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### THE NEW BRUNSWICK-JAPAN CONNECTION: A History

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#### *Introduction*

As we approach the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is quite common to speak of the linking within the world and the interdependence of its peoples. Many cities in the United States participate in a Sister Cities program, a concept that was instituted by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1954 to connect American towns with those abroad. There is a Sister Cities newspaper and a national organization that is funded and well-organized. New York and Tokyo, Boston and Kyoto are Sister Cities. New Brunswick, New Jersey is a participant in this program, having two Sister Cities in Japan: Tsuruoka and Fukui. In fact, New Brunswick won an award in 1986 for best overall program for a city of its size with its Japanese counterparts.

Part of New Brunswick's past, as mentioned at the beginning of this essay, is a connection with the island nation of Japan, lying in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Asia. Occasionally *The Home News*, *The Targum* (the Rutgers University student newspaper), or even Newark or New York papers will run articles about visiting dignitaries from Japan, or a museum exhibit on or from Japan, or about a meeting in New Brunswick with a Japanese theme. How did this modern connection come about? How different is it from one that might be found in Ithaca, New York, or in Bloomington, Illinois? Does this connection have deep roots? Let us examine it, to determine how special it is, if indeed it is, and trace its history in full form.

*First Western Contacts with Japan*

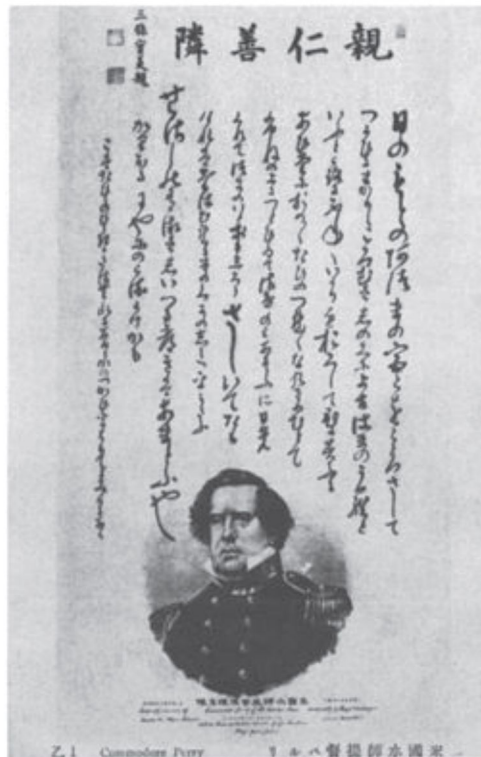
New Brunswick would have no unusual connection with Japan were it not for an exchange of people that developed as a result of the early trade of the Portuguese and the Dutch with the people of the Far East. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, American whaling ships too were in Japanese waters, and shortly after Commodore Matthew Perry visited Japan in 1853, a significant number of young Japanese samurai students made their way to America—specifically to New Brunswick—for the purpose of study.

In the sixteenth century, Portuguese traders first landed in Southern Japan and began the history of Western interaction with the Japanese. In 1549, Francis Xavier went to Kyushu, Japan's southernmost island, and preached Christianity. In 1571, a Christian *daimyo*, or leader, in the small village of Nagasaki, also on Kyushu, allowed Portuguese trading vessels to stop and dock. This permission marked the beginning of the growth of Nagasaki, to which Chinese, Dutch, and other ships would also come in regular fashion. Japanese merchants moved to Nagasaki to trade with the foreigners, and a small but strong Christian Japanese community developed as the port expanded.

The Portuguese were sometimes in port for two or three months or longer, due to trade winds. In order to better control them when in port and, in fact, in order to isolate them, the Japanese central government decided to construct a man-made island, Deshima, at the end of a promontory in Nagasaki Bay. In 1636 it was completed, and 65 years of free and open residence of the Portuguese in Nagasaki came to an end. The very next year, however, as a result of the Shimabara Rebellion, Japan's Tokugawa central government decided to prohibit Christianity and expel the Portuguese. This decision was the now-famous "Closing of Japan." Landlords of Deshima and Japanese merchants in Nagasaki were greatly worried over their future, and eventually the people and the government of Nagasaki petitioned the *bakufu*, or Japanese government. As a result, a concession was made. In 1641 the Dutch community at Hirado was transferred to Deshima, thus allowing a modicum of foreign residence and trade in Nagasaki.<sup>1</sup>

Until Commodore Perry arrived in Tokyo Bay 212 years later, in 1853,

<sup>1</sup> Niwa Kankichi, *The Dutch Settlement at Dejima: A Guide to the Past and Present* (Nagasaki: The Committee to Promote the Restoration of Dejima, undated), pp. 1-3.



A postcard found in the Griffis Collection. It is a poem in honor of Perry, written by Sakuma, teacher of Yoshida Shoin. It was given to the latter when he departed for Shimoda in 1854, hoping to get to America.

—Special Collections and Archives, Alexander Library, Rutgers University Libraries

this small Dutch settlement at Deshima was the sole Japanese window on the West. About twenty Dutch merchants resided there. They were very tightly controlled by the Japanese and no Dutch women were allowed. The head of the settlement had to make an annual visit to Tokyo. An annual report on the activities of the outside world was also required of the Dutch by the Tokugawa *bakufu*. Because of the length of this time period and the almost total isolation of Japan, these Dutch reports became very important. Japanese curiosity and interest in the Dutch at Deshima led to a school of learning known as *Rangaku*, or Dutch Studies, that developed out of this slight contact at Deshima.

For their part, the Dutch introduced Japan to other Western peoples as best they could come to know it during this long period of isolation. The

writings of Kaempfer and von Siebold spread through Europe upon their authors' return to Europe.

Thus, prior to Perry's visit to Japan in 1853 to break the Tokugawa's official policy of seclusion, the Japanese, because of the Dutch contact, were not entirely unaware of American intentions to go to Japan, and the Western world in turn had some knowledge of the country to which they would soon venture again.<sup>2</sup>

Perry's visit to Japan to force the Japanese to recognize, deal with, and make treaties with the West, America in particular, was a tremendous shock to the Japanese government. The *bakufu* issued a request to the populace for suggestions on how to solve the crisis of the foreigners with their powerful ships and guns. When Perry returned in 1854 with even more "Black Ships" than before and negotiated a treaty, the *bakufu* entered into a semi-chronic state of crisis. Samurai thinkers like Katsu Kaishu, Sakamoto Ryoma, and Yokoi Shonan became more and more active in theorizing ways to strengthen Japan while not giving in to the West. Steps were taken. The Dutch, still in Deshima, provided some technology and sold a steamship to the Japanese that aided the development of an experimental naval academy in Kobe, Katsu Kaishu's *Sorenjo*.

On the heels of the Black Ships and in the midst of the intellectual ferment in leading circles in Japan, Western missionaries returned to the nation that had previously proven fertile for work. The first to arrive were James Hepburn, James and John Ballagh, Guido Verbeck, and Samuel Robbins Brown. They all came via Shanghai. Christianity was still outlawed, however, and these pioneering workers in a strange land limited themselves to teaching English, studying Japanese, or otherwise working within the Japanese educational system, such as existed at that time. This way, they gave the Japanese officials and samurai-students confidence in working with foreigners. Guido Verbeck, of Dutch descent, settled in Nagasaki and was asked to teach at the Nagasaki School of Western Studies that the *bakufu* had set up.<sup>3</sup>

### *Japanese Students Come to New Brunswick*

After the first U.S. consular official to Japan, Townsend Harris, completed additional difficult negotiations with the *bakufu*, a Rutgers College man

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-9.

<sup>3</sup> Sugii Matsuro, "Yokoi Saheida to Yokoi Daihei no Amerika Ryugaku," *Shakai Kagaku* (Kyoto: Doshisha Daigaku, 1970), pp. 475-480.

arrived in Edo (modern Tokyo) in 1862. He was Robert H. Pruyn, of the Class of 1833. Together with the missionary James Ballagh of New Brunswick who had arrived in 1859, Robert Pruyn established the first contact between the people of New Brunswick and Rutgers and the Japanese. Through the combined efforts of Pruyn in Edo, Guido Verbeck in Nagasaki, and the Reverend John M. Ferris, Secretary of the Board of Missions of the Dutch Reformed Church in New York City, a method of sending Japanese students for training abroad began to emerge. The quickly changing internal situation of Japan caused many young samurai to want to take action and caused great difficulty for already established political activists.

Younger samurai who were trying to influence affairs of state decided after first contacts with the newly present Westerners that they would have a better chance to be influential if they first gained experience from life and study outside of Japan in the West. Yokoi Shonan of Kumamoto, an older samurai thinker and activist, had been grooming his two nephews for years to assume high positions in the new Japan he saw emerging from the prolonged crisis. With great difficulty he financially supported their education in Kumamoto, Edo, Fukui, at Katsu Kaishu's *Sorenjo* in Kobe, and ultimately in Nagasaki at the Western School. He finally supported their decision to go abroad when they proposed the idea to him, and he privately raised more money to support them. Official support was unthinkable because of the radical nature of their decision.

Yokoi Daihei and Yokoi Saheida, then, with the assistance of their English teacher in Nagasaki, Guido Verbeck, and the blessing of their uncle, Yokoi Shonan, succeeded in leaving Japan for the United States in 1866 when it was still against the law for anyone to exit the country. They did not know where they would study, but they were bound for New York with a letter of introduction from Verbeck to John M. Ferris of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Upon arrival in New York, the Yokoi brothers were taken to the office of the Dutch Reformed Church by the captain of the ship on which they had been travelling. They met Ferris and made known their desire to study "big guns and big ships" in America. The Board of the Dutch Reformed Church decided to aid them logistically as well as financially, as their funds were very limited, and since New Brunswick was a Dutch Reformed center of learning with both a grammar school and a college, Ferris brought the young men to New Brunswick. They were not of an ability in English to attend Rutgers College, much less learn the skills of navigation and gunnery, but they

settled into life in a private home in New Brunswick and attended Rutgers Grammar School.<sup>4</sup>

There were about seventy students enrolled in Rutgers Grammar School when the Yokoi brothers arrived. Students were drilled in languages and mathematics and used maps, globes, and charts. The curriculum was divided into three parts: classical, business, and general secondary program. Great stress was placed on work in the English language throughout the school in all classes and departments. Two English compositions were required from each student every month of the school year. Careful attention was given to spelling, punctuation, grammar, and the development of ideas. It was into this rigorous academic environment that the Yokoi brothers entered.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, neither diaries by them nor letters to their uncle from New Brunswick are extant. It is impossible to know their performance at the Grammar School or reconstruct their lives in New Brunswick. All told, however, Yokoi Saheida, the elder brother, studied ten years in America, including time at Annapolis, while Yokoi Daihei stayed for four years. Both died before reaching their full promise back in Japan. A lengthy essay has been published by Sugii Matsuro of Doshisha University concerning the two brothers, their uncle Shonan, the missionary-teacher Guido Verbeck, and John M. Ferris of New York.<sup>6</sup> The essay reconstructs their lives and the evolution of their thinking as carefully as can be done without many substantive primary sources. It shows the remarkable span of events that the Yokoi brothers lived through in their short lives, and discusses in great detail the interaction of Verbeck and Ferris as well as the relationship of Christianity to Confucianism. Yokoi Daihei eventually was responsible for the construction of a Western school in his native Kumamoto before he died as a result of illness contracted while studying in New Brunswick.

In the late 1860s, the Yokoi brothers, now beginning their studies in New Brunswick, were soon joined by other Japanese *ryugakusei*, or overseas students, who succeeded in entering Rutgers Grammar School for study. These other early Japanese in New Brunswick also shared the motivation to contribute to a New Japan, which Guido Verbeck thought would be "the

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 481-482.

<sup>5</sup> Frank V. Spurduto, *A History of Rutgers Preparatory School* (Somerset, N.J.: Rutgers Preparatory School, 1967), p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> Sugii, "Yokoi. . .", passim. This one hundred page essay can be found in the Griffis Collection, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Alexander Library, Rutgers University.

England of Asia.” They were Kusakabe Taro of Echizen, Takagi Saburo of Shonai, Katsu Kojika (the son of the navigation expert Katsu Kaishu), Asahi Kotaro (the son of Iwakura Tomomi), Matsukata Sosuke, and Shumma Shiramine. Later Matsukata Kojiro, Noma Masaichi, Matsumura Junro, Kimura Kumaji, and Moto Ohgimi would also study at the Grammar School.<sup>7</sup>

While it is impossible to know the exact line of original influence from Japan to New Brunswick and Rutgers Grammar School, probably Robert H. Pruyn in Tokyo, Guido Verbeck in Nagasaki, Samuel Robbins Brown in Yokohama, and John M. Ferris in New York were all responsible for igniting the fires of interest among the young Japanese to travel abroad and then helping them to successfully achieve that goal in New Brunswick. The Japanese *ryugakusei* grew substantially in numbers through the 1860s and 1870s and went to England, Germany, and Russia as well as the United States.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Further Interaction in New Brunswick*

It is difficult to know the exact number of Japanese students who were in New Brunswick in the early post-Civil War days, or to know many precise details about those whom we know definitely were there. There are, however, some photographs extant from that time showing groups of about ten Japanese students or so in New Brunswick, and other photographs of Japanese and American students together. In 1870, at the time of the death of one of them from tuberculosis, Kusakabe Taro of Echizen, thirteen Japanese signed a letter printed in the Rutgers College student newspaper, the *Targum*, thanking the college for its concern and its memorial to Kusakabe.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the *ryugakusei*, like Kusakabe, moved from the Grammar School to the college for study and participated in the daily life of the college. About 150 undergraduates were at Rutgers at this time, and both scientific and classical curricula were offered. Extracurricular activities were quite popular.<sup>10</sup> That some of the Japanese participated in these aspects of college life

<sup>7</sup> David A. Heinlein, *The First Japanese Students to Come to the United States of America and Rutgers Preparatory School* (Somerset, N.J.: Rutgers Preparatory School, 1976), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ardath Burks, ed., *The Modernizers: Overseas Students, Foreign Employees, and Meiji Japan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), passim.

<sup>9</sup> Letter, Japanese Students to Rev. W. H. Campbell, President of Rutgers College, April, 1870, *The Targum*, undergraduate journal of Rutgers College.

<sup>10</sup> Richard P. McCormick, *Rutgers: A Bicentennial History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1966), p. 103.

too is seen by the photograph of Matsukata Kojiro in a football uniform standing in the front row of students for a team picture.<sup>11</sup>

William Elliot Griffis, an American who was graduated from Rutgers College at the time the Japanese students were first studying in the Grammar School and then at the college as well mentions in his writing that he knew one hundred Japanese when he was at Rutgers.<sup>12</sup> It is known that forty Japanese students were sent to Rutgers between 1866 and 1876, that thirteen of them definitely attended Rutgers, and that four were graduated.<sup>13</sup> The exact number of Japanese who came to Rutgers to study during the nineteenth century is in dispute. Attending a college for a few months was common then. The initial prohibition on leaving Japan was lifted in 1868, and the Emperor Meiji in the Charter Oath Declaration of that year called on the Japanese to seek knowledge from around the world. Records of the Grammar School from the nineteenth century have been lost, but an 1886 speech by Griffis on Japanese students at Rutgers mentions some fifteen Japanese students who were at the Grammar School.<sup>14</sup>

As is the case with Japanese students travelling even today, as well as with overseas travellers from other nations, informal visitors and unenrolled students are frequently a part of the smaller formal organized group that is studying. The Special Collections and Archives Department of Alexander Library of Rutgers University in New Brunswick contains some individual portraits of these early students, and one can perhaps safely make the statement that New Brunswick was second only to London as a place for the gathering of Japanese overseas students in the early 1870s. The Japanese stayed in boarding houses and attended classes, meeting head on the American culture of the late 1800s. The difficulties they encountered and their cultural shock must have been tremendous.

The young Rutgers College student, William Elliot Griffis was deeply influenced by these Japanese scholars whom he met in New Brunswick. In 1871, after a year of tutoring them at Grammar School, Griffis agreed to sign a contract to teach science in Fukui, the hometown of one of the students, Kusakabe Taro. This was accomplished through the intermediary

<sup>11</sup> Photograph of the Rutgers College Class of 1889 Football Team, Special Collections and Archives, Alexander Library, Rutgers University, around 1885.

<sup>12</sup> William Elliot Griffis, *The Mikado's Empire* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1906), pp. 677-78.

<sup>13</sup> McCormick, *Rutgers*. . . , p. 103.

<sup>14</sup> Griffis, *The Rutgers Graduates in Japan* (New Brunswick: Rutgers College, revised and enlarged, 1916), pp. 21-26.



in Japan, Guido Verbeck. Kusakabe was a personal friend of Griffis and a brilliant student, the first Japanese member of Phi Beta Kappa, but unfortunately he died just prior to graduation in the spring of 1870. Griffis brought the books of Kusakabe from Rutgers as well as Kusakabe's gold Phi Beta Kappa key with him to Fukui. He served as a pioneer *oyatoi gaikokujin*, or foreign employee of the Japanese government, in Fukui for eleven months, setting up a laboratory and teaching a broad range of subjects, and then went on to Tokyo. Griffis followed in the footsteps of the two New Brunswick and Rutgers men, James Ballagh and Robert H. Pruyn, in his travel to Japan. As a *yatoi*, Griffis was part of a group of Europeans and Americans who both contributed to Japan's technological programs and modernization and later wrote about the nation.<sup>15</sup>

### *The Japanese Cemetery in New Brunswick*

Unfortunately, Griffis' friend Kusakabe Taro was not the only Japanese to fall ill and die during the early days of Japanese studying abroad. A Japanese plot within New Brunswick's Willow Grove Cemetery on Morris Street was set aside and a total of eight Japanese, who died in New Jersey or in the United States during the nineteenth century, are buried there. This cemetery is unique on the East Coast of America as a Japanese memorial area and it is a triste indication of the role that New Brunswick played in the process of Japanese overseas education during the late Tokugawa and early Meiji years.

A descendent of Japan's Matsukata family, Matsukata Sosuke, is buried in the cemetery. There used to be a child's grave marker for the infant daughter of Takagi Saburo and his wife.<sup>16</sup> Kusakabe is buried there. Others who died outside of New Brunswick on the East Coast are also interred there. The last date on the markers is 1886. Almost all of the other Japanese were in their twenties when they died. The cemetery, which was vandalized in the second half of the twentieth century, has been repaired through funds from Kusakabe's hometown of Fukui, but the child's grave marker is now missing. (A contribution was made in July, 1990 by the Tsuruoka citizens to restore the infant daughter's gravemarker. This restoration is in progress.) The obelisks, with Japanese and English inscriptions, once broken and toppled, have been repaired. The cemetery is in an out-of-the-way corner of Willow

<sup>15</sup> Edward R. Beauchamp and Akira Triye, eds., *Foreign Employees in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> Mitsui Tetsu, conversation with the author in Tsuruoka City, Japan, 1984. Dr. Mitsui, former Chairman of the Tsuruoka-New Brunswick Friendship Association, showed me a photograph of the grave marker.

Grove, and it is a constant battle to keep the weeds, litter, and dead branches from trees from turning this memorial into a desolate and unkept area.

### *A Written Legacy*

Three more Rutgers men from New Brunswick were impressed by Japan so much that they decided to travel there in the 1870s. Edward Warren Clark, Griffis' classmate at Rutgers College, taught in Shizuoka. Martin Wyckoff went to Fukui, and David Murray, a mathematics professor, was hired by the Japanese government to be an adviser to its newly formed Bureau of Education. Both Clark and Murray, like Griffis, left behind writings on their experiences in Japan.

Griffis, for his part, became an extremely prolific writer and lecturer not only on Japan but on Korea and China as well, publishing numerous volumes on Asia and Japan. He also wrote the biographies of the three major missionary figures in early Japan: Verbeck, Hepburn, and Brown. Griffis stands as an intellectual landmark in the history of early scholarship on Japan, not only by his writing and speaking, but by his collecting as well. Another aspect of New Brunswick's and Rutgers University's claim to importance in the history of Japan-U.S.A. interaction are the graphic records Griffis left to the college: namely, his English language papers, correspondence, diaries, journals, scrapbooks, photos, manuscripts, maps, clippings, etc. with some Japanese materials in them, which were all given to Rutgers after his death in 1928. This gift is a large collection, known as the Griffis Collection, housed in Rutgers' Department of Special Collections and Archives. Japanese scholars of early Japanese-U.S. interaction visit the Griffis Collection regularly to consult and cull information on missionaries such as Brown, Hepburn, and Verbeck, the *yatoi*, and on Japanese in the United States. It is a rich trove of information on much of Meiji and Taisho Japan, and shows Griffis to be one of America's leading and first "Old Japan hands." (The Griffis Collection has been closed, except for the correspondence series, for extensive preservation, and to conduct and produce a new finding aid.)

From among Griffis' Japanese books, a collection of nearly 500 volumes on Christianity, literature, history, and education were given to Cornell University, and are housed in the Wason Collection of books on Asia in the Olin Library in Ithaca, New York. They too are a source that scholars use in the study of Christianity in Japan. New Brunswick's Gardiner Sage Library, on the campus of the Dutch Reformed Seminary in the midst of the Rutgers College Avenue campus, holds many Griffis books, records, and letters of

the early missionaries to Japan. This collection has proved valuable to contemporary researchers such as Takaya Michio of Yokohama, Yamashita Eiichi of Fukui, and Ishikawa Kazuo of Tokyo. Many Japanese visit New Brunswick and Rutgers annually to explore the historic areas or to carry out research.

*Twentieth Century Contact Between New Brunswick and Japan*

In the early twentieth century, contacts of note between New Brunswick and Japan were significantly fewer than those in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1912 Dr. Millard Lowrey, a New Brunswick man, who later became Superintendent of Schools in Middlesex County, toured Japan as a private citizen. He collected four boxes of colored glass slides of sites in Japan, and subsequently these boxes were added to the Griffis Collection. In 1916, on the 150th anniversary of the founding of Rutgers, Tokyo University gave the college a memorial gift of a scroll and lacquer box.

In the mid-1950s, activity and exchange in Japanese Studies and contact with the nation resumed after the bitter caesura of World War II. A Rutgers professor in Japan visited Fukui by chance in 1958 and discovered that the memory of the *yatoi* William Elliot Griffis was alive. (Griffis himself had visited Fukui for a second time at the age of 84 in 1927). This professor, Ardath W. Burks, subsequently organized the Griffis papers at Rutgers to make them accessible for research and to introduce them to the academic community. A Japan scholar, Dr. Burks visited Fukui numerous times, sometimes accompanied by other Rutgers officials, professors, or delegations. He was responsible for much of the New Brunswick-Rutgers-Fukui interaction from the 1950s to the 1980s, organizing a landmark conference on the *yatoi*, the *ryugakusei* at Rutgers in 1968 and keynoting a second conference in Fukui in 1985.

Fukui City is now one of New Brunswick's Sister Cities in Japan; Tsuruoka City in Yamagata Prefecture is the other. Delegations from Fukui and Tsuruoka proceeded to New Brunswick following individual contacts on the part of Burks of Rutgers and Louis Migliorini and Joseph Kler of the New Brunswick Rotary Club. Rotarians Kobana Morio and Mitsui Tetsu of Tsuruoka, and Doshita Kenji of Fukui were early visitors to New Brunswick.

Furthermore, as a result of efforts by individuals such as Burks of Rutgers University and Dr. David M. Heinlein, Headmaster of Rutgers Preparatory School, institutional interaction between schools, the city, and Japan in-

creased. In 1976, a Kusakabe memorial service was held at Rutgers University's Kirkpatrick Chapel, while at Rutgers Preparatory School, Dr. Heinlein organized an international education conference. This event commemorated the nineteenth century ties between Rutgers Grammar School and Japan. It also recognized the former teacher William E. Griffis, and the twentieth century Bell Labs scientist and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Jack Morton, who had a long working relationship with Japanese engineers. Dr. Heinlein oversaw the construction of a Japanese memorial corner with *shoji* and *tokonoma* and books on Japan in English at the Prep School's new library on its Easton Avenue Campus.

*David A. Heinlein in Tsuruoka City*

Japan met fact to face with a modern-day representative of New Brunswick, after David A. Heinlein, son of Headmaster David M. Heinlein of Rutgers Preparatory School, signed a contract to teach English in Tsuruoka City in 1983. Assigned to work with junior high school students and teachers, Heinlein went there in October of that year. He had been born in New Brunswick, lived in nearby Piscataway, and Japanese people frequently visited him and his parents. After graduation from Amherst College in 1969, he lived with Japanese university students for two years in Kyoto at Doshisha University and had some fluency in Japanese. In the New Brunswick vicinity he was active in tutoring English to Asians. He had traveled to Fukui City in 1979 to learn more about William E. Griffis, Kusakabe Taro, and the New Brunswick-Japan connection. He had previously volunteered as a guide for Japanese visitors to New Brunswick.

Heinlein's encounter with Japanese people in Tsuruoka was as much a product of people-to-people encounters as it was an official city one. It was through the informal Rutgers-Japan network that Heinlein was first brought together with a representative of Tsuruoka City in February, 1983. At this time Takikawa Yoshio, a young maker of *kamaboko* (fish paste) and ice cream, was staying overnight at the residence of Professor Seymour Gilbert of Rutgers University. Mrs. Gilbert, who had been Heinlein's student of Japanese, called to alert him about a visitor from New Brunswick's "Sister City." At first Heinlein thought Takikawa was from Fukui, and it was only upon meeting Takikawa that he learned about the other sister city of New Brunswick.

Heinlein showed Takikawa the Japanese cemetery in New Brunswick and took him to his house for lunch. Takikawa, upon learning that Heinlein wanted to live and work in Japan again, encouraged him to write a letter in

Japanese introducing himself to the Mayor of Tsuruoka and expressing his desire to teach and live there. According to Takikawa, Tsuruoka City might want to have an English teacher from its sister city.

Heinlein wrote the letter and Takikawa brought it back to Japan with him after his three-week stay studying English at Rutgers' Program in American Language Studies. A six month correspondence in English and Japanese ensued, involving Heinlein, Tsuruoka City Hall, and Takikawa, as well as Shimpō Kohichiro, a Tsuruoka architect and active Rotarian. Shimpō had written a letter to the New Brunswick Rotary Club that came to the attention of Dr. David M. Heinlein, also a Rotarian. Heinlein wrote a letter to Shimpō, which was translated to Japanese by his son, and in response, Shimpō wrote that he was hopeful his daughter Megumi could come to New Brunswick for her senior year of high school. He also said that he would assist the younger Heinlein in coming to Tsuruoka. Heinlein's father agreed to be Megumi's guarantor and it was arranged that Megumi would study at St. Peter's High School as a Rotary Exchange Student and live with the Heinleins.

Mayor John A. Lynch of New Brunswick wrote a letter of recommendation for the younger Heinlein, even though he was not a New Brunswick resident or city employee. This cemented the city-to-city relationship through the Piscataway resident. The Mayor of Tsuruoka, the Honorable Saito Dairoku, agreed to be Heinlein's guarantor. Heinlein finally received his contract, in Japanese, from the Tsuruoka City Educational Committee, and subsequently his visa from the Japanese government. He left for Japan on October 5, 1983. Much initial energy, correspondence, paperwork, telephoning, and meeting had gone into the arrangements whereby Shimpō Megumi came to St. Peter's and David A. Heinlein went to Tsuruoka. He was the first American that City Hall in Tsuruoka had ever hired, and the first to serve as a city employee.

Heinlein's first two-and-a-half months in Tsuruoka constituted a time of adjustment for both the Japanese and for him. At first he lived in a small six-mat room in a school dormitory and rode a bicycle to his office at the Tsuruoka Kenshujo and to the junior high schools where he had immediately begun teaching English conversation. Tsuruoka City is an old castle town on the Japan seacoast with rice growing and fishing being the main sources of income. The city still had much of the feeling of old Japan about it, where everybody knew everyone else and the feeling of community was very strong. Some of the schools were the old wooden-style ones.

Tsuruoka officials had had no real experience in dealing with Americans,



Night performance of farmer's noh drama, Matsuyama-city, near Tsuruoka.  
—photo by Suzuki Hisashi, May 1984

so Heinlein and they operated on a day-to-day basis of negotiations and meetings. They got to know each other on 24-hour-a-day terms, as Heinlein had related to the Japanese at Amherst House at Doshisha University in Kyoto thirteen years earlier. A City Hall official was assigned to help him in getting adjusted to the Japanese way of doing things. Heinlein met with an “honorable loss of privacy” that is the case of the teacher or public figure, especially in the rural parts of Japan. Students wanted to know his age, his family background, what New Brunswick was like, and what he did on weekends. Teachers and city hall personnel wanted to host him in their homes or at drinking parties at night.

The Tsuruoka climate, which changes to overcast skies and rain in early October, and then to snow, complicated Heinlein's initial period of adjustment. By early December, however, the city had found Heinlein an apartment and he had bought a small used car. Heinlein's stay in New Brunswick's Sister City until his Christmas and New Year's vacation was a real test of his

endurance and resiliency. He met and began to work with hundreds of junior high school students and dozens of English teachers and school personnel. His successful completion of the first teaching period was to a large degree the product of Tsuruoka City Hall's and the Educational Committee's flexibility, understanding, and commitment to make Heinlein's stay a success. The Mayor, the Rotary Club, the schools, and individuals such as Shimpō Kohichiro, Mr. and Mrs. Yamaguchi Yoshihiko of the Tsuruoka Amazon Museum, Kitazume Masa-aki of the Yamagata newspaper, Nakae Ryoh, who owned a Chinese restaurant, and Nakamura Osamu, who owned a coffee shop near where Heinlein first lived, all cooperated.

Invigorated by a vacation with Japanese friends in sunny and dry Tokyo, and feeling more at home with typewriter, tape recorder to listen to music, heaters, and his own apartment, Heinlein returned to Tsuruoka in early January to continue his work with his new colleagues. The Tsuruoka Educational Committee had set aside every tenth day of Heinlein's schedule to be *kenshubi*, or study day, in which he could pursue whatever he wanted that was uniquely characteristic of the Tsuruoka, Shonai, and Yamagata area. Together with Yamaguchi Nasuko of the Amazon Museum, he began translating into English an essay on Kurokawa Noh, or farmer's noh drama of the Shonai District. The annual festival and performance was to take place on February 1. Heinlein established a rhythm of teaching, translating, letter writing, drinking with colleagues socially, and going to coffee shops to relax and talk. He drove to schools in his small car through ground blizzards, wore heavy black rubber farmer's boots everyday in the snow and slush, and cooked and lived by himself in Miharamachi.

As a result of his coming to New Brunswick's second Sister City and the city officials' strong reciprocal interest in New Brunswick, as well as Heinlein's study of William E. Griffis and his previous action in New Brunswick as translator, researcher, and friend of visiting Japanese, Heinlein began to put together a history of the New Brunswick-Japan connection. Writing this essay was very stimulating, as was his translation of Kurokawa Noh and the actual witnessing of the noh drama in the distant village of Kushibiki. At the time of the noh performance, other foreign teachers and residents in Japan visited Tsuruoka, so Heinlein had a chance to interact with fellow Americans in his new home territory. The translation he had worked on was read at a conference at this time. The Educational Committee, seeing promise in Heinlein's writing and his enthusiasm, encouraged him to write and study more. The idea of a small book to be published in



Junior high school students in Tsuruoka-City, January 1984, with their team teachers, David A. Heinlein and Japanese colleague.

—photo by Suzuki Taro

Tsuruoka by Heinlein, in Japanese as well as in English, was born.

In the spring of 1984 the book took shape. It included poetry from Kyoto days, New Jersey subjects, as well as Tsuruoka writings. *Wild Seeds* was published in July, 1984. Through Shimpō Kohichiro, Heinlein had begun to teach English at the Tsuruoka Rotary Club. He also taught at the Shonai bank and a local company, in addition to his regular schedule at the junior high schools. Takikawa Yoshio introduced him to the local health club, Plus One. He met a woman employee of the national broadcasting company, and she introduced him to local figures such as a hawk trainer, a classical dance teacher, a TV announcer, as well as to the city of Sakata. He took trips to the prefectural capital, Yamagata City. He began collecting books in Japanese and in English.

After his first six months' work in Tsuruoka, his salary was increased to 200,000 yen or \$800 a month. His apartment was paid for by the city, gas for his car was taken care of, and he had telephone privileges within the country. He was hired by Tsuruoka Technical College to teach English once a week, and he decided to stay a second year in the city. That summer the Mayor of



New Brunswick, John A. Lynch, and a delegation visited both Fukui and Tsuruoka, and Heinlein helped plan the Tsuruoka reception. He served as translator for the Mayor.

In September, 1984, Heinlein continued his regular schedule of teaching in the eight junior high schools. There were 40 students to a class, and he team-taught with the native Japanese English teachers. He developed more friendships, and kept in contact with news from the United States. Heinlein was accustomed to the stimulation of a university community. Tsuruoka lacked this quality, except for the agricultural branch of Yamagata University, but both teachers and citizens opened their homes to him. He entered into the life of the community in a way that could not be done in one of Japan's larger cities.

As one of the few foreigners in the Shonai area able to speak Japanese, Heinlein was in demand as a speaker at community meetings of such groups as the Boy Scouts, the Sakata Women's Association, the Amarume community center, and the Tsuruoka Retired Teachers' Association. He spoke on New Brunswick's geography, the Delaware-Raritan Canal, New Brunswick's Japan connection, and the Griffis Collection of materials at The Alexander Library of Rutgers University. Once he even put on sumo gear and participated in a sumo match at an elementary school. A picture of him in sumo gear with some boys in the ring was placed in the Yamagata Prefecture International Education magazine.

His parents visited for a week in the spring of 1985, and before he returned to the United States in the fall, he received a contract with the city of New Brunswick to work as its Japan Consultant. One of his duties was to train the New Brunswick High School black and Hispanic Gospel choir, the Vocal Dynamics, in Japanese culture and language prior to their Sister Cities tour in 1986.

### *Most Recent Events*

In 1986 the Vocal Dynamics Gospel Choir, headed by Ernie Scott, visited Japan, and the Fukui Junior Orchestra came to New Brunswick. These visits prompted the introduction of Japanese as a second language at Redshaw Elementary School in New Brunswick. Rutgers Preparatory School greatly expanded its library holdings on Japan with money from memorial donations following the death of Dr. David M. Heinlein in February 1989. A small Japanese garden in Heinlein's honor was built next to the middle school that now bears his name. Japanese instruction at Rutgers Preparatory School will begin in the fall of 1991.



The Japanese Corner of Rutgers Preparatory School's library. Edward O. Heinlein, brother of Dr. David M. Heinlein. October 20, 1989.

—photo by David A. Heinlein

The Rutgers University Zimmerli Art Museum has also acted to follow up on the original ties with Japan that date back to the student of the nineteenth century and Americans such as Pruyn, Ballagh, Verbeck and Griffis. An International Center for Japonisme has been founded. The purpose of the Center is to promote through publications, exhibitions, performances, lectures, and curricula a greater understanding and appreciation of the reciprocal influences between Japan and the West in the past and in the present. The museum's director, Philip Dennis Cate, is himself the grandson of a Universalist Christian missionary to Japan. In May 1988 he organized a conference on Japanese influence on America. It was sponsored by Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd. and associated corporations, which had a long connection with Matsukata Kojiro, one of the nineteenth century *ryugakusei* who studied at Rutgers.

The university itself offers several years of language training in Japanese, and Rutgers' East Asian Library has a growing collection of Chinese and Japanese books in addition to the Griffis Collection. More individuals in the area have travelled to Japan, either as private citizens or associated with the university.

Nakata Yoshitomo of New Brunswick headed a Japanese Language and

Culture Center that was active for a short time in downtown New Brunswick in 1987. Paul Sher of Bridgewater has organized Kintatsukai, an association that promotes interchange with Japan and other nations in Asia. Sher lent some of his Japanese artifacts to the New Brunswick Public Library when it participated in New Brunswick's Japan Week of 1986. This Japan Week featured displays of children's art from Fukui and Tsuruoka, as well as other gifts of books, folk craft, and dolls in a special room in the Henry Guest House adjacent to the library.

The Japanese watercolor artist Takeuchi Mitsuko of Kamakura has visited New Brunswick several times and has shown her work at Johnson and Johnson headquarters. At Rutgers, professors who study and teach about Japan include Janet Walker, Donald Roden, Senko Maynard, Paul Schalow, Sarane Boocock, Shimahara Nobuo, Obayashi Hiroshi, and Tsurumi Hiroki. The Mayor of New Brunswick, John Lynch, has visited Japan three times in the last ten years. The late Edward Bloustein, past Rutgers president, also visited three times. A stream of professors and students moves from New Brunswick and Rutgers to Fukui, and a smaller stream from Fukui and Tsuruoka to New Brunswick. Special art exhibitions, concerts, and conferences on Japan-U.S. interaction have been held, and will continue to mark the course of interaction between the city and Japan.

### *Conclusion*

Circumstances of international, national, as well as local history were responsible for bringing about the New Brunswick-Japan connection. It is one of the longest among any on the East Coast. The Dutch Reformed Church in Japan, in New York City, and in New Brunswick served as an intermediary in the process whereby nineteenth century Japanese students came to Rutgers to study. Such men as William E. Griffis, David Murray, Ardath Burks, and David M. Heinlein took action that developed this unique international relationship. As the university inaugurates a new president and the city elects a new mayor, it is up to the citizens and the maturing generation of teachers, politicians, businessmen and students to nurture this long special connection and bring it still flourishing into the new decade.

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