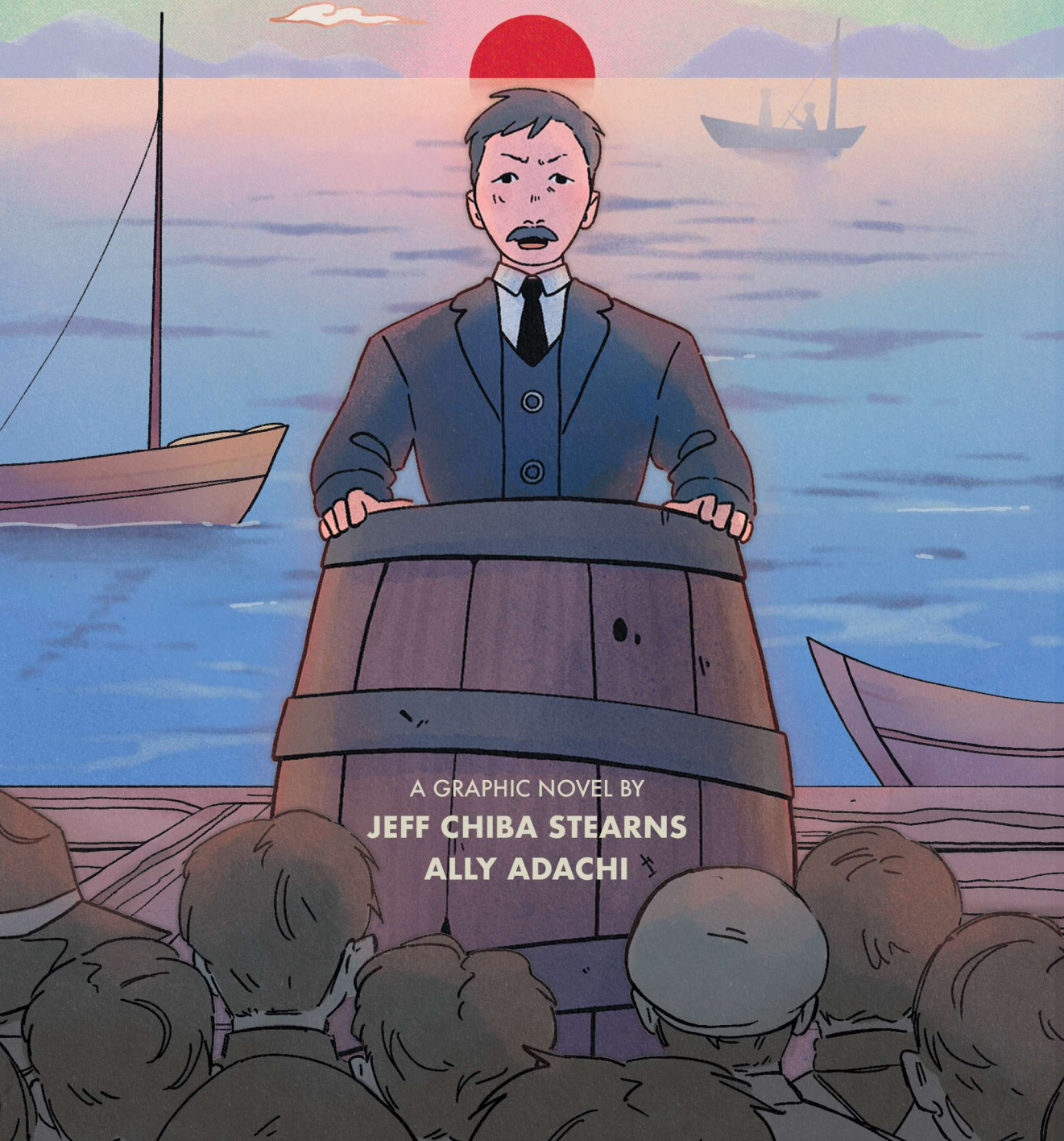


"BEAUTIFULLY BRINGS TO LIFE THE STRUGGLES AND CELEBRATIONS
OF AN IMPORTANT CANADIAN CIVIL RIGHTS STORY."

— JOY KOGAWA, AUTHOR OF *OBASAN*

TOMEY

THE UNYIELDING SPIRIT OF
TOMEKICHI HOMMA



A GRAPHIC NOVEL BY
JEFF CHIBA STEARNS
ALLY ADACHI

TOMEY

THE UNYIELDING SPIRIT OF
TOMEKICHI HOMMA

WRITTEN BY
JEFF CHIBA STEARNS

ILLUSTRATED BY
ALLY ADACHI

FORMATTING AND DESIGN BY
JEFF CHIBA STEARNS

PROJECT COORDINATOR
ERIN WILLIAMS

STORY CONSULTANTS
KEIKO TENNEY-SEAN HOMMA
ANDREA GEIGER
GEOFF MEGGS
CAREY ISAKSSON

This book is dedicated to all the Japanese Canadian storytellers and advocates who have devoted their lives to capturing and preserving our stories for future generations. Storytellers like Keiko Tenney-Sean Homma, who was instrumental in helping me capture her grandfather Tomekichi Homma's authentic voice and bring his remarkable story to life. Also, a special thank you to Andrea Geiger, Geoff Meggs and Carey Isaksson for their tireless research and writings on the legacy of Tomekichi Homma and for their feedback in helping craft this important Canadian story.

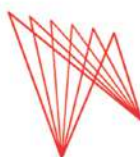
JEFF CHIBA STEARNS

Dedicated to my grandparents, Bob and Kathy Adachi, for their continual support in helping me learn about my personal family stories and our Japanese Canadian history. Thank you to my family for inspiring and encouraging me to create and for their unconditional support of all my artistic endeavors.

AS
ADACHI



**National Coalition
of Canadians Against
Anti-Asian Racism**



ASIA PACIFIC
FOUNDATION
OF CANADA

FONDATION
ASIE PACIFIQUE
DU CANADA

Canada

This project has been made possible in part
by the Government of Canada.



**JAPANESE
CANADIAN
LEGACIES**

We gratefully acknowledge support from the Community
Fund of the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society.

Published by The National Coalition of Canadians Against Anti-Asian Racism (NCCAAR)

Text and illustrations ©2025 The National Coalition of Canadians Against Anti-Asian Racism (NCCAAR)
All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

No part of this book may be reproduced, transmitted or stored in an information retrieval system in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, scanning, photographing, taping and recording without prior written permission from the publisher above.

Digital PDF Edition Printed in Canada Chiba Stearns, Jeff | Adachi, Ally ISBN 978-0-9737808-2-6

To book Jeff or Ally as a speaker, please contact info@meditatingbunny.com

AUGUST 1942 (SECOND WORLD WAR)
POPOFF INTERNMENT CAMP
SLOCAN, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

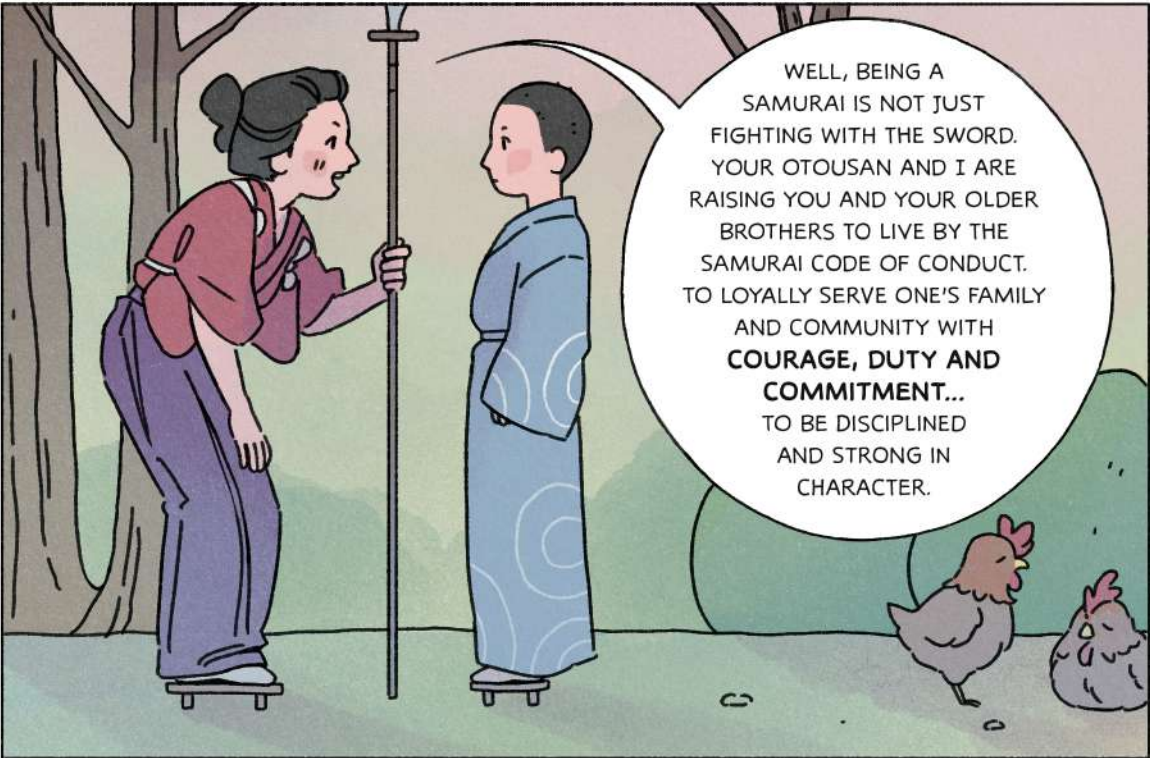
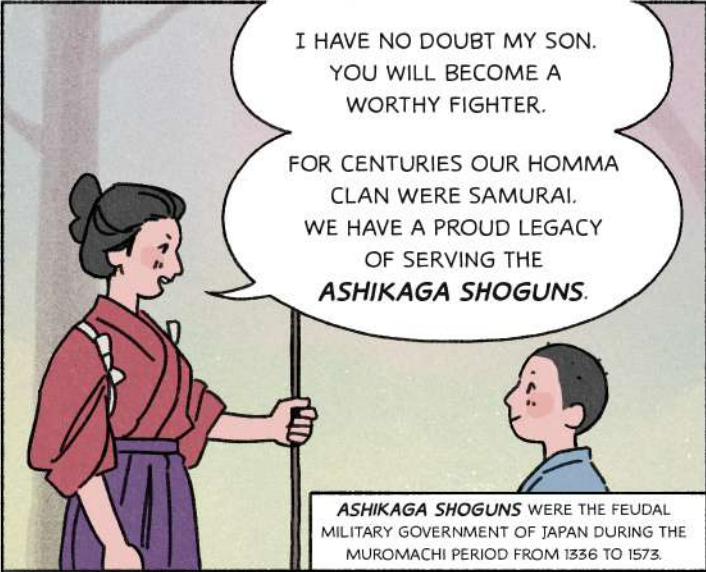




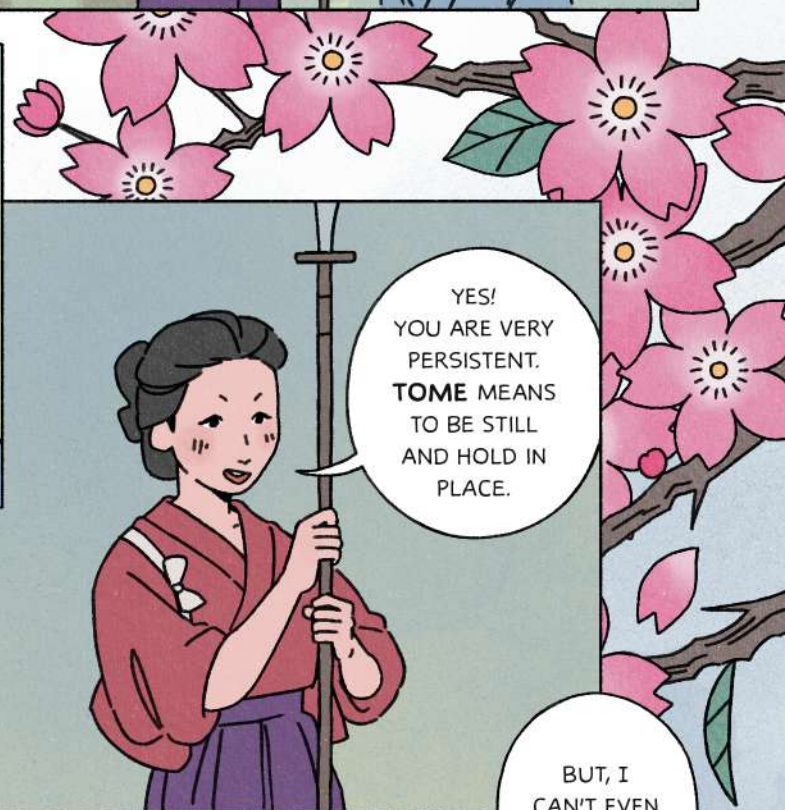
1872 (THE MEIJI ERA)
HOMMA RESIDENCE
ICHIKAWA, JAPAN

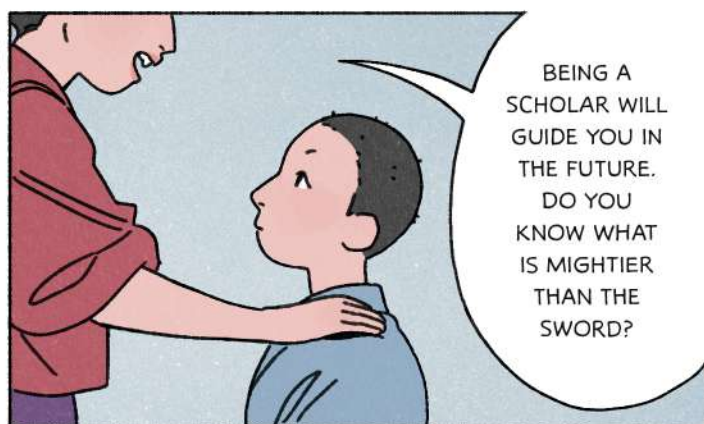
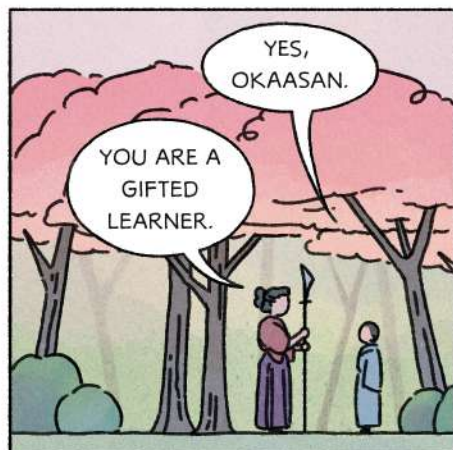


TSUYOI KARADA, TSUYOI KOKORO
(STRONG BODY, STRONG MIND)









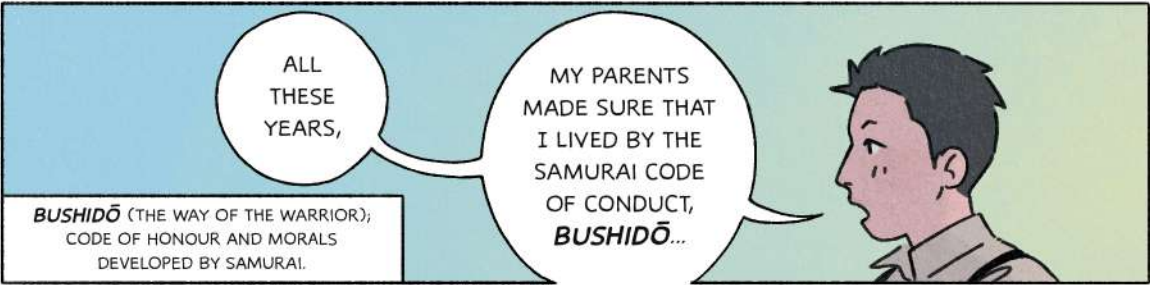
1883 (11 YEARS LATER)
PACIFIC OCEAN



WELL
YUGORO,
I GUESS
THERE'S NO
GOING BACK
NOW.

YOU KNOW TOMEY,
AS FRIENDS WE'VE
DONE A LOT OF
THINGS TOGETHER...
BUT THIS IS BY
FAR THE MOST
ADVENTUROUS.





1897 (14 YEARS LATER)
STEVESTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA



WHEN I FIRST
ARRIVED HERE IN
STEVESTON OVER A
DECADE AGO, I WAS
ONE OF ONLY A
FEW JAPANESE
FISHERMEN.

BEING
PEOPLE
OF THE SEA,
THERE ARE NOW
MANY MORE OF US
FISHING THESE
WATERS!

THIS IS WHY
WE CAN NO
LONGER ALLOW THE
FISH CANNERIES TO
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
US JUST BECAUSE
WE ARE
JAPANESE!

WE DESERVE
TO BE PAID AS
MUCH FOR OUR
CATCH AS
THE WHITE
FISHERMEN!



YES, WE
NEED TO BE
TREATED
AND PAID
FAIRLY!

WHAT
CAN WE
DO?

HOMMA-
SAN, WHAT
DO YOU
SUGGEST?





WE NEED TO IMPROVE OUR WORKING CONDITIONS AND FORM ONE STRONG VOICE TO NEGOTIATE FOR EQUAL FISH PRICES.

TO GAIN POLITICAL POWER, WE MUST UNITE BY CREATING OUR OWN JAPANESE FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION.



GYOSHA DANTAI
(JAPANESE FISHERMEN'S BENEVOLENT SOCIETY)

MAYBE WE CAN CALL OUR GROUP **GYOSHA DANTAI!**



YES, AND LET'S HAVE **TOMEKICHI HOMMA** AS OUR FIRST PRESIDENT!

THERE IS NO ONE MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND CAPABLE THAN **TOMEY** LEADING US IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS!



FAIR WORK, FAIR PAY!
FAIR WORK, FAIR PAY!
FAIR WORK, FAIR PAY!



1899 (2 YEARS LATER)
STEVESTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA



THE
FISHERMEN'S
HOSPITAL IS
COMING ALONG
QUITE NICELY, EH,
HOMMA-SAN?

THANKS FOR
BEING SUCH AN
ADVOCATE FOR
BUILDING US A
HOSPITAL IN
STEVESTON!

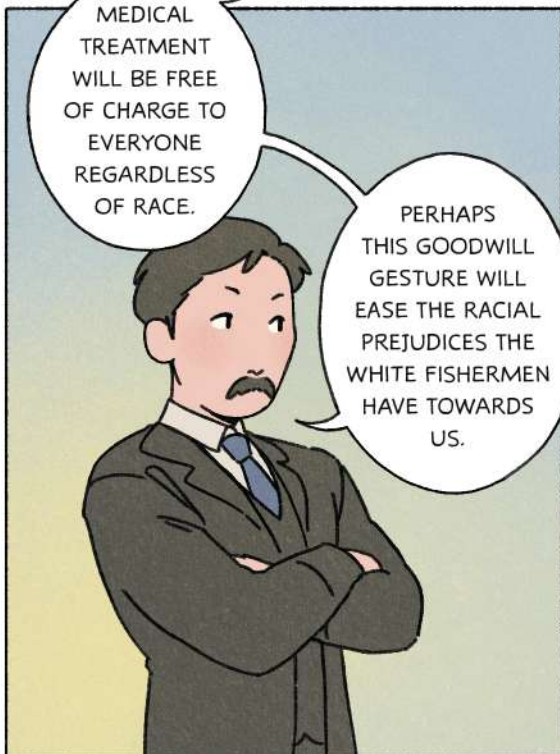


THIS WILL
HOPEFULLY
CONTROL THE
DEADLY SPREAD
OF TYPHOID
FEVER IN OUR
COMMUNITY.

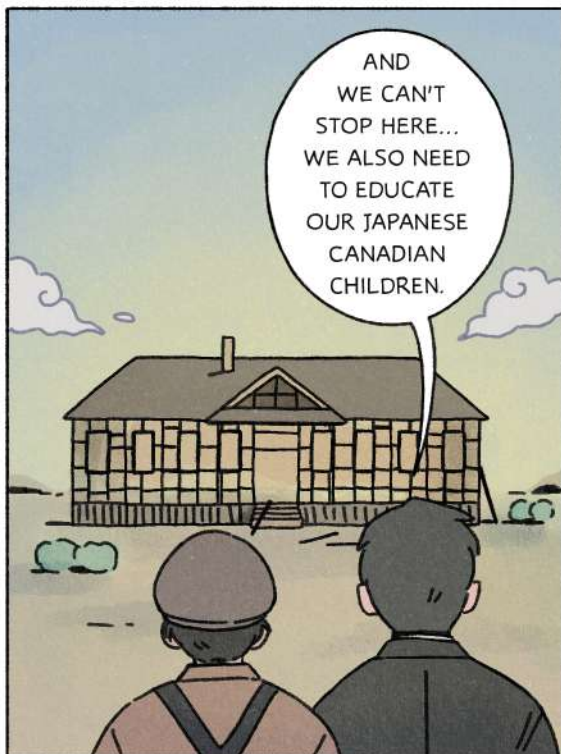


MEDICAL
TREATMENT
WILL BE FREE
OF CHARGE TO
EVERYONE
REGARDLESS
OF RACE.

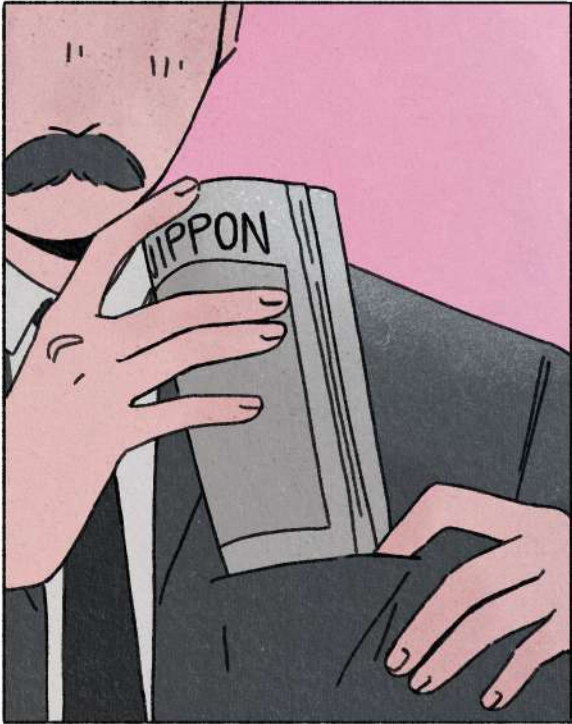
PERHAPS
THIS GOODWILL
GESTURE WILL
EASE THE RACIAL
PREJUDICES THE
WHITE FISHERMEN
HAVE TOWARDS
US.



AND
WE CAN'T
STOP HERE...
WE ALSO NEED
TO EDUCATE
OUR JAPANESE
CANADIAN
CHILDREN.









HERE MATSU,
I HAVE A FRESH
COPY OF TODAY'S
DAI NIPPON...
HOT OFF THE
PRESS!

HOW DO
YOU FIND TIME
TO PUBLISH A
NEWSPAPER,
TOMEY?

DAI NIPPON (GREAT JAPAN),
A JAPANESE LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER.

SINCE WE'VE
BEEN MARRIED,
YOU'VE BEEN
RUNNING THIS
BOARDING HOUSE,
TRANSLATING
DOCUMENTS AND
LETTERS...

...WORKING AS AN
EMPLOYMENT AGENT
FOR THE CPR AND
OPERATING A TOFU
COMPANY, A JAPANESE
RESTAURANT AND
A SOCIAL CLUB...
WHAT'S NEXT?

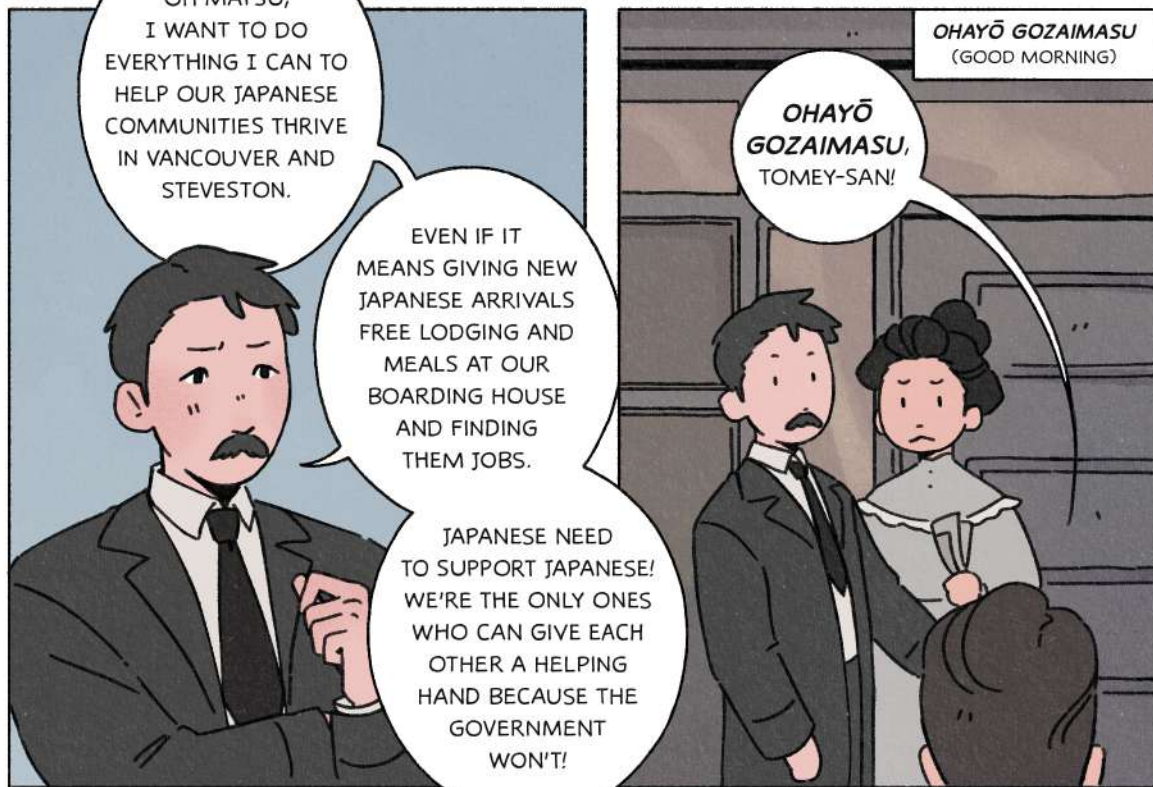


WELL,
WE'VE GOT
ANOTHER TRIP
PLANNED TO
STEVESTON.

IT'S IMPORTANT
TO CONTINUE
FULFILLING MY
OBLIGATIONS
AND ATTENDING
MEETINGS
THERE!

YAMETE!
TOO
MUCH!

YAMETE
(STOP IT)



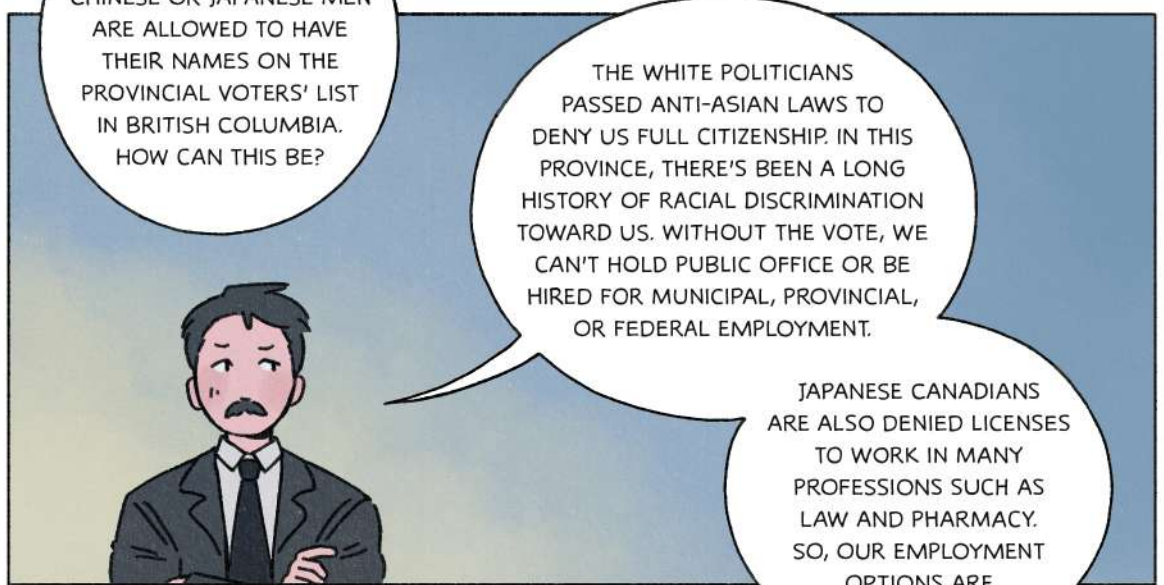
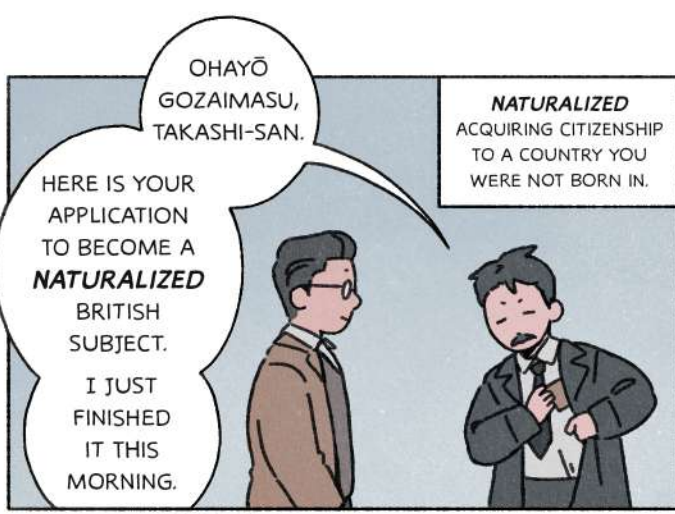
OH MATSU,
I WANT TO DO
EVERYTHING I CAN TO
HELP OUR JAPANESE
COMMUNITIES THRIVE
IN VANCOUVER AND
STEVESTON.

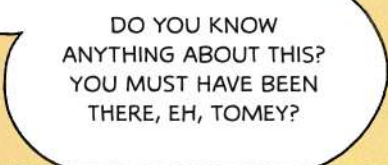
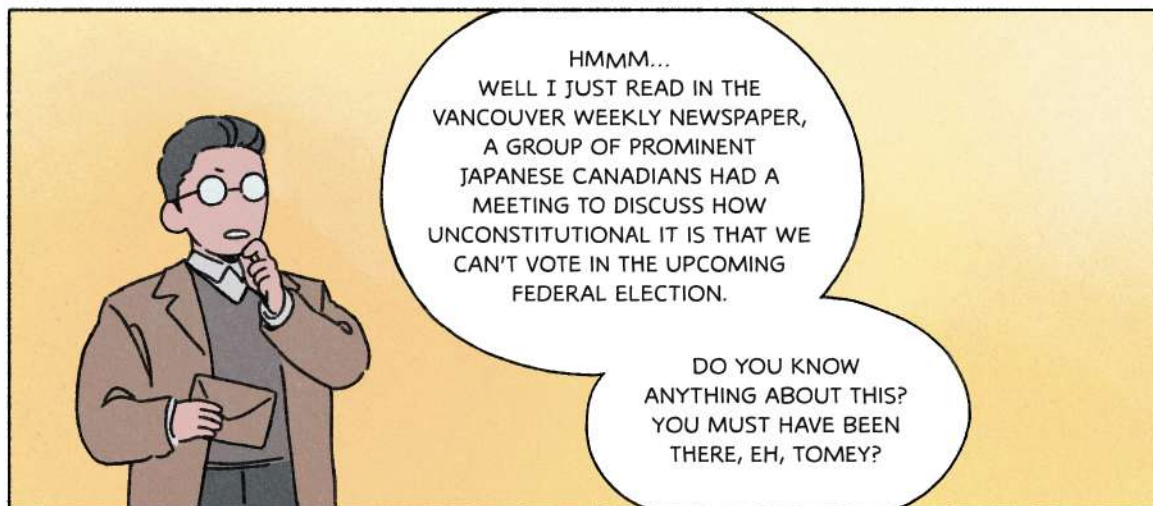
EVEN IF IT
MEANS GIVING NEW
JAPANESE ARRIVALS
FREE LODGING AND
MEALS AT OUR
BOARDING HOUSE
AND FINDING
THEM JOBS.

JAPANESE NEED
TO SUPPORT JAPANESE!
WE'RE THE ONLY ONES
WHO CAN GIVE EACH
OTHER A HELPING
HAND BECAUSE THE
GOVERNMENT
WON'T!

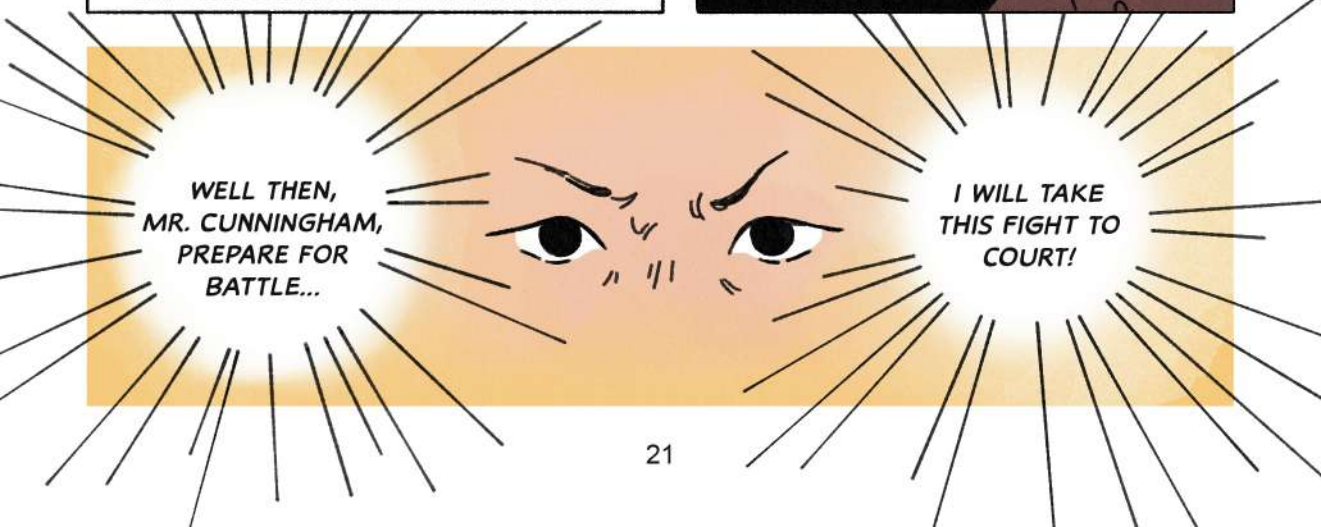
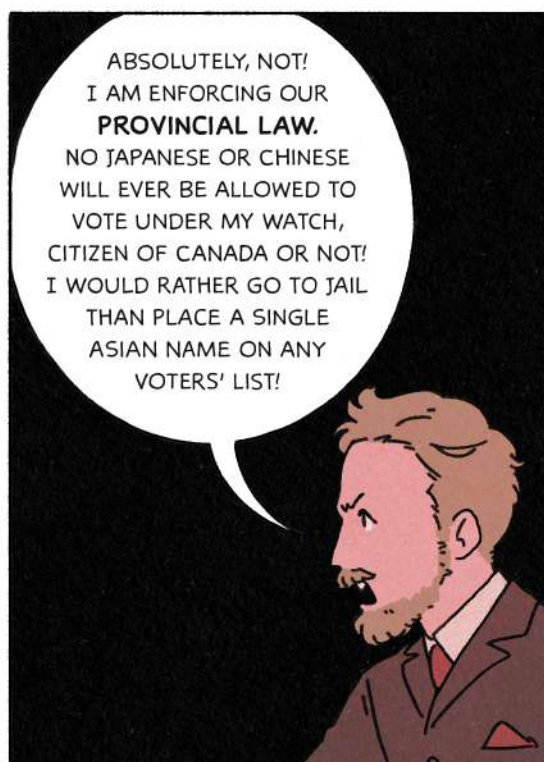
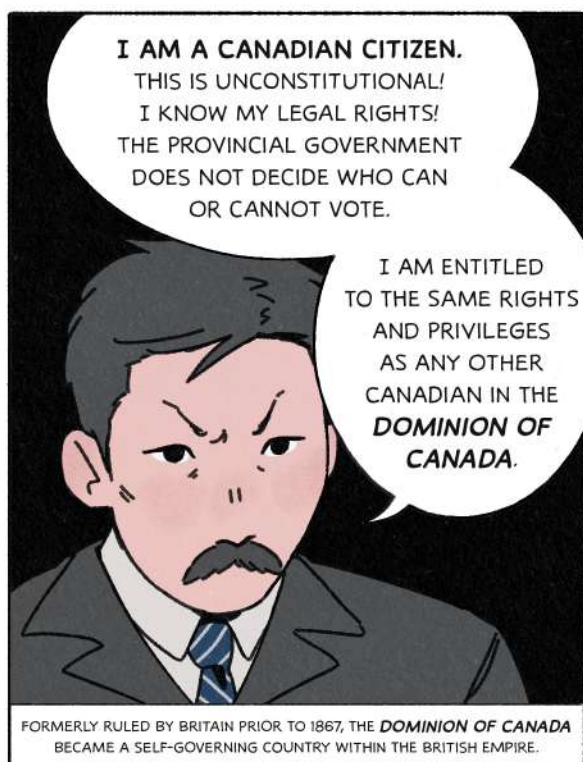
OHAYŌ GOZAIMASU
(GOOD MORNING)

**OHAYŌ
GOZAIMASU,**
TOMEY-SAN!









DECEMBER 1, 1900



OUR BARRISTER R.W. HARRIS ARGUED ON OUR BEHALF AND WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE WON THE COURT CASE!



Entitled To Vote
The Judgement of Chief Justice McColl in the Japanese Appeal.
When Naturalized They Pass Under the Control of Provincial Legislature.

THANK YOU, PROMINENT MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY AND THE JAPANESE FISHERMEN'S BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION FOR FIGHTING FOR OUR EQUALITY!
WE DEFEATED CUNNINGHAM!



YOU ARE A WARRIOR FOR JUSTICE, HOMMA-SAN!

JUSTICE!

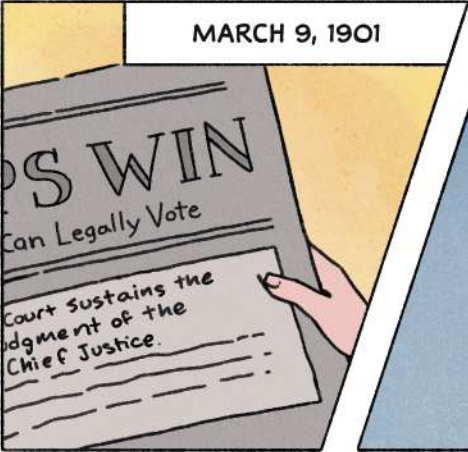
YES!

WE WON!

HOORAY!







MARCH 9, 1901

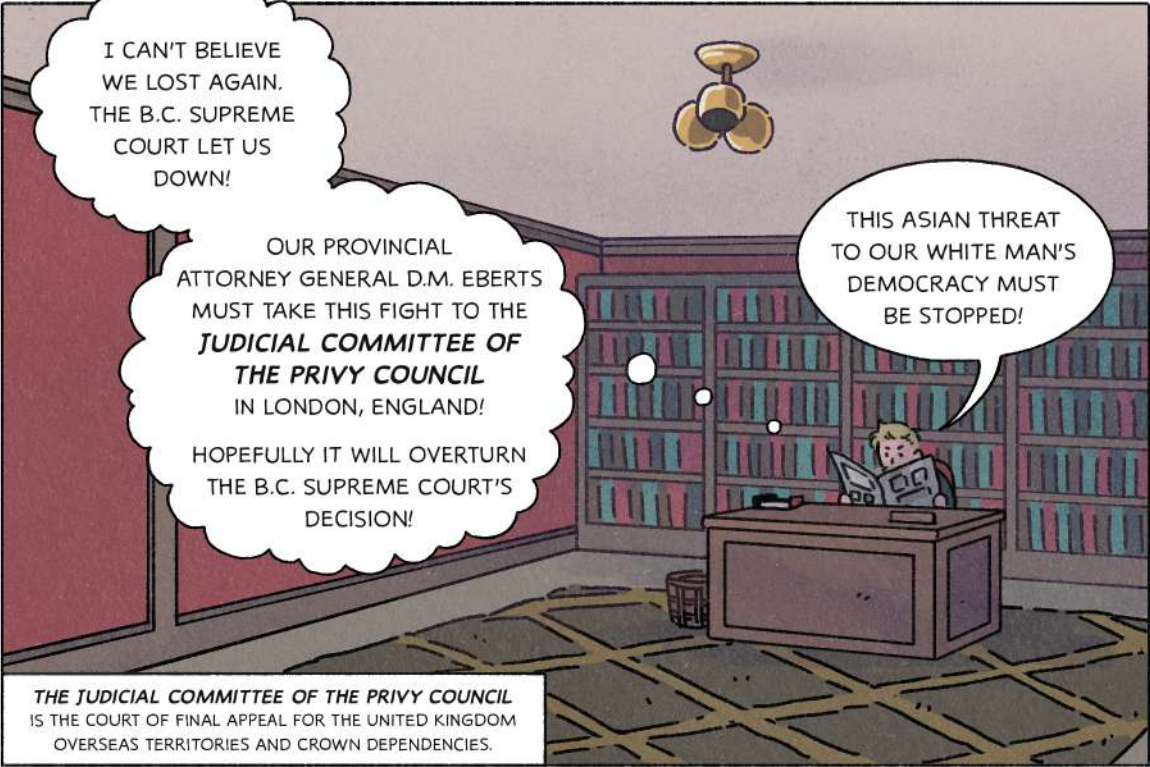


THE B.C. GOVERNMENT APPEALED THE LOWER COURT'S DECISION AND WE WON AGAIN IN THE B.C. SUPREME COURT!



WE WERE RIGHT! IT WAS ILLEGAL TO BE DENIED THE VOTE!

TOMEY'S COURAGE AND HOPE HAS LED US TO ANOTHER VICTORY!



I CAN'T BELIEVE WE LOST AGAIN. THE B.C. SUPREME COURT LET US DOWN!

OUR PROVINCIAL ATTORNEY GENERAL D.M. EBERTS MUST TAKE THIS FIGHT TO THE **JUDICIAL COMMITTEE OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL** IN LONDON, ENGLAND!

HOPEFULLY IT WILL OVERTURN THE B.C. SUPREME COURT'S DECISION!

THIS ASIAN THREAT TO OUR WHITE MAN'S DEMOCRACY MUST BE STOPPED!

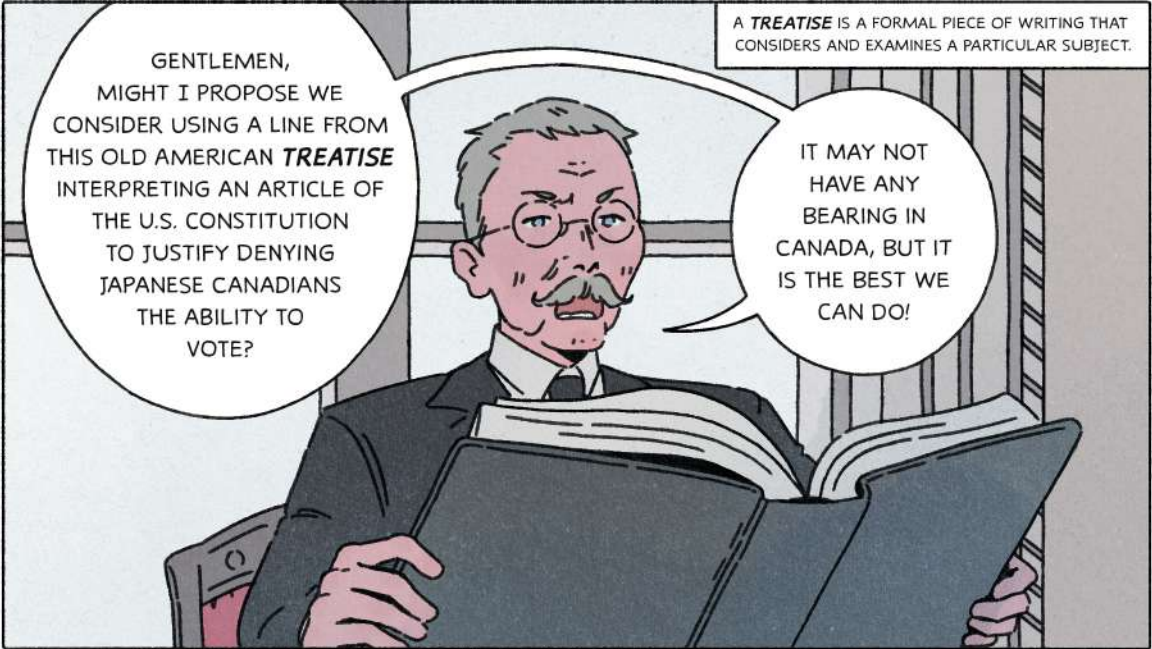
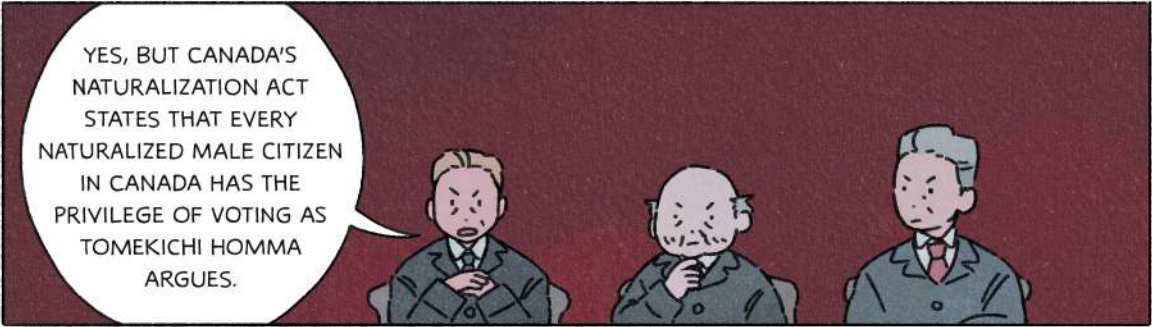
THE JUDICIAL COMMITTEE OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL IS THE COURT OF FINAL APPEAL FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM OVERSEAS TERRITORIES AND CROWN DEPENDENCIES.

DECEMBER 1902

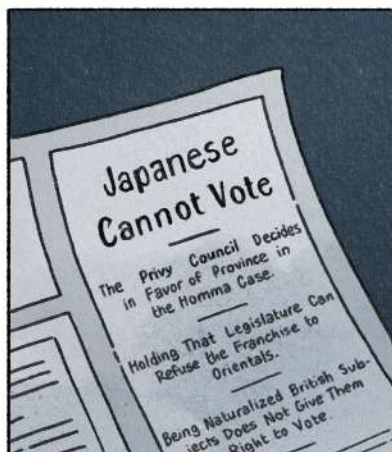
JUDICIAL COMMITTEE OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL
LONDON, ENGLAND

ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA PREMIER, JAMES DUNSMUIR, AND D.M. EBERTS, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, THE PROVINCE IS REQUESTING THAT THE B.C. SUPREME COURT'S DECISION TO ALLOW JAPANESE CANADIAN MEN THE PRIVILEGE OF VOTING BE OVERTURNED.

IF WE ALLOW ASIAN IMMIGRANTS TO VOTE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, IT COULD SET A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT IN OTHER PARTS OF OUR BRITISH EMPIRE AROUND THE WORLD.
WE NEED TO STOP THIS!



DECEMBER 17, 1902



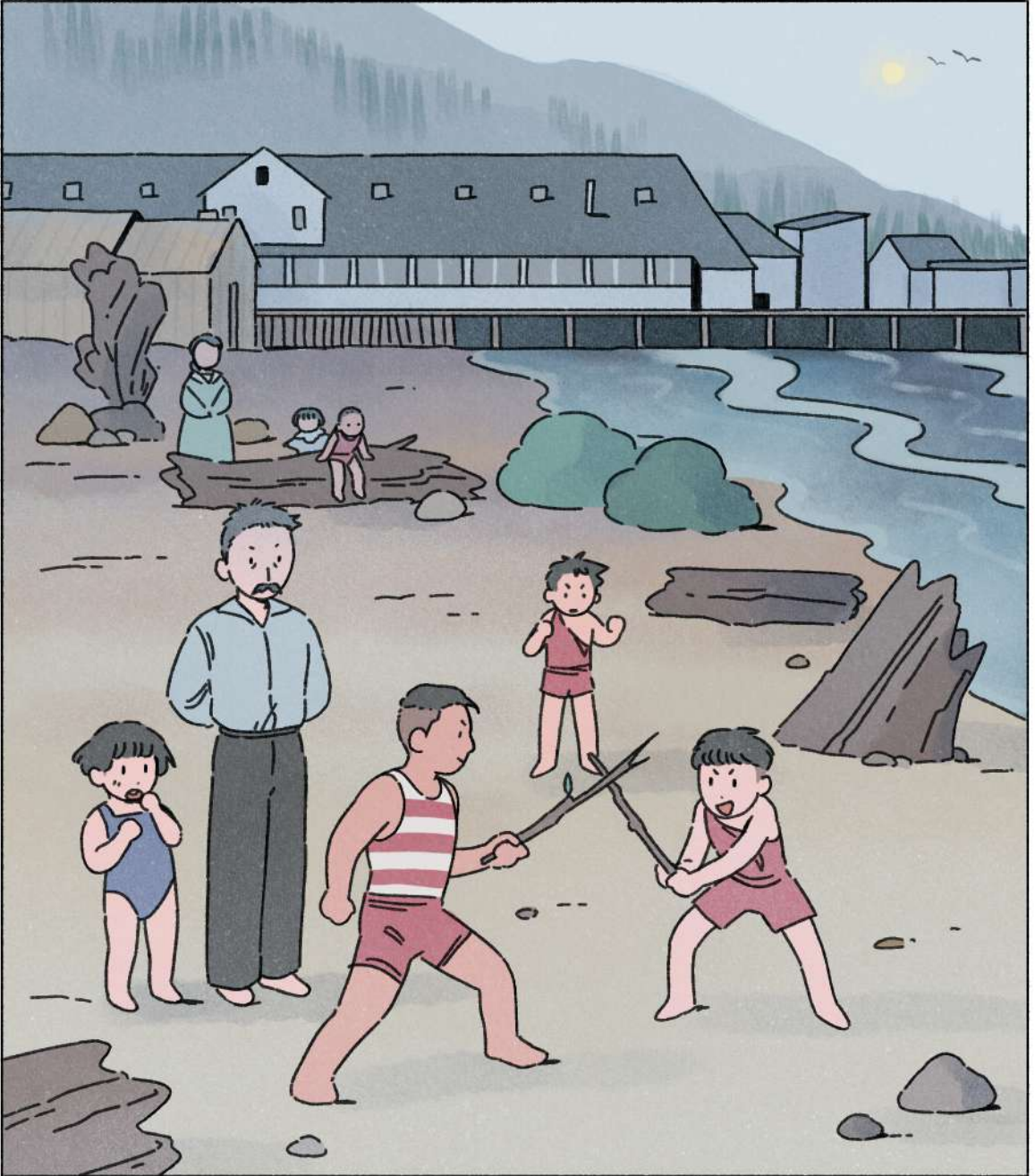
OH TOMEY,
YOU ANTICIPATED
THE PROVINCE WOULD
TAKE YOUR CASE TO
THE HIGHEST COURT
OF APPEAL FOR
THE BRITISH
COMMONWEALTH.

EVEN THOUGH OUR
CANADIAN GOVERNMENT
SUPPORTED YOUR CHALLENGE
BY INTERVENING TO DEFEND
THE NATURALIZATION ACT,
THE PRIVY COUNCIL STILL
OVERTURNED THE B.C.
SUPREME COURT'S DECISION.
SUCH DEVASTATING NEWS...
WHAT CAN BE
DONE NOW?

I DON'T KNOW
MATSU, BUT IF
JAPANESE CANADIANS
CAN'T VOTE, OUR LIVES
WON'T CHANGE...
WE WILL CONTINUE
TO FACE RESTRICTIVE
LAWS AND REMAIN
SECOND-CLASS
CITIZENS IN
CANADA.

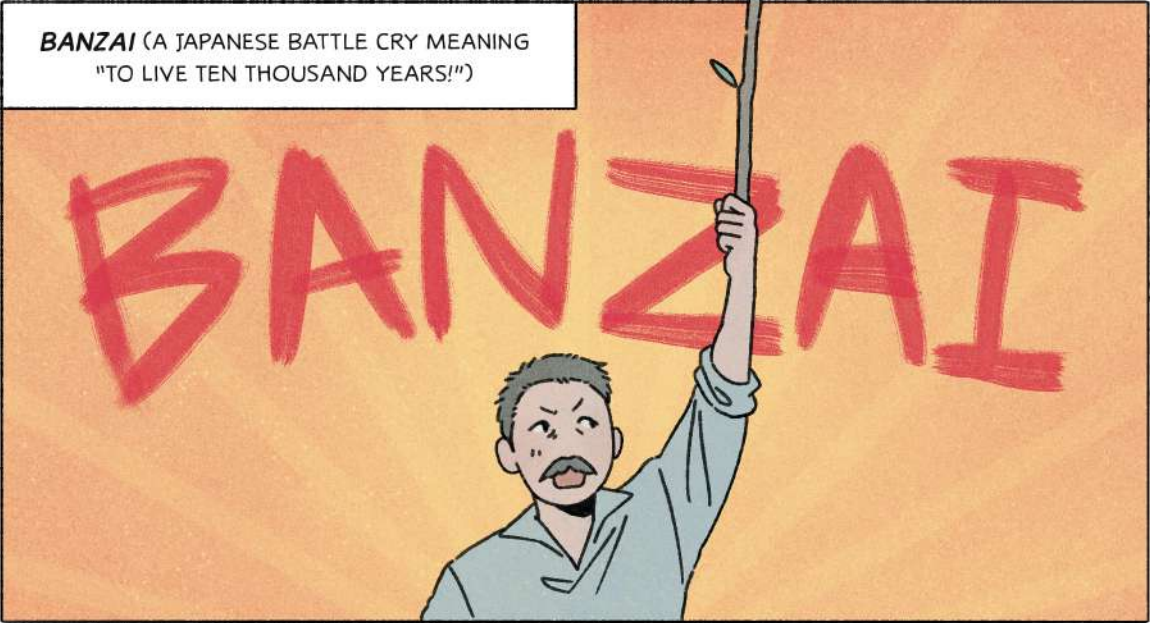


1922 (20 YEARS LATER)
GREAT NORTHERN CANNERY
WEST VANCOUVER,
BRITISH COLUMBIA





BANZAI (A JAPANESE BATTLE CRY MEANING
"TO LIVE TEN THOUSAND YEARS!")







SHOGUN (A MILITARY
RULER IN FEUDAL JAPAN)

...AND THROUGH
GREAT SKILL AND
PATIENCE, THE
SAMURAI WOULD
DEFEND THEIR
SHOGUN FROM
THEIR BITTER
RIVALS!



IS THIS TRUE
PAPA?

TELL US
MORE!



THAT'S
ENOUGH
STORIES FOR
TONIGHT, CHILDREN.
WE'LL DO MORE
TOMORROW...



...AW,
PAPA!





STRONG BODY,
STRONG MIND!



1923 (ONE YEAR LATER)
GREAT NORTHERN CANNERY



OH TOMEY,
WE MOVED TO WEST
VANCOUVER TO ENJOY
A QUIETER LIFE WITH
OUR CHILDREN, BUT
EVERYONE CONTINUES
TO RELY ON YOU
AND...

YOU'RE
ALWAYS
WRITING.



MY JOURNALS AND
TRANSCRIPTS ARE
IMPORTANT HISTORICAL
RECORDS, MATSU.

THE STORIES OF OUR
JAPANESE PIONEERS
WHO MADE CANADA
THEIR HOME NEED TO
BE DOCUMENTED AND
PRESERVED FOR FUTURE
GENERATIONS.

THIS IS OUR
LEGACY.



YES, WELL, WHEN YOU
ACCEPTED MR. NAKAYAMA'S
PROPOSAL TO GATHER
INFORMATION ABOUT OUR
COMMUNITY FOR THE BOOKS
CANADA NO HOKO AND
**CANADA DOHO HATTEN
TAIKAN FUROKU**...

YOU WERE AWAY
FOR MONTHS AT A TIME
INTERVIEWING JAPANESE
CANADIAN IMMIGRANTS
THROUGHOUT THE
PROVINCE.



CANADA NO HOKO (TREASURE OF CANADA - PUBLISHED 1922)
CANADA DOHO HATTEN TAIKAN FUROKU (AN APPENDIX TO THE DIRECTORY
OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE CANADIANS - PUBLISHED 1922)



EACH TIME YOU RETURNED HOME, YOU SPENT HOURS WRITING ABOUT THE INDIVIDUALS YOU INTERVIEWED. THIS PROJECT TOOK YOU YEARS TO COMPLETE.



YES, SEVEN YEARS...

YOU'VE DONE SO MUCH FOR OUR FAMILY MATSU. I REALIZE THAT WHENEVER I WAS AWAY, YOU WERE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING. MY ABSENCES HAVE MADE YOUR LIFE DIFFICULT... I'M SO FORTUNATE TO HAVE YOU BY MY SIDE.





1929 (SIX YEARS LATER)
GREAT NORTHERN CANNERY



OH, TOMEY.
OUR HOUSE
AND BELONGINGS ARE
GONE...EVERYTHING...
ALL YOUR JOURNALS
AND IMPORTANT
PAPERS...

YES, BUT MATSU,
OUR FAMILY IS SAFE
AND TOGETHER.





MAY 1942 (13 YEARS LATER)
WEST VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

IF ONLY WE HAD THE
RIGHT TO VOTE, THIS WAR
BETWEEN CANADA AND
JAPAN MAY NOT HAVE LED
TO THIS INJUSTICE...

PAPA, BECAUSE OF YOUR
LEADERSHIP AND ACTIVISM,
THE **BRITISH COLUMBIA
SECURITIES COMMISSION**
RESPECTFULLY OFFERED YOU
AND MAMA A PRIVATE RAILWAY
CAR TO GO TO THE CAMP IN
THE SLOCAN VALLEY.

THE **BRITISH COLUMBIA SECURITIES COMMISSION** WAS
CREATED DURING WWII TO ADMINISTER THE FORCED REMOVAL OF
JAPANESE CANADIANS LIVING ON THE WEST COAST AND THE
CONFISCATION OF ALL THEIR PROPERTY.

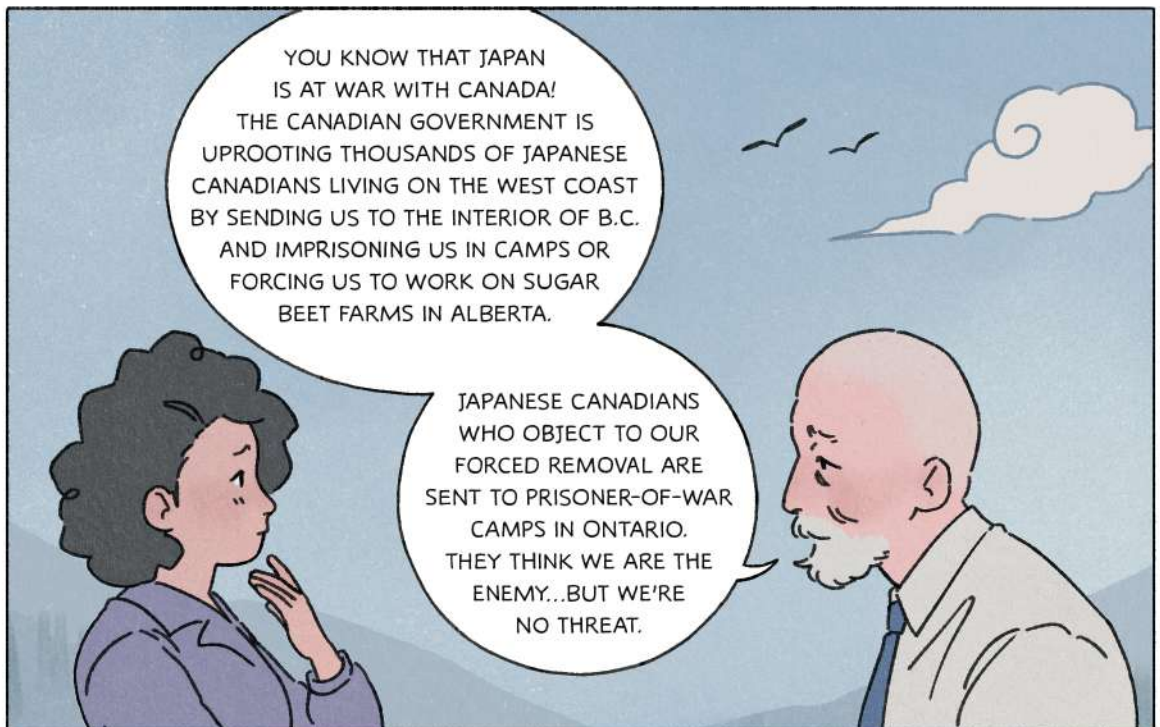
MAMA AND I
WILL NOT BE
TREATED SPECIALLY.
WE WILL TRAVEL
LIKE EVERYONE
ELSE.

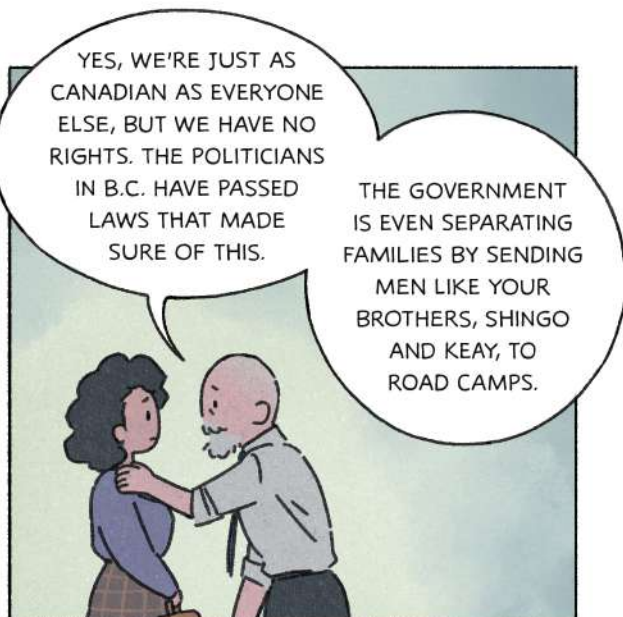
BUT THE RAILCARS
WILL BE CROWDED.
IT WILL BE
UNCOMFORTABLE
AT YOUR AGE TO
RIDE THIS WAY.

THINK OF
WHAT IT
WOULD BE
LIKE FOR
MAMA
TOO.

THERE WILL BE
MANY ELDERLY
PEOPLE LIKE US
ABOARD.
HOW CAN MAMA
AND I BE TREATED
AS PRIVILEGED
INDIVIDUALS?

NO, WE WILL
TRAVEL WITH
OUR FELLOW
JAPANESE
CANADIANS.





AUGUST 1942 - POPOFF INTERNMENT CAMP

WE ARE
CANADIANS...

HOW CAN
THEY DO
THIS TO
US?

I WISH ALL
OUR SONS AND
DAUGHTERS COULD
BE HERE WITH US
TOMEY.

IT'S
UNTHINKABLE,
MATSU.

THE GOVERNMENT
SENT OUR MARRIED
CHILDREN AND THEIR
FAMILIES TO OTHER
CAMPS...

...SEPARATING
US.

WHO KNOWS WHEN
WE'LL BE TOGETHER
AGAIN.

OH TOMEY, IT'S
SUCH A SHAME.
THERE'S SO MUCH
YOU COULD STILL
SHARE WITH THE
CHILDREN.

I REALLY WISH
YOU WOULD HAVE TOLD
THEM MORE ABOUT YOUR
UPBRINGING IN JAPAN
AND YOUR WORK FOR
OUR COMMUNITY.
THEY SHOULD KNOW.

WHEN THE LID
OF MY COFFIN
IS CLOSED,
THEY'LL ALL
UNDERSTAND...

**JAPAN SURRENDERED ON SEPTEMBER 2,
1945, ENDING THE SECOND WORLD WAR.**

JAPANESE CANADIANS CONTINUED TO HAVE THEIR RIGHTS RESTRICTED BY THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT. DURING WORLD WAR II, OVER 22,000 JAPANESE CANADIANS WERE FORCIBLY DISPLACED AND HAD THEIR PROPERTIES, HOMES AND BUSINESSES CONFISCATED. ORIGINALLY HELD IN TRUST BY THE GOVERNMENT, EVERYTHING WAS SOLD WITHOUT THE OWNERS' PERMISSION FOR PENNIES ON THE DOLLAR.

AFTER THE WAR, NOT A SINGLE JAPANESE CANADIAN LIVING IN CANADA WAS EVER CHARGED WITH AN ACT OF DISLOYALTY. INSTEAD, THEY WERE FORCED BY THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TO CHOOSE BETWEEN MOVING EAST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS OR BE SENT TO WAR-RAVAGED JAPAN. ALMOST 4000 JAPANESE CANADIANS, HALF OF WHOM HAD BEEN BORN IN CANADA, WERE STRIPPED OF THEIR CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP, AND EXILED TO JAPAN. IT WOULD NOT BE UNTIL APRIL 1, 1949, THAT JAPANESE CANADIANS WOULD REGAIN THEIR FREEDOM TO LIVE ANYWHERE IN CANADA.

NOT YET PERMITTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO RETURN HOME TO VANCOUVER, **TOMEKICHI HOMMA** DIED ON **OCTOBER 28, 1945**, AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY WHILE STILL INCARCERATED IN THE POPOFF INTERNMENT CAMP.

NOVEMBER 1945

TOMEY, ALTHOUGH YOU LEFT THIS WORLD WITHOUT SEEING ANY OF YOUR INTENTIONS BEAR FRUIT, THERE ARE MANY STILL REMAINING IN CANADA WHO WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT.

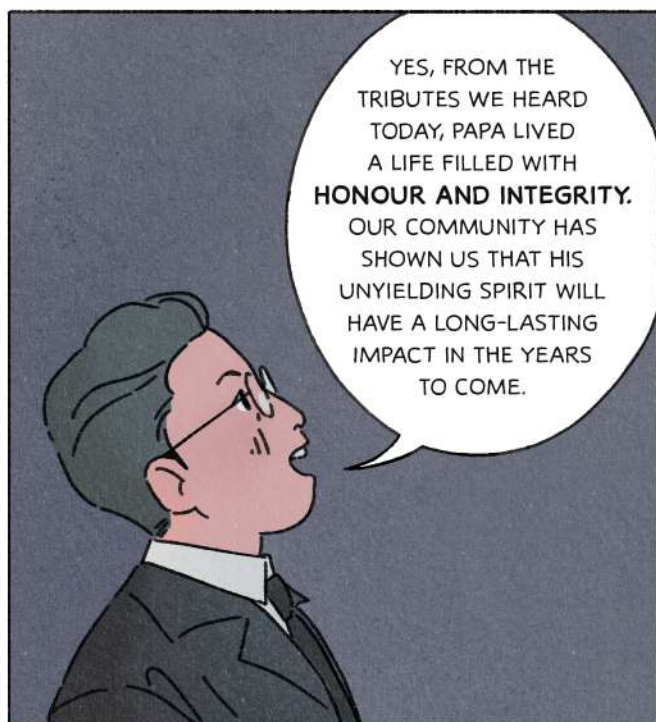
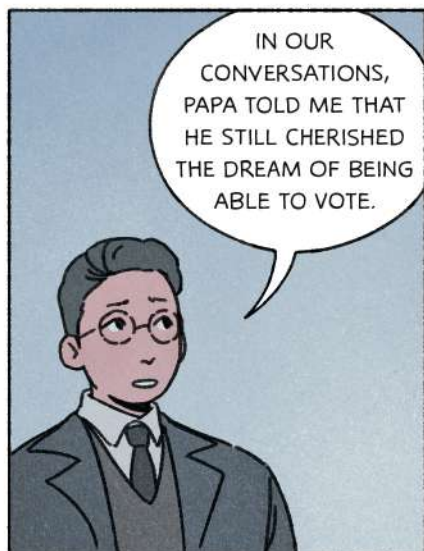
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THIS WILL BE POSSIBLE DURING MY LIFETIME, BUT I FIRMLY BELIEVE YOUR DREAMS WILL BE REALIZED...

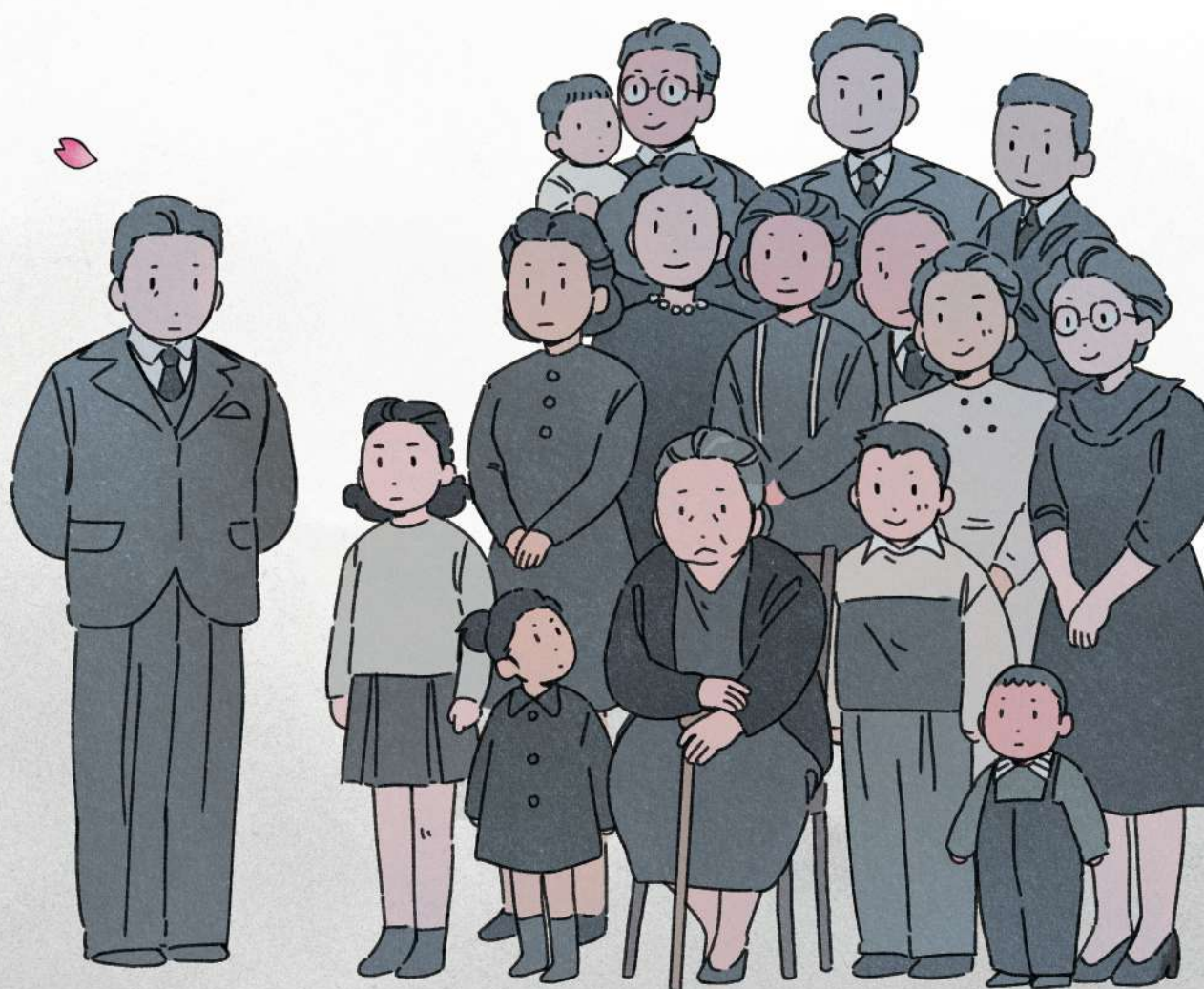
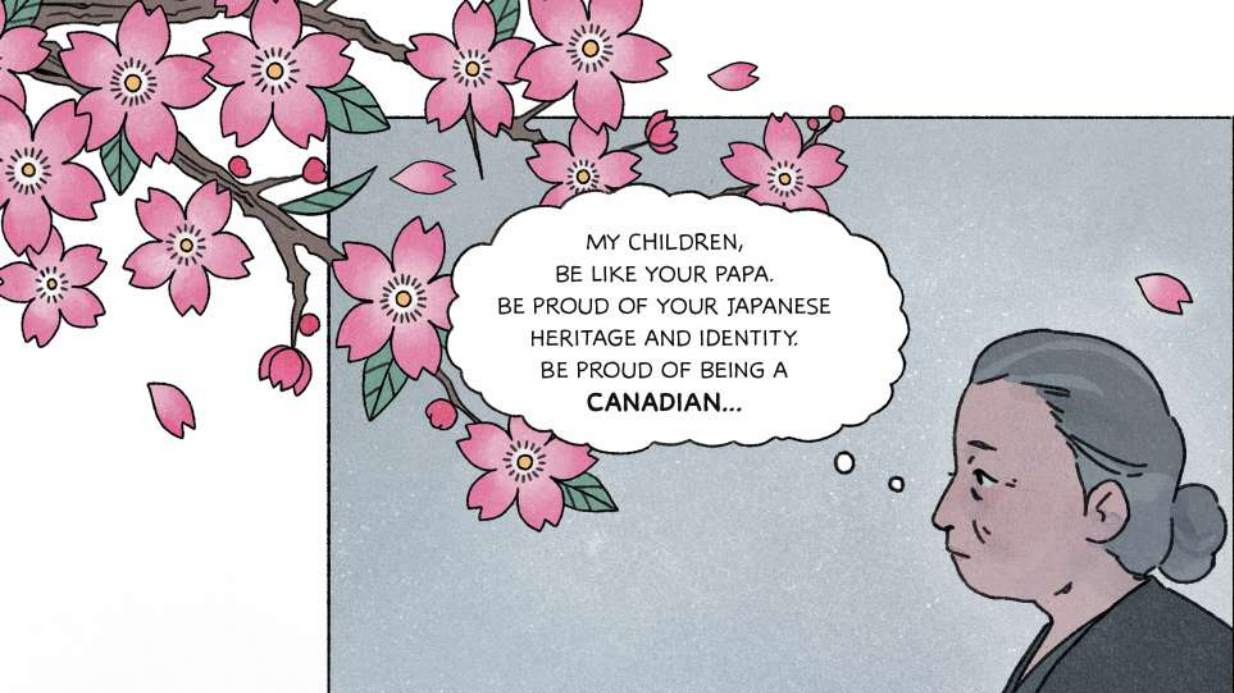


I'M SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS MATSU-SAN. YOUR HUSBAND WAS A GREAT MAN. HE WAS A TIRELESS CHAMPION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY.

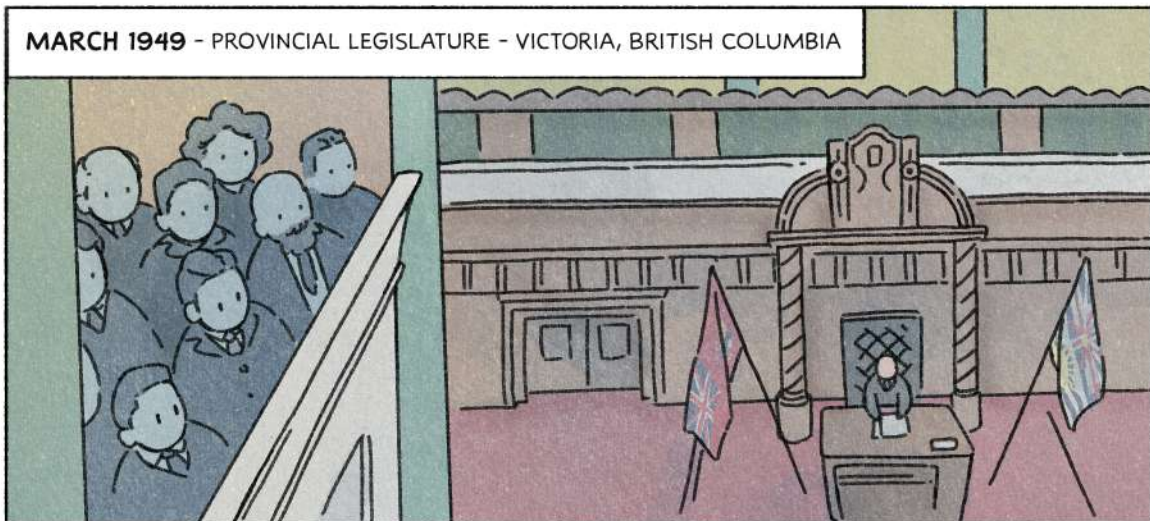


I OFTEN WONDER HOW DIFFERENT LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR JAPANESE CANADIANS, HAD YOUR HUSBAND WON US THE RIGHT TO VOTE FOUR DECADES AGO...





MARCH 1949 - PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE - VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA



IT'S BEEN FOUR YEARS
SINCE PAPA'S PASSING AND
ALMOST 50 YEARS SINCE
HIS COURT CASE. I ONLY
WISH HE COULD BE HERE
TODAY TO EXPERIENCE THIS
LONG-AWAITED VICTORY.
HE WOULD HAVE BEEN
SO THRILLED.



THE PROVINCE OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA
HEREBY GRANTS
CANADIAN CITIZENS
OF JAPANESE ORIGIN
**THE RIGHT TO
VOTE...**



TOMEKICHI HOMMA'S MONUMENTAL LEGAL BATTLE
WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA WOULD
GO ON TO INSPIRE FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ACTIVISTS,
LIKE HIS SON **SEIJI**, WHO CONTINUED THE FIGHT TO
SECURE EQUAL VOTING RIGHTS FOR ALL CANADIANS.

IN 2017, THE HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS BOARD OF CANADA
COMMEMORATED TOMEKICHI HOMMA'S LANDMARK LEGAL CASE
CUNNINGHAM V. TOMEY HOMMA AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC EVENT.

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ACKNOWLEDGES THAT "TOMEKICHI HOMMA'S
LEGAL BATTLE IS KNOWN AS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTS OF
RESISTANCE TO REPRESSION IN THE HISTORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CANADA.
HOMMA'S DEMAND FOR EQUITABLE TREATMENT INFLUENCED OTHERS TO FIGHT
FOR EQUAL RIGHTS, AND, IN RETROSPECT, HIS COURT CASE HAS BECOME
CRUCIAL TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTEXT AND EVENTS THAT LED TO
THE ENACTMENT OF THE CANADIAN BILL OF RIGHTS IN 1960 AND THE
ENTRENCHMENT OF THE CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS INTO
THE CONSTITUTION ACT OF 1982."

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRIVILEGES OF CITIZENSHIP WERE A HARD-FOUGHT
BATTLE AND CANADIAN CITIZENS MUST CONTINUE TO PROTECT AND STRIVE
FOR JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND EQUALITY; A MESSAGE THAT NEEDS TO BE
PRESERVED AND SHARED WITH FUTURE GENERATIONS OF CANADIANS.
VOTING IS NO LONGER A PRIVILEGE; IT IS NOW A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT.



TOMEKICHI "TOMEY" HOMMA (1865-1945)

*"LET US CELEBRATE THE COURAGE AND PERSEVERANCE OF THE FIRST
JAPANESE CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST, TOMEKICHI HOMMA!"*

- ART MIKI, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JAPANESE CANADIANS, 1984-1992

*"TOMEKICHI HOMMA IS A JAPANESE CANADIAN HERO. HIS LIFE WAS
A STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM FOR EQUALITY FOR ALL ASIANS."*

- MARYKA OMATSU, CANADA'S FIRST FEMALE JUDGE OF ASIAN HERITAGE

SPECIAL THANKS

KEIKO TENNEY-SEAN HOMMA, ANDREA GEIGER,
GEOFF MEGGS, CAREY ISAKSSON, JOY KOGAWA,
ART MIKI, MARYKA OMATSU, JEN KATO, VINCE CURATOLO,
NIKKEI NATIONAL MUSEUM & CULTURAL CENTRE,
SHERRI SHINOBU KAJIWARA, DAIEN IDE, KEIKO KANEKO,
MEI TERASAWA, LILLIAN MICHIKO BLAKEY,
FUMI TORIGAI, ANNA LING KAYE

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SOURCE MATERIALS, REFERENCES, RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

Nikkei Images - Pioneer Issei: Tomekichi Homma's Fight for the Franchise
by Andrea Geiger. Spring 2003, Vol. 8, No. 1. 2003

"Writing Racial Barriers into Law: Upholding BC's Denial of the Vote to Its Japanese
Canadian Citizens, *Homma v. Cunningham*, 1902," in *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest*,
by Andrea Geiger. Published by University of Washington Press. 2005

Tomekichi Homma: The Story of a Canadian by Keiko Tenney-Sean Homma and
Carey G. Isaksson. Published by Hancock House. 2008

Tomekichi Homma, Canadian by Geoff Meggs.
Published on Lotusland (geoffmeggs.substack.com). 2024

TOMEY: THE UNYIELDING SPIRIT OF TOMEKICHI HOMMA

was written and illustrated on the unceded and ancestral
territory of the həŋqəmiŋəm and Skwxwú7mesh speaking
peoples, the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh
(Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, who have
stewarded these lands since time immemorial.

About the Author



Jeff Chiba Stearns is an Emmy® nominated and Webby award-winning animation and documentary filmmaker, as well as an acclaimed author and illustrator. After graduating from the Emily Carr University with a degree in Film Animation, he founded Vancouver-based boutique animation studio and publishing company Meditating Bunny Studio Inc. in 2001. Jeff's short and feature length films, including *Yellow Sticky Notes* (2007), *One Big Hapa Family* (2010) and *Mixed Match* (2016), have been broadcast around the world, screened in hundreds of international film festivals and garnered dozens of awards.

Being Yonsei, fourth generation Japanese Canadian, and having mixed Japanese and European roots, Jeff's work often deals with themes of multiethnic identity. He coined the term Hapanimation to describe his style of blending anime and manga with a North American cartoon aesthetic.

In 2018, he wrote and illustrated his first picture book *Mixed Critters*, an ABC book inspired by his own children's mixed Japanese backgrounds. *Nori and His Delicious Dreams* (2020), Jeff's second children's book, features a Japanese Canadian boy named Nori who dreams of sleeping on foods from around the world. In 2021, Jeff collaborated with Sansei artist Lillian Michiko Blakey to create the best-selling graphic novel *On Being Yukiko*. Jeff's latest graphic novel, *Ojiichan's Dragon* (2026), is a fantasy based story that takes place in a Japanese Canadian internment camp during WWII.

Tomey: The Unyielding Spirit of Tomekichi Homma is Jeff's second graphic novel.

Follow Jeff's work at [@meditatingbunny](https://www.instagram.com/meditatingbunny) & www.meditatingbunny.com

About the Illustrator



Ally Adachi is a Japanese Canadian (Yonsei) illustrator from Vancouver, British Columbia who graduated from Ontario College of Art & Design University with a degree in Illustration in 2023. After learning how her family was interned during WWII, Ally focused the topic of her OCAD thesis project on the Japanese Canadian internment. With a passion to uncover more historical stories, Ally plans to continue exploring Japanese Canadian history in her future works.

As a fan of animation and film, Ally draws inspiration for visual storytelling from the cartoons that she grew up watching. Heavily influenced by anime and manga, Ally considers her art style simplistic and focuses her strengths on the ability to capture strong emotions through body language and subtle changes in expressions. She contributes her love of drawing to the years she spent doodling in her youth and is thankful that her parents supported her pursuits of becoming a professional artist and illustrator.

Tomey: The Unyielding Spirit of Tomekichi Homma is Ally's first professional project and graphic novel.

Follow Ally's work at [@allyallyorangeart](https://www.instagram.com/allyallyorangeart) & www.allyallyorange.com

TOMEY: THE UNYIELDING SPIRIT OF TOMEKICHI HOMMA SHINES LIGHT ON THE OFTEN UNTOLD STORY OF ONE OF CANADA'S EARLIEST SOCIAL JUSTICE CHAMPIONS.

TOMEKICHI "TOMEY" HOMMA'S INSPIRATIONAL STORY COMES TO LIFE THROUGH AN ENGAGING GRAPHIC NOVEL BY JAPANESE CANADIAN STORYTELLERS, JEFF CHIBA STEARNS AND ALLY ADACHI.

IN THE LATE 1800'S, AFTER LEAVING BEHIND A LIFE IN JAPAN STEEPED IN THE SAMURAI CODE, TOMEKICHI SETTLED IN STEVESTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA TO BEGIN A HUMBLE LIFE AS A FISHERMAN. HE WOULD SOON RISE TO BECOME A REVERED COMMUNITY LEADER WITH A RELENTLESS SPIRIT TO FIGHT AGAINST INJUSTICE AND CHALLENGE RACIST POLITICIANS AND LAWMAKERS.

INSTRUMENTAL IN STARTING THE JAPANESE FISHERMEN'S BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, TOMEY WOULD GO ON TO ADVOCATE FOR THE BUILDING OF THE FIRST FISHERMEN'S HOSPITAL AND PROVIDE SCHOOLING FOR JAPANESE CANADIAN CHILDREN. IN 1900, HE FOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA TO GRANT JAPANESE CANADIANS THE RIGHT TO VOTE, ONLY TO LATER DIE IN AN INTERNMENT CAMP BEFORE EVER SEEING HIS DREAM REALIZED.

"I BELIEVE GRANDFATHER TOMEKICHI WOULD BE PLEASED WITH HOW OUR JAPANESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY HAS MORE THAN ENDURED; IT IS THRIVING, TAKING ITS RIGHTFUL AND WELL-EARNED PLACE IN THE DIVERSE CANADIAN MOSAIC."

-KEIKO TENNEY-SEAN HOMMA,
CO-AUTHOR OF **TOMEKICHI HOMMA:**
THE STORY OF A CANADIAN



National Coalition
of Canadians Against
Anti-Asian Racism

©2025 The National Coalition of Canadians Against Anti-Asian Racism (NCCAAR)
All Rights Reserved

ISBN 978-0-9737808-2-6



9 780973 780826

MADE IN CANADA 