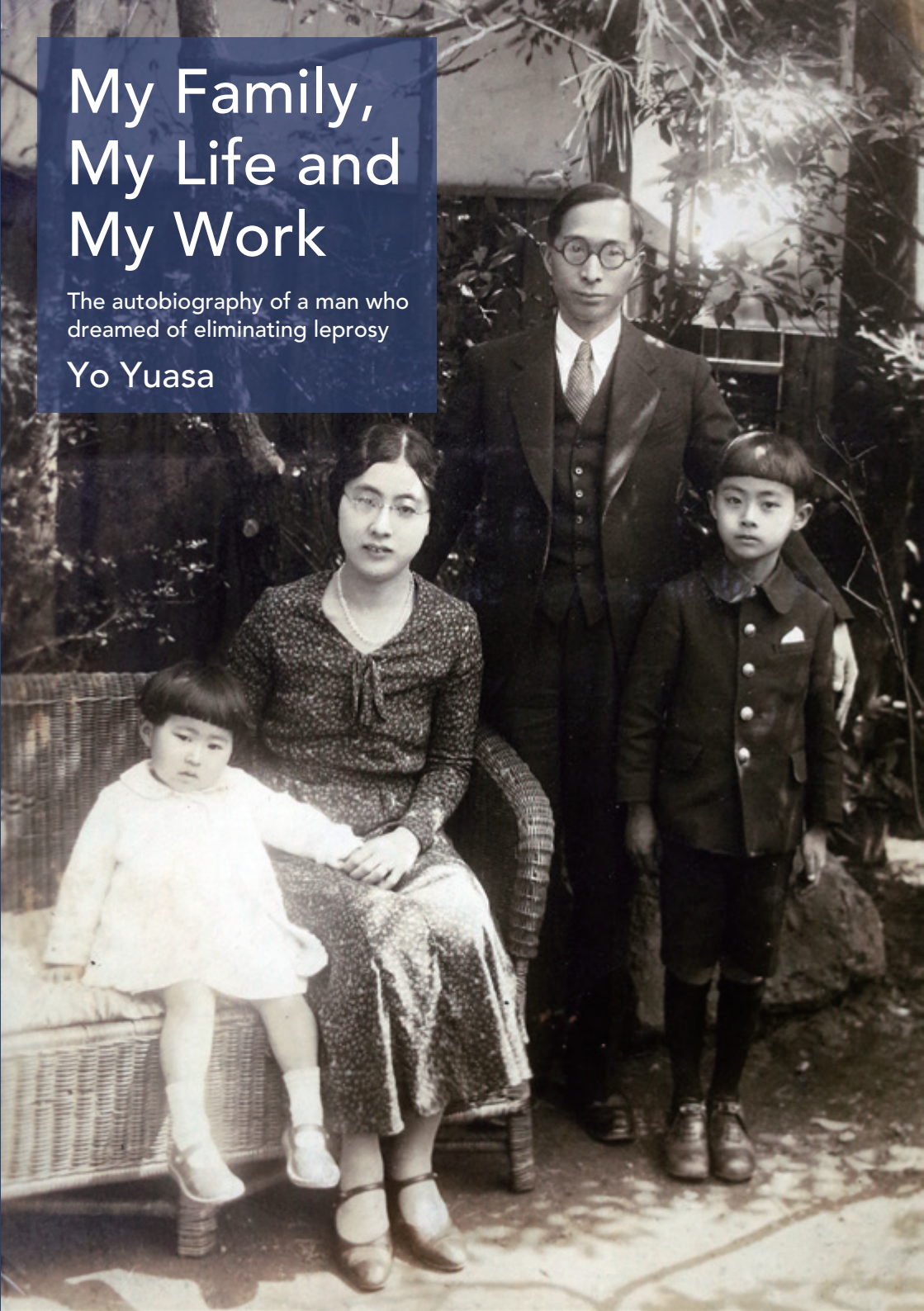


# My Family, My Life and My Work

The autobiography of a man who  
dreamed of eliminating leprosy

Yo Yuasa



*As each one has received a special gift,  
employ it in serving one another  
as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

*I Peter 4:10.*



The author in 1950, aged twenty-three

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Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation

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# Foreword

Both as a colleague of Dr. Yo Yuasa's at Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation and as a member of the first graduating class of International Christian University (ICU), I have more than a passing interest in the story told in these pages.

Dr. Yuasa's father, Dr. Hachiro Yuasa, was the first president of ICU, and Dr. Yuasa himself studied there in the mid-1950s after returning from five years at Amherst College in the U.S.A.

ICU was a new type of university established after World War II. It set out to provide its students with a liberal arts education and foster a commitment to peace and social justice. Eleanor Roosevelt, who played an influential role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, gave the first convocation address. As students, we felt we were part of a grand project and there was a great sense of unity among us. My experience at ICU certainly shaped my life in many positive ways.

Dr. Yo Yuasa was seven years older than me, but he was my contemporary at ICU. Tuberculosis had forced him to leave Amherst before he could graduate. After some months recuperating in a sanatorium in upstate New York, he had come back to Japan for a lung operation. At ICU he was able to earn the credits he needed to graduate from Amherst.

The president encouraged students to find their life partner while at ICU. His son was successful in finding Yuko-san, who was in the second graduating class, but unfortunately I failed. (Happy to report, I found my perfect match once I started my career.)

I had little contact with Dr. Yuasa while at university, and this would remain the case for many years until the establishment of Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation in 1974. Like ICU, SMHF was a new undertaking with a grand vision, which was to realize the dream of its founders Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa and Professor Morizo Ishidate to eliminate leprosy from the world. From the outset, it was guided by the “humanism and science” of Professor Ishidate, the founding chair.

Our first activity was to hold an international conference for leprosy control in Southeast Asia. One of our trustees, Dr. Saikawa, suggested inviting Dr. Yuasa, who was then working at a leprosy hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal. As we had been advised to look for a medical director by Professor Ishidate and Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara, another of our trustees, I asked Dr. Yuasa if he would be willing to assume this role. Fortunately for us, after consulting with many people, he agreed.

As medical and later executive director, Dr. Yuasa was a key member of SMHF for more than thirty years. He became a world leader in the fight against leprosy, not only through his work with our foundation but also in his position as president of the International Leprosy Association for two terms, and through his contributions to various WHO and other expert committees.

He took advantage of the window of opportunity provided by the introduction of multidrug therapy (MDT) in the 1980s to push for leprosy to be placed on the global public health agenda, firmly believing that treatment should be available through the general health services in order that every last patient could be reached. “MDT for all” was his rallying cry.

A thorough account of his work and views on leprosy elimination was published by our foundation two years ago in *A Life Fighting Leprosy*, a collection of Dr. Yuasa’s speeches and writings. This new book tells us more about the man, his upbringing, and the experiences that shaped him.

I last saw Dr. Yuasa in hospital in Kyoto, a month before he died in September 2016. We had a good conversation and I was able to express my gratitude for all he did for our foundation and for leprosy elimination, which was immeasurable. I am also grateful that he left behind this account of his family, his life and his work, because it is a story that deserves to be told.

Professor Kenzo Kiikuni  
Chief Advisor, Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation  
Tokyo, August 2017



## Editor's Preface

In 2012, after a distinguished career at the forefront of the global fight against leprosy, Dr. Yo Yuasa retired from Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation. He served as SMHF's executive and medical director between 1975 and 2005 and as advisor until his retirement. He still kept a desk at the foundation, however, and visited once a month from his home in Kyoto. At some point, his desk was relocated to the room where I was editing the *WHO Goodwill Ambassador's Newsletter for the Elimination of Leprosy*. Quite what he thought of the new arrangements, Dr. Yuasa was too much of a gentleman to say.

In his prime, he had traveled the world on a single-minded mission to cure people of leprosy. He worked with the leading leprologists of the day, liaised with public health officials and WHO policy makers, and played a key role in introducing a new treatment regimen that made possible the goal of eliminating leprosy as a public health problem. He served with distinction not only SMHF but also the International Leprosy Association, first as secretary and subsequently as its first non-Western president. For his contributions, he was the recipient of the leprosy world's most prestigious honor, the Damien-Dutton Award.

This was the Dr. Yuasa I knew about. Clearly, though, there was more to the story, since he was already forty-nine by the time he joined the foundation. The family he was born into and the life he had led up until that point—including the bouts of tuberculosis that gave him a patient's eye view of doctors—I became aware of only recently.

A graduate of Amherst College in Massachusetts, Dr. Yuasa was invited to provide an account of "What I did after Amherst" by the organizer of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion of the class of 1953. That assignment must have stirred memories because

he continued to flesh out details of his life long after the reunion was over.

Dr. Yuasa wrote in long hand and in English, and from time to time would fax pages of his manuscript to SMHF. There, Ms. Chiemi Sanga would type them up and post them back to Dr. Yuasa for review. At some point, I was invited to take a look and was immediately fascinated.

As someone who has spent many years in Japan, to read about some of the educators, activists and opinion-formers of the modern period and to discover their connection to Dr. Yuasa was a revelation. My enthusiasm must have communicated itself to him, because he agreed to let me edit these pages.

The last time we met was on his final visit to the foundation at the end of 2015, when he came to clear his desk. As he was leaving, he stopped, looked me in the eye and extended his hand. For the elderly man he had become, he had a firm grip; I felt I was being given a commission as well as being charged with certain responsibilities.

The work of editing this manuscript began when Dr. Yuasa was still alive and continued after his death in Kyoto on September 7, 2016 at the age of ninety. For the chapters on his career at SMHF and his activities for leprosy elimination, which he had addressed in more detail in previously published work, I have included information from his earlier writings to fill in the picture for readers who may be unfamiliar with the story. I have also added some reflections of Dr. Yuasa's from an unpublished interview as well as a number of anecdotes gleaned in conversations with his widow, Dr. Yuko Yuasa, and daughter Yoko Yuasa.

I think back often to Dr. Yuasa's handshake and trust he would have approved of these additions.

Jonathan Lloyd-Owen

Tokyo, August 2017



My father, Hachiro Yuasa (back row, center), and his family shortly before he left for the U.S.A. in 1908.  
Seated in the front row are my grandparents, Jiro (right) and Hatsu (third from right).

1

## The Yuasa Family

In 1908, aged eighteen, my father Hachiro Yuasa arrived in the U.S.A. from Japan as an agricultural immigrant. He had been given a first-class boat ticket by his father to cross the Pacific upon graduating from Doshisha Junior High School in Kyoto and promising to be financially independent in the future.

After spending three years as a farm hand in California, he realized that he needed to further his education, so he moved from California to Kansas because Kansas State Agricultural College had given him a scholarship.

In Kansas City he found accommodation at a YMCA hostel. Coming back from an outing one day, he saw that the manager was quite agitated because my father had left seven \$10 gold coins—all he possessed—on a desk in his room. My father, such was his innocence or ignorance, told the manager that he had assumed his money would be quite safe since it was a Christian hostel.

From Kansas, he entered the Graduate School of the University of Illinois in 1916 to study for a Ph.D. in entomology after the professor of entomology there had given him a job as his assistant. He then found a full-time position as an entomologist with the Illinois State Department of Agriculture, which was unusual because he was not a U.S. citizen.

He met my mother, Kiyoko Ukai, who was his second cousin, at a conference in Des Moines, Iowa. She was the eldest daughter of the Reverend Takeshi Ukai, a famous pastor of the Ginza Church in Tokyo who preached there for thirty years. She was the granddaughter of Mrs. Kajiko Yajima, who was related to the Tokutomi clan in Kyushu.

Mrs. Yajima was the first president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Japan (Kyofukai), which was formed to fight against social evils such as drunkenness and prostitution. She was also the first Japanese principal of Joshi Gakuin, today one of the oldest and most reputable Christian girls' high schools in Tokyo.

My mother accompanied her grandmother on a tour of the U.S.A. as her interpreter and then entered Simpson College in Iowa. After her graduation, she and my father were married in 1922. It was at this point that she surprised him by saying, “Let’s go home.”

My father had not thought of returning to Japan and now had to find a job there. Fortunately, the newly opened College of Agriculture of Kyoto Imperial University needed a professor of entomology. My father had been offered the position the previous year, but had replied briefly by postcard saying he was not interested. Now he wrote a longer and much more polite letter to inquire if the job was still available.

He was given the post and he and my mother moved to Kyoto in 1924 after first spending a year in Europe, mostly in Berlin, on a Ministry of Education scholarship. Living was cheap for those with foreign currency, so my parents purchased a piano, a gramophone and lots of records, which they brought with them back to Kyoto.

Initially they lived in a typical Japanese house, but found it too cold so they commissioned William Merrell Vories to design them a 100 percent American-style house in Shimogamo, an area with a famous shrine that is now a World Heritage Site. Vories was an American educator, architect, entrepreneur and missionary living in Japan. Among his many activities, he founded a company, later known as The Omi Brotherhood, to promote an ointment named Mentholatum that he sold to earn funds for his missionary work.

Having left Japan at eighteen, my father—unlike his fellow professors—had not had a chance to develop his artistic tastes. Consequently, when Mr. Soetsu Yanagi started a *mingei* (folk art) movement in Japan in the 1920s, my father became involved. He was one of the founders of the Kyoto Folk Art Club in 1929 and later in life became the president of the Kyoto Folk Art

Association, establishing a folk crafts museum in Kyoto in 1981 to which he gave a number of pieces from his private collection. He also started a folk art class at International Christian University (ICU), the university founded in Tokyo after World War II that he served as first president. The Yuasa Hachiro Memorial Museum that opened at ICU in June 1982, the year following my father's death, contains many items from his collection.

In addition, my father was a central figure at the Kyoto YMCA, serving for a time as its chairman, and was an active member of the Rotary Club of Kyoto, almost never missing its weekly Wednesday lunchtime meetings. He was also president of the Kyoto-Boston Sister City Committee—Boston becoming one of Kyoto's sister cities in 1959.

When talking about my father, I must mention his mother Hatsu, my grandmother. She was born a Tokutomi and was a niece of Mrs. Yajima. The Tokutomi clan was an old-established and well-known family in the town of Minamata in Kumamoto Prefecture. Hatsu was the fourth daughter and each of her elder sisters made a significant contribution to girls' education.

My grandmother was given the responsibility of looking after her two younger brothers, Iichiro and Kenjiro, who in adult life were called Soho and Roka. Soho was a journalist and prolific writer on Japanese history with more than thirty volumes to his name. He became a national opinion leader and counseled both the government of Japan and the imperial household. His younger brother Roka was a popular novelist and an admirer of Tolstoy, whom he went to meet in Russia in 1906—just as Soho had done ten years earlier. Roka's novel *Hototogisu* (The Cuckoo) became a best-seller.

One thing I can still remember about Soho is something that he wrote in his daily column in one of the national newspapers during World War II. He took issue with the military over the wording of their communiqués from the

Pacific Front. They used the word *tenshin*, literally meaning “to turn around and advance,” which they had coined as a euphemism for “retreat”. My great uncle strongly objected to its use, because he felt it was misleading the nation.

Although she was just a few years older than her brothers, Hatsu was put in charge of their day-to-day lives and their schooling. When Soho entered the Kumamoto Western Academy, where the curriculum was taught entirely in English by Captain Leroy L. Janes, a veteran of the American Civil War, Hatsu accompanied him; when they moved to Kyoto to join the newly-established Doshisha Eigakko (Doshisha Academy), she went too. In fact, she attended school with them, although she had to listen to all the lectures while sitting in the corridor outside the classroom, because the school did not admit girls.

Later she became a kindergarten teacher in Tokyo, before marrying my grandfather, Jiro Yuasa, in 1885. Jiro’s first wife had died young and left him with four young children. Hatsu would bear him eight children, all but one of whom reached adulthood.

Jiro was the eldest son of a wealthy merchant in the town of Annaka, Gunma Prefecture, where the family produced miso paste and soy sauce—sold to this day under the Aritaya brand—and ran a thriving silk business. A prominent Christian in the town, he served as a member of the Gunma prefectural assembly for many years and was chairman by the time he married Hatsu. In this role, he worked to end licensed prostitution, and succeeded in making Gunma the first prefecture in Japan to outlaw the practice, in the face of long-established local interests. He also founded Japan’s first private library.

My grandfather had had the good sense to name his children by numbers. The first-born was Ichiro, the No. 1 child and a boy, who became a moderately famous painter. He spent time in Spain studying the works of Diego Velasquez, and was one of the founders of Nika-kai, an association of



Japanese contemporary artists. One of his paintings, commissioned by the government, hangs in the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery in Tokyo.

My father Hachiro was Hatsu's second child with Jiro and their first son. He was so named because he was Jiro's eighth child ("hachi" meaning eight) and a male, taking into account two other children from my grandfather's first marriage who did not survive.

An episode concerning my grandmother when she was still single was her possible marriage to a promising young politician. Her brother Ichiro—concerned for his sister's future, one day brought a young man to meet her. Knowing her brother's intentions, Hatsu asked the young man for his views on the concubine system, which was quite common in those days.

The man was greatly surprised to receive such a question from a young unmarried woman, but replied that while he had no concubines as of yet, he would be likely to have one or two when he was older and a successful political figure. With that answer, my grandmother bid him goodbye, saying that they had no future together—much to the disappointment of her brother. The young man in question would later become prime minister of Japan and my grandmother lost the chance of being the "first lady," although I am sure that did not bother her in the least.

Another story about my grandmother concerns her honeymoon. Hatsu invited her good friend and cousin Miyako Ebina, a pastor's wife, to accompany her and Jiro to a hot spring resort. Quite what this lady's function was to have been, however, I do not know.

My grandfather Jiro obviously was very considerate toward my grandmother. After the wedding, he brought her not to his ancestral home in Annaka, but to Tokyo. They lived in his new residence next to Reinanzaka Church, behind where the U.S. Embassy now stands. Jiro had donated land

for the church, which was founded in 1879. The building was destroyed in a U.S. air raid during World War II, but was subsequently rebuilt by my cousin.

One by one, Jiro brought his four children by his first wife so that they could get to know their new stepmother. Of my father's siblings, his brother Juro (child No. 10) became a fundamentalist church minister in the Holiness movement and emigrated to Brazil to preach among Japanese in Sao Paulo. The church he founded, known today as the Igreja Evangelica Holiness do Bosque, has become the largest and most active Japanese Protestant Christian sect in Brazil. Moreover, the Yuasa family in Brazil is now larger than all the Yuasa families in Japan put together.

In passing, my grandfather had a young brother, Kichiro, who studied at Yale University and obtained a Ph.D. in Old Testament and Semitic Languages and became a famous poet who wrote under the name Hangetsu Yuasa. He was one of the pioneers of new-style poetry as well as translating some books of the Old Testament; his most famous translation is of *Ecclesiastes*, *The Song of Songs*.

Returning to the U.S.A. to pursue studies in library science, Kichiro was later appointed director of Kyoto Prefectural Library, the first public library in Japan. He was also a professor of theology at Doshisha University and designed the university emblem, adopted in 1893, based on an Assyrian letter meaning a nation or a land.

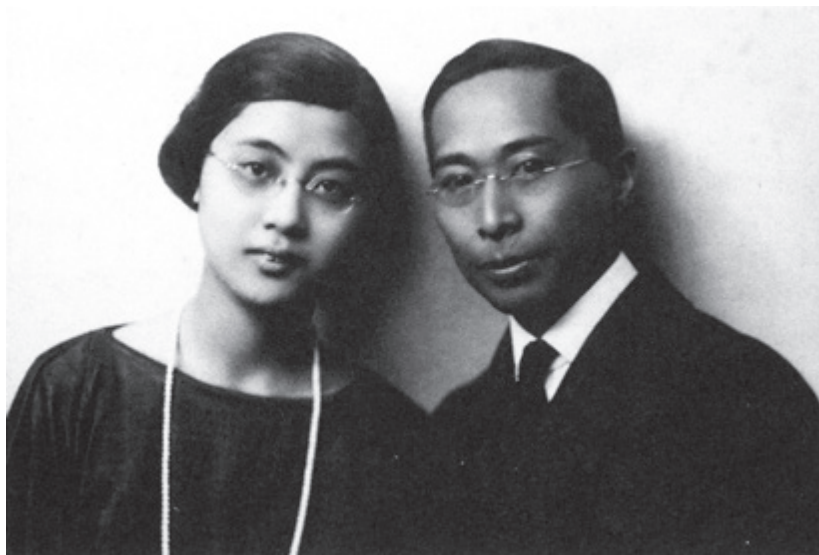
Now let me give some details of my own life.



My grandparents Jiro and Hatsu Yuasa. Jiro fathered twelve children, eight of them with Hatsu; my father was their first son.



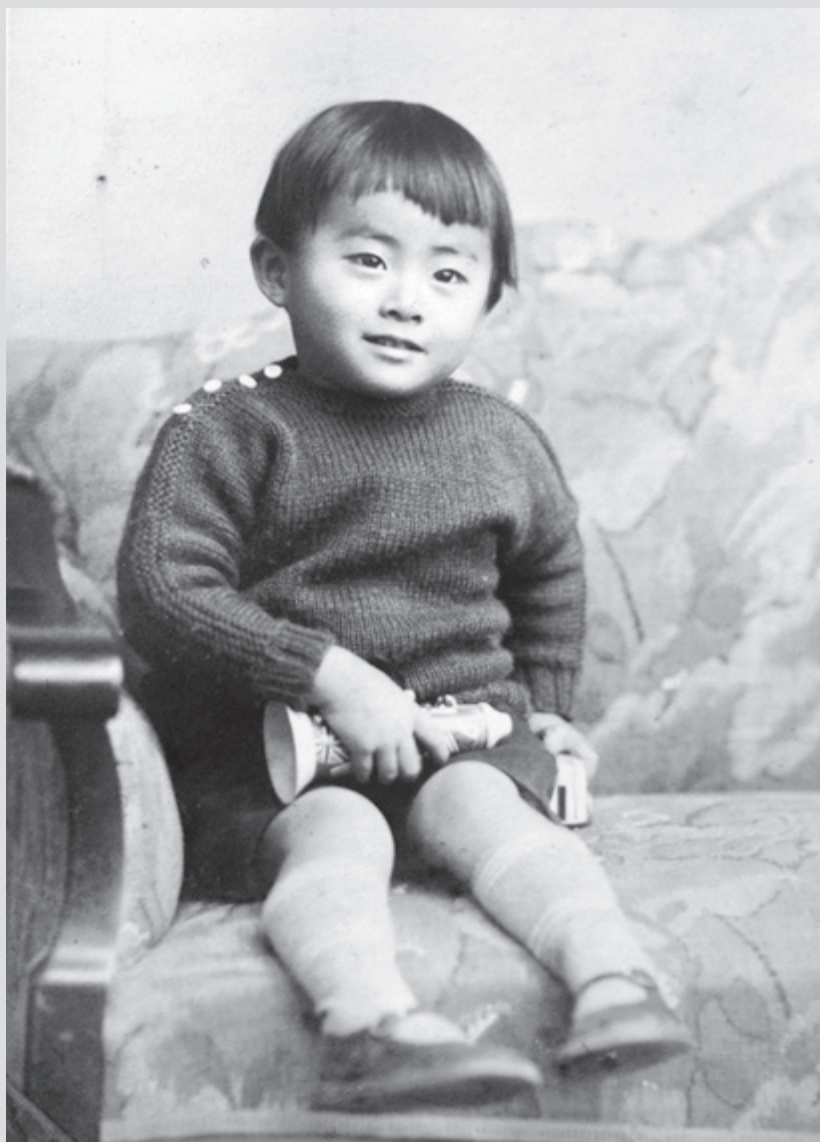
My father (right) during his days as a farm hand in California



My mother and father in Berlin in 1923



A view of our house in Shimogamo,  
designed for my parents by William Merrell Vories



I was around three when this photo was taken.

2

Growing Up in Kyoto

I was born on July 10, 1926, in Kyoto, which was the capital of Japan for over ten centuries from 794. I was the only son, but I had an adorable sister six years my junior, called Koko.

Tragically, she died when she was six years old due to a brain tumor, which was a great loss to my parents and to me. Her funeral service took place at Doshisha Chapel, one of the oldest Western-style buildings in Kyoto and now classified as an important cultural property.

I still recall quite vividly a delightful scene when my sister, then five, came to fetch me for supper from my piano teacher's house, which was about 500 meters away from ours. She had three puppies on a leash and she was as lovely and lively as her puppies.

My mother forced me to learn the piano. I went to the teacher's house twice a week for lessons and was the only male student. While I did not enjoy the lessons at all, I enjoyed the socializing afterward. Once a year we had a recital at Doshisha University's Neesima Hall. It involved around ten pupils and I was required to play two pieces.

By the age of only five, I seemed to have developed quite a good geographical memory and sense of direction. One day, I decided to visit my father at Kyoto Imperial University; evidently, I had accompanied him there at least once. It must have taken me about an hour, but I found my way to his second-floor office in one of the buildings.

He was quite surprised to see me and after giving me some sweets, told me to go home, which I did without any difficulty. My mother was furious, demanding to know why he had not put me in a taxi. My father said that since I had managed to get there on foot, he thought I could walk home too.

I also went by tricycle with a five-year-old friend to the Doshisha Women's College campus to visit an American missionary by the name of Miss Denton.

She was the honorary director of McLean Kindergarten, where I had started going around that time, and was famous for baking nice biscuits. Again, in about one hour, I found her house. She recognized me as the son of Dr. Yuasa, and gave me and my friend what we had come for.

Nearby lived Mr. Katagiri, the principal of Doshisha Women's College, and next door to him lived the Izumiya family, who were well-known confectioners. Every morning, various kinds of biscuits were delivered around the neighborhood. Another treat came from Shinshindo bakery, famous for its tasty bread and whose motto was "Our Daily Bread" after the Lord's Prayer. They had a delivery service and we enjoyed their freshly baked loaves every morning. Their second son, Mana, was my classmate.

After two years of kindergarten, I started at a newly-built primary school about twenty minutes' walk through paddy fields. Within a year, the area had been developed and street cars ran along a wide street. I came home for lunch every day during the one-hour lunch break.

For some reason, I was considered a leader in my primary school days and my fellow pupils always elected me head of the class. I was also chairman of the school's Good Behavior Club and wore a nice blue ribbon on my chest. I was supposed to prevent my schoolmates from watching the *kamishibai* storyteller when he came round and narrated stories that he illustrated with pictures displayed in a wooden box theater mounted on the back of his bicycle. But I enjoyed the show so much that I was just as likely to be among the audience.

I was quite fluent in the Kyoto dialect as spoken by children, but at home I used the standard Tokyo dialect with my parents. In the Japanese language class at school, I was made to read aloud the textbook for the benefit of my fellow students as our teacher had a strong Kyoto accent.

I was a grade-A student, other than one B grade I received in my fourth-



year art class for using my left hand for drawing. I was born left-handed, and in those days using one's left hand was frowned upon. In kindergarten, I wrote my name on the back of my drawings, apparently copying my teacher's example. In fact, it went through my eyes to my brain and came down through my left hand to produce a mirror image, rather like Leonardo da Vinci's famous mirror writing. This left-handedness proved very useful when I became a surgeon, however, because I could use both hands equally well.

Summer in Kyoto is hot and humid. For two summers in a row my mother took me to Kamakura, south of Tokyo, where her father had a church within walking distance of the popular Yuigahama beach. The following three summers, she rented a cottage among pine trees on the shore of the Ise Peninsula. At low tide there were many small, shallow pools where I could catch fish as well as clams, so our lunch always consisted of fried fish and baked clams.

In the summer of my fifth and sixth years of primary school, following the death of my sister, I was made to join the summer camps run by the YMCA on Mount Hiei and in Omi Maiko on the shore of Lake Biwa. I did not particularly enjoy these, however.

My father did not have much time to spend with me, but I still remember two occasions quite well. At the beginning of spring, perhaps in early March, when I was around ten, we went to Kurama Temple in the northern part of Kyoto. Snow lay on the ground and my father found a very rare seven-segment insect, which resembled a twig.

When I was twelve, just before he went to India and from there to the U.S.A., we went to Mount Rokko and stayed at the Rokkosan Hotel. At night, we looked out from the dining room at the city of Kobe beautifully illuminated below us. Next morning I had fried fish for breakfast, which was a special treat for me.

Going into Kobe, we went to a movie theater to watch a film about the German World War I flying ace, Baron von Richthofen, whose fighter plane was painted red. He shot down many enemy aircraft, but in the end the Red Baron met the same fate.

I had only one more trip with my mother before World War II. We went to the popular summer resort of Kamikochi in the Japan Alps. From there, we traveled to Lake Yamanaka at the foot of Mount Fuji, where we visited Soho Tokutomi.

In 1935, after happy days at Kyoto Imperial University, my father became the president of Doshisha University, following in the footsteps of his brother-in-law Dr. Gintaro Daikuhara. Founded by Joseph Neesima, Doshisha had begun life as Doshisha Eigakko, where my great uncles Soho and Roka had studied. It was a Christian educational institution, which in the increasingly ultra-nationalistic and militaristic atmosphere pervading Japan at the time placed my father in a very difficult position.

At Kyoto Imperial University, he had enjoyed considerable social status as a professor of an imperial university as well as a secure financial position, which would have been his for another fourteen years until retirement at sixty. My mother was strongly opposed to his moving to Doshisha, but his uncle Soho apparently had no objection. It took my father a full month to decide whether or not to accept the post; when he did, he must have taken it as guidance from heaven.

As president of Doshisha, he was branded public enemy No.1 and posters calling for his death surrounded our house. On one occasion, I found three thugs, one with a drawn sword, standing at the entrance when I opened the front door in response to the ringing of the doorbell. I thought they seemed relieved when I told them that my father was not at home.

Perhaps to protect me from these same nationalists who took exception to my father's position and the values that Doshisha stood for, my school chose me as the student representative who almost every month had to visit Shinto shrines and imperial tombs to pay respects.

I started learning Japanese brush calligraphy, primarily to strengthen my right arm. Soon my father also wanted to learn. The teacher used to come to our home one evening a week. I was quite good, and my work was exhibited on two occasions at the Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art near the zoo.

I took up fishing in my second year of primary school and would often be out by myself until nightfall on the banks of the Kamo River or along an aqueduct that ran from Lake Biwa; both were only a five- to ten-minute walk from our house. I seldom caught anything, but I enjoyed being alone for a couple of hours.

Because of my father's profession, I also liked to collect butterflies, dragonflies and other insects, and I shocked my mother by bringing them home and displaying them—together with the occasional snake—on our dinner table. If not fishing I was collecting these creatures in the nearby botanical garden.

In our garden we used to get tortoises as well as snakes. About thirty years ago we found a badger with three little ones playing under a full moon. I took a flash photograph of them but there was nothing on the film, much to my disappointment.

I did not play much with my classmates after school. My close friends were the children of Professor Hitoshi Kihara, my father's colleague at Kyoto Imperial University and a world-famous geneticist who discovered an ancestral species of bread wheat in the Central Asian Steppes. He was also an influential figure in the development of skiing in Japan. His wife and my mother were close friends.

The Kiharas had three daughters and one son. The eldest daughter, who was one year older than me, died before reaching twenty. The second and third daughters and I were very close, even more so after the war when my mother and I came back to Kyoto from Tokyo. I think my mother and Mrs. Kihara thought perhaps that the second daughter and I would eventually get married, and even I thought it would happen.

But after Mrs. Kihara died and Dr. Kihara retired from Kyoto Imperial University in 1955, he moved away, becoming director of the National Institute of Genetics in Mishima, at the foot of Mount Fuji, and later establishing his own institute of biological research in Hodogaya, near Yokohama. After that, I had much less contact with his children; however, I did become reacquainted with the third daughter when she entered university in Tokyo, where I was based at the time. She had a red, open-top sports car, and we would make day trips to the coast for seafood.

One of Dr. Kihara's commercial enterprises was to develop a seedless watermelon that became very popular in Japan. While he was perfecting it, we used to receive several watermelons each summer so that we could check whether or not they had seeds. I think this exposure to all these watermelons is why I lost my taste for them in later life.

In 1937, under strong pressure from the army, my father had to resign from Doshisha. Late the following year, he traveled to India to represent the Protestant Church in Japan at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Missionary Council Conference in Tambaram, near Madras.

Before he left, he made an arrangement with his brother in Annaka for me to become the legal owner of the house and land in Shimogamo. As a result, when he died many years later, I had only to pay a small amount of inheritance tax.

From India, he was invited to the U.S.A. to report to churches there on the message of the Tambaram conference. The visit was organized by Miss Ruth Seabury, the education secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. My father was one of five people in a delegation from Asia and Africa.

He stayed on, initially based at Congregational House—the headquarters of the American Board—at 14 Beacon Street in Boston. On the day of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, he had been preaching in a small church in Maine.

Any useful employment in wartime Japan was out of the question for my father, so he declined the chance to return aboard a ship taking Japanese diplomats back home. He remained in the U.S.A. for the duration of the war.

As an enemy alien, his movements were somewhat restricted, but he tried to visit the relocation centers—in effect, concentration camps—where Japanese Americans who had been living on the West Coast were interned. His main message to them was to try to be good American citizens and help make America a better place, despite the wrong that had been done to them, because this was their country.

American citizens of German or Italian origin did not suffer the same treatment, and the internment policy was greatly condemned by the American public after the war. But it wasn't until 1988 that President Ronald Reagan signed an act that offered an official apology and provided monetary compensation to those who had suffered this injustice.

My father tried to find jobs for young Japanese Americans who had been living on the Pacific Coast and succeeded in bringing several of them to New York or Boston, where they worked mostly at various Christian mission boards.

Elsie Takeoka was one of these, becoming Ruth Seabury's private secretary at the American Board and living at the house of a Mr. Vakar and his family

in Watertown, near Cambridge, Massachusetts, where my father was a house guest. Mr. Vakar was a White Russian, and Miss Seabury helped him and his family to obtain U.S. citizenship. Later, when I was studying at Amherst College, they became my host family whenever I went to Boston, and Elsie would take me around the city at weekends.

When I finished six years of primary school, my mother and I moved to Tokyo—me to start junior high school and my mother to live with her father, the famous pastor of Ginza Church, one of the Protestant churches in Tokyo.

My grandfather was also the chairman of the Sunday School Board, and wore a nice little dove-shaped gold pin on his lapel. As a frail child, I had always missed a few days of primary school each month through illness. I hardly ever missed Sunday school, however, which was held in the kindergarten where I went for two years before starting primary school. As a result, I received a dove-shaped lapel pin similar to my grandfather's, but made of bronze. I was very proud to show it to him and naturally he was very happy.

In fact, Sunday had been the best day of the week when we were living in Kyoto, because we had a very friendly Sunday school teacher, Mr. Murakami, a student of Doshisha University's School of Theology. After the service, he used to take several of us hiking and fishing. Sometimes we even went skiing, carrying our skis to the top of Mount Hiei, which was nearly 900 meters high. Mr. Murakami died during World War II, leading a tank battalion on Okinawa.

Some years later, when my mother and I returned to Kyoto from Tokyo after the war, I became a Sunday school teacher myself after being baptized at the age of twenty. I taught at the same kindergarten that I had attended as a boy.

At the end of my fifth year of primary school, I had to make a speech on behalf of the whole school, offering best wishes to the graduating class. My father helped me to write it. It was not the conventional speech you would

normally expect to hear at a school in Japan; I remember it being quite good. Perhaps for that reason, a year later I was called on to make another speech, this time as a representative of the graduating class.

With that, my school days in Kyoto were behind me, and I was about to begin a very different kind of education in Tokyo.



With my sister Koko: her death at the age of six was a tragic loss.





In this family gathering, I am standing next to my grandmother Hatsu (third from left) in the front row. Behind us are my mother and my father, who is holding Koko.



With my trusty tricycle in 1929



In our garden with my father.



This family portrait was taken at Daimaru department store in Kyoto on October 30, 1938, before my father left for India. From India he traveled to the U.S.A. and did not return to Japan until 1946.



With my mother in Tokyo on August 30, 1943

3

## High School Days in Tokyo

I had passed the entrance exam to Jiyu Gakuen (“Freedom School”) and became a boarder there in 1939. This was a unique high school started by Yoshikazu Hani and his wife Motoko, famous journalists and educationalists, who were not happy with the curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education with its emphasis on rote learning. In naming the school, they were inspired by the passage in the Gospel of St. John: “And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” The school’s motto was “Thinking, Living, and Praying.”

A school for girls opened in 1921 in Tokyo’s Mejiro district. In 1934 the main campus relocated to its current location, set among pine trees in the western suburbs of the city. The following year, the Boys’ Department was established there. The area was developing as a residential district and some two decades later the International Christian University campus would be built about ten kilometers to the south.

As originally conceived, Jiyu Gakuen provided seven years of schooling: four years of middle school and three years of high school. Danish-type gymnastics, Western music and farm work were important items on the curriculum. The first school activity undertaken by newly enrolled boys was to build the desks and chairs we would use in our dormitory.

Each student had to join the school chorus, singing the music of Verdi’s *Aida*, Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* and other pieces in the original language. I can still sing the Fourth Movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in German without looking at the text.

We were also required to take up a musical instrument. I chose the violin and was a member of the second violin section as well being one of the two timpanists in the school orchestra. Several members of the New Symphony Orchestra came to our campus each week and assisted us with our music practice.

Some of us went to Hibiya Public Hall several evenings a year to attend concerts of classical music. Afterward, the journey back to our dorms involved us walking the last part of the way as the local electric trains were no longer running at that hour.

In my second year at the school, we took part in a big music festival at Hibiya Public Hall, which seated more than 2,000 people. I was a timpanist for a Haydn symphony and second violinist or member of the tenor section of the choir for some other pieces.

We also held gymnastics events on the central lawn of the Girls' Department, with various demonstrations of Danish gymnastics as well as martial arts exhibitions involving bamboo sword fencing.

In the Boys' Department we had a pig pen. I remember making a big ham by smoking the loin of a pig that had been butchered at a local farm. We also had a pond filled with rainbow trout. Each day we had to run over to tend to the pigs and the trout and then run back again for fifteen minutes of physical exercise, which we did bare-chested, even when snow was falling.

The three periods in the morning were spent in class following the standard curriculum laid down by the Ministry of Education. One of our English teachers was from Great Britain—he was a Welshman—so I managed to learn the language with very good pronunciation. But afternoon classes were quite different, with many hours devoted to handicrafts.

Mr. and Mrs. Hani were Christians, though rather unorthodox ones. Most days there were separate morning services for boys and girls before classes started, held in the boys' gymnasium and the girls' auditorium, respectively, although for special events the boys would join the girls. We always read some passages from the Bible, we sang some hymns and either Mrs. or Mr. Hani would give a talk for twenty minutes or so. These talks were not always on Christian

themes. In fact, more often than not, Mr. Hani based his talks on stories from the writings of Confucius. We had prayers only on special occasions.

The girls' dormitory was in the center of the campus, right next to Mr. and Mrs. Hani's house. The boys' dormitory, called Totenryo, was just off campus. Totenryo consisted of four identical two-story buildings, with rooms for six or eight boys. Each room had a central study area, where we placed the chairs and desks we had made immediately upon entering the school. There were tatami mats at opposite ends of each room, where we slept. There were no closets and all our possessions had to be stored in our desks.

In winter, the only heat was provided by a coal stove in the dining room, while in the summer there was no such thing as air conditioning. We were awoken by the sound of a bugle at 7:00 A.M. in winter and at 6:00 A.M. the rest of the year. In fifteen minutes we had to wash and dress; the next fifteen minutes were spent cleaning the room and surrounding areas; then we had half an hour of self-study, followed by half an hour for breakfast in the dining room before we all went to the campus.

Susumu Hani, who later became a famous film director, was three years below me. He was the son of Setsuko Hani, a well-known author, and a grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Hani. For some reason, Susumu did not come to school for a few days. I was called to Mr. Hani's house, where he and Mrs. Hani asked me to persuade their grandson to return to class. I was not his friend and wondered why they had approached me. But I went to his house anyway and met with him, and he told me he would come to school the next day. This he did, thus resolving an embarrassing situation for Mr. and Mrs. Hani. I never did find out why they had chosen me for this task, but I was glad it had a happy ending.

The school had a huge farm in Nasu, Tochigi Prefecture, two hours north

of Tokyo by train, which it established in 1941. We spent much time there, living in a converted barn without electricity or running water. We broke ground and developed fields of rice, corn and other crops. The farm later became a very productive dairy operation, with many cows.

During the war, regular classes were suspended and many of the students were sent to work in factories or on farms. Our class was ordered by the army to come up with a cosmic ray counter to measure weather conditions in the stratosphere. We spent nearly two months planning, designing and constructing a rather crude-looking but perfectly functional device. It was used by the army until the end of the war, when soldiers in the American Occupation forces destroyed it by throwing it into the sea.

During my first summer vacation in 1939, I went to a boys' summer camp run by the YMCA at Lake Nojiri in Nagano Prefecture, where three of my cousins living in Tokyo were staying. I was not well: a doctor at the camp diagnosed tuberculosis, so I was exempted from most of the physical activities.

Jiyu Gakuen placed emphasis on students' self-governance. During my time there I held several posts in student government, both for the school as a whole and for the boys' dormitory. In my senior year I was appointed chairman of the Student Committee. Only one person a year could get this post and it was considered top recognition. I was horrified, however, because I considered myself a total failure at school and not worthy of the position. Not long afterward, I developed an episode of tuberculosis in the lung and right knee; I had to leave school in order to be admitted to hospital, and this came as a great relief to me.

As there was no effective chemotherapy for TB at that time, I was soon discharged to rest at my grandfather's house in downtown Tokyo, where my mother was living. She was a senior instructor with the Sogetsu School of



Ikebana and was also acting as one of the vice chairwomen of the YWCA.

Daytime U.S. air raids had begun, and I could hear and see B-29 bombers flying very high over Tokyo, dropping bombs here and there every five minutes or so. Most people took refuge in crudely built air-raid shelters in their gardens, but I could not move due to the plaster cast I was wearing. I remained alone in the house, where I was soon joined by a stray cat whose face was half burnt by an incendiary bomb that had fallen nearby.

On March 9, 1945, I was evacuated by train to Haruna-so, a small private TB sanatorium on the slopes of Mount Haruna, about 150 kilometers northwest of Tokyo. That night, U.S. warplanes mounted their first night-time raid on Tokyo, destroying large sections of the city with incendiary bombs and killing some 100,000 people—second only to the death toll following the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. From the sanatorium we could see huge fires burning, but thought the flames came from Takasaki City, less than thirty kilometers away, and not from Tokyo.

Around this time I received a draft notice, nicknamed a “red paper” because of the color of the paper it was printed on. But on account of my TB, I managed not to have to serve in the military.

There was a great shortage of food at the sanatorium and we nearly starved. Instead of rice, we ate dried sweet potatoes or dried kaoliang, and were lucky if we got one chicken egg a month. After the war, together with a couple of friends from Haruna-so, I went to visit a leprosarium in the Inland Sea. We had heard that leprosy patients had fared better than TB patients during the war and wanted to see for ourselves what life had been like for them. This visit to Nagashima Aiseien in 1947 would come to have enormous significance in my life.

I was still at the TB sanatorium on Mount Haruna when the war ended

on August 15, 1945. Over the radio we heard our emperor's voice for the first time, announcing Japan's surrender.

In October, my mother and I returned to our house in Kyoto, which had been rented to a family in our absence. Kyoto was one of the very few cities in Japan to have been spared American bombing, following advice from Japan specialists—mostly at Harvard University—who appreciated Kyoto's ancient culture. But for a time, it had been considered as a possible A-bomb target. Coming home to the same old neighbors and shops was a real pleasure.

American Occupation forces were stationed in Kyoto, just as they were in other parts of Japan. They built two camps: the first, for married officers and their families, in the botanical garden; and the second, for other members of the forces, on open ground between Heian Shrine and the zoo. They also appropriated Western-style houses in the city for officers.

Four or five houses in our neighborhood were earmarked for this purpose. Our house, having been designed by an American architect, must have been a very attractive proposition for them; for some reason, however, it was not requisitioned and was left for my mother and me to live in. Perhaps they knew that my father was coming back from the U.S.A. on one of their troopships, and so someone in the Occupation authorities or at Kyoto City Hall made sure that the house was ready for him.

After an absence of some eight years, my father returned to Japan in 1946 and resumed being president of Doshisha. My mother, meanwhile, became actively involved in Kyoto's civic life and our life settled into a peaceful routine.

As part of the process of democratizing Japanese society after the war, a number of committees were established, run by people who were popularly elected. My mother became head of the city's educational committee. She

was also elected to the Kyoto Family Court, which handled everything from difficult divorce cases and inheritance claims to issues relating to a marginalized caste unique to the Kyoto area. In addition, she was a leading figure in the YWCA and also established the Kyoto branch of Tomonokai (Friendship Society), a women's group started by Mrs. Motoko Hani that pursued the ideal lifestyle Mrs. Hani propounded in her monthly magazine *Fujin no tomo* (Women's Friend).

On the creative side my mother had the world of haiku, a short-form poem expressing cosmic truths in seventeen syllables. What *mingei* (folk art) was to my father Hachiro Yuasa, so the haiku form was to my mother Kiyoko: it was her means of communicating.

Immediately after the war there was a great shortage of things, and my father's friends in the U.S.A. frequently sent us parcels, many of them containing food items. These often included saccharine tablets, a sugar substitute, which I could get quite a lot of cash for by selling. With the money I made, I started buying second-hand gramophone records of classical music.

There were four record shops in Kyoto that stocked second-hand classical records, which they obtained once a week at auction in Osaka. The owners knew what I wanted so they would buy the records for me if they came up. Every Thursday, I would cycle from shop to shop to find out what they had. I obtained some Haydn string quartets in this way, and they fascinated me.

In March 1946 I returned to Tokyo to attend my graduation ceremony from Jiyu Gakuen. Although I had been absent for a year, Mr. Hani made it possible for me to graduate with my original classmates. As I had no proper suit for the occasion, Mrs. Akagi, the widow of the general manager of the South Manchuria Railway Co., lent me her late husband's formal wear. I like to think I was the best-dressed member of the graduating class.



Graduating from Jiyu Gakuen in 1946 in a borrowed suit: the widow of the former general manager of the South Manchuria Railway Co. lent me her late husband's formal wear.



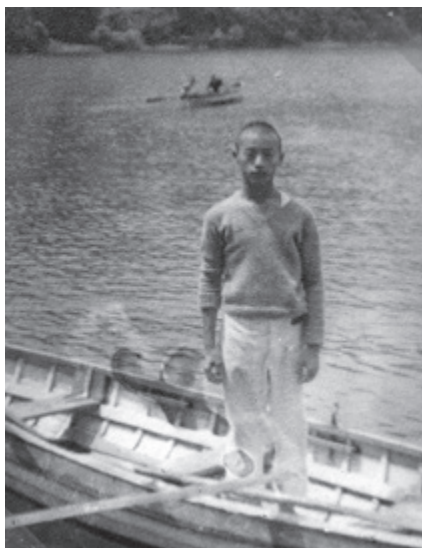
At home in Shimogamo, Kyoto, following my father's return to Japan in 1946



With my friends from Haruna-so TB sanatorium during our trip to Nagashima Aiseien leprosarium in November 1947.



Aboard the boat to Nagashima Aiseien



At a YMCA summer camp at Lake Nojiri in 1939:  
I was not well and a doctor diagnosed tuberculosis.





On a visit to Mount Holyoke women's college in May 1950

4

Studying in the U.S.A.



Twenty-one of us graduated from Jiyu Gakuen that year. Five of us somehow managed to go on to earn B.A. degrees and higher, even though graduates of Jiyu Gakuen received no academic credits for admittance to colleges in Japan. This is why I chose to go to the U.S.A., enrolling in Amherst College, Massachusetts, in September 1949.

I didn't immediately leave for Amherst, however, spending three more years in Kyoto. I wanted to know more about Christianity, so I became a non-regular student of Doshisha University's School of Theology, attending many courses without planning to get a degree. They had a very good faculty, with people such as Dr. Setsuji Otsuka, Dr. Tetsutaro Ariga and Dr. Tadakazu Uoki. I also made friends with a number of the students, including Masao Takenaka, who entered Doshisha after graduating from Kyoto University. He later became one of Japan's best-known Protestant theologians, and guided my wife when she was a student there.

During this period, my health problems resurfaced. I developed TB pneumonia and was confined to bed for almost six months.

As part of my preparations for studying abroad, I had to learn English well enough to listen to class lectures. The Reverend John Young of Hawaii House and Professor Otis Cary and Dr. Alice Cary of Doshisha's Amherst House took on the responsibility and did their best. My English, when I reached the U.S.A., was still far from adequate, but by the end of my first semester at Amherst I was doing okay.

Ruth Seabury, who had taken my father to the U.S.A. after the 1938 conference in India and who was known to me as Aunt Ruth, came to stay at our house in Kyoto for a year or so. She went to Doshisha almost daily with my father, whom she referred to in Japanese as *onii-san* or "big brother." The way she pronounced it, however, dropping the second "i", made it sound more

like *oni-san* or “devil.”

When she returned to the U.S.A. in August 1949, she took me with her. We boarded a Pan Am flight from Haneda airport in Tokyo, arriving in Honolulu after a short refueling stop on Wake Island. We spent two days on Maui Island, where there was a follower of hers, a Japanese American pastor of a Congregational church. I had to give a one-hour talk in Japanese to elderly Japanese members of the church about life in Japan during the war.

From Hawaii we flew to San Francisco, and from there Aunt Ruth took me to a boys’ summer camp in the forests of Oregon for a couple of days, before we continued on to Denver.

In those days, to prevent TB patients entering the U.S.A., foreigners had to have a chest X-ray picture in addition to a visa. My doctor was certain I would not be admitted with my own X-ray, so he gave me someone else’s instead.

From Denver, we took a train to Chicago, where we stayed with Miss Louise Lamphere, a good friend of Miss Seabury and my father. After a couple of days, I had to leave Miss Lamphere’s apartment because someone in the building objected to the presence of a “Jap”. This was the only anti-Japanese sentiment that I encountered during my five-year stay in the U.S.A.

After Chicago, we took a train to Cleveland to meet a friend of Aunt Ruth and then resumed our journey to Boston. One of the first things I did was to locate a Chinatown, so that I could get some good Chinese food. I was also able to meet many people at the American Board who knew my father well from his time there during the war.

Amherst College was considered one of the three top three liberal arts colleges in the country. Together with Williams and Wesleyan, it formed the Little Three athletic conference; Harvard, Yale and Princeton were known as the Big Three.

It was located less than 160 kilometers due west of Boston on Route 9, which went to Albany, New York. Two of the top three girls' colleges in the country, Mount Holyoke and Smith, were within sixteen kilometers of Amherst, and the town was situated at the foot of the Berkshire Hills. There was a Greyhound Bus service from Boston, and a railroad station at Northampton, about sixteen kilometers away.

Prior to World War II, there had been a number of Japanese students at Amherst College. The first was Joseph Neesima, the founder of Doshisha University, which was the first Christian institute of higher education in Japan. Another was Kanzo Uchimura, the founder of the Mukyokai or Nonchurch Movement of Christianity in Japan. This group had no pastors, no churches and no church organization, believing these were unnecessary to live a life of faith. Still another was the famous scholar of English, Naibu Kanda.

Let me spend a moment to talk about Joseph Neesima. As one of Amherst's most distinguished graduates, Neesima's portrait enjoys a prominent position to the right of the altar in Johnson Chapel; it was not taken down during World War II, in spite of many protests.

Neesima had left a closed and isolated feudal Japan in 1864, when going abroad for Japanese was punishable by death. To carry out his plan, he went to Hakodate in Hokkaido. From there, an American ship took him to Shanghai, where the captain arranged for his onward passage to Boston aboard a ship called the *Wild Rover*.

With the support of the wealthy and kind owner of the *Wild Rover*, Neesima studied at Phillips Academy and then at Amherst. After graduation, he went to Andover Newton Theological School, where he trained to be a pastor and a missionary.

In 1874, he returned to Japan and was officially welcomed at Yokohama

Harbor by my grandfather Jiro Yuasa, who was the head of the civil service in Annaka, which was Neesima's home town. Four years later, Neesima baptized Jiro and twenty-nine other Annaka residents, and together they founded Annaka Church. It was the first church in Japan to be started by Japanese, and it was where Jiro and Hatsu were married.

Neesima's mission was to create a Christian higher educational institution. After much difficulty, he managed to establish Doshisha in Kyoto, the Buddhist capital of Japan, in 1875. Unlike the majority of Christian schools in Japan, Doshisha was not a mission school, so it did not receive funding from abroad and thus had no financial security.

At the time of Neesima's sudden death in 1890 at the age of forty-six, my grandfather Jiro was a member of the newly established national Diet. Publically acknowledged as a financial expert, he was chairman of the Diet finance committee and seen as a future finance minister. But following Neesima's death, he resigned from the Diet and moved to Kyoto, where he took charge of Doshisha's finances. He spent twenty of his productive years putting the school on a stable footing, working for no pay. All he received for his efforts was a gold watch.

Soho and Roka Tokutomi had both had attended Doshisha, but had left without graduating. When Neesima was on his deathbed, he summoned Soho to his side and asked him to note down his last wishes, which mostly concerned the school's future. The brothers-in-law Jiro Yuasa and Soho Tokutomi thus became the cornerstones of Doshisha's future development.

I was the first postwar Japanese student at Amherst and during my time there I was joined by a second. Now there are at least two Japanese students every year, one a Neesima Scholar from Doshisha, and the other an Uchimura

Scholar from the University of Tokyo.

An American graduate of Amherst who is famous in Japan was William S. Clark. He helped to establish Sapporo Agricultural College (now Hokkaido University) and is remembered for his parting words to his Japanese students, “Boys, be ambitious!” There are several statues of him in Sapporo.

In my freshman year, I had a single room in the Morrow Dormitory. In my sophomore year, I roomed with a senior student from Buffalo, New York, who helped me to get a summer job at Bethlehem Steel. In my junior year, I roomed with five seniors, most of them from Philadelphia. We shared four rooms: two for sleeping, one for study and one for recreation. In the latter I kept my gramophone player and my record collection.

During the first half of my senior year, I had an attic room in a chemistry professor’s house. I acted as a house boy, vacuuming the rooms every day and mowing the lawn once a month. In the second half of my senior year, I roomed with Bob Ting from Shanghai on the ground floor of the North College, and used to enjoy nice Chinese food, such as swallow’s nest, that he received from home.

Of the classes I took, I liked a biology course on genetics taught by a young instructor from California using fruit flies. A history class in my sophomore year and classes on religion and the visual arts were also good, and we had a good chemistry professor of German nationality.

Valentine Hall, the college dining room, had a snack bar that was open till 11:00 P.M., but there was also a diner—a converted railway dining car—on the corner of the town common that stayed open until 2:00 A.M. There I could get a nice bowl of Boston clam chowder with as many oyster crackers as I wanted for less than a dollar. I enjoyed this snack quite often and don’t remember going to the Chinese restaurant in town at all.

My scholarship from the college covered only 50 percent of my needs, so I had to earn the rest by doing jobs on and off campus. In the first year, I worked at Valentine Hall, serving food and washing dishes. During the summer vacation I did the same at Camp Wyanoke, one of the boys' summer camps on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire. From the second year for three years I had a very good job on campus as a keeper of the college music center, which was located on top of a hill in an old observatory called the Octagon. The center closed at 10:00 P.M. but as I had the key I could play the piano or listen to the large collection of classical music records anytime I wanted. The long-playing record had just been introduced by Columbia Records and the college bought many of the new LPs, so my taste in classical music, especially chamber music, developed rapidly.

In the summer vacation of my second year, thanks to my roommate, I found a very well-paying job at the Lackawanna factory of Bethlehem Steel near Buffalo. I worked in the inspection department, collecting reports from the different sections of the factory. After a week the factory workers went on strike. I still got paid, so I spent time in New York at the Japanese Methodist Church being looked after by my father's second cousin, the Reverend Okubo. The church was located at 323 West 108<sup>th</sup> Street, not too far from Riverside Church. It was half a block from Broadway to the east and Riverside Park to the west.

There was plenty to explore in the city. Among the places I enjoyed visiting were Central Park, the Museum of Natural History, with its display of mammoth remains, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

During my five years at Amherst, I went to New York whenever I had the chance. I would hitchhike to save money and stay with the Okubo family. One of Rev. Okubo's friends was an assistant manager of the Metropolitan Opera House and collected Japanese ceramics. When he needed something

repaired, he paid with opera tickets.

On occasion I was able to make use of these tickets. One memorable performance I attended at the Metropolitan Opera was Bruno Walter conducting Verdi's *Requiem*. I also went to chamber music concerts at the YMHA Hall quite often. My main problem was a shortage of pocket money.

There were two Japanese students at the nearby Mount Holyoke and Smith women's colleges. One of them became my girlfriend and we spent most weekends together, sometimes going as far afield as Washington, D.C.

At Amherst, I also made friends with a couple of Koreans that I taught how to swim in the college pool; to get a B.A., one had to be able to swim twenty-five yards. One of the Koreans later became a top finance official in the South Korean government.

In early April 1953, I had to go to New York to appear on a TV program and from there travel to Washington, D.C. for a reception at the Japanese Embassy. My trip was connected with the founding of International Christian University (ICU), which had opened in Tokyo the previous month.

Just weeks after the end of the war, a group of Japanese Christian educators began a movement to establish a university in Japan based on Christian principles. They received the backing of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, which relayed the idea to the American people. In 1948, the Japan International Christian University Foundation was established in the U.S.A. to raise funds for the project.

Most of the mission boards of Protestant churches in the U.S.A. joined this movement to start a Christian educational institution of high academic standard that would be the academic equal of Tokyo or Kyoto imperial universities. Meanwhile, a Protestant pastor from North Carolina, who began

raising funds as an expression of American people's remorse at using atomic bombs against the Japanese, and as a means to rebuild a peaceful Japan, also spurred the project with a sermon he delivered that was widely disseminated.

ICU opened on April 1, 1953, as the first four-year liberal arts college in Japan. Ninety percent of the teaching staff were Protestant Christians. There was no requirement for the students to be Christian, but when I was there in the mid-1950s, perhaps 30 percent were.

My father, who was the president of Doshisha University immediately before and after World War II, was chosen to be ICU's first president. At the entrance ceremony he spoke about the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and asked students to make a pledge to abide by the declaration—a tradition that continues to this day. Under his strong leadership, ICU developed into a reputable international liberal arts institution. After he made way for his brother-in-law Dr. Nobushige Ukai in 1961, he continued to serve the university as chairman of the Board of Trustees until his death.

In Washington, I conveyed greetings to Mr. Joseph Grew, political advisor to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, at his office in the East Wing of the White House. Mr. Grew had been the U.S. ambassador to Japan at the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the opening of war between the U.S.A. and Japan, and he was now the honorary chairman of the ICU fund-raising foundation. Following the meeting, there was a big reception at the Japanese Embassy.

From Washington, I made the long bus ride back to Amherst. I had developed a fever and the college sent me directly to the infirmary. I wasn't allowed to return to the room I shared with Bob Ting, with whom I had been planning to go on a road trip over the summer.

Unfortunately, my TB had reappeared and I had to leave Amherst at the



end of May 1953, less than a month from graduation. I was a pre-medical student at the time and had been scheduled to start my medical training at Yale Medical School in September. Having suffered much from TB as a youth, I had decided to become a TB doctor. Personal experience had taught me that most doctors and nurses were too healthy to understand what patients wanted or needed, and were not sensitive to their feelings; I felt I could do better.

Within a week of returning from Washington, I was sent by the college to the Trudeau Sanatorium at Saranac Lake in upstate New York, where I stayed until December. This was the first open-air TB sanatorium in the U.S.A., patterned after the Swiss model.

At first I was placed in the original central hospital building, which had a dozen bedrooms that shared an open veranda with a wide front screen, where many colorful humming birds gathered. We stayed in our individual rooms at night, but by 9:00 A.M. all the beds were pulled up to the veranda.

I remember one of the dozen patients on that veranda was a stunningly beautiful young blonde, said to be a girl kept by a gangster. She made herself even more eye-catching by walking around the beds in a translucent nylon negligee, attracting more attention than the humming birds.

We could go out from the hospital almost anytime we wanted in the afternoon up to 9:00 P.M., and I went to the town and lakeside café often. One of the patients was a local, so we would go to his house where he had a collection of classical music LPs. Sometimes we were accompanied by off-duty nurses. These nurses, together with the friendly student nurses from Buffalo, looked after us very kindly. I also received a visit from my Japanese girlfriend from Smith College before she returned to Japan.

A sulphone drug called PAS had just been developed in powder form for treating TB. By taking it, my tongue became covered in a thick fur and I lost

all sense of taste, even after vigorously brushing my teeth. With ice cream, I could feel the cold, but couldn't taste the sweetness. I also had injections of streptomycin, which I think is the cause of my hearing weakness.

I was told that I needed a chest operation, but as it was too expensive to have the procedure done in the U.S.A. I flew back to Japan. Aunt Ruth came to see me off at Idlewild Airport, where I boarded a Northwest Orient double-decker Stratocruiser for the long journey home. Fortunately, I had a comfortable double bed on the lower deck. I left New York at 9 A.M. on December 23, flying via Detroit, St. Paul, Spokane, Seattle, Anchorage, and Shemya in the Aleutian Islands before finally landing at Haneda airport in Tokyo at 1 P.M. on Christmas Day 1953. I joined my parents at their new home, which was the official residence of the president of International Christian University in Mitaka, Tokyo.

I had segmental lung resection surgery at St. Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo in April 1954 and needed to convalesce for a further six months. I was planning to return to Amherst, but the college administration told me that I could earn the twelve academic units that I still needed in Japan and transfer the credits.

So, after passing the entrance examination of ICU, I entered the junior class. It offered many courses taught in English by its international faculty members.

The ICU campus was located on the site of a former Nakajima Aircraft Co. factory where they had manufactured engines for the famous Zero fighter plane during the war. The campus was huge, covering more than 350 acres and had forests of pine and other trees. I could easily spend three hours or so in the woods without meeting anyone, in the company of a mongrel puppy I found there one day that became my pet.

As a result of my time at ICU, I managed to get two B.A. degrees—one

from Amherst in 1956 and the other from ICU in 1957. Since I did not know anyone in the Amherst class of 1956, the administration kindly put me back in the class of 1953.

Having decided I was not strong enough to be a doctor, I had switched my interest to psychology and was planning to return to the U.S.A. to do a Ph.D. To prepare, I now joined a Master of Arts class in Educational Psychology at ICU. I had a place lined up at Syracuse University and a scholarship to go with it. Once again, however, my life was about to take a different course to the one I had planned.



With my parents and Ruth Seabury at our house in Shimogamo. Aunt Ruth lived with us for about a year, before returning to the U.S.A. in August 1949, taking me with her.



Johnson Chapel (Courtesy: Amherst College)



Joseph Neesima, founder of Doshisha

August 1950  
at Camp Wyanoke, Wolfborough, N.H.



My first summer vacation in the States.  
Washing dishes 9 hours a day, 6.5 days a  
week for 12 weeks!  
I get paid \$250 plus good meals and  
a sack in a shack for being the boss  
of six quite friendly yet most unwork-  
man like (local high school) kids.



by Lake Winnepessaukee



Some of the dish-washing crew

Scenes from my first summer vacation job in the U.S.A., washing dishes for twelve weeks at Camp Wyanoke, New Hampshire, in 1950. I wrote in the family photo album, "I got paid \$250 plus good meals and a sack in a shack for being the boss of six quite friendly yet most unworkmanlike local high school kids."



Leaning out of the window of the ICU president's residence in Mitaka, Tokyo, in January 1954, following my return from five years in the U.S.A.



On the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court during a visit to Washington



Standing in front of Childs Memorial Infirmary at Trudeau Sanatorium, Saranac Lake, in June 1953



Yuko poses next to NYK Line's *Asama Maru*. In 1960, we sailed from Kobe to Genoa by way of Taiwan, Singapore and Egypt on our way to Edinburgh, where I was to study medicine.

5

Becoming a Doctor in Europe



In October 1957 I received a letter from my friend Mr. Shigeo Suzuki. I had met him when I visited Nagashima Aiseien leprosarium after the war and we had kept in touch. Nagashima Aiseien was one of thirteen government-funded leprosaria in Japan and had nearly 2,000 patients. Mr. Suzuki was chairman of the patients' association.

He had been diagnosed with leprosy when a university student and had been at Aiseien for many years. Later in life, after he was discharged, he ran for mayor in his hometown and my father went to support his campaign. In the end, he lost by a small margin.

Aiseien was the only leprosarium to have a high school and Mr. Suzuki wrote that some of the students were planning to take university entrance examinations. He thought that their level of English was not good enough and wanted me to come and help them. There would be no payment, but food and accommodation would be provided.

I left the M.A. class at ICU and went to Aiseien at the end of 1957. The food he mentioned was the food cooked by the leprosarium for the patients, a serving of which was delivered to the director's room for his inspection. Director Shigetaka Takashima never touched the dishes, so the meal was available to me. My accommodation was a vacant house in the staff quarters.

Of the thirty-odd students I helped, five managed to get into university, which came as a big surprise to everyone. One of them, who went to medical school, became a professor of bacteriology; later, he would become president of the Japanese Leprosy Association.

While I was at Aiseien, I acted as an active iconoclast, without being aware of it. In those days, leprosaria were strictly segregated into patient areas and non-patient areas. Staff had to change into a working uniform that included a cap and mask, and when they left the patient area they would take a shower

before changing back into their own clothes. But I ignored these rules and kept going in and out in my ordinary clothes. Some staff members raised my case at meetings, but Director Takashima said that since I was not a staff member, I should be allowed to wear whatever clothes I wanted. Probably the director himself realized that such strict segregation was out of date, and wanted to use my behavior as good example for change.

In June 1958, Japan agreed to host the 7<sup>th</sup> International Leprosy Congress at very short notice. The Indian government, whose offer to host the congress had been accepted at the previous congress in Madrid in 1953, had withdrawn its invitation because of the political difficulties it faced in inviting International Leprosy Association (ILA) members from countries such as South Africa and Israel whose governments it did not recognize.

The hastily-created Japanese Organizing Committee needed an English speaker, so I was summoned to Tokyo from Nagashima Aiseien to be among the committee members. Dr. Kikuo Hamano, the capable director of the Tofu Kyokai (Japanese Leprosy Foundation) who had been instrumental in bringing the congress to Japan, knew me from Aiseien and had asked me to help out.

Although there was considerably less than one year to prepare, people were favorably surprised at how well Dr. Hamano and the Japanese host organization managed the congress, which took place from November 12 to 19, 1958. There were forty-three countries represented and nearly 300 ILA members attended.

After working on the congress as a liaison between the ILA and the Japanese Organizing Committee, I spent the next twelve months as a staff member of the Japanese Leprosy Foundation, working alone to produce the 518-page *Transactions of the VII<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Leprology*, a task

that Dr. Hamano had assigned me as an afterthought. It was a very difficult job as all the speakers had returned home and I had to send air mail letters to each of them requesting their manuscripts. Moreover, it was not easy to have a book typeset and printed in English in Tokyo at that time, so I more or less lived at the printers, helping the typesetter to pick out the right letters as he could not read English by himself.

From my time as a staff member of the Japanese Leprosy Foundation and as a result of reading the *Transactions* from front to back several times, I learned so much on all aspects of leprosy that I decided to work in leprosy somewhere outside Japan. My advisors on this were three internationally renowned leprologists: the ILA president, Dr. H.W. Wade, who was a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and a founding member of the ILA and of the *International Journal of Leprosy*; the ILA secretary, Dr. E. Muir; and the secretary-designate, Dr. J. Ross Innes. The latter were both graduates of the University of Edinburgh. All felt I should work in leprosy, but said that it would be much better if I first acquired a medical degree. Between them, they thought perhaps I should apply to Edinburgh; to this I agreed, since I had already spent five years in the U.S.A.

When I went to Edinburgh, I was already sure of what I would be doing after I had qualified. Dr. Ross Innes, who at that time was the medical secretary of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association (BELRA, now called LEPROA) had a plan for me to go and work for his organization in Africa, starting in Malawi.

Dr. Ross Innes, who had two daughters, treated me almost as his own son and a successor to his leprosy work. He died in 1968 before I was fully qualified, however, and his plan did not materialize. But on his deathbed he asked Dr. Stanley Browne, the leprologist and medical missionary known as “Mr. Leprosy” from his work in West Africa, to look after me. Dr. Browne did

a wonderful job, perhaps even beyond what Dr. Ross Innes could have hoped, and I have always thought of them as my personal mentors.

As a reward for my work for the congress, including the publishing of the *Transactions*, Dr. Hamano gave me four months' paid leave. Using this opportunity, I went to India, first accompanying Dr. Hamano and Dr. K. Yanagisawa to the All India Leprosy Workers' Conference in Bombay in December 1959.

After the conference, I visited the Central Leprosy Teaching and Research Institute in Chingleput, Tamil Nadu, to meet with Dr. Dharmendra, whom I had become acquainted with at the congress in Tokyo. A distinguished leprologist, Dr. Dharmendra was the first director of India's national leprosy control program and a founding member of the Indian Association of Leprologists.

I also accompanied the renowned British leprologist Dr. Robert Cochrane to Chennai, where Professor T.N. Jagadisan accepted me as a house guest. Professor Jagadisan was another I had gotten to know at the Tokyo Congress. A close follower of Mahatma Gandhi, he had developed leprosy as a university student. He was treated with dapsone by Dr. Cochrane at the leprosy center in Polambakkam, Tamil Nadu, and his deformities were corrected by the pioneering leprosy surgeon Dr. Paul Brand at the Schieffelin Leprosy Research Sanatorium in Karigiri, near Vellore in Tamil Nadu.

Professor Jagadisan became a national leader of leprosy patients, attending many international meetings representing India. He still needed some assistance for daily living, including getting dressed, and certainly for traveling.

I suppose in return for my efforts to look after him in Tokyo, where I stayed in the next-door room to him at the hotel and also took him and Dr. Muir to Nagashima Aiseien, Professor Jagadisan arranged for me to see many

leprosy-related establishments under his care.

From there I went to the leprosy center at Polambakkam, which was being run by Dr. Franz Hemerijcks, an eminent Belgian physician, with four young nursing sisters from the West. Based at Polambakkam, the staff carried out mobile clinics in the surrounding area. I joined Dr. Claire Vellut, who was assisting Dr. Hemerijcks, and three other team members in visiting several villages for case-finding. I was quite used to roughing it, but the number of bed bugs that managed to find their way into my sleeping bag was a challenge.

As I recall, Dr. Hemerijcks needed a beef steak at least once a day. This being India, the nursing sisters had a difficult time in complying with his needs.

From Polambakkam I went to the Schieffelin Leprosy Research Sanatorium in Karigiri to observe Dr. Brand's reconstructive surgery techniques, which were based on those developed by military surgeons during World War II, and his approach to patient rehabilitation. But after a week in Karigiri I fell quite ill with viral fever and for nearly a week I was barely conscious.

I was taken to the Christian Medical College Hospital in Vellore. Some three weeks later I was discharged, but I was so weak that I was barely able to walk. Mr. Furness, an Anglo-Indian who was Dr. Brand's physiotherapist, and his wife, who was Dr. Brand's secretary, kindly put me up as their house guest and I stayed with them for nearly two months.

By March I was well enough to travel, so I took an overnight train to Maharashtra to visit Dr. R. V. Wardekar at the Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation in Wardha. Dr. Wardekar had been guided by Mahatma Gandhi, and established the foundation in 1951 to perpetuate Gandhi's memory and further his leprosy work.

By now I had received word from Edinburgh Medical School that I had been accepted, and I made one more trip before returning to Japan. I went

to Darjeeling, where I had to wait five days for the clouds to lift before I could enjoy the majestic views of the Himalayas around Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world. A group of Germans with whom I had traveled from Calcutta had to leave without seeing the mountains because of their fixed itinerary. From this experience, I always made a flexible plan when my wife and I traveled to the European Alps in the 1960s, 1980s and 1990s.

I met Yuko at ICU. Being the only son of the university president, I felt I needed to keep a certain distance from other students, especially the girls. One day, when I was sitting alone in the university chapel, a girl came and sat next to me. I recognized her as having played the part of the Virgin Mary in a Christmas play at the chapel. We found that we had a shared interest in classical music, and our friendship developed from there.

Yuko, who was in the year below me at ICU (although she was nine years younger than me), already had a scholarship to go to Emory University in the U.S.A. to pursue a Masters in Religious Studies. Instead, she gave up that plan and we were married on May 30, 1960, at the university chapel. A couple of months later, in mid August, we sailed from Kobe aboard the *Asama Maru*, a cargo ship of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK) Line, bound for Europe.

There were five other passengers with whom we played deck golf almost every day. At meal times we ate together with the captain and the officers in the dining room and found we had good appetites. It must have been the sea air, but if we were offered a bowl of Japanese curried rice, which the rest of the crew ate, after our full-course dinner, we would often say yes!

En route, the ship stopped in a number of places, including Taiwan, where my wife had spent her primary school years as her father had been the governor of Taipei until the end of World War II. Her parents were devout Christians

and she had many friends there. Next, the ship docked at Singapore, where we were met by Dr. Furuya, a church pastor and close friend of mine since high school days. We took a taxi trip to a rubber plantation in Malaya. From Singapore we crossed the Indian Ocean to Aden, then Jeddah, before passing through the Suez Canal to Port Said. We disembarked and went by road to Cairo, where the Japanese ambassador was a good friend of my father-in-law. We enjoyed seeing the sights, including going to the pyramids of Giza and the Cairo Museum with its Tutankhamen treasures.

We rejoined the *Asama Maru* for one last voyage as far as Genoa, where we caught a train to Lake Como. We spent a few days there, and then traveled by rail to Zurich.

In Zurich, we stayed with Dr. Emil Brunner, a well-known and respected theologian famous for his dialogue on natural theology with another world-renowned theologian, Dr. Karl Barth. Dr. Brunner spent some years teaching at ICU, accompanied by his wife and daughter-in-law. My wife had taken some of his courses and was well known to him.

The day following our arrival was a Sunday and we were looking forward to attending his service at the Frauen Kirche (Church of Our Lady). Instead, he packed us off with a lunch box to Mount Rigi, one of the best scenic spots near Zurich. He was sure that we would experience God's glory by seeing the wonderful scenery rather than by listening to his sermon. In any case, the service would have been in German, a language neither of us had much knowledge of. From Zurich we traveled to Paris, and then to London, where we spent a few days with Dr. Ross Innes's family before heading to Edinburgh.

In Edinburgh, we found a nice apartment on the sixth floor of a hundred-year-old stone building. There was no elevator, so I had to carry a bucket of coal up the stairs almost every day in the colder months. The apartment

had a nice view of Edinburgh Castle and was a thirty-minute walk across the Meadows to the Medical School where I was studying.

We stayed in Edinburgh for five years, during which time Yuko had the opportunity to introduce Japanese culture as an instructor of an extramural course at the university. We also had a visit from my father.

The exchange rate in those days was 1,000 yen to the British pound, so we found life in the U.K. very expensive. As a result, we spent most of our vacations on the Continent; they were very long, as the Medical School had classes only six months of the year. We went to Italy most often, especially to Florence because of the artistic treasures there, but we also visited Siena, Pisa and other towns too, from Palermo in Sicily in the south to Milan and Venice in the north.

In addition to our frequent visits to Italy we also traveled often to Greece, Scandinavia, Spain, France, Germany and Austria. In Norway, we visited the Lofoten Islands; in Greece, we toured Athens, Delphi and Corinth, and then went by boat first to Mikonos, then to Rhodes and on to Crete, where we explored the ruins of the Minoans.

In Spain, we spent several days during Semana Santa (Holy Week) in Seville watching the world-famous processions of hooded penitents accompanying floats of the Virgin Mary from different churches. In Germany, we went to the Bayreuth Festival, attending performances of Wagner's *Parsifal*—when we heard the famous German baritone Hans Hotter—and *Lohengrin*.

After graduating from Edinburgh with an MBChB (a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery degree) and becoming a member of the British Medical Association, I spent the next five years in West Sussex in the south of England. I worked as a houseman at Southlands Hospital in Shoreham-by-Sea, a historic town on the south coast of England where invaders from



Brittany came ashore in 1066 to begin the Norman Conquest.

There I did one job after another for six months at a time, working in Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics, Gynecology, Pediatrics, Orthopedic Surgery, Casualty and even Geriatrics. This was most unusual, because newly qualified doctors normally stayed in one hospital for six months to do a house job, before moving to a different hospital to begin the next. I was grateful for the experience, as I pictured myself one day working alone, perhaps in an African jungle, where I would have to deal with all manner of medical problems.

Our extended stay in West Sussex worked out very well for us. We lived in comfortable, newly built doctors' accommodation. My wife had a job in London as a Japanese instructor at one of the Berlitz language schools, and she commuted to work daily. She also lectured on Japanese culture, as she had done in Edinburgh.

After five years in West Sussex we spent one year in Liverpool, where I gained a Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene at Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. Armed with this qualification, I was ready to start my work in leprosy. As we had no children, I thought we could go anywhere.

I contacted Dr. Stanley Browne for his advice. I assumed he would recommend Africa, but instead he told me that The Leprosy Mission needed somebody to work in Nepal. I somehow said yes, without even asking my wife.



Yuko during her time teaching at Berlitz in London in the latter half of the 1960s. She commuted from our home in Shoreham-by-Sea, where I was working as a houseman at Southlands Hospital.



Visiting with Mr. and Mrs. Shigeo Suzuki at Nagashima Aiseien in 1955.



Yuko in her student days at ICU in the 1950s



Alongside Dr. Hemerijcks (second from left) near Polambakkam, Tamil Nadu, in early 1960, during my tour of leprosy institutions in India.



With my bride and our *nakodo* (matchmakers) Professor and Mrs. Shinoto on our wedding day, May 30, 1960



I served as superintendent of Anandaban Leprosy Hospital between January 1974 and October 1975.

6

With The Leprosy Mission in Nepal

As we had not been back to Japan for eleven years, the mission gave us a few months' holiday before my work was due to begin. Before embarking on the trip home, we toured Ireland, Wales and continental Europe in a rather beat-up Renault, taking advantage of the fact that I had acquired a U.K. driver's license.

While we were in India en route to Japan, my wife found herself pregnant for the first time. Soon after we reached home, she gave birth to a healthy, lovely baby daughter. We named her Yoko.

My mother, who had been suffering greatly from cancer, died in April 1972 just a few days before our daughter was born. She had been aware of our return, however, miraculously regaining consciousness when I went to see her in hospital. For three nights I slept by her hospital bed. On the fourth night, I was persuaded to get a proper night's rest at our house; she passed away that night.

This made it necessary for my wife to remain in Kyoto to look after my father. He had been too busy to spend much time with my younger sister, Koko, who had died when she was six; now he sometimes confused his granddaughter with his daughter, calling her Koko instead of Yoko. Nevertheless, it certainly made the last ten years of his life happy ones, and it was a good opportunity for my wife and daughter to learn his philosophy of life—although it meant I had to live in Nepal without my family for an extended period.

First, though, I spent a year in Hong Kong at The Leprosy Mission's hospital on the island of Hei Ling Chau, which had been designated a leprosy colony in 1950. Under Dr. Grace Warren, a kind and excellent teacher from Australia, I trained in leprosy in general but also in reconstructive surgery to prepare me for my duties at the mission's Anandaban Hospital outside Kathmandu.

I went to Nepal both as a member of The Leprosy Mission and as an affiliate member of the Japan Overseas Christian Medical Cooperative Service, which



was sending doctors and nurses to a number of Asian countries, including Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nepal. Among those they had dispatched to Nepal was Dr. Noboru Iwamura, a well-known TB specialist, who single-handedly built up the national TB control scheme there.

His house was located on a hill overlooking Kathmandu, very close to the United Mission to Nepal's Shanta Bhawan Hospital. The house was run very efficiently by Mrs. Iwamura and functioned as a gathering place for Japanese, who knew it as "Mom's house." I was given a room there and over the next three months I went daily to UMN's head office for language study, together with a Miss Sakurai, a young Japanese nurse who had also just arrived.

After completing my language course, I took up residence at Anandaban Hospital at the end of 1973. Immediately, I could see why the mission had sent me to replace the current medical superintendent, Dr. John Harris, who was a cousin of the renowned reconstructive surgeon Dr. Paul Brand.

Dr. Harris was not interested in leprosy at all. His personal mission was evangelism, trying to convert as many Nepali citizens to Christianity as possible. This was exactly contrary to Nepal's Constitution, which stated that a citizen should maintain the religion of his or her father. The punishment for religious conversion was only three years in jail, however, so there were many Nepalis who voluntarily went to jail and emerged three years later as officially recognized Christians.

I was given a room at the superintendent's house. After supper one evening, I remember talking by the fireplace with Dr. Harris's children—a boy of ten and a girl of eight. I asked them what they wanted to be when they grew up. Their spontaneous replies really shocked me: both of them said they wanted to be a martyr. Their aunt had been killed in the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, so they knew the meaning of the word. From their replies I developed



a deep mistrust of the director's character. Fortunately, his children grew up to be normal adults in England and did not follow through on their plans.

Anandaban was the exact opposite of Hei Ling Chau in Hong Kong. Generally speaking, one could see really poor work being done at Anandaban, or no work at all, and it was poorly funded. When I arrived, the staff consisted of the director, an English nurse, an Indian nurse, a Nepali physiotherapist who had been trained in Karigiri and was doing good work, and two paramedics, one Indian and one Nepali. There was also an Indian business manager—later found to have been embezzling quite a lot of the mission's funds—and his wife, who was a capable pharmacist.

The registry contained the names of 7,500 patients. After conducting a quick survey, however, I realized that a third of them came just once and another third came only two or three times before disappearing. This meant in effect that we were actually treating only 2,000 or so patients who came to our clinic more or less regularly to receive their medicine.

In those days, DDS (dapsone) was given in very small doses of 5 or 10 milligrams at Anandaban, when commonly 50 or 100 milligram doses were given elsewhere in the world. As a consequence, we probably created many cases of dapsone resistance.

In my third year there, after I had become medical superintendent, we ran out of dapsone. The Leprosy Mission office in India said we had used up our budget on repairs to the roof, so they could not send any more of the drug. Fortunately, I was able to get sugar-coated dapsone tablets from my friends in Tokyo, and these became a favorite of the patients.

I felt there was an urgent need for a public health initiative to find new leprosy cases, both in the town and in the countryside. Since I was the only doctor in the hospital once my predecessor had departed, this struck me

as a better use of my time than spending half a day in an operating theater performing reconstructive surgery on a single patient. In this way I became a public health worker, without any previous training.

At the time, Nepal was one of the world's most leprosy-endemic countries. There was one Nepali doctor in charge of the national leprosy control program, which in reality was practically non-existent. His name was Dr. Mali and he refused to touch any patient, even at diagnosis. I wanted to meet him to discuss my work, but he was completely unwilling to do so. This was because of his animosity toward my predecessor, who had once spent a week in police custody, wrongly accused of defiling statues of Hindu gods.

Not prepared to take no for an answer, I drove to the Ministry of Health every day for a week and parked our Land Rover, with The Leprosy Mission logo clearly visible, in front of the ministry building to await his arrival. The director of communicable diseases control noticed me and asked me what I was doing. After I explained my problem, Dr. G.L. Das told me to come to his office and he summoned Dr. Mali to see me. From then on, Dr. Das became my most effective supporter and helped me in many ways.

On one occasion, the head of The Leprosy Mission in India, a retired army colonel, wanted to meet with Princess Shanti Singh, a member of Nepal's royal family. Dr. Das made the arrangements, only for me to hear back from the head of the mission that the timing was not convenient for him, even though he had told me he could come on any day. As it was my impression that Indians tended to look down on Nepalis, this made me so upset that I said I would resign. But Dr. Das told me these things happen, that he would talk to the princess, and I was not to worry.

In the absence of an effective government leprosy program, there were four foreign groups actually running things. In the Eastern region, a British

team operating a TB program also did some leprosy work. In the Far Western region, Seventh-day Adventists from the U.S.A. ran a leprosy hospital, while in the Central region, The Leprosy Mission had its leprosy hospital where I worked outside Kathmandu. But the most active leprosy program was in Pokhara, in the Western region, run by the International Nepal Fellowship (INF). There were two doctors, one from U.K. and one from West Germany, and four nursing sisters. They had good inpatient facilities, including for reconstructive surgery, as well as extensive outpatient clinics.

By coincidence, one of the sisters had been a nurse at Southlands Hospital in Shoreham-by-Sea, where she had started working on the same day that I had done. That first night, an old lady lay dying and we sat on either side of her bed, holding her hands until she passed away.

When talking about leprosy work in Nepal, I must not fail to mention Eileen Lodge. Originally from the U.K., she was one of the original four sisters who started INF in Pokhara. She later became a Nepali citizen and has remained active in leprosy work to this day.

Once the initial icy period was over, Dr. Mali and I worked together quite well and our relations improved; one time, he welcomed me to his house on his daughter's birthday. Later in my career, I invited Dr. Mali to most of the leprosy meetings that Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation conducted in Asia, so he came to Japan, too.

Anandaban Hospital was located about sixteen kilometers south of the center of Kathmandu, beyond the foothills so that the king would not have to see a leprosy establishment. There was also one government-run leprosy asylum called Kokhana, also to the south, situated along the Bagmati River.

Anandaban had about 110 beds, with men and women housed in separate buildings. There was a concrete head office building that included the

director's office, secretariat, operating theatre and physiotherapy room. Each day's work started with a brief staff prayer meeting.

From the top of a hill behind the hospital we could see the runway of Kathmandu airport; beyond it lay the Himalayas, with Gaurishankar to the east and Himalchuli to the west. To see more famous mountains such as Everest or Manasulu, one had to climb another hill to an observation post.

On Sunday we had a Christian church service, led by a pastor who came from Kathmandu; staff and some patients attended. Afterward, I always treated the minister to a lunch of fried rice with buffalo meat.

The Leprosy Mission was known to provide very good staff accommodation and mine was certainly spacious. With my family in Japan, I was living alone and did all the cooking and cleaning myself.

We had a weekly outpatient clinic in UMN's Shanta Bhawan Hospital, which we could reach in half an hour by car. Normally I drove the Land Rover, instead of our Nepali driver, and the car always filled up with family members of staff who went for shopping. On one occasion there was a big pool of water in the center of the road. In order to avoid it, I drove around it onto the shoulder. Unfortunately, a farmer had planted an extra row of rice just below, and the car slid sideways into the paddy field. We all got wet and dirty, and I gave the hospital a substantial sum as a fine for reckless driving.

Every Wednesday evening I went to Dr. Iwamura's house, where I enjoyed a nice Japanese meal and a hot Japanese bath. In bad weather I had to walk, which took up to four hours.

We had another outpatient clinic in Jumla, in the Far Western region, which we visited two or three times a year in a small plane. The Cessna would touch down after sheep and goats had been chased from the landing strip. The aircraft belonged to The Bible Society and ferried supplies to about ten

translators, each working in a different local-language district.

It was a lovely flight along the western Himalayas, which include Dhaulagiri, the seventh highest mountain in the world. The American pilot once told me that it was his third plane; he had smashed two previous aircraft while landing.

One time, the plane to take us back to Kathmandu could not land because of low cloud. Over the following days we could hear the sound of an airplane engine but never saw the plane. After one week of waiting, we decided to hike three days to an Indian border town and catch a bus to Kathmandu; we were just about to set off when the plane managed to land safely and saved us the trek.

We held our clinic in Jumla in a building belonging to the government, and rented a room in a farmer's house for our accommodation. We suffered terribly from bedbugs, which we could do little about; but we did everything we could not to bring them back with us to Anandaban. In the summer there were also many leeches, which would somehow attach themselves to our legs. They would balloon up and burst, filling our shoes with blood.

Among our patients in Jumla was a young mother with a lovely five-year-old daughter named Tabita. They lived in a cave just outside a village and begged daily for food. The woman had been divorced by her husband, a farmer, because she had developed leprosy. We tried to take them both to Anandaban, but the mother refused to go. We did, however, manage to take Tabita with us. She was in the early stages of leprosy and became the darling of the patients.

We took Tabita back to Jumla once to see her mother and it seemed as if she had decided to stay. We were preparing to fly back and had started the engine when we saw Tabita and her mother come running toward us. Tabita got in and sat on my lap in the copilot's seat for the journey back to Kathmandu. Not long afterward, her mother died. After three years, Tabita was adopted by an

Anglo-Indian minister of a Christian church in Kathmandu. She grew up to be a nice young lady and eventually got married.

There was no entertainment for the patients at the hospital, so I decided to do something about this. I started monthly cinema shows with films I borrowed from various embassies in Kathmandu. These became very popular with the surrounding villagers, who eventually outnumbered patients at the screenings.

Later, after my wife and daughter had joined me in Nepal, my father came to stay with us at the hospital. We welcomed him by taking him to Pokhara, where he could view the Himalayas. He often told us about the inspiration he received from that visit and how it reaffirmed his faith in God, the Creator of the Universe and the Father of Jesus Christ.

My father died at our home in Kyoto aged ninety-two on August 15, 1981, the anniversary of Japan's surrender at the end of World War II, without suffering ill health at all. He always had a lot to say about Japan's situation under military control and we were prepared to listen to his angry words that morning. We were in the dining room and heard him getting up. When he failed to appear, our daughter went to see him. She came back and told us that grandfather was lying by the side of the bed; evidently, he had suffered a heart attack. On his desk we found an unfinished postcard to a friend, in which he was talking about going to Nepal again to receive holy inspiration from the majestic Himalayas.

One experience that was to prove most useful for my future work was my participation in an intensive one-month-long session in Kathmandu on planning a five-year national leprosy control strategy. Taking part were representatives from the WHO, both from headquarters and the South-East Asia Regional Office, as well as leprosy workers, mostly non-Nepali like me.

This took place in September 1975 and was significant for being the first time that the leprosy unit of WHO headquarters had involved itself in the national leprosy control program of any country.

Although there was no written or even verbal contract, international staff members of The Leprosy Mission were expected to remain with the mission for the rest of their working lives. This I had been quite prepared to do, especially as I found the Nepali people easy to work with and because the countryside where our hospital was located was very similar to rural Japan.

But I was becoming increasingly frustrated at not being able to work in the way I felt was needed. The Leprosy Mission said my job was at the hospital, but when I thought about the situation in the country as a whole I was far from satisfied with what I was doing. It was around this time that I was presented with the opportunity to join a newly established foundation in Japan.



I liked Nepal, but became increasingly frustrated at the job I had been asked to do.



The view of the Himalayas from Pokhara: my father often spoke of the inspiration he had received when he visited and how it reaffirmed his faith in God.





Addressing an international workshop on the chemotherapy of leprosy in Asia,  
organized by Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation in Manila in 1977

## Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation

Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation (SMHF) was started by Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa in 1974 with the goal of eradicating leprosy, although no tool or method to accomplish this noble task existed at that time. Mr. Sasakawa was the founder of the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation, later to become The Nippon Foundation, which was set up and financed with proceeds from legalized gambling on powerboat racing. The chair of SMHF was Professor Morizo Ishidate, who is remembered as the father of leprosy chemotherapy in Japan.

A number of my friends and acquaintances had joined this foundation and they wanted me to become its medical director. Before I made my decision, I attended two international leprosy seminars in Tokyo organized by SMHF, participating as a delegate from Nepal. Many present marveled at how this Nepali could speak Japanese.

I also consulted my mentor Dr. Stanley Browne, who thought that perhaps I could make a greater contribution to tackling global leprosy problems through this Japanese organization. I remember telling him that he was responsible for my decision and that he would have to help me in developing SMHF, and this he duly did.

With Dr. Browne's encouragement, I joined SMHF at the end of 1975. I expected to spend only five years in Tokyo before returning to Nepal to complete the unfinished business I felt I had there.

I had heard a number of stories about Mr. Sasakawa concerning his influence behind the scenes on politics and finance in Japan; in person, I found him to be a man of strong conviction who motivated us to achieve our goal.

His own interest in leprosy was said to have come from an experience he had growing up in rural Japan, when a beautiful young woman disappeared from his village. He later found out that she had been diagnosed with leprosy and isolated in a sanatorium.

Once he established himself successfully in business and politics, he started private contributions to leprosy work. When he made overseas trips, which was frequently, his itinerary usually included a visit to a leprosy facility.

In 1973, Mr. Sasakawa sat down to lunch with several people, including Professor Ishidate, who happened to mention his own strong interest in leprosy. As the son of a prosperous pharmacy owner in northern Japan, he had on occasion visited a leprosy sanatorium not too far from his home, accompanying someone from the family pharmacy to deliver medical supplies.

During World War II, Professor Ishidate was involved in developing drugs against TB, a serious health problem in Japan at that time, as I knew from my own experience. One day, according to his account, he learned about a sulphone compound successfully used against leprosy. He found the reference in a brief description, in German, in a pharmaceutical journal that had been brought to Japan aboard a German U-boat, which was a common means of communication between Germany and Japan during the war.

He recognized the drug as Promin, an anti-TB drug based on dapsone that had been synthesized early in the century but was not being used because of its toxicity. Shortly after the end of the war, his laboratory succeeded in producing a small quantity of Promin, which had proven effective when used on leprosy patients at Carville leprosarium in the U.S.A.

Before the lunch was over, Ryoichi Sasakawa had proposed creating a foundation for leprosy work that he would fully support financially. This he did to mark his seventy-fifth birthday—along with a large donation he made to the World Health Organization for leprosy eradication. The latter marked the start of an annual grant by The Nippon Foundation to the WHO for leprosy work that has continued to this day.

Traditionally, leprosy foundations had devoted themselves to leprosy

work only, although some also had joint programs with organizations working in sexually transmitted diseases or tuberculosis. None had a working relationship with the general health services, however.

SMHF was different. The new foundation considered leprosy within the context of the general health services. It established contacts with WHO headquarters as well as with the WHO regional offices and in this way it was able to start building relationships with the health authorities of leprosy-endemic countries. I think it showed remarkable leadership in global leprosy work.

Professor Ishidate was a man of strong beliefs. One of these was that since the bulk of modern leprosy work in Japan had been started by Christian missionaries from the West, with the exception of one Japanese Buddhist priest, it was now an honorable duty for Japanese to repay that debt by helping to solve leprosy problems in the developing world, especially in Asia.

Another of his convictions was that even though much leprosy work had been prompted by humanitarian concerns, the work of the new foundation must be based upon up-to-date scientific knowledge and practice, and not merely on goodwill.

As the medical director of this newly created NGO, it was my responsibility to come up with initiatives to support the national leprosy control programs of developing countries and not to start projects of our own, which was what most NGOs tended to do. I was assisted in this by SMHF's general secretary, Mr. Suminori Tsurusaki, who did an excellent job. He had been at Nagashima Aiseien during the several months I had spent teaching English to high school students there, and I had taught him English too at his request.

As general secretary, he told me: "Your responsibility is how to spend money; my responsibility is how to obtain it. You come up with the programs and I will get you the necessary funds." He never refused my requests and

always found funding for what I wanted to do.

The first program I came up with was a series of nine meetings, one taking place every six months, called the International Workshop on Leprosy Control. Held in the capital cities of leprosy-endemic countries in Asia—cities such as Manila, Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Kathmandu and Taipei—the meetings covered different subjects including “Training,” “Chemotherapy,” “Urban Control,” “Case Finding,” “Recording and Leprosy Statistics” and “The Role of Non-Governmental Bodies.” Invited were leprosy workers, among them the national leprosy program managers of countries covered by the WHO’s South-East Asia and Western Pacific regional offices.

These regular meetings of the national leprosy program managers developed into a cohesive and effective platform for tackling leprosy problems, not only in Asia but globally. This was especially because both my mentor Dr. Browne and Professor Michel Lechat of Belgium, the president of the International Leprosy Association for ten years, participated from the very beginning.

The meetings made my visits to leprosy-endemic countries not only easier but also more productive, because I was always able to meet the top people at the Ministry of Health, including the minister and the director general of communicable diseases control. With them, I could discuss leprosy problems in the context of larger public health issues, which made SMHF’s support for these countries more effective.

Things didn’t always go smoothly. Since we were a small, private organization not bound by lots of bureaucratic red tape, we had flexibility and speed of action in our favor. In my haste to move ahead, however, I once sent a copy of my letter to the head of a national leprosy program to his superior, the director general of communicable diseases control, without a proper covering letter. This action so offended the DG in question that he

threatened to terminate our working relationship in that country. I had to write a letter to him, in the name of our chairman of the board, apologizing for the inexperience of the new medical director, and my colleague Professor Kenzo Kiikuni had to deliver it directly to him, together with a bottle of whisky to placate his anger. Fortunately, I managed to get on with this DG quite nicely for more than ten years thereafter.

Of those nine meetings I organized, the most important and timely was the one held in Manila in 1977 on “Chemotherapy.” This focused on the problem of the rising resistance to the drug dapsone in the treatment of leprosy; later, this would prompt the leprosy unit of the WHO to recommend the use of multidrug therapy (MDT) in a report it published in 1982.

As it turned out, my five years with the foundation extended to thirty years until I retired at eighty as the executive as well as the only medical director it has ever had. In those thirty years, I spent more than half of my time out of Japan, visiting leprosy-endemic countries on behalf of the foundation or the WHO, or attending international meetings—some that I organized myself—on various aspects of leprosy. In some years I made more than twenty overseas trips, visiting up to thirty countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

During these years, I stayed during the week with my in-laws, who lived about an hour outside Tokyo, and traveled back to Kyoto at weekends. There seemed no point in renting accommodation in Tokyo as I was out of the country so often. On Sunday mornings in Kyoto, we made it a routine to cook pancakes and bacon for breakfast, which I had acquired a taste for during my time in the U.S.A.

I enjoyed some countries more than others because of the people I had an opportunity to work with. I think of China because of Dr. Ma Haide, one

of the vice ministers of health and the head of leprosy services; or of Mexico because of Dr. José Rodríguez Domínguez, the director of health services; or of Vietnam because of Professor Le Kinh Due.

Dr. Ma Haide was born George Hatem. He was a Lebanese American doctor who went to work in Shanghai after graduating from the University of Geneva. He joined the Chinese Communist Party and took part in the Long March of the Red Army in the 1930s, becoming close to Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and other top Communist Party leaders. He married a beautiful Chinese film actress, Su Fei, and lived in a nice traditional residence in Beijing very close to the original Ministry of Health in the old quarter of the city.

We traveled to many parts of China together on field trips. On occasion he would meet me at the airport in his official car, a big black limousine with lace curtains. To spend time with him was always enjoyable and fulfilling. One unrealized promise between us was to spend a few days in a mountain resort in China to talk about anything and everything but leprosy, but Dr. Ma passed away before I could have that pleasure.

Dr. Rodríguez Domínguez was a bit like Dr. Ma both in appearance as well as in his interest in history and culture in general. The time I spent with him had rich rewards much beyond the business of leprosy control.

Professor Le Kinh Due became a great friend as well as a good working partner. Descended from the old royal family, he was intelligent, well educated and with a highly developed literary sensibility; he loved to talk about poetry and history as much as leprosy. He never failed to accompany me on field visits, except in the last year or so of his life, when his physical condition did not allow vigorous trips to the provinces.

One of the most memorable journeys we made together was a ten-day drive from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City on National Highway No. 1, visiting



the most important leprosy units along the way. Unfortunately, the trip was rather uncomfortable, with six or more people squeezed into a little Daihatsu jeep that normally seated four. There was no air conditioning, either, which made me regret the choice of car we had donated. Vietnamese are tough people: some of the field visits lasted eighteen hours and on a long drive we might go for eight hours without stopping for food or drink. Fortunately, I was tough enough myself in those days.

In terms of nature, I enjoyed going to Brazil, especially to Manaus and the vast Amazon basin. Micronesia in the Pacific was another area I liked visiting, particularly in the company of the late Dr. Jong-wook Lee when he was a medical officer attached to the WHO's Western Pacific Region Office. Together we once visited tiny Pingelap Atoll.

I was a member of the WHO Expert Panel on Leprosy for nearly twenty years and as such attended most of the global, regional or national-level leprosy meetings organized by the WHO, including meetings of the Expert Panel. I was also a member of the Medical Commission of the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP) of which SMHF is a member, although my contribution was rather meager in the early days when it was practically run in French. ILEP had started out as the European Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations, becoming an international federation when the American Leprosy Missions and SMHF joined in 1975.

Most importantly, for me, I served as the first non-Western president of the International Leprosy Association (ILA) for two terms from 1993 to 2002, after five years as the secretary of the association during the presidency of Dr. Wayne Meyers.

Among the files I received when I became ILA secretary was one under my name that had been sent by Dr. Browne, who had been a past secretary.

In it I found a copy of a letter of recommendation from Dr. Ross Innes to the head of admissions at the University of Edinburgh, in which he had written, “Yo Yuasa is a kind of genius and likely to be a forward surge in leprosy.” I had not known of the existence of this letter, but naturally it made me want to do my very best for leprosy and for the ILA.

As president, I was responsible for organizing the 15<sup>th</sup> International Leprosy Congress in 1998 in Beijing and the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress in 2002 in Salvador, Brazil, in addition to the first-ever Asian Leprosy Congress in Agra, India, in 2000. The Beijing Congress was the fulfillment of a pledge I had made to Dr. Ma Haide to hold the congress in China, although regrettably he had passed away a decade earlier.

For Beijing, I came up with the main theme of “Working toward a world without leprosy.” This has since become everyone’s battle cry, including the WHO, ILEP member associations and many health authorities of developing countries. But almost immediately I came to realize that a more meaningful and realistic goal is “A world without leprosy-related problems, both medical and social.”

“A world without leprosy” really should mean “eradication” of leprosy, which can only be achieved by eradicating leprosy bacilli from the surface of the Earth. At present, this is technically impossible because of the existence of non-human hosts in the form of armadillos and apes. Even were it to become technically possible in twenty or thirty years’ time, it would be hard to justify the financial and human resources necessary to achieve this, in the face of more serious public health problems such as TB, HIV/AIDS and malaria.

From what we are learning from comparative genomic studies of *Mycobacterium leprae*, the bacillus that causes leprosy, and *M. Tuberculosis*, I think *M. Leprae* is becoming less toxic to humans. Perhaps a hundred years from now, if not sooner, it will become a commensal organism within

the human body. In any case, I do not believe it is in humankind's remit to eradicate an organism we did not create. But the problems caused by leprosy in terms of stigma and discrimination, they are certainly manmade, and it is our duty to resolve them.

Among many ILA activities I started when I became president in 1993, I regard the more important as being: (1) Organizing regional ILA congresses between the international congresses held every five years; (2) Establishing the Global Project on the History of Leprosy based at the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine at the University of Oxford; (3) Launching the *ILA Forum*, a newsletter to air the opinions of ILA members that was distributed free with the *International Journal of Leprosy*; and (4) Hosting an ILA Technical Forum six months prior to the start of the Beijing Congress in place of the WHO Expert Committee meeting that had been long overdue, in order to decide what should be the main objectives of the forthcoming Beijing Congress.

During my years involved in leprosy work, of historic importance was the meeting of the WHO Study Group on Chemotherapy of Leprosy for Control Programs, which was held in Geneva in October 1981. I was one of the three chairs, in charge of the group discussing paucibacillary leprosy.

Similar to SMHF's chemotherapy workshop in 1977, a key focus was the rising resistance to dapsone, the drug on which global efforts to control leprosy were based. Dapsone could suppress *M. leprae*, but could not kill it. As *M. leprae*'s resistance to dapsone gradually built up, its efficacy was being lost and this now threatened to undermine the entire leprosy control program.

To solve this problem, the meeting recommended using multidrug therapy (MDT)—a combination of three existing drugs, dapsone, lamprone (clofazimine) and rifampicin—to treat leprosy, issuing its report in 1982. Not only did this prevent drug resistance, which had been the original aim, but

MDT also proved to be very effective in curing leprosy; it also rendered the patient no longer infectious within a week of starting treatment.

I immediately saw great possibilities for this drug regimen, so in the 1980s my main role was as a self-appointed salesman of MDT. I worked to persuade health authorities and health workers, on behalf of the WHO or our foundation, to adopt the treatment; I gave technical advice; I provided necessary drugs or funds to start using MDT in the field; and I monitored progress. I was credited with starting the “MDT for all” movement, which even ILEP adopted in 1989.

In 1981, Dr. J. Walter retired from the WHO’s leprosy unit in Geneva and Dr. H. Sansarricq wanted me to join; however, I thought I could be more effective within SMHF than as part of the WHO, so I said no. I was also invited to join the WHO’s Western Pacific Regional Office, but I declined this too.

In 1983, I was made responsible for the first WHO-financed pilot study of MDT implementation by the general health services as opposed to the existing leprosy services. I chose the Philippines because I was familiar with its leprosy activities and leprosy workers there were ready to do this.

At the time, the secretary of health of the Philippines was publically advocating for all known leprosy patients and their family members to be isolated on the island of Culion, which had a history as a leprosy colony, in order to save the government’s precious health budget. I managed to convince him that a nationwide MDT program would not only reduce the number of patients but also ease the demands on the government budget. Accepting my argument, he allowed me to conduct the pilot study.

We started in two provinces, Ilocos Norte and Cebu, which were among the top ten leprosy-endemic provinces in the country. The trial involved 2,500 cases. So well did it go, with more than 90 percent of patients completing

their MDT treatment, that the national government implemented MDT on a nationwide basis after only the first year of the three-year study. Thus did the Philippines become the first country in the world to have a national MDT program operated through the general health services.

A key reason for this success was that the Philippines had one of the best primary health care systems in the world, called the barangay health services, in which health workers provide primary health care services to barangays (neighborhoods). The system was implemented by a previous secretary of health, Dr. Jesus C. Azurin, who had received the first-ever Sasakawa Health Prize, awarded to him by the WHO in 1985 for his contribution to the development of his country's primary health care system.

It used to be said that medical people in general did not like to be involved in leprosy work. That was certainly true of the majority of doctors. But the barangay midwives of the Philippines were quite different. They knew who was suffering from leprosy in their area and they wanted to do something for them; but until then, they had not been trained in leprosy and had had no medicine to give them. Needless to say, they were happy to be able to help the patients within their own districts with MDT.

One interesting observation I made was that not all patients believed they had leprosy, or believed that the drugs would cure them. But they took the drugs anyway, because they entrusted their health and the health of their families to the barangay midwives and they did not wish to displease these ladies by rejecting their instructions.

Another reason for the success of the project was Mrs. Soledad Grino, the director of the Philippines Leprosy Mission (PLM), which received financial and technical support from the American Leprosy Missions (ALM). She had her office within the Department of Health in Manila and was always giving

the leprosy unit a kick up the backside when needed. I am sure that without her, the unit would have achieved very little on its own.

One important innovation I made to promote the spread of MDT was to put leprosy drugs in monthly calendar blister packs. This made it easier to distribute drugs to individual patients and to monitor compliance when a health worker made an unannounced home visit.

Another contribution of mine toward the global fight against leprosy was the publication of *A Pictorial Atlas of Leprosy*, utilizing the vast collection of clinical pictures of leprosy patients held by the Leonard Wood Memorial Laboratory in Cebu, the Philippines. The print version was produced in seven languages and became a popular and useful tool for field workers. We printed 60,000 copies and gave them away for free. Later, with the kind collaboration of Dr. A. Colin McDougall, *A New Atlas of Leprosy* was created featuring a wider variety of leprosy patients and thus more useful globally. This was produced in seven languages and more than 200,000 copies were distributed. These days, it is also available for download electronically from the SMHF website.



With Professor Morizo Ishidate, the founding chair of Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation. He believed it was an honorable duty for Japanese to solve leprosy problems in the world.



In 1978, I went to Carville, Louisiana, for a meeting of the ILEP Medical Commission. In this photo I am in the front row on the extreme left; next to me is one of my mentors, Dr. Stanley Browne.



Interpreting for Dr. Ma Haide (left) and SMHF founder Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa (right) in Tokyo in 1984



With my great friend and working partner Professor Le Kinh Due in Hanoi in 1994.  
He loved to talk about poetry and history as much as leprosy.





Monitoring multidrug therapy implementation in Surabaya, Indonesia, in 1997.

To my right is Dr. S.K. Noordeen of the WHO's leprosy unit.

In this photo we are examining MDT blister packs.

## Eliminating Leprosy as a Public Health Problem

In 1991, the significant progress made in leprosy control using MDT emboldened the 44<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) to set a goal of eliminating leprosy as a public health problem. Elimination was defined as attaining a prevalence rate of the disease of below one case per 10,000 population. In making this decision, the WHA was influenced by the arguments of Dr. S.K. Noordeen, who was the head of the leprosy unit at WHO headquarters in Geneva.

In fact, Dr. Jong-wook Lee, who later became WHO director-general, and I had started a similar initiative in the WHO's Western Pacific Region in 1989. After surveying the leprosy situation there, we were confident it would be possible to reduce the prevalence rate in each country to a rate of less than one case per 10,000 within ten years with intensive implementation of MDT.

But we had needed a catchphrase to sell the idea to the health authorities of the region; we found it in a pamphlet titled *A Strategic Plan for the Elimination of Tuberculosis in the United States* that a visiting chemotherapy expert had brought with him to a conference.

I heard later from Dr. Lee that he had been reprimanded by the leprosy unit in Geneva for making such an important policy decision without consulting them. Consequently, when Dr. Noordeen proposed the elimination target at the World Health Assembly in 1991 without consulting us, we felt the shoe was now on the other foot.

The WHA resolution was a shrewd move. For most governments, leprosy was a low priority and they did not pay it much attention. Now they had to become serious about leprosy control and it gave them a clearly defined and achievable target.

By 2000, the WHO was able to announce that the goal had been achieved at the global level. However, there were still a dozen countries—India and

Brazil among them—that had yet to do so at the national level, so the target was extended to 2005. Today, as I write these lines, Brazil is the only country with a population of over one million that has yet to reach this goal. Given that in the early 1980s some 130 countries had yet to eliminate leprosy as a public health problem, the outcome is clear to see. In public health terms, it can be considered a huge success, next only to the eradication of smallpox.

I feel privileged that most of my working days covered this challenging period, when I was very close to the center of the global movement that produced the above results. We were given an excellent opportunity to control leprosy and we took it.

Of course, the end of leprosy work is still far away. Although it has become a much smaller problem, it is more of a challenge to find and treat the remaining cases. I really sympathize with the people who have to deal with this in the coming decades, as it will not be easy.

Medically, there is still much to be done, especially in preventing nerve damage and the consequent physical deformities and disabilities that leprosy can cause. We also must resolve the human rights issues associated with leprosy, namely the stigma and discrimination that surround the disease. This is now receiving more attention, with people such as Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, the son of Ryoichi Sasakawa, making a key contribution in his role as chairman of The Nippon Foundation and as WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination.

As a doctor, I never had a sense of being almighty: I saw each patient as an equal partner in life. While the physical condition due to leprosy requires medical care, the person within needs fellowship, and I always made a point of touching my patients. I didn't have to train myself or force myself; it came naturally.

I've never been shocked, except for one case when I went to Nagashima Aiseien for the first time. I was with the then-director, Dr. Kensuke Mitsuda, and some others. We passed a young girl wearing a lovely kimono, and Dr. Mitsuda turned to greet her. From the back she was a beautiful young girl, but when I saw her face she was a fully developed case of lepromatous leprosy.

When I look over my time with SMHF, I believe one of the more significant contributions we were able to make to global leprosy work was that, alone or jointly with other bodies such as the WHO or other ILEP members, we organized and sponsored various meetings on leprosy. I have already mentioned some of these. Others included "Epidemiology of Leprosy" and "Immunology of Leprosy," both held in Norway; "Leprosy Prophylactic" in Micronesia; "International Workshop on Leprosy Research" in Thailand; and three meetings on "How to Accelerate MDT Implementation" in Vietnam, India and Mali, respectively. But perhaps our greatest contribution was in helping to turn the elimination of leprosy into a global movement, by promoting partnerships with the health authorities of leprosy-endemic countries as well as with the WHO, UNICEF and other leprosy-related NGOs including our fellow ILEP members.

In the world of leprosy, one award above all others is considered to be the most prestigious. Called the Damien-Dutton Award, it is given to only one person or institution a year in acknowledgment of the recipient's contribution to the fight against leprosy, be it medical or social.

The first award was presented in 1953 and over the years the contributions of a wide range of people, from a humble paramedical worker in a developing country to the president of the U.S.A., have been recognized. I received

the fiftieth award in 2002, and I feel honored to share the same award with the likes of President John F. Kennedy, Mother Teresa and many other outstanding winners, more than half of whom were my personal friends or colleagues. These included Dr. Felton Ross of the American Leprosy Missions and Professor Michel Lechat of Belgium.

In my acceptance speech, I made a particular point of thanking my wife, Yuko, who has always stood fast by me and helped me to overcome the difficulties I faced. Without her, I am quite certain I could not have received this great honor.

In marrying me, she gave up the chance to study for a Masters in Religious Studies in the U.S.A., but she always wanted to pursue her studies further. Her opportunity came much later, when our daughter Yoko was in high school.

Yuko earned a Master's degree from Doshisha University's Graduate School of Theology, finishing top of her class. She then went to the U.S.A., where she received a Doctor of Ministry degree from the San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, California.

Under the direction of Dr. Hisako Kinukawa of ICU, a feminist theologian, and Dr. Letty Russell, a prolific scholar on various cultures and theologies including feminist theology, she developed her interest in intercultural and interreligious communication. This found expression in her main theme of Noh drama and the Bible. It was the subject of her lecture series at Doshisha's Center for Christian Culture, where she was called to serve after getting her Doctor of Ministry.

The idea of combining Japanese traditional Noh drama and the Bible had been inspired by a conversation with Dr. Emil Brunner at ICU, who told her to pursue two things: "the spirit of service" and "the completion of one's own field." Ever since, in the course of her studies, these have always been her motto.

Yuko took every opportunity to coordinate her travels with mine, and with planning we were able to meet in various lands, including Thailand, India, Zimbabwe and Russia. Fortunately, some of her mentors were at the Ecumenical Center of the World Council of Churches, located within walking distance of the WHO offices in Geneva, which became one of my regular working places later in my career.

She also lectured in Tokyo on the topics that were close to her. Her classroom was Reinanzaka Church, the church built by my grandfather Jiro Yuasa on his land and with his funds. Based on these lectures, my wife published three books; she also translated three books and contributed chapters to books edited by Dr. E. Schüssler Fiorenza and by Dr. Kwok Pui Lan.

Her Noh dramas have been performed on the historical Noh stage at the Christian Academy in Kyoto, in Loccum and in Hanover during Expo 2000. Meanwhile, an interreligious symposium inspired by Doshisha theologian Professor Masao Takenaka, and sponsored by the city of Niigata, was the occasion for the staging of her Noh drama consisting of a dialogue between Ryokan, a Zen priest, and Saint Francis of Assisi, a Catholic monk.

One of the highlights of her career was the staging of her Christian Noh drama *Mary and Hannya* (Mary and the Female Demon) featuring performers from ten different countries speaking in their native languages. Also taking part were five young Buddhist priests who read sutras in unison: this was the very first time that the Zen priests of Shokokuji Temple, which is adjacent to the Doshisha campus, had appeared at the Doshisha Chapel.

Our daughter Yoko, who is quite athletic, was captain of the volleyball team at Doshisha Junior High School and joined the archery club at my suggestion; she also enjoyed skiing. When she went to Doshisha University, she commuted by a 250 cc Kawasaki motorbike—the same-sized machine I

had occasion to ride in Nepal.

Like me, she is very much interested in dogs and wanted to be a trainer of guide dogs for the blind. She took a job in Osaka with Nippon Lighthouse, the largest welfare center for the blind in Japan. Being interested in the welfare not only of the blind but of all those with physical disabilities, she also helped out at an agency that dispatches home helpers. These days she works at an animal hospital near Kyoto.

Since my retirement from SMHF, I have been living in our house in Kyoto, the same house that my parents had built for them after their return from Europe in the 1920s. It has a nice garden with lots of tall trees on the east, south and west sides. From the ground floor we do not see any neighbors, giving the impression that we are living in the woods in the summer resort of Karuizawa. We have some nice flowering trees, including pink and white dogwoods as well as a purple magnolia; we also have two persimmon trees that bear about 100 sweet fruits in the autumn—although half of them are consumed by birds before we can harvest them. This is the scene I have looked out on as I record these details of my life.

Well, I spent nearly fifty years working in leprosy, which was not at all in my original plan. I found the work not only interesting but uplifting, and that must have been by heavenly guidance, although I did not realize it at the time.

Without leprosy, I might not have become a doctor at all, but an ecologist or an entomologist, working with nature. Basically, I am not very good at dealing with people, and being alone was never a problem. But I felt a certain responsibility to leprosy patients, and that was no hardship at all.

Among the many citations given to me, the one I appreciated most came from the American Leprosy Missions in 2005. I would like to quote it here:

“The Board and staff of American Leprosy Missions give thanks for



Dr. Yo Yuasa, a channel of Christian love to people with leprosy. For over three decades, Dr. Yuasa has led the Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation, supported MDT research, contributed to the World Health Organization's body of knowledge and literature, generated resources and inspired people around the world to believe that leprosy elimination is achievable. Quietly, firmly, faithfully, brilliantly, he served. He served God and he served 'the least of these'. Presented June 1, 2005."

I can easily guess who wrote this. I am certainly looking forward to the day when we are both in Heaven, encouraging leprosy workers on Earth to do their best so they can join us.

Kyoto, June 2016



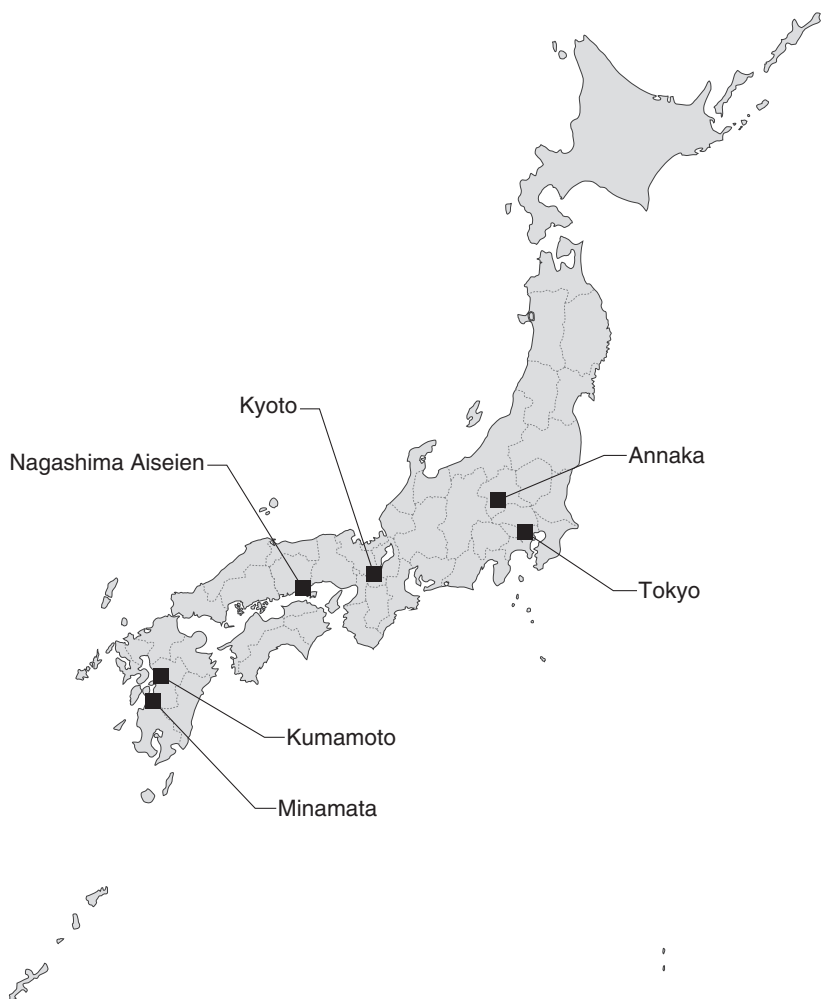
With Yoko and Yuko in Kyoto in 2015 (Photo: Kaoru Kishimoto)



With Yuko at the Damien-Dutton Award ceremony in New York in 2002.



With Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation colleagues and associates in 2013. Seated alongside me in the front row are (from left) Professor Kenzo Kiikuni and Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara. Behind Dr. Hinohara is Professor Etsuko Kita, and to her right is Mr. Yohei Sasakawa—son of SMHF's founder, chairman of The Nippon Foundation and WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I was blessed with many wonderful teachers, colleagues and supporters throughout my leprosy work. Some I have already mentioned in these pages, but there are too many to include in a short autobiography. Nevertheless, I would still like to mention some of them as an expression of my gratitude, even though a number have since passed away.

- (1) Japan: Dr. K. Saikawa, Professor Otis Cary and Dr. Alice Cary
- (2) China: Dr. Ma Haide and Dr. Ye Gun Yun
- (3) South Korea: Dr. Kim Do Il
- (4) Hong Kong: Dr. Grace Warren
- (5) Vietnam: Prof. Le Kinh Due
- (6) Philippines: Dr. Cesare Viardo, Dr. Ricardo Guinto, Mrs. Soledad Grino,  
Mrs. Salah Labitan, Dr. Gemma Cabanos, Mrs. Monina Madarang
- (7) Thailand: Dr. Teera Ramasoota
- (8) Indonesia: Dr. Andy Louhenapessy
- (9) Myanmar: Dr. Kyaw Lwin and Dr. Tin Shwe
- (10) Nepal: Ms. Eileen Lodge
- (11) India: Dr. K. C. Das,
- (12) Mexico: Dr. José Rodríguez Domínguez
- (13) Brazil: Dra. Maria da Graca
- (14) Zambia: Dr. R. de Soldenhoff
- (15) United Kingdom: Dr. Stanley Browne, Dr. James Ross Innes

- (16) ILEP: Dr. Ji Bao Hong, Dr. A. Colin MacDougall  
(17) ILA: Dr. Pieter Feenstra, Dr. Wayne Meyers, Dr. Felton Ross, Professor  
Michel Lechat, Dr. Marcos Virmond  
(18) WHO: Dr. S. K. Noordeen, Dr. Jong-wook Lee



I am also most grateful to the California Protestant Churches Women's Group for their generous financial support for my study in Edinburgh over a five-year period.



This is an expanded and edited version of "What I did after Amherst," the account I wrote at the request of the chairman of the 60<sup>th</sup> reunion of the Amherst College class of 1953 in 2013. My thanks to Mr. Jonathan Lloyd-Owen of Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation for his editing.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1926 Born in Kyoto
- 1939 Moves to Tokyo, enters Jiyu Gakuen (“Freedom School”)
- 1945 Admitted to Haruna-so TB sanatorium in Gunma Prefecture  
Returns to Kyoto
- 1946 Graduates from Jiyu Gakuen
- 1947 Makes first visit to Nagashima Aiseien leprosy sanatorium
- 1949 Enrolls in Amherst College, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
- 1953 Visits Washington, D.C. in connection with founding of International Christian University (ICU)  
Admitted to Trudeau Sanatorium, Saranac Lake, New York  
Returns to Japan from U.S.A.
- 1954 Undergoes segmental lung resection surgery in Tokyo  
Enters ICU
- 1956 Graduates from Amherst College (in the class of 1953)
- 1957 Goes to teach English to high school students at Nagashima Aiseien
- 1958 Recruited to assist Japanese Organizing Committee of 7<sup>th</sup> International Leprosy Congress
- 1959 Produces *Transactions of the VII<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Leprology*  
Departs on four-month visit to India
- 1960 Marries Yuko Nishimura at ICU Chapel  
Sails for Europe aboard NYK Line’s *Asama Maru*  
Enters Edinburgh Medical School

- 1965     Graduates from Edinburgh Medical School with MBChB  
            Starts work at Southlands Hospital, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex
- 1971     Earns Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene from Liverpool  
            School of Tropical Medicine  
            Joins The Leprosy Mission (TLM)
- 1972     Daughter Yoko born in Kyoto  
            Begins training at TLM's hospital on Hei Ling Chau Island, Hong Kong
- 1973     Arrives at TLM's Anandaban Hospital in Nepal
- 1974     Becomes medical superintendant of Anandaban
- 1975     Joins Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation (SMHF) as medical director
- 1980     Becomes executive and medical director of SMHF
- 1988     Appointed secretary of the International Leprosy Association (ILA)
- 1993     Begins first of two terms as president of the ILA
- 2002     Receives 50<sup>th</sup> Damien-Dutton Award
- 2005     Becomes advisor to SMHF
- 2012     Retires from SMHF



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Author

**Yo Yuasa**

Publisher

**Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation**

The Nippon Foundation Building, 5<sup>th</sup> fl.

1-2-2 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 107-0052, Japan

Telephone +81-3-6229-5377

Fax +81-3-6229-5388

E-mail [smhf@tnfb.jp](mailto:smhf@tnfb.jp)

URL <http://www.smhf.or.jp/e/>



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*There was a great shortage of food at the sanatorium and we nearly starved. Instead of rice, we ate dried sweet potatoes or dried kaoliang, and were lucky if we got one chicken egg a month. After the war, together with a couple of friends from Haruna-so,*

*I went to visit a leprosarium in the Inland Sea. We had heard that leprosy patients had fared better than TB patients during the war and wanted to see for ourselves what life had been like for them. This visit to Nagashima Aiseien in 1947 would come to have enormous significance in my life.*

*—Yo Yuasa*

Cover: The author (right) with his parents and sister in 1933

Back cover: Main photo: The Old College Quad, University of Edinburgh (Credit: The University of Edinburgh)

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