

**Interviewee: Sam Yamada**  
**Interviewer: Connie Sugiyama, Bill Hashizume, Peter Wakayama**  
**Videographer: Tak Yano**  
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THE JAPANESE CANADIAN LEGACY PROJECT

**[Start Part 1]**

Interviewer: Where were you born and what year?

Sam Yamada: Vancouver.

I: In Vancouver?

SY: 1914.

I: Where were your parents [unclear]? Which prefecture?

SY: Everybody else came to Canada at that time.

I: Brothers and sisters?

SY: Older like all the niseis and isseis that came over here, any seasonal job, you went to the [skiener?], which is a certain type of [unclear] in Vancouver. Oh yes, when that season was over, a garden.

[Overlapping speakers]

SY: I was doing sculpting as well. When I took her picture, she was an unusual blond girl so I said, hey, this photograph is interesting. I'd like to make a sculpture. I took her picture from all, every angle possible, up and down. When they came in to see the proofs, the mother said, "Oh I like this one. That's perfect. We are going to San Francisco for the whole summer, two months so don't rush it." At this time, I was going to night school. I was into some sculpting. I took it from all angles to make her sculpture. Two months was time enough. So, I did. Now, the whole family came back from San Francisco to look at proofs of the picture. The little girl says, "Hey mummy, that's me." By that time, I had the sculpting all finished in plastic cast. So, the woman said, "Gee, can I take this home and show this to my husband?" Sure, go ahead. Oh yes, they came back twice. After they came back, they went to San Francisco, I had the sculpture on the side of the studio, talking to her about which one she wants to order. The little girl said, "Hey mummy, that's me." The mother said, "Sculpting? Who did that? Can I take it home and show to my husband?" Sure, go ahead. When she brought the order in for the photographs, she says, "My husband wants to buy it." Someone wants to buy my first sculpture? I said, "No, it's free, take it." "We can't accept it." I told her, don't worry about it. Then, the war started and everything happened. We were all thrown out of Vancouver to go to different places. Our family had to go to Kaslo, we had to get rid of our house and everything. We were thrown into a camp where all the boys are all together and girls are separate. We had to fix straw into [unclear] or whatever you want to call it for people to sleep in. All the guys were working like that and-

I: Was that in Hastings Park?

SY: Hastings Park, yes, that's right, Hastings Park. We were in Hastings Park. Then, I got a letter. A real business envelope. I didn't know who sent it so I was scared to open the thing. It says, the husband of the little blond girl that I did was a member of- It was a big envelope, I was scared to open it. I didn't know anybody who would send me a letter. Is there anything I can do? Is it possible that you would be interested in me staying in Vancouver? Japanese couldn't stay in Vancouver anyway, we had to get out of there.

[5 minutes]

SY: So, there's an art school in Toronto. It said, if you can get the President of the Vancouver School of Art - I know personally, the President of the Ontario School of Art. If they get together, one student to another student.

I: This man wrote to you when you were in the camp?

SY: I was in the camp. I was scared to open the big envelope. I thought what the hell did I do now. I opened it and I saw the name. It was the blond girl's father. A lot of people at the Ontario College were Black. So, if you could get the President's name of the Vancouver School of Art to hang out with the President of the Ontario College of Art. Would you take one Japanese boy instead of going to the camp as a student?

I: Who was this man? Who was the man who wrote to you?

SY: The father of the girl.

I: But wasn't he, he was a member of Parliament?

SY: Yeah, we knew someone in the Ontario College of Art. So, if I could get- Now, that means you have to protect yourself. What have you got in your bank? What I have got in my bank? Nothing. Then, we found out that all the [unclear] that Mr. Toyama had in Vancouver, if we can sell it to raise some kind of money. Oh my god. At that time, anything we had came up to as much as \$3,000. I can't touch it so we sent the letter to a bank in Toronto. Can't touch it. So, the day came, he brought everybody out. The whole family came and picked me up at the house. I went to a lawyer to do all the legal things. Police had to be there to sign and all the costs and everything was the little girl's father's doing. Paid for everything.

I: Do you remember this name?

SY: [unclear]

I: [unclear]

SY: Got that big envelope, I didn't check it- Took our house and everything away. I didn't tell him but I saw his name, oh my gosh. He would do all that for me? All the cast and everything, it was put in Toronto and isn't it crazy? He did everything. It didn't cost me a cent.

I: Saying just in the morning that things happened to you has something to do with your belief, Anglican?

SY: Anglican? Yes, Ms. Toyama was an Anglican. The one that took me over you know.

I: Sam, excuse me, let's get back to a little bit more about the war and all that. Sam the name your father gave you?

SY: Japanese name is Sam.

I: Your father's name, what was his name? Yamada?

SY: Kichiro, Kichiro.

I: Kichiro and your mother's name?

SY: Nami, Nami.

I: Do you know her maiden name? You don't know?

SY: Kris Mackenzie.

I: [unclear] Endo-san [was from] Fukushima-ken? You know they all got together, eh, as the kenjinkai.

I: So, when was it that you came to Toronto?

SY: When I came to Toronto, it was something like Sunday morning. The war was on. All the young guys [coughing], when I got off, I got to find Yonge Street, first of all.

I: What month and year was that that you first came to Toronto?

SY: I think it was April.

I: April of? '42?

SY: '42 or '43.

[10 minutes]

I: That's the year following the [unclear] war.

SY: I don't know what was going on. All I knew we had to get the hell out of Vancouver.

I: As soon as you got the hell out of Vancouver, you went to?

SY: Toronto. Sunday morning, not a soul because everybody was- So, I was looking for Yonge Street. How the hell do I find Yonge Street? I was standing on Y-o-u-n-g and looking for Y-o-u-n-g. Not a soul, the war was on. The police comes by. The way I was looking, they knew I didn't live in Toronto. I'm looking for Yonge Street. You are standing on it. Y-o-u-n-g. No, that's not the spelling. [Police asked] "What are you doing here?" I told him exactly the two [unclear]. First time in Toronto because I had to get the hell out of here and I'm staying at the YMCA. [Police said] "Oh, that's up the street. I'm going up there so I'll take you." Not a soul, not a car. The policeman walking up. The rest, he has time for coffee. He has good coffee. Took me right up to YMCA and parked. That's how it started. Oh and another thing, Jewish people, you think, Japanese had it bad in Vancouver or Toronto. Jewish people had it just as bad in Toronto. When did it all happen? I was looking for a job all over the place. I got the sample ad. I went to a Jewish studio because we never had much. [unclear] I didn't know anything about that. I walk up and there. Can I help you? I'm a photographer looking for a job. Are you a good photographer? I think so. How you like the picture? That's not a picture. You should see, it's good. Me touching on the negative before you meet me. Did some retouching to start with. You take all the retouching off and I- Take all the time you want. Before that, there was a receptionist sitting out in the front, downstairs. Okay, I got a five-dollar bill. I'm going to take all the [unclear] you did on your negative and reprint the picture and see what's the difference. So, I sat there for months with a pencil. Exactly the same size photograph and put it on the table. I told the receptionist, bring the envelope down. [unclear] I said so. Oh, who did that? Same picture. Oh, he did. That's different. I keep. You are better at retouching than me. Who taught you? A Japanese

man from Japan who is a photographer there, he taught me how to do the retouch. He was good. A little highlight was needed, it wasn't in the picture. He put a sheet all on the negative and I learned how to do that. Nothing I can do.

[15 minutes]

SY: When it had to do, I was able to do it. Got ten dollars out of it. What are you doing? I'm looking for a job. Can you do retouch for an eye cam? I'll give you five dollars. Then, he says, you are looking for a job when you can do retouch like that? I tell you, oh, at that time, it was 25 dollars a week wherever you go looking for a job. 25 dollars a week. Holy cow.

I: Was that good or was that a lot or was that-?

SY: That's the top price you can get in any kind of job. Photography, I can't find any job so might as well do anything: wash the floor, clean the windows, I don't give a damn. I don't so- In Toronto, university, university graduates, in engineering, whatever it is, 25 dollars a week is the maximum for a job. If you can meet that as fast as you can and as much as you can, it was a good work. Depends on how fast you can meet it. I was sitting at YMCA. One thing I did do was retouching as a retouching disc to hold it there with a [crown?] glass so I could see behind and retouch it. Everywhere you go, thank you for dropping, 25 dollars. Some of those negatives, they were ten, 15 cent negatives. Most of them were 25 cents. Look how many graduation days. Each graduation student, we would take hundreds, eh.

I: So, was this man taking those sorts of photographs?

SY: No, they all through different studios. Engineering class.

I: All the retouching work came into this man. So, did he hire you in the end?

SY: Jewish family. If you're good enough, you will be accepted by any studio in Toronto. Any studio means there are dozens of studios and [unclear]. Holy cow. I sat down one night and started. Stopped and figured out I made 35 dollars one night. [unclear] night for a week and I'm staying at YMCA. I'm going around every studio in Ontario, Toronto and outside the city. Wherever he went, he told, there's a Jap kid working out there in Toronto. He'll retouch for this studio and that studio. Would you believe it? I timed myself and I could do 30 to 40 a night. I would go golfing during the day and stay up at night retouching. I was making 60 to 75 dollars a week going golfing and doing weekdays at night.

I: You worked for this man for a while?

SY: Oh yes. His son was in university. Take after his father. Stuff I did was different. When I looked around everywhere, geez, is this the best they do? What's that top photographer?

I: Karsh<sup>1</sup>

SY: Karsh. Karsh was a [unclear]

I: Ottawa.

SY: Went all over Toronto, couldn't find a job. Went all over Montreal, couldn't find a job. Couldn't speak a word of French. Somebody said there was a guy named Karsh

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<sup>1</sup> Likely referring to Yousef Karsh, more commonly known as Karsh of Ottawa.

who is a good photographer. Everywhere, I also got to see him. [unclear] There was a [unclear]. Can I help you guys? Lost the job to another Jap.

[20 minutes]

SY: What could you do? I couldn't read that. At that time, making money had- The picture he- Retouching was [unclear]. Retouching can be done on-. I have a sample of my work I've been showing. It clicks different and the receptionist, I looked at her. It was a short fellow with a suit coming down the stairs. Before I could say anything, takes out a cigarette and puts it in my mouth. I never felt, gee, he did inform me. He popped it in. Something, oh my god, I felt I'm dying. I have a bad cold. Excuse me, can I get a drink? When I saw his work, I knew him. By this time, I was at Vancouver School of Art so we had down a lot of line work and sketching. Light and shadow is something I could tell by feel. The lights were this way and I didn't know who Karsh was. This light should be over here and this part here could be over here. Then, a lady walks in and she's Mr. Karsh. He didn't even look at the customer standing behind. I'm busy all day so cancel. I'm not doing anything, I'll go and take pictures. He had four appointments that day. He cancelled everyone and they came. Lunchtime, he took me out to lunch and he showed me that British.

I: Churchill?

SY: He looked like Jewish, Karsh. He told me right off the bat and put the cigarette in his mouth that "I'm not Jewish". I'm Jap, we shook hands. He took me to a lawyer. Made a couple of friends to take to the course for golf. [unclear] It was Huck so he was going to take a shot. He says, ten [talzone?]. The Jew, gentile and Jap. I knew something was not right there. Public course, mind you.

I: Where was that said, in Toronto?

SY: Oh yeah, Toronto, right up north. It cost 60 cents to play. We played golf. [unclear] take a shower in the locker room. It says "gentile only"

I: What did you do?

SY: So I send to my friend, "Hey, it says "gentile only"". Someone was taking a shower. Are you a Jew? No, I'm a Jap. You're not a Jew, you're a gentile. So, I take a shower.

[25 minutes]

SY: The screen was a big fat bully. What was his name?

PW: [Derek Brodin?]

SY: Yeah, he comes up all fat and wet like, you're not a Jew, I can tell. That's right. I went and took a shower. It was hot. We walked outside so coffee drinking. Then, I see, right on the lawn. Gentile zone, Jews not allowed. I found out that Jews and- He was a goalie for Toronto. What's his name? Famous goalie- In those days, it was distinction between Jews and Japs.

I: They had no problem with you being a Jap in Toronto.

SY: Oh no. Oh yeah. There weren't that many. I never heard of [unclear]. They took me in right in a public video place that said, [Tim tok zoning]. He's the guy that told me when the university graduations happen. There's one studio that's the top studio

above all the other graduation studies. On that one, there's Jewish, there were no ways around that. That was [unclear]. When the wages were \$25 a week, I completed it one night and go golfing the rest of the day.

I: We are going to stop for a moment and what we have to do next is plan out some questions or practice interview questions for you. We'll come back to some of the things you previously talked about.

SY: Different world.

I: I'd like to about myself, farms. This, I want to hear him if he so lucky have me. Education, at most year over there. And different atmosphere in Toronto that distinguish difference, dislocation difference was experience difference. You want to ask questions to contrast the Vancouver experience with the Toronto experience? Okay, what did you want to talk about, Bill? [unclear] He apprenticed at [unclear] Photography to start. Then, he attended Vancouver School of Art. I don't know if he went off to UBC. No interest in stopping. You know. [multiple people talking] In indentured camp. Got this letter from the father, reliving, the father would let his-

[30 minutes]

I: Early days, [unclear]. Some sample of the- First thing first, we need to know more about his family, who he married, how many brothers and sisters he has. Want to make that? Yeah, that's what I was thinking. You know, we have pretty well what he was doing in Vancouver, pre-war. After the war, he kept rambling on. His family, how many brothers and sisters he had. What happened to him? They're all just about- Pick one topic we want to focus and limit it. You can time us because we have forty minutes. Two-fifty did he say. You got ten, twenty-five minutes at the most. At about two minute times, just hold up hand two. Wrap up quickly so it doesn't go on. You sort of have to wrap it up. Wait a minute, John needs to discuss what he plans. So, Bill, you are going to ask questions the earliest or on the early years? BILL! More or less on the family.

SY: My family would be Toya. I was 13 years old when my father died after a year of cancer. What kind of father would he be without working with three kids, eh?

PW: Sorry Sam. We are not going to go. What they are going to do is they are going to discuss who is going to ask what. They're going to take about ten minutes to ask you their certain questions. They're going to take about three turns each and then, I'll be videotaping you for the question and answer. John, what are you going to ask him so there's not too much crossover. Early years. Up until [unclear]. I guess I would.

SY: Hastings Park was

I: Can I focus my questions on the photograph and some of the documentary value? Maybe there's something you can actually show us. So, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

PW: Excuse me, let me just start over again here.

I: Go with the name.

I: Well, they're all dead.

I: Well, they must have a name.

SY: [Taker0?] and the other one is Bob. They are all dead.

I: Had a Japanese name?  
I: Takeru is a Japanese name but his other is Bob.  
I: Hideo must have been called Bob then.  
SY: Yes, Bob or whoever.  
I: Sisters?  
I: No sisters. He just had two brothers.

[35 minutes]

SY: Two brothers.  
I: So, three brothers and you're the eldest?  
SY: No, Bob was the eldest.  
I: Bob was the eldest and you were the second?  
SY: Yep.  
I: And Takeru was the third? Your eldest brother, what, how far up the school level did he go? All the way to high school?  
SY: All the way to high school.  
I: Public school and that's up to grade eight was it? Did any go on to high school?  
SY: No. We were able to go to public school. Sometimes, we only ate two meals a day because our father was sick. A year and a half of casserole. The day they came to take his body into the [unclear], he was a skeleton, no meat. Last three months was really stuck. Nobody could sleep in the room. We had to sleep on the floor because the smell rises, right?  
I: Now, getting back to your, to you Sam, the highest education you received was-  
SY: High school.  
I: Toronto College of Art, was it? Is that correct?  
SY: Well, the schooling was just public school.  
I: I'm talking about you Sam. Did you not go to Ontario College of Art?  
SY: Well, that's later. A little older.  
I: As you grew older. That's what I was interested in and what year did you graduate from that College?  
SY: Oh. Probably, I went to several other places so it's hard to say. Went up to about a couple of years ago. Ontario College because I took up sculpting. In sculpting, there's metal sculpting and glass sculpting. Those were all different classes. I took about four classes including [unclear].  
I: That's after you reached your golden years?  
SY: Yup. Took classes, metals. I brought some of the work that the girl, lady, asked me to do. I brought whatever she saw for you to see.  
I: During your young years, the Vancouver School of Art was the school you-?  
SY: That's where I met all my friends. They encourage you and getting interested in that. I took stainless steel, bronze, glass, everything. I brought some of the samples so you could see the stuff.  
I: Earlier you said that you did your first sculpture. You gave it to the girl's father. While in internment camp, you got a letter from him saying he would recommend you to Ontario College of Art.  
SY: [nods] That's right.

I: When did you enter that? Did you go-?

SY: That was when we were thrown out of Vancouver, '43.

I: So, it was 1942 that you entered the Ontario College of Art. How many years did you attend there?

SY: [unclear]

I: No, no, I know education is ongoing, on, ongoing process but during the initial years, there must be a time period that you attend for three years or four years before you graduated.

SY: Because I took-

I: Did you not graduate from college right after the war?

SY: [shakes head] I didn't, I was just going to public school and to night school.

[40 minutes]

SY: Taking different sketching, calligraphy. Then, into the glass, metal. That's why I have to show you all the stuff. This is what the other lady wanted to see in Vancouver so she gave me the artwork.

I: Before moving on, I have some questions. [unclear] your brothers. You are being looking after by Toyama [Stu?] and then how was the others?

SY: My brothers went to Union fish company. Anyone who worked there has to stay at the place where they kept all the- They had a funny setup so he left us and live with the group. They have to, when they take an order, get paid. They get paid the very same day. He never lived with us, except the weekend when he could stay over. Stay and eat there and the he-

I: So, your mother must have had all only babies.

SY: She had it really bad.

I: I see. How do you get your language? You told me that you can speak Japanese.

SY: Oh, we went to Japanese- Every nisei that was born there had to go to Japanese school.

I: Oh.

SY: The region is-

I: Every day or-?

SY: Every day after school is [overlapping sounds] three o'clock. You write [unclear] and by four o'clock, Japanese school.

I: Japanese teacher you had?

SY: All of us spoke Japanese.

I: What kind of the facilities school was used? Church kind of thing or-?

SY: Japanese school? That's even before children went to English school. Parents who came from Japan stayed in one place. They built the home.

I: So, the-

SY: We all had to go to school from morning until four o'clock and then, we would rush home, pick up the Japanese book and rush down there.

I: Where did the book come from? The textbook come from where? The textbook, you used for-?

SY: Oh. We brought from Japan. Later, even to the [unclear], everything came in.

I: What kind of subjects did you learn in Japanese school?



SY: It was like ABCs and [unclear].

I: What other subjects like [unclear]? Those things.

SY: What do you call? Yeah.

I: [unclear]

SY: You know, we have to.

I: How about singing?

SY: Singing?

I: Singing.

SY: No singing now, just [unclear].

I: Okay. You sort of moved to Toronto. After moved to Toronto, you lost your opportunities to use the language?

SY: Even in Vancouver, we all spoke English.

I: [unclear]

SY: Just at school.

I: Just at school. Can you tell me about sort of a short period of time I believe you sent to Hastings Park for camping?

SY: No, we were all thrown into Hastings Park to get that place set for the new [unclear]. That's where our parents were.

I: I have no idea about it.

SY: It was a dirty place.

I: Like how many people were there?

SY: Thousands. It was horses and cows, they moved them out but you can't get the smell out of that place. We have to all sleep there.

I: Ok. Used to be where the horses and the cows are kept.

SY: [nods] All horses, cows and pigs.

I: [unclear] facilities.

SY: All in one place.

[45 minutes]

SY: [unclear]

I: [unclear] They kept up the Japanese study there?

SY: Oh yes. The parents' house spoke Japanese.

I: Is there a school?

SY: In Japanese, they have Japanese language school?

I: How about public school?

SY: We were all well [unclear]. The niseis are pretty good in Japanese. Our kids can't speak Japanese because we don't speak Japanese.

I: Deliberately, that's what I hear.

SY: That helped. [unclear] They don't know. [unclear]

I: [unclear] How do you remember the time when you are there? What do you remember?

SY: We were all like that. Everybody, everybody's the same.

I: So, it can be tolerated?

SY: Husband and wife speak English and the kids would fight to show off. Breaking everything under the sun.

I: Now, you were lucky person because of your artful talent.

SY: [nods] That took me all over the world. Yeah. When I went to New York, I went from New York to San Francisco, Hollywood. These were all recommended when I went to New York. I knew there was not enough in Vancouver. I went to art school so I knew more about art. Some of the photographers- Went looking for a job. Found out there's always knew I'd come. I went to [unclear].

I: Was that helpful?

SY: I went to New York for the first time. I didn't know [unclear] the other. How am I going to find out, I had a small load to talk to. Just the photography. The deception to the conversation, how about the studio that took your picture? He was the Japanese consulate in Europe for the Japanese. Oh yeah. How about so-so? Who do you think he was? He was a top photographer in Cali. Time of Mussolini, he was a big man in Italy. He was asked by Mussolini to go to Italy for a whole week to take all the top Italian people. That's how big he was. He wore a suit just to walk down. His wife was there and he says, Mussolini asked him to come to Italy for a whole week and the Italian paid the whole expense to take the picture of Mussolini's family.

I: But you told me, the two of us, you continued education in various art fields?

SY: Oh yes.

I: Even metal and-

SY: Yes.

I: You keep rolling.

SY: He was the one that recommend it, the top photographer in [unclear]. How can I keep [unclear]? He was top photographer then, in Metropolitan Opera. Fella and he knew what I was interested in as a little different take on artwork. He knew this top photographer. He wrote the letter and phone, don't go back this way to back home back to Vancouver. Why don't you go down the subway and go to Hollywood? Everything started six o'clock. All the camera companies six o'clock.

[50 minutes]

SY: Six o'clock in the morning, all the stars are getting dressed and eating. I am having breakfast with them. We start taking pictures. The steps, see the picture from top to bottom, something you never see at all. He was nice enough to write a letter to him. He sent us a card.

I: So, from what you told us, you never had any sort of racial experience at all? I was in New York City and I wanted to see the other part of the city. Big Chinatown city, New York. A group of I had tickets for those days. 30 people went to the bus at Children's house and Japanese got in. You know, this is Chinatown and everyone said he was outside. Outside talking to another Chinese across the street. We walked out in group. Chinese point a finger at me. People on the other side of the street, I started standing up second. Few men and mostly women. All the girls stand around the center and you guys stand on the outside. [unclear] In a couple drives, down the street and fast as we can. We know which way they goes. We made it come all the way to the arc. All the Chinese were standing outside. I was scared. Talking about me in Chinese, on less Jap in their-. I couldn't believe what they were doing to Manchuria.

I: I believe in-

I: Sam, I wanted to ask more questions about your career in photography. Maybe you wanted to share with us one of your early info graphs and explain.

SY: Photograph, yep.

I: You are credited with [Toyama-san?] Is that a typical way for people to join photography in those days. Hard to say. Ruth, lovely man, first came to Toronto. [overlapping sounds] One day and the wedding pictures. My posing was from the wedding on Saturday, one or two if you get pretty lucky. But because of the newspaper, these are all the cut-outs from Saturday morning paper.

[55 minutes]

SY: When would you get a chance to have all this advertising on the paper when the envelope cost less than a sent because they want these pictures. These are new bride cut-outs. Twenty-two weddings on long weekends. Weddings on Saturday. All day Sunday I prepare the prints and have the actual print ready on Monday. Newspaper was something new, fresh. Day before the wedding and these are all the brides I took. My wife kept all these. You get an ad like that in the paper. It cost a cent. I recall this Sunday. All day Monday, Saturday, and Sunday, right through, get an ad like that with my name on it, free.

I: What time period was this?

SY: Wedding season.

I: No, what year, Sam?

SY: When I came to Toronto. 1943.

I: 1943 on, eh?

SY: No, I wasn't doing any lighting like I was doing. I learned all this in high school.

I: Was this from your, you had your own business or were you working for someone?

SY: My own business. Then, I traveled all around United States and saw everything, the possibilities.

I: Even during the war, you were pretty free to travel?

SY: Oh yeah.

I: Were you self-employed?

SY: Yes, my own business.

I: How can you get all these ads in the paper each week?

I: So, did you have any difficulty starting your business in Toronto knowing that you are Japanese? Is that-?

SY: Well, there's the Japanese. They didn't involve me. Lot of Chinese in here too, you know. There's Chinese.

I: You were able to get employment as a photographer almost right away?

SY: Yeah. I was lucky that way because when I started. Week after week, I get all these advertising without costing me a cent.

I: People would see your name and then give you more business?

SY: Yup. Everyone had the name on it. This is the funniest part when I went to the newspaper. Ok, let's take a picture of you with the camera. [unclear] All my camera is confiscated. What do you mean you are a photographer that doesn't have a

camera? Government took it all. [unclear] That's why I was able to sell money to get the [unclear]. You are starting a studio and you don't have a camera. We went to a-

I: Is that a picture of yourself?

SY: This is a picture of a camera in the newspaper. The photographer starting off and hasn't got a camera.

I: Is that you?

SY: That's me.

I: Can I just hold that up?

I: Yeah, Surprising.

I: I was wondering, could you tell us a bit more about what it was like when the government confiscated your equipment? You said, there were about five.

SY: Not only that, all of the Japanese must have been home six o'clock. At that time, I had a girlfriend, eh. I was invited to her home for dinner to talk. [unclear] After six. Japanese live in Japanese [unclear] in Vancouver. Houses there. [unclear] No Japs could be, in their home by six o'clock. So, I sat in the back seat and she covered me with blankets.

[60 minutes]

SY: She sat in the back and her father was driving home. Risky business. She's directing her father to the left, three more houses. Make sure the door was open before I got out of the car. By this time, there was all the [unclear] cars were going up and down Japanese areas, see? To see absolutely empty without any single people walking because they had to be in their houses by six o'clock. One time I was working late, making an appointment for a housing customer. They came in late because they didn't know. It's a wedding picture so it's a good few dollars. Finally came in and by the time they finished arranging what they want to spend and how they want to spend, it was after six o'clock. They walked out of the studio without worrying. I can't get out of my studio. So, doesn't cost me anything. I phoned the police station, who I am, where I am. A customer came in late and [unclear] so now I'm late. Can you send me [unclear]. So, police send a car out.

**[End Part 1]**

**[Start Part 2]**

SY: Lot of entertainers. She called up and said she was six foot three.

I: Caucasian girl?

SY: Oh yeah.

I: And I don't really hear too much about those kinds of relationships. What happened? What did that impact?

SY: Well, we were all students and taking that- Got a cup of coffee like everybody else and one time, there was a girl and a guy in Vancouver school of mine doing calligraphy. She was a real top calligrapher and in other classes, they were all in their group. One time, we sitting there, two of us and then, four guys in the other classes came in. Where are you guys going? We were going out swimming. This is

about seven o' clock after dinner and he's going to go swimming. In mid Vancouver is warm, eh? Okay, let's go. But there's only two bathing swimming suits between the six of us. [laughing] It doesn't matter. And how many towels? We got two towels for the six of us and two bathing suits. We forgot the bathing suits and towel. That's the kind of life that is different.

I: Sam, what kind of reaction was there to you and the hakuji girl?

SY: Oh. You got to remember, in art school, man or woman, we sketch nudes so there's nothing to it and we only had two towels between four of us but we still went on. The life there was completely different. This is full-size [unclear]. Male.

I: [unclear]

SY: Yeah.

I: Think we are going to have to wrap up. We'll just talk for a minute about-

SY: This is [Teresa Stratus?] from Metropolitan Opera.

I: Sam, what did you think, what are your thoughts on this interview?

SY: What interview?

I: This one.

SY: Oh. Well, what's her name was here on Wednesday. What's her name from the group?

PW: Grace Thompson.

SY: Grace Thompson, yeah. Well, there have been several other people interested in something different, someone with interior, someone with a lot of stuff to say. They want to know whether red is good for certain things while green is- They ask me so many questions, it's crazy but I always answer or show the picture to them. Well, for shooting backgrounds, outdoors, indoors, this is taken in the studio but this is a back [unclear] Oh, this background was taken in Spain. Old, old. See how old it is and I just used part of it. [unclear]

I: How do we feel about this interview? What worked and what didn't work?

SY: And brass, the new goals are very popular in the States. These are all taken in the studio.

I: [Rubbles mamore?]

SY: This one is beautiful. Here, these are [unclear] shots. They have changes to take so we have different backgrounds immediately. Outdoor, indoors, [unclear]. The main thing is color, you have to know what color, what goes with red and what doesn't. These are mostly girls matching-

I: Hey Sam, one question I want to ask you. When you have, how many children you have? Two?

[5 minutes]

I: How many children you have?

SY: Three.

I: Oh

SY: My daughter's here.

I: And I know your son. Did you try to use Japanese at home?

SY: Oh no.

I: No, eh. Why is that?

SY: Just natural, I guess.

I: Oh natural, huh?

SY: But between my wife and I, when we didn't like what the kids did, we speak Japanese. [Baka speaks in Japanese]

I: But we learned that word very early.

SY: [Baka speaks in Japanese] Between us, you know.

I: No problem with communicating with your children?

SY: Oh yes, oh yes.

I: Because-

SY: One of my daughters is here.

I: Yeah. We forgot to talk about-

SY: We have to learn Japanese language in Japan here. This was for a magazine cover so I had to design that.

I: I think we are going to have to go into the other room. From, it will be interesting to look back on this. What were your observations on the process? What do you think? Which parts of the interview worked best and why?

SY: The dinner was good.

I: [laughing] I liked that part too.

SY: That's number one.

I: But why number one? How do you feel about this sort of talk we just did?

SY: Well, we have this kind of meeting all together when we go to art school. Some are in glass, some in metal, some in just drawing and painting. We have a group like this all the time. talking about glass, how difficult it is.

I: Now [speakers overlap] we are talking about your life.

SY: Yep, this is my life ever since I was 13-year-old. When my father died and I was adopted by another family. they were so nice. They were really someone I can trust. I couldn't trust anybody. When I came to Toronto, it was the Jewish people that helped me. Even if I was making ten times more [unclear]- When all the graduates from university who did engineering, every department, nursing, into the 100s, each graduate has to get their picture taken because they had to give their family one to show daughters graduating, sons graduating, becoming lawyers and all that. They all had their graduation pictures taken and each one has to be retouched. Those graduates, when you are taking a graduation picture, the retouching goes up to a dollar a minute. A dollar a minute to retouch, no other way to do it. I learned that from Mr. Fujiwara in Vancouver. When he was in Japan, he was a retoucher in Japan. He was [unclear] but he was helpful and I was just a kid.

I: What did you use to retouch the negatives?

SY: A pencil, just the lead-

I: Oh.

SY: -In the middle and that's sharpened with sandpaper. It was like needle sharp so if we need to retouch, it won't show on the negative.

I: So, you have to enlarge it to touch it?

SY: Yes, you have to magnify it.

I: Magnify it, I see.

SY: Goes underneath the eye and otherwise if you touch it, you get puffy eyes. So, you got to make all the mistakes then after that, it's entirely up to you. It was cold

cash I was making. It was 25, up to 125 one night and cost me during the day. I had come home and YMCA, I'll meet at.

I: How well is [unclear]?

SY: [Unclear]

I: Still friends?

SY: Yes, we are still friends. We still go skiing, yep.

I: Skiing too?

SY: Yep. In this part of the country, winter is good cause snow season.

I: I was gonna say that in this case where photography plays a big part of the interview, we might think about having the photographs you might want to talk about as reference of either of you or the photographs.

[10 minutes]

I: I don't know. Do you have photographs that depict what life is like in Vancouver in the 30s when you grew up?

SY: Wouldn't want to forget. There is nothing you want to leave in memory.

I: Really?

SY: Oh yes. Only Mr. Torino, he was really more than kind.

I: What happened to him, Sam?

SY: The son was a terrific student so when he died, he wasn't the age getting into university. The father asked me, would you mind? He's going to university next year. Do you think it's ok for him to go cause the father had the [unclear] physically. He was fantastic. His literature was something. He was something unusual.

I: There was a teacher at my brother's school in Toronto. [Toyama?], what is it the same family?

SY: No, there is only one. He was really good. I probably have- He wrote.

I: So, after he graduated school, did he reach [unclear] as you?

SY: No, he had tuberculosis. So, he had to go hospital and he died when he was sent out of Vancouver. So, he died.

I: He died in Vancouver or in camp?

SY: In camp, lot of people died because if you were sick, there was no hospital. Just got thrown out. Certain group, a certain name. I thought I had his work- This boy from Vancouver was fantastic. You'd never read anything like that. It's not in here. Oh, these are the latest artwork that I did.

I: Is this yours?

SY: Yes.

I: Computer, yep. We did open the [unclear] Well Sam, thank you very much. We have to go into the other room now. This was fascinating.

SY: If we are finished, my daughter is here.

I: Would you like to go back? Terry will take you back?

SY: Ok, we'll come back to the room. [blue screen at 13:01]

[15 minutes]

[blue screen]

[20 minutes]

[blue screen]

**[End Part 2]**