

REVEREND HOSHIN S. OKADA - Steveston Buddhist Church

INTERVIEWED:

February 27, 1975

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First church building in Steveston in 1928, built by Japanese carpenter, Mr. Seijiro Kiba, with help of Mr. Tsunematsu Atagi and help of congregation, for congregation of about 200 families - 800 people - from Steveston community of about 3,000 Japanese.

Building cost - \$5,000 for main hall
- \$3,000 for youth hall

1933 June 5, first minister - Rev. Masatsugu Mori came from Japan - until February, 1938.

February 1938, Reverend Toshio Katatsu stayed until outbreak of Second World War hostilities with Japan when all the Japanese and the minister were interned inland. The custodian took over the building. On the return of the Japanese to Steveston, they wanted a church.

1952 March 2, decided to have a church started by about fifty members. First bought \$12,000 kindergarten hall on Chatham Street. Stayed there until 1963.

Two ministers -

Reverend Shinjo Ikuta 1952 - 1958 (Vancouver, Kelowna & Steveston) came down for funeral or special occasions.

(Junior) Reverend Kyojo Ikuta 1958 - 1966 came back from Japan.

New Building

Reverend Kosho Nagatani - July 17, 1966 - June 1, 1970

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Rev. Takamichi - June 1970 - July 31, 1971

Rev. Hoshin S. Okada - October 10, 1971 to present.

From 1960 to 1963 discussed building new church as old church quite unsafe for meetings or services. Talked about reconstructing old one but decided to get new building. Bought five acres on Garry Road.

23 February 1964, new building - \$ 17,000 for land
- \$120,000 for building.

- Architect: Mr. Petrow

- Contractors: Turnbull & Gale (at end of tape)

1973 added separate gymnasium building -

- Contractor - G.E. Shaw.

Plan

Ministers Office
2 Classrooms
Kitchen & entrance hall
Main chapel
Minister's waiting room
Storage rooms

Flooring - Tile on concrete.

Lighting - Fluorescent.

Heating - Five gas furnaces.

Congregation now about 300 families originating from many prefectures in Japan, in Steveston area. Two Caucasian Sunday School teachers, one Mr. Fred Williams of Richmond and one lady from Tsawwassen. Services bi-lingual as second and third generations do not speak Japanese

Faiths

Teaching of Buddha - universal truth, everything changing

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but there is a permanence in beauty and truth. Use three scriptures as a foundation - Sutra Headquarters in Canada. Mother Temple in Kyoto, Japan - does not directly control, but this church must be faithful to doctrine. Church now independent since Rev. Nagatani. There are about 10 ministers with about 20 churches in Canada. In B. C. there are 4 churches and 3 meeting places - Vancouver, Steveston, Kelowna & Kamloops, and Aldergrove, Vernon and mid-way.

Women in Church

Women have own organization -

- cooking classes
- educational class
- special service for women
- visitations in hospitals

Women take part in service. Serve refreshments and prepare main hall, chairs and cleaning up. Quite a few teach Sunday School.

Youth

Many young people use gymnasium after school. Comments on use of Japanese language.

Special Events

- 1958 - Abbot Kosho Otani visited this church from Japan
- 1965 March - At ceremony of dedication with about ten ministers from U.S. and Okanagan
- 1973 - Visit by Bishop Tsuji of Buddhist Churches of America.

Plans for Future

Plan to build Old People's Home on church lot. Fixing of the parking lot, and finish garden.

Ministers Residence

Even from beginning, there has always been a house for the minister, the present one being south of the church.

M. NOBLE