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Reverend Canon Paul Ken Imai fonds Accession 2022.02

Elizabeth Carroll, 2024

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Biographical note

Reverend Canon Paul Ken Imai was born November 10, 1911 in what was at the time called Manchuria, though his family had roots in Tottori Prefecture, Japan. His father, Kumajiro Imai was a devout Anglican and named his son Ken as it means “offering” in Japanese. He studied and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts from Rikkyo University also known as Saint Paul’s University. He then achieved a Bachelor of Divinity from the Anglican Theological College, in 1936 in Tokyo. A year later on July 28, 1937 Imai was ordained to Deacon at the Christ Church Cathedral in Sendai, Japan. His studies continued in Ohio where he began to study at the Graduate School of Applied Religion within the University of Cincinnati, then studied at the General Theological Seminary and Columbia University within the Department of Sociology, in New York City from 1938-1940. It was during this time that he learned English. Returning to Japan, Imai was ordained to Priesthood December 4, 1940 at Christ Church Cathedral. For a short period in 1941 he spent time at the Saint Savior’s Church in Akita, Japan.

When WWII began, Imai was a conscientious objector, but was eventually drafted into the Japanese army. Before being drafted, he gave a sermon from the pulpit against the war. During the war, he was often sent to the front lines as a scout. His English language skills served him well, and he often interpreted for the army. Imai was injured in Papua New Guinea and later captured by the Americans. He also spent time in a POW camp in Australia.

Not much is known about Imai’s family prior to WWII. He had a wife and daughter, the later passing away during her travel from Manchuria to Japan. It is not known when his first wife passed away. It is believed that the Nozomi Rose, a strain of roses, was named after his first daughter.

After WWII, Imai became the Chaplain at St. Margaret’s Rikkyo School in Tokyo. In 1947 Imai married Yachiyo Grace Tobimatsu (1920-2017), an English teacher. They had two children in Japan, Shin Imai (1950-) and Margaret Imai Ko (1952-) and once in Canada they had, Rei Imai (1954-). He stayed at the school in Tokyo until 1953 until he was called by the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada to minister Japanese Canadians in the Toronto, Hamilton, London, St. Catherine’s, and Montreal area.

Ken Imai and his family were some of the few Japanese permitted to enter Canada during the period after the war. The family traveled from Yokohama to San Francisco, then took a train to Toronto via Chicago. The assignment from the Church was initially to be three years, but the family decided to continue their life in Canada, and received citizenship in the 60s.

Imai continued his education in Toronto. As part of the three year assignment, Imai was also awarded a scholarship from Trinity College at the University of Toronto, to pursue a Master of Theology (Degree granted in 1958).

Rev. Ken Imai began to lead the St. Andrew’s Japanese congregation and their first location was the Church of the Holy Trinity (10 Trinity Square, Toronto). Their congregation outgrew the

church, so they moved to St. Anne's Parish Hall (651 Dufferin Street, Toronto) in 1956. By 1957 they were self-supporting and named St. Andrew's Dufferin. The congregation rapidly grew and moved to the Cathedral of St. Alban the Martyr in 1961. Eventually, when the choir school took over, the congregation moved to St. David, Donlands (49 Donlands Ave, Toronto).

Imai was dedicated to his parishioners. In order to better reach the Issei who read mostly Japanese, he translated the *Book of Common Prayer* with the assistance of Rev Reg N. Savary and copy-editing done by Shizuko Moritsugu from 1965-1967. 1969 marked the 25th anniversary of the congregation. Celebrations were held, and guests included Lt. Governor of Ontario Ross Macdonald and Right Rev. Bishop Hunt. 1973 marked the 100th anniversary of the first Canadian missionary to Japan. To celebrate the occasion, Rev. Imai and his congregation gathered with notables including Canadian primate Most Rev. Ted Scott, the presiding Bishop of Japan John N. Okubo, the Japanese Ambassador to Canada and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Nishiyama, Counsel General Mr. and Mrs. Yamaguchi, and 33 Canadian missionaries to Japan.

In 1975 Rev. Imai was appointed honorary Canon of the Cathedral Church of St James in Toronto. By 1976 he was inducted as Incumbent of St. Andrew's Church and retired from there in 1978. He and his wife went to England, where he was Chaplain of the Rikkyo Japanese School. After, he moved into the position of Dean of Shoei Centre at King Alfred's College in Winchester, England, holding the position from 1981 to 1983. At the time this was an all-girls boarding school, with pupils from ages 18-20.

Rev. Canon Imai and his wife returned to Toronto in 1983 to retire. Imai's dedication to the Japanese Anglican community continued until 1997, as he would often guest preach at Japanese language churches, while also running a Bible class. He passed away November 27, 2007.

References:

Anglican Journal staff. "Paul Ken Imai." *Anglican Journal*, February 1, 2008.
<https://anglicanjournal.com/paul-ken-imai-7701/>

"Canon Imai Obituary." *The Globe and Mail*, November 29, 2007.
<https://www.legacy.com/ca/obituaries/theglobeandmail/name/canon-imai-obituary?pid=189846185>

Scope and Content

Dates range: 1953-2009

Extent: 3 box (0.7 linear meters), comprised of
20cm of textual records
27 black & white photographs
86 colour photographs

- 1 colour polaroid
- 20 colour negatives
- 1 CD-R
- 1 DVD-R
- 1 resin award

The majority of the material covers the period when Rev. Canon Imai led the St. Andrew's congregation in Toronto. Photos of the congregation and special events are included. Some of his written work is also present, offering an insight into his relationship with religion and community. The material also reflects how the Japanese Canadians who relocated to Toronto after internment created community.

Note:

Arrangement: Due to the small volume of material, files were not intellectually arranged into series. Material from the photo album at risk of damage have been removed and placed into folders with the title of the page number they were removed from. Attempts have been made to describe the arrangement of these images on the page in the file level description.

Titles, unless given in square brackets, have been taken from the original material / containers. Please see full file level descriptions on Discover Archives.

Access: Unrestricted.

Boxes: 3

Appendix

File list

File number	File title	Date range	Location
2022.02.001	[Chapel News]	1980-1987, 2004	Box 1, File 1
2022.02.002.1	Ken Biography	[19--], 2007-2009	Box 1, File 2
2022.02.002.2	Ken Biography	[193-?]	Box 1, File 2
2022.02.003	<i>The Growth of St. Andrew's Japanese Congregation in Toronto</i>	1969	Box 1, File 3
2022.02.004	<i>St. Andrew's Japanese Anglican Congregation</i>	2004	Box 1, File 4
2022.02.005	Cincinnati Summer School in Social Work	August 18, 1938	Box 1, File 5
2022.02.006	<i>The Japanese Adjustment to Canadian Life</i>	1958	Box 1, File 6
2022.02.007	<i>Inuchi no ai</i>	1997	Box 1, File 7
2022.02.008	<i>Shinko no ikinuita hitobito</i>	1995	Box 1, File 8
2022.02.009.00	St. Andrew's Events 1953-1979		Box 1, File 9
2022.02.009.01	Page 1	September 1954	Box 1, File 10
2022.02.009.02	Page 2	1959	Box 1, File 11
2022.02.009.03	Page 3	1959	Box 1, File 12
2022.02.009.04	Page 4	1958	Box 1, File 13

File number	File title	Date range	Location
2022.02.009.05	Page 5	[1957-1958]	Box 1, File 14
2022.02.009.06	Page 6	1959	Box 1, File 15
2022.02.009.07	Page 7	1959	Box 1, File 16
2022.02.009.08	Page 8	1961	Box 1, File 17
2022.02.009.09	Page 9	1961	Box 1, File 18
2022.02.009.10	Page 10	March 1960	Box 1, File 19
2022.02.009.11	Page 11	[1961]	Box 1, File 20
2022.02.009.12	Page 12	[n.d.]	Box 1, File 21
2022.02.009.13	Page 13	September 1969	Box 1, File 22
2022.02.009.14	Page 14	1969	Box 1, File 23
2022.02.009.15	Page 15	September 28, 1969	Box 1, File 24
2022.02.009.16	Page 16	September 28, 1969	Box 1, File 25
2022.02.009.17	Page 17	[n.d.]	Box 1, File 26
2022.02.009.18	Page 18	September 28, 1969	Box 1, File 27
2022.02.009.19	Page 19	[n.d.]	Box 1, File 28
2022.02.009.20	Page 20	[n.d.]	Box 1, File 29
2022.02.009.21	Page 21	September 1971	Box 1, File 30
2022.02.009.22	Page 22	1972	Box 1, File 31
2022.02.009.23	Page 23	November 1973	Box 1, File 32
2022.02.009.24	Page 24	1953, 1973-1976	Box 1, File 33
2022.02.009.25	Page 25	November 4, 1973	Box 1, File 34
2022.02.009.26	Page 26	1975	Box 1, File 35
2022.02.009.27	Page 27	1975	Box 1, File 36
2022.02.009.28	Page 28	August 31, 1975	Box 1, File 37
2022.02.009.29	Page 29	1976, 1985	Box 1, File 38
2022.02.009.30	Page 30	[n.d.]	Box 1, File 39
2022.02.009.31	Page 31	[n.d.]	Box 1, File 40
2022.02.009.32	Page 32	[n.d.]	Box 1, File 41
2022.02.009.33	Page 33	1978	Box 1, File 42
2022.02.009.34	Page 34	1978	Box 1, File 43
2022.02.009.35	Page 35	[1963]	Box 1, File 44
2022.02.009.36	Page 36	[197?]	Box 1, File 45
2022.02.009.37	Page 37	[197?]	Box 1, File 46
2022.02.009.38	Page 38	1978	Box 1, File 47
2022.02.009.39	Page 39	[1964]	Box 1, File 48
2022.02.009.40	Page 40	1979	Box 1, File 49
2022.02.010	Yachiyo Grace Imai	[October 20, 1993], April 1, 1964	Box 2, File 1
2022.02.011.01	A Celebration of the Life of the Reverend Canon Paul Ken Imai	2007-2008	Box 2, File 2
2022.02.011.02	A Celebration of the Life of the Reverend Canon Paul Ken Imai	1980	Box 2, File 2
2022.02.011.03	A Celebration of the Life of the Reverend Canon Paul Ken Imai	2007-2008	Box 2, File 2

File number	File title	Date range	Location
2022.02.011.04	A Celebration of the Life of the Reverend Canon Paul Ken Imai	[195?]	Box 2, File 2
2022.02.011.05	A Celebration of the Life of the Reverend Canon Paul Ken Imai	2007	Box 2, File 2
2022.02.011.06	A Celebration of the Life of the Reverend Canon Paul Ken Imai	December 1, 2007	Box 2, File 2
2022.02.011.07	A Celebration of the Life of the Reverend Canon Paul Ken Imai	2007	Box 2, File 2
2022.02.012	<i>Book of Common Prayer</i>	1968	Box 3, File 1
2022.02.013	Scrapbook	1967-1997	Box 3, File 2
2022.02.014	<i>New Testament References</i>	1942	Box 3, File 3
2022.02.015	Centennial paperweight	1973	Box 3, File 4