



Fujikazu Nakagawa

1920-1988

Fujikazu Nakagawa, as a lumber man and a leader of the Japanese lumber business, throughout his lifetime disseminated the virtues of lumber, its necessity, as well as the form the distribution system should take. A pioneer in such important areas as the development of the lumber market to which he addressed his considerable planning and executive powers, he also took upon himself the task of acting as liaison between government organizations and private businesses to realize measures by which to revitalize the lumber business as well as maintain and improve forestland.

He was born on January 30, 1920, as the eldest son of Sue and Keizaburo Nakagawa, Gobo City, Wakayama Prefecture. Following his graduation, March 1940, from the Forestry Course, National Mie High School of Agriculture and Forestry, he enrolled in April of the same year at the Business Course, Economics and Business Department, Kansai University, Osaka. With the escalation of World War II, however, the graduation of all juniors was forwarded a

year and Nakagawa joined the field artillery corps of the Japanese army. Assigned to domestic duty, he held the rank of First Lieutenant when the war came to an end.

Although he was discharged from the army, he was unable to resume his family business, as the supply and use of lumber, which had been under government/army control during the war, had not yet been deregulated. Instead, he went to work as supervisor of a horse breeding association, where he worked for a year. In January of 1947, when the supply of lumber was at last deregulated and private individuals could procure it, he established the Nakagawa Lumber Company in Osaka.

The present branch of the Nakagawa family dates back to 1661 when Zengoro (born 1637) moved to Wakayama Prefecture from Togawa, Chiba Prefecture. The family's business name of "Togawaya" dates back to over 300 years. Until the time of Fujikura, the 6th descendent, the Nakagawa family acted as guild master of the wax business

under special orders from the feudal lord of the area. However, with the diffusion of electricity, the family turned from wax to lumber and forestry. Nakagawa is the 8th descendent of this distinguished line.

In January 1953, the company was reorganized to become Nakagawa Lumber Co., Inc., with Nakagawa as its president. Under his management, the company expanded to become a comprehensive wholesale dealer of both domestic and imported lumber. In 1970, Aoikenso Co., Inc., a company dealing in the processing and sales of lumber for interior use as well as functioning as design and construction contractor, was established. In 1981, Nakagawa Inc. was established to undertake the wholesale of lumber, plywood and new construction materials. The following year, in 1982, Nakagawa Silver Service Inc., a company dealing in the manufacture and sales of wooden interior and exterior merchandise, was established. Nakagawa was named chairperson of these respective companies and under his excellent directorship the companies were enlarged and expanded.

In 1946, he married Teruko Hinomoto of Osaka. Currently his eldest son, Katsuhiro (born 1948), is president of Nakagawa Lumber Co., Inc.; his second son, Hiroshi (born 1950), is the managing director while his third son, Akisaburo (born 1952), is an independent designer of furniture. All are actively involved in the lumber business.

Nakagawa's contributions to society and the lumber industry were as diverse as they were far ranging. One of his major contributions to the local lumber business world was with Osaka Mokuzai Seinen Keieisha Kyogikai (Osaka Young Manager's Lumber Council).

Established in 1958 by young managers of lumber businesses located in Osaka, Nakagawa was nominated as its first acting vice-president. From 1960 to 1962, in the capacity of chairman, he promoted seminars and field trips, and at the Lumber Festival, he demonstrated his creativity and executive talents by organizing a fleet of 150 trucks in a grand promotional demonstration of lumber. Furthermore, he produced an 8 mm film entitled "The History of Lumber in Osaka," as well as organized and taught for a year, the first seminar to be held for newly hired employees. That the Council holds a central position within the Nihon Mokuzai Seisounen Dantai Rengokai (Japan Lumber Federation) and is regarded as the up-and-coming leader within this nation-wide organization, is due largely to the enthusiasm with which Nakagawa fulfilled his responsibilities in guiding the Council.

Following his retirement from the Council, he was instrumental in establishing the Nihon Mokuzai Doyukai (Japan Alumni Association of Lumber Men), and as permanent manager, assisted in the streamlining of information exchange and formulation of the industry's guiding principles.

Nakagawa was also known for his many contributions to the Osaka Mokuzai Kojo Danchi Kyodo Kumiai (Osaka Lumber Industry Complex Cooperative Organization). Established in 1962, its purpose was to consolidate the secondary and tertiary lumber processing industries, which deal in items such as plywood, construction materials and lumber, to cope with the rapidly developing lumber industry in Osaka.

As its vice-executive director, he worked energetically to procure land for the relocation and construction of industries. At

the same time, his civic mindedness led to the involvement in various activities geared towards the welfare of employees and residents of the Complex. They included the dissemination of a system whereby employees could purchase their own homes. For this purpose, he championed the construction of residential areas and established the Soekai, a mutual help organization for residents of the Complex.

In the Cooperative Organization, he also proved to be a tireless contributor. Not only was he instrumental in constructing a cooperative storage house and a cooperative factory for independent businesses but he also organized a volunteer corps of firefighters as well as a busing system for members of the Cooperative Organization.

In recognition of his many contributions, he was named executive director of the Complex in 1981. Here too, he demonstrated his far-sighted and progressive outlook by establishing new areas of businesses such as a forklift repair cooperative.

In 1985, a friendship agreement was signed between the Complex and the World Forestry Center in Portland, U.S.A., a world famous forestry organization and, in commemoration of the event, he established "Woodream Osaka" at the Complex. Modeled after the World Forestry Center, it was the first center of its kind in Japan, which was geared towards the dissemination of information regarding lumber and its use and serves to demonstrate Nakagawa's open-minded and cosmopolitan outlook.

Nakagawa was also a leading figure in a nation-wide organization whose central function is the development of a market for timber derived from the thinning out

forestland. Since 1970, Nakagawa had been involved in the merchandising of such timber. Following post-war maturation of woods and forests in Japan, the need to find a use for such kinds of timber was an important issue that needed to be addressed by the nation's lumber industry. In the firm belief that there was a very real need to develop technologies to convert such timber into merchandise as well as to provide information regarding the supply and demand of the same, he called on individuals in the forestry business and lumber men around the nation, to assist in establishing the National Small Circumference Timber Supply and Demand Development Council. In April 1982, the Council was established and Nakagawa was nominated its chairman.

The Council has as its main function, the organization of seminars and field trips to promote the development and supply and demand for such timber, procurement of materials as well as to make available various related information. Since 1983, with the cooperation of the Forestry Agency, a nationwide symposium has been held annually. Meanwhile, in 1982, at the Total Housing Fair held at the Osaka International Trade Fair, he pioneered the use of merchandise made from such kinds of wood with exhibits that included exterior commodities such as gates, doors, fences, and tables.

His activities in this area lead to the establishment of the National Loghouse Promotion Association in 1986, of which he was named chairman. In parallel with his activities at the National Small Circumference Timber Supply and Demand Development Council, he organized a study group of people interested in loghouses from around the nation. Armed with the knowledge and expertise derived from this

activity, he further organized a nation-wide association to further expand the use of domestic small and medium circumference timber. Furthermore, in order to supply loghouses that would meet customer satisfaction, he was instrumental in establishing thorough seasoning of timber and loghouse design contests.

Meanwhile, as a private individual, he was a committee member of the Osaka West Rotary Club that is comprised of about 70 members. He functioned with distinction as chairman of this club from 1984-1985. From 1987-1989, as committee chairman of the International Rotary Area Number 266 Yoneyama Scholarship Committee, he worked assiduously towards improving the lifestyle of overseas students in Japan. In this and many other ways, he divested his responsibilities of civilian diplomacy.

A keen researcher, Nakagawa had up-to-the-minute information regarding the domestic and overseas lumber situation. In April, 1955, he gave his first of many lectures on his lumber distribution theory at Mie University's Agriculture Department, his alma mater. This led to his becoming lecturer at the university in May 1961. He continued in this position until September 1978, lecturing to countless students on his theories regarding lumber distribution and the lumber business.

A strong believer of the individual being the key figure in business management, he addressed himself to the grooming of such individuals. As his work prevented him from holding lectures during normal school hours, he gave intensive two-day courses, with the venue generally being at the University's experimental farm. He never missed a class, and even when the trains were immobilized

due to a strike, he would drive the 100 kilometers to meet with his students.

He was also invited on several occasions to speak on the relationship between design and lumber by design specialist schools and by the Osaka Regional Forestry Office to speak to officers undergoing training seminars on the current lumber market and its future. He furthermore lectured on forestry and the lumber business and its future with insight and far-reaching vision at Agriculture and Forestry Departments, Forestry Unions, and Forestry Promotion Conferences of prefectures around the nation.

In 1984, he compiled the essence of his lectures given at Mie University into a book entitled, *What is Lumber Distribution: Strategies for the Era of Domestic Lumber*. The book was highly acclaimed as being a practical guide for the future of lumber distribution in a changing Japan. In 1986, his second book, *Mokuhen Hyakuju (Hundred Trees with the "Tree" Radical)* was published. The following year, in 1987, he co-authored *Changes in Lumber Distribution* and in 1990, his last publication, *How to Deepen Your Understanding of Lumber*, a book compiled together with four other writers, was published.

Despite his busy schedule, Nakagawa was a man of culture with an in-depth appreciation of paintings and sculptures besides being an adept of the traditional Japanese tea ceremony and the Japanese dance. He was also musically talented and as a junior high school student, had seriously contemplated a major in music so much so that he even undertook to study for the entrance examinations of a music school. The tone and range of his magnificent voice was a source of pleasure to many while the songs he wrote were highly

appreciated. One such entitled “The Daiseikyo Song” was chosen as the official song of the Osaka Young Manager’s Lumber Council and is, to this day, widely sung.

As a second year university student, Nakagawa was an excellent equestrian, winning the Governor’s Award in the Jumping Contest at the Osaka Equestrian Meet and coming in first at the Modern Japan Pentathlon. A few years after the end of the war, he established the Osaka Equestrian Study Group in 1950, the forerunner of the Osaka Equestrian Association Foundation.

In recognition of Nakagawa’s civic contributions, he was presented with the following:

1979: Industrial Medal of Merit, Osaka Prefectural Government

1983: Yellow Ribbon Medal, Government of Japan

1983: Medal of Merit, Japan Equestrian Federation

1988: Fifth Class Order of the Rising Sun (Sixth Rank), Government of Japan

1989: Medal of Merit, International Rotary Area No. 266 Conference (the medal was created solely in honor of Fujikatsu Nakagawa and is the first and last medal to be awarded)

Fujikazu Nakagawa was struck down with aneurysm of the aorta on September 5, 1988, thus ending his 68 years of work promoting the nation’s forestry and lumber business.

A devout Christian, his tomb is inscribed with the words – ‘*For there is hope of a tree*’ (Job, Chapter 14, Paragraph 7, The Old Testament). He rests in peace today on a hill overlooking Woodream Osaka and his Gobo City hometown.