

WILLIAM AKIYOSHI TOGASHI
8-21-1917 to 1-15-1977

William Togashi's life was a testament of reconciliation. In unspectacular but practical ways he worked to knit humankind into one family under God. His was a spirit that takes away the occasion for war.

With strong cultural ties to both the United States and Japan, Willie Togashi brought together in his own way the best of each heritage. Born in Los Angeles, California, taken by his parents to Japan in 1931 while still a school boy, he attended school in Hiroshima. He graduated from Aoyama Gakuin (Christian) College in Tokyo, majoring in English. When World War II came he was conscripted into the Japanese army, (thereby losing American citizenship) served in Java, repatriated to Hiroshima in 1947. For a year he studied at the Japan Library School, Keio University, afterward working in the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission Library in Hiroshima. During this time he came in contact with members of the Society of Friends and from then on shared their concern for developing the World Fellowship Center in Hiroshima as one expression of a deep commitment to peace and international understanding. Many visitors to Hiroshima remember him as a genial host and interpreter.

William Togashi returned to the United States in 1957; his wife and children came the following year. As a conscientious objector he regained his American citizenship in February, 1961. At almost the same time, he and his two eldest children joined the Friends Meeting of Washington.

His experience with the grim realities of war, especially nuclear war, had much to do with his vocation and how he used his so-called "free time" the rest of his life. As a cataloger in the Technical Services Division of the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland, he worked with, among other things, documents in both Japanese and English related to the medical aftermath of the atomic bombs. He served unstintingly on the Peace and Social Order committees of his Meeting and the larger Quaker community, on the board of the Washington Peace Center, as an interpreter for Japanese visitors to Washington, as a liaison with the World Fellowship Center in Hiroshima.

But he did not confine his talents to the larger scene. Willie was always available wherever the Meeting needed him - setting up tables for the Monthly Meeting meal, accomplishing assigned chores on the House Committee, discharging responsibilities of the Nominating Committee, helping with the annual Bazaar. In addition he was active in the Japanese-American Christian Fellowship in Washington. In his quiet, unassuming way, seasoned with a gentle sense of humor, he was a pillar of strength, a caring and sharing Friend.

So many lives have been enriched by Willie Togashi that we still find it difficult to measure the gap that has been left since his short life ended so quickly. We are grateful to his family for sharing him with us. We hold his wife and children in our prayers, not only in sympathy, but in rejoicing that here was a Friend who walked cheerfully in two worlds that he saw as one, finding God in each.