



ARTSCLUB
ALIVE ON THREE STAGES

theatre:
CALGARY

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

FORGIVENESS

by

Hiro Kanagawa

Adapted from the novel

Forgiveness: A Gift From My Grandparents

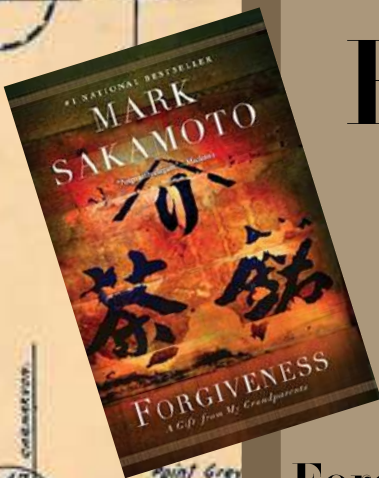
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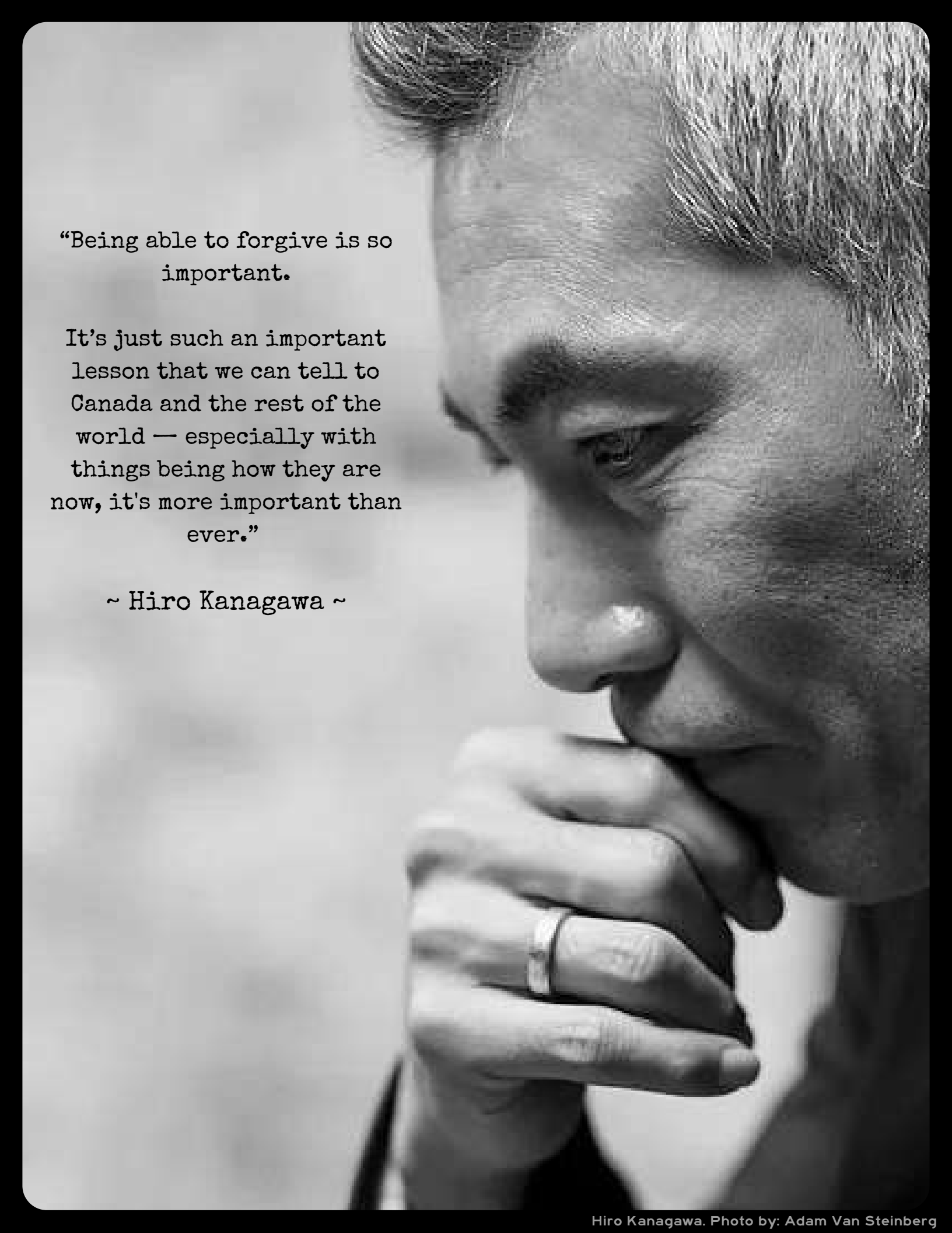
Mark Sakamoto

2022.2023 Season

Stanley Industrial Stage

January 12–February 12, 2023





“Being able to forgive is so
important.

It’s just such an important
lesson that we can tell to
Canada and the rest of the
world — especially with
things being how they are
now, it’s more important than
ever.”

~ Hiro Kanagawa ~

Table of Contents

Welcome	2
About the Arts Club	3
Learning Objectives & BC Curriculum Connections	4
Historical Context:	
Timeline - Asia-Pacific War	5
Timeline - Japanese Canadian History	6-9
Synopsis & About the Playwrights:	
Synopsis	10
Hiro Kanagawa	10-11
Mark Sakamoto	11
Character List	12-13
Discussion Questions	14
Warm-up Activity - Drama	15
Activity #1 - Drama	16
Activity #2 - Social Studies (also, Drama)	17
Activity #3 - Language Arts	18
Further Resources	19
Sources	20
Image Bank	21-25
Quote Bank	26

Welcome

This guide was created for teachers and students. It contains an overview of the play's story as well as informative resources and activities for teachers and students. The guide aims to provide background knowledge and critical perspectives on the play that will yield fruitful discussion and foster an understanding and appreciation of theatre arts.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for the guide, please contact our

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This study guide was written and designed by Amy Collisson & Braden Griffiths.



About The Arts Club Theatre Company

The Arts Club of Vancouver was founded in 1958 as a private club for artists, musicians, and actors. It became the Arts Club Theatre in 1964 when the company opened its first stage in a converted gospel hall at Seymour and Davie Streets.

Now in its 59th season of producing professional live theatre in Vancouver, the Arts Club Theatre Company is a non-profit charitable organization that operates three theatres: the Granville Island Stage, the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage, and the Newmont Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre. It's popular productions range from musicals and contemporary comedies to new works and classics.

Learn more about the Arts Club Theatre Company at artsclub.com

About The Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage

The legendary Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage is a newly renovated art deco theatre that originally opened in 1931 as a cinema and Vaudeville House. Now beautifully updated, this 620-seat theatre has been home to musicals such as *My Fair Lady*, *Swing*, and *Sweeney Todd*, revitalized classics such as *Hamlet*, and comedies ranging from *Easy Money* to *Art*. The restoration of the venue received a 1999 City of Vancouver Heritage Award.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explore personal narrative through the lens of relationship, time and place (geography).
- Explore the mediums and technologies that might help us to tell our own stories, or share the stories of others.
- Engage with historically relevant narratives of Canadians with varied Lived Experiences, and consider how those narratives inform the present.

BC CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

DRAMA 9

- Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through dramatic experiences.

DRAMA 10 - 12

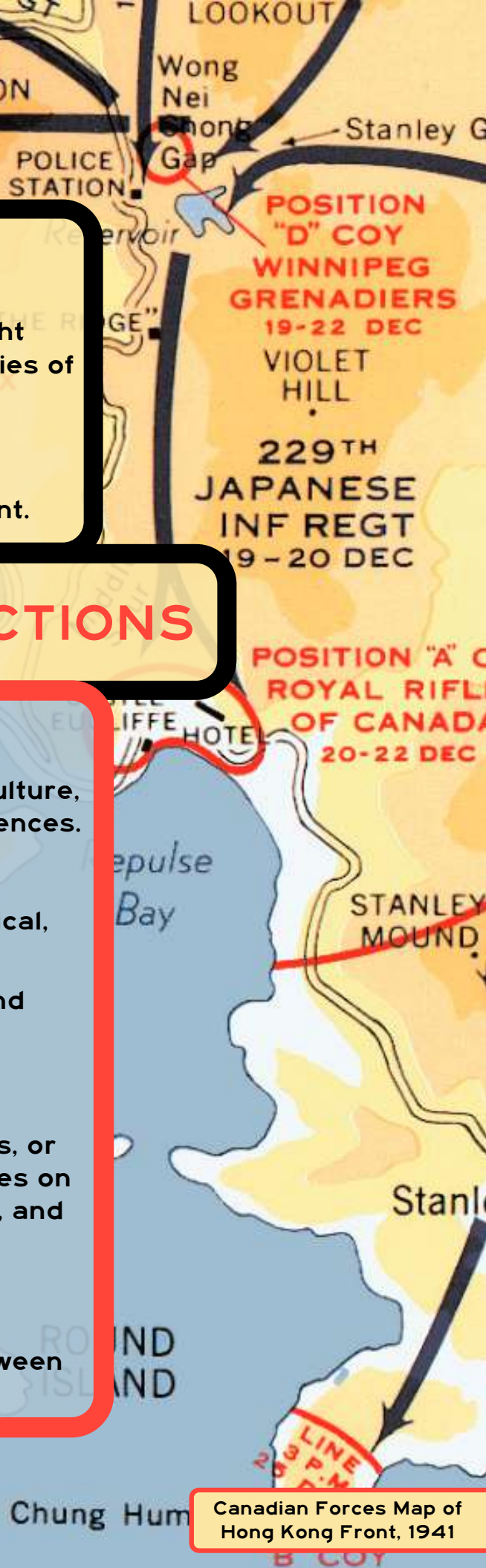
- Examine the influences of social, cultural, historical, environmental, and personal context on drama.
- Experiment with a range of props, processes, and technologies.

SOCIAL STUDIES 10 & History 12

- Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments, and compare varying perspectives on their significance at particular times and places, and from group to group

ENGLISH

- Construct meaningful personal connections between self, text, and world.



Canadian Forces Map of Hong Kong Front, 1941



Timeline of Major Events of the Asia-Pacific War and the History of Hong Kong

1842

- By the Treaty of Nanking, China first cedes the island and peninsula of Hong Kong.

1843

- By Royal Charter, Hong Kong becomes a separate British colony.

1895

- Shimonoseki Treaty. After its defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, China cedes Taiwan to Japan.

1898

- New Territories area is leased to Britain for ninety-nine years.

1905

- Japan defeats Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. The Treaty of Portsmouth forces Russia to give up its claim in southern Manchuria to Japan and recognizes Japan as the dominant power in Korea.

1910

- Japan "officially" annexes Korea.

1926

- Hirohito, after five years as regent, becomes the 124th Emperor of Japan.

1931

- The Japanese army launches an invasion of Manchuria.

1932

- The Japanese army seizes Manchuria and establishes the puppet state of Manchukuo.

1933

- The League of Nations declares that Manchukuo an illegitimate state; Japan withdraws from the League, keeping troops in Manchuria it expands control in the area by gaining control of much of North China.

1936

- The Japanese Army gains primacy in Japanese political life.

1937

- After the "Marco Polo Bridge Incident," Japan launches an invasion of China. Japan captures Peking (now Beijing) and Shanghai. After the capital, Nanking (now Nanjing) falls, Japan's military commits the Nanking Massacre.

1939

- World War II begins in Europe with the Nazi blitzkrieg of Poland.

1940

- Japan moves into northern Indo-China. Japan joins the Axis Alliance with Germany and Italy.

1941

- Tojo Hideki becomes prime minister of Japan. Canada, agreeing with the British assessment of Hong Kong's strategic importance, sends 1,975 troops that arrive on November 16. On December 7, Japan raids Pearl Harbor. Malaya, Philippines, and Hong Kong are attacked. Hong Kong is surrendered to Japan. Of the 1,975 Canadians, 290 are KIA; 1,685 are interned in POW camps; 264 die in internment.

1942

- Japan gains control over much of southeast Asia (Hong Kong, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Malaya, and Dutch East Indies).

1945

- The first atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima on August 6. The Soviet Union declares war on Japan on August 8 (as agreed to by the Potsdam Treaty that ended the war in Europe). The second atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki on August 9. With Japan's surrender on August 15, World War II ends.



GORDON KING, RALLY FOR REDRESS, PARLIAMENT HILL, 14 APRIL 1988.
SOURCE: THE OTTAWA JAPANESE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION.



JAPANESE CANADIAN FARMERS.
NO PHOTO CREDIT; SOURCE: JAPANESECANADIANHISTORY.NET

Japanese Canadian Historical Timeline

~ Pre WWII through Post WWII ~

Adapted from full timeline, available here:
japanesecanadianhistory.net

1877

- Manzo Nagano, the first Japanese individual known to land and settle in Canada, abandoned ship in New Westminster and subsequently ran a gift shop, Japanese food store and hotel in Victoria, BC.

1890s

- Issei, Japanese immigrants, establish stores, boarding houses and businesses along streets near Hastings Mill, especially along Powell Street. This neighbourhood becomes the major settlement of Japanese Canadians until WWII.

1902

- Tomekichi Homma, a naturalized Canadian citizen, applies to be included on the voters' list. After refusal and appeal, a BC judge bars Asians from voting...

... con't

... Japanese Canadians are also barred from holding office or becoming teachers, lawyers, accountants, pharmacists and architects.

1907

- Anti-Asian Riot in Vancouver.

1914

- The outbreak of World War I.

1916

- After being rejected in BC, approximately 200 issei volunteers travel to Alberta to join the Canadian expeditionary force. Veterans are promised the right to vote.

1931

- Japanese WWI vets finally receive the right to vote; the only Japanese Canadians to be enfranchised.

... con't

1936

- Japanese Canadian Citizens League is formed; sends a delegation to Ottawa to petition for the franchise. The petition is unsuccessful.

March - Aug. 1941

- Compulsory registration of all Japanese Canadians over 16 years is carried out by the RCMP.

December 7th, 1941

- Japan attacks Pearl Harbor. Canada declares war on Japan. Under the War Measures Act, all Japanese nationals and those naturalized after 1922 are required to register with the Registrar of Enemy Aliens.

December 8th, 1941

- 1,200 fishing boats are impounded and put under the control of the Japanese Fishing Vessel Disposal Committee. Japanese language newspapers and schools closed. Insurance policies are cancelled.

December 16th, 1941

- P.C. 9760 is passed requiring mandatory registration of all persons of Japanese origin, regardless of citizenship, with the Registrar of Enemy Aliens.

Feb. 7th, 1942

- All male "enemy aliens" between the ages of 18-45 are forced to leave the protected coastal area before April 1. Most are sent to work on road camps in the Rockies. Some are sent to Angler.

Feb. 26th, 1942

- Notice is issued by the Minister of Justice ordering all persons of "the Japanese race" to leave the coast. Cars, cameras and radios confiscated. Dusk-to-dawn curfew is imposed.

... con't

HIROSHI OKUDA, REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE, STAMPED "CANADIAN BORN", ISSUED JUNE, 1941; SOURCE: SAANICH NEWS



CONFISCATED BOATS, BAMFIELD, BC. 1941-1942; NO PHOTO CREDIT; SOURCE: THE SAANICH NEWS

March 4th, 1942

- B.C. Security Commission is established to plan, supervise and direct the expulsion of Japanese Canadians.
- P.C. 1665 Property and belongings are entrusted to the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property as a "protective measure only".

March 16th, 1942

- First arrival at Vancouver's Hastings Park holding center. All Japanese Canadian mail is censored from this date.

June 29th, 1942

- P.C. 5523 - The Director of Soldier Settlement is given authority to purchase or lease farms owned by Japanese Canadians. He subsequently buys 572 farms without consulting the owners.

October 1942

- 22,000 persons of whom 75% are Canadian citizens (60% Canadian born, 15% naturalized) have been uprooted forcibly from the coast.

... con't



A CROWDED DINING HALL IN AN INTERNMENT CAMP IN SLOCAN, A VILLAGE IN THE WEST KOOTENAYS. SOURCE: BRITISH COLUMBIA: AN UNTOLD HISTORY

... con't

January 23rd, 1943

- Council grants the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property the right to dispose of Japanese Canadian property without the owners' consent.

August 4th, 1944

- Prime Minister King states it is desirable that Japanese Canadians are dispersed across Canada.
- Applications for "voluntary repatriation" to Japan are sought by the Canadian government. Those who do not return to Japan must move east of the Rockies. "Repatriation", for many, means exile to a country they have never seen before.

August 6th and 9th, 1945

- The US drops two atomic bombs, they detonate over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively.

September 2nd, 1945

- Japan signs The Japanese Instrument of Surrender.
- All internment camps, except New Denver, are ordered closed and settlements of shacks bulldozed. B.C. Security Commission office in New Denver closes in 1957.

THE TASHME INTERNMENT CAMP, NEAR HOPE.
SOURCE: BRITISH COLUMBIA: AN UNTOLD HISTORY





JAPANESE CANADIAN CHILDREN ON THEIR JOURNEY TO INTERNMENT CAMPS IN THE INTERIOR. SOURCE: BRITISH COLUMBIA: AN UNTOLD HISTORY

The Post War Years

January 1st, 1946

- On the expiry of the War Measures Act, the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act is used to keep the measures against Japanese Canadians in place.

April, 1947

- The Citizenship Act extends the franchise to Canadians of Chinese and South Asian origin but excludes Japanese Canadians and aboriginal peoples.

March 31st, 1949

- Restrictions imposed under the War Measures Act are lifted and franchise is given to Japanese Canadians.

1967

- Canadian government announces a point system for new immigrants. "Race" is no longer a criterion for immigration.

Redress Efforts in the 80s

January 1984

- The National Association of Japanese Canadian Council meeting in Winnipeg unanimously passes resolutions seeking an official acknowledgement and redress for the injustices committed against JC during and after World War II. The Council also calls for a review of the War Measures Act to ensure that no Canadians will ever again be subjected to such wrongs.

May 9th, 1986

- Price Waterhouse Associates assesses income and property losses at not less than \$443 million in 1986 dollars.

April 1988

- Rally on Parliament Hill, Ottawa by supporters of Redress.

Sept. 22, 1988

- Acknowledgement, apology and compensation.

1996

- The Census of Canada shows a Japanese Canadian population of 77,130.

2002

- 125th anniversary of the first Japanese to arrive in Canada.



PRIME MINISTER BRIAN MULRONEY; NAJC PRESIDENT ART MIKI SIGN THE JAPANESE CANADIAN REDRESS AGREEMENT, SEPTEMBER 22, 1988. PHOTO: JOHN FLANDERS.

"THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT OF THE TIME COMMITTED UNFAIR, DISCRIMINATORY ACTS AGAINST LOYAL CANADIANS. THIS GOVERNMENT IS NOW ACKNOWLEDGING THOSE WRONGS AND PROMISING THAT THEY MUST NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN..." - PRIME MINISTER B. MULRONEY, OFFICIAL STATEMENT, 1988.

Synopsis

Forgiveness is Hiro Kanagawa's stage adaptation of Mark Sakamoto's award-winning family memoir *Forgiveness: A Gift from My Grandparents*. The play centres on the real-life experiences of Mark's grandfather Ralph MacLean and grandmother Mitsue Sakamoto who both suffer tremendous deprivations during World War II: Ralph as a prisoner in a Japanese POW camp, and Mitsue as a victim of the Japanese Canadian internment. In order to rebuild their lives and their families after the war, Ralph and Mitsue must find the grace and generosity necessary to forgive those who have wronged them. Their journeys of healing culminate in 1968--more than two decades after the war--when Mitsue's son Stan and Ralph's daughter Diane begin dating, and Ralph is invited to Mitsue's home for dinner.

Hiro Kanagawa

Hiro Kanagawa is a well-known and well-regarded character actor with a diverse and extensive resume. Also an accomplished playwright and screenwriter, he is the recipient of the 2017 Governor General's Literary for Drama for his play *Indian Arm*.

Hiro's distinct talents were cultivated over a lifetime of wide-ranging experiences in a variety of locales. Born in Sapporo, Japan, he grew up in Guelph, Ontario and Sterling Heights, Michigan before returning to Japan for high school. Showing an early talent in a variety of arts, he went on to study at a series of prestigious East Coast schools: Middlebury College, the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. He trained in classical guitar, sculpture, performance art, and theatre along the way, honing his skills as both a creator and performer.

Hiro moved to Vancouver in 1990, attracted by the burgeoning film and television production in the city. Since then he has become a mainstay of the industry with close to 170 credits in projects ranging from blockbuster features to indie films and hit series to cult favourites.

Although perhaps best known as an actor, Hiro is an award-winning playwright and sought-after story consultant. He was story editor on several critically-acclaimed Canadian television series: *Da Vinci's Inquest*, *Da Vinci's City Hall*, *Intelligence*, and *Blackstone*. His plays *Tiger of Malaya* and *The Patron Saint of Stanley Park* have been performed across Canada. His most recent play, *Indian Arm* received the 2015 Jessie Richardson Award for Outstanding Original Script and the 2017 Governor-General's Literary Award for Drama.



Photo by Kristine Cofsky

Hiro Kanagawa - The Playwright

Published Works

- *Indian Arm* – Playwrights Canada Press, 2016
- *The Patron Saint of Stanley Park* – Playwrights Canada Press, 2014
- *Tiger of Malaya* (published in “Love and Relationships Volume 1”) Playwrights Canada Press, 2009

Awards

- 2017 – Governor-General's Literary Award for Drama, *Indian Arm*
- 2015 – Jessie Richardson Award, Vancouver – Outstanding Original Script for *Indian Arm*
- 2012 – Playwrights Guild of Canada New Musical Award Nominee – Short-listed for *Tom Pinkerton: The Ballad of Butterfly's Son*
- 2011 – Jessie Richardson Award Nominee, Vancouver – Outstanding Original Script for *The Patron Saint of Stanley Park*.

Mark Sakamoto

Mark Sakamoto is a Canadian lawyer and writer. He is most noted for *Forgiveness: A Gift from My Grandparents*, a family memoir which was published in 2014.

Originally from Medicine Hat, Alberta, he is the son of a Japanese Canadian father, Stan Sakamoto, and a Scottish-Canadian mother, Diane MacLean. He studied political science at the University of Calgary before moving to Halifax to study law at Dalhousie University. He is currently the executive vice-president for Think Research, a Canadian software company innovating in health data, and has served on the boards of the Ontario Media Development Corporation and the Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies.

The hardships faced by his Paternal Grandparents, during World War II, formed the basis of his book, *Forgiveness: A Gift from My Grandparents*. To write the book, Sakamoto interviewed his grandparents about how they forgave those formative experiences to embrace and connect with each other when their son and daughter fell in love and married. The book was a shortlisted finalist for the Edna Staebler Award in 2015.

Forgiveness was selected for the 2018 edition of Canada Reads, winning the contest on March 29, 2018





AFTER THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT RELOCATED JAPANESE-CANADIANS, RYUTARO NAKAGAMA AND HIS WIFE NOBUKO LOST THEIR PROPERTY AND THE GROCERY BUSINESS THAT THEY HAD OPERATED, IN STEVESTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA, FOR OVER A DECADE. THEY FOUND THEMSELVES IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA IN 1942, AND, LIKE MANY JAPANESE CANADIANS, THEY HAD TO WORK IN SUGAR BEET PRODUCTION.

Character List

Part One

MITSUME - Nisei woman, teens to late forties. Full of hope and dreams. She possesses inherent goodness and grace and lives as if these things matter. If she has a fault, it is a fierce clarity about what is right. Though she surely raised her voice in anger from time to time, it is said of her today that no one once ever heard her do it. (pronunciation: Me-tsuo-eh)

HIDEO - Nisei man, twenties to late forties. Educated and progressive, but speaks with an accent, having been sent back to Japan as a child. Adores Mitsue, but is disillusioned by the internment. (pronunciation: He-day-oh)

STAN Sansei man, childhood to twenties. Mitsue and Hideo's second son. A "people person," he has inherited his mother's innate goodness.

RON - Sansei man, childhood to twenties. Mitsue and Hideo's eldest son. A Japanese Canadian prairie boy with dreams of hockey and rock and roll.

KATO - Japanese POW camp commandant, thirties. Arrogant and sadistic, but believes himself to be a worldly and educated man. (pronunciation: Kah-toe)

PAT - Nisei man, Mitsue's brother. Wants to be accepted as fully Canadian and bristles at his own Japanese-ness. **YOSUKE AND TOMI** Issei couple, late forties to sixties, Mitsue's parents. They aspire to middle-class respectability in Canada for themselves and assimilation for their children.

ICHIRO - Nisei man, twenties. One of Mitsue's suitors. Aspires to a fully assimilated life in Canada.

MIYOKO - Nisei girl, teens. Mitsue's best friend. Trying to be a typical Canadian teen despite having a strict Japanese father.

MRS. YAMAMOTO - Issei woman, sixties. Kindly dress shop owner and would-be matchmaker to Mitsue and Hideo.

THE NAKAGAMA'S OPENED THEIR GROCERY STORE IN LETHBRIDGE IN SEPTEMBER OF 1947, RELOCATING WITHIN DOWNTOWN LETHBRIDGE IN 1955... IT REMAINS TO THIS DAY AND IS CONSIDERED A HISTORICAL LANDMARK, TOURIST DESTINATION AND A PRETTY GREAT GROCERY STORE.





CANADIAN SOLDIERS STATIONED IN HONG KONG.
SOURCE: THE CANADIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA.

Character List

Part Two

RALPH - Grindstone boy, childhood to early twenties. Like Mitsue, he has an innate sense of morality and fairness and continues to believe in these things through the horrors of war. Signs up for war in search of escape from a small and abusive life at home. Spends the rest of his life searching for the meaning of his suffering.

DEIGHTON - Grindstone boy, childhood to early twenties. Ralph's best friend. Naive, good-time-Charlie.

COOPER - Grindstone boy, childhood to early twenties. Ralph and Deighton's friend. Coarser, more crudely male.

PHYLLIS - Ralph's long-suffering wife, forties. Trying her best to support Ralph through his PTSD. Trying her best to not disapprove of her daughter dating a Japanese Canadian.

DIANE - A Prairie girl, twenties, Ralph's daughter. Not a hippie, not a rebel, just happened to fall in love with a Japanese guy.

MORTIMER - A Canadian officer from the stiff-upper-lip military academy, thirties. He does his best to keep himself and Ralph alive.

ADAMS - A straight-talking Southerner, twenties, has probably seen horrible things that only Americans fighting in the Pacific will ever see.

MRS. RUTT - Sugar beet farmer, middle-aged. Not consciously cruel or racist, but entirely comfortable with housing a Japanese family in a chicken coop.

MR. ARCHIBALD - A tailor whom Mrs. Yamamoto entrusts with valuable items from her dress shop and who later takes her shop over.



LIBERATED CANADIAN PRISONERS FROM HONG KONG
RETURN TO CANADA ON BOARD HMCS PRINCE ROBERT.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As Hiro and Mark's characters seek peace and a place to call home, they perpetually struggle with their identities and within the global conflict that uprooted so many individuals... the following are a few questions that are foundational to their journeys and that might plant the seeds for a worthwhile discussion after having attended *Forgiveness*:

What does it mean to be Canadian?

**“Work is freedom”,
“Is work freedom for slaves?”**

(Kanagawa; pg. 90)

**“What is more sad?
To never have a (hometown), or
never see your (hometown) again?”**

(Kanagawa; pg. 103)

Warm-Up Activity

Buffalo, Farmer, Landowner

An exercise in Power Dynamics

Number of participants: ∞

Many of the characters in *Forgiveness* find themselves in situations where their "power" has been taken away...

Mitsue and her family must uproot their lives, along with so many other Japanese Canadians, as they are forced to build a new life in another province;

Ralph must struggle to survive under the tyrannical rule of the POW Camp Commandant, Kato...

Neither individual is afforded much power to decide their future and their fate...

This exercise invites students to engage in play and, afterward, into a conversation about what it means to have power, and what it feels like to have none.

- All students will participate in a large open space
- However, the instructor will assign the following roles:
 - ~ **Farmer** | One or Two Students
 - ~ **Landowner** | One Student
 - ~ **Buffalo** | Everyone else

(IMPORTANT NOTE: The **Landowner** role should be assigned in secret and the **Landowner** should only be introduced partway through the exercise).

- The "**Buffalo**" are instructed that they must follow the hand of the farmer, with no exceptions, unless they are not safe.
- The "**Farmer**", without words, and with their hand(s) extended, will now direct the buffalo around the room. It is very important that this is done SILENTLY.
- Where the "**Farmer's**" hand leads, the "**Buffalo**" must follow.
- The "**Landowner**" is then introduced, and the "**Farmer**", while still leading their "**Buffalo**", must follow the SILENT guiding hand of the "**Landowner**".

Debrief Questions:

- How did it feel being the **Buffalo**?
- The **Farmer**?
- The **Landowner**?
- How did it feel for the farmers when the **Landowner** was introduced?
- Possible prompt: How does this exercise mirror the experience of the characters in *Forgiveness*?
- Or, more broadly, how does this exercise mirror the experience of individuals in a Colonial Society?

Activity #1

Drama

Pictures, Prose, Projection

Enhancing our stories with images

Hiro Kanagawa suggests the use of projected images and animation to support Mitsue and Ralph in telling their stories throughout *Forgiveness*. The use of projection has become an integral part of the modern theatre-maker's toolbox. One could argue that the projections are the third core storyteller in this production. The following exercise is, ideally, enacted with the support of an in-class projector... but, there are options for those spaces that do not have access to such technologies.

Using historical images from the era (and, possibly, text from Kanagawa's play), students will devise short tableaux sequences that respond to pictures that capture something of the lived experiences of Canadians during WWII, both at home and on the frontlines.

Groups of 3-5 students.

- Each group will be given a historical image from the era (**see pages 21-25 for images**)
- In their groups, students will create a sequence of 3-5 tableaux images.
- These sequences should tell a story, beginning, middle, and end... with one of the tableaux recreating the historical image provided.
- If the drama space has a projector available, it is suggested that, in addition to the image provided, students do some gentle research to find images that support each of the tableaux that they are creating.
- These images should be projected during the performance of their tableaux sequences.
- *For older students:* the tableaux being created should be *representational* as opposed to *literal* re-creations of the projected images.
- Pieces can be performed twice: once without projection, and once with.
- Debrief: Compare and Contrast - How did the projections enhance the story? What did you prefer (with projection, or without)? Was the image/animation distracting?

Guiding Questions ~ Devising Tableaux:

- What happened in the lives of the characters prior to this photo being taken? What led them to this moment?
- What happened after this photo was taken?... What events transpired in the lives of these individuals in the days, months or years following this moment in time?

Scaffolding Up

- In addition to each group receiving an image from the era, each group will also receive a piece of text from Kanagawa's play (**see page 26**)
- Using the text as a foundation for inspiration, students should create a tableaux sequence that responds to either the text and the image provided.
- *OPTIONAL:* One student from each group has the option of performing the provided text as their peers enact the tableaux sequence that has been devised.



PROJECTION ROOM OF THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE, LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA; 1950. SOURCE: GALT MUSEUM COLLECTION.

Activity #2

Social Studies

(also, Drama)

The Envelope Exercise

Constructing a Narrative from historical images

Materials: Multiple copies of **Image Bank (pages 21-25)**

An equal number of envelopes as there will be groups participating

Pre-Class Preparation: After photocopying the Image Bank, cut out the images and place them (in desired combinations) within the envelopes. Curation of multiple combinations will create more varied story results... however, even if the instructor provides the same images in each envelope, no two stories will be exactly the same.

- Students should work in small groups of 4-5.
- Each Group should receive one envelope (full of the provided images).

Students will then reveal one image at a time and discuss the following questions:

- **When did this image take place?** (Year, Month, Day, Hour; specificity will lead to better narrative clarity)
- **What is happening in the image?** Who is present? And what do those individuals appear to be doing?

Though these images capture real people and places, within this exercise, there are no wrong answers. If students are struggling, there might be some reassurance found in the fact that all of the provided images are related to the historical context of *Forgiveness*.

Once they have discussed the individual images and catalogued their guesses as to the content, students will...

... Create a hypothetical narrative based on the images they have discussed.

(In a Drama class: these narratives might be performed... perhaps with projection)

Tips for creating a **new historical narrative**:

- Estimate the chronological order of the images.
- Consider the similarities between the images received.
- Consider the characters in the images provided, what relationships might those characters share?
- Allow students to remove one of the images from their story continuum.
- Base the story on factual information learned from this guide and the production.

Stories can be shared with the class and/or documented/recorded for assessment after the Lesson.



CANADIAN FORCES OFFICER HAROLD WARD MACDONALD WROTE HUNDREDS OF LOVE LETTERS TO JACQUELYN RUTH ROBINSON WHILE HE WAS AWAY DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR... THESE ENVELOPES HELD HER RESPONSES. PHOTO: VICKY LAM; SOURCE: THE WALRUS.

Activity #3

Language Arts

Hideo's Proposal

Perspective poetry

During the first act of *Forgiveness*, Hideo explains to Mitsue that he intended to plan a more romantic proposal that would include a poem. Afraid that the war will separate them, Hideo makes an impromptu decision to propose to Mitsue.

"I was saving this for beautiful day in spring when sakura are blooming. I was going to write poem for you. But I have no poem, no beautiful words. Only my love and my promise. Mitsue Oseki. I will devote my life to you. Will you marry me?"

- **Hideo** (Kanagawa, page 63)

Assuming Hideo wasn't so pressed for time...
Pretending that Hideo did write a poem for Mitsue...

What would the poem say?

Keep in mind that, when they first meet, Hideo tells Mitsue he is trying to improve his English, so he might be trying to impress her with language.

Here are some quotes that help us understand Hideo:

"Ohhh I like it, Mitsue Oseki. Smart. Modern. Individual. Canadian. A Canadian woman for a Canadian life. A Canadian family."

- **Hideo** (Kanagawa, page 50)

"I'm good with numbers, Mits. I will improve my English, I can get a good job. My wife... my wife will be an educated, independent woman."

- **Hideo** (Kanagawa, page 50)

This poem could be **Free Verse**, however, there is a rich tradition of various Japanese poetic forms to draw from (Haiku, Renga, Kanshi, etc.).

For further information on the various forms see:

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/a-guide-to-japanese-poetic-forms#10-types-of-japanese-poetry>

THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS BLOOM IN KITSILANO



Further Resources

In addition to the resources provided below, almost every image in this guide is sourced from an article or site that provides invaluable content that ties directly to the history and themes of *Forgiveness*.

All "Image Sources" are hotlinked on page 20 of this guide.

VIDEO RESOURCES

Minoru: Memory of Exile

NFB short film, re: The Japanese Canadian Experience in BC:

<https://www.nfb.ca/film/minoru-memory-of-exile/>

Wartime Animated Shorts by Philip Ragan

NFB short films re: Canada's War Efforts:

<https://www.nfb.ca/channels/wartime-animated-shorts-philip-ragan/>

LESSON PLAN PACKAGE

Canada's "Forgotten Heroes"

The Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association's Study Guide to the Canadian Force's efforts in Hong Kong between 1941-1945:

<https://www.hkvca.ca/teacherszone/en/lessons/Mar%2025%2009%20Ten%20Lessons%20in%20English.pdf>

ARTICLES

Apology to Japanese Canadians of WWII, Sept. 22nd 1988

An article that covers, and provides context for, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's apology to Japanese-Canadians in 1988:

<https://www.rcinet.ca/en/2016/09/22/history-sept-22-1988-apology-to-japanese-canadians-of-wwii/>

Hiro Kanagawa Interview

Kanagawa talks to the Medicine Hat News about his adaptation of Sakamoto's *Forgiveness*:

<https://medicinehatnews.com/news/local-news/2018/10/09/forgiveness-in-the-hands-of-canadian-playwright/>

JOY KOGAWA – POETRY

Born in Vancouver, British Columbia, poet and novelist Joy Kogawa was sent with her family to an internment camp for Japanese Canadians during World War II, and her writing often focuses on the lasting scars of racism.

Kogawa is a member of the Order of Canada and the Order of British Columbia.

<http://www.joykogawa.ca/poetry.html>



MASS DROP OF THE 1ST BATTALION FROM DOUGLAS DAKOTA AIRCRAFTS, SALISBURY PLAIN, ENGLAND, FEBRUARY 6TH, 1944. SOURCE: JUNOBEACH.ORG



SOURCES

(by page number – all sources hotlinked)

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- [Plan of Vancouver School Districts and Properties, 1938](#). (The Vancouver Archives)
- [Forgiveness, Novel Cover Image](#). (Good Reads)
- [Hiro Kanagawa in profile](#). (hirokanagawa.com)

Quote Page

Page 1

- [San Wan War Cemetery, HONG KONG](#). (Commonwealth War Graves)

Page 2

- [Parade on Powell Street, between 1936 & 1938](#). Photographer Karl Haspel. CVA AM1663 – CVA 300-136. (Heritage Vancouver)

Page 3

- [1948 The Stanley Theatre. Archives – CVA 1184-2324](#). (miss604.com – Archived Photos of the Day)

Page 4

- [Canadian Forces Map of Hong Kong Front, 1941](#). (Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association)

Page 5

- [Royal Rifles of Canada Recruitment Poster; Between 1942 and 1945](#). (The Globe and Mail)

Page 6

- [Japanese Canadian Farmers](#). (JapaneseCanadianHistory.net)
- [Gordon King, Rally for redress, Parliament Hill, 14 April 1988](#). (Ottawa Japanese Community Association)

Page 7

- [Hiroshi Okuda, Registration Certificate, Stamped "Canadian Born"](#). (Saanich News)

Page 8

- [Confiscated Boats, Bamfield, BC 1941-1942](#). (Saanich News)
- [A crowded dining hall in an internment camp in Slocan](#). (British Columbia: An Untold History)
- [The Tashme internment camp, near Hope](#). (British Columbia: An Untold History)

Page 9

- [Japanese Canadian children on their journey to internment camps in the Interior](#). (British Columbia: An Untold History)
- [PM Brian Mulroney, NAJC President Art Miki sign the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement](#). (DiscoverNikkei.com)

Page 10-11

- [Kanagawa Photo Bio and Awards](#). (hirokanagawa.com)
- [Sakamoto Photo](#). (CBC.ca)
- [Mark Sakamoto Bio](#). (Adapted from: Wikipedia – Mark Sakamoto)
- [Synopsis](#). (Theatre Calgary | Audition Notice)

Page 12-13

- [Ryutaro Nakagama and his wife Nobuko](#). (The Galt Museum)
- [The Nakagama's Grocery Store in Lethbridge](#). (Downtown Lethbridge)
- [Canadian Soldiers Stationed in Hong Kong](#). (The Canadian Encyclopedia)
- [Liberated Canadian prisoners from Hong Kong](#). (Legion Magazine)
- [Character List](#). (Theatre Calgary | Audition Notice)

Page 14

- [Modern Day Sugar Beet Field](#). (Twitter: Hilleshög Seed, LLC)

Page 16

- [Projection room of the Paramount Theatre](#). (The Galt Museum)

Page 17

- [Jacquelyn Ruth Robinson Letters](#). (The Walrus)

Page 18

- [The Cherry Blossoms Bloom in Kitsilano](#). (kitsilano.ca)

Page 19

- [Mass drop of the 1st Battalion](#). (JunoBeach.org)

Page 20

- [Elementary students at Pine Crescent Elementary School](#). (PolicyNote.ca)

- ↓
- [CANADIAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN HONG KONG](#). (THE GLOBE AND MAIL)





IMAGE
BANK



Elementary students at Pine Crescent Elementary School, Bay Farm, BC.



Canadian prisoners of war in Hong Kong



After the Canadian government relocated Japanese-Canadians, Ryutaro Nakagama and his wife Nobuko lost their property and the grocery business that they had operated, in Steveston, British Columbia, for over a decade. They found themselves in southern Alberta in 1942, and, like many Japanese Canadians, they had to work in sugar beet production.

Unless otherwise noted: image sources available on page 20 of this guide.

Canadian
Soldiers
Stationed in
Hong Kong.



A crowded
dining hall in
an
internment
camp in
Slocan, a
village in the
West
Kootenays.



Japanese
Canadian
children on
their journey
to internment
camps in the
Interior.

Unless
otherwise
noted: image
sources
available on
page 20 of
this guide.



Japanese
Canadian
Farmers

Gordon
King,
Rally for
redress,
Parliament Hill, 14
April
1988.



Parade on
Powell
Street,
between
1936 &
1938.

Unless
otherwise
noted: image
sources
available on
page 20 of
this guide.



The Murakami Family in Greenwood in BC's Interior

Image Source.
(Saanich News)



Two children look in the window of a Japanese Canadian store.

Image Source.
(Saanich News)



Unless otherwise noted: image sources available on page 20 of this guide.

Confiscated Boats, Bamfield, BC. 1941-1942.

City of Vancouver,
1898

Image Source:
(The Vancouver
Archives)



San Wan War
Cemetery, HONG
KONG:
Commemorating
Canadian (and
commonwealth)
Soldiers who served
in the Hong Kong
War Garrison and
Perished during the
Second World War.



Displaced Japanese
Canadians leaving
the Vancouver area.

Image Source.
(Saanich News)

Unless
otherwise
noted: image
sources
available on
page 20 of
this guide.



QUOTE BANK

VA
WEIC
THIC
STEP
LOC

ICHIRO

I'm not gonna do anything funny, Mits. Just close your eyes for me. Okay. Now picture a house, like the ones you see on your bus ride home. The ones you dream of living in. A nice yard, a dog, kids skipping rope and playing hockey in the driveway. Can you see yourself living there? Can you see us? I can. I know I got a shot, Mits. With you by my side, I know I can do it. A Canadian life. With kids who grow up Canadian. Who will never have to feel they don't belong. Tell me you can see it.

ITSUE

It's like a dream. Something I won't even dare to think about having.

(Kanagawa, pg. 41)

RALPH

We called them "hellships." And for good reason. Same as anywhere, Japan had a labour shortage with all their able-bodied men at war. So they shipped us POWs to Japan as a slave labour force. Over a hundred thousand of us. For transport they used unmarked cargo vessels, dozens of them were sunk by Allied forces who had no way of knowing these ships were full to the gunwales with our own soldiers. From Hong Kong, three hundred of us were packed into the hold of a ship designed for hauling coal. The Japs didn't bother washing the coal dust out. We were packed worse than sardines--there wasn't enough space for all of us to lie down at the same time. Not that you exactly wanted to. There were no toilets, no clean water, no light, no air. Hellship? (He nods.) Only thing missing were the flames of damnation. Which could come at any moment from an American plane, a torpedo. We were down there in that darkness for seventeen days.

(Kanagawa, pg. 90)

ITSUE

When I got off the train, I couldn't bring myself to go straight to Celtic. I decided to walk to Powell St. and went through Chinatown which felt somehow normal and anonymous and safe. And then I walked by Hideo's parents' house and thought I saw a Japanese man on the steps. But another man came out and they started speaking in Cantonese. I didn't bother asking if I could have a look inside... I don't know what I expected to find when I got to Powell. Familiar faces, sounds, smells? The special music of nikkei English and Japanese. What I didn't expect was...emptiness. An emptiness I could see and feel from a block away. If you feel that way about Powell St. today, now you know why...I headed downtown and got up the courage to get on the Granville bus. My heart was in my throat as we crossed the bridge. At the last second I got off at Broadway and walked up the street past the Stanley—a John Garfield movie called "We Were Strangers" was playing. It wasn't about us."

(Kanagawa, pg. 113)

ITSUE

Oh, Miyoko. It's times like this I miss you most. I feel so at home working for Mrs. Yamamoto, but then I get on this bus and all the little sideways glances and dirty looks make me feel like I don't belong. How dare I be on this bus, in their presence, in their line of vision, in their city, their province, their country. If only you were here I wouldn't mind so. If you were here I bet we wouldn't even be going home right now, Miyoko, we'd have gone straight to the Stanley to see a movie. And we'd sit wherever we pleased, too!

(Kanagawa, pg. 38)