

Kiso Tsuru

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Dr. Kiso Tsuru (1895 – November 23, 1966), was a Japanese philanthropist who lived in Mexico most of his life and made many contributions to the economies of both Japan and Mexico during the 20th century. Tsuru built Japanese neighborhoods and schools and created jobs for Mexicans. He practised medicine and helped to lower the mortality rate of the Mexican people as well as the Japanese in Mexico.

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Early life

Dr.Kiso Tsuru was born on April 20.1894 in Usa,Kyushu, Japan. His parents were Mr Toma and Mrs Shimo Tsuru who were Buddhist and local farmers in Usa a town in the district of Oita on the Island of Kyushu. He was one of eight children. According to Buddhist beliefs it was a special day - the day he was born, he was to become the next High Priest for their temple and at 13 years old would join their monastery,however when he reached the age of 13 to start his monastic studies he decided that his life was for adventure and to help others in the field not to live a monastic life. He did his early schooling in Oita and he went to Osaka for College and studied Industry and Commerce, Then went to the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Tokyo and studied at Yokohama at the Association of Immigrants where he specialized in Politics of Immigration.

So in 1918 at age of 24 he left Japan and went to Mexico city and began work as private secretary to the Minister of interrelations between Mexico and Japan under Baron Ootori. A year later went back to Japan where he established in Yokohama his first company (Compania Mexicana de Comercio Exterior.) The Mexican company of Exterior Commerce.

In 1924 he went back to Mexico and he obtained his licence to practice Medicine there and established himself in Ciudad Valles in the state of San Luis Potosi where he opened

a pharmacy and a Medical Clinic. For his great initiative and Medical assistance, he was awarded by the Governor of San Luis Potosi, (Saturnino Cedillo) "The Medical Doctor" of the Regional, Military, and all schools of the state.

Later life:

In 1926 he went back to Japan and got married to Mrs.Mihoko Kayaba the daughter of a prominent Lawyer and brought her to Mexico. During their 40 year marriage they had 9 siblings,all but one were born in Mexico. Between 1930-1940 he founded the International company of medical Drugs (KSK) of Japan and Mexico. This was but one of his many interests and businesses. He also founded the Petroleum company of Lagunas S.A., The Petroleum company of Veracruz S.A., The mining company of Taxco S.A., where they mined large deposits of Fluorite, The Tsuru mining company S.A. in Oaxaca where they mined the mineral Mica. And in Japan established the Petroleum company of the Pacific S.A.,The Tsuru Shrimping company and last but not least the International company of Commerce S.A., that dedicated to the exchange between Mexico and Japan. Just before World war II he sent a large donation to the Navy and Army of Japan for the invasion of Manchuria,China. Which he was awarded with a certificate from the Army and Navy of Japan.

World War II

During the war most of his businesses were either sold or were taken over by the Mexican Government. And what little money he had left,he used it to create a Society for the protection of the Japanese in Mexico and formed the first Japanese neighborhood (Colonia Japonesa) and fought to keep the Japanese out of concentration camps and got many of them out,he also invited many of his Japanese friends to stay in his last lands he owned in Ciudad Valles,but due to its remoteness,they preferred to stay in Mexico city.He also donated money to Japan for the Red cross and sent money and goods to his relatives in Japan as well as keeping his family in Mexico well in those hard times. He also helped establish 3 Japanese public schools, The central school (Chuo-Gakuen), the Japanese school of Tlalpan and the Japanese school of Tacuba in Mexico city.

After the war

He reorganized one of his last companies, The International Company of Commerce and used it to sell many medical pharmaceutical over the counter products such as Gotacilina,Polytamin,Vita Penicilina which later became the famous latin american ointment Vitacilina. Later in between 1951-1956 he returned to Japan and began promoting commercial exchange between Mexico and Japan and worked to elevate the diplomatic missions to the rank of the Mexico-Japan Embassies.With 2 of his friends he helped to establish the Assosiation of Rikko-kai in Mexico which helped the Japanese immigrants to emigrate to latin America,which included teaching them spanish.As he had

been appointed the temporary Ambassador to Japan during the war, he also helped to establish the first official Ambassador (Mr. Kubota) between the Mexican President (Miguel Aleman) and Japan. He also helped to introduce the Prime Minister of Japan (Hayato Ikeda) to the Mexican President (Adolfo Lopez Mateos), who welcomed him cordially as he was the first Prime Minister to visit Mexico after the War. During this time he also did projects to help the economy of the southeast of Mexico and organized the international company of Salt Industries S.A. in the zone of Salina Cruz Mexico. Then in 1960 due to his health, went back to the few land holdings he had left in Ciudad Valles and began to grow agricultural products like Mangoes, Avocados, sugar cane. He experimented with making Mango Hybrids that later became world famous and were the only farm at that time to export to Japan and Europe. He also saw that the people of this city and State San Luis Potosi were lacking education so he opened a rural public school on the 29 of April 1960. In the last years of his life Dr. Kiso Tsuru was still Advisor or founder of several companies such as The Tsuru Ranches, The International Company of Commerce S.A., The Copper company of the Pacific S.A. and The Japanese films S.A. to name a few. In October 1966 he went back to Japan where he spent his last moments visiting his beloved country, till his death from a heart condition. He left behind over 30 family members including his wife, 8 children, 12 grand children and 5 grand children. One of his cousins was Shigeto Tsuru a Prominent Japanese Economist.

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