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NI: So, can you give me your full name including Japanese name, and your birth date?

BH: Yeah. My name is **William Tasaburo Hashizume**, and I was born in Mission, B.C. on the 22nd of June, 1922. That makes me about eighty-three years old.

NI: Wow. And your parents, what are their names?

BH: My parents, the father was born in *Wakayama-ken*, Kainan city in *Wakayama-ken*. And my mother was born in *Yoshida-cho* in *Ehime-ken*. They were married in 1912 or '13, and they settled in Mission. I was born in Mission as well as, all my siblings are born in Mission. Of the siblings, myself, my younger sister and another younger sister are the only ones living. All the rest of them passed away.

NI: Can you give me the names of your siblings?

BH: Yeah. The eldest was **Eiichi John**, and I think he passed away some time in '88. The second son was **Yujiro**, he lived in Tokyo, he lived in Japan from around age six or seven. He was sent there by my parents, and he went through high school, university, and he worked as, he worked for a company and later he set up his own company which, which rents out movie equipment to various producers. And his business was pretty good. He passed away about five or six years ago. The eldest daughter was named **Hiroko**.

NI: Your sister.

BH: My eldest sister was named **Hiroko**, but she died at the age of about five due to an accident on the farm.

NI: In Mission?

BH: Huh?

NI: In Mission?

BH: In Mission, yes. And then the second eldest sister is **Toyoko**, she passed away about twenty-four years ago. And the next **Taeko**, she passed away in... she passed away maybe three or four years ago in Spain.

NI: She was living in Spain?

BH: Yes, she was living in Spain. And myself, and then my younger sister **Seiko**, she married **Fudge Inamoto**, they live in Don Mills right now. And my youngest sister, **Wakako**, she lives in Hawaii. She married a civilian after the war, American civilian after the war, and they now live in Hawaii. Now, of all the four -- of all the siblings, the ones that lived elsewhere like in Spain, Tokyo, Hawaii, they're all rich. [Laughs] Only, only the ones that lived here are the poor siblings.

NI: The ones who stayed in Canada?

BH: Yeah. Ironic.

NI: How about your parents? Do you know their birth years and years of death?

BH: Yes, I do. I think I have it here somewhere.

NI: Oh, that's okay, if it's easily accessible. We can get this later.

BH: Okay, all right.

NI: So you were born in 1922?

BH: 1922.

NI: And at that time, your father was a farmer?

BH: Farmer, yes.

NI: What kind of farmer?

BH: Strawberry farmer mainly, berry farm, fruit farmer. And as most farmers in Mission, they concentrated on growing strawberries. Not only strawberries and berries, various... and then during the wintertime, they grew hothouse rhubarb.

NI: Hothouse rhubarb?

BH: Yeah.

NI: Regarding hothouse rhubarb, I do have a more extensive article written in the book that I published, *The Japanese Community in Mission*, which is this. [Holds up book]. And later on in, later on, this occurred after I left Mission in 1938 for Japan, but between 1939 and '41, they started growing hops.

NI: Hops?

BH: Hops.

NI: For what purpose was it?

BH: It was a good product, marketable product, and it supplemented strawberries. It didn't, it didn't coincide with the strawberry growing season, it was, the harvesting is done sometime in September

and October. And, which, you know, which gave the farmers extra income. And during the winter season, hothouse rhubarb, it supplied additional income to the farmers because during the winter, they couldn't grow anything else except some who went to work in the sawmills and logging camps during the winter.

NI: I see. Let's get back to your father, though. When did he arrive in Canada?

BH: He arrived in 1903.

NI: Okay.

BH: He arrived in 1903. The family was quite well-to-do, and his mother, since he said that he wanted to go Japan -- the reason why he wanted to come to Canada was after... no, during the late 1800s, okay, he served three years in the army.

NI: In the Japanese army?

BH: Yeah, in the Japanese army. And then with the impending war between Japan and Russia, you know, looming, he said, "I already served three years." He says, "Now I want to go outside and learn more -- well, try and make a living or strike it rich." And with that, he, his mother gave him quite a sum of money to travel, and he intended to go to Los Angeles, but while on board the ship, he was distracted by fellow Wakayama *kenjins* who were returning to Canada.

NI: Oh, they were returning, or they were...

BH: No, no, they were returning from Japan. After the fishing season, why, there's nothing to do, so with the money they saved, well, earned, they went to Japan and then spent the winter there and came back. And it was during that, on the boat there, they got to know him, says, "Oh, you're from Wakayama-*ken*." They says, "How about trying fishing with us?" So he did that, but the first year turned out to be a disaster because it was a poor salmon run that year. And all the money he had with him, which in those days, five hundred bucks, that's quite a sum.

NI: He had five hundred dollars when he first came to Canada?

BH: Yeah, uh-huh. Well, fishing boat, he had to get the net and this and that. Now, after the season was over, he found himself -- [coughs] excuse me -- almost broke. So whatever money he was able to salvage, he went looking for a job. But that didn't last, so he went over to Victoria on Vancouver Island, a place called Saanich. There he looked for a job, and he begged a *hakujin* farmer for a job, which the *hakujin* farmer says, "Okay," says, I think he was paid only about fifteen dollars a month, that included room and board. And one good thing about this farmer, he was a schoolteacher. And also, he gave my father an English name called George, and he says, well, my father's name was **Tashiro, Tashiro Hashizume**. Says, "Hey, **Tashiro**," rather than calling him, says, "I'll call you George." And, "George, do this, George, do that." Says, "Well, hitch up the horse or clear the farm or this and that." Well, this schoolteacher taught him not only how to look after farm animals, how to grow strawberries, how to plant potatoes, how to harvest them and this and that, but taught him English, too, which turned to his advantage because you're in an English-speaking country, you have to know, be able to speak some English to get by on. So he did that, and he stayed there for two and a half years.

NI: On that farm?

BH: Uh-huh.

NI: Do you know the farmer's name?

BH: No, I don't. That's one thing I've been trying to find out but unsuccessfully.

NI: How old was your father when he came to Canada?

BH: He must have been twenty-three or twenty-four or something like that.

NI: Okay, I see. How about your mother?

BH: My mother was around twenty-three when she came, got married and came to Canada.

NI: Your mother's name?

BH: **Etsu**. And my mother, when she first met my father, she was working as a midwife. She was a midwife.

NI: In Ehime?

BH: No, in Osaka, yeah. And when she came over, there was quite a few Japanese families that began settling here. When they started calling over their wives and got married, they have kids, she was in pretty good demand there, especially around the neighborhood where we lived. She went and delivered 'em, or if she can't be in two places at once, why, instructed them how to deliver the baby or so forth. But nevertheless, she looked after the needs of the thing there. Oh, most of the people that... oh, if they were living, if they were about eighty-nine or ninety or younger, younger to maybe seventy-five, I'm pretty sure she must have delivered most of the babies.

NI: This is in Mission?

BH: Yeah, in Mission, yes.

NI: Did your mother come over to Canada as a "picture bride"?

BH: No, no, no. It's not a picture bride at all. They met in Osaka, and through my, my father's sister, and so no, she wasn't a picture bride by any means.

NI: So they met in Osaka and, sorry, what year again were they married?

BH: I think 1912.

NI: 1912, they were married in Japan?

BH: In Japan.

NI: In Japan, and then your father came over.

BH: That's right, that's right.

NI: Settled, and...

BH: Well, my father, after married, my father came back earlier and well, he had to fix the house up so that she can join him there. And then when she, when she did come over, she already had the baby in her womb.

NI: And which of your brothers was this?

BH: The eldest one, **Eiichi John**, yeah, **Eiichi John**.

NI: And they settled on the farm?

BH: Uh-huh.

NI: What was the farm like? How many acres did you have?

BH: Well, my father, at first he started out with about twenty-seven or twenty-eight-acre farm. And according to what I found out, he settled in Mission in 1910 and in 1911 he called over a *yobiyose* from Wakayama. And then through, he called over many *yobiyoses* during the meantime, and with the *yobiyoses* he cleared the farm. And then I think in 1910, he purchased about twenty-eight acres. The following year, he purchased another ten. And then in 1916, he purchased twenty-six or twenty-seven acre more. And then later on he purchased, in 1918, he purchased ten more acres which makes it a grand total of about eighty acres.

NI: That's big.

BH: Uh-huh. Oh, he was very successful as a farmer, because according to, according to this thing that I researched, back in 1918, he had, he had a net income of six thousand dollars. Six thousand dollars. But the amazing part is during the following, during the following year, according to a different source, he grossed twenty-two thousand with a net profit of eleven thousand. And a loaf of bread at that time was probably three or, three or four cents.

NI: So he had, just to clarify, Mr. Hashizume, *yobiyose* is, can you tell me what that is?

BH: *Yobiyose*, is, literally means "to call over," *yobiyoseru*, "call over." And there was this system which you could call over somebody from Japan to work as a domestic or a store clerk or a farmhand or a logging camp hand, and so forth. And you had to apply to the Japanese consulate in Japan to call over this person. Now, the requirements were quite strict. You had to be an established farmer or established logger or established sawmill owner. You can't be anybody, you can't call over, you know, if I didn't have a job, or if I was working on a, working at a logging camp, I can't call over a *yobiyose*. It has to be somebody that's already established.

NI: So it's like, nowadays, we have the working holiday visas.

BH: Well, yes, but it doesn't need a sponsor, does it? Working holidays?

NI: Yeah, you need a sponsor.

BH: Oh, you need a sponsor, okay.

NI: So your father was, your family was fairly well-off.

BH: It was, yes.

NI: What do you remember from your childhood of your house in Mission?

BH: Well, I hated going out to the farm and working, but you had accept that.

NI: Why did you hate it so much?

BH: Well, there were a lot of *hakujin* people that were enjoying their summer holidays. Heck, we couldn't. But insofar as I was concerned, I was better off than the rest because unless it was a strawberry or busy thing, I wasn't required to go out and hoe the, weed the strawberry farm or things like that, or use the plow. But it's only during the busy summer season that I was made to work and so forth. My father paid me accordingly.

NI: He paid you?

BH: Yeah, well, the pickers got so much. I got the same thing, too, which I was able to use as spending money.

NI: How much did you get?

BH: What was that again?

NI: How much money did you get?

BH: Well, you know, on a good day, on a good day, probably, you're lucky if you, picking strawberries, \$1.50.

NI: That's not so much.

BH: That's for a ten hour work. You got up at six, were out in the field by seven, and noon hour about an hour lunch, it took, it took about fifteen minutes for the workers to go from the thing to the house to get fed, and then go back out and get back to work in about an hour. So between twelve and one was lunch hour, and then from one o'clock to six they worked. From seven to twelve, that's five, ten, and the afternoon, that's ten hour work.

NI: Were the workers on the farm, were they all Japanese?

BH: No, some were Japanese. We had bunkhouses for them, and we had native Indians. They lived somewhere else, in a house provided for them. And that was it.

NI: Did you have any *hakujin* people helping you out?

BH: One year we had a schoolteacher from the prairies during the Depression years. They came by and we provided them with a separate house to, where they could live and things. But they, they were the only *hakujin* people at thing.

NI: And then how many people would be working for you in a typical season?

BH: Oh, about twenty Japanese.

NI: And how many native Indians?

BH: About ten or twelve.

NI: Okay.

BH: And that's during the height of the berry season. And we had, we had one permanent Japanese worker throughout the year, and we had two Chinese workers living separate house, living all year round. And my father paid them... during the summer, why, the wages were thing, but he paid 'em bonuses or extras during the busy season, but he kept them going. Probably the *yobiyose* rate for the first year was about fifteen dollars per month, probably that's what my father paid them all throughout the year, but during the summer season, why, they paid 'em twice as much or two or three times as much according to their work.

NI: That was good money for people...

BH: Oh, yes.

NI: Would your father pay for their passage to come to Canada?

BH: Oh, yeah. Regarding the *yobiyoses*, it's more or less written in this book. But the conditions, the terms and conditions of the thing, it's all written in there. And I was lucky to get that, because my eldest brother, who passed away, he had records of the thing which I was able to get. It was given to me after he passed away, says, "Well, here are these papers. Don't know what to do and it's a shame to throw them away. Could you see what they, what they are?" Well, the wife, the brother's wife couldn't read Japanese, and it was all written in Japanese. And I was able to read the thing, so says, "Oh yeah, this is very important." Says, "Oh, I didn't know this, I didn't know that."

NI: How long did they come to Canada for, then?

BH: Huh?

NI: The *yobiyoses*. How long would they come over to Canada for?

BH: Well, the *yobiyose* contract period is about three years.

NI: Oh, three years.

BH: Three years. And they paid for, the sponsor pays for the passage plus a little bit of spending money. And once in Canada, he has to look after, well, he pays 'em fifteen dollars per month for the first year, second year twenty, and the third year twenty-five dollars. And if they're -- he has to supply 'em clothes, too, room and board, and also if the *yobiyose* become sick, he has to look after the doctor's expenses, hospital expenses and this and that. Other than that, after the three-year period is up, they all move out.

NI: They'd go back to Japan?

BH: No, not necessarily, not necessarily. Quite a few remain and go elsewhere. Sometimes I wonder why, if it was, *yobiyose* was from Wakayama-*ken* I can understand that, because it was a fellow *kenjin*. But there were others from Fukuoka-*ken* and Hiroshima and others, and some established themselves. I don't know what happened to quite a few of the others. I suppose if I investigated, I would know whatever happened to them.

NI: Was there much of a, from your book, there were a lot of Japanese names, of course, and a lot of Japanese farmers in the Mission area. What do you remember about the community back then?

BH: Well, it was quite united. Sure, there were factions, like Buddhist faction, Christian factions, and some didn't believe in the farmers association and weren't members, they were more or less independent. But all in all, they got together. After all, the majority of them were all members of the Japanese farmers association or *nokai* as they called it. And during the meeting, why sure, they got together and ironed things out and settled the thing. And if there's any casualties to the family, why, there's *mimaikin* or condolence money given to them.

NI: Very Japanese.

BH: Yeah, very Japanese, yeah.

[Interruption]

NI: Yeah, so you have the *nokai*, you have the different *kenjinkais*. How much socialization happened back then?

BH: Well, most of the socialization was done between *kenjins*, *kenjins*. Well, you're from the same prefecture, why, there's a sense of intimacy or closeness. We were the only Wakayama-*ken* people in Mission, so we were pretty left out, but there, like I mentioned here in the book, there's Fukuoka-*ken*, there's Shiga-*ken*, there's Tottori-*ken*, Hiroshima-*ken*, Kanagawa-*ken*.

NI: Miyagi-*ken*?

BH: Miyagi-*ken* was only one or two, but... yeah, Miyagi-*ken* there was about five, yeah.

NI: Mostly farmers?

BH: They're all mostly farmers, yeah.

NI: So when you were growing up then, Mr. Hashizume, you went to, what schools did you go to?

BH: Well, I went through grade school up to grade 8 public school, and then from grade 9, 10 and 11, I went through Mission High School. And it was during, while I was in Mission High School grade 11 from September to, September to December. And in September of 1938 my father died. And my father, before he died, he told my mother, he says, "You take," me, my younger sister, my two younger sisters to Japan. He says, "Give 'em a Japanese education." He says, "Now, once you did that, they'd be on their own, so no problem." So based on that, my mother took me and, took me and my two sisters after Christmas, I think, or just before Christmas.

NI: How old were you?

BH: I was sixteen then.

NI: Sixteen.

BH: Yeah, I was sixteen.

NI: And your sisters, how old were they? Your sisters?

BH: My sisters, younger sister was fourteen and my youngest one was thirteen.

NI: Why did your father want you to get a Japanese education?

BH: Well, it's like most Japanese parents, they came, they wanted their kids to know Japanese or things like that. And as a matter of fact, my eldest brother and elder brother, the two elder brothers, they were sent to Japan when they were kids. And my brother, he came back after, he came back after completing, graduating from middle school in Japan and that's why most of the conversation, he's more fluent in Japanese than in English. And of course, being, after coming back during the winter months, he attended high school to learn more English rather than other subjects as a courtesy of the principal there.

NI: When you were growing up, though, the language of your house was Japanese?

BH: Japanese, yeah. Japanese, I was, my father was an enthusiast, enthusiastic supporter of the Japanese school.

NI: In Mission?

BH: In Mission, yes. And he, he required, well, since he's a supporter, he had to send his kids to Japanese school. We did, we... there's a photo of myself going, and my sisters at the **East school**. This is the, this is the photo. And this is the **East school**, and this is the photo of the downtown, downtown school. There were two separate schools in Mission.

NI: You had two Japanese schools in Mission?

BH: Yeah, uh-huh.

NI: Did you enjoy going to Japanese school?

BH: Hated it like hell. Hated it like hell. But nevertheless, it caught up to me. When I went to Japan, had I studied more and been more diligent, probably I wouldn't have suffered as much. But once I got to Japan and entered the high school equivalent there, which they called middle school or *chugakko*, I was enrolled in the third year. I was, probably my age, I should have been enrolled in the fifth year, but since my Japanese thing was, you know, not up to par, and of course, the Japanese education system, they thought theirs was superior in this and that, says, well, American high schools, their educational level is probably, grade level would be about equivalent to grade 3 in middle school there. Well, that was fine. So I, but once I got into middle school, most of the textbooks are written in Japanese, and how to read that? How to, you know, elementary, elementary *kanjis* I could thing, but some of the *kanjis* that were thing were far more difficult and complex than what I was learning. Heck, you had to learn how to read that, and for that I had to consult a Chinese-Japanese dictionary to find out what, how it's pronounced. Now, once you've got the pronunciation right, you didn't know what the meaning was. So I had to consult the Japanese-English dictionary to find out the word. For example, for example...

NI: Yeah, a simple example.

BH: Yeah, well, for example, for "*doho*" here. I didn't know, well, I knew what the "*do*" was, but I didn't know what that was, so I looked it up in the *kanji* dictionary and said, "Oh, that's '*doho*.'" I looked it up in the Japanese-English thing and says "fellow countrymen." And *nogyo*, well, *nogyo*, but for example, *hattenshi*. *Hattenshi*, I didn't know what that word was, so I looked up the *kanji* in this *kanji* dictionary and it says *hatten*, so I looked up *hatten* in the Japanese-English dictionary and it says, "development." And that's how I... thing, and almost every night after school, why, it was repetitive work. But I was young then. Once you learn what it means, you know, you remember it. So it's the new words that keep cropping up that I had to thing, but by the end of the first year, I was able to read the Japanese papers and somewhat understand it.

NI: How were you academically in Mission before you went to Japan?

BH: I was... I didn't do too bad. I was in the top, top category. I wasn't, I wasn't the brightest, but I was up there.

NI: And what kind of aspirations did you have before you went to Japan?

BH: I wanted to, I wanted to go to university but to be an engineer or what, I wasn't too clear. But even when I went to Japan, I wasn't too clear. But it was my brother that suggested I go to a technical school rather than a commercial school, being that I was strong in physics, chemistry and science subjects, and math. After I graduated from -- well, the war already started when I was in the fifth year of middle school, and I had to, you know, I had to... in order to, in order to keep on, why, I had to enter a higher school. Now, I chose, I made, I wrote an entrance examination to three schools. One was the, one was the Kansai Gakuin higher commercial school, which was an affiliate of the middle school that I attended. The other one was Osaka School of Foreign Languages, and the other one, the third one was Kobe Technical College. And I already had admission to the Kansai Gakuin commercial school, higher commercial school as a result I was, my grades in middle school were sufficient.

NI: From Canada?

BH: No, no, my grades in Kansai Gakuin middle school were sufficient to enroll me into the school without entrance examinations. And I applied, well, I wrote the entrance examination to, for Kobe college, and I knew I was thing because I answered everything. I knew I had to, I'll be in the top ninety percent or something like that, because... but I chose the thing because it was a government-run institution. Kobe, Kobe Technical College. It was a government-run institution, and the tuitions fee were a third of what I had to pay if I attended Kansai Gakuin higher commercial school.

NI: That was a private school?

BH: Yeah, private school. But I chose thing because of the cheapness and I was more, I was more technically oriented than commercially oriented. And I spent, it was a three-year course, but because of the war, they shrunk the course to two and a half years. And in September I graduated, September 1944 I graduated. And now, it's either, once I graduated, it was either I had to go into the army or navy, and I chose the navy. It was more open-minded, rather than the army, it was pretty strict. But once I joined the navy and took basic training, why, sure, it's like any boot camp and things. Sure it's hard, but heck, I had farming experience. I says, if others can take it, I can take it, too, and that's the philosophy I took.

NI: When you were in Canada, though, Mr. Hashizume, what was the environment that you left before you went to Japan? Like do you remember, do you remember the people of Mission or B.C., do you remember a lot of hostility against Japanese?

BH: Well, there was, there was discrimination, but you know, it's something that I learned while researching my book for the history of Japanese in Mission. That the farther away you're from Vancouver, the less the discrimination. The closer to you get to thing, the more intense it was. Now, if you measure the intensity of Japanese discrimination in Vancouver as a hundred, probably it would be about fifty or forty percent there in Mission. People were more tolerant. Now, as you farther go away, there was hardly any.

NI: Right, right. What kind of discrimination do you remember?

BH: Well, during our school years, grade school years, our washroom facilities were segregated. Well, this is for Japanese, this is for thing. But in high school, it was all the same.

NI: So the, the washrooms were segregated?

BH: Yeah, yeah. I don't know about the girls' side, but the boys' side. And during the recess, during the rainy days, we all congregated in thing, and all the Japanese were on the, gathered. And of course, the only place you can do your business was segregated, one side of the basement is this, *hakujin* were on the other side.

NI: How about fighting?

BH: There, sure, there was fighting, but in any community there's fighting. There wasn't that fighting because you're a white or you're a *hakujin* or a Japanese. We all got along together.

NI: When, so when you went to Japan, you went what year again?

BH: We landed in Japan, Yokohama and Kobe, in January of 1939.

NI: January 1939. How was, what was your, you had family, of course.

BH: We had, my father had brothers and sisters living in Osaka. None lived in Wakayama, they're all moved to Osaka and doing business. And we lived close by to one of the relatives, and we kept in touch. They taught us what to do and what not to do, and I chummed around with a cousin of similar age as well as my sisters with their cousins.

NI: How were you received in the school system by the Japanese kids, being, I guess you'd be a foreigner.

BH: "*Nisei namaiki*." "No *yamato damashi*?" All that crap. Now, when you, when you, after, when the war broke out, and they had to, some that were in the commercial side of the university, taking commercial courses, or non-technical courses, they were drafted and sent off to war. And you can, you can tell him, says, they hate it like hell because of course, who wants to be killed? And they were teaching me, he says, they're proud to be, die in action, this and that. And heck, the very person that thing, why, you hear mumblings, says hate like hell going to thing, being drafted and going to hell, but heck, they can't voice that in public, but you could sense that.

NI: When you were, at that time, when the war was happening, in Japan, my understanding of *yamato damashi* is just that, of course, the spirit of Japan, right?

BH: Uh-huh.

NI: But at that time, what kind of Japanese spirit were they talking about? Because there was a lot of propaganda from the government that, as you said, you were brought up with an idea that Japanese were superior?

BH: Right, right.

NI: Well, what did, what did *yamato damashi* mean? And can you give me an example of what was happening in Japan at the time? What did you hear and see?

BH: Well, one of the things that *yamato damashi*, you weren't afraid to die for the emperor. And... well, it's pretty hard to explain, but you hear all this *yamato damashi* and this and that, you don't hear it anymore, but those days, heck, we grew up more freely in Canada as compared to Japan. Japan was more or less close-knitted. You had to do this, you had to comply with the rules of the society or this and that. Now, when you address somebody elder, well, you have to use different kind of words, *keigo*. And that, it was pretty hard for me to thing, but when in Rome you do as the Romans do, why, I tried to keep up with the Japanese customs and traditions.

NI: Did you have any problems, though, as a *gaijin*?

BH: Well, lot of people, when I went to Kansai Gakuin, I was, I was resented because I was a *Nisei*, and my attitude wasn't Japanese or things like that. The school I went to was *bocchan gaku*.

NI: I'm sorry?

BH: *Bocchan*.

NI: *Bocchan gakko*?

BH: Yeah, well, it's for well-to-do families, well-to-do families. And well-to-do families' kids are *bocchans*, okay? And some I didn't get along with, some were okay. But my best friends from high school days are the ones that helped me get along with school.

NI: Through this time, so you were communicating with your parents by regular letters, I imagine?

BH: Well, my mother was there in Japan.

NI: Oh, your mother came with you?

BH: Oh yeah. No, no, my mother came back, but while in Japan, my mother and everybody was there. The only people that, the only brother that was in Canada was my eldest brother.

NI: Okay, and he was taking care of the farm?

BH: Well, he was, he took over the farm, he inherited the farm, he got married.

NI: After your father died?

BH: That's right.

NI: So everybody went back to Japan.

BH: Everybody was in Japan, yes. Everybody was in Japan.

NI: I see. Okay, I wasn't sure. So he was running the farm?

BH: Uh-huh. And then when the war broke out, he had to leave behind the farm, the truck, everything, and the only thing he was able to take was his personal belongings. He had a wife and two kids, and since he knew Japanese, they expected, he was -- well, he wasn't fluent in English, but he could speak both languages. So most of the fellow farmers in Mission, they relied on him to do this, do that, look after them.

NI: So between the cultures...

BH: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. And, but he had to look after his family, too, so he did his best. Made sure that these people went to certain place, this group of people went to certain places and so forth. He looked after 'em. Not only my brother, but the schoolteacher, Japanese schoolteacher. He looked after the thing.

NI: Who was that?

BH: **Mr. Kudo.**

NI: Okay, I always hear **Mr. Kudo.** He really got around.

BH: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. And yeah, my brother was the only one that thing. And the reason why, the reason why most of the Japanese farmers moved to the sugar beet farms in Alberta, Manitoba, was that they could stay together with their family. Others, they were broken up and sent to various things.

NI: So your, your family then, where did they settle? After your father died and your family moved back to Japan or moved to Japan, they settled in Kobe or Osaka?

BH: Well, we moved from, first from Osaka to Kobe and then back to Osaka again. And that's where we stayed 'til the end of the war. During the height of the -- after I entered the navy, my mother moved to Shikoku where due to government orders to evacuate from large cities due to possible bombing and fire. And so my mother moved to Ehime-ken where she was born, and there she, you know, the war ended. She lived there when the war ended. So my sister, my younger sister was, the youngest sister was living with my mother, and my younger sister was living in Osaka as a technician for *Asahi Shinbun*. My eldest sister lived, went to, worked as a receptionist at a hotel catering to foreign dignitaries in Osaka. My elder sister was, my elder sister, she married her cousin, and she was living in Osaka. My brother **Yuji**, he was living in Tokyo. He was, after graduating, he worked for a company that was starting to develop Manchuria -- no, northern China, northern China.

[Interruption]

NI: We were talking about your family returning to Japan, and your eldest brother, who was taking care of the farm. With the evacuation, did your brother join you in Japan, or was he evacuated?

BH: My brother, the only person that was, stayed, who stayed back in Canada was my eldest brother. He took after the farm, and during, at the outbreak of the war in April or May of the following year, 1942, he was forced to move to Alberta.

NI: Oh, okay. So he went to Alberta with his family.

BH: Right, with his family, his wife and two daughters.

NI: Two daughters?

BH: Yeah.

NI: Whereabouts in Alberta?

BH: He went to Lethbridge. Lethbridge, I think he went to Picture Butte.

NI: Picture Butte?

BH: Picture Butte.

NI: Okay, so you're just looking it up now?

BH: Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Reading] "During the evacuation in 1942, **Eiichi** and family moved to a sugar beet farm in Raymond, Alberta." Raymond, Alberta.

NI: Did he, through the war, he stayed in Alberta?

BH: Yes. He didn't return to Japan during the... there was an exchange ship. None of the people that lived in Mission returned on the exchange ship back to Japan in '42 or '43.

NI: So none of the people from the ship returned?

BH: No, no.

NI: I see. So your brother was interned in Picture Butte?

BH: Well, he worked at, went to work at a sugar beet farm in Raymond.

NI: Oh, Raymond?

BH: Yeah.

NI: Okay. So what, so you were, how old were you in 1941?

BH: 1941 I would be nineteen.

NI: You were nineteen?

BH: Nineteen.

NI: What do you remember of the evacuation? Do you remember hearing --

BH: I heard that they were uprooted, but where they went, I didn't know.

NI: What kind of communication did you have with your brother?

BH: None.

NI: Nothing?

BH: Nothing. It was only after the end of the, end of the war, which ended in August. In October --

NI: '45.

BH: Yeah. But in October, by October the 21st, I think, I worked for -- well, after the war, I worked for a construction company in Tokyo. And through luck, I was able to get them a job building airport, airport runway for the American army just north of Tokyo.

NI: Okay, so your brother returned to, went to Japan.

BH: No, no, no. That was me. My brother never went back to Japan after the war.

NI: Oh, I see.

BH: Okay. Now, but I did get in touch with them after the war, and that time, we could send, we weren't allowed to send letters out of Japan, so I had, I sent a letter through an American officer, American army officer who was kind enough to mail it for me. And since I didn't know where he was located, I asked my good friend in Mission to relay this letter to my brother. And I do have a record of that, believe it or not. And I sent it to him and he kept it, and back in 2000 and, around 2000, I visited his, his widow, his wife, widow, and he had this with him.

NI: This is a letter from you?

BH: This. That was written in October...

NI: October 5, 1944.

BH: Yeah. You know, probably during the war years, no communication.

NI: So how long was that, though, Mr. Hashizume, like when did the communication between Japan and Canada basically come to a stop?

BH: Well, at the outbreak of the war.

NI: Okay, so Pearl Harbor.

BH: Yeah.

NI: Shortly after.

BH: Uh-huh. They wouldn't, they wouldn't send mail out of the country, and even if you did, probably it was censored. And until the war ended, actually, a few years after the war ended, that you could send communications outside. But I think I was one of the first to send communication through the armed forces, American forces. I asked them to, "if you'd be good enough to mail it," he paid for the stamp, to a friend of mine in Mission who relayed it to my brother.

NI: Oh, I see, I see. Let's back up, Mr. Hashizume, to the time when you finished college. And what was happening in Japan at the time?

BH: Well, when I first entered college, Japan military success were at its highest. All right? That's when I entered college. And then soon thereafter, when I was in the second year, they started having problems at the front. Americans rebounded down in Guadalcanal, they were... and of course, during my first year in college, Japan suffered a major setback at Midway which the people, the military authority, naval authorities kept silent. They said that Japan scored a victory with a few minor losses, whereas it was a total lie. Then Doolittle raided Tokyo, that was during my first year. And then second year, things got more worse. Americans were making a counterattack, and they, they captured the Solomon Islands. And during my final year, at the time when I joined the navy, the Americans took

back the Philippines. And while during the, while during the, my year in, my nine months in the navy, Okinawa was taken and they were ready for, the country as a whole was ready for a mass invasion of the mainland. When suddenly, well, in August of -- I forgot the date, but the Americans dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and subsequently another one in Nagasaki. I believe the Japanese military authorities, you know, they're hard-headed, they finally came to their senses. The emperor, he was supposed to be the supreme commander. During, during the crucial meeting with him, the emperor, he heard about the casualties in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and he knew that the military were thing. So the military wanted to keep on the war, but the emperor stepped in and says, "No, we're gonna end the war, we're gonna call for the end of the war." And the military, once the emperor made that decision, the military couldn't say boo. Because there were things, the propaganda they were issuing to their people is they were fighting for the emperor, all in the emperor's name. When the emperor says no, that was it. And that's why they, that's why everything came to a halt peacefully. No casualties, no guerilla tactics that usually follow a country's surrender. Everything went peacefully, it's because the emperor said no, everything was done in the name of the emperor, and the civilians, they followed suit.

NI: But when you were growing up, when you were going to school and when you were going to college, as a Canadian guy, did you go with a lot of the propaganda?

BH: Well, yes and no. You know, when I went to Japan, I heard that the emperor was revered as a living god. And a living god, my goodness. He's no different from an ordinary person. And, but my relatives, you know, they warned me. Says, "Don't ever say that, because the special police or the military police are going to come and pick you up." And not only that, it's not myself, it's the full family, and the thing will be in trouble. They wouldn't be able to get good jobs, they wouldn't be able to do business. So, "keep it under your hat," which I did. I didn't want anything to happen to my sisters or my mother, any of my brothers. So I kept it all on my thing, but you know, all this, to me, from a person that went to thing and had, grew up in Mission, in Canada, that seemed to be a lot of hogwash, but I just kept that to myself.

NI: But in your, you felt it was hogwash?

BH: Yeah. But during the, during the war, we sensed that, we get reports of, through the navy bulletin, the navy issued their own bulletin and so forth, which ordinary people don't get. I sensed that pretty soon, when, if the... heck, I never thought that, well, I thought that they'd be fighting to the bitter end with the Americans invading the mainland of Japan. I figured that well, if the time comes, well, what the heck? Probably that would be my last days in this world. But sure, but I never, I never thought that the emperor would step in.

NI: Right. Before that, though, Mr. Hashizume, like when you came to Japan after your father passed away, how did you, was there any feelings of regret about leaving...

BH: Canada?

NI: ...Canada behind.

BH: Well, yes and no. Sure, now I don't have to work on a farm, that was one good thing. Now I'll be able to concentrate on things. But it was hard trying to get assimilated into Japanese society per se. Sure, I had the American mannerisms or Canadian mannerisms which is hard to get rid of all in Japan. Even I have a hard time trying to get rid of it; it's sticking with you.

NI: So what were the circumstances then, before you entered the Japanese navy? Did you volunteer for the navy?

BH: Well, it was either, it's either if I didn't volunteer for the navy, I'll be conscripted into the army. There's no conscription into the navy, it was either conscription into the army or go into sign up for the navy, and I opted for the latter, navy.

NI: And what was, what was your job in the navy?

BH: Well, they sent me off to school, a cadet school, to, for aircraft maintenance, aircraft maintenance. And that was because I had a technical background. Of course, I was in civil engineering, aircraft maintenance involves mechanical engineering, but I still had the technical part. Which, sure, we went to, they sent us to the maintenance school, aircraft maintenance school where I took basic training, and how to service the airplanes and so forth, but that didn't last long. Before long, after about... after about eight months, I was appointed an officer of the navy. Until then I was only a cadet. And once I got my commission as an ensign, ensign, they assigned me to a school where young cadets wanted to be, to be pilots. I went there, I went there, which, this cadet school was in Okayama. I went there, and that's, I worked there, I stayed there 'til the end of August, end of August of 1945, two weeks after the surrender. I was demobilized then.

NI: I see. What, what were your feelings? What were your feelings to be a member of the Japanese navy when Japan was at war with Canada?

BH: Well, it was either you fight or be killed. And I sure as hell hated to be killed. But it's like any, it's like any soldier, you have no, you have no animosity against the other guy, but if he's out to kill you, why, you want to be the first to kill him before he kills you.

NI: Did you see any active action?

BH: No, no.

NI: You didn't see any action.

BH: No. But, you know, once you graduate from a higher institution, you know what the score is, you begin to know what the score is. And what the heck, even if you are on the losing side, well, you got to do your best. And I was willing to do that; I was willing to do that like any, like any soldier or sailor.

NI: Did the navy make any use of your English ability?

BH: Surprisingly, no.

NI: They didn't?

BH: No, surprisingly, no. And I wondered about that; I wondered about that. Probably wasn't in my resume that they had. They, you know, my resume showed that I was born in thing and went to high school in, Kansai Gakuin high school, and Kobe Technical College. I don't know why they didn't put me more, you know, thing where use of, knowledge of English would be more useful to them. But

probably naval bureaucracy or army bureaucracy, lot of stupid people there. They're good at writing entrance examination, but making decisions, some were really bad.

NI: Were there other *Niseis* that you knew, Canadian *Niseis* who were...

BH: There was one American *Nisei* that was in the cadet group, basic training. I think his name was Shimizu. But it's only a fleeting time that I was able to talk to him, he was in a separate, separate contingent, whereas I was in another one. And forever, most of the cadets, they're complaining about the bad food, how hard they had to work, they were always complaining. And that's one thing I never did, complain, complain. About the food that... heck, probably some of them were from well-off families, and they reluctantly had to, either they had to go to the army or navy, and they ended up being with the same group that I was. But this fellow called Shimizu, a *Nisei* from the States, started talking about Oh Henry! bars. You know Oh Henry! chocolate bars? Heck, yeah, I knew about the Oh Henry! chocolate bars and all the ice cream and candies, and this and that. But the only *Nisei* that I knew that was in the same class that I was, cadet class I was, is Shimizu. And I never, I never volunteered to seek out, but I was talking about -- he must have heard that I was Canadian-born. And during one brief period there, he came up to me and says, introduced himself and says he's from, he's a *Nisei* from the States, Shimizu. There was only that brief moment that I was able to get to know him and talk to him.

NI: What were your feelings, though? Because you said that it's "kill or be killed." And of course, you're a Canadian, and you're, of course, you can speak Japanese. You can communicate and fit in fairly well, but as a young man at the time, did you have, what kind of feelings did you have about being in the war?

BH: Well, you know, during the last part of the war, they were getting ready for the invasion from the thing.

NI: From...

BH: From the Americans invading the mainland. And at one time, if the worse came to worst, heck, we had no rifles. The only thing, sure, I had that so-called samurai sword, officer's sword, *gunto*. That was my only weapon, I didn't have any side arm or pistols. Rifles was, you know, most of the armaments that, come to think of it, most of the armaments were sent overseas to Philippines and things like that, they were lost, or some were being shipped and sunk by submarines. Sure, after the thing, why sure, some of the divisions and regiments were well-equipped, but when it came to the navy, they were not ground fighters. Well, we were asked to be ground fighters like the infantry, but if worse came to worst, where are the rifles, where are the things? And you know, the students that, I think they're only, I was twenty-one at the time, twenty-one or twenty-two at the time, and these guys were only fifteen, sixteen, kids. Kids. But they were well-disciplined, they were well-disciplined and ready to give up their lives for thing. But how, how can you, how can you as an officer send these out, tell them, says, thing, without any arm or bullets or bayonets or rifles? And they're going to be slaughtered. And at one time, I could have, I could have... once an officer tells a thing, the order is absolute. Now, the kids, I could tell 'em, says, "Lay low, don't do anything." Probably I might, I might have taken my shirt off and raised the white flag. Now, I was prepared for that. As long as you're prepared for that, you could thing. Because after all, if you're going to take responsibility, probably you'll be, they'll court-martial you or put you in prison, hang, or make you commit suicide or something like that. That's the worst they

could do. But heck, that situation never happened, never occurred, so in a sense, pretty relieved. I didn't have to give that order.

NI: What was your feeling, though, when you were in the Japanese navy -- but as far as who you were at that time? Did you feel Japanese or Canadian?

BH: Well, well, pretty well Japanesey. They train you to be that.

NI: How did they train you to be that?

BH: Oh, well, they slapped you around no problem. Make sure that you did the right thing, followed the orders, everything down to a tee. And once you step out of line, why, you got slapped. Heck, I... heck, you keep counting 'til around twenty, thirty, you stop counting because... that's, it's happening around that, disciplinary action is really good. Because sure, it's unhuman and things like that, but heck, by the time you're thing, you're afraid of nothing.

NI: What were the conditions like towards the end of the war for you? What did you see around you in the navy, because it's well-known...

BH: Well, in the navy, we're, we were... it's just a training school, so we didn't see too much of things. Business as usual type of thing. Now, but you could sense the, sense the feeling, because they were digging bunker tunnels in the mountainside and this and that in preparation.

NI: The training school was in Okayama-ken?

BH: Okayama-ken.

NI: Okayama city?

BH: No, a city called Kurashiki.

NI: Oh, I know Kurashiki city.

BH: Kurashiki. You know, there's a big industrial complex by it? It's just, it's, I think the industrial complex absorbed this area that, where the naval school was.

NI: I see. So you didn't see any of the destruction?

BH: No, destruction, no, no bombing.

NI: You weren't bombed?

BH: No, no, no.

NI: Oh, okay. You were quite lucky.

BH: Quite lucky. Very fortunate.

NI: Your mother and family, where were they at the time?

BH: No, my family, my mother was in Shikoku. She was forced to be evacuated from Osaka to a more safer place in *inaka*. And she went to her birthplace where her brother lived.

NI: And then your brother and your sisters, they were...

BH: My brother was in Tokyo, but my sister who was married, stayed in Osaka. I think my other sister stayed in Osaka, too, because she worked at the Royal Hotel. And then my two younger sisters -- my younger sister was in Osaka because she worked for *Asahi Shinbun*. And my youngest sister was in, was with my mother in *Ehime-ken*.

NI: I see, I see. What, what do you remember about the day of the bomb, the A-bomb?

BH: Well, I wasn't aware of any, I wasn't aware of any news, but one of the officers who went to Hiroshima to pick up supplies for the school, he was reported dead from atomic bomb. And probably a day or two after the bomb was dropped, we heard that the Americans had dropped a new type of military weapon.

NI: On Nagasaki?

BH: Uh-huh. And possibly it was, it was a nuclear bomb.

NI: How did you feel at the end of the war with the surrender? What was your feeling as Japanese, a member of the Japanese navy? How did you feel?

BH: Well, it was a war that they couldn't win, I knew that, I knew that. And now that the war is over, I don't have to send my kids, well, my thing out to the front to get killed.

NI: Oh, the soldiers...

BH: Yeah, that's right, that's right. They're only kids. And sixteen, seventeen years old, they're still kids yet. And I'm glad I didn't have to send 'em off, lead them out to battle and get killed. Now, the hard part is, the hard part is how to start making a living again. And that, that I found very easy. Before the war, before the war ended, life was quite miserable for *Niseis*, living in Japan.

NI: What was that?

BH: Well, like any society, you got to have connections to get proper food, to... material was scarce. Rice was rationed, to get certain kind of things you had to have friends or connections to get those, like fish and things like that. Now, those I had, we had problems because my mother didn't have, of course, we had relatives, but the relatives had to look after themselves, too. They can't worry about us; I can understand that. But once the war ended, because I, because I had knowledge of English, can communicate, and you know the Americans are, they make friends easy. The other way around is pretty, pretty difficult. You know, if the Japanese were victors, the Japanese wouldn't be as generous as the Americans were. And you can make friends with the American officers, whereas with, trying to make friends with the Japanese officers, forget it.

NI: Did you feel that you lost the war, though?

BH: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

NI: You felt you lost?

BH: Well, once I joined the navy, we knew that the war was lost because of the communiqués that were coming in. And you can tell, of course, it was publicized that the Philippines were, Americans had landed in the Philippines and the navy lost the battle there. And the Solomon Islands, they lost the, they withdrew their troops from Guadalcanal, New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Philippines, and then they took, they took Guam and Iwo Jima, and the Americans took over after they ran over. You know, it's all, we knew that.

NI: That was in the Japanese newspapers?

BH: Oh yeah, Japanese. They had to, yeah.

[Interruption]

BH: Well, like I said, the Japanese, it takes, it takes quite a few years to train a good pilot. Japan had enough of those during the start of the war, then the cream of the crop were on aircraft carriers. And the aircraft carriers --

NI: Were they *kamikaze*?

BH: No, no, no, before that. And that's why they were successful at Pearl Harbor. At Midway, luck went against them, but they lost the cream of the crop at Midway, and that's where... and they couldn't train 'em fast enough. They couldn't train 'em fast enough because they had, their supply of oil was limited, not like the thing. And their production facilities, the Americans were, let's say a plane was lost, they replaced that in three days. Whereas in Japan it took 'em about ten days to replace the thing. Same for ships, aircraft carriers, it took about, Japan, three years. Americans did it one year, and better, better and faster. The students that became pilots, they knew how to drive cars. Japan didn't have cars, they didn't know how to drive cars. Of course, a car and an airplane's a little different, but it takes, you know, it takes a certain amount of know-how to thing, Americans had that. They had a lot of private planes, they have a lot of students, they knew how to train 'em, and they trained 'em fast and they didn't waste any money on fuel. If they wanted to take ten more hours of thing, another extra hour flying, Americans, didn't bother you, but Japan balked. They couldn't afford spending all that precious fuel to train. And that's where, that's where the difference began to show. And well, most of these things I didn't know about while I was in the thing, but it's after the war that I learned.

NI: During the war, your main job was maintenance.

BH: Maintenance, yeah.

NI: Aircraft...

BH: Aircraft maintenance, yeah.

NI: So you were doing that?

BH: But that's, during the basic training, I was taught that. But after becoming an officer, I had nothing to do with that.

NI: What did you do after that point?

BH: Well, I was a, I was an instructor at this cadet school, flying school, cadet school at Kurashiki. That's all I was doing, but mostly it's all administrative work.

NI: Okay. You weren't teaching, then?

BH: No, actually, most of the teaching was done by non-coms, non-commissioned officers.

NI: I see. So at the end of the war, did you rejoin your family or what happened to your family?

BH: Well, after the war, I sailed, I took a boat, me and another officer and a sailor, we hired a fishing boat and went to Shikoku.

NI: You hired a fishing boat?

BH: Yeah.

NI: What do you mean?

BH: Well, we hired a fishing boat.

NI: Why, and you wanted to get to Shikoku to see your mother?

BH: Well, it was either taking a long route, a rail route to Shikoku. But rather than do that, my superior officer at Kurashiki, he says, "Well, let's take a, let's hire a fishing boat to take us over. And the fishing boat, you know, it cost us a hundred *yen*. A hundred *yen* in those days, the pay, the pay was about... my pay as an officer was about a hundred and fifty a month. But we split it three -- well, actually, the sailor, he didn't pay anything, but my superior officer and myself, we split that, I think. And then we... half a bag a rice. That's how important rice was.

NI: Well, plus, half a bag of rice, hundred *yen* plus a half a bag of rice.

BH: Well, about fifty pounds of rice. And that's what the farmer, no, the fisherman thing. So we said okay, and he, my superior officer arranged for the fifty-pound rice, and we went to Shikoku and I took the train from Shikoku to my mother's hometown in Ehime-*ken*.

NI: Did the family settle in Ehime?

BH: No, no, it was only temporary. It was only a temporary thing there, but once I got there, I spent about a week there, and then I decided I should go to Tokyo and meet my brother, and that's how I started out life in postwar Japan.

NI: Did everybody survive the war? Was anybody...

BH: None in my family died, none in my family died.

NI: Okay. So then you went to Tokyo. What happened after that?

BH: Tokyo, why, I already had a job lined up with a construction company at the time of the, when I graduated from technical college. And I went to their headquarters and reported for duty. And at that same time, they told me, says, "Well, you could go to a dam project in Shikoku." And my brother intervened and said that here I knew English, be able to communicate with the American forces. So the president of that company, he took a liking to me and he says, "Okay, you stay here." And I answered his, I replied -- well, I repaid, well, repaid him or I answered his call for a thing. He was looking for a job. The construction company had overseas offices in China, Korea and Manchuria, and he had the obligation to take 'em all back and see that they look after the welfare. But they couldn't do that without any job, and jobs from the government and local governments were hard to go by, you were strapped for cash. But one day, I dropped in to the general headquarters in Tokyo, MacArthur's headquarters, and I was talking to, I happened to run into a lieutenant-colonel there. He says, "Sir" -- well, he came to me and he says, "You looking for a job?" They were looking for a good interpreter. I says, "Yes, I'm looking for some work." He says, "Well, we can use you right away." Says, "No," I says, "I don't mean that. I work for a construction company and I'm trying to see if there's any work the army wants done." Well, at that time, this colonel, lieutenant-colonel in GHQ headquarters, he was in charge of construction of a runway, air-, well, runway in a town called **Toyoka** that's, that's where the Japanese army had their air cadet school. They had a field there but it was a grass runway, and the Americans wanted a concrete runway. And they were looking for someone to build it for them. Since I knew nothing about the company, nothing about experience, I told him, I says, "Well, could you wait until tomorrow?" Says, "I'll have a bunch of engineers with all the answers." So next day we went -- once I hurried back to the head office and reported back to the president, and he rounded up things. "Well, get him from somewhere," "Get him from somewhere," "Get him from, call him somewhere." They assembled within a day, and we went to, we went to the headquarters together. And it turned out that they wanted to build an airfield in, airfield in this former air cadet school in **Toyoka**.

NI: So you were more of a...

BH: Liaison.

NI: Liaison between the Americans and the Japanese.

BH: That's right, that's right.

NI: What other kind of work did you do after the war?

BH: Well, that was that, that continued until about '48, '49. And then I got sick and tired of all that, and well, actually, actually, I got fired. [Laughs]

NI: What happened?

BH: Well, heck, I was leading a pretty affluent life then. Now, you make, you make friends with the American civilians, this and that, and they shower you with gifts, sugar, this and that, cigarettes. They

were hard to come by. And the affluence, well, a lot of people get jealous. And of course, by then, the company, they were well in a position to expand. They hired a lot of other interpreters, too, but not with technical background. But heck, there was a lot of internal friction, politics or something like that. Says, "Well, we don't" ... they had to restructure to thing, so during the restructuring, I was laid off. So, well, and virtually I was being fired, but heck, that didn't stop me. What I did was I started working for the military police in Tokyo, that was for a couple of years.

NI: As an interpreter?

BH: Interpreter, interpreter, yeah. And I got to do quite a bit of investigation methods and this and that. But that kind of work, heck, was not to my liking. It was far from the education I took, so I switched over, started working for the American oil company, it's a predecessor of, well, part of the Exxon-Mobile group in Japan, and I stayed there for about a year. And then luckily I got, luckily by then, I got my citizenship back from the Canadian government.

NI: What happened to it before?

BH: Well, I got that in about 1952. 1950... maybe what? 1952.

NI: Okay.

BH: Okay, and then I applied for U.S. government service as a... at army pay. U.S. army pay, which was considerably, far better than what I was making at the oil company. At the oil company, probably I was making about fifteen thousand a year -- a month. Whereas for, with the American thing, I was making oh, probably I was making about a hundred thousand a month. Japanese *yen*, yeah, or equivalent in dollars. So I worked there for about a year and a half, and then after the peace treaty, after the peace treaty, I was laid off because according to the peace treaty with, between Japan and the States, the only people that can work for the American army were U.S. citizens, not Canadian. So I got laid off, and a year after I got laid off, I worked as an interpreter for a Japanese company trying to land contracts with, contracts for the U.S. army. The work I was doing while I was with the U.S. army as their civilian employee was procurement of supplies for the Korean War.

NI: Oh, I see.

BH: And that helped me quite a bit in my later life after retirement here, because I had to do a lot of mechanical translations, mechanical engineering translations, electronic engineering translations. But after, after being laid off at, from the U.S. army, why I worked for, I worked for, as a consultant to various Japanese companies doing business with American companies, supplying material for the Korean War. And during the meantime, during the meantime, although I had Canadian citizenship, I wasn't free to travel.

NI: Why not?

BH: I don't know why. See, I got my citizenship, but they wouldn't give me the passport, let's put it that way.

NI: Oh, I see.

BH: Okay? And then at that time, middle of 1954, I got permission, says to, I got my Canadian passport and with that, I was free to travel. So with that, I returned back to Canada in 1954.

NI: 1954. Why did you make that decision in '54 to come back?

BH: Well, it's much easier living here. Far better. Japan, although they lost the war, was pretty well still a closed society. The company structure was more feudalistic, the construction company was really feudalistic. If you weren't a relative of the founder or anything, why, you'd never get to the top. So it was much easier to make a go of it in Canada, so I came back. And I think I made the right decision. Sure, after I left, Japan embarked on an industrial comeback, and you know how prosperous she is now. Now it makes me wonder whether thing, but no, it's hard for me to make the thing because I, I went to Japan when I was sixteen, and I still had the customs, Canadian customs. And it's hard to get used to Canadian society and life per se. So my judgment was this is probably better if I went back to Canada and started over again.

NI: Did you come to Toronto?

BH: I came to Toronto.

NI: Where --

BH: Toronto, partly because my sister, my younger sister was already here.

NI: Oh, I see. So she returned before you?

BH: Yes, she returned in 1952.

NI: And why did she come back to Canada?

BH: Well, she came back after talking to friends, that Ontario, Toronto would be a good place to thing because there was hardly any discrimination. And a lot of Japanese *Niseis*, they moved to Toronto.

NI: So they created a new life here.

BH: Yeah.

NI: So what did you do when you arrived in Toronto?

BH: Well, I arrived in Toronto, my other older sister was already here.

NI: Okay, so was she --

BH: And my mother, she was already here, too. Well, my sisters called her over.

NI: Okay.

BH: My sisters called her over, that lived in Toronto.

NI: Were they married, your sisters?

BH: No, my younger sister was married, my elder sister was not married. She died a spinster. And then once I came back, why, sure, I knew that I had to, I had to restudy all over again. Sure, I had the basics, but you know, during the wartime years, you kept busy, tried to keep your stomach full. And we didn't do too much of study. Sure, I made passing marks, but even the passing marks, I think the professor was rather kind to me rather than being strict.

NI: So, when you were in Toronto...

BH: Well, I applied to the Association of Professional Engineers and they asked me to get my transcript for my education, which I did get from the high school that I graduated from, Kansai Gakuin, and Kobe Technical College and a couple references. And they asked me to write six papers plus a thesis, which I did. And upon passing it, why, I was a full-fledged engineer.

NI: When did you become a full-fledged engineer, what year?

BH: '58.

NI: '58, okay, six years. Or, sorry, four years. I see.

BH: And then after I got my papers, why, well, before that, as soon as I got back, I started working for the Department of Highways. It was called Department of Highways then, it's now Ministry of Transportation right now. But I started out there as a junior draftsman, and then once I got my papers, I was given an engineer's pay, which is substantially higher. And although the pay for an engineer was not as good as the others, like the federal government municipalities and private industry, nevertheless, I was easygoing. You did what you were told, and thirty-three years, thirty-two and a half years later, why, I had to retire at age sixty-five.

NI: Do you, the return to Canada, have you had any regrets since coming back to Canada? Nothing.

BH: No, sometimes during the 1970s, I had thoughts about just what life would be like if I was in Japan and had not, had I decided to stay there. Probably I would have, it would have worked out, but life wouldn't be as, well, life would be very hectic if I was in Japan, whereas it was leisurely here.

NI: And how about your identity now? How do you look at yourself now? I guess when you were in the navy you thought of yourself as Japanese? And after over fifty years back, how do you feel about your identity now?

BH: Half-half. About half-half.

NI: [Laughs] What does that mean?

BH: Well, you know, I have a lot of concerns over the future of the nation of Japan. In that respect.

NI: What kinds of things are...

BH: Well, you know, heck, the Chinese government is complaining about the prime minister visiting Yasukuni Shrine. That's none of their goddamn business. But and also, China, being a factory to all the world right now, what's going to happen to Japan? I get kind of concerned. And now there's talk about, there's talk about changing the Japanese, revising the Japanese constitution which forbids having an army. Heck, my view on that is the countries of East Asia and Southeast Asia, they're all wet behind their ears. Now, in this nuclear age, trying to build up an army and navy to invade other countries, unthinkable in the nuclear age. And sooner or later, Japan will have to rearm herself or change the constitution so that she could defend herself. Not with a self-defense force but with a, you know, a defense force proper. Now, in order to, in order to defend a country, you have to attack the other country, too, which the current, current constitution forbids. Which, you know, so in that sense, I have a lot of concerns for the country of my parents' birth.

NI: Right, right.

BH: I'd like to say, no other than, no other than the Jews and the British and thing for their mother country.

NI: Yeah. But of course, you've chosen Canada to live in.

BH: Yeah, yeah.

NI: Do you think it would have been possible to go the other way? Do you think the Japanese would have accepted you had things been reversed and you wanted to go back to Japan after the war? Do you think your life would be as good as it is now?

BH: Well, it's hard to tell unless you experience it. I suppose I could have, I could have made a go out of it. Sure, probably in the engineering field that I was, probably no. Probably no, because I know there were a lot of better, highly-educated things. I don't have the university degree, that I think it's only a college diploma thing. Now, had I been to a prestigious school like Tokyo University or other university with a bachelor's degree in engineering, may be fine, but not, and with my diploma in civil engineering. Sure, you can go up to a certain level, but that's it, which would have been fine. Now, after, after retirement, I don't think I would have had any problems, because I'll probably be engaged in a lot of translations and this and that. But who knows?

NI: Yeah, what kind of projects are you working on now?

BH: Nothing much except history of **Heinokai**. Piece of it which I showed you. And that's about it.

NI: Do you get to Japan very often?

BH: Since coming back, I went back in 1965, 1970, 1973, 1980, 1990, 1998, and then forthcoming November the 16th.

NI: Does it feel like home when you go to Japan, or what's your feeling?

BH: Probably I'll feel like Rip Van Winkle, it's so modernized now. But the main, the main things are still there, like, like Tokyo Station, like Tokyo Station, Fujiyama is still there, the Imperial Palace, Asakusa Kaminarimon is still there. The loop line around Tokyo is still there, the stations, Osaka is

still the same. Where we lived has changed a little. Shikoku where my mother was born has hardly changed.

NI: You have brothers or sisters, are they, do you have anybody living in Japan right now?

BH: No. None in Japan right now.

NI: They're all back here.

BH: They're all back here. One's in Hawaii, the youngest one is Hawaii, and my younger sister is in, lives in Don Mills, and myself. Of the siblings, only us three are still living. And the one in Hawaii, well, she's a millionaire. My brother in Japan, he's a millionaire, and my sister who lived in Spain and died, she died a millionaire. The only two, me and my younger sister living here, are the poor siblings.

NI: What, for your grandchild, what's your grandchild's name?

BH: **Noah**.

NI: **Noah**?

BH: Yeah. I guess when **Noah** gets, grows up and maybe **Noah** wants to see this DVD in the future, is there anything about your, your life experience in Japan and through the war and going through all that you've gone through, what would you want to say?

BH: Well, it's pretty hard, but the only thing is do what you can do the best as you possibly... it applies to anything. Whether you live in Canada, in Japan, be respectful of others, the usual things. That's about the only thing, as long as they follow that principle, they can do no wrong. Keep a... watch where your money goes. Don't go broke, or don't go into debt, that's about it.

NI: [Laughs] Okay, well, maybe we'll finish there for today. Thank you, thanks very much.