

**Interviewee: Rose Kutsukake  
(nee Taipei)  
Interviewer: Peter Wakayama  
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THE JAPANESE CANADIAN LEGACY PROJECT

**[Start Part 1]**

Peter Wakayama: [Speaking in Japanese], right?

Rose Kutsukake: Yours?

PW: No, yours!

RK: No, no [Speaking in Japanese. Repeats the phrase above].

PW: No, no.

RK: I had to marry him [Ken Kutsukake] because, he says if I don't marry him, he'll jump into Lake Ontario! [chuckles] I save one life.

[Both laugh.]

PW: Rose, you're funny. You have a sense of humour. That's one thing about her [Rose], she's got a good sense of humour.

RK: And I think it was the other way around, too.

PW: Yeah?

RK: I say, "If you don't marry [me], I'll jump in!" [laughs]

PW: [laughs]

RK: Yeah. It was a nice marriage, though.

PW: He had a lovely fifty years.

RK: Lovely, lovely. Best fifty years.

**[Conversations and setting up interview. Rose's niece Joy Sato was also present during the interview but was offscreen.]**

**[Interview restart at 13:45]**

PW: Rose, what's your maiden name, and where you born. Can you tell us?

RK: I was born in Vancouver, B.C., 1918.

PW: And then, where did your parents come from?

RK: My parents both came from Hiroshima, Japan.

PW: And they were in Vancouver?

RK: Mother came as a bride. So she was already married when she came here. So she had- Joe Sato's mother, that was her oldest, and second, she didn't come until when she was 7 years old. So, Sharon, Sharon Funei, she was [the] second girl. And the third was Mickey Sato. How many years younger was Mickey?

Joy Sato: My Dad was born in 19-

RK: He was another 9 years younger than the oldest. Mickey Neisa, Sharon's mother, and Mickey Sato. And then I came 9 years later. So we're all far apart.

PW: W your grandparents here, or were they in Japan?

RK: Just the parents. No grandparents.

PW: Your grandparents didn't come to Canada.

**[Recording is paused. Resumes at 15:46]**

RK: One of my cousins-

PW: [possibly speaking to someone off-screen] I might have, but it just doesn't ring a bell. I'm terrible for names, you know. [laughs]

RK: I got [unclear], going to [centre?] right now[unclear]. six different families.

PW: Oh, isn't that great.

RK: Six cousins. And their children. [looks over at a person off-screen] He's a cute little boy. I like him.

PW: [chuckles]

RK: [Talking to person off-screen] I took a liking to you!

Tak: Yeah? We're going out on a date next week?

RK: What did he say?

PW: Next week he's going to take you on a date.

Tak: [Head] to the movies?

RK: Sure!

PW: Tell him to bring the *manjū*.

RK: Yup, I'll bring the *manjū*. But I can't walk, though.

PW: That's okay, he'll wheel you around.

RK: Okay.

[interrupted by beeping medical alarm]

PW: I guess that sound's all over the place?

JS: Yes, until they turn it off.

RK: She's [Joy] a retired kindergarten teacher. Can you imagine? Retired! So she's old.

JS: [laughing] I retired young!

PW: I said to her [that] she's too young to be retired. She told me she's retired, I said, "you're too young to be retired."

RK: She retired how many years ago, 3 years ago.

JS: Four.

RK: Four years ago, she retire. So she-

PW: Early retirement? Good package. She's kind of mochi [?]too, then.

RK: Kind of mochi [?]? She's got no [keel?], but I think she's the nicest girl in the world.

PW: There you go. You're going to be a matchmaker yet! [chuckles]

RK: Yeah! But nobody falls for me. They think, "Oh, Peter, you do it!" They think it's [unintelligible] doing it. If it's just a friend, it's okay. You do it, find her a nice man.

PW: Now Rose, do you know why your mother and father came to Canada?

RK: Well, I guess they wanted to make money and go home. Which, instead of making money, they got further and further into a hole, so they couldn't go back to Japan.

PW: And what did they do in Vancouver?

RK: Rent a boarding house. On Alexander [Street]. They called it "Hiroshima." But, if that had succeeded, we wouldn't have been rich, but at least we would have been able to go home to Japan. They say that, "Well, here we are." But how can you go back to Japan in debt, right? Everybody's like that. So, we stayed.

PW: And did they ever go back, did they take a visit back to Japan after the war?

RK: No, no, [they] never went back. Dad couldn't go back, he gave his land to his sister and came up. Mother did the same thing. Nothing to go back to.

PW: You know, when you were growing up in Vancouver-

RK: Oh yes!

PW: Tell us about your schools and your friends, and what you did.

RK: Oh, that was the best, even if we had no money, nothing, that was the best part. Growing up was the best part. Going to school—because I went to kindergarten, too, in Vancouver. See, my classmates were like [Kaz Suga?] and [unintelligible] [Kobayashi?]we all went, because we grew up on Powell Street.

PW: So you were right down in Japantown, then, if you were on Powell Street?

RK: Pardon me?

PW: Did you go to Japanese school there, too?

RK: Oh, sure! I think I did more than go to Japanese school, I finished, like- Everybody went to school, went to Japanese school, and then I did it 4 years more. On top of, you know, your compulsory was 8 years, Then I went about 4, 5 years more.

PW: So, you can read and write Japanese?

RK: [nods] Joy, I can read and write Japanese.

JS: Yes.

RK: I still got the Japanese books and it'll come naturally to me, both, it doesn't matter which. I don't know what I'm reading, English or Japanese.

PW: So you're totally bilingual?

RK: I'm totally bilingual- I think I can say I'm the only bilingual person in Canada. Like Irene Uchida, she's good in English, but not a word of Japanese, you know what I mean? Yeah. I hear she's got Alzheimer's now, a little bit of Alzheimer's.

PW: Yeah, that's why I think you're in better shape, mentally than she is.

RK: Yeah, she's one year older. She's 1917, and I'm 1918. That's how, when we were children, I used to go and stay at her place, she used to live by Hastings Park, where the monkey trees [are]. We were good friends.

PW: You know, when the internment started, what were you doing? When you got the notice?

RK: I was working.

PW: What were you working at?

RK: At the-where was I working at? T. Maikawa.

PW: Doing what?

RK: Department store. Sales girl.

PW: And what did you think when that happened?

RK: Pardon?

PW: What did you think when you got the notice? How did you feel?

RK: Oh, I thought it was the end of the world. Really. Because the older people thought that ah, you know, they have - *hakuji* [non-Japanese] would eventually win. But if you mentioned that amongst the Japanese, you shut - You daren't say it. But we knew there [was] no chance for Japanese. (Speaks in Japanese)

PW: And then did you, were you evacuated into Hastings Park?

RK: I was not in Hastings Park. Never went to Hastings Park.

PW: Where did you go, then?

RK: From the home, right to Ghost town. To- Where was it? To Slocan. From Slocan, I went to- No, because we had a home in Vancouver- A lot of people came out to Vancouver, without a home. They were shipped out to, where was it, Hastings Park. But we had no second home to go to, so they kept us where we stayed. It was not a good place, but-

PW: So, you stayed at the home, and then from there you went directly to Slocan?

RK: Yes. Where we were, we got a room on Powell Street. Rooming house.

PW: And then when you were in Slocan, what did you do in Slocan?

RK: Another job. Another sales job. You know, because they have to have stores.

PW: So, you were working in a store?

RK: Yeah.

PW: And how did you find the internment camp? The housing and the food?

RK: Oh, they sent you there. You were allowed one suitcase.

PW: And did your family go with you?

RK: Yes.

PW: Your father and mother?

RK: Mm-hmm.

PW: The father went, too, with you?

RK: Mm-hmm, at that time, because all the younger fathers were shipped away. Ghost town, it was an old- well, in fact, I had no father, it was my brother-in-law JS: Weren't you with your brother?

PW: Was your brother-?

RK: [shaking head] No, my brother was old, I mean, he was not allowed to go to a house. It was these old men, over 60, or young kids.

PW: Now, after Slocan, where did you go?

RK: After Slocan, Toronto.

PW: You came directly to Toronto? With your family?

RK: Mm-hmm.

PW: And what did you do in-  
[microphone issues]

RK: No. We were alright because we were no menace and- No, it's the people that they thought were, you know, bad- If we would do anything against the community. Then you were screened out. But look at the young kids and old men, what can they do? So, we were okay.

PW: Were you sponsored? Did you have a place to come to when you came to Toronto?

RK: Yes.

PW: And who sponsored you?

RK: My uncle- not my uncle, my nephew. George Sato.

PW: Oh, George sponsored you over here. So, George was here before.

RK: Yes, he was here before. He was working here.

PW: And so, he found you a place to stay and everything?

RK: Yeah, him and Onizuka - What's his name? George's friend.

PW: Shig? Shig Onizuka?

RK: Not Shig [Onizuka?], his brother. Shig went out to B.C. Shig Onizuka went out to B.C. [nods] So he still called me, sometimes, "my cousin," you know. I don't want to be his cousin. Not a very bright boy. [chuckles] So she [pointing off-screen] says, "shut up!" [laughs] But that's what I am!

PW: How did you feel about coming out east?

RK: I didn't want to come out. Oh, no. It was forced.

PW: Would you have rather stayed in B.C.?

RK: Yes, at that time. But now- [shakes head]

PW: Why did you think you wanted to stay in B.C.?

RK: B.C.? Because we knew everybody and we weren't scared of anybody. Here [Toronto], we didn't know where we were going to go, who we're going to meet, what kind of work we're going to get, you know what I mean? Oh, yeah.

PW: So, when you came to Toronto, what did you do?

RK: Uh, sewing! 50 cents an hour-no, 50 cents an hour.

PW: And then, did you do anything else after that?

RK: Let me think. So, some people, they went to school, high school, or they furthered their career. Which was better. But I did nothing. I didn't have any ambition. I think I was the girl with the least ambition, amongst the Japanese.

PW: But you must have been pretty smart, though, eh? You must have been pretty smart, if you did school in 4 years and all that.

RK: Oh, that time I was smart. You know I skipped from 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A. Or maybe they wanted to get rid of me, I was getting [a] little bit too smart. [chuckles]

PW: Now, in Toronto, is that when you met Ken [Kutsukake]? How did you meet Ken? Did you know him in B.C.?

RK: No, you know what? He is married to- His wife, is my sister-in-law.

JS: His sister is your-

RK: He is- Mickey's wife, Mickey Sato's wife. She-is my sister-in-law. And even though we[?] were in the same house, you come around; well, he never let me go after that.

PW: So, did you know him in B.C.?

RK: I knew him from Vancouver, I knew who he was.

PW: Who he was as a baseball player?

RK: Yes. But I never knew him personally.

PW: So, tell me about your marriage with Ken.

RK: Wonderful, all I can say is wonderful.

PW: Now, you know Ken had this career as an Asahi player, and then he played in B.C., and then when he came to Toronto, then he was the manager of a lot of the nisei baseball teams, and he won a lot of championships. Now, as his wife, how did you feel? As a wife?

RK: Oh, I thought it was an honour. I didn't know him as a big bad boy, before. I just knew him as he was, and I liked him. [smiles] You couldn't help but love him, I say. A good man.

PW: And did you go to baseball games?

RK: No.

PW: You didn't go to the baseball games?

RK: We went to the small ones, like his Honest Ed's games. But that time they weren't in the Blue Jays [baseball team]. Never got a ticket. We never went to see- Only Blue Jays game we started going [to] was when they started giving us free ones. [chuckles]

PW: But you went to his when he was the manager of the Best Way or the Honest Ed's? You went to all the games?

RK: Oh, yes. Those were good games.

PW: At the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, at the Centre, when did you and Ken get involved?

RK: When did we get involved? Before it started!

PW: Right from the start, right from the beginning?

RK: Right from when they were first gaining the money for the- Because Ken and Sam Hagino, I think they're the ones that went to the bank to borrow the money. And that's when they got the money, because they got it from people from putting up their life savings- Oh yeah, they didn't know they would get the money back, but they did it. And even up to now, Sid would say, "Oh, this is Ken Kutsukake's wife, you know, the baseball player?" I said to Sid, "What do you mean, a baseball player? What did he do for the [Japanese Canadian Cultural] Centre?" I said, you know? Even Sid said he didn't know. About Ken, until recent[ly]. Because he had no position, like Bob and them, you know, they had nice positions. So they remember him. But they said -

**[speaking Japanese 34:38-34:46]**

RK: If you don't want to mess with him, put the lid on. That was his- they put the lid on him [Ken] for the last 20, 30 years. And I'm putting him out, I told him I will. I say, "you're coming out".

PW: So, tell me some of the things Ken did for the [Japanese Canadian Cultural] Centre.

RK: Tell me what he didn't do.

PW: Well, tell us what he did do.

RK: Oh, at Christmas, at New Year's and Christmas, now they get janitors to get them, cleaning up the next day. But we want to save 5 dollars, [holds up hands with all 5 fingers extended] if you get extra person on Christmas or a New Year's Day, to sweep the place, it costs us 5 dollars, so he said. "let's save the 5 dollars." Ken and I did it. You know, just to save the 5-not to get the 5 dollars ourselves, we wanted the centre to save the 5 dollars. Oh, we did a lot, I think. And right after that, we would sweep up the hall, and then dress and go to another party. I bet you a lot of people thought that Kenny was a janitor. That's all he did, sweep the floor and wash the washroom. And they thought I was a bottle-washer. If there was a party the day before, if you wash all those glasses, you get five dollars. So, I say, "let's save that 5 dollars, I'll do it for you." So even the Coby's [Kobayashi] kids, Marty, they used to come around and when I was doing the washing, they'll remember me as a woman that was always washing the dishes- Not the dishes, glasses. You know, glasses for beers. You ask him, Sidney-Not Sidney, Marty. And then there was another boy, their brother, Kobi [possibly referring to Dr. Robert Kobayashi], he's a doctor now. The girl was on the run too much. But those were the days, we loved it, you know, at least you've got memories. A lot of people don't have any memory. I've got millions of memories.

PW: And that's why we want to hear them, too.

RK: Yeah. Yeah, right.

PW: Because a lot of people don't really know that, because he was behind the scenes. You and him were behind the scenes, right?

RK: We worked so hard. I was saving pennies, Sam- Yone-chan was saving millions. Yone Kobayashi, she made millions, her husband made millions.

PW: And you did other things at the [Japanese Candian Cultural] Centre, right? Tell me about your involvement with the Ikenobo, Ikabana.

RK: Osushi for 40 years. Bazaar. 40 years bazaar, eh? I- Not because I'm sick, well, last year I knew, I'm getting a little bit too old, and I told Sumi Takashima, "Sumi, I don't think I can carry on next year, you do it, I've got everything written from 40 years ago, what day the bazaar started, what time it started with how many boxes, and how many boxes we made the night before, you know? I've got everything written down in a little book".

PW: So you recorded all that?

RK: Oh, yeah. What's a thing without recording? It's no use. So, I said, "Sumi, you're going to take over, but I'm going to give you all the record sheets." I got it all. Forty pages, all done and ready for her.

### **[Interruption]**

RK: I'm giving it to Sumi this week, so it says what time, it started with so many boxes. In 1 year, it ran out. We had over a 1,000 boxes, but we ran out. And some years, we sold it all. At how much? You read it, it's very interesting.

PW: So, you recorded that for 40 years?

RK: Yeah. Forty years, I recorded it. Just to satisfy myself.

PW: That's amazing.

RK: Not for other people, but just to satisfy myself, I did it. And then I wrote how many came from [unclear], and then Osushi. I put what was in there, like how many *age* sushi, and what filling was in there, and on the side, I put how many *chow mein* boxes were sold.

PW: So, were you in charge of the sushi group?

RK: Yeah! I was in charge for 40 years. Kind of makes me sad I have to quit now. But you take a look at that.

PW: Yeah, I will.

RK: I'm going to give it to Sumi, Sumi Takashima. She's a capable girl.

PW: You did Ikenobo, too, right? Ikebana, right?

RK: Ikebana? That's one thing I [don't?] know. Dance. You know, she started 40 years ago home, Shichan. Just with her friends. Well, I started it with her because she was my friend, and I liked to have tea and a cake afterwards. That's why I went. But



at the end, Kenny said that, "You're not learning anything, I'll go and learn in your place." Because Bob, he knows flowers, he would take a lesson and the night before, he would be there. And next morning, he would come to my place, and drop- We were on Palmerst-Not Palmerston, in between- So she would go up, and he would tell Sue, "Sue, I don't know what Rose was doing, but she didn't have it right." So, Kenny insisted that, "if you're not going to do it right let me go, and I'll learn." Well, I thought I was little better than him, anyway. [laughs] I couldn't miss that anymore. Refreshments, so I kept on going for the last 40 years. And you know what? Shichan got me an extra certificate for a girl that got- Diploma without learning anything.

PW: [laughs]

RK: Yeah! She asked Mr. [unclear, Ikenobo] you remember, that's how I got it.

PW: I thought you were a really good ikenobo person.

RK: No! [laughs] I shouldn't have told you, no! I was a dunce! But Shichan got it for me. And 1 year she got me a clock. Were you the one that presented me with that clock?

PW: Yup.

RK: I knew nothing, Shichan put it in there as a joke. But joke turned out good for me, because he [points to interviewer] didn't know, he thought I was really good, but I was a dunce.

PW: Because I thought after 40 years, you'd be a sensei.

RK: [laughs] You figured it out, then! [chuckles] But Shichan was good to me. Oh, yeah. She really pushed me up, she really was good. In fact, everybody knew, but they all liked me, and they pushed me up. Nobody said, "No, she shouldn't deserve it." They all thought I deserved it.

PW: Sure. You went on trips to Japan.

RK: I went every time they went.

PW: For the workshop in Kyoto.

RK: Oh, yeah. Well, I spent a lot of money for ikenobo, too. But, oh, we had fun.

PW: Tell us about some of the trips that you went with the group, to Japan.

RK: I went to every one of them.

PW: And did you go to the workshop?

RK: In the beginning, I, a couple of times I did. But, how can I join the others when I don't know what they're talking about? [chuckles]

PW: But you went for the tour.

RK: Yeah. And then for the dinner. And the big 'do. You've got to pay big money for when the sensei comes, too, when he puts on the red robe and comes too, oh yeah.

PW: But you enjoyed it?

RK: Oh, I enjoyed it, I enjoyed it, but I had to spend money, too.

PW: But you went with Ken, as well? Together?

RK: Yeah, yeah. We enjoyed it. He never got around to it. He would have been next to go on the ikenobo tour. Soon [she?] would have had to join.

PW: Rose, you know, what's your general attitude about life, in general, now that you've had all this long, long life you've had.

RK: I think it's wonderful, especially a life in here. You can't get a thing like this anywhere in Canada, I don't think you can get anywhere in Canada, attention that this hospital gives to everybody.

PW: So, you're very happy here?

RK: Very, very happy. But I think they might be getting around and giving them too much food, because we always have to leave a little bit left over. You can't eat what they give you. I hope they haven't heard us in case it's not enough for other people. Yeah, don't they give us a lot, Joy?

JS: Yes, they do.

RK: Yeah.

PW: You have a wonderful sense of humour.

RK: Yeah? [chuckles] Thank you.

PW: Do you have any regrets?

RK: No regrets. No regrets, except that he went a few days earlier. That's about the only regret.

PW: Well, you had a honeymoon there, at the end.

RK: Yeah, yeah.

PW: Your honeymoon suite.

RK: That's what the other nurses say. They called it the honeymoon suite. Yeah. Oh, he was good. If there is another man in the world as good as Kenny- There isn't. Even you, Peter. I don't think.

PW: Well, I haven't lived as long as you have and I haven't lived with you for 50 years, either [chuckles]

RK: Yeah. But still. I could talk with Ethel, and [say], "I got a better one." I don't think there's anybody better than Kenny. You've got to be super.

PW: So, do you got [sic] a message for the younger people?

RK: No, they've got their own life. I think no message, they'll find it. Oh yeah, they'll find it themselves, they'll find it and they'll know. Yeah.

PW: You mentioned them being proud of their Japanese heritage.

RK: Oh, yeah. Don't ever be [unintelligible] Japanese heritage. [shakes head] There's the best in the world. I'm glad you've got a little bit of Japanese blood in you. I bet you've got 100% Japanese, [speaks in Japanese to someone off-screen] Yeah. And then the manjū, don't forget to make the manjū. Bring me a sample, okay?

Tak: He only makes it in batches of 25.

PW: He only makes them in batches of 25, can you eat 25 manjū?

RK: Okay. Okay, I'll take it. I'll sell it to Ruth. [chuckles] Maybe a little commission in between.

PW: [chuckles]

RK: Yeah. Make 50. And I'll get rid of it for you.

PW: You can serve these people who come to visit you with the manjū.

RK: Yeah! And they'll say, "where did you get it?"

PW: Then you could advertise.

RK: No, but if he wants to only get rid of 50 or 100, Ruth will get it. If you get on the good side of her, she might want 200! [chuckles] Yeah, yeah. But you've got to let me taste one first.

Tak: Okay.

RK: Are you making the money or your mother?

Tak: My father.

RK: Your parents. Good, make them a millionaire. Yeah, yeah.

Tak: It would take a lot of manjūto become a millionaire.

RK: Let's raise the price. I'll taste it and tell you whether we can sell it for more or not. Don't go out selling too cheap, I'll get more for you.

PW: That was good! Thank you very much.

RK: Is this the interview? I thought this was just talking.

PW: This is the interview. Well, we are just talking. This is just talking and interview.

RK: Well, this is a talking interview.

Tak: Do you want to do it again?

RK: Well, Joy?

JS: Yes?

RK: Show him that the [unintelligible that the voice didn't come in loud enough.

JS: Yeah, you know why? See, you know how you're wearing a mic?

PW: See this? [touches Rose's microphone]

RK: We can get it louder?

JS: No.

RK: We can't? Do you know how to work it afterwards?

PW: Joy's going to try it. Try and bring it over. So, how'd it come out? Are you okay?

Tak: I'm just going to try something.

RK: Thank you [Tak?]. Thank you very much.

Tak: No problem. I just want to say something.

RK: I enjoy your company.

Tak: Well, it was interesting doing this. You're a very easy person to interview.

PW: No, she's wonderful.

**[End of part 1]**

**[Start part 2]**

JS: I thought he died at about 65?

RK: My dad?

JS: Yeah.

RK: You think so?

JS: [chuckles] I don't know! I thought so.

PW: But your mother was alive when you went to Slocan. Did your mother go with you?

RK: Yeah. She didn't die that much younger-

JS: No, she died when she was close to 60?

RK: Huh?

JS: You know she seemed-

PW: [unclear] Toronto, she did come to Toronto?

JS: Yeah. [nodding]

PW: So, she did come to Toronto?

JS: She seemed so elderly, but-

RK: She was only [?] 67.

JS: No, she was about-in her 70s, I think.

RK: Yeah?

JS: Yeah. I think – yeah.

RK: She was a good- She's wasn't like me.

JS: No?

RK: She was backwards.

JS: [laughs]

RK: She never came out in the open. My Mom was quiet [unintelligible] lady. But I'm not. She-

JS: She said, Auntie Rose [Kutsukake] said her mother didn't have, like schooling. But she knew all the words to the *Chūshingura*<sup>1</sup>.

PW: Woah, really?

RK: She could tell the story to everybody, yeah. She just learned it by memory.

PW: Really?

RK: Yeah. My mother was a brilliant woman.

JS: Because they didn't have the advantages that we have today.

PW: All the formal schooling.

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<sup>1</sup>*Chūshingura* is a fiction that became famous in kabuki theatres, translated as "The Treasury of Loyal Retainers".

JS: Right. Opportunities were not available. Because I can remember my Dad used to listen to *naniwa-bushi*<sup>2</sup> and I remember not liking that. But I think they got the love of that from their Mom. From my grandmother.

PW: Because that's very hard, naniwa-bushi. Very hard Japanese singing.

RK: Yeah, you'd have to really know it. I know the names of all the characters.

PW: Oh, do you?

RK: Yeah. By memory. Your memory never goes away.

PW: That's incredible. That's really good.

RK: I said "They're [have?] Chūshingura in the centre".

PW: Yes.

RK: I said if they get stuck, they'd come around. [chuckles] I know all the names.

PW: Really? That's incredible.

JS: Each story.

RK: Huh?

JS: You know the stories of the different-

PW: Yeah.

JS: That's good.

RK: But it's going to die with me.

JS: [chuckles]

PW: That's too bad.

RK: Yeah, it is too bad. There are no younger ones learning anymore. Yup, too bad.

PW: Well, maybe Joy will pick it up.

RK: No, no. She can't. [chuckles] No, she has a smarter brain than mine. But, [speaking in Japanese] she can't remember, you've got to have it in Japanese. You know, you've got to have it in Japanese, the names. Then it comes [easily] to you.

PW: Yeah? Is that the secret?

RK: Even Joy's a professional won't be able to do it. They're too hard.

JS: I guess. Well, you've heard it over and over since you were young, so it's not something you pick up by hearing the story a couple of times.

PW: So, did you hear that all from your mother, then?

RK: Pardon me?

PW: Did you hear that all from your mother? The stories?

JS: Your mom used to tell you the stories.

RK: Oh yeah. She must have.

JS: Well, I guess in those days there was no television, so you had to-

RK: No books to read-

PW: Silent movies?

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<sup>2</sup> A genre of traditional Japanese singing.

JS: Silent movies! Tell Peter what you did about the mummy's hand. It's not an attractive side of you.

RK: Oh.

PW: Tell me your secret.

RK: Well, that was not that unattractive, but nobody would go with me, I-

JS: She wanted to go see the movie "The Mummy's Hand," this is in Vancouver?

PW: Yeah.

JS: So?

PW: What did you do?

RK: I told them it was a tragic story. [chuckles]. You know, "Mummy's Hand," What else could it be?

JS & PW: [laughing]

PW: [unclear, possibly speaking Japanese?]

RK: And I got [unclear] to go. I fooled Joy into to one, eh?

JS: Yes.

RK: What was that?

JS: "The Fly!" And how old was I? You took a little child to see "The Fly!" [laughing]

PW: [laughing] The sci-fi horror movie?

JS: [laughing] Yes!

PW: Was she [Rose] into these kinds of movies?

JS: It just about wrecked my entire life.

PW: [speaking in Japanese].

RK: Oh, I like the horror movies!

PW: You like horror movies?! [laughs]

RK: Oh, I loved horror movies. "Frankenstein" was one where people wouldn't go, so I went with my [Chogo Papa?].

JS: Oh yeah? That would be her [Rose's] brother-in-law. Her eldest sister's husband.

RK: Margaret's father. I went to Pantages [theatre?], Paul Street. They wouldn't let anybody over, unless they were 13 years old.

JS: And you were younger?

RK: Yeah, I was younger. I went with Chogo Papa.

JS: Oh, you talked him into going with you.

RK: No, you couldn't go in. You'd have to be 13 years old.

PW: Well, how did you get in?

JS: How did you get in, then?

RK: Well, I went with Chogo Papa, and I must have said I was 13 years old.

JS: So even then, you were really tricky. And devious.

RK: Well, I was close to it.

PW: She was smart!

RK: Any means to get in.

JS: Any means!

RK: I think I was the youngest girl that saw "Frankenstein."

JS: [Laughing] Oh, jeez.

RK: Well, Frankenstein isn't even that- "Frankenstein" is the name of a doctor.

JS: Right. But it was scary at the time.

RK: They weren't scary. Not that scary.

JS: Well, now- Yeah, I was reminding Auntie Rose she took me to see "The Fly," and that I was really scared. I don't think I was 5, I think I was maybe closer to 8. And then she said, oh, she said, I even talked to someone, she said her name, I can't remember now- Into going to seeing "The Mummy's Hand," and she said I told her "It's a story about a mother's hand!" [chuckles]

PW: [laughing] You have some wonderful happenings in your life. A thousand stories.

JS: Yup, yup. That's for sure. And she has a very good attitude.

PW: Oh, terrific, yeah.

JS: [to Rose] You have a good attitude.

RK: Yeah.

PW: Yes. A very good attitude.

RK: Oh, and another thing I want to tell you is, you know, when you have a, when you buy land, you've got a mortgage. Who do you think had a mortgage on that? Kenny was one of them that had the mortgage.

PW: Oh, at the [Japanese Canadian Cultural] Centre?

RK: At the-123 Wynford [Drive].

PW: Right.

RK: In the middle of the night, the phone would ring, there's a false alarm, there's a fire alarm or some-[unclear, possibly speaking Japanese] would be sleeping. So, the alarm would go off, and since Kenny is older, [there was] nobody to phone but him.

PW: Oh, right.

RK: Middle of the night, he'd get a phone call, saying "Unless you come, we can't turn the alarm off."

PW: Oh yeah, that's right.

RK: Bob wouldn't have it because he says he'll be disturbed.

PW: [laughs] Bob Kadoguchi was the executive director at the old [Japanese Canadian Cultural] Centre.

RK: But nobody knows that background [?], I think. I once threatened Bob, you know. "Bob, I'm going to change the name to your name, because Kenny can't get an evening sleep, too many phone calls." He said, "Don't do that, don't do that." See, he's got kids. So, Kenny did it and he just threatened. [Speaking in Japanese]

PW: [Speaking in Japanese]

RK: Nobody knows.

Tak: So, Kenny's name is on that plaque?

RK: Oh yeah, it's set, yeah.

PW: It's got a dozen people who signed the mortgage. Put up their house and all that.

RK: That shows Kenny was a good man. He had sleepless nights.

PW: And he was still working at Iwata, wasn't he?

RK: No.

PW: Oh, was he finished then? Or was that later on? When did he work at Iwata?

RK: Never worked at Iwata-

PW: Oh, he didn't?

JS: No, at the time, he was working at the [Japanese Canadian Cultural] Centre. That was- he didn't work at Iwata travel until the 1970s, I think. Late 70s.

PW: Oh, okay. Okay. So, Ken, where did Ken work, then? When he was [unclear]?

RK: Before? He was a cutter.

PW: Oh, what, on Spadina [Avenue]? Where?

RK: Spadina. And then a lot of things come, stories come up.

PW: Oh, yeah.

RK: You know, he was friends with cutters around there. Two Jewish cutters wanted to open [New Moat?]. Okay, now I'm glad I know now, better to know than not to know. Two of them were Kenny's friends. Jewish cutters. Kenny was a cutter, too. So they wanted him as a 3<sup>rd</sup> partner, at [New Moat]. But, now everybody's dead, so, this Japanese girl, she was the designer at [New Moat]. She came and told me that actually, they wanted Kenny on at [New Moat]. But Roy Shin refused. [Speaking Japanese] Right?

PW: Oh.

RK: At least one of designers came and told me, "Did you know that there was a case like this?" Well, I said "Thank you very much," I [said] better to know that he was wanted than rejected in the first place, right?

PW: Yeah.

RK: So I said "Thank you, we won't take it any further." [Speaks in Japanese]

PW: So, when did he work at Iwata's?

RK: Huh?

PW: [Speaks in Japanese]

RK: Money [would have been?] better.

PW: No, but when did he work there? After the cutter?

RK: More money was made at Iwata he didn't make any money. But it was nice to know that at least he was wanted. And one more place where he was wanted was -

### **[Interview interrupted and resumes at 15:24]**

JS: You doing okay?



PW: We're going to go now. Domo arigato! [Speaks in Japanese]  
Joy: Thank you very much!  
RK: Thank you, thank you very much! I like you very much! [unclear]  
Tak: I'll tell my Dad.  
JS: Do you know his Dad?  
RK: If I know that guy, I would know his Dad. Because I know everybody. How come I don't know your Dad?  
Tak: Because he's invisible! [laughs]  
RK: I may be fifty years older than his [Tak's] Dad.  
Tak: My Dad was born in 1942.  
RK: 1942, eh?  
JS: Oh, Sharon's age. His Dad is Sharon's age.  
RK: His Dad. But, compared to Kenny-  
JS: Way younger. So, actually, Tak's grandfather would probably know Uncle Ken. That's what.  
RK: But how come he doesn't know Powell Street, your Dad?  
JS: 'Cuz he was too young.  
RK: I thought everybody knew Powell Street.  
JS: He's Sharon's age, His Dad is Sharon's age.  
RK: I have a niece. Same age as your father's age. And she's a grandmother.  
JS: And she's a grandmother! [laughs]! Right.  
Tak: My grandparents are- My grandparents on my mother's side- I think my grandfather's going to be 88 this year, and my grandmother, I think-  
RK: I'm going to be 90 this year!  
JS: No, you just turned 85 this year. Next year, 86.  
RK: Oh.  
JS: So, were they in Vancouver?  
Tak: Uh, grandfather-  
RK: So, anyways, I'm a few years older than his grandfather. I am a few years older than his grandfather.  
Tak: She [Rose] is 85? He's 87!  
JS: His grandfather's older than you.  
RK: Yeah.  
Tak: My grandfather was from Steveston [British Columbia].  
JS: Steveston.  
RK: How old is your grandmother? Who was she?  
Tak: Uh, Kajira, Mariko Kajira.  
RK: Kajura?  
JS: Kajira.  
PW: Where was she from?

Tak: She was-Haney [B.C.].

RK: My cousin comes from Haney. But they were young, so- Kajira?

PW: Kajira.

Tak: And then my grandparents on my father's side, Yano, were from, uh, I think they were out of Port Alice.

RK: Port Alice? [Speaks in Japanese, shaking head]

Tak: Yeah. And they had, I think, a dry cleaner's, or something, out there?

RK: Gardening.

JS: Dry cleaning.

RK: Dry Cleaning.

Tak: They were laundry.

RK: Well anyways, they must be good people to produce- [gestures towards someone off-screen]

Tak: [chuckles]

RK: Thank you very much for helping me and making it easy for me with the answers. I thought, "Gee, he's such a square," yeah [traces a square outline in the air and speaks in Japanese]

JS: Oh my God! [laughing] She [Rose] gives with one hand and snatches away!

PW: [laughing] Just so you don't get up too high!

JS: Exactly. [chuckles]

PW: Chop 'em down again.

RK: Well, he is a square.

JS: [Laughs]. Stop, like I said to you before, stop!

RK: Compared to his generation [points at someone off screen], he is a square.

JS: Okay.

PW: I'm old enough to be his [Tak's] father.

RK: Yeah, that's what I mean. But you found out that better side of you, didn't you?

Tak: Is there a bad side to him [Peter]?

RK: No, no. This is the worst side. He's a good guy.

PW: Thank you. [chuckles]

Tak: So do you want to, shall we take you back out to the hallway? Or do- if we don't take you back out there, will they think you've escaped?

RK: No, somebody' will take me back.

JS: Do you want to be in here or do you want to be in the hall?

RK: Yeah, maybe in the hall.

JS: It's brighter, isn't it? It's brighter in the hall.

**[Group moves Rose into the hallway and adjusts camera. Interview resumes at 22:25]**

PW: She's just a chauffeur, that's all.

RK: Yeah? Betty Lou takes over.

PW: Oh yeah, Betty Lou's teaching, you know, that's [unclear].

RK: Yeah. Very good group, isn't it?

PW: Yeah.

RK: They all get along. Shichan's a good leader. I'm so happy that she got the award.

PW: This year she got that big award, this year [from the foreman's office?].

RK: They gave it to me for nothing.

JS: [chuckles] An inside joke.

PW: You deserve it! You deserve it, you were there all the time, you helped, and you know, not everybody could do that.

JS: That's right, you didn't give up.

PW: You didn't, you stayed there. You stayed.

RK: Because I like everybody.

PW: Well, it's a good group Those trips to Japan were fun-.

RK: And I think everybody liked me, too.

PW: Oh, yeah. Ken was quiet, but she [Rose] was the life of the party. Yes. Very friendly-

RK: Only one person that got the-this middle [brings hands together in front of her stomach]- by working in the kitchen only. [chuckles] Nobody knows why I got it. But it was Shichan that pulled me into it. That's the only way I could get in, right in. She's no good any other way. [chuckles]

JS: Well, it's good that they appreciated you, right?

PW: Absolutely, yeah, you deserve it. You deserve it.

RK: I say, many [times], "she's a dunce."

PW: [chuckles] Nobody's a dunce. Everybody's got their qualities.

RK: But I'm not, as I told you, I'm a good record player. Record keeper-

PW: Record keeper, yeah.

RK: So, from the day that I learned, I got it in the pencil, you know, a coloured pencil.

PW: Yeah?

RK: Yeah, you should see it. It's pretty. I don't know what it means, but it's pretty. [chuckles]

PW: Wow. [chuckles]

RK: You can see it, you might understand it a bit more. You can see it.

PW: It's like they had it all colour coded.

RK: Yeah, coloured. Different flowers coloured.

PW: See, look at that.

RK: Because Kenny said he'll go, if you're not going to learn anymore, I'll go and learn for you. You know, and then- Maybe I should learn, we might have 1 or 2 diplomas.

PW: [laughing] Yeah, but you know what, those diplomas cost money, then. [Speaks in Japanese]

RK: Yeah. [Speaks Japanese with Peter]. Oh yeah, mine didn't cost anything!

PW: See, you were better! And those have to keep paying money for their ones.

RK: I get [?], she didn't charge me for it.

PW: There, see, look at that. That's even better. See, you're smart, actually!  
[chuckles] You're smart!

RK: I was smart.

PW: Yeah, you played it right. You played the game right.

RK: Yeah. I really did.

PW: Okay, we'll come and see you again, okay?

RK: Okay, bye. Next time we'll show you that- what was it that we want to show him?

JS: Oh, "Sleeping Tigers."

PW: No, no, the other one, the Hall of Fame one, the one that you didn't see-

RK: [Carly made?], Carly [?]. That way you don't waste your time here, you can take it home and watch it.

Tak: Well, I'll probably watch "Sleeping Tiger" when I go to my grandparents' for Christmas.

RK: No, not the "Sleeping Tiger."

Tak: I know, I know. But I'll watch that over Christmas.

PW: Then he'll appreciate what Kenny did.

Tak: Then we can come back and we'll look at the other one, okay? Because you said you were there, too?

RK: Yeah, Kenny's in it, he's good. Not that- He's an actor-

JS: But he was an actor.

PW: He was a singer.

JS: Yeah, for a quiet person, he was actually-

RK: Yeah, but he wasn't hired as an actor.

JS: He was.

PW: He was so, I saw him at the Crest Theatre one time.

JS: "Long[?], and the short, and tall."

PW: Remember that, when he was a Japanese prisoner or something?

RK: Yeah, yeah.

PW: That was Ken, right?

RK: Yeah. I want to know the story of that.

PW: I went to see that.

RK: That was a really good story. Even Nathan Cohen gave him a good write-up.

PW: Yeah, I remember, I went to see him in that play.

RK: He did a good job.

PW: [laughing] He didn't say anything, but he did- He didn't have any lines in it. Jeez, that's about 35 years ago.

JS: At least.

PW: Or more, 40 maybe.

RK: Yeah, maybe more than that.

PW: Yeah, I remember that.

RK: It's good- They should bring those out, very good picture, the story itself is good.

PW: Yeah, yeah, it really is. I can't remember what the story was, but I remember him in the play. At the Crest Theatre, I know it was the Crest Theatre.

RK: It was a good story.

PW: We used to live around there.

RK: It makes hakujiin look good. And yet, in a way, it makes *nihonjin* look good.

That's a great story.

JS: I think it was to show everyone is human, even though, like, he was the enemy, he was a prisoner of war, but they realized that he's a person.

PW: He was a human, he was a person. And he played it very well, without saying a word.

JS: Exactly.

RK: Good story.

PW: Tak, can I give you a ride home?

Tak: Sure, if you'd like.

PW: [to Joy] You got a car?

JS: Yes, I do, thank you very much. And thank you for lunch.

PW: Oh, you're welcome. [Speaks Japanese to Rose] Goodbye!

RK: Oh, okay. [waving] Thank you Peter! Bye bye.

PW: [Speaking Japanese]

[Joy Sato and Rose Kutsukake made a phone call]

[brief interruption by a physiotherapist. Resumes at 34:58 but interview with Rose is over]

PW: Yeah, but they bring you food, your relatives, so you don't need it.

RK: I get outside food. But the poor people that just exist on this [hospital food], how can they?

Tak: Maybe you should share.

RK: They don't like to. Thank goodness.

JS: [laughing] Thank goodness!

RK: We like our food, we want to keep it to ourselves.

JS: Actually, some of the nurses like Japanese food more than you. Sushi-

RK: I think so, because they're getting a little smarter.

PW: They're eating the leftovers, are they? [chuckles]  
RK: [Speaks in Japanese] Chopped egg sandwich.  
JS: Not bad.  
RK: Not bad, I said "Oh, I think I can't [?] eat this, but there's no salt in it".  
JS: Oh.  
RK: So, I said "I could really use salt now" I [said], "Too late, I'm full now." I said, "I'm full now, I don't want any more".  
Tak: You must have been pretty hellish on stewardesses on long flights to Japan!  
JS: He said you must have been complaining to stewardesses- I don't think so, actually. A difficult person.  
RK: Difficult? No, I'm not a difficult person.  
JS: [laughing] Hard to please.  
RK: No, really easy to please. I told her we don't have to put salt on it. I said "No, take it back," I didn't say "Take it back and put salt on it." I said "No, I don't want salt on it now".  
JS: "Now." [chuckles]  
RK: That was worse?  
JS: Well, "May I have a little salt?" would be nicer than "Take it away, I don't want it anymore, there was no salt on it".  
PW: Too late.  
RK: You try to eat the chopped egg sandwich. You put onion in it, eh? But nothing in it. So anyway, I didn't have it.  
Tak: So, you're going to have noodles for long life on New Year's Eve?  
JS: Udon? Soba?  
RK: It depends, if somebody brings it. Are you offering?  
PW: [laughs] I knew that was coming!  
Tak: Come on, I've got to make mochi on the 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>.  
RK: One bowl of udon is nothing. That's what he needs. Okay!  
JS: What?  
RK: Okay, I'll wait for it.  
Tak: You guys can bring it.  
RK: You're dad's gonna [unclear].  
Tak: I'm going to be in Hamilton! I'm going to be in Hamilton.  
RK: He's in Hamilton?  
Tak: No, I'm going to be in Hamilton [on] New Year's Eve  
RK: Oh, good excuse. I was supposed to be at the hospital, but it's too far.  
JS: Hospital?  
RK: It doesn't matter, bring it any other day.  
Tak: Mm-hmm. Okay.  
PW: There you go.

RK: I love udon any day. Doesn't have to be-  
JS: New Year's Eve.  
RK: No, it doesn't have to be end of the month, end of the year.  
Tak: Okay.  
RK: Every day is end of the year for me.  
Tak: Okay, well, we'll come back. We'll come back.  
JS: Thank you very much.  
RK: You're [Tak] going to go to your parents for soba?  
Tak: My grandparents.  
RK: Your grandparents?! You lucky boy. Kataoka [Asks a question in Japanese]?  
JS: Yano.  
RK: But no Kataoka. There's no Kataoka in your family?  
Tak: No. What is it?  
PW: No, the name.  
Tak: No.  
RK: You[re] from Haney, Kataoka [?].  
JS: No. Your Mom's name was Kajiura [?].  
RK: Kajiura. Not Kataoka. Why do they have such similar names?  
JS: [chuckles] I don't know!  
RK: They should be "Smith," or something.  
JS: Kajiura.  
RK: His relative is Kataoka?  
JS: No. Kajiura.  
RK: But they don't live in Swansea.  
Tak: Where's that?  
JS: An area in Toronto.  
Tak: No, not that I know of.  
PW: South Etobicoke.  
JS: No, uh, it's just north of the Lakeshore. Sort of Windmere, south of Bloor [Street].  
Swansea.  
PW: It was like Leaside over here, Swansea on the other side. That's where Lucien Kurata was counsellor, remember?  
JS: Lucien Kurata was counsellor?  
PW: Yeah, wasn't he the reeve of Swansea?  
RK: Forty years ago.  
PW: Long time ago, he was a reeve. Lucien Kurata, Japanese Canadian politician. Lawyer, too. Okay, you ready?  
JS: Okay.  
RK: You have to drive home to Hamilton today?  
Tak: No, not today.

RK: Not today.  
PW: Okay, bye Rose!  
RK: Okay, bye bye!  
JS: Bye, thank you very much!  
RK: Sam.  
JS: Sam? Peter.  
Peter. Not Sam Wakayama.  
PW: That's my brother.  
JS: I think a couple of times she [Rose] called him [Peter] "Sam" on the- When you listen to the video, I think she called you Sam a couple times.  
PW: I do have a brother Sam.  
RK: A brother Sam. But he's not in Toronto.  
PW: Yeah, he's in Toronto. Do you know Sam?  
RK: No. I know it comes from the same family. No, I don't know Sam.  
JS: [chuckles] You called Peter "Sam," a couple of times today.  
RK: What does Sam do?  
PW: He's retired now.  
RK: Retired. More my age.  
PW: Uh, no, he's not your age. No, he's only 72.  
RK: Age is 72?  
PW: Yeah, my older brother.  
RK: Still younger.  
Tak: Do you have any other brothers?  
PW: Yeah, Tommy and Kamiyo. You met Kamiyo?  
JS: Yeah, 85.  
Tak: Yeah, I remember the photos he did for the *Five Generation* show [unclear].  
PW: Yes, he did that.  
RK: I'm 85. Well, it was nice meeting you again.  
PW: Okay, and we'll be back again, we'll come and see you.  
RK: Okay.  
JS: Thanks a lot, thank you! Merry Christmas!  
PW: Have a nice Christmas!  
Tak: Have a good Christmas.  
RK: That's a good camera, eh?  
Tak: Yeah, it's handy.  
RK: Handy nothing. It's expensive and it's very nice. Japan?  
JS: Canon.  
Tak: Made in Japan. Yeah, Canon.  
RK: Very good. Anyway, it was nice meeting you.  
Tak: It was nice meeting you. You'll have good holidays.



PW: He'll be back with the manjū for you. He's got a date for you with the manjū.

RK: Oh, oh. Soba? Manjū.

PW: He might bring a soba one day, too.

RK: You never know, so you might have to bring two extra ones.

Tak: Okay, but I don't want to find [them], like, hiding in your pillows and, like, stashed away for rainy days.

RK: No, nothing to show for it.

[nurse visits, and remains for the rest of the conversation]

Tak: We'll be back with the manjū, then!

PW: Tak will be back with the manjū.

[Joy explains what manjū are to the nurse off-screen, and talks about Tak's family making manjū]

RK: it's him.

JS: It's him?

RK: I thought another person appeared.

JS: No?

RK: A young girl.

PW: [laughs] Here's a young girl [the nurse] who came, right here.

RK: I thought[unclear] was a young girl. [points to someone off-screen]

Tak: Wow. Guess I need a haircut.

RK: How can he dress more like a boy?

PW: Oh, I see. He's got pants on.

JS: She doesn't see really well.

Tak: Okay.

Nurse: No manjū for you!

JS: [laughing] Exactly!

**[End of interview]**



