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Photo by Dave Bonner

TAKAO TANABE

# Painting marks centennial

By ROSLYN NUDELL

Visitors to the Winnipeg Centennial Library may notice an addition to the premises, courtesy of the Japanese Canadian Centennial Society.

It's 100 years since the first Japanese immigrant arrived in Canada and on Tuesday morning the society presented the library with a painting to commemorate the event.

"We wanted to contribute something to the city as part of the centennial year," said Art Miki, society chairman. "We felt the library was an appropriate location because it was a centennial project of the city."

The painting, Foothills, by Takao Tanabe, was an appropriate choice said Miki. The artist is a Japanese Canadian who began his training in

Winnipeg at the old School of Art after the Second World War.

Tanabe, now head of the art department of the Banff School of Fine Arts, was in Winnipeg to attend the presentation and afterwards he talked about his work.

"Last year I drove across the Prairies to Winnipeg. The trip really jogged my memory about places in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

"Foothills is part of a group of paintings that sprang directly from my trip."

In 1972, Tanabe decided to use landscapes as an image in his work. He began with the Prairies. "I narrowed it down to the Prairies and flat land because I had travelled across them in the '50s and I had thought they were an impossible subject to paint. In 1972, I thought I was able to

cope with the challenge of the big prairie."

After last year's drive to Winnipeg, he began painting more rolling landscapes. "Perhaps — perhaps — I'll get into mountains eventually. But right now I've deliberately limited my paintings of landscapes to the Prairies and foothills because I want to keep going deeper and deeper into one narrow subject area."

He called his paintings "almagations" of the places he has seen. "These paintings don't depict any one place," he said.

"It's realism, but not complete realism. Part of the details have been suppressed, like telephone poles.

"Essentially, my work creates a general, idealized view of this big land."