

THE JAPANESE ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

Its Democratic Reform and the Destruction of its Democratic System by Vancouver Consul Kaai

Toshiji SASAKI

INTRODUCTION

Kanada Nihonjinkai [Japanese Association of Canada] was established by about 50 Japanese immigrants on March 24, 1909. However, organized activities of Japanese immigrants in Canada did not originate with the Japanese Association, but with the Japanese Christian churches in Steveston, Vancouver, Victoria and other cities, and the Fraser River Fishermen's Union in Steveston.

There were other organizations such as the *Dainihonjinkai* [Great Association of Japanese] established in 1897 in Fraser River, and *Kanada Zairyu Nihonjin Kyogikai* [The Council for Japanese Immigrants in Canada] established in September 1900 to resolve the incidents of the perjury of certificates of naturalized citizens. Both of these organizations shortly disappeared and made only limited contributions to the Japanese community.

Therefore, it can be said that the virtual beginning of any meaningful organization of the Japanese in Canada was the Japanese Associations in 1909. The first president (1909-1917) of the Japanese Association of

Canada was Yasushi Yamazaki who was also president of the newspaper company, *Tairiku Nippo* [Continental Times]. While the number of Association members grew year after year, membership in the local districts remained relatively small. For instance, in June of 1911, the number of members in the Vancouver district was 263 and the Skeena Branch had 97.¹⁾ But the control of the Japanese Association was kept in the hands of a small group of leaders in the Vancouver area.

In 1915, the Japanese Association plundered the Fraser River Fishermen's Union of 'guarantor authority', the authority to issue certificates to those who wanted to return to Japan temporarily to bring wives and children to Canada, and to be given one year's grace for military service. The Fraser River Fishermen's Union then split into two factions. The Association also broke up into two factions in 1916 in a controversy over the enlistment of Japanese volunteer soldiers for World War I. However, even when the Japanese Association was reunified in 1917 and engaged in activities such as organizing against the Spanish Flu epidemic and working for the reform of Nisei education, the Association remained under the leadership of a small number of powerful, affluent Vancouver immigrants.

I . DEMOCRATIC REFORM MOVEMENT OF THE JAPANESE ASSOCIATION

The Beginning of the Democratic Reform Movement

The democratic reform movement within the Japanese Association originated in the decision made at a meeting in January of 1921 which opened association membership to all Japanese immigrants 17 years of age and older who lived independently in Canada. The fact that this meeting of the Japanese Association, which represented only a small part

of the Japanese community in Canada, made a decision applicable to all Japanese immigrants in Canada, obviously exceeded the Japanese Association's authority. Moreover, the association harassed unwilling immigrants who did not pay the three-dollar membership fee by refusing to issue them various important certificates.

The democratic reform movement was led by workers organized by the Japanese Labor Union and by farmers' associations in the different districts. The Japanese Farmers' Association in Haney was in existence as early as November of 1919, and other farmers' associations followed.

As a direct result of 79 Japanese workers having joined a strike at a paper factory in Swanson Bay in May of 1920, *Kanada Nihonjin Rodo Kumiai* [the Japanese Labor Union], was organized with the approval of the provincial government of British Columbia. *Rodo Shuho* [the Labor Weekly], a bulletin of the Japanese Labor Union, began publication in August of the same year. Japanese workers were beginning to advocate the rights of workers. Etsu Suzuki, an opinion leader in the labor union movement, became active as a writer for *Tairiku Nippo*.

At that time, white labor unions in both the United States and Canada were trying to exclude Japanese immigrants from entering Canada, and the Japanese Labor Union attempted to negotiate with these white workers' unions to halt the exclusion movement. In order to sustain their negotiations with the white unions, the Japanese Labor Union desperately needed money for organizing meetings and paying interpreters. They therefore asked for financial assistance from the Japanese Association. Their request was flatly rejected by the managing committee without any serious examination of the request. With this incident as the turning point, a democratic reform movement within the Japanese Association began to gather momentum.

Cry for a Democratic Reform

It is said that many articles registering opinions about the democratic reform movement were published in *Tairiku Nippo* and other newspapers after June of 1921. At the present time, however, the only such primary source is the *Tairiku Nippo* (unfortunately, data from other newspapers were lost during the evacuation).

Major articles and editorial opinions that appeared in *Tairiku Nippo* from June to October in 1921 are as follows; "Mentality of the Main Figures of the Japanese Association" (June 16), "Disposal of the Main Figures of the Japanese Association" (June 18, 20, 21, and 22), "Unfaithfulness of the Main Figures of the Japanese Association" (July 2), "Only the Remainers of the Yamazaki Faction" (July 4), "Attitude of the Main Figures of the Japanese Association" (July 6, 7 and 8), "First, Educate the Main Figures of the Japanese Association" (July 16), "Looking at the Attitude of the Main Figures of the Japanese Association" (July 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 25), "Warning from the Japanese Journalist Club" (July 21), "Meeting of the Japanese Association" (August 16), "Laziness at the Executive Meeting of the Japanese Association" (September 17), "Request to the Japanese Association" (October 28 and 29).

As these headings show, heated discussion was taking place in the newspapers and other places. Besides opinion leaders, people in the local districts began to send in their proposals on the reform of the Japanese Association. Some of the opinions of local people were reflected in the following articles; "Democratic Reform of the Japanese Association Is Our Urgent Business" (Murase and Sekiya; Skeena River, November 28), "The Japanese Association Is Something Worse Than Useless" (Ichiro Kanemura; Kamloops, November 29, 30, and December 1, 2, 3, and 5), "We Request the Dissolution of the Japanese Association" (S.S.

Ocean Falls, December 5-8), "Through Reform or Dissolution" (Y. M. ; Cumberland, December 10), "The Japanese Association Has Internal Troubles" (Kumiagai; Cumberland, December 15 and 16), "Some Opinions on the Reform of the Japanese Association" (Mawatari; New Westminster, December 20), "Opinions of Coal Miners on the Reform of the Japanese Association" (Miyamoto; Cumberland, December 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 28).

The majority of these contributors felt that the Japanese Association was controlled by commercial interests in Vancouver and should be democratized through the conversion of its system to an association of diverse local organizations.

In an article "Disposal of the Main Figures of the Japanese Association,"²⁾ Etsu Suzuki argued against those who refused to transfer the control of the Japanese Association into other hands and against those who retaliated against the *Tairiku Nippo*, on the basis that both institutions were founded by Yamazaki. Suzuki demanded that the Japanese Association should be a representative organization of all Japanese in Canada, not the private property of some people or some group. Suzuki maintained that the *Tairiku Nippo* should serve all Japanese in Canada and should criticize the Japanese Association if the Association was in error.³⁾

In the article "Request to the Japanese Association,"⁴⁾ Suzuki explained why reform was necessary and how it should be accomplished. He took up two points; external and internal. (1) From the white people's point of view, the Japanese Association was a branch shop of the Japanese Consulate and an agent of the Japanese Government. They claimed that Japanese immigrants were 'invading' Canada nonviolently by orders of Japanese Government. However, the present leadership of

the Japanese Association was incapable of clearing up the misunderstandings that existed between whites and Japanese immigrants concerning the true functions of the Japanese Association. (2) The present leadership of the Japanese Association thought of the Association as private property. Thus, when the Japanese Association decided that all Japanese immigrants had to become members of the Association at the meeting on January of 1921, they represented only one percent of the Japanese community in Canada. Moreover, the Association refused to issue important certificates to anyone who did not pay the three-dollar membership fee. The fact was most of the leading figures of the Japanese Association were not conscious of their responsibilities to the social welfare of Japanese and were eager to become executives simply to satisfy their own vanity. The only solution to resolve these urgent issues was to make the Japanese Association a conference of diverse Japanese organizations in Canada.

A number of seminars and lecture meetings were held during this period, and opinions concerning the necessity of reform and projected methods of reform were energetically debated.

On November 9, a free debate on the problem of exclusion of Asian people was held at the Vancouver Japanese Methodist Church under Rev. Yosimitsu Akagawa's chairmanship. The problems discussed included the lack of English among Japanese pupils; the sanitary conditions in Japanese communities; the prohibition against selling farm land to Japanese in the Okanagan district; exclusion of Japanese in the fruit canneries in the New Westminster district; and dual nationality of Japanese fishermen. To cope with these difficult and complex problems, it would be necessary to reform the Japanese Association, to change the imperialistic thinking of the Japanese and to teach them about public

hygiene.⁵⁾

On November 26, the third free debate centering on the problem of the exclusion of Asians was held at the Vancouver Japanese Methodist Church.⁶⁾ Three main problems were discussed. On the matter of dual nationality, it was decided that all Japanese immigrants should select one nationality, either Japanese or Canadian. On the matter of religion, all Japanese living in Canada should have respect for Christianity and try to understand it. On the problem of the Japanese Association, some insisted on the reform of its system, others insisted on its dissolution, but all were in agreement that any activities which would make white men entertain doubt about the Japanese should be gotten rid of.

On November 27, at a meeting sponsored by the Japanese Journalist Club, an audience of 700 listened to speeches by Etsu Suzuki, Rityu Ide, Ryuichi Yoshida, and others.⁷⁾ The necessity of reforming the Japanese Association and the concrete means of the reform were discussed.

Success of Democratic Reform

On November 29, 1921, the Japanese Association hosted a conference of various Japanese organizations and representatives of local Association branches. The total number of organizations and local branches who had sent representatives was 26. The 36 representatives included.⁸⁾ 14 directors of the Japanese Association also attended the meeting.

The meeting from the outset got into trouble. The president of the Japanese Association, Matsunoshin Abe, said, "The executive committee will deliberate the decision of this meeting." Suzuki confuted this and insisted, "As this meeting reflects various opinions of all the Japanese communities, this meeting is the highest organ of decision." Abe demanded one vote per representative, but his proposal was rejected. Contrary

to the wishes of the leaders of the Japanese Association, the discussion started with the matter of the reform of the Association. Abe and Saori Goto (an executive of the Japanese Association) insisted that the matter on reform should be discussed last, but no one agreed. Ryuichi Yoshida (Skeena Branch) gave a fully detailed plan for reform. Shinji Sato (New Westminster Branch), Junichi Ishii (Journalist Club), Taneji Sada (Japanese Labor Union), Kesahiro Iwashita (Kelowna Branch), and others expressed respect for the reformers' opinions and agreed to the reform proposal.⁹⁾

On the second day of the conference, (November 30), Suzuki described the situation of the Japanese Association in California, stating that "the Japanese Government had advised the Consul to dissolve the Japanese Association because the exclusionist movement in California was being inflamed by the activities of the Japanese Association." Suzuki concluded from this, that reform of the Japanese Association of Canada was indeed an urgent necessity.

After exchanges of opinions on both sides, the position of the Association leadership was finally overcome by the opposition groups and all agreed to reform the Japanese Association. Since there were mixed opinions on the specific method of reform, five committee members from both sides were asked to formulate a proposal by taking the different opinions into consideration. It turned out to be impossible, however, to formulate the proposal within a short period of time, and nine members were newly appointed to develop the proposal in the near future.¹⁰⁾

On the third day of meeting (December 1), a new proposal based on Ryuichi Yoshida's idea was submitted. At the meeting, it was decided that the name of the association would be *Nihonjin Renraku Kyougikai* [Associated Council for Japanese] and that each organization would

send one representative to the council. Fifteen committee members were selected to develop the official regulations of the Council. Among these fifteen members were Etsu Suzuki, Ryuichi Yoshida, Junichi Ishii (chief proponents of the reform movement), Goro Kaburagi (former pastor of Vancouver Japanese Christian Church), and Yoshimitsu Akagawa (pastor of Vancouver Japanese Christian Church). Finally, at Suzuki's suggestion, all those attending adopted a resolution of gratitude to the Japanese Association who sponsored the meeting, and the three day conference was adjourned.¹¹⁾

Even after this decision, the former president of the Japanese Association, Matsunoshin Abe and other central figures of the old association continued to oppose the reform proposal by sending letters to local Japanese organizations. On December 21 and 22, Etsu Suzuki wrote articles in *Tairiku Nippo* entitled "Explanation of the Reform Proposal of the Japanese Association — Admonishing the Activities of the Main Figures of the Japanese Association," and advised readers not to misinterpret the proposal. The central organizational problem remaining was how to deal with direct members in the Vancouver Council who had dual membership in various organizations within the city such as the Japanese Commerce Association, Japanese Hotel Business Association, Japanese Barber Association, Japanese Laundry Association and so on.¹²⁾

At the August 1922 meeting, the democratic reform side succeeded in reaching the final stage of reform by gathering almost all votes from the Japanese Labor Union, local farmers' associations, and from other various Associations in the Vancouver area.¹³⁾ As a result of the reform, the Japanese Association now held 1,960 direct members (number of voters 1731), 27 associate organizations with 3,675 members (for a total of 5,635, about half of the adult Japanese population in Canada).¹⁴⁾

The first president of the reformed Japanese Association was Ritsu Ide (1923), the second president (1924 and 1925) was Yataro Arikado (a key figure in the education reform movement for Nisei and a member of a Japanese Methodist Church in Vancouver).

Some Stories Relevant to the Background of the Reform

Here, I want to refer to Ryuichi Yoshida's Book *A Man Of Our Times*, to explain the background of the reform movement of the Japanese Association. Talking about how he became a socialist, Yoshida writes that when he was at the university in Japan, he didn't think about politics very much. Socialism was already being talked about in Japan, and he had read some books on the subject. But it was only after he came to Canada and worked in the camps that he was genuinely influenced by socialism, seeing how the companies and bosses exploited workers. In other words, after coming to Canada and he himself becoming a laborer, he then understood what it felt like. This was the time of the 'Taisyō Democracy' in Japan when, for a time, government censorship of diverse political opinions lessened and many Japanese socialists came forward. He recalls a bookstore on Powell Street in a Japanese town in Vancouver that sold translated socialist books. For the first time, he read translations of some of Marx's works. In the 1920's, the Japanese community in Canada was also influenced by magazines like *Kaiho* (Liberation) and *Kaizo* (Renovation). Newspapers like *Tairiku Nippo* also started to take somewhat more liberal positions. Prior to that, publications were very conservative."¹⁵⁾

Yoshida writes about the Japanese Association before the reform. The Association, he says, used to be dominated by the Japanese Consul and was run by merchants and other powerful people who monopolized

the executive positions. Most Japanese organizations were branches of the Association. The only exception was the Steveston Fishermen's Union. Precisely, who ran the Japanese Association? For examples, the owner of a fish store was in charge of looking after the affairs of the fishermen on the Skeena. Loggers' affairs were in the hands of a loggers' boss in Vancouver and agricultural matters were surprisingly in the hands of a fertilizer merchant. The Japanese Association was very influential in the lives of Japanese in Canada. As long as the Association remained loyal to the Consul's ideas, it had "guarantor authority" and was privileged to provide "authorized approval" for legal documents. For example, many Issei living in Canada were still liable for the draft in Japan. If they did not get an exemption from the Consul, they would have to return to be drafted in Japan. The Consul also had control over visas. In addition, for application to bring wives to Canada, one needed the Association's approval. And for many other things that required Consular approval, one had to apply through the Japanese Association. Yet, the Association did nothing for the Japanese workers.¹⁶⁾

The Japanese Labor Union and people like Suzuki and Yoshida reached the conclusion that the Japanese Association was a serious obstacle and that it was absolutely necessary to break its control over the Japanese in Canada. The Japanese Labor Union had no power at that time. As the Skeena Fishermen's Association had about 2,200 or 2,300 members and the Steveston Fishermen's Association about 1,500 members, Suzuki and Yoshida thought that they could influence some change in the Japanese Association if the fishermen gave their support. Yoshida planned to begin by organizing a Liaison Council of all Japanese fishermen independent of the Japanese Association. A general meeting of the Skeena fishermen supported Yoshida's proposal. Yoshida then went

down to Steveston, but the Steveston people were unwilling to listen. They didn't want outside interference in their affairs and accused Yoshida of making trouble in the Japanese community.

Undeterred, Yoshida went to the fishermen in the No. 3 district of Vancouver Island, explained the plan and won their support. Yasushi Yamazaki was then able to convince the leaders of the Steveston Fishermen's Association of the necessity for Liaison Council of all Japanese fishermen. Although many of the Steveston people remained unconvinced, in the end, the Fishermen's Liaison Council was established.¹⁷⁾

At a meeting of all Canadian Japanese organizations and the Japanese Association branches, the original executive board of the Japanese Association resigned and was replaced by members of the Fishermen's Liaison Council, the Japanese Labor Union, and the farmers' associations. The supporters of the Japanese Labor Union and Fishermen's Liaison Council dominated the Japanese Association for two years. When the Japanese Labor Union started to attack Japanese bosses, the former executives of the old Japanese Association fought back. They claimed that key members of the board of the Association were all "reds" controlled by Suzuki.¹⁸⁾

II . THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF THE JAPANESE ASSOCIATION BY CONSUL KAAI

Background of the Destruction by Consul Kaai

Yoshida wrote,

"As all this was going on, we [board members] came under a unreasonable attack from the former executives of the Japanese Association. The Japanese Consul Sunao Gomyo had been understand-

ing about the Japanese Labor Union and had somewhat of a progressive attitude. In the summer of 1926, he was replaced by a new Consul who was very conservative and imperialistic. [Consul Gomyo was recalled in March, 1925 and was dismissed from service the next month. Consul Tatuo Kaai arrived in September, 1925]. Kaai thought he should convert the Vancouver Japanese into ardent nationalists. He soon started to investigate the ideological tendencies of the Vancouver Issei. . . . At the end of the year, the Consul requested a review of the account books of the Japanese Association. He told Suzuki that we should be more respectful of the Japanese Consul. Suzuki told the Consul that the Japanese Association was an organization registered in Canada and it did not have to be subservient to the Consul. The Consul then brought out a document stipulating that as long as the Association had 'guarantor authority' it would be under the supervision of the Consul of Japan. This meant that all official applications and papers needed for visas were under the control of the Consul. The supporters of the Labor Union soon started to suffer from pressure by the Consul. For instance, he withheld permission from Union members to bring their families from Japan. We continued to control the Japanese Association but we were under great pressure. The Consul gave instructions that the former directors should work to regain control of the Japanese Association. He gave them his full support. They became very strong and in the next election of the executive board, they won so many places that there was only one vote's difference between them and the supporters of the Labor Union. They persuaded delegates from some local associations to oppose all our proposals. With the local delegates, they could win

every time and our proposals always ended up defeated. Finally, the control of the Japanese Association fell back into the hands of the pro-Consul group.”¹⁹⁾

In a letter dated February 2, 1926 to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, Consul Kaai asserted that there were two major problems in the Japanese community in Canada.²⁰⁾ One was the problem of ‘guarantor authority’ through the Japanese Association and the other was that Etsu Suzuki and his followers had taken the lead in the Japanese Association. He explained that these two problems were deeply connected.

According to this letter, Consul Abe, in 1915, gave the Japanese Association ‘guarantor authority’ on the condition that the Japanese Association hand in the written oath, “all activities of the Japanese Association will be under the Consul’s supervision and the Japanese Association will have no objection of being relieved of ‘guarantor authority’ if any activity of theirs is contrary to the Consul’s wishes.” When the question of the charge of the certificates was raised on July 25, 1921, Consul Ukita, determined to give full authority of certificates to the Japanese Association, on the condition that the Japanese Association must reserve half of these monies in a special account and could not spend it without the Consul’s permission, and that the use of this special account should be only for the purpose of enlightenment, education, public hygiene, assistance to Japanese immigrants, the enlightenment of Canadians, and for the prevention of the white exclusionist movement. However, the executive board of the Japanese Association of that time had embezzled the special account for their own use.

About Etsu Suzuki, Kaai wrote as follows:

“Suzuki, who had been invited as the chief editor of Tairiku Nippo, gathered his followers and established the Japanese Labor Union.

He then took over the Japanese Association by means of the power of the Japanese Labor Union (which consisted of cooks, sailors and woodcutters who were just what he wanted as a cat's-paw). When he spoke to local districts, he often blamed the monarchy of Japan and glorified the republic of America. It is said that he blamed the dignity of the Japanese emperor. He committed adultery with Toshiko Tamura, ran away to Canada, and cohabited with her in Vancouver."²¹)

These allegations were full of malice against Suzuki and stemmed from the preconceptions Kaai had been taught by certain people.

Then, Kaai then connected the two problems, and he wrote as follows:

Suzuki and his followers attacked the policy of Consul Saito, who was a mild person, through his newspaper *Minshu* (Daily People) and *Tairiku Nippo*, and curried favor with Consul Gomyo. He came to the Consulate almost everyday, he drank heavily and sang loudly as if this were his own house (a staff person of the Consulate said). In 1924, they obtained expenses of \$300 for research of the conditions of Japanese immigrants. But only when they were asked for the report, did they then begin the research (there is good evidence of this fact but I want to keep this fact a secret). Of the 1924 budget of \$18,000, Suzuki and his followers got \$4,000 as their salaries. After 1923, when the incident of cutting back on the Japanese fishermen's licences took place, they established the Fishermen's Liaison Council, gathering campaign funds of more than \$10,000. Suzuki sent his followers to Ottawa, made them stay there a few months and wasted the rest of the money holding various meetings. Of the special \$3,000 account of 1924, they

added only \$2,000 to it and spent \$1,000 without the permission of the Consul.²²⁾

Consul Kaai added that he would do all he could to rid the Japanese Association of the influence of Suzuki and his followers.

First Meeting of the Executive Board of the Japanese Association and Consul

On January 21, 1926, Consul Kaai sent a letter to Yataro Arikado, President of the Japanese Association.²³⁾ In that letter Kaai said:

I examined the 1925 account book and found that only one third of the income from issuing certificates was added to the special account and that the special account has been used without the permission of the supervisor after the former Consul was recalled. These activities of the Japanese Association are a breach of the written oath of December 21, 1920 which the Japanese Association presented to the then Consul Ukita. I find it necessary to reinforce supervision. From now on you must add all the money from issuing certificates to the special account and ask for the permission of the Consul when you want to use the special account.

As we saw, in Kaai's letter of February 2 to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, Kaai had listed many kinds of bad conduct on the part of Suzuki and his followers. In this letter, he wrote about only one thing, the treatment of the special account after the recall of former Consul Gomyo. Gomyo may well have given permission for the uses of the special account to the executive board of the Japanese Association. If so, Kaai could not criticize the use of the special account during the tenure of Consul Gomyo.

On January 25, 1926, the first meeting of the executive board of the

Japanese Association and Consul Kaai was held at the Consulate.²⁴⁾ From the Japanese Association, were President Arikado, Vice President Ide, Accountant Honda, and Secretary Etsu Suzuki, and from the consulate, were Consul Kaai and Secretary Ito.

At the outset, Arikado said, "When we called on you with many papers of the activities of the Japanese Association as soon as you arrived, you said that you wanted to study the conditions of the Japanese community for a while and then to meet with the executive board of the Japanese Association. After that, since you were in the hospital, we did not have a chance to meet with you and explain the activities of the Japanese Association." Soon after that, Ide and Suzuki took up the matters of the Consul's intention to supervise the special account of the Japanese Association, saying, "The budget of 1925 of the Japanese Association was approved by Consul Gomyo, so the budget was not set up by us as we pleased. We then found out for the first time, the contents of the written oath of 1920 that the then president of the Japanese Association, Matsunoshin Abe, had presented to Consul Ukita. The oath had been kept secret for a long time and had never been reported to a general meeting of the Association. So most members of the Japanese Association, including myself, had no way of knowing about the oath. At that time, the Japanese Association was in the hands of an affluent group of Vancouver men and it did not represent all the wishes of Japanese immigrants. So, it was decided that half of the income from issuing various certificates must be added to the special account and that that money must be used with the permission of the Consul only for the purposes of the enlightenment and education of Japanese immigrants. After the reform of the Japanese Association, we made up a budget and we have used the money with the permission of the Consul. Your statements are

contrary to the facts, and you are making too much of the written oath of 1920."

Kaai insisted, "The promise that the Japanese Association made in the oath should be carried out." Kaai did not want to hear any explanation of changes after 1920, but Suzuki went into detail of the changes within the Japanese community. Kaai insisted, "Since the Consulate furnished the Japanese Association with the money. It must be repaid to the Japanese treasury. I must supervise the use of the special account, case by case. I will carry out the promise written in the oath."

Suzuki took up the second problem and said, "If we must add all the money from issuing certificates to the special account, we will be unable to carry out the activities of the Association. What you want to do will destroy the self-government of the Association because you will be taking away the main source of the Association's income." Kaai said, "If the Association cannot carry out its activities without the money from issuing certificates, the Japanese Association cannot be said to have a proper foundation for a self-governing organization." Suzuki objected, "The income from issuing certificates is neither a contribution nor a subsidy, but the charge for issuing the certificates. To earn the money, we must do various kinds of research that cost a considerable amount of money." Kaai said, "I want to do what I think is right." Suzuki asked, "Can you change the policy pertaining to the special account just as you like?" Kaai answered, "There is that which I can do and that which I cannot do. But I think I can effect the change that all the money from issuing certificates should be added to the special account. Because I have the right of supervision."

Thereafter, the discussion continued between the Association executives and the Consul, but the Consul did not change his firm attitude and

insisted that the meeting should end because he was ill. Moreover, Consul Kaai wished the contents of the meeting to be secret.

Consul Kaai Requested the Authority to Supervise All Activities of the Japanese Association

Two days later (January 27) a emergency executive meeting was held at Orange Hall.²⁵⁾ 18 executives of the Japanese Association and Consul Kaai and Secretary Ito attended.

At the outset, President Arikado said, "Consul Kaai wanted this emergency executive meeting to be secret and the contents of the discussion in this meeting not to be published in any newspaper. So we must decide on this matter first." But this proposal was not agreed to. Masuda explained the process of the matter in detail and Suzuki reported the contents of the discussion at the first meeting in Consul Kaai's office. Then, Arikado disclosed that a second meeting was held between Consul Kaai and Arikado (who went with Masuda) on January 26 at the Consul's request and that the Consul had demanded answers to his questions. One was whether the Japanese Association would approve or not the oath that stated "the Japanese Association will perform all activities under the supervision of the Consul." The other was whether the Japanese Association would admit or not that some activities of the present Japanese Association were disobedient to the oath of 1920. Arikado explained that he said he could not answer those questions and that he would answer them after consultation in the executive meeting.

The main issue at the executive meeting was the Consul's request of placing all the Association activities under his supervision. Yoshida insisted that the Consul intended to dissolve the self-government of the Japanese Association and of the Associated Council for Japanese.

Yasushi Yamazaki was asked to explain the situation in which the then Japanese Association had presented the oath of 1915 to Consul Abe. Yamazaki explained that the Japanese Association had indeed presented the oath but, thereafter, the Japanese Association had carried out all activities in accordance with the determination of the executive committee and that all of the succeeding Consuls had permitted all of these activities, even though replacements of Consuls were frequent.

The third meeting with Consul Kaai was held at the Consulate on January 29.²⁶⁾ Arikado, Honda, Suzuki, and Yoshida attended.

Initially, Consul Kaai said, "I have come to know the conditions of the Japanese community fairly well as I have heard your and other people's opinions. I want to think about the matter of supervision a little more. I will answer your questions after due consideration, so I will put off the enforcement of what I wrote in my letter of January 22."

Arikado revealed that Kaai had met with those who had been on the opposite side of the reform of the Japanese Association and with a person connected with *Kanada Nichinichi Shimbun* [Canada Daily News] while at the same time, avoided meeting with the executives of the Japanese Association for reasons of illness. Suzuki asked, "Why did you meet with those people to discuss the Japanese Association and the Japanese community before you met with us?" He went on, "You should have met with us to be informed about the Japanese Association. We cannot help but think that you investigated the Japanese Association with a particular motive." Kaai answered, "Since I was ill, I could not meet with you. There was no other reason."

Suzuki said that the contents of the discussion of the executive meeting held the day before were published in *Kanada Nichinichi Shimbun*, and demanded, "We kept our promise and did not publish the contents of the

discussion. Who divulged the secret? The article in *Kanada Nichinichi Shimbun* reported that the Japanese Association seemed to have something that they wanted to keep secret. To clear up suspicions of us, we now cannot help publishing the contents of the discussion. We must explain why we kept it a secret and that it was Consul Kaai who wanted to keep it a secret”.

Yoshida said, “If someone asks why the executive committee kept the discussion a secret at the general meeting, we must reply. Will you explain the reason to the full membership of the Japanese Association?” Kaai answered, “I want to attend the general meeting, but it will be very hard for me to go to the third floor as I have just recovered my health.” Secretary Ito promised, “If the Consul cannot attend, I will explain why the contents of the discussion were kept secret.”

On the same day, the 17th general meeting of the Japanese Association was held at Orange Hall.²⁷⁾ Secretary Ito attended instead of Consul. Ito announced that there were some differences between the article in *Tairiku Nippo* and that in *Kanada Nichinichi Shimbun* and that it was a matter of regret that *Kanada Nichinichi Shimbun* had guessed the contents of the discussion and reported them. But Ito did not disclose who wanted to keep the contents of the discussion secret. So some of the delegates could not help but think that the executives had done something that they could not publish. Therefore, Suzuki explained the contents of the discussion of the executive meeting.

The fourth meeting with Consul Kaai was held on February 12 at the Consulate.²⁸⁾ Arikado, Ide and Yoshida attended. The Consul said, “I cannot accept the Japanese Association as a self-government organization. I should have the authority to supervise all activities of the Japanese Association”. In the Consul’s speech there was nothing new.

On February 13, an emergency executive meeting was held at Orange Hall and resolved that the executive committee could not accept the Consul's answer.²⁹⁾ At this meeting, an executive committee member revealed, "I heard from a few local men that Kaai recommended those whose names *Kanada Nichinichi Shimbun* listed as candidates in the next election of the executive board of the Japanese Association and that Kaai said that the correct decisions of the delegates of the local organizations would be appreciated and it was no good for the present executives to be reelected." All those attending had heard the same stories including Suzuki, who added, "The Consul said that 'guarantor authority' would be taken away if the present executive was reelected." The meeting decided to look into the problem of what was said by Consul Kaai to present executive board and the interference in the Japanese Association's election.

On the same day, Yataro Arikado, president of the Japanese Association, sent a petition to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Kijuro Shidehara.³⁰⁾ In it, Arikado wrote about the entire process of the matter in detail, explaining that the Japanese Association and Consul Kaai were on opposite sides of the question of the Consul's supervisory authority over the Japanese Association and asked for the Minister's kind consideration. In this letter of petition, which has been preserved in the Diplomatic Record Office of Japan, the stamps of the director and the chief of the Commercial Bureau were sealed and Ishii wrote, "Kaai's opinion seems to be right judging from the oath but his position will make a bad impression on Canadians and on the Government of Canada. It will be better to sever the Consul's connection with the Japanese Association."

However, the term of office of the executive committee was completed on February 15. At the election of the executive board, the pro-Consul group had the majority and Eikichi Kagetsu, an owner of the biggest

Japanese lumber mill, was elected the new president of the Japanese Association.

The Japanese Association Held by the Pro-Consul Group

On February 17, Consul Kaai sent a letter to Eikichi Kagetsu, the new president of the Japanese Association, saying that Consul would refuse any kind of supervision but that the 'guarantor authority' of the Japanese Association would be stopped whenever the Consul thought it necessary.³¹⁾

The first meeting of the new executive committee was held on the same day. This problem was discussed for four hours but they could not find a solution.³²⁾ The new executive committee appealed to hold a mass meeting of Japanese residents in Canada. At the mass meeting of March 7, the resolution said, "The meeting confirms that the statement and the resolution made by the former executive committee were in breach of the oath of 1920, and demands the executive committee to find a solution. The meeting demands to hold a general meeting of the Japanese Association to consider a solution as soon as possible."³³⁾

A regular executive meeting was held on March 15 at Orange Hall. Hundreds of people gathered to hear the discussion between the pro-Consul group and the former executive committee. The main subject of discussion was the matter of the proposed emergency general meeting of the Japanese Association. Kagetsu insisted, "We must hold a general meeting for the purpose of admitting that it is natural that Consul has the authority to supervise all activities of the Japanese Association." The members of the former executive committee objected but were defeated.³⁴⁾

On March 17, sixteen former executives of the Japanese Association

who opposed the new policy of the pro-Consul group resigned. They were Yataro Arikado, Ritsu Ide, Sen Kanno, Seisuke Okazaki, Kohei Nakai, Hachiro Miyazaki, Senji Takashima, Hisakichi Shimizu, Hozumi Yonemura, Kaizo Tsuyuki, Masaki Yamamura, Taju Sakuma, Etsu Suzuki, Ryuichi Yoshida, Shinji Sato, and Taneji Sada.

They published their statement in *Tairiku Nippo* and explained why they had to object to the Consul's authority to supervise all activities of the Japanese Association and argued for the self-government of the Association.³⁵⁾

On the same day, Consul Kaai wired the success of his plan to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan. In the telegram Kaai said, "Communist Etsu Suzuki and his followers lost their positions at last. They had abused the executive authority of the Japanese Association and wasted its money. Most of the Japanese residents hated Suzuki and his followers, but could not oppose them for fearing their revenge. ... The new President is the owner of the biggest Japanese lumber mill, a very prudent man, who has been worried about the Japanese youth being Bolshevikized."³⁶⁾

On April 3, the emergency general meeting of the Japanese Association was held and a resolution concerning the Consul's authority to supervise all activities of the Japanese Association was decided. It said that: We deny the resolution and activities of the former executive board concerning the Consul's authority to supervise the Japanese Association. We will try to find a method to cooperate with the Consul as soon as possible. We will disqualify for three years the 16 former executives who resigned jointly from the Japanese Association.³⁷⁾

On April 12, Eikichi Kagetsu, president of the Japanese Association sent a letter to Consul Kaai. In the letter, Kagetsu said that the letter

about the petition and a full account of the matter which was sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs by the former president Arikado falsified the facts, and to send such a letter was to exceed his authority, therefore, "we could not find any right in it."³⁸⁾

Thus, the democratic system of the Japanese Association was completely destroyed. But, thereafter, the Japanese Association was unable to unite the Japanese Labor Union and other organizations.

Ryuichi Yoshida writes in his book, "The Labor Union broke with the Japanese Association completely and became separate from the other associations. The Labor Union was isolated in the Japanese community, with the exception of the Skeena Fishermen's Association, which gave us continuous support. During that time, we lost many members and sympathizers. But after 1928, we did not lose too many. When the Second World War broke out, we still had about 1,200 members. *The Daily People* also lost many readers but we continued to publish it until 1941."³⁹⁾

NOTES

- 1) Kanada Nihonjinkai, *Nihonjinkai Kaiho*, Vol.4, June 1911, pp. 58-60.
- 2) "Nikkai Kanbu no Shochi," *Tairiku Nippo*, June 18, 20, 21, 22, 1921.
- 3) "Iwayuru Yamazaki no Zanto," *Tairiku Nippo*, July 4, 1921.
- 4) "Nikkai ni taisuru Kibou," *Tairiku Nippo*, Oct. 28, 29, 1921.
- 5) "Hainichimondai Jiyu-toronkai," *Tairiku Nippo*, Nov. 11, 1921.
- 6) "Hainichimondai Tokyukai," *Tairiku Nippo*, Nov. 28, 1921.
- 7) "Sakannarishi Jiyu-enzetsukai," *Tairiku Nippo*, Nov. 28, 1921.
- 8) "Nikkai Shusai no motoni hirakareta Daihyosha Kaigi," *Tairiku Nippo*, Nov. 29, 1921.

36 Representatives from various organizations and local branches were Takeuchi Toukiti and Yoshida Ryuichi (Sukiina Shibu), Okamura Tsunenosuke and Sato Shinji (Nyu-uesutominsutaa Shibu), Nakamura Shinichi and Okada Bukichi (Chemainasu Shibu), Maeda Katsuzo (Dankan Shibu), Kunita Shoji (Suwansonbee Shibu), Hyodo Eiichi (Oosyanforuzu Jijikai), Simizu Shotaro

(Purinsurupaato Nihonjin Kyokai), Yasuno Shintaro and Yoshida Shinya (Sutebusuton Gyosha Dantai), Iwasita Kesahiro (Kerouna Noukai), Kawamoto Sansuke and Okano Hukuzo (Hamondo Noukai), Hisafuji Kumekichi (Missyon Noukai), Yano Seiji and Yano Shiro (Henee Noukai), Yamada Keizo and Adachi Chin (Akuchibupassu Noukai), Shin Jutaro and Kosaka Shigeichi (Unokku Noukai), Hori Shichizo (Bankuuba Shougyoukumiai), Akagawa Yoshimitsu (Mesojisuto Kyokai), Koana Fujio (Seikokai), Shigeno Junichi (Kanada Bukkyokai), Nishimoto Kakuzen (Hongannji Bukkyokai), Sato Tsutau (Kyouritsu Nihonngogakkou), Suzuki Etsu (Tairiku Nippo), Takahashi Gihee (Kanada Nichinichi Shinbun), Ishii Junichi (Kisha Kurabu), Sada Taneji and Adachi Shigeru (Nihonjin Rodo Kumiai), Deguchi Senmatsu (Hesutengu Miru Rodo Kumiai), Kaburagi Kaoru (Nihonjin Fujinkai).

14 directors of the Japanese Association were Abe Matsunosin, Uchida Sentaro, Sannomiya Koichiro, Utsunomiya Shikanosuke, Fujita Sataro, Goto Saori, Ide Ueichiro, Matsumoto Takematsu, Nagao Tadaichi, Kaburagi Goro, Sasaki Shuichi, Ide Ritsu, Shimada Shinichi, Hirata Momotaro.

- 9) "Daihyosha Kaigi -- Tohyoken to Kaizo Mondai de oitsumerareta Nihonjinkai," *Tairiku Nippo*, Nov. 30, 1921.
- 10) "Daihyosha Kaigi--Nikkai no Kaizo wo ketsugisu," *Tairiku Nippo*, Dec. 1, 1921.
- 11) "Kansha wo ketsugishita Sakujitsu no Daihyosha Kaigi -- Atama wo nadete Shiri wo tatakareta Abe Kaityo no Hiniku," *Tairiku Nippo*, Dec. 2, 1921.
- 12) "Nikkai Kaizo Genan no Setsumei -- narabini Nikkai Kanbu no Modo wo imashimu," *Tairiku Nippo*, Dec. 21 and 22, 1921.
- 13) *Kanada Doho Hattensi*, Vol.3, 1924, pp. 60-66.
- 14) *Ibid.*, p.109.

27 associate organizations are as follows:

Vancouver district:

Bankuba Nihonjin Shogyo Kumiai, Bankuba Nihonjin Ryokangyo Kumiai, Bankuba Nihonjin Rihatsugyo Kumiai, Bankuba Nihonjin Yofuku Kuriinngugyo Kumiai, Hesutengu Somiru Yuikai, Kanada Nihonjin Senyu Kyokai, Kanada Nihonjin Rodo Kumiai, Kanada Nihonjin Seinen Renmei.

Local districts:

Sutebusuton Gyosha Jizen Dantai, Nyu Uesutominsuta Nihonjinkai, Bikutoria Nihonjin Kyowakai, Reimondo Nihonjin Kyokai, Komokkusu Ku Jijikai, Osyangforuzu Jijikai, Purinsurupato Nihonjin Kyokai, Dainiku Gyosha Kyokai, Okanagan Senta Koyukai, Kerona Nihonjin Nokai, Missyon Nihonjin Nokai, Hene Nokai, Hamondo Nihonjin Nokai, Uwonokku-Arubion-Rasukin Nihonjin Nokai,

Sanmarando Nihonjin Nokai, Akutibupassu Nihonjin Nokai, Uddofaibaa Isshinkai. Potoarisu Yuaikai, Dankan Nihonjin Shinwakai.

- 15) Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi, *A Man of Our Times*, 1976. pp. 40-42.
This book is the life history of Ryoichi Yoshida, one of the main figures who actively pushed the reform of the Japanese Association.
- 16) *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
- 17) *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.
- 18) *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.
- 19) *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.
- 20) Tatsuo Kaai's Letter to Ishii (A Chief of Commercial Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Ministry) dated Feb. 2, in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken* (Miscellaneous Affairs concerning the Japanese Associations Abroad), Historical Document K-3-2-2-2 of Japanese Diplomatic Record Archives.
- 21) About Etsu Suzuki and Toshiko Tamura, see Miyoko Kudo and Susan Phillips, *Bankuuba no Ai--Tamura Toshoko to Suzuki Etsu*, (Love in Vancouver), Dome-su Shuppan, 1982. Etsu Suzuki was an ardent organizer of the Japanese Labor Union and advocate of the reform of the Japanese Association, not an ambitious man.
- 22) *Ibid.*
- 23) "Tatsuo Kaai's Letter to Yataro Arikado, President of the Japanese Association, dated Jan. 21, 1926" in "Kanada Nihonjinkai Rinji Yakuinkaigi Gijishoroku" in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.
See *Bankuuba no Ai*, p. 162.
- 24) "Kaikenroku, No.1 (Jan. 25, 1926)" (Record of the Interview with Consul Kaai, No.1) in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.
- 25) "Kanada Nihonjinkai Rinji Yakuinkai Giji Shoroku (Jan. 27, 1926)" (Record of the proceedings of the emergency Executive Meeting of the Japanese Association) in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*. And "Kaikenroku No.2 (Jan. 26, 1926)" (Record of the Interview with Consul Kaai, No.2) in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.
- 26) "Kaikenroku, No.3 (Jan. 29, 1926)" (Record of the Interview with Consul Kaai, No.3) in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.
- 27) "Kanada Nihonjinkai Dai17kai Sokai (Jan. 29)" (Record of the 17th General Meeting of the Japanese Association of Canada) in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.
- 28) "Kaikenroku, No.4 (Feb. 12, 1926)" (Record of the Interview with Consul Kaai, No.4) in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.

- 29) "Kanada Nihonjinkai Rinji Yakuinkai Giji Shoroku (Feb. 13,1926)" (Record of the proceedings of the emergency Executive Meeting of the Japanese Association) in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.
- 30) "The Letter of Petition from Yataro Arikado, President of the Japanese Association to Kijuro Shidehara, Foreign Minister dated Feb. 13, 1926." in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.
- 31) "Hutatabideta Ryouji no Tegami no naka no Konsei de 4 jikanmo togishitaga Kaiketoku dekizu Konban mo Kaigi kaisai" (Discussed Consul's New Requests in the Letter dated Feb. 17, 1926 for 4 hours but Could not find the Means of Solving the Problem. Continue the Executive Meeting this Evening) *Tairiku Nippo*, Feb. 19, 1926.
- 32) Ibid.
- 33) "Jikyoku Mondai Zairyumin Taikai Ketsugibun (held March 7, 1926)" (A Resolution at the Meeting of Japanese Residents) in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.
- 34) "Yakuin megakete Toseki" (A Stone was thrown at an Executive), *Tairiku Nippo*, March 16, 1926.
- 35) "Doho no Shorai wo ureite" (We are anxious about the future of the Japanese in Canada), *Tairiku Nippo*, March 19, 1926.
- 36) Tatsuo Kaai's Letter to Ishii dated March 17, 1926 in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*. In this letter Kaai called Etsu Suzuki a communist. But Suzuki was a moderate socialist, not a communist. In 1929, he was attacked by the Japanese Proletarian Youth League as a corrupt leader of the Japanese Labor Movement.
- 37) "Rinji Sokai niokeru Ryoji no Kantokuken mondai ni kansuru Zengosaku" (The Countermeasure concerning Consul's Authority to Supervise the Japanese Association in the Extraordinary General Meeting) in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.
- 38) Eikiti Kagetsu's Letter to Consul Tatsuo Kaai dated April 12, 1926 in *Zaigai Nihonjinkai kankei Zakken*.
- 39) Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi, *A Man of Our Times*, p. 59.