

## LESSON 1 SOURCE 1.16 THE MORISHITA AND EBISUZAKI FAMILIES

**Family Names:** Morishita and Ebisuzaki

**Family Members:** Masataro and Hide Ebisuzaki

Kojiro, Sawa, Setsuko, Hatsumi, Nancy, and Teruo Morishita

**Street Address:** 337 Powell Street Vancouver, B.C

**Occupation:** Owner/operator of Ebisuzaki Shoten, a general store

**Location:** Vancouver, British Columbia



Vancouver sits on the coast of British Columbia's mainland, on the shore of the Pacific and near the mouth of the Fraser River. New arrivals to the region recognized the geographic advantage of a settlement in this place. The land on which it stands has long been home to people of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh-ulh Temíxw (Squamish) and səilwətaʔt təməxʷ (Tsleil-Waututh) territory).

In 1939, Vancouver is the economic engine of the province. The Canadian Pacific railway carries timber, coal, and canned fish across Canada. The port delivers the same resources across the world. It is a time of optimism: this year has shown the first signs of economic prosperity since the Great Depression. Newcomers pour into the city hoping to take advantage of the province's natural wealth.

Powell Street is the heart of Japanese Canadian life in Vancouver. It is lined with Japanese Canadian-owned shops, businesses, restaurants, boarding houses, and food merchants catering to Japanese Canadians in and beyond Vancouver. Powell Street begins in the business centre of Vancouver and runs east toward the city's working-class districts. Shipyards and lumber mills lie north of Powell Street. Residential neighborhoods, with family homes, expand southwards. The streets bustle with millworkers, entrepreneurs, established families, and new immigrants.

Not all Japanese Canadians live in the Powell Street neighborhood. Some families have moved to different parts of the city. Successful entrepreneurs live in wealthier neighborhoods like Kerrisdale. Even as the community grows, however, Powell Street remains a vital centre to Japanese Canadian life. Only there can you find the home-turf of the beloved Asahi baseball team, uniquely Japanese cuisine, and the headquarters of community newspapers.

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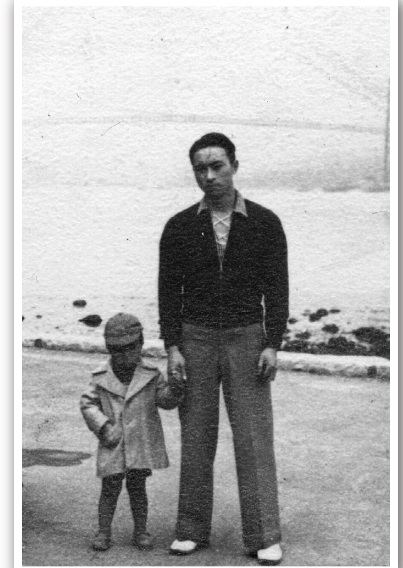
### ABOUT THE MORISHITA AND EBISUZAKI FAMILIES

One of the many businesses on Powell Street is the Ebisuzaki Shōten, or store. It sells just about everything: hand-made children's overcoats, lady's silk robes, dolls for Japanese festivals, and food imported from Japan. Rice, miso, soy sauce, tea, and noodles line its shelves.

The store is family owned and run. It is named for Hide and Masatarō Ebisuzaki who opened the business in 1909. In 1920, Hide's brother and sister-in-law, Teiji and Sawa, immigrated to Canada and began helping with the business. The families live and work together. Now, their house

is filled with children. Teiji's daughter, Nancy, remembers a "crazy" busy home, "a big house with lots of people in it."

The business serves Japanese Canadians across coastal British Columbia. Every few weeks, Teiji drives to deliver groceries. He visits farmers in the Fraser Valley, fishers in Steveston, and loggers on Vancouver Island. If a customer is unable to afford their purchase, the Ebisuzaki Shōten extends them credit. Its motto was "Thin Profit, Thick Trust."



Left: Members of the Ebisuzaki and Morishita families stand with store employees on the front steps of a residence. Masataro Ebisuzaki stands on the left, wearing a suit jacket. His wife, Hide Ebisuzaki, sits at the right-hand side of the group. Hide's brother, Kojiro, stands to the right of her young daughter, Hatsumi. Nikkei National Museum 2011.79.4.1.1.70  
Centre: Sawa sits with her children: Setsuko, Hatsumi, Nancy, and Teruo. Nikkei National Museum 2011.79.4.1.3.2  
Right: Uncle Kojiro Ebisuzaki holds the hand of his nephew, Teruo Morishita. They are in Vancouver's Stanley Park. The Lion's Gate Bridge appears in the background. Nikkei National Museum 2011.79.4.1.3.78