

Maple and Momiji – One Hundred Years Ago

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Every spring, we enjoy the lovely new leaves that appear on branches that were bare over the winter. Here in Japan, some of the most beautiful leaves are on the momiji, or Japanese maple trees.

This year, Kwansai Gakuin is celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of relations with a country symbolized by another type of maple leaf. Of course, that country is Canada, and it was 100 years ago that the Canadian Methodist Church joined the American Methodist Episcopal Church South to support the young school with both money and personnel. In 1910, there were only 21 professors and 264 students.

As the first representative of the Canadian Methodist Church after it joined in support for Kwansai Gakuin, Dr. C.J.L. Bates was sent to teach at the Theological School. This means that 2010 is also the 100th anniversary of Dr. Bates' arrival at Kwansai Gakuin. The following year, Dr. Bates had been appointed as Dean of the proposed College of Literature and Commerce, which was opened in 1912. By the time he was forced to leave Japan because of the war in 1940, the number of students had grown to 3000.

Dr. Bates had a profound influence on the development of Kwansai Gakuin through his leadership as Dean, and later as Chancellor of the entire school. His emphasis on academic excellence and character development was an important supplement to the theological focus of the Methodists from the United States. The school motto, "Mastery for Service," which he introduced in 1912, has been adopted and loved by all Kwansai Gakuin ever since.

Other fine Canadian teachers helped to build Kwansai Gakuin's reputation, and the Canadian Methodist Church was proud of the school's accomplishments. For example, Dr. Outerbridge, who also arrived at KG 100 years ago and spent most of his working life at Kwansai Gakuin, served in many responsible positions, and even played a central role in the move from the original Harada Mura Campus near Kobe to the Nishinomiya Uegahara Campus. When Dr. Outerbridge retired, his high expectations for Kwansai Gakuin were evident from these words he wrote in *The K.G. Times*, "Its purpose is to educate the type of young men and women which Japan needs most, - leaders of high moral character devoted to the unselfish service of human society."

As we admire the beautiful momiji leaves, let us remember the prayers and offerings by many nameless Canadian Methodist Church members who supported Kwansai Gakuin one hundred years ago, as well as the Canadian teachers who loved and served our school.

(Chancellor)