people...in Viet Nam...in the 1990s just as it was opening up to the west. Those mostly young, educated, honest and hard working people seemed to hold no bitterness towards Americans for

bringing a war to their country and killing so many of their people, almost surely including people that they knew personally. Instead, they were quietly confident, sure in the knowledge that if they were patient and determined to work together, they could defeat the U.S. army in a conventional military conflict. In much the same way, the internment experience has shown an honest and hard working community of people (who) can face adversity with dignity, and thrive in spite of the setbacks and hardships. We are seeing the same thing in the Japanese people today after the earthquake and tsunami. We don't need or want to make a big deal about this, we just want to quietly, confidently, competently go about our lives.

Greg's relationally constructed story compares recovery from loss after the Internment, and how the Japanese people in Japan may have a similar recovery after the earthquake of March 2011.

I think what it is that, okay, so you had your bad experiences, but of course, okay, so you talk about it sometimes, but you didn't let it slow you down. You just kind of moved on with your life and you tried to keep going, you know? You didn't, they didn't really hold a grudge to kind of really chew yourself up, eh? You just kind of okay,, it happened, okay, so we kind of try to recover and you just want to keep going. And maybe that's going to be what Japanese people in Japan, after this earthquake, they may experience something similar where there's a setback, okay, and maybe 20 to 40 years from now, you know, you can tell recovery is well on its way and people are back to normal again, as best they can be.

While not the only participant who is aware of political acts of violence against other populations, Greg expands the relationally constructed story of Internment to include other populations, such as Ukrainian Canadians and Chinese Canadians, who have also experienced political trauma.

(T)he thing is though... we can be a little bit ignorant of other atrocities that may have happened with other people, just like many other people are ignorant of the atrocities that happened to us, like the bad things that happened to us...I don't know all the details about the Ukrainian Internment or whatever happened there around World War I...it's been documented a few times, but I guess, because it happened so long ago, the Ukrainians didn't have the chance to seek the Redress. And of course, the Chinese, their Head Tax....here's also a big story about the history about that.

Being aware of the history of Internment in their own family and community has sensitized participants to the historical trauma or racial minoritization of other populations (Nagata, 1998).

### **Language as Barrier to Discussion**

Even if the Issei and Nisei had been more open about sharing their thoughts and experiences about the Internment with the younger generation, a language barrier often impeded the flow of intergenerational communication. In general, the Issei (first-generation Canadians) mainly spoke Japanese, their first language. The Nisei were mostly bilingual, speaking both Japanese and English), while the Sansei and Yonsei mainly spoke English. Nisei, being bilingual, were often the translators between grandparents and grandchildren (Ayukawa, 2008).

Five participants felt that their inability to speak Japanese, and their grandparents' lack of fluency in speaking English, hampered the possibility of having meaningful conversations. Steve says "I was never able to communicate effectively with any of my grandparents because of the language issue – something that I have always regretted." For Alan, not knowing each other's language meant that he and his Grandmother couldn't carry on a conversation about anything. The only thing they could do was basically watch wrestling on TV and talk about wrestling.

Greg speaks about his grandmother, an Issei, and how she went about her daily business.

She hardly knew any English. She was strictly with Japanese people, even here, until the day she died, yeah, just with Japanese people. And, of course, if she met

Japanese people she'd be bowing to other people. But of course, she went about her daily life and she took the bus and she was able to read the bus signs and do her shopping and stuff, but no, she never really understood the language at all. And that was till she passed away. And we kind of knew her gestures and everything, she was very well liked, a nice person, but we could never really speak to her, you know?

For Crista, the language barrier meant that she could not learn about family history directly from her Grandmother, as well as communicate with relatives in Japan. Although her Mother or Aunt would sometimes act as translators for Crista and her Grandmother, she found the experience frustrating because she thinks it would be much more interesting to hear it from her. When she was moving to BC, she and her Grandmother looked at photographs of places where her Grandmother had lived and visited. Crista couldn't quite understand what her Grandmother was saying, although she recognized the significance of dates that her Grandmother referred to.

Not knowing Japanese was also an obstacle in learning about family history when Crista was in Japan.

I had the opportunity to try to go back to where my Grandmother was from and I met, was able to find some of her relatives there. But it was kind of further more out, away from the city I was living in and a little bit more in the country and was... she and her son didn't really speak English. So, I was able to find them but, unfortunately, it was kind of disappointing for me, I was happy to find them, but I was disappointed because of my, because I can't speak Japanese, Like, here I am, I'd really like to find out more about my family and there was a huge language barrier which is, it's kind of frustrating, same with talking with my Grandmother. ... I would like to be able to hear directly from her about her life.

While Keith wasn't able to communicate with his grandmother, he has a different perspective on the language barrier:

She never spoke English.... You felt her sense of love when you were there, you could tell she was a warm person, but you just couldn't communicate, you know,

but shame on us, we never said "You know what? I'm going to learn to communicate with Grandma. I'm going to take Japanese lessons!"

There were times, though, when the children's lack of knowing the Japanese language could be used to the parents' advantage. Both of Keith's parents spoke English and Japanese, and he laughed when he related, "They spoke it (Japanese) in the house more often when they didn't want us to understand what they were talking about."

### **Reactions and Responses on Learning about Family Stories**

On learning about the Internment and their family members' experiences, participants' reactions and responses were mixed, considering, for instance, their age when they first learned about it and communication within the family. All of them expressed empathy for their family members' and community's experiences. The discussion of responses on learning about the Internment includes emotional reactions, changing worldview, becoming more vocal about discussing it with others, becoming active in the Redress campaign, and identifying with Internment history.

Some participants felt that they were too young to fully grasp the situation, others had difficulty in relating to it because it seemed so far removed. Some felt surprise, shock and disbelief that something like this could happen in a democracy like Canada, and that it could even happen to their own family. While these were remembered responses of the time when they first learned about Internment, more immediate reactions, expressed by those who learned about internment more recently, were anger and sadness, as well disgust for the government's barbaric treatment of Japanese Canadians. One participant found the stories depressing and disturbing.

Crista, Misa, and Keith felt they didn't really comprehend the story about the Internment when they were younger. Crista was under ten years of age when she first heard about the internment, in conjunction with Redress.

I think it was sort of hard to believe, or, sort of confusing, because when I was younger at the time you don't.... just to think that that would happen seems sort of unbelievable and a bit confusing to think that actually happened to my family.... and to think that that could happen in our country, I don't know, I think it was probably hard to understand for being so young at the time. "

Misa was about twelve years old when her grandparents took her and other family members to their Internment site in BC but she didn't quite understand the historical aspect of the site or the time in which they lived there. She says,

Well, you know, I wish I was older. I remember going there and going....I didn't quite understand. I mean, we hadn't taken it in school yet. You kind of take your Canadian history in high school, so I didn't understand the whole story of...why did they gather you up? Why did they take you away from your homes?

Learning more about the Internment as she grew older, Misa became more vocal about it. It was during the Redress Movement that she attended high school. When she realized that the Internment was only mentioned in one paragraph in her Canadian history textbook, she spoke up in class.

I would actually say to the teacher....I put up my hand. And it's like, "My grandparents, this happened to them, and for it to be summarized in a little paragraph, I said it doesn't explain how they lost all their belongings, how they lost their businesses, how they lost their cars, how they lost everything and were never reimbursed for that. They had a couple of days, they were each allowed a suitcase. What would you do if you were given a day, or two days and you're allowed one suitcase per person, and everything else you have to leave? And the government sold their stuff. I mean I had great -aunts and uncles who had stores and grocery stores and businesses, but, pfft, gone, gone, you know? The government sold it at auctions, (laugh) and they had nothing to come home to.

Although Keith first started hearing about the Internment when he was between eight and ten years of age, he said, "I couldn't comprehend it and uh, it was sort of a " 'slow thing.' " It wasn't until a few years later that he had a better understanding of what the experience was like for his parents. By talking in terms that he could relate to and describing what it would have been like for Keith if he were in that situation, his father helped him understand the experience of being torn away from the life that he knew due to something over which he had no control – his Japanese heritage. Keith explains,

My father, I remember him, the one time that I can remember where it really, really sort of hit home, and I must have been, maybe 12 years old and he said, "okay, here's the deal. You're living in a house like you are now on your street," and I said, "Yeah." "You're going to school, you have your friends down the street." "Yeah." "And all of a sudden somebody comes from the government and puts a sign on your door that says because you're Japanese, you have to move out. And you have to carry what you can and leave. And the only reason you have to do that is because you're Japanese." And he says, "so what about your friends? I mean, It's the same thing, you were born in Canada, you understand you have your life, everything's set up and all of a sudden you get yanked out of that for the full fact of being Japanese." And that sort of stuck with me a little bit, I think. That story, I can remember my father telling me that and it certainly did leave an impression on me. And I guess it was something I could relate to more.

What Keith imagined the camps were like as a young boy was much different from the photos that he saw much later.

When you hear stories about your parents being interned, I guess your imagination goes with you and I guess my parents probably only told me as much as they thought I could handle for that age. So I guess you sort of have your own idea in your mind and when you finally see the pictures, obviously, then they're quite often different....My impressions changed over the years. When I was younger, I thought, I didn't think it was, quite as, maybe militaristic, as it appeared to be later on. As I got older, I sort of, I guess I had a better understanding of it, maybe had a better idea of what it meant, the impact of what it meant on my parents and grandparents, just on their humility on having to be segregated like that, you know.



Shock, surprise and disbelief were other reactions participants experienced on learning about their family's Internment experiences. Alan's reaction on learning about the internment was one of shock and disbelief that an act of political violence like the Internment could actually happen in Canada, and to his own family.

Well, you know, obviously you're shocked, right? You're shocked just because it's happening here in Canada and I think, like everyone, you wouldn't think that anything like that could happen here. You know, I know in terms of the history of it, that, you know, everyone was, you know, they were Canadian citizens. And, you know, you're shocked more than anything....It's something like you...You don't feel like....uhhhh...You almost feel so far removed from it in the sense that you don't believe it. You can't believe it happened to your family. You know something, okay, you see it in a movie, or something like that, right? It's so far away, or it's in another country.... It's not what you would expect in a democracy.

Alan hadn't really thought about the Internment until he was 18 years old.

Realizing that the Internment was part of his family history made the history personal to him, something that he wanted to talk about with others. Unfortunately, it wasn't a time when his family felt comfortable talking about it. As Alan explains,

I would have been 18 or so, and even for me, you know, I never even thought about it before then....For me, it was more like in school. I was a history major and then I started studying it more and then it was kind of like, well, hey this is my family, and then it kind of made me talk about it. Because no one ever really talked about it before. And I think, you know, that's obviously, I'm sure you know, part of the culture, right? Typically, you know, at least in my family, no one is pretty...um, no one really wants to open up about things like that.

When asked if he had the opportunity to speak to other Sansei about this, Alan says,

No, not really. Like, just in terms of, yeah, from my own generation, um, like my siblings at least, I think for them, they felt so far removed from it because it had never been brought up in childhood or anything so it's kind of like, this is a foreign event to them in some ways, so there weren't a lot of people to talk about it with, and then the people you could talk to, like the older generation,

they didn't want to talk about it because obviously, it wasn't a good experience for them. So in some ways, you're kind of isolated about it.

Andrea's reactions to learning about the Internment were "a little bit of surprise" and "a bit of sadness in there, thinking about what my Grandma had to go through, of that sense of just how hard that must have been and stressful and how horrible it is."

This knowledge also prompted her to think about where her family's experience fit within the overall picture of Canadian history and to consider her own identity as a Canadian.

And then I guess there's a little bit of, sort of, re-thinking about how our family's history fits into Canadian history, sort of realizing, and maybe because I was older and knew a little bit more about history, seeing events that had happened and sort of realizing that I have a very close connection to this major event that happened in Canadian history. So that sort of was powerful, because until then, I really, being born in Winnipeg, and growing up here, and going to school here, I really identified as Canadian, and never really thought of myself as being different from any other kid in Winnipeg but finding this out sort of highlighted that difference, not in a bad way, but just in the sense of, here's where I fit into Canadian history, and this is a major event and I'm part of that because of my family's.

Because the Internment was not discussed as part of the school curriculum, Andrea had to ask family members and do research on her own. The more she learned, the more vocal she became about it. For instance, Andrea is often asked about her ethnicity, because of her mixed-race physical appearance, and includes her family history of Internment in her explanation.

I wanted to talk to people about it and I think, for me, it became important to tell my friends about it, or tell people that knew me. I often get asked, "What's your background, your ethnicity? People look at me, and they can tell, they want to know what my ethnic background is. It became more important for me to include, as part of that answer, the history. And I just sort of let people know, well yes, my Mother is Japanese, and her family history is this. My Grandpa was interned during that period, and he was in Canada, and he was put in this camp and I share that story with people and I think that's how I integrated finding out

about it by wanting people to remember, to have people realize that, even if my friends never treated me differently, I personally never experienced any racism, so I've never felt discriminated against or had, felt prejudice from people. But I felt it was so important to share with people because it wasn't that long ago that our country made this decision and supported this decision and then tried to hide these actions, so I think finding out about it actually made me more vocal about it, even though I never learned about it in school. If I did want to learn about it I had to either ask in my family or do research myself to try to find out well, what *is* this issue, what *are* the details about it.

While previously mentioned participants learned about the Internment from ages ranging from eight to mid-twenties, E is currently exploring the Internment experience of Japanese Canadians. Internment was not discussed in her family when she was growing up and when she did express interest in it, and about the Redress compensation package from the government, she was rebuffed by her grandmother, and did not speak about it again. Her recent reactions to hearing about the internment are not so much from the stories of her own family members, but from transcribing stories of other Japanese Canadians who were interned, and the stories of their family members who, though not interned themselves, expressed their feelings about their family members Internment experience. In transcribing these tapes, she could relate their stories and experiences with what her own family members might have experienced. "I'm just visualizing, yeah, this is probably what happened with my family, my father and his siblings and my grandparents."

The sense of immediacy in E's reactions and the wide gamut of emotions that she experienced differ from those of other participants who voiced their reactions of 15 or more years ago. In the process of transcribing, she found some of the stories to be disturbing, shocking and depressing.

So there was a wide range of emotions that I felt when I was transcribing these stories....Some of them were a little bit disturbing....I can't remember specifically. I guess it was kind of a shock because, like I said, I didn't really know what happened...what they, what an internment camp really was.... And some people, I guess, they transmitted their sadness and grief, not because they experienced it but because their relatives had experienced it, and how unjust they felt that their relatives were treated. And that part, it was, uh, I guess, it's kind of depressing... to be hearing stories like that.

On reading information about the Internment on the Internet, E also experienced shock, outrage and disgust at the government's treatment of Japanese Canadians.

I also read about a few things on the internet and looking at photographs of how the Japanese people were basically, they lived within a certain kilometerage from the coast, like a certain area, how they were all sort of brought together, forced to go to Hastings Park. That part really disgusts me. And I've seen photographs of the beds lined up, side by each. And you know, the women and children were told to go on one side, and men were told to go on the other side, and I'm thinking, "how barbaric is that." Families were separated. And also, ....I guess in some of the stories too, how the Japanese, the people were basically treated like criminals. You know, they had to register, the police were there, corralling them up, they were enemies of the state. You know, that whole thing just really disgusts me. And kind of pisses me off, basically. (laughter)

You know, you're taken from your home, from whatever you were doing and the RCMP officers or whoever came to the door, "okay, take whatever you can and come with me, you have no choice." It's like you're under arrest, right? And, then you get put in this area, and you probably don't even know why you're there, you know? If something like that happened to me, I don't know, I'd be *really* mad, because then, because I'm that kind of person, you don't treat me like that without telling me why you're doing this, because that's our society now. You can't treat anybody like that. But you know, in the 40's things were a lot different. And also there was a communication problem. Not being to understand what they're saying and even what they did say, who knows. They probably had guns, too. And when someone comes to your door with a gun and says, "Come with me" you're not going to say "No, I'm not going with you." That's the sad part of it. Being forced out of your home, and forced to go into these horse stalls, with the smell and they're dirty, and you don't even know why you're there, that's the part that pisses me off, the unjustness and unfairness.... It's crazy, I think. Granted, I know that things like this happen all over the world, even today, like I guess it basically boils down to which humans have the right, and who don't. In our society, not specifically in Canada, but world wide, human rights don't exist in

some places. And at that time in Canada, or in BC, they didn't exist for the Japanese people.

These more recent reactions to stories of the Internment are a contrast to an experience she had when she was younger, while attending a Japanese Canadian sponsored event. In that earlier situation, E reflected on how she reacted the same way her grandmother had reacted to her years before.

I just remember this particular fellow being so agitated, and so emotional about the Internment. Maybe there was a display.... But, you know, when he was just going on and on about it, my girl friend didn't have much to say about it. But he was very upset about something. And my reaction at the time was "what is this guy talking about?" I had the same reaction that my grandmother basically instilled into me. In other words, "That happened so long ago. Forget about it. It's history. It's something I don't want to talk about." That was my immediate reaction when this fellow was talking about it. But then, that was however many years ago.

Knowing more about the Internment now, in hindsight, she can relate to that man's response. "But now, today, because I know more about what had happened, not from speaking with my family but hearing from other sources what had happened, it angers me now."

The intergenerational mirroring of responses between grandmothers and granddaughters is interesting. E's initial response to someone who was reacting strongly to some information about the Internment was the same reaction as her Grandmother's when E wanted to know more about it. Andrea's Grandmother told positive stories about the Internment, and this was mirrored in Andrea's positive and enthusiastic attitude towards the way Japanese Canadians dealt with the Internment and how she sees the community today.

There was very little discussion about the Internment in Crista's family when she was growing up. She recalled the experience of reading the first book she read about the Internment – The Enemy That Never Was by Ken Adachi (1976), that was recommended by a classmate from the Indo-Canadian community.

That's where I really got a lot of the details, and not just about my family, but about I guess the community in general, the Japanese community and what had happened. It was...I mean it was really sort of upsetting to read it, kind of...um...I felt angry reading it, and any sort of um,..... I don't know, that was probably the most that I heard about it was when I read a book about it.

Hearing a class presentation about the Internment in a university class drew an emotional response from her as well.

I think when they actually did their presentation, I felt quite emotional...it was kind of strange to.....um.....kind of have it talked about in class.....and because it was something that was personal. Because we had talked about, we took an Aboriginal course and talked about colonization and that history there, but I think it's sort of different when you're talking about, you know when you hear people talking about residential schools, it hurts to hear, but when you're talking about your own family....Yeah, and it's not something....I guess, because, no one in that group was of Japanese Canadian descent. They had just chosen it as something they had heard about and didn't really know much about it, so that's why they had picked it. ...I felt emotional to hear them talk about it in class...but it was a good experience for me.

Steve learned two different versions of the Internment – the early one, the “evacuation” told by his mother when he was growing up, and the political, historical version written by Ann Sunahara (1981). He was shocked when he learned the true facts and was motivated to learn more about it and to become actively involved in the Redress movement.

(I)t was my mother who told me about the relocation – it was never referred to as an internment – and how the Canadian government had made a mistake

obviously, but that it was made honestly in the hysteria of wartime. ...My world view changed upon reading Ann Gomer Sunahara's The Politics of Racism. This was early 1980s .... I remember being shocked to learn the true and full extent of the facts surrounding the internment, how the "honest mistake" view was in stark contrast to the brutal reality. I read every book I could find on the subject, spoke to as many people as I could on it, and with some of them eventually helped form an organization...so we could work together towards Redress.

When asked via email, if he could elaborate on how his worldview changed, from what it was before, and then after he learned more about the facts, Steve replied:

Before, I had a naïve trust in authority figures. It had never occurred to me that those with the responsibility for acting in our interests would do anything but the "right" thing. I had never before really understood how political considerations could outweigh moral or human rights considerations. It was easy for me to believe that they were sincerely trying to do the best thing at the time, but that they were simply making an honest mistake in the midst of war-time hysteria. I was shocked to learn the how the realities of political economy had so drastically and unfairly affected the lives of my parents and grandparents.

I asked Steve if he felt that his mother was protecting him, as a child, from knowing the "brutal reality" by softening the facts, and his response was:

Maybe, but also I think they really believed the story, and that they wanted us not to hate Canada or our government and leaders, to have compassion and understanding for them. I don't think she was trying to protect me or else she would not have told me so many other personal stories about how difficult it was to survive on a daily basis in the face of open racism.

### **Generational Shifts in Communication and Identity**

Communication and discussion about the Internment varied in the lived experience of participants, coming in "bits and pieces," or anecdotally woven into everyday experience, or indirectly through stories constructed relationally to other members of the community. One hindrance to communication between Grandchildren and their Grandparents was often the inability to converse in each other's language, that

is, English or Japanese. Other factors that hindered communication and discussion were growing up in neighbourhoods where there were few other Japanese Canadian families with which to share stories and experiences, and the lack of written information, particularly in the school curriculum, about the Internment as a historical event in Canadian history.

However, participants noted a change or shift in communication since they first learned about or became aware of the Internment from their childhood or early twenties. This shift in communication were attributed to validation of Internment, after Redress, as a legitimate event in Canadian history, and Yonsei children choosing the Internment as a topic for their school projects, generations sharing the same language, perceptions of family members becoming older and wanting to tell their stories, and motivation of younger generations to know the stories of their aging family members.

Although discussion of the Internment was fairly open in his family, Steve noted that communication in his family opened up even more after Redress. He spoke about his Grandmother's feeling of shame, and believing that the government would never apologize for its wrongdoing towards the Japanese Canadian community.

I think....like my grandmother never....felt that she was ever going to get an apology.....there was never, ever anything that would, that anybody else had done wrong, like certainly not the government of Canada, like how could the government of Canada had done something wrong? She felt like she had done something wrong, like, not her, well even her personally, but she never learned English, they all lived together, all the Japanese, they would cluster together, they were a visible minority, and didn't assimilate and that was...you know, so no wonder, you know, people were xenophobic towards us and it was our own fault and we did all these things wrong and really took a lot of the guilt and the blame on themselves. And when the prime minister apologized to the Japanese Canadian people, it was like, wow, it was like they never expected to hear that apology and... uh... it was suddenly, or maybe even a little before that they



started to realize...actually, we didn't do anything wrong. Actually, these things were....I think it just became more legitimate to talk about it afterwards.

However, working in the Redress Movement of the 1980's he spoke of the difficulty in getting Japanese Canadians who had been interned to speak with him

But when we were trying to document the redress, when we were trying to get the movement going and everything, it was really painful for people, because they hadn't talked about it. At. All. And so, it was repressed, it was just buried and ....We had to get more information, we had to find out more about what had happened to people and that just surfaced all of these bad memories and it made people feel terrible.... many Issei and Nisei were angry with the Sansei generation for stirring up all those bad memories for what they perceived was a hopeless cause.... So, they just didn't want to talk about it.... They were so grateful when redress was actually achieved. That was a significant achievement....Then afterwards, then redress, okay, so now....it just became...they could talk about it more openly and the shame and the guilt. They could talk about it.... I think it just *became more legitimate to talk about it afterwards* [emphasis added].

He contrasts these earlier conversations in the 1980s with those who were interned with the more open conversations he had with his parents after Redress.

After the redress settlement, my parents opened up a lot more in speaking about the Internment and how it affected them personally....My mom told me about how it was for her as a 13-year-old riding that train from Vancouver to Winnipeg while having her period, having to stand on the train station with her family to be looked over by the farmers as if they were animals at auction, the deep personal humiliations that she was able to share with me....Mom was the stay-at-home mom, as was the case in those days in the 50's, 60's so – very traditional household. Dad...was starting up his own business and he was working all the time so we didn't see him a lot. And kids were the responsibility of the mom. But then after Dad retired, which was also after Redress, um, yeah, we heard a lot about what it was like, moving from [his home in BC], and he was driving this big lumber truck, and what it was like in the camps, but not growing up.

Greg noticed his Father would talk slightly more about Internment after Redress:

Well, um, you know, it's kind of like, um, you know how some war veterans, maybe they'll just discuss it very occasionally, once in a while, about how things were, well, it's kind of like that.... But I think, when the Redress movement came through though, uh, in the early 80's, I think my Dad mentioned a little bit more about it, you know....in [rural town], Manitoba, he seemed to mention that as

being one of the more uncomfortable points of his life, because I guess the heating wasn't very good, the drinking water wasn't very good. He also said he had to go and work in a paper plant in Ontario for a while, you know, so he mentioned those things as being kind of the things that were the most difficult for him, you know?

Misa also felt that there was more discussion about the Internment after Redress.

A lot of things were brought up, um, well, brought to light, I guess, during Redress, about that whole thing learning about them having to carry that card, you know, that was one of the ways you could prove you were interned, because you had that identity card, and a lot of the Japanese Canadians kept them. And you could send a copy of it and that's how you could get your cheque. You know that was one of the ways. You had to prove that you were there, right? to get the compensation. And my grandmother had her card, and I remember that, and she showed it to me. She said, "We had to carry that card, to get on a bus."... this is part of our history. A lot of them kept it. A lot of them had it. So that was one of the ways they could prove they were there, were part of it and were eligible for the compensation. So that's what I mean, these stories came up when Redress was happening because things were coming to light, like I said, that was a perfect example, she said "Oh, I have to send them this card, and you know what, this card? We had to use it...you know, she told us about the curfews, so it made stories come out when Redress happened.

Nagata and Cheng (2003) reported that 75% of the Nisei in their study indicated that they were more willing to talk about the Internment with their children after Redress, however, they also noted that willingness to talk did not mean that conversations actually occurred. The fact that information about the Internment moved out of the realm of family and community, and became open to the general public through the media, opened up interest and discussion with some participants as well. As Andrea said,

And even, then, though when I was older, and particularly after the Redress when it was sort of more in the public knowledge, I think that was in '88?, that that would, I think I probably started asking more questions to want to know, how do we fit in to this, like what is our family history? But prior to that, it just, really wasn't talked about that much.

Steve believed that discussion about the Internment became more open after Redress, because "it became *more legitimate* [emphasis added] to talk about it afterwards." Not only did his parents talk about it more, but his daughter chose the topic of Internment for her school project. In comparison, he notes that when he was his daughter's age, that topic was not one he would have chosen for himself. Information about the Internment was not as readily available and, more significantly, he believed that it wasn't a legitimate thing to talk about when he was in elementary school. During his school years, Japanese Canadians were still trying to assimilate into mainstream culture, and the Internment was not acknowledged or recognized in mainstream society as a wartime event, let alone a travesty of Canadian democracy. Many Manitobans were unaware of what had happened in BC. Redress provided a socially approved framework that validated and legitimized the Internment (Nagata & Cheng, 2003) which was motivated by xenophobic Canadians, particularly in BC. While information in school textbooks still appears to be scant (Tupper, 2002), reliable electronic resources of information are now available.

Whereas few participants learned about the Internment through the educational system when they attended school, participants' Yonsei children have chosen the Internment as their topic in school projects. Keri's daughter "is very involved in learning all about it (the Internment). She did a research project on human rights and she did it through a pictorial display of the internment and what had happened. And the centre of it was her great-grandfather." Keri has collected books about the Internment which her

daughter has used as a resource. Steve's daughter also chose the topic of the Internment for a school project.

Last year, my eleven-year old daughter selected the internment as the theme for a school project on her grandfather's "migration." She downloaded images from the web on the barracks in Hastings Park where Japanese Canadians ... were held, and images from the [Internment camp]... where Dad was kept for a time, and put together a really thoroughly researched paper, showing that those stories have really had an impact on her. ...I showed that to my Dad, and he just sat there, he was just stunned, he couldn't believe it. And then he said, "Do you think I could keep this for a little while? Because I've got some people coming from Japan, and they don't know, you know? and this explains everything that happened. And I said, "Of course, you can keep this. This is yours. This is for you!"... He was really touched. It was awesome. That meant a lot to me and obviously it meant a lot to Dad and for the next generation to know and to... that's great.

Steve refers to how it would have been almost unthinkable for those in his generation to have presented a topic like this in a school project when they were her age.

This is what I mean about pre- redress . When we were eleven years old, that was before redress, there was no way! I mean, we wouldn't have known, all of that information, you know, in the first place but, of course we wouldn't have chosen that topic because it wasn't a legitimate [emphasis added] thing to [talk about] ...

When asked how his daughter felt about having this aspect of racism in her family history, Steve responded,

I don't think embarrassed would be the word. I'd have to ask her. But I think it would be more indignation, or more outrage or...I don't think she would be ashamed. I think she's even kind of....it's even the reverse probably, maybe proud, not quite, but I mean I don't think she feels badly about it, that it happened. We were very much the victims....so it's a legitimate thing for us to talk about proudly, you know? We were totally the victims and... we were completely in the right.

Unlike the experiences of many participants who were unable to converse with their grandparents because neither generation fully understood the language of the

other, some of the younger Sansei participants, such as Misa and Andrea, and some participants' Yonsei children are able to converse with their grandparents in English, their shared language. While Keith could not communicate with his own Grandmother in Japanese, his Yonsei children feel comfortable talking about the Internment with their Nisei Grandmother.

(T)hey ask my Mom about it all the time. She's still alive and she has a very, very close relationship with her grandchildren. Unlike my grandmother who – I still couldn't understand, um who came to Canada, lived here for I don't know how many years, and never really learned to speak English, so there's always that big gap. My mom can tell these stories to my kids directly. So they have a wonderful relationship, they can talk about things and if they don't understand, my Mom will explain it to them.

For family members, aging is a motivating factor to tell their stories as much as it is for the younger generation to seek them. Within her family, Misa found that family members are now talking more about family history than they did when she was a child, and attributes this to, "Like, I think as they're getting older, people are getting older, they want the story, or the truth to be known."

Just as the Sansei sought out the stories of Internment experiences from their elders during the Redress Movement in the 1980's, in Andrea's current experience it is the younger Sansei seeking stories directly from older family members directly while they are still alive. Andrea includes herself when she explains,

You know what I find interesting? I feel like the grandchildren are the ones pushing for the information. Because when I was asked to give a presentation, and said "Yes," and then realized I needed to go to my Nana to ask her questions, um, so it was, and I think that that's a lot of what's happening, it's the youth who are wanting more information, wanting the stories and information. How did you feel? And what happened? I think we're now going to the grandparents, or the parents, if the grandparents have passed away, to say, "Tell me what you know." So, in a sense, it's a little bit backwards from when you think of other storytelling

in cultures where stories get handed down. I feel the Japanese community needed the sort of, like it was not talked about, and then there was a trigger and now it's almost the younger generation saying we want to know, tell us. And especially as that generation, they're passing away now, that gap is growing.... But I think as the youth are growing up, we're aware that our grandparents are passing away, and that once they're gone, that first voice is gone, then you need to rely on your parents, but already that's second hand, it's not their experience, it's what they heard from their parents. So I think that's where you're seeing within the community a resurgence of the youth wanting to connect with the older generation.

There has also been a shift in self-perception and identity between generations.

For instance, when Keith was growing up, he did not want to be identified as a Japanese Canadian. He wanted to assimilate and be like all the other "white Canadian boys." And as he stated earlier, "it wasn't until much, much later when you realize, you know what? My heritage is extremely important and my ethnicity is something to be celebrated, not something to be hidden." He has noticed a huge contrast in how he perceived himself when he was growing up and how his children, who are of mixed race, perceive themselves and are proud to identify themselves as Japanese Canadians. He and his family watched a movie together called One Big Hapa Family by Canadian filmmaker Jeff Chiba Stearns (2010) who identifies himself as half-Japanese-Canadian. This documentary / animation was sparked by Jeff's realization that after his Japanese Canadian grandparents' generation, everyone married interracially. He explores how the children of mixed race over three generations in his extended family perceive their identities. Keith identified with the perceptions of those in the documentary.

It's fantastic. It's reflective, I mean, watching it, I felt, that's exactly what I felt like growing up. Anyways, at the end of the movie, the whole big thing is, "what are you?" And my son and daughter both said without hesitation, we're Japanese Canadian, and my wife had her feelings hurt. She said, "Well, wouldn't you say

you're Japanese-[Euro] Canadian?" And they both went, "No. We're Japanese Canadian." (pause – and he spoke the rest of his thoughts more slowly.) And I thought that was interesting. They're very proud that they're visible, like they have, they both look partially Japanese, but they're both very proud that they look different. Which is completely different than it was when I was growing up.

I think that there's more and more, I mean everybody, it's all boiling down to everything's getting mixed, right? There's more and more Asians, more and more half Asians, more and more Southeast Asians, so it's nothing now, I mean, to have a bunch of Asians. It's not a big deal. Whereas growing up, I think it was. And I think it's just accepted more, where everybody knows somebody that has either married or has friends that are...you're not viewed as being a visible minority. I mean, (in my profession), there are days when we're working in the room, and there's not a Caucasian male in the entire room. It's all Asians, you know? Like there'll be five or six males in there and all of them are Asian. So it's, it's just different.

### **Continuing Intergenerational Communication of the Internment**

The Internment is an integral part of the history of Japanese Canadians as well as the history of Canada, of which participants believe subsequent generations, not only of Japanese heritage, should be informed. From what they've learned about the Internment through family stories and other sources, and from what they've experienced growing up in the aftermath of the Internment, participants shared various aspects of what they would pass on to future generations – pride in how the older generations overcame years of racial discrimination, awareness of other populations which may be vulnerable to racialization, strength of community, and speaking up for what you believe in.

Steve believes that "it is important that future generations of Japanese Canadians know what happened to their ancestors as part of their identity" and to acknowledge the hardships that they experienced and overcame even before the Internment.

I think they should be proud of what their grandparents and great-grandparents endured, and had to put up with and overcame, you know, you can go even

before the internment – the open discrimination that our grandparents faced when they landed in BC. I can't imagine how they overcame all of that.

Those events shaped our parents, and therefore they shaped us. I just think that it is important to know what happened, not so much to draw critical life lessons, but just to know. It was a long time ago now, and it all seems so remote, but I do not think it is irrelevant to Japanese Canadians today. I think it would be useful for any person to reflect on what it must have been like and what they might have done in the same situation if they had been their grandparent at the time, or a (non-Japanese) neighbor, or a government official, etc. It actually happened, after all. What can they learn about themselves from such reflections?

Steve also believes knowledge of the history of Japanese Canadians would be appropriate and useful for non-Japanese Canadians, as well.

It is also important to me that future generations of mainstream Canadians (and Asians, and Americans, and Europeans, etc.) know what happened to Japanese Canadians before, during and after World War II. Just that would be enough, but it would also be good if, as a result, some of those people were better able to apply principles of tolerance and compassion and justice in their daily lives, and if the public policies adopted by their governments reflected those principles.

Participants believed that it would be important for subsequent generations to be aware of situations where other minority populations might be vulnerable to racialization and to guard against prejudice. Steve believes a situation like the Internment "could easily be done again to [a population that is painted by the mainstream public] a target group because of their name, their religion, the colour of their skin." He cautions against these mainstream prejudices and "to be more thoughtful about that sort of thing."

June provides words of encouragement to guard against other minority populations being treated the way Japanese Canadians were during Internment. One of the lessons her parents taught her was "to put the past behind you and work hard to



make the future brighter." For future generations, she adds to the lesson her parents taught her.

Well, I personally feel that it was a great injustice done to Japanese people but, by the same token, what's done is done so you move forward and, by education, you ensure that it never happens again to any people..... and I guess basically, if everybody, no matter your race, your beliefs, whatever, would just treat each other with a lot more kindness, dignity, and fairness. If everybody would do that, then we wouldn't have to worry.

There are two sayings which, to Kiyō, represent what she would want to pass on to other generations concerning the Internment history. One relates to community and the other relates to speaking up for what you believe is right.

Well, I think what I'd want to pass on is: "It takes a village to raise a child." I believe that the Internment experience showed that when you confine a community to one space, and that community lives by "gaman", then the character of each person is impacted by the actions of the group and people have hope for the future. If people don't work together and respect one another, nothing can be achieved. The actions of the Japanese Canadians during Internment contributed to a better society in that Canadians became more aware of human rights and social justice. Japanese Canadians are viewed as leaders in that movement of redressing wrongs that have been inflicted upon groups and communities, ultimately resulting in reconciliation and healing.

I also think there's another important message for future generations. And that's one that's done regarding the Hiroshima Peace Day. And that is "Better to light one candle than curse the darkness." So, better that you try to do one right thing, or even to try to be, do something that you believe in rather than to criticize things and not do anything. So if you're upset about something and you know something is wrong, try to do something about it, rather than just complain about it or sit back. So I think the whole Redress around the Internment issue was that kind of movement to say, "Something wrong happened here and we need to bring closure to that. We need to have a common theme to making that right." And I think that's what Redress was about.

## **The Lived Experience: Born After the Internment**

### **Early Environment Growing Up**

The government's policy of dispersal and forced assimilation influenced or played a factor in the early social environment of participants when they were growing up, in terms of where they lived, the proximity of other Japanese Canadian families in their neighbourhood, their accessibility to interact with other Japanese Canadian children at school or in the neighbourhood, and their participation in learning about their Japanese heritage and language.

There were few, if any, Japanese Canadian families living in the same neighbourhood in which the participants were raised. This isolation from other Japanese Canadians stemmed from the dispersal and assimilation policy set by government, as well as the community's own cognizance of blending in. The Manitoba Japanese Joint Council, formed in 1942, suggested to Japanese Canadians moving into the city that they not live together in the same areas to avoid creating a ghetto situation which, ironically, had occurred in BC due to government policies which prevented them from assimilating (Dion, 1991; MJCCA, 1996).

In their respective neighbourhoods, four participants said there were no other Japanese Canadian families besides theirs, two said the only other family was related to their own, four said there were two or three families and one said there were five families and they all knew each other. Concerning other non-Caucasians in their neighbourhood, two participants identified themselves as the only "visible minority." Two participants

lived in neighbourhoods that were diverse, representative of different ethnicities and cultures.

Not being around many Japanese Canadian children in the neighbourhood or at school meant that participants did not have the ready opportunity to socialize with other Japanese Canadian children (and to share similar experiences or be supportive of each other) and that they were often singled out by the other children as being different from them. Besides their siblings, Misa and E, were the only Japanese Canadians at their respective elementary schools. Kiyo says there was one other Japanese Canadian student and they became friends. Crista attended a bilingual European language school surrounded by blonde children, and says she has never had a Japanese Canadian friend, although she did have a friend who was Chinese. Greg thought there might have been five other Japanese Canadians within a student body of several hundred students.

Shared heritage and/or shared experience became the bond through which friendship was formed. For instance, it wasn't until she attended junior high that E met and became friends with another Japanese Canadian girl.

I don't even know if there were other Asians in my school..... it wasn't until I went to junior high, that's where I met, one of my friends was Japanese, same age, a Japanese female so we went to junior high together, so she's Japanese so there was obviously at least with me, there was an immediate bond, because you're Japanese. But I also had a Chinese girlfriend. She was a bit later, I think. So that was about it, because I didn't have...it wasn't until Junior high I had a Japanese girlfriend the same age as me....someone I could identify with in that weird kind of way (laugh) as opposed to my siblings brother and sister who had (Japanese Canadian) friends the same age and also going to school, for them it was earlier, but for me it was later.

Misa became friends with a girl in high school who also had a Japanese Canadian-Euro Canadian heritage.

...the first day of high school...one girl, who's now one of my best friends...saw me walking down the hallway from a distance and said, "She's a halfer." And immediately she felt drawn to me, because she was a halfer, as well. So we met the first day, and she came up to me and said, "you're half Japanese, aren't you." And I said, "yeah." And she said, "Me, too." And then.... (Laughing)....years later, we're still the best of friends. But you're *drawn to* each other, sharing that same experience, you know? her mother being full Japanese and her dad being white, (laughing)...it's funny, how you're drawn to your own kind. (laughter)...We had the same shared experience of these weird traditions, the grandmothers, and the red rice on the holidays, (laughing), you know, things like that, it's funny, yeah, shared experiences.

However, Patti's experience befriending other Japanese Canadian children differed from the experience of other participants. From an adult's perspective, she wonders if this may have been influenced by the dispersal and assimilation policy.

Well, there were a few Japanese families around. But, uh.... and actually, two of the families had kids my age, but we never really....Let's put it this way. The fact we were Japanese didn't necessarily draw us together because we... I don't know, I really didn't talk to them to find out. We didn't feel any need or a desire to come, you know how a lot of the (immigrants), they tend to stick close together whereas, so even though there were these other Japanese trying to assimilate....I don't if we were actively trying to avoid them or if it was more... it's hard to know, on my part...how much had to do with if I was trying to avoid them because of...or just because they weren't my personality type.

Being one of the only Japanese Canadian children in the neighbourhood or at school often meant that participants were singled out as being different due to their ethnicity or physical appearance. Ten participants experienced racist remarks or gestures from the neighbourhood children. Two of these participants, though, pointed out that their friends accepted them and it was children who didn't know them that made the racist remarks. Of the four participants who did not experience racist remarks, two lived

in diversely populated neighbourhoods, one said he "may have been completely oblivious or insensitive to it," and another said he "didn't look like a visible minority."

For Patti and Andrea, being Japanese Canadian did not seem to be an issue in the diverse neighbourhoods in which they were raised. Speaking about her neighbourhood, Patti attributed this to the fact that

they were all immigrant -type of people - Polish, Ukrainian, Jewish people... I mean my parents, all these parents were either like first generation Canadians or had been born in other countries, or second generation Canadians, but anyway they all came from immigrant type families.

However, when she was about eight years old, her family moved to another area of the city where Patti did experience racism.

Misa and her siblings were the only racially different people in her neighbourhood and did experience racism, even though..."we're only half Japanese....A lot of the time, I mean to find any ethnic diversity whatsoever was difficult. So we were the only visible minority in our school until...I think, I was in Grade Four, when a black family moved in.... The pressure went off us, and all the teasing went to them."

E's experience with racism occurred when she was older, in junior high, when she began to go out more on her own, not just with family.

I guess the racism wasn't apparent, or in my face, until I was in junior high, maybe, when I would go out more, with friends. Because when you're younger, when you're in elementary school, up to about 12 years old, most of the places you go to, you're with your parents or with your family, something like that, you're not going to go out on your own. So it wasn't until junior high...I was at some store...I still have this vivid memory. I was either going up or down the escalator and there were these boys going in the opposite direction, and they looked at me and said "Oh, look at that Jap, or "Slanteyes," you know, things like

that? I got that all the time. And of course, that made me angry, you know, and that probably started when I was in junior high.

Based on appearance, Alan said he would not be racially differentiated from others. Yet hearing racist remarks in the playground made him feel uncomfortable.

...I'm not sort of a visible minority. So in some ways, people didn't really know I was Japanese Canadian. So, like anything where, you know, when you're a kid in the schoolyard and stuff, and every kid, you know, they'd make sort of racist comments as a joke or something. And it's funny, it wasn't directed at me or anything like that because no one, in essence, no one really knew I was a minority. But it's funny, as a kid you don't really know how to deal with it. I think in some ways I was sort of ashamed a little bit, or embarrassed or something.....and then in some ways, it was uncomfortable in the sense, I'm not, it's not directed at me, but in some ways, as I get older I realize, that was me, do you know what I mean?

Both June and Keith felt accepted by their friends and made the distinction that these racial remarks were initiated by people who didn't know them. As a high school student, June felt that race was not an issue with her friends. Keith explains the difference between how he was perceived by friends and by those who didn't know him personally.

The friends I had obviously either recognized that we were a visible minority and didn't care, or didn't recognize we were a visible minority because you were just a friend down the street....They didn't see your ethnicity as the first thing, for one thing, they saw you as a person first. And then, oh your ethnicity was this, but it didn't really matter, right? So, your friends are your friends and they didn't care whether you were black, white, yellow or green, essentially, right? But with other people, that's the first thing they saw, the people who didn't know you, the first thing they saw was your ethnicity and they were quick to point out, "Hey, you look different." It's like, "Gee, I didn't know I was Japanese, thanks for telling me."

Participants found different ways of dealing with these racist remarks. E was the only one who said outright that it made her angry when people made racist remarks to

her. In contrast, June and Greg downplayed the impact of being the recipients of racial taunt. June said,

We did experience racism, um,.....but you know, being little children, it didn't really affect us so much, I think, because my siblings and I were very close in age, so we kind of had our own little gang, and we played outside on the street, and I would run along after my brothers....I DO remember, going to school or walking down the street to the store, other kids that didn't know us, would come out and say "Kill the Japs," you know? "Kill the Japs," that kind of thing? But, as I say, we didn't feel any kind of, you know, from what I recall, we weren't particularly upset or hurt by it, it was just like, "Well, they don't know any better" and "we have each other, so it doesn't really matter what they say," that kind of thing. And then in school...I don't recall experiencing, you know, any sort of racism. It was just mostly on the playground and on the street, playing outside.

Also downplaying the impact of being called names by other children, Greg said, "when it comes to discrimination, and being called Chinese, or something like that, uh, yeah, there were maybe a few times in elementary school, someone reminded me of it, but *there was no harm intended*" [emphasis added].

### **Dualities of Perception**

Being a Nisei or Sansei, that is, a second or third-generation Canadian of Japanese heritage, has created a duality of perception, how one perceives oneself and how one is perceived by non-Japanese Canadians. Assumptions have been made about participants' birthplace and ethnicity based on their physical appearance (Japanese/Asian phenotype) and/or family name. For instance, while participants perceive themselves as Canadians, others have assumed that the participants were from Japan or elsewhere due to their Japanese/Asian phenotype or physical features, despite the fact that participants speak flawless English without an accent. For instance, both Patti and Kiyoko have been complimented on how well they speak English because it was assumed that they weren't

born in Canada, but somewhere else. The visual impression is stronger than the aural one. Misa, E, and Greg acknowledged that if you heard a Japanese Canadian speaking via the telephone, you would not know that they were Japanese Canadian, although

Greg adds:

Well, when you're... speaking on the phone, you can tell, when it's a Nisei on the phone, because their English has a little bit of a Japanese accent, you can tell it's a Japanese person, right? Maybe it doesn't stand out so much when you're speaking with them face to face, but on the phone you can tell.

Five participants have been asked about their ethnic background, or have been mistaken for other ethnicities or races, such as Chinese, Filipino or Aboriginal. So they end up identifying both aspects of their identity, and having to affirm or assert their Canadian-ness. For instance, Patti is frequently approached by Filipinos, who immediately start speaking to her in Tagalog.

I just say, "Pardon me?" So then they'll ask me.... Obviously they think I look like them. I do consider myself Canadian, I was born in Canada. But in terms of these people, this other race, looking at me...they obviously know, well, I guess they don't know that I'm Canadian necessarily, but ....They're wanting to know where my looks come from, physical looks come from, so that's why I say, "Yeah, I'm Japanese." The Canadian part is understood maybe, especially when they hear me speaking. I mean, someone might say, "Oh, you speak English really well. And I'll say, "Well, I was born here." (laughter)

Crista has been asked about her ethnic background in both Canada and Japan.

She explains what this experience was like while living in Japan.

It was interesting because, I guess, also being a biracial person, as well, people can't really place me [emphasis added]. So people would often try to guess what I was....sometimes I blended in a bit, but not, not fully, I mean they could still look at me and see that I'm, like, a foreigner there.

For Crista, going to Japan, allowed her the opportunity to gain an understanding of the culture and to visit her family birthplaces. "I really enjoyed being in Japan and I



think it was really important for me to have a bit more of an understanding and see where my family came from, and travel around..." Christa's experience living in Japan was meaningful in affirming her home, or sense of place, in Canada and her identity as a Canadian as well as providing a cultural context for her Japanese heritage. While feeling at home in Japan, and blending in in some ways such as body type, she also felt that, being biracial, she was identified as a foreigner there.

It was very interesting, because, when I got there, I felt really at home there. I had a great time....You know, I go there and for me, it was really exciting to see so many Japanese people because mostly the people I knew were from my family, but I mean, I definitely, I'm a foreigner there, when I go there. So, it was great to learn about it, and I felt really at home there, but at the same time, um, I, you know, decided I was going to go back to Canada because I felt, I'm Canadian, I speak English, I don't really speak Japanese. I really enjoyed my time there but I felt I needed to, Canada was my home so I was going to come back.

Two participants, Kiyoko and Crista, spoke of encounters or situations which sparked them to explore their "location" or identity in terms of why, even though they were Canadians, born and raised in Canada, they were perceived as not being born here or as being different culturally.

For Kiyoko, the Canadian and Japanese aspects of her identity felt blended, yet there would be encounters with non-Japanese Canadians who considered her to be Japanese. This made her take stock of her situation.

For instance, when Folklorama is on, and patrons would say, things like, "You speak very well--when did you come from Japan?" or in chance encounters, people would say, "Oh, you speak so well, when did you come over from Japan?" and you'd say, "Just a minute." So when you have those kinds of encounters, you know, it's the time to say, "okay, who am I? People obviously see me in a certain way, and they judge what that is, that isn't who I am, okay? But I don't want to discount the fact that that's part of my heritage, being Japanese. But I AM a Canadian. And so, I think it was a blend of both. That I see myself as Canadian, I think I just say I'm Japanese Canadian, but in truth, I would say that I am a

Canadian of Japanese heritage. But I think it's just sometimes simpler to say I'm a Japanese Canadian. I think language has different connotations with people, but sometimes, when you want to have a serious conversation with people, you get into more of those kinds of identity issues. But I think when people are just, you know, it's just a casual encounter in a grocery store or something like that, I just want to say the simplest thing (both laughing), because I think people don't mean to offend, so I don't want to make them feel bad because they've asked me a question that I have to go into a whole lot of explanation for.

One of Crista's encounters dealing with the duality of perception came about in meeting with her boyfriend's family and their reaction to her. Because her first name and family name were Euro Canadian, they did not realize she was Asian until they met her face-to-face, in person. Judging her by phenotype, they did not want their son to date her due to what they perceived as cultural differences and the potential difficulties that could pose in the relationship. Encounters such as this started Crista exploring why she was being perceived as being different culturally, even though both she and her mother were Canadian-born, and to learn more about her family's history and her Japanese heritage.

(W)hen I got to be a bit older, one of my first, my first serious boyfriend and his family, um, didn't want him to, had seen my name, and thought I was Caucasian 'cause my first and last name are Caucasian, but when I went to meet them, they saw that I'm, they could tell I'm Asian so they, uh, didn't want him to date me because they had said they knew someone who had married someone who was Japanese and they got divorced and they had cultural differences and things like that, and that was sort of my first more serious experience of people sort of really judging me based on that and I thought that was sort of, um, a bit confusing to me, because I'm born here, my Mom was born here, I don't speak Japanese, what kind of cultural differences are you talking about? I think that all helped to spark my interest really, finding out, well, this is part of my culture and I did want to learn about that, and this is how people perceived me. What is this about? So it really wasn't until I was older and sometimes having some of those negative experiences were... um... kind of sparked more of my interest in finding out, well, what my family's history was about.

About her experience living in Japan to teach, Crista says,

It was interesting because, I guess, also being a biracial person, as well, people can't really place me. So my students would often try to guess what I was. You know I go there and for me, it was really exciting to see so many Japanese people because mostly the people I knew were from my family, but I mean, I definitely, I'm a foreigner there, when I go there.

As mentioned earlier, the duality of perception carried by others as well as by participants themselves is reminiscent of the duality which Japanese Canadians, particularly those born in Canada, had to grapple with during the Internment, and being branded as "enemy aliens" due to their heritage and phenotype, despite the fact that they were rightful citizens.

### **Aspects of Forced Assimilation**

While being able to appreciate one's heritage as an adult, this often didn't come easily to many participants when they were children. Whereas the section on early environment dealt with how they were seen and treated by those who didn't know them or recognize them as friends, this section deals with how some participants felt about the experience of growing up in a neighbourhood where there were few, in any, other Japanese Canadian families, or any other visible minorities. Participants articulated different phrases that seemed to elicit the same meaning – while being expressed in terms of "wanting," and "not wanting." There seemed to be a sense of longing, or wanting to be able to identify with others who looked like themselves, and who shared the same heritage and similar experiences, wanting to blend in, or to be a part of a majority, not necessarily Caucasian, or wanting to be white. Conversely, there were

expressions of not wanting to stand out, not wanting to be visible or a “visible minority” (their terminology), discomfort being with other Japanese Canadians or Asians, and not wanting to be associated with other Japanese Canadians or Japanese culture. Wanting to assimilate often seemed to be motivated by a not wanting, rather than a positive thing in itself. While many of these experiences may be seen as wanting to assimilate, they may also be seen as part of the dichotomy of perception by self and others (see following section, “Dualities of Perception.”) Other aspects of assimilation, or the ambivalence of assimilation, that emerged from the interviews dealt with the pressure to assimilate, unsuspectingly being assimilated, and being born into assimilation, in addition to learning, or not learning, the Japanese language and culture.

Six participants articulated the longing to be with others who were similar to themselves in heritage and shared experience. As discussed earlier, it was significant for E and Misa to meet and become friends with another Japanese Canadian at school and to talk about similar experiences. On the other hand, Patti indicated that her experience in not wanting to be friends with other Japanese Canadian children her age might have been a result of wanting to assimilate into the mainstream, or, a natural outcome of just having different personalities.

Andrea and Crista, who identified themselves as mixed race and biracial respectively, enjoyed going to community events with their families every year because it gave them the opportunity to be with other children like themselves. Andrea explains,

When I was a kid, you didn’t see as many mixed-race kids, but at the same time I felt that a lot of the Japanese families were mixed. So that was never an issue. It was kind of nice to go to the picnic and see a lot of kids my age who were also

half-Japanese....it gave me a sense of "they're like me!" a white Dad and a Japanese Mom, or a white Mom and a Japanese Dad. And even now when you go to the Centre you see a lot of the youth, who are now in their 20's and 30's, are mixed race. So I always thought that was really nice, to be able to see that.

For Crista, attending Folklorama also provided her with this opportunity. "I had a friend who was Chinese, but I didn't know any Japanese. I've never had a Japanese friend. That's why it was always very interesting going to Folklorama to see other kids who sort of looked like me."

Two other participants, Greg and Keri, expressed wanting to be part of the majority and both spoke of the difference in being a minority in Canada and part of the majority in Japan. Not having been to Japan, Greg imagines what it would be like to be in the majority there.

Well, the thing is, you see, if you're born and raised within your own kind, you feel perfectly comfortable. If you're born and raised outside it, it would feel a little different coming back. I'm always used to being a minority in a group of majority people. I'm always used to being on the minority side. I've never really lived a moment where I'm a majority with all Japanese people. That's an experience I've never encountered. And if I was born and raised in Japan, I would have that experience, right? I don't have that, you see. And that's what I think I'm missing.

Keri travelled to Japan, and was looking forward to blending in and being part of the majority, but the outcome of her experience was not what she had anticipated. This will be discussed in more detail under the section "dualities of perception."

Wanting to blend in and not wanting to stand out or be visibly different was strongly expressed by Patti, Keith, and Keri. For Patti, this also included not wanting to be differentiated aurally, as well. She explains why she decided to change her name, informally, from her given Japanese name to an English-sounding name.

When I was about eight years old, my family moved (to a different area). As my teachers always had trouble pronouncing my name prior to the move, I (along with my siblings) decided to use an English name. It was embarrassing at the time when teachers would try to stumble through my name... it would call attention to myself when I was trying to be "invisible." I used that name ... right through school and my first few years of work. I guess it was probably when I returned to Winnipeg ... that I decided to go back to my real name....I don't remember exactly why...except for a few things such as I think my sister had gone back to (using her given name), I was that much older and didn't much care if people had trouble with my name, it no longer embarrassed me, and possibly the name sounded "childish."

Visiting Japan provided Patti with the opportunity to experience what it was like to blend in, unlike her experience growing up in Winnipeg:

You know, it's funny because, uh, I really felt at home there. It's like....I think, I think in a way....partly to do with.... something to do with the internment and how we adapted. I didn't want to stand out. I never wanted to stand out in a crowd. I always wanted to blend in. And I attribute that to...to... what my family had gone through during the war and also the racism I experienced as a child... that you don't want to be seen. If you're seen, you're ostracized, made fun of, whatever, you're called names, all sorts of things, so, uh, I always wanted to....I didn't want to be noticed. So going over to Japan, it's like, well, I can blend in!.... So I really enjoyed it over there. It was interesting, too, because...not only...I felt I was home, in a funny kind of way, even though I had never been there before, I really felt I was at home.

Patti's adult experience in Japan, of feeling at home and being able to blend in, was in sharp contrast to her experience in Winnipeg, of feeling discomfort, "almost like a fear," being in a group of Japanese Canadians.

(In Japan)....I didn't stand out. I think that was a big part of it. Here, growing up, I was aware of who was around me. People stared at me. I really didn't want to stand out at all. It left me feeling....I almost felt as though.... At the Cultural Centre, when I was with a group of all Japanese people I'd somehow feel that that was wrong...uh.... which is a really weird feeling that I would feel that way. Somehow I must have.... my parents never expressed that feeling. I don't know if they.... Somehow, I felt it was almost like a fear I had of being with all these Japanese people not so much like how we were going to be perceived by the rest of the world, but by the people around us, the community. If they see all these Japanese people, that can't be good.

Both Patti and Keith felt that as an individual, a Japanese Canadian would stand out in a group of hakujin, so a group of Japanese Canadians would really be visible and attract undue attention.

While Patti's wanting to blend in was fulfilled by her experience in Japan, and in the Japanese culture, Keith's wanting to blend in with the majority of Caucasian children, was strongly linked with not wanting to be associated with, almost an aversion to, his Japanese heritage and the Japanese culture or even being seen with other Asians.

(W)hen I was growing up, I wanted to be part of the white Caucasian, Western community, Western society, you know?...That was the part of my life where it was, you almost eschewed, you almost wanted to give away your ethnicity, because the only thing you wanted to do was assimilate. You wanted to assimilate with all the other Caucasian kids who were around. You didn't want to be different. You just wanted to just blend in. And it wasn't until much, much later when you realize, you know what? My heritage is extremely important and my ethnicity is something to be *celebrated*, not something to be *hidden*.

Wanting to disassociate himself from anything related to being Japanese carried over into not wanting to participate in activities, like judo or karate, that were related to Japanese culture.

We were exposed to it. I just never had any interest in it. 'Cause again, it was something that was too linked to being Japanese, and I wanted to be, I wanted to be a white Canadian boy, (laugh) growing up, you know? Yeah. There was a huge pressure, and it comes back again to assimilation, a huge pressure to assimilate. You wanted to eschew almost anything that was Asian or anything that was Japanese and part of your culture.

Feeling this pressure to assimilate meant that he would literally distance himself from other Asians.

It went so far to the point where, if I was standing waiting for the bus, and I was standing there, and ... if they were Japanese-looking or Asian-looking, I would make sure I didn't stand beside them at the bus stop because I didn't want to be

viewed as being with them. Do you know what I mean? I wanted to, you know, I'm a cool white, pseudo-trying-to-be-white Caucasian kid here. I'm too cool to go downtown with my Asian grandparents, that sort of thing. So I can remember standing at the concert hall waiting for a bus, and actually doing that, moving away from these Asian people because I did not want people to think I was with them.

For Keri, wanting to blend in meant being "part of the majority and not so visibly identifiable." Being seen as racially different made her the target of racist remarks and attitudes.

(G)rowing up... I thought life would be a lot easier if I were white. Yeah, you know, just blend in with the crowd, and just be a part of the majority, and not be so visibly identifiable. ...I would be more popular; I would get better jobs; I would snag the handsome guys. I felt that if I blended in, rather than stood out as the only non-white person in the room or wherever, my life would be easier. I felt I was targeted as a non-white; I was bullied at school; people would call me racist names like Jap and Chink. I was not allowed to go over to my best friend's home because her mother did not like Asians. I had a friend's brother escort me to a wedding and my friend told me not to expect anything other than the escort thing; I would never be allowed to date him or be a part of their family because I was not white. I supposed I felt that had I been white, these things would not have happened to me. I guess I felt that if I were part of a majority, the playing field would be even on all counts.

Participants had different experiences relating to assimilation, such as feeling the pressure to assimilate, going along with it unsuspectingly, or just being "born into it."

Where Keith felt there was a strong need or pressure to assimilate when he was growing up because of the prejudice directed towards his father in Manitoba after the war, Steve felt he was just going along with it when he was growing up:

I think our whole generation was, we were deliberately assimilated. As kids we didn't know what was going on so we just, you know, we went to school, (laughter) we were totally immersed in white culture....We were brought up to be, to think we were white...They wanted us to learn English, they wanted us to have white friends.... We played their sports, learned their rules, and through the admittedly Japanese traits of honest hard work and perseverance, the sansei



generation seems to have entered the professions that their parents could not, thereby assimilating into mainstream Canada.

But in retrospect, he sees the context and justification for the assimilation.

I think with our culture, the Sansei generation, we lost the language, we lost the culture, we lost everything. I think our parents deliberately did not teach us the culture in order that we could more quickly assimilate. Like I was explaining about my grandmother, the big reason why we got picked out, you know, no other ethnic group got picked out like that in the second World War. It was because we just did not have Canadian values, we didn't have Canadian interests, so... we all did... you know we didn't even do Japanese, you know...no one was doing judo, or kendo or anything like that anymore, until we...much later, like University and yeah, we didn't have..... they didn't speak at home except when they didn't want us to understand what they were saying.

Some participants felt that assimilation wasn't an issue to them because it had already occurred before they were born, through their parents' marriages, that is, a Japanese Canadian marrying a Euro- Canadian. They also noted an increase in intermarriages within their family and in the general population. Alan said,

(M)y Dad, in essence you could say, having married an English woman, that ..., our lives were kind of assimilated from the beginning, so there's never any pressure to do that. But, you just see it happening everywhere. So, obviously no one's saying anything like that, but that's just sort of the way things evolve. You just look at our culture in general, right?

Misa also felt that she and her siblings didn't have to assimilate when they were growing up because it had already happened.

You know what, I think that had already happened. Everybody was kind of assimilated already. And you know, my mother... her and her generation, they all married white people. (laughter) There's only one same marriage where it's Japanese-Japanese, like of all our cousins that are that generation, baby boomers, only one married Japanese, the rest married white people! (laughter) so that is the next generation. Like, all of my cousins are *halfers*, we're *a-a-a-all halfers*, you know..."

Mixed marriages and intermarriage are growing phenomena in the Japanese Canadian community, changing what was formerly a homogeneous composition. According to the website of the National Association of Japanese Canadians, data from Statistics Canada 2001 indicated that the Japanese Canadian community has the highest percentages of mixed marriage and intermarriage of all ethnic groups, with the rate of mixed marriages at 70%, and the rate of intermarriage at 95%. For individuals, the percentage of people of mixed ancestry in the Japanese Canadian community has increased from 26% in 1991 to 37.5% in 2001. These figures reflect changes in the Japanese Canadian community as a result of the government's dispersal policy after the Second World War, which decreased opportunities for social contact within the community. The small population of Japanese Canadians also reduced their possibility of marrying within the community.

Steve said, "I never dated a Japanese Canadian. ...There's so few Sansei who marry Japanese...so few, they all intermarried....the ultimate assimilation." As far as carrying phenotypical Japanese features, Steve says, "The Yonsei kids, okay, they look, they could look, some of them [look Japanese], but then when you to the Gosei, when they get one quarter Japanese, you can't tell at all, not at all Japanese."

Crista wondered how her mother might have been affected by assimilation. She dyed her hair blonde, which was confusing to Crista as a child, and didn't teach her the Japanese language, although she spoke Japanese with her own mother.

Um, I think... some things I've sort of wondered about, like, for example, with my mother, has that played a part in her not, not speaking Japanese to us, and not really um, involving us in cultural activities when we were younger,,, and.... sort of that effect on her? Was there a part of her that maybe just wanted to blend in

with other Canadians or wanted us to sort of just, you know, assimilate with everyone else?

.... Was that part of.....? Was there.....? That's what I sort of wondered. Was there some sort of effect on that? Well, how did that affect my Grandmother and them when they came to Manitoba? Were they...? Why...um... I have met some Japanese Canadians here, but not people who have family history through the Internment but more recent immigrants, and it's interesting for me because now I see their kids who are also half Japanese, but, who are fluent in Japanese and they speak their language and they're involved in activities and things like that. So that kind of made me wonder...uh... why didn't that happen for... my mom's, or maybe her generation? I don't know, in terms of losing your language or not passing that on, is there...was that affected by the Internment in any way? I don't know.....um..... that's something I sort of wondered about... You know, or when my mom wanted to lighten her hair to be blonde... instead of having black hair, that always sort of confused me a little bit.....so, I don't know.

In an email, I asked Crista if she could explain a little more about what was confusing to her. She wrote,

I felt a bit confused because I felt that I was getting the message that blonde hair was better than black hair. I liked my mom's black hair. We talked about it. I think she was looking for a change and liked the look of it and had compliments on it. I had wanted to dye my brown hair black when I was a teenager and she had said no, and offered to pay for me to dye it blonde.

Assimilation brings with it both gains and losses, but change would generally evolve over time, as generations became further removed from the pioneer generation. For instance, the Nisei were becoming assimilated just by attending mainstream schools, reading mainstream newspapers and knowing about general trends and fashion and what was going on in the world, particularly if they lived in Vancouver. But they still had links with their parents' world, the world of the pioneer Issei and the Japanese culture, through language, food and customs. The Nisei generally attended public schools with mainstream society, and also attended Japanese language school after their regular public school classes, in addition to helping on the family farm or business. The

Japanese language would have been spoken in the home and in the community (unless there were only few families living in a hakujin community) and the English language would have been spoken at school and in interactions with mainstream society.

### **Sense of Loss in Continuity of Culture**

Under the umbrella of the collective story of cultural genocide and loss are the varied lived experiences which may, or may not, fit with that collective story. A collective story of the Japanese Canadian community's trauma and losses experienced through Internment was developed during the Redress campaign, as community members brought forward their personal stories. Participants who worked on the campaign will be particularly familiar with it. But what does that mean in terms of actual lived experience? How do participants perceive the loss of language and culture, as well as economic losses?

Due to *forced* assimilation and the destruction of the community as a whole, resulting in the dispersal and scattering of the population across Canada, the geographic and social context in which the language could be spoken almost disappeared. Forced assimilation was similar to the horticultural term, "forced blooming," in which a plant is placed under unnatural conditions to speed up the growth process. Like forced blooming, the process of forced assimilation was not a natural progression of adjustment. There were few Japanese Canadian families living in close proximity in neighbourhoods that were predominantly Caucasian. Patti describes the geographic and social context of living in Winnipeg due to forced migration and dispersal:

(T)he Japanese Canadians moving here from the internment camps had to find accommodations wherever they could - they didn't have the luxury of picking where they wanted to live. Basically, you were lucky to have maybe four Japanese families living in the same area and if you were lucky to have any daily contact with them, you certainly didn't speak in Japanese when everyone else around you would probably be not too impressed....that "daily contact" was missing and I think it did have a profound effect on people even though they still carried on with their daily lives. Perhaps that was the reason they went to church... even though Buddhists do not traditionally attend church -they tend to go to church mainly for big events such as Hanamatsuri or funerals and weddings.... so as to have a legitimate reason for being together....but there wasn't that same sense of community when they all dispersed after Sunday church and went back to their hakujin communities.

Usage of the Japanese language was confined to the home, in family settings and occasionally when Japanese Canadians met together. There was discomfort in speaking Japanese in public, that is, in mainstream society. Patti said, "(W)e weren't able to speak Japanese (without possibly incurring the wrath of our new community) because it would draw attention to the fact that we're of Japanese origin."

The collective story is that "we lost the language." Yet some participants had the opportunity to attend Japanese language classes, for instance, through the Buddhist Church. However, Japanese was often not spoken in the home, as Steve noted, "They wanted us to learn English.... they didn't speak [Japanese] at home except when they didn't want us to understand what they were saying."

While having the opportunity to learn the Japanese language because their parents wanted them to attend these classes, participants did not continue with them because they were not interested, or lost interest. Steve attended Japanese language classes at the Buddhist church because his parents wanted him to go. Even though they

told him that he'd appreciate it later, he didn't see the relevance of learning Japanese at that time in his life, and stopped going to classes.

I had to go to these Japanese language classes. I think there were only about half a dozen kids going to this school and ... we just got drilled on "ah ee u ay o, ka ki ku ke ko," and I went for, I don't know how many years, until I was able to, you know my parents said, "okay, you can decide, but you're going to regret it if you quit," but I quit. And that wasn't really part of my...uh, I mean I wasn't consciously trying to assimilate, but most of my life, I'd say 99% of my life was elsewhere and I had this 1% where I had to go to Japanese school every Sunday and that would be an hour and... the rest of the time, I was on the school basketball team or whatever....so that part felt foreign to me...and I didn't like it and I quit doing it as soon as I could. I didn't see the relevance of it. Yeah, that part doesn't fit in with the assimilation.

In Kiyō's family, both Japanese and English were spoken in the home. Kiyō also took Japanese language lessons, but in her early teen years, she was more interested in spending time with friends than in learning the language. As an adult, though, there were times when she felt it would have been helpful to know the language.

I resented the fact that every Friday night, as well as every Sunday morning, I had to go to Japanese school, which took away from time with my friends, and I didn't like that, so I was never really interested in learning Japanese language. I actually found it a little hard.... And then at some point my parents said, "she's not really enjoying this, she's not liking it so we'll pull her out." So I was given that flexibility whereas I don't think my older siblings were. So I didn't learn it as well as I should have, and in later years, in my adulthood, I realized that I really felt embarrassed that I didn't know the language as well as I wanted to.

Patti also attended language school when she was younger. She cited assimilation as the reason for not continuing to learn Japanese as well as not speaking Japanese to her own children.

Many of us attended Japanese school when we were younger where we learned hiragana and were exposed to some language. But, the teachers were not necessarily qualified teachers although they did a good job of teaching the basics. Unfortunately, many of us quit as soon as we got a little older. I think our parents didn't "force" us to speak Japanese at home - again, because of the

assimilation thing - and while they did speak Japanese to us, it was more of a functional or "kitchen" type of Japanese.

It is much easier to learn a language when you're younger but unfortunately most of us stopped going to language school when we were still quite young (and hadn't learned that much in the way of grammar - mostly learning only the basics of writing). So, in many respects, we're still in that same stage that we were in when we stopped going to language school - just knowing the "kitchen" Japanese - some words but no idea as to how to string them together.

Of course, as my generation had children, we weren't about to speak much Japanese to them other than to use certain words such as *hashi* or *shoyu*.

Misa and Crista didn't attend language classes when they were growing up, but they wondered about the loss of language from their Japanese Canadian mothers.

Crista's Canadian-born Mother speaks Japanese and conversed with her Grandmother in Japanese or would act as translator between Crista and her Grandmother, but never spoke the language at home. Crista wondered if the reason her mother didn't speak any Japanese to her was due to assimilation. "In terms of losing your language or not passing that on, is there...was that affected by the Internment in any way? I don't know."

Misa spoke of the loss of the Japanese language in her mother and her mother's generation after dispersal of the Japanese Canadians, and feels saddened by the loss.

My mother knows no Japanese. None. She can't understand it, she can't speak it, and yet, my Grandmother tells me, that was her first language....When she was growing up, they lived in a Japanese community, that's what was spoken in the home....But, don't you find that whole generation really lost the language because after Internment and they were put back in society, my Grandmother said she told them, "no Japanese, don't ever speak Japanese." You know? You didn't want to point yourself out, that you were Japanese. English, English, English, English. So there's a whole generation that really lost the language.

So it's kind of sad. Like to me, it saddens *me* that they've lost the language, you know? *None* of my aunts, uncles, cousins of that generation speak Japanese. None of them. Like I have friends who are Ukrainian, who are 45 and they still speak Ukrainian. They haven't lost their language. Their family has passed it

down from generation to generation within the home. They can write Ukrainian, read, and you know, they're at an age when I thought, you'd start losing it, like our culture has lost the Japanese language, eh? No, they said they're very strong about keeping that going in their culture, and they're living here in Winnipeg. So I thought that was pretty neat that their mother, their parents were insistent that they learn Ukrainian because they're Ukrainian, and yet they speak English, too.

Perhaps the phrase "we lost the language" refers to loss in what the Japanese language represents, or represented, to participants growing up in what Patti referred to as "the throes of assimilation." In this sense, "we lost the language" could refer to loss on many levels - loss of pride in speaking the language, loss in being able to speak the language publicly without fear of reprisal, loss of communication with those who could only speak the language and thereby losing touch with their heritage through grandparents – literally being "cut off" from the mother tongue, and lack of continuity of the usage of the language. Learning the Japanese language now has become more recreational, than a necessity.

The same sense of loss may be applied to the phrase "we lost the culture." The performing arts, as one aspect of culture, were kept alive in the Internment camps. Participants spoke of family stories about theatrical and musical productions that were performed there. Even after dispersal, Kiyo spoke of these types of productions that were performed here in Winnipeg.

We used to have Japanese concerts in Winnipeg in the 50's and 60's. We would have a variety of performers, dancers and singers. I used to dance as I was taking dance lessons, others would do traditional Japanese dancing and people used to sing, like George Fukumura , Sue Oike and Grace Koga. And they'd always sing popular songs, and Mr. Nakai used to do his mime dancing. We used to do that at the Polish Hall on Selkirk.



At some point, these variety nights were phased out. Most participants did not participate in any cultural activities, that is, activities related to Japanese culture. Some participants learned traditional Japanese dancing, odori, when they were growing up.

About this experience, Kiyo said,

(W)hen I became twelve, thirteen, I didn't want to do it anymore....You know, you're a teenager, you want to do other things, right? (It's) the time of your life when your friends are most important. So I just didn't do it anymore. And now that I see some young girls doing Japanese dancing, I really appreciate the fact that you learn something about the culture by that discipline of movement and listening to music, and being able to appreciate the stories of how that music came to be, and what are the themes of that song and, so yeah, I think I, I felt that I missed out on something. But I think you can always pick it up as an adult....when you're a child, if you don't want to do something, it's not going to happen.

Other than Andrea who learned how to play a Japanese musical instrument when she was in her teens, none of the other participants learned any of the arts, or even sports related to Japanese culture. On not learning cultural activities, Steve says,

I think our parents deliberately did not teach us the culture in order that we could more quickly assimilate. Much later in [location] when we started to put on Japanese cultural events in order to raise money for redress, we found that we needed the new immigrant community to do almost everything – cha no yu (tea ceremony), ikebana (flower arrangement), koi (Japanese carp/fish), shodo (calligraphy), all the music (koto, shamisen, taiko) and dance (even though my mom apparently was in a dance group in Vancouver), even origami (paper folding), none of us had learned as children. Instead we were focused on the same things as Canadians of European ancestry.

Patti acknowledged the necessity of assimilation after Internment and the sense of loss that entailed.

Our parents and grandparents did such a great job of assimilating their children, which I do think was necessary, but it came at a price - that is, we lost our "language" and felt "uncomfortable" when we were with members of the Japanese Canadian community. I don't know if all Japanese Canadians of my

generation felt that way but ... I did.... that seems to be a "missing part of our lives."

Perhaps the generation that grew up in what Patti referred to as "the throes of assimilation" were, in a way, "cultural orphans" (Apfelbaum, 2000). However, they are now reconnecting with what they felt they "lost" – pride and relevancy in their language, culture and history. This will be discussed in the section on Alternative Outcomes to Historical Trauma.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The Internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War was a blatant act of racial-based injustice in Canadian history. Twelve Canadians of Japanese heritage who were born after the Internment, and whose parent(s) or grandparent(s) experienced a form of Internment provided the basis for this research, for which I am truly grateful. Together we explored intergenerational communication about family members' experiences of the Internment, such as how the Internment was discussed within the family, what kinds of narratives family members chose to tell, the way in which they related their Internment experiences and participants' own responses on learning about the Internment. We also explored the lived experience of being born after the Internment. Working from the concept of the Internment of Japanese Canadians as a historically traumatic event, I analyzed the findings using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

I am aware that there is a selective process in the stories which family members chose to tell the next generation, and in the stories which participants chose to tell me. However, in the winnowing, these were the stories that were told, which remain in the telling.

## **The Internment and Historical Trauma Theory**

The conclusion of the findings will be discussed in terms of methodology, theoretical framework, and dual findings: the intergenerational communication of Internment experiences and the lived experiences of participants who were born after the Internment. While the hermeneutic phenomenological approach was an appropriate choice for this study, it became apparent during reflective analysis that the theoretical framework of historical trauma was unsuitable for several reasons. The findings on intergenerational communication of Internment experiences will be discussed in terms of how they related to and differed from the historical trauma framework which reflects a Eurocentric perspective.

The hermeneutic phenomenological approach was well-suited for this study. Phenomenology focuses on lived experience, in this instance, the lived experience of Japanese Canadians who were born after the Internment, learning or not knowing about the Internment through family stories. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach validates the cultural, historical and political context of that lived experience, that is, the Internment of their family members during World War II.

During the process of analysis and writing about the findings, a disjunction emerged between the research findings and the theoretical framework. Perhaps it could be said that there was disjunction at the onset. Some phenomenological researchers believe that theory is the antithesis of phenomenology (Van Manen, 1994) because the researcher approaches the phenomena directly rather than through concepts or theories

(Cohen & Omery, 1994), while others say knowledge of some theories beforehand may be confirmed or contradicted, depending on the data (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010). The latter could be applied to this research.

At the time I was writing my research proposal, the theoretical concept of historical trauma seemed appropriate because it dealt with the collective trauma and oppressive events of the past that were inflicted on earlier generations by the dominant culture (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Grant, 2008) and included intergenerational communication of that trauma (Danieli, 1998). The Internment may be considered to be historical trauma in that it was the culmination of ongoing social, racial-based trauma inflicted on Canadians of Japanese heritage since the late 1800's and I was interested in the intergenerational communication of the Internment between the generations that experienced it and the following generations that did not experience it directly.

As I reflected on the findings, I noted incongruencies between the findings on the intergenerational communication of Internment experiences, and the literature on the responses and effects of historical trauma, such as pain and suffering, loss and grief (Evans-Campbell, 2008). This disjunction may be attributed to two different worldviews as represented in the family members' stories and the theoretical framework.

Participants' family members, while born and raised in Canada, may have been shaped or influenced by the cultural values of Japan that they learned or absorbed from older family members who were raised in Japan. These values may have influenced the way they perceived and responded to the Internment. The theoretical framework of historical

trauma was developed from the Western Hemisphere, Eurocentric perspective and does not consider other cultural values.

Considering this disjunction, it does not seem culturally appropriate to address the responses of Canadian-born family members who were interned, and most likely influenced by the Japanese values of their older family members, with the concepts of historical trauma, which have been developed from a Western, Eurocentric perspective. However, I can legitimately discuss family members' responses to the Internment on their own terms, in the context of the Japanese values of *gaman* and *enryo*, as hermeneutic phenomenology validates the lived experience and the context of that lived experience. These responses will be discussed below, followed by alternative outcomes to historical trauma in the lived experience of the twelve participants.

### **Alternative Responses to Internment as Historical Trauma**

In being uprooted from their homes and communities, forced to live in temporary housing for an indeterminate period of time, and treated as "enemy aliens" because of their heritage, the Japanese Canadian community was suddenly thrown out of context, from the physical, geographic spaces that they had developed and were familiar with and from the psychological spaces they believed they inhabited as citizens of Canada. The contents of their lives were ruptured and scattered.

Given the magnitude of this disruption in their communities, personal lives, education, and businesses, the stories which participants related about their family members' experiences seem muted, characterized by silence, understatement and

restraint. This should not be perceived that the Internment was of little consequence in their lives, or had little impact. The responses do not necessarily reflect how they felt, but rather, what they wanted to convey to the next generation. For the most part, these stories seemed to reflect the cultural values of *gaman* (perseverance-suppression of emotions) and *enryo* (self-restraint, reserve). This is where the findings diverged from the historical trauma framework and the intergenerational transmission of trauma.

There is a disjunction between the way silence is perceived from the Western hemisphere, Eurocentric perspective and from the perspective of the cultural values of Japan. From a Western, Eurocentric perspective, silence is viewed as a form of pathology, compared to talking about one's problems, which is considered to be healthy and beneficial (Denham, 2008). On the other hand, silence emanating from the Japanese values of *gaman* and *enryo* signifies inner strength. The theoretical framework of historical trauma only accounts for a Western, Eurocentric response to trauma, and does not consider other cultural values.

According to a Western hemisphere, Eurocentric perspective, silence is one of the mechanisms by which trauma is covertly transmitted to the next generation, and may stem from not talking about the trauma, or by another family member not asking about the trauma, out of fear of triggering a strong emotional reaction (Ancharoff, Munroe & Fisher, 1998). This might be applied to the situation in some participants' families, except participants' responses differed from the above. For instance, E's grandmother firmly stated that she didn't want to talk about the Internment and would rather forget about it. Alan's relatives were extremely reluctant to talk about it and he believed "just by not

talking about it, that kind of said a lot." These situations led them to believe that the Internment must have been a very difficult time, and as a result, they refrained from asking more questions. However, their reason for not raising more questions was out of respect for their family member's feelings and well-being, as well as respect for an older family member, which Ancharoff, Munroe & Fisher (1998) did not take into consideration.

Stories of inner strength emerged as participants spoke of the stories being told by family members without bitterness or anger. Not succumbing to bitterness or anger, *choosing* not to tell their stories in bitterness or anger, may be attributed to the values and practice of *gaman* and *enryo*. This was another point of disjunction between theory and findings. Historical trauma is discussed in terms of transmission of trauma between generations (Danieli, 1998), yet in the family stories of most participants, there did not appear to be verbal transmission of bitterness or anger about the Internment or towards the Canadian government. Patti felt that it was an unspoken agreement, among the Japanese Canadians who were interned, not to transmit their feelings of bitterness and anger to the next generation; and this was confirmed by her mother telling her, "We can't pass this on....any feelings of anger, bitterness, even sadness onto our children. That's not going to help them." Participants expressed amazement and admiration that their family members could display such emotional self-control, considering the dire circumstances in which the government had placed them. Most participants contextualized the stories they were told, with their acquired knowledge from other sources, such as print material and documentaries. For instance, while saying his mother didn't sound bitter or angry, Steve also provided reasons that could have justified



bitterness or anger in her generation, such as having their education interrupted, and having to support their parents who were too old to start over.

This is not to say that emotions of bitterness or anger were not felt, only that they were not expressed or communicated to the next generation, or not expressed in a manner they could comprehend (Sata, 1973). This was a reflection of the values their family members had learned from the previous generation, the Issei and older Nisei, which may explain why this external lack of expression of bitterness and anger seemed “foreign” to many of the participants. The difference between Eurocentric values and the values of Japan, as well as growing up in environment of forced assimilation, may explain why several participants viewed their family members’ responses in terms of “their” culture, rather than “our” culture, as they were further removed from the values of the Issei.

Another form of inner strength which participants’ perceived was the absence of personal victimization, self-pity, or losses in the stories that participants related. One of the aspects of the Internment stories that stood out for Andrea was the resilience, strength of character and the absence of victimization within her family and the community,

(I)n spite of the hardship they’d gone through... it’s seeing a strong community and not seeing a community that was weepy and playing the victim, ‘poor me,’.... what really stood out was the resilience...it seemed that the whole community just dealt with it in a positive way and came out of it quite strong!

Family narratives did not include how they felt about their losses, or what the losses meant to them, but would refer to other people’s losses, deflecting attention away from

themselves. (While constructing their stories in relation to others has been understood as a way by which they could lessen the pain or trauma of their own situation (Sugiman, 2005), this understanding was not articulated in the stories or by the participants. Thus I am writing from the perception or lived experience of the participants.)

The findings also diverged from the historical trauma framework as stories of resilience and empowerment, psychological and pragmatic, emerged from family members' experiences. Family stories contained messages of resilience and empowerment, where trying circumstances were reframed and named with a positive outlook or perspective, such as "a blessing in disguise," or "the silver lining in a dark cloud." Family stories expressed the importance of moving on and moving forward from the Internment experience. Participants related stories of how family members helped to provide entertainment in the camps, to keep up the community's spirits. There were stories of community strength, working together to provide for the needs of others, and working for the good of all. Adding commentary to the stories, participants acknowledged the resilience and resourcefulness of their family members, stating that they made the best of their situation, such as it was. This is similar to Nagata's (1998) research in the Sansei Research Project with Japanese Americans.

The prevailing themes in the stories which participants chose to tell me about their family members' Internment experiences conveyed *gaman* and *enryo*, resilience and empowerment, rather than the pain and suffering, loss and grief as noted in the historical trauma framework. The findings diverged from the transmission of trauma noted in the historical trauma framework, because the cultural values of *gaman* and

enry were not taken into consideration in the Eurocentric perspective of the framework. The findings also diverged from the historical trauma framework in that they revealed narratives of resilience and empowerment. These findings are more in line with "narratives of resilience" which Denham (2008) considers to be alternative responses to historical trauma.

By not transmitting bitterness or anger, by reframing their experiences in a positive light, the legacy of these alternative stories from family and community members allowed subsequent generations to grow up without feeling hatred and anger towards their fellow Canadians and the Canadian government, and to navigate the rough waters of forced assimilation more smoothly.

### **Alternative Outcomes to Internment as Historical Trauma**

The concept of historical trauma focuses on responses of loss and grief, pain and suffering, as well as the effects on survivors and subsequent generations, in terms of cultural rupture, loss of connection with one's heritage, and cultural identity (Grant, 2008, p. 127). Implying pathological and dysfunctional effects from the trauma, this concept does not allow for alternative responses or alternative outcomes such as resilience and empowerment (Denham, 2008). In this research study, I prefer to use the term "outcomes" instead of "effects" to avoid the perception of a cause-and-effect relationship in the findings.

As descendants of those who experienced Internment, many participants felt a sense of loss in terms of cultural continuity through forced assimilation which resulted

from the Internment and dispersal policy. However, their lived experience indicated alternative outcomes which differed from the implied effects of historical trauma. Motivated by family and community stories of the Internment, they actively learned more about their family history, developed an appreciation for their heritage, participated in community activism such as the Japanese Canadian Redress campaign in the 1980s and human rights activities, and became more involved in the Japanese Canadian community.

Learning about the history of Internment changed the context in which Andrea saw herself, from being Canadian, "and never really (thinking) of myself as being different from any other kid in Winnipeg," to being a Canadian with a family history that differentiated her from other Canadians. She expanded this context by "re-thinking about how our family's history fits into Canadian history...and realizing that I have a very close connection to this major event that happened in Canada....and feeling that I'm a part of it, has just strengthened that part of my character." Doing her own research, as the history of the Internment was not part of the education curriculum, prompted Andrea to informally educate people about the Internment if they asked about her ethnicity, "...especially when I think of being of mixed race....I think it's become important for me to identify my Japanese heritage. It's an important part of my identity...and I'm proud of it."

While growing up, some participants, like Keith, did not participate in sports like judo, kendo or karate, because they didn't want to be associated with Japanese culture. Others, like Crista, are connecting with their family history and Japanese heritage by

participating in Japanese cultural sports and activities. She is currently learning one of the martial arts which her grandfather had practiced, although she had “never really had any interest in martial arts at all, (small laugh) but...I knew that my Grandfather had been really involved in that...I wanted...to try to learn, to continue to learn a bit more about.....him.”

The family history of Internment has been a motivating factor in participants' choice of work and community activism. Knowing about the injustices of the Internment and her family's experiences influenced Keri in her career, “The way it influenced me was to make me want to help people in that same situation... It's hard to explain. Just to be a part of not letting that happen to any other culture or people, what happened in my life.”

Others worked diligently on behalf of Redress. On hearing the “brutal reality” of Internment, in contrast to the childhood stories his Mother told him, Steve was motivated to gain more knowledge about the political and economic factors that led to the Internment, and became actively involved in the Redress campaign.

(M)any people in the world know what happened to Japanese Americans during WWII, but most have no idea that the treatment of Japanese Canadians was even worse. My interaction with others is influenced by a perceived need to gently set that record straight, and to clarify the Canadian government's record on human rights. I am definitely more of a rights activist because of the injustices inflicted on my parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.

Due to the human rights issues in their own family history and the injustices which occurred therein, participants are sensitized to the situations which other minoritized populations face, as were their Japanese American cohorts in Nagata's (1998) research.

Perceptions of identity have changed over time. Growing up in her early environment, Patti felt uncomfortable, almost a sense of fear, being with a group of

Japanese Canadians in public, and wanted to blend in with the mainstream rather than be noticed for her heritage, which made her vulnerable to racial minoritization. At this point in her life, though, she says, "Now that I'm much older, I'm very proud of my heritage, proud to be a Japanese-Canadian." Keith, too, came to the realization later in his life, "My heritage is extremely important and my ethnicity is something to be celebrated, not something to be hidden."

### **Summary of the Findings**

What emerged from family memories and stories of the Internment were empirical and moral messages (Sugiman, 2009) that conveyed *gaman* (perseverance-suppression of emotions) and *enryo* (self-restraint, reserve) (Kitano, 1969 as cited in Nagata & Cheng, 2003), resilience and empowerment. What emerged from participants' own commentary of these family narratives were empathy and acknowledgement of the hardships their family and community endured, in addition to respect and admiration for how they conducted themselves under those circumstances beyond their control, and how they created new lives for themselves, starting with few resources.

Participants related their lived experience growing up in the aftermath of the Internment and the disruption of community through forced assimilation. Shared aspects of their forced assimilation meant being racially differentiated when they were growing up, having a duality of perception in how they perceived themselves as Japanese Canadians and how non-Japanese Canadians perceived them, and feeling a sense of loss in the continuity of culture and community. However, over time, they

developed a stronger sense of identity, and an appreciation for their heritage, which had been the source of race-related trauma or friction for their ancestors, culminating in the Internment. The findings from this research study, the intergenerational communication of Internment experiences and lived experience of growing up in the aftermath of the Internment, provide alternatives to the responses to, and outcomes of, the predominant concepts of historical trauma discussed in the literature review.

However, it would be too facile to link the positive, motivating outcomes of Internment to family stories of *gaman* and *enryo*, and resilience and empowerment. The lived experience in the aftermath of the Internment has been influenced by many more factors than intergenerational communication of the Internment and residual effects of the Internment. As Nagata and Cheng (2003) stated, "Disentangling cultural influence [family culture], race-related trauma, and intergenerational communication...is complicated" (p. 276-7), particularly in this study, given the range of openness in discussing the Internment experience, how family members perceived the Internment, the age of family members when they were interned, and the time period in which participants grew up after the Internment.

## **Contributions to Research Literature**

Concepts of historical trauma imply or presume pathological or dysfunctional effects on those who have experienced historical trauma, as well as their descendants. The findings from this research study, to some degree, indicated otherwise. This study shows that those who experienced the Internment demonstrated alternative historical trauma responses, such as inner strength, resilience and empowerment. And the descendants of those who experienced the Internment demonstrated alternative historical trauma outcomes, as shown by their motivation to actively learn more about their family history and the Internment, to develop a sense of identity as a Japanese Canadian, to gain a deeper understanding of their heritage, to volunteer within the Japanese Canadian community and to become involved in community activism.

This research study furthers the literature on intergenerational communication and historical trauma by contributing new information about alternative responses to historical trauma in those who have experienced it, and alternative outcomes to that historical trauma in their descendants. In finding ways to re-connect with their Japanese heritage in a Canadian context, and developing an identity that incorporates the Internment and appreciation for one's heritage, participants presented alternative outcomes to a historically traumatic event, such as the Internment.

In addition, this study of intergenerational communication and lived experience contributes to an understanding of the unique legacy of the Japanese Canadian history.



## **Challenges and Limitations of this Study**

The overall challenges of undertaking this research dealt with methodology and the subject matter itself. The philosophical and pragmatic challenges of using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach may be exemplified by Van Manen (1994):

Contrary to what some think, phenomenological human science is a form of qualitative research that is extraordinarily demanding of its practitioners. Unless the researcher remains strong in his or her orientation to the fundamental question or notion, there will be many temptations to get side-tracked or to wander aimlessly and indulge in wishy-washy speculations, to settle for preconceived opinions and conceptions, to become enchanted with narcissistic reflections or self-indulgent preoccupations, or to fall back onto taxonomic concepts or abstracting theories. To establish a strong relation with a certain question, phenomenon, or notion, the researcher cannot afford to adopt an attitude of so-called scientific disinterestedness. To be oriented to an object means that we are animated by the object in a full and human sense. To be strong in our orientation means that we will not settle for superficialities and falsities (p. 33).

The challenges stated by Van Manen certainly applied to this research study. Being a novice researcher, the major challenges of this study lay in working with a high volume of material in a brief period of time and staying focused and not getting side-tracked by other "interesting" questions that arose from the material. Working with twelve respondents was an unexpected gift, particularly since two non-participating Sansei had told me, prior to my research, that "no one will want to talk with you." Ironically, the concern of not having any respondents at all became a concern with working with a large amount of material, given the time restraints of completing this degree. Trying to do justice to each and every person's lived experience was a challenging, yet rewarding, learning experience.

During the process of gathering and winnowing through the material, a challenge emerged in trying to differentiate between the collective story and the personal story. The Collective Story of the Internment, including the forced relocation and assimilation, was developed during the Redress campaign of the 1980's. Being aware of this Story, some participants included it as part of their personal experience, speaking from the collective perspective of "we." I gradually became aware of the insertion of the collective story over several interviews as similar phrases cropped up, such as "we lost the language" or "we lost the culture." While the collective story is valid in its own right, the challenge for me lay in trying to find the personal, emotional lived experience or the personal meaning of the experience when I sensed that the collective story was being told. As well, in winnowing through the material, there were times when I, myself, would fall back to that collective story by default, lulled by the familiarity of it, rather than looking at the actual lived experiences.

The limitations of the study lay in the broad range of criteria, the wording of the criteria in the letter of invitation and posters, time constraints, and my inexperience as a researcher. Due to the voiced concerns that no one would want to speak with me about this topic, I kept the scope of my criteria open in order to increase the possibility of inclusion in my study. Thus, participant age groups ranged from 30 to 35 and 60 to 65, and reflected different periods of settlement and social conditions in Winnipeg following the forced dispersal and assimilation after the war. The research may be lacking in depth, due to the breadth of variation in participants' lived experience.

My intent was to make criteria as inclusive as possible to different aspects of Internment, as defined in my proposal. This inclusive definition encompassed not only the Internment camp experience but also the mass uprooting from their homes and communities in BC, dispossession, expulsion from BC and forced dispersal across Canada, working on sugar beet farms and road camps, and exile from Canada. I hoped to be able to speak with some participants whose families did not live in internment camps but experienced other forms of Internment, such as coming directly from BC to work on sugar beet farms. However, I inadvertently omitted the inclusive definition of Internment in my posters and the final revised letter of invitation to prospective participants. When most community members see the word Internment, they think of internment camps. My intention to be as inclusive as possible became, unintentionally, exclusive of those who did not live in internment camps. I regret this oversight and hope that I did not offend any members of the community who experienced other forms of Internment.

Another limitation of this study was the limited amount of time in which to analyze and reflect on the material. In hindsight, less time could have been spent on the proposal and finding a theoretical framework, due to the phenomenological emphasis of this research. It would have been beneficial to conduct preliminary interviews, to test and fine tune the interview guide. There was no time to compile three years' worth of journal notes to write an account of my reflexive process.

Several issues were raised which were beyond the scope of this study. I had initially hoped to focus this project on Japanese Canadians who had come to Manitoba

to work on the farms. However, due to concerns that I would not find any volunteers for this study, my criteria for participation was kept open, rather than being specific to families who came directly to Manitoba. Although this study illustrates the personal stories and experiences within the collective story of Internment, this Manitoba-based research does not reflect the specificity of the location and the experiences of families who came directly from BC to work on the farms. There is room for more specific research. Another significant topic for future research is the specific lived experience of Japanese Canadians of mixed heritage, particularly given the high rate of intermarriage within the community.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Due to the small sample of this qualitative study, it should be cautioned that this is not a definitive representation of the generation whose parents or grandparents experienced Internment or representative of intergenerational responses to the Internment in particular, or to historical trauma in general. However, implications for social work emerged in areas of practice, education and future research.

While a collective story of a particular population may provide a broad understanding of that group's experience, there are also personal stories within that group experience. In working with individuals, or groups of individuals, it would be helpful to gain an understanding and learn from their lived experience rather than relying on a collective story or assumption based on group experience of, for instance, historical trauma. Conversely, it may be helpful to explore their presenting situation in

terms of any historical trauma in the family. However, Nagata (1991) cautions against making assumptions that historical trauma is the source of the presenting problem.

In order to understand the effects of trauma on an individual or groups of individuals, it may be prudent to create a context for it by learning about the individuals' perception of the trauma, the meaning they ascribe to it, and the narratives they use to describe it. It may then be more helpful and productive to focus on areas of coping and adaptation rather than how the trauma was experienced. If the trauma was racially-based, it would be beneficial for a social worker not to stereotype the person they work with as a member of a race, but to see that person in more holistic terms "as an individual who has a race" (Coleman, 1991 as cited in Gitterman & Germian, 2008).

Given the protective, historic silencing of Canada's role as oppressor and perpetrator of injustice to its own citizens, which includes the Aboriginal and Inuit populations, early pioneers from Asia (China, India and Japan), and those of Ukrainian and Italian heritage, social work education might include a closer look at these situations of Canadian oppression to fill the gaps of knowledge in the dominant culture. Learning why these situations were "allowed" to occur and the impact on these populations, could enable students to gain a more empathic understanding when working with diverse populations or dealing with issues of human rights.

Concerning future research, my hope is that this study will raise more questions for future research, not only within the Japanese Canadian community, but within other populations that have also experienced historical trauma. Hopefully, this will increase understanding and insights about the value of the multi-faceted ways in which all of us

are influenced through intergenerational communication of historical trauma and family history, and the lived experience of learning to honour that history. Becoming aware of the strengths and potential within that traumatic past may provide beneficial continuity to subsequent generations, or to newcomer and refugee populations, while enhancing and enriching our lived experience.

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APPENDIX A: Poster for Volunteer Participation in Research Study

Hello **NISEI, SANSEI** and **YONSEI!**

Would you be interested in helping me with a research project?

I am a Winnipeg-born Sansei who is hoping to speak with Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei as part of my Master's degree in social work. My work deals with family and community memories of the Internment and how we may have been influenced by these memories.

If you would like to participate, all that is required is one to two hours of your time for an informal, conversational discussion. Your views and experiences are valued. Your privacy is important, and your name and information will be strictly confidential.

If you are interested or would like more information, please call or email me (Gaia - see below). Or if you know of someone who would be interested, please pass the information on to them. Feel free to leave a message on my confidential answering machine if I am unavailable.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Gaia Hashimoto  
Graduate Thesis program,  
Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba  
Telephone: XXX-XXXX (confidential answering machine)  
Email: xxxxx@xxxxxxxxx  
(subject heading: "Nisei-Sansei-Yonsei project")



## APPENDIX B: Letter of Introduction from Organization

Dear Member,

This is an invitation to participate in a research study by Gaia Hashimoto, a Sansei, who is currently working on a master's degree in social work at the University of Manitoba. For the research component of her degree, Gaia would like to explore how family and community memories and stories of the Internment have influenced following generations who did not have direct experience with Internment. She is hoping to speak with Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei individually, who did not experience Internment directly themselves, and whose parent, grandparent, or great-parent did have direct experience with Internment. Your participation in this research is voluntary. All information will be kept anonymous and strictly confidential.

Gaia's letter of invitation, which follows, contains basic information about her research and ways to contact her. If you wish to participate, please contact her directly, by phone or by email. If you know of someone who would be interested, she requests that you would please forward this information to them.

Thank you.

## APPENDIX C: Invitation to Participate

Dear Member,

My name is Gaia Hashimoto and I am a Sansei working on a master's degree in social work at the University of Manitoba. To fulfill the research component of my degree, I am working on a research study in which you may be interested in participating.

The title of my research is “—Nisei—Sansei— Yonsei—*Exploring the influence of family and collective memories of historical trauma.*” The Internment (eg. internment camps, expulsion from BC, forced migration, and violation of citizenship rights) is a big part of our family history and may be considered to be a form of historical trauma. For this study, I am hoping to speak with Nisei, Sansei, and Yonsei individually, who did not experience Internment directly, but have/had a parent, grandparent or great-grandparent who did have direct experience with it. I would like to explore how family and community memories, stories, and experiences of the Internment have influenced us, such as our identity, our life choices, and how we see ourselves in relation to others.

Sparks for this research project were ignited in September, 2008, at a gathering at the Manitoba Japanese Canadian Cultural Center to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Redress. Listening to the speakers there made me, a Sansei, wonder and reflect on the types of questions we could explore together, such as:

- In what ways did we learn about our family history and the Internment?
- What was it like growing up in our neighbourhoods, often separated from other Japanese Canadian families?
- In what ways did we learn, if at all, about Japanese culture or the Japanese language?
- In what ways have family memories of Internment influenced how we see ourselves and how we interact with others?
- From what we've learned and experienced as descendants of family members who experienced Internment directly, what would we like to pass on to future generations?

Your help would be greatly appreciated. All that is required is just one to two hours of your time for an informal, conversational discussion, at a time and place that is convenient for you. Your privacy is important, and your name and information will remain anonymous and strictly confidential. By participating in this study, you will be contributing to a deeper understanding of the legacy of our Japanese Canadian heritage.

If you would like to participate, or if you would like more information, please feel free to call me at XXX-XXXX or leave a message on my confidential answering machine, or email me at xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxx. If you know of someone who would be interested in participating in this project, I hope you will forward this information to them. It would be greatly appreciated if you could contact me by April 14<sup>th</sup> to arrange a time to meet.

Thank you for your consideration in helping me.

Gaia Hashimoto



APPENDIX D: Advertisement placed in The Bulletin, University of Manitoba

Seeking Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei for Master's research project (the influence of family memories and experience of Internment.) If interested, please contact Gaia Hashimoto, Graduate Student, Social Work, University of Manitoba at xxx-xxxx or xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.  
Thank you.

APPENDIX E: Consent Form for Research Study

Consent Form for Research Study

Research Project Title: —*Nisei—Sansei—Yonsei—Exploring the influence of family and collective memories of historical trauma*

Researcher: Gaia (Gail) Hashimoto,  
Graduate student (Master's thesis program)  
Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba  
Telephone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx  
E-mail: xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx

Research Advisor: Dr. Judy Hughes  
Assistant Professor  
Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba  
605 Tier Building  
Telephone: (204) 474-8261  
E-mail: xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx

Thank you for your consideration and willingness to participate in my research study, —*Nisei—Sansei—Yonsei—Exploring the influence of family and collective memories of historical trauma*, as part of my Master's thesis in Social Work.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Sparks for this research project were ignited in September, 2008, at a gathering at the Manitoba Japanese Canadian Cultural Center to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Redress. Listening to the speakers there made me, a Sansei, wonder and reflect on the types of questions we could explore together, such as:

- In what ways did we learn about our family history and the Internment?
- What was it like growing up in our neighbourhoods, often separated from other Japanese Canadian families?
- In what ways did we learn, if at all, about Japanese culture or the Japanese language?
- In what ways have family memories of Internment influenced how we see ourselves and how we interact with others?
- From what we've learned and experienced as descendants of family members who experienced Internment directly, what would we like to pass on to future generations?

By participating in this study, you will be contributing to a deeper understanding of the legacy of our Japanese Canadian heritage and passing along what you have experienced and learned, through family and community memories of the Internment, to future generations within the Japanese Canadian community.

If you would like to be a part of this research:

- We will have an interview that will last about one to two hours.
- We will meet at a time that is convenient for you and in a place that is confidential.
- With your permission, I will audio record our interview. If you do not want the interview to be recorded, I would ask for your permission to make handwritten notes during our conversation to maintain accuracy of the information. However, if you would prefer that I don't audio-record or take handwritten notes, then we would not continue with the interview.
- If the interview is audio recorded, I will transcribe it, and send a copy of the transcription to you if you would like to provide your contact information. If I am only allowed to make notes, I will send you a copy of my notes, if you like. If there is any information in the transcript or notes that you would like me to change, delete, or expand on, you can contact me and I will make the changes accordingly.
- In my completed thesis, parts of your interview may be included as unidentified quotes and your information will be combined with other participants' to illustrate the similarities or dissimilarities of life experiences, thoughts or feelings. All the data will remain anonymous and unidentifiable and may be used in future, in other confidential research settings, in research journals, or in lectures.
- If you would like to receive a copy of the research summary, there is a space at the end of this form to indicate your interest and how I may contact you. This summary will then be sent to you by October, 2012.
- Your privacy and the confidential nature of this research are important. Each audio-recorded interview will be transcribed personally by me. No one else will have access to the audio recordings and transcriptions which will be stored at my home in a locked metal filing cabinet. To preserve your anonymity, you may choose a pseudonym or code name which will be used on your audio recording and transcription. The list of participants' names and their pseudonyms will also be kept in locked storage, but separate from the audiotapes and transcriptions. As the population of Japanese Canadians in Winnipeg is small, there is the potential for

personal details or family anecdotes to be recognized by other readers. To alleviate this concern, I would remove any information that would identify you or your family, and you would have the opportunity to review your material to delete any identifying details, as well. Upon expected completion of my degree, all information containing personal identification such as consent forms, the list of names with pseudonyms, and the original audio recordings will be destroyed by October 2012.

- If you are uncomfortable during the interview, you can refuse to answer any questions, leave the interview before it is complete, or ask to have all of your information withdrawn from the study. At the end of the interview, I will provide you with a list of community resources that will be helpful if you are unsettled as a result of the interview.

I appreciate your willingness and generosity of time to help me with my research and I would like to present you with a gift card as a token of my appreciation. This gift is yours to keep even if you refuse to answer questions or leave the interview before it is complete.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

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The University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board(s) and a representative(s) of the University of Manitoba Research Quality Management / Assurance office may also require access to your research records for safety and quality assurance purposes.

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research study.

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I consent to having my interview audio recorded for the purpose of this research.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not consent to having my interview audio recorded for the purpose of this research. However, I would be willing to have the researcher make handwritten notes during the interview to maintain accuracy of information.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would be interested in receiving a transcript/a copy of your notes of my interview. Please send:

\_\_\_\_\_ by e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ by postal service

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would be interested in receiving a research summary. Please send this to:

My email address: \_\_\_\_\_

My postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F: Interview Guide

- In what ways did we learn about our family history and the Internment?
- What was it like growing up in our neighbourhoods, often separated from other Japanese Canadian families?
- In what ways did we learn, if at all, about Japanese culture or the Japanese language?
- In what ways have family memories of Internment influenced how we see ourselves and how we interact with others?
- From what we've learned and experienced as descendants of family members who experienced Internment directly, what would we like to pass on to future generations?

APPENDIX G: Questionnaire

Questionnaire for —*Nisei—Sansei— Yonsei—Exploring the influence of family and collective memories of historical trauma*

Please circle the appropriate response.

1. My family member(s) interned during the Second World War are:
  - Mother
  - Maternal Grandmother
  - Maternal Grandfather
  - Father
  - Paternal Grandmother
  - Paternal Grandfather
  
2. Growing up, I would describe what I knew about the internment as:
  - knowing a lot
  - knowing a fair amount about it
  - knowing a little bit about it, but feeling there was more that was unsaid
  - not knowing very much, but feeling there was more that was unsaid
  - not knowing about it at all
  
3. In my family, the Internment was talked about:
  - Openly
  - Fairly openly
  - Not very openly
  - Wasn't discussed very much
  - Wasn't discussed at all
  
4. I would identify myself as a:
  - Sansei
  - Yonsei
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. I would identify myself as:
  - Japanese-Canadian
  - Japanese Canadian (not hyphenated)
  - Canadian
  - Canadian, of Japanese heritage
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. I am between the ages of:

20 – 25	35 – 40	50 – 55
25 – 30	40 – 45	55 – 60
30 – 35	45 – 50	60 – 65