

「懸橋」 趣旨

明治十年最初の日系移民がカナダに渡ってきて以来百十年の歳月が過ぎました。太平洋を越え最初に上陸する地点は賑やかな開港場ヴィクトリア・ハーバーでした。

数年前ヴィクトリア在住の日本人が墓石の割れた日本人名のお墓をロス・ベイ墓地でみつけ、驚き供養しました。第二次大戦前までヴィクトリア周辺には、日本人がたくさん住んでいたのですが、敵性人を規定され内陸へ強制移動させられ、動産・不動産も処分されてここでの生活基盤を失いました。戦後四十二年たった今日までに、ヴィクトリアへ戻ってこられた方々は極僅かですし、この二十年来の新移民の日本人とは交渉もなく、墓は風化にまかされています。毎年供養するようになっていますが、墓地へ行く度に荒れた墓石の破片は片付けられ、日本人の墓標の数は減っていています。またチェマイナスの日本人墓地は、墓石をすっかり取り片付けられ、整地されてしまったと聞くに及び、このままのしておけば日系移民の汗と涙の痕跡は、消滅の危機にさらされています。文章や地上に痕跡のないものが、歴史から消えて了うというのは、存在を知っている人間には悲しい限りです。

二年前、近年ヴィクトリア在住の日本人有志が集まり、先人達の為に墓標を建てようと相談し、新渡戸稲造博士の言葉「太平洋の懸け橋」から「懸橋」をとり、募金運動のシンボル名としました

一九八七年八月十三日

代表 荒川佳郎

尚、墓標建立運動は、カナダ全国だけでなく、日本の方々にも広く知って戴き、御協力を仰ぐつもりであります。

KAKEHASHI (BRIDGE)

The Object of the Campaign

One hundred and ten years have past since the first Japanese immigrant came to Canada in 1877.

The first landing point from across the Pacific Ocean was the busy open port of Victoria.

A few years ago, some Japanese in Victoria discovered with surprise some broken tombstones bearing Japanese names in Ross Bay Cemetery. Subsequently they held a memorial service. Many Japanese had lived in the Victoria area before World War II. However, when the Pacific War began, they were registered as enemy aliens and forced to move to the interior. Their personal property and real estate were confiscated. As a result, they lost their bases for living here.

Only a very few have come back to Victoria until now, 42 years after the war ended. New Japanese immigrants who arrived in the past 20 years have made no connections with the older generation of immigrants. The graves have weathered. A memorial service has been conducted yearly over the past few years. However, some broken tombstones have been taken away and the number of Japanese tombstones has decreased.

We have been told that the Japanese tombstones have been taken away from the Japanese cemetery in Chemainus and the land had been cleared. If this situation remain unchanged, these reminders of the sweat and tears of the original Japanese immigrants may vanish.

It is very sad for people who know of their existence to see them disappear from history because no evidence can be found in the records or at the grave sites.

Two years ago, concerned people of Japanese descent in Victoria gathered and decided to erect a memorial monument for these predecessors. In order to achieve this objective, a fund-raising campaign has been organized.

The campaign has been named "Kakehashi" (Bridge). This was taken from the famous phrase "a bridge across the Pacific Ocean" originated by Dr. Inazo Nitobe who died here in Victoria.

We would like to have this campaign for the erection of the memorial monument to become known to not only Canadians but also to people in Japan. We ask for your co-operation and assistance.

Yoshiro Arakawa
Campaign organizer
August 13, 1987