

KIYOSHI TOGASAKI,

A versatile, vigorous internationalist is RI's President for 1968-69.

By **BILL HOSOKAWA**

THE NEXT President of Rotary International has made his home in Japan since 1933, yet his roots are deep in the American soil on which he was born. He belongs to the Rotary Club of Tokyo, but his travels have taken him to all parts of the globe, and he likes to think of himself as a citizen of the world. Even his name—George Kiyoshi Togasaki—reflects the influence of two cultures.

It is necessary to understand these seeming incongruities in order to know George Togasaki the man, and appreciate his total dedication to Rotary principles. And there is no better way to tell his story than from the beginning.

It starts with the arrival in the United States of America of his father, Kikumatsu. The year was 1886, and Kikumatsu Togasaki was no ordinary immigrant. At 19 he was already a graduate of a Japanese government school of jurisprudence. But by law he could not be sworn in as a judge until he was 21. Energetic, restless, he took a ship for San Francisco to learn about the U. S., expecting to return home in a year or two.

Kikumatsu fell in love with both America and another Japanese visitor, Shige Kushida, daughter of the co-founder of the Women's Christian Temperance Union movement in Japan. Before long she helped convert him to Christianity. They returned to Japan to be married, then sailed back to San Francisco to take up an immigrant couple's life.

Although he was an educated man in his native land, Kikumatsu Togasaki found opportunities limited in the United States. He was working at odd jobs, spending his evenings preaching the Christian gospel to fellow immigrants, when George Kiyoshi arrived September 24, 1895. George was only the first. The children kept coming. Eight were born over a 14-year span, and it took sacrifice and ingenuity to rear so large a family. Seeking a more abundant life, Father Togasaki opened an art goods shop. But it was all but wiped out by the earthquake and fire in 1906. It took him seven years to liquidate his debts. Eventually the shop grew into a modest importing and exporting business.

George remembers that it was a family rule in his boyhood that the children could have butter or jam with their bread, but not both. Two spreads were considered an extravagance. Yet, the Togasakis were a warm, close-knit family. They read the Bible together daily around the dinner table, discussing the meaning of various passages.

"We knew our parents loved us because they gave

us so much of their time," George recalls. "And because we loved them, too, we tried to be like them. Dad and Mother made the basic virtues a part of their daily lives—virtues like honesty, frugality, love of children, hard work, and public service. We children learned to live the same way. Our parents were so selfless, we were ashamed to be selfish."

The children grew up in a difficult time. For no reason other than that he was an Oriental, the elder Togasaki was stoned and beaten by hoodlums. One day George and other children were ordered into a segregated school for Orientals. Father Togasaki led a vigorous protest to the board of education. "How can our children become good Americans if they are not allowed to associate with other children?" he asked. It took intervention by Theodore Roosevelt, President of the U.S.A., to end the segregation.

Father Togasaki believed devoutly in education as a key to advancement. It was a great day for the family when George enrolled in the University of California at Berkeley. But before he could complete his studies the United States entered World War I. George joined the Army, was shipped to France in April, 1918, and served with the 347th Field Artillery in the Verdun sector.

After the Armistice he came home with the intention of studying medicine. Father Togasaki vetoed the idea and gently spelled out his reasons. "You have the capacity to become a doctor," he told his son, "but not an outstanding one, and it will take many years to establish a practice. On the other hand, you can become a successful businessman. I wish you to study commerce, then come and work with me. In that way, you can help your brothers and sisters to get an education, too."

George agreed, as much because he wanted to help the younger children as because he respected his father's wishes. The extent to which his sacrifice bore fruit is evident in the achievements of the family. Three of his sisters are practicing doctors of medicine in the San Francisco Bay Region. The other three girls have degrees in nursing and public health nursing. One brother continues to run the family importing business. A half-brother, product of a second marriage after George's



Like the man he portrays in this article, Bill Hosokawa was born of Japanese parents in the U.S.A. A former war correspondent and now associate editor of the *Denver Post*, he is writing a history of the Japanese in the U.S.A. Bill is married, has four children, and is a member of the Rotary Club of Lakewood, Colorado.

WORLD CITIZEN



Surrounded by friends and well-wishers at 1967 Rotary International Convention in Nice, France, Kiyoshi radiates warm fellowship.

mother died, is a mathematician engaged in research for International Business Machines.

After his graduation from the University of California in 1920, George made a series of business trips to Japan. There he met Misu Kanamori, petite and charming daughter of Tsurin Kanamori, a noted educator.

George and Misu became engaged, but almost immediately the United States passed its Immigration Act of 1924, banning all immigration from Japan and other parts of the Orient.

George and Misu were married January 3, 1925, knowing that under U. S. law she could enter the United States only as a temporary visitor, never as a permanent resident. For the next few years Misu spent much time commuting across the Pacific by ship, remaining with her husband in San Francisco as long as the law allowed, then returning to Japan to apply anew for a visitor's visa.

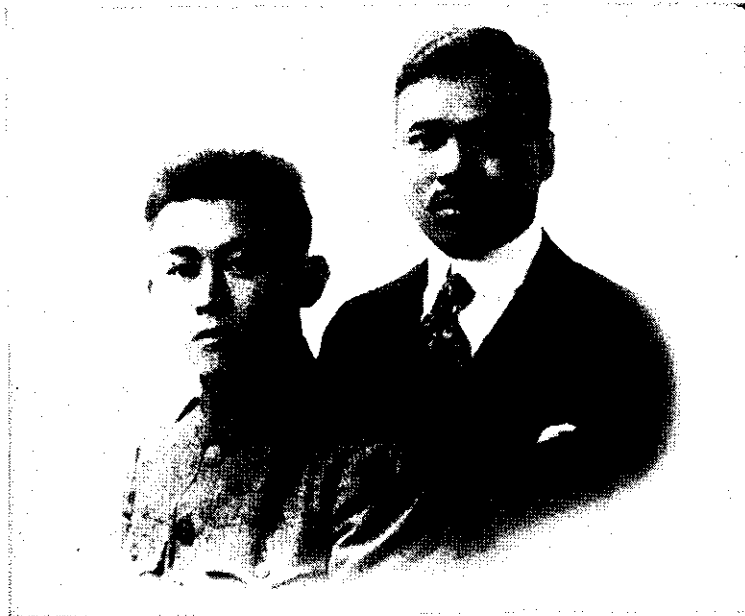
A meaningful family life was impossible under these conditions. In 1933, in the depths of the Depression, George pulled up stakes and moved to Tokyo, hoping that some day the law would be repealed and he could go home with his family. In Japan he found his knowledge of English and his U. S. connections were in demand. He served as guide and interpreter for the U. S. Economic Mission led by Cameron Forbes, worked for the America Japan Society, became executive secretary

for the World Federation of Education Associations meeting in Tokyo, and was named commissioner of the Japanese exhibit at the New York World's Fair in 1939 and 1940.

The outbreak of war in 1941 found George in Tokyo, caught in a deep dilemma. He remembers with gratitude the friends who helped him survive. Japanese officials had enough faith in his integrity to let him go to work as business manager of *The Japan Times*, an English language daily newspaper published for the substantial number of resident foreigners who could not read Japanese. His knowledge of the two nations helped bridge many awkward gaps in a delicate period.

About this time, after George was named president of *The Japan Times*, he was invited to join the Wednesday Club whose members were Japanese who had been Rotarians. Rotary had gained a foothold in Japan in 1920, but it had been banned by the military in 1941 because of its foreign ties. Its members, however, continued to meet on Wednesdays, retaining Rotary's objectives and high principles. George Kiyoshi recalls that for many months after he joined, members brought their own lunches to meetings because food was severely rationed.

S. Kendrick Guernsey, of the U.S.A., was President of RI in 1947-48 when the board voted to seek Japan's



Family portrait (circa 1900) of Kiyoshi nestling under his mother Shige's arm. . . . George in U. S. Army uniform in 1918 with Masakazu Kobayashi, who became RI First Vice-President in 1958. . . . Kiyoshi with the late U. S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.

return into the Rotary fold. The next year, under President Angus S. Mitchell of Australia, the Board sent George R. Means, then Assistant General Secretary, to Japan for a survey. The Rotary Club of Tokyo came back to life—Rotary becoming the first international service organization to be established in postwar Japan—and George Togasaki was in it, and enthusiastic! Almost at once there came six other Clubs in Japan—and these have now grown to 851 Clubs—25 in Metropolitan Tokyo alone—with 40,400 members.

George Kiyoshi Togasaki was elected President of the Rotary Club of Tokyo for 1955-56. The next year he was aboard a ship en route to San Francisco, on his way to an International Christian Leadership conference in Holland, when he received a radiogram asking him to address the RI Convention in Philadelphia. He had never been to a RI Convention but he accepted, expecting to speak at one of the small gatherings that take place during Convention week.

Only after he arrived in Philadelphia did he learn that he was to be a principal speaker for the massed audience

of thousands at the final plenary session, and that his speech manuscript was needed for release and for publication. George had no manuscript. He had expected to speak from notes. Hurriedly he called to nearby Swarthmore College where his eldest son's fiancée, Tamiyo Suyematsu, was enrolled. Tamiyo was preparing for her wedding, but she cancelled all appointments to sit down and type George's speech as he drafted it in long-hand. It was Monday when she was summoned. By Wednesday the speech had been whipped into shape. The wedding took place on schedule, Saturday.

Later that year George made a major address at RI's Pacific Regional Conference in Sydney, Australia, and two years later another at RI's Asia Regional Conference in New Delhi.

After serving as District Governor in 1957-58, George was named to the Program Planning Committee of RI in 1961-63. As Host Club Executive Committee Chairman he guided his Rotary Club of Tokyo in entertaining, in 1961, the largest of RI Conventions—23,366 people. In 1963-64 George was a Director of RI, the follow-

ing year Second Vice President. In 1966 he was Chairman of the RI Convention Committee.

Early one frigid morning in January, 1967, the telephone rang in the Togasaki home in Tokyo. Daughter Betty answered, then hurried to waken her father. It was a call from Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A. The Chairman of the Nominating Committee for President of RI for 1968-69 was on the line. Would George accept the Committee's nomination for the Presidency of RI?

"I think I said yes," George remembers. "At first I was so overwhelmed by the honor that I couldn't respond properly. Then each of the other members of the Committee got on the phone to congratulate me. They went on and on. They were in a warm office in Evanston. I was in that chilly hallway in my pajamas. Before we hung up I was shivering so violently that I couldn't speak coherently."

George Kiyoshi has little spare time. He is an adviser to *The Japan Times*, Tokyo's leading English language daily. He is president of Fuji Tours International, trustee of the Japan Bible Society, vice president of the America Japan Society, trustee of St. Luke's Hospital in Tokyo, director of Kiyosato Educational and Experimental Project (KEEP), and honorary chairman of the board of International Christian University of Japan which he has served since its founding in 1949.

Two years ago the Japanese government decorated George with the Order of the Rising Sun, Third Class, for his contributions to Japanese-American relations. This year the University of California, his alma mater, honored him twice. He was elected to charter membership in the Berkeley Fellows, whose membership is lim-

Kiyoshi (left), as Host Club Executive Committee Chairman, and other Rotarians greet Emperor Hirohito at Rotary's 1961 Tokyo Convention.



ited to 100 prominent alumni. Then the regents selected him for the third annual Elise and Walter A. Haas International Award which is presented to an alumnus who has made an outstanding contribution to his country. The stature of this award can be measured by the fact that the two previous winners are Abdul Majid, Afghanistan's ambassador to the United States, and Galo Plaza, former President of Ecuador.

Energetic and vigorous despite his 73 years, George



Petite and charming, Misu was Kiyoshi's wife for 42 years. "I will carry on as she would have wanted me to," the President says.

carries a trim 155 pounds on a 5-foot 5½-inch frame topped by a head of graying hair. "I have no hobbies," he says, "because I've spent all my time on my avocations—international understanding, good human relationships, and developing leadership for tomorrow."

As President of Rotary International, George Togasaki hopes to inspire greater activity at the Club level and greater concern for human relationships at home and around the world, and this hope he details in his message on page 18.

At this writing, all three of George Kiyoshi's children are in the United States. Gordon, who has a master's degree from the Harvard School of Business, is in New York City as manager of current economic planning in the Pacific area for Pan-American Airways. Betty is Mrs. Tokue Shibata, wife of a professor of economics at Tokyo Metropolitan University who currently is a guest lecturer at Grinnell College in Iowa. Robert, the youngest, earned his Ph.D. at Cornell University and is research geneticist at Harvard Biological Laboratory. This Autumn he will join the faculty of Indiana University as an assistant professor of botany. Gordon and Betty have provided their father with two grandchildren each.

Only one cloud of sorrow darkens the future that George contemplates as RI President. Misu, his wife of 42 years who charmed thousands of Rotarians during her travels with him, died unexpectedly last Summer.

"I will carry on as she would have wanted me to," President Togasaki says simply.