

Interviewee: Tak Yoshida
Interviewer: Elizabeth Fujita-Kwan
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THE JAPANESE CANADIAN LEGACY PROJECT

* Note that this interview makes reference to outdated terminology regarding Indigenous people.

* Note that this transcription is based on a recording that is split into 4 parts. The timestamps indicate both the total time of the interview and the timestamp in the relevant part. For example, **[50 minutes] [5:20 on Part 2]** would indicate that 50 minutes has passed in the interview in total and that 5 minutes and 20 seconds has passed in the Part 2 clip.

[Start interview]

[Start Part 1 at 00:00]

Elizabeth Fujita-Kwan: There we go. Right. Okay.

Tak Yoshida: Alright?

EF: [laughs] So, just for the sake of the video recording, today is Tuesday, May the 21st —

TY: Yes.

EF: —2013, and if you could please tell me your full name.

TY: My name is Takehiko, Yoshida.

EF: Okay.

TY: Yoshida Takehiko, we call it in [nods head to the side] Japan, I suppose.

EF: I just like to put that in there so that if the video tapes get separated from their paperwork, that we know what it is, [Tak nods] so. Okay, so, I do have a lot of details that I got from Peter, [Tak hums in acknowledgment] and he also gave me that—the interview piece that—

TY: Yes. [nods]

EF: —yeah, that was composed, but. Just for the sake of having it on video—

TY: Yes.

EF: —maybe we'll go over some of the simple details?

TY: Mhm.

EF: So, first of all, when and where were you born?

TY: I was born in Fukagawa, in Tokyo, it's called [Sarei?]-cho, but part of Fukagawa [shakes head and closes eyes] where the [ishita machi?]- and, [open eyes] 1944, February the 21st.

EF: Okay. And your parents' names?

TY: My father's name is Kichisaburo Yoshida, Kichisaburo, and Ginn, G-I-N-N [spells it out]. [nods] Ginn-san.

EF: [laughs] And what was your mum's maiden name?

TY: Saito.

EF: That's an unusual name, Ginn.

TY: Ginn.

EF: I don't think I've heard it before.

TY: Yeah, [shifts in seat] quite a number of Meiji? And old Meiji, Taisho, Ginn-san, Ginn. [nods]. Yeah.

EF: Hm, okay. And your two parents, do you know much about where they came from, or what kind of family they had?

TY: They came from, father's came from Fukushima, from that top of—I would say that—not the samurai family, it's top of farmer's organization, he hap—his father and grandfather would happen to be organizing for farmer, like [kumi-aicho?], I mean, like union leaders, type of family, and mother came from Chiba, and she was born out of a fisherman's— nice size of fisherman's family.

EF: Okay, did either of them come from large families, or mostly small ones, or—

TY: Just normal.

EF: Okay.

TY: Yeah.

EF: I see. And, would you happen to know either of their birthdays?

TY: No. [laughs] I only know mother's, April the first! Can you believe? [laughs] April the first, that—you won't forget, right? [laughs] I don't know father's birthday. No. [shakes head]

EF: Would you know approximately what year, either one would've been?

TY: Yeah, oh, boy. [mumbling in Japanese] Well, I can calculate them because if I was 15, he was 60—67, right? [EF: mhm] So from 15 to now, almost, I am 69, so you could, you know, they [go?] calculate them, and mother, when I was 17, she passed away, she was only 64.

EF: Okay. Yeah, I can do some calculations there.

TY: Yeah, that's right.

EF: [laughs] Okey-doke. So, from what I understand, and especially because it was during the war, so you were—you were born in Tokyo? But you—you—

TY: Right after—

EF: Mhm?

TY: At—which is you know, just middle of Second World War.

[5 minutes]

TY: So I had to move out to father's family, which is Fukushima. So right after I was born, then mother took to Fukushima, and father, and another son—I have three brothers and two sisters, so all they were in Tokyo. But I was—happen to one of the

youngest, so, it's called *sokai*, you know, I—*sokai*, it's mean [waves hand in front of face]— move back to safety area, which is Fukushima. Then I came back to Tokyo, graduate— [closes eyes] I mean, first year of [open eyes] primary school.

EF: Oh, okay. Do you remember much about Fukushima? Or do you—

TY: No [shakes head]—

EF: —oh, you were very young, so.

TY: —I really don't remember.

EF: [coughs] Sorry. Hm. So, when you and your family went to Fukushima, was it your parents and yourself, and—did any of your siblings come? Or did they stay in Tokyo?

TY: They stayed in Tokyo. You have to remember that before Second World War, my parents had about 15 employees for architecture office, so the time Tokyo bombing, like which is *daikūshū*, and all the houses gone, everything has to be all burned down, and lucky enough it was all safe, two sisters and [nods] three brothers, is all—alive in Tokyo.

EF: Hm. Okay, so you—yeah, your family was really lucky. So then you moved back to Tokyo, and then you—you spent the rest of your time growing up there. Do you—do you remember much about growing up in Toyko?

TY: Oh yeah, yeah, I can remember that—and—you know, my father was traveling and—to find a—like an apartment, happened to be Ueno, and two rooms, you know, with two rooms, we're talking about father, mother, and three brothers, so four—you know, six people lived in an old small room in Ueno. And [moves head back and forth] father was working with some—working with basically part time job with constructing and architecture, and mother, she was selling and at a corner of a certain, like a street, and they're selling newspapers. And every time as I finished work—I mean the school, I had to help the mother every night—almost every night. And, you know, then I played [moves head left and right] basketball when I was in secondary school, and it was a really—that time was a pretty poor—we were very poor that time. And all—I think as father was little bit pissed off about it then he started drinking more. And the meantime, you know, by the time I was in secondary school, he—he already had a little bit of stroke, and [nods] he—you can imagine, that you know, just before the world war, and he was, you know, making pretty good money, with 15 architects working for him, and nice house, nice office, then, after the world war, all gone—completely finished, right? It's all gone. But I think it's lucky that they're alive. There's so many people that Tokyo-*daishinsai*, it's really killed millions of people died, atomic bombs. [nods]

EF: Yeah, the other thing that I learned from reading through here, I guess your—your older brothers were already working at the time? or—

TY: No, I would say by the time I came back to Tokyo, he was still in university.

[10 minutes]

TY: And, I have another two brothers, because of the, you know, lifestyle change, we didn't have enough money, so they had to go to, basically eight years night school. Like four years high school night school, four years university night school. So, you know, oldest son was lucky, because our family was well off. And he graduated Shibaura Kōgyō Daigaku Kenchiku, which is architecture section in—and he was very good, he started right away he had a job in Tokyo. And later on, he became one of the top [notch?] architecture, very well-known architect, for airport. Like more like terminal building, airport, so he was involved with big responsibility for now the Narita Airport, you know? [nods] That's Yoshida Kichihiko, he's— his name is involved [unclear] some big time.

EF: Oh yeah, before I forget, let's see. So, in order, it's— is it Kichihiko, you said?

TY: Kichiko—

EF: Is your oldest—

TY: —hiko—[nods]

EF: —brother?

TY: —oldest one.

EF: And then the next one—

TY: Akihiko, it's funny eh? Tomohiko, and Takehiko. All four hiko. Because of [raises left hand] —my ojichan, [puts down raised left hand] Hiko Saburo, [points finger upwards] that's why it came from Hiko. Hiko Saburo.

EF: Hm. I'm curious. Your—your grandfather and your father both had Saburo on the name, so.

TY: Yes, [laughs, shakes head and scratches forehead] I don't know why Saburo came in—Kichisaburo, Hikosaburo. That's why Kichisaburo, Kichi came into oldest son, [points finger upwards] Kichihiko, eh? So.

EF: Oh, yeah, okay. And then your two sisters?

TY: Yes.

EF: What—what were their names? Or what are their names?

TY: Yasuko, oldest one, and Junko. You can imagine— Yasuko, she married, by the time—before I was born, she married already, and she already had about six years older than me—old son.

EF: Oh, wow.

TY: Yes.

EF: That's a big gap there.

TY: So, my sister, [raises hand offscreen] oldest sister, to me, I don't know how many years, [shakes head, laughs] long time, that was just— I think right now, if she lives—90, almost 92? So, 92 to 69—so 23—

EF: 23 years?

TY: 23 years? [nods] [unclear] My mom was really busy! [laughs]

EF: [laughs] Wow. So, so was your sister Yasuko the oldest?

TY: Oldest.

EF: Oh, okay.

TY: And Junko is the second.

EF: Ah, okay. So—

TY: And then four boys. [moves hand in downward motion]

EF: Ah. Wow, okay. Four boys in a row. [laughs] How big of an age gap was there between you and the—sorry, your brother Aki—

TY: So right away, from my brother is the only one who live now, seven years older than me. So, he is now 76—no, 70—yeah, [nods] 76.

EF: Okay. And that's Kichihiko, sorry? Or—

TY: Kichihiko—then Akihiko is two years older than him, and Kichihiko is three years older than him.

EF: Okay, okay. Okay, so, let's see. So, in growing up in Tokyo, do you—I guess do you—do you have many memories about like—like happy memories, or the kinds of things you might do when you weren't in school or working, or did that take up all of your time? [laughs]

TY: Eh, not—I was a pretty happy boy, and I know our family was very poor, and many many times, you know, one good example. I was wearing that—it's called geta?

[15 minutes]

TY: Wooden, wooden shoes, [mimes holding a shoe] like a geta, to the school. Then one of the teachers came to me, and “why— why you wearing a geta?”, you know? So I said, “Sensei,” —teachers— “There is a *geta-bako*. That means a name, that a lot of people in the school—at school said *geta-bako*, it's a Japanese word, *geta-bako*, it's existing, I never heard of *kutsubako*, so that's why my brother told me that we don't have the money, we can't buy, we can't buy your shoes, so why don't you wear the geta, and that's why I'm here. He couldn't say anything to them, because of [laughs] *geta-bako* is existing, but *kutsubako* is not existing, so why I cannot wear the *geta*? So, actually I think the teacher was going to buy me new shoes, but he didn't [shakes head] buy me new shoes. [laughs] But, other than that I, right after primary school, and went to secondary school, I was so crazy about basketball, and I was crazy about playing basketball, and as a matter of fact, right after—three years, end of secondary school, already one of the top-notch basketball—like high school teacher and high school senpai came to my family and you know, “I hope Tak—Takshi comes to our high school.” And he says, “That's fine, but I'm sorry, we don't have the money to go during the day school.” So, my brother said, “Would you like to go to morning and night newspaper delivery? Then if you want to do that, then we have no problem for you, but other than that, we don't have money to send us—just a private school.” So, meantime, my oldest brother said that, “Tak, you know, there's a few companies, they have a school, and they will pay you.” “What do you mean by that?” [mumbling] but basically, Hitachi, Seisakujo Ishikawajima, and Toshiba, [counting down on fingers] and those three company, they're looking for, right after

secondary school, like, oh, like apprentice shop, type of a, you know, things. But they will pay you, but three years, we had a chance to study, just a regular high school sort of a program. So, my oldest brother said Hitachi is one of maybe biggest company that time, "Why don't you try Hitachi?" So, I was lucky because [shakes head] it's not just writing, but my family happened to be very good sort—kind of background for engineering, architecture, so on so—Japan has a lot of—power is writing [for okay?] 60-70 percent, [emphasis with hand gestures] another three—30 percent is what kind of a family structure, they're pretty good, you know. So, well, maybe, that was pretty good. But 1300, you know, kids, came from, they only, they looking for 130, right? So [*jūbai?*], 10 times [holds out hand, palm facing out] more. So, I was really lucky to be in that. So, first, you know, they, they—Hitachi gave me the jacket, number one, I guess, just like a high school jacket, and high school hat, [mimes wearing a jacket and hat] just like I was going to a normal high school! In the meantime, eight o'clock, to 12 o'clock, studying, like English, to, you know, everything. Then, from lunch—after lunch, to five o'clock, I had a chance to go to inside of factory, [emphasis with hand motions] to learning like—how to hit the hammers, the machines, or machinery, or whatever that. So, that's not that big money, but they pay me for every month. [moving head back and forth] And that time I still remember 5000 yen to month. And I had to give to mum, of 3000. Because, you know, so right after we're talking about 15 years old boy, made 5000 a month, 5000 yen a month, then 3000 I had to give to my mother for food. But that was okay.

EF: Did you enjoy those years?

TY: I—first few years, I had a great time. Because I learned—you know, school wanted—Hitachi wanted to have a brass band,

[20 minutes]

TY: —which is like, you know, they wanted —factory wanted to have a special [emphasis with hand motions]—a special group for musical instruments, right? Like, I was learning from trumpet. And I also played a lot of basketball, and yeah, that—that—three years, had a fantastic time. Right after three years, and now, company wants you to work, [nods] right? [laughs] So three years, yeah, great time! They pay you, but whatever you made it, [emphasis with hand motions] thing is, they couldn't stop, right? So, you're talking about—if you have engine light operating, it's whatever you make, cutting and so and so, that's [emphasis with hand motions] not the really—there's no pause, nothing. It's just like practicing, practicing, practicing for three years. But now, the company enough spend money with you, [points finger] you better work. So, I was working for seven days a week, night and—night and day. We're talking about during the day, eight o'clock to eight o'clock night. Following week, eight o'clock night to eight—Sunday morning eight o'clock. 12-hour shift, every week, day shift, night shift, day shift, night shift.

[emphasis with hand motions] So, meantime, I said, I'm start singing. And a lot of people like Tak's [unclear], "I don't want to work [unclear]!" [laughs, crosses arms] But you know what, I didn't steal anything from company, I didn't do bad thing, just only buzz off, [laughs] like, you know, I—time off, you know, like foreman said, "Tak, make sure tonight you got to work until eight o'clock," and, "No, no, no, [shakes head] I have a appointment, I have to go to—" So I buzz off at five o'clock. Next day, buzz off. So, my foreman was so upset. But, they didn't, they didn't fire me, they don't want to fire—because I'm a must—you know, the company spent three years, [emphasis with hand gestures] I don't know how much it is—big, big, money to me, right? In the meantime, I was dealing with the engine—pretty good with engine light operating, and foreman came to me, "Tak, would you try out for Olympic game, like, you know, technical Olympic game?" You know, okay, I try it, and I tried, became second in the—second in the national. And I lost it for the same company, Hitachi *seisakujou*, but the [kameri kojou?], which is, it's about half hour different—I mean driving distance, another factories there, [emphasis with hand gestures] because, Hitachi has, I don't know at that time, maybe 25, 30 factories in Japan all over. So, one of the Hitachi boys, same, my age, and he, he became number one in Japan, then he went to the England. So, he became one [nods] of the gold medalist. So, that time in Japan was so good. Boring machine, engine light operating, milling machine, there was a tool and dye making, and everybody was in gold medal, that time. [puts hands out] We're talking about year 1960, we were year 60. So now, Elizabeth, you know who takes gold medal? Korean. [moves hand in upward motion] They still have the international world technical Olympic game. But Korean takes 80 percent of gold medal. But the year—the year 1960s, [moves hand] Japan was almost 80 percent gold medal. Anyhow, so that, I was kind of proud of it, you know, and foreman said that, "[unclear] good, You're not the number one but you're good, you're good—" so, but they didn't give me nothing, didn't, no rise, nothing, so keep on working, night, and—because Japan is growing like a, you know—just prior to Tokyo Olympic, year 1964, my gosh, company is so busy, and, you think about it, seven days a week, and 12 hour shifts, so no way I can sneak out, having a good time with the girlfriend, number one. So every time girlfriend call me, "Tak, when is your time?" "Just a minute, I have to take a look at [gestures with hand motion] the calendar first, I have to be in the day shift! [laughs] If it's a night shift, no way, I can't go to—right?" [emphasis with hands] Date, date with the girlfriend. So, yeah, that's--but, in the meantime, you know, 130, for that year, [emphasis with hands] students, by the time, around about five years later, I would say, 70, almost half, was all gone. Quit.

[25 minutes]

TY: You know, you have to remember, there was no dream at that time. Like [shrugs shoulders]—if I wanted to have a car, no, impossible to think about that, right? You're talking in the year 1961, 1962. But, [shrugs] I think it's— companies are big,

guarantee for your life, but, it's a pretty low pay. And a lot of young kids start thinking, but I—you know, that kind of pay, and the salary, I don't think I can—I can, you know, married, and so so. So quite a few young kids left already, didn't want to go back to school. So, I was exactly the same. I felt that the—every time I go to my brother's place, I been complaining about it. Complaining, complaining, and one day my sister-in-law said, "Tak, Tak-chan, what the heck are you complaining about? Why don't you use your technique to—to do—get out of Japan and somewhere in the other countries?" That was what happen. [taps hands together] So she gave me the *Asahi Shimbun*, *Asahi* newspaper, showing that Brazil, Australia, and Canada were looking for new immigrants. And, so then, that particular night, I just—I— [speaking Japanese] I mean, something came up [holds hands close to face], "Yeah, I mean, Canada must be pretty good." So, I was living in, you know, that time, was small apartment, so my brother's— Kamakura to my apartment, it's about hour and a half away, already [Japanese phrase], and I said, "I think I'm going to Canada. I think that's good idea." But my brother didn't know nothing about it. But, then I—by the time, I couldn't sleep that night. So next morning, already, [shakes head] "I think I'm going to Canada! So, what should I do? Well, if that's the case, maybe I should go to Canadian Embassy first, maybe, I'm going to find out." So, I went to—right away to, [Aoyama Sancho?] the Canadian Embassy. So, I met Mr. Tasho, who said, "Yeah, Tak-San, Yoshida-san, you have no problem." You know? "You have type of—we really needed you." You know? And you know, pat [pats his back] on the back. "Here's an application form." "Thank you very much." Oh my gosh, [mimes reading] this is all English. [laughs] Trouble, trouble, trouble, what the hell talking. So I didn't want to ask anybody, so I came back to the apartment, and I, you know, dictionary, [mimes writing] and so and so, wrote as much as possible. So already, next day, again, I, you know, push it into the foreman saying, "I'm still having a problem with my cold." So, then right away, I went to—back to the Embassy, and Mr. Tasho to look at it, [shakes head] "Yoshida-san, I don't know what the hell you're talking about—this—I can't —80 percent I don't know what you're saying!" [laughs] This is no good, [unclear]. So I said, you know, from that door, I still remember that embassy door to the street, just a [*jedimichin?*] nice, nice, beautiful, beautiful Canadian embassy. By the time I get on the subway, I said, "Why, why I have to do this? Maybe I should go to Kanda." Kanda is a beau—there is so many bookstores [gestures with hands] there, and also, there's a lot of, you know, [gestures with hands] tran—I mean—interpreting companies also. [ebun yaku?], you know? Oh I should go there to—you know, I don't know how much it's going to cost me. So let's ask. So one of the ladies said, no problem, how much? 500 yen. Okay, here's the 500 yen. So please sit down. So first, okay, you better start telling me, you know, what you—what is it, so on so on, what the date, and so on so on. So within the 15 minutes, she came up with a beautifully typed [unclear]. [slaps thighs, laughs] So right away I went back, and Mr. Tasho said, "What the hell, this is—what happened, Mr. Yoshida? This is perfect!" [laughs] "So, yes, this is—we're going to accept, so, you have to wait." So I

said, “Mr. Tasho, how long should I have to wait?” “I don’t know, Mr. Yoshida. We’re going to send this one to Ottawa, Canada, and then we have to wait.” “Oh, we have to—that’s it then? We have to wait?” [nods] “Yes, we’ll let you know.”

[30 minutes]

TY: So meantime, I asked him—last—you know, just before-- “Tasho-san, are you sure I’m type of—you know—if I—” “But Mr. Yoshida, you better start learning English, okay?” “Yeah, okay. So are you sure I’m pretty good—” “Oh, yes. You’re the type of people they’re really looking for you.” “Okay.” So meantime, I already believed it! So I can [raises arms in flexing motion] go to Canada! I am going to Canada, I can go to Canada! So I went [points thumb backwards] back to Hitachi, “I want to quit!” [laughs, claps hands] So [believe in it?], Elizabeth, in that time, Shinin in Kacho, came to me, of course, because I’m really gold *tamago* [Japanese expression, golden egg], right? And it’s important, “Tak--Mr. Yoshida, you can’t quit. First thing, you cannot quit.” “Oh, no, I want to quit.” [laughs] Then Shinin came to me, “Yoshida-san, Canada [speaking in Japanese], Indians comes in and they’re going to cut you up and then your skin off for you!” “[speaking Japanese], don’t you know, that Canada pretty soon, there’s an Olympic—I mean Montreal has a, you know, Expo’s going to come out in a few years.” So I said. So anyhow, they accepted, you know, I had a chance to quit. And I had a nice *sokokai*, which is a party, and then after that, then nothing comes. That was sometime in April—no June, June 15th. Then, you know, [moves body around] as I have to find a job to eat and so and so, and so I started doing for—first thing is I became a beach boy in Kamakura, I did it couple of months. And then for August, I selling Christmas [card], that was a fantastic opportunity, the Christmas card, and—this is my sister—sister-in-law, which is my second sister’s husband, been doing business for woodblock print. So there’s woodblock print, two woodblock print about this size [holds out hand for size]—five by seven size, they put this—make a nice Christmas card, like [Japanese term]. So he said, you know, “Tak-chan, in Tokyo has so many trading companies. They—all trading companies need Christmas cards. So why don’t you knock the doors, and try to sell them. 2000, 2100, whatever. So I started carrying samples, start selling them. Then I hit the one big company, in Tokyo Boeki [Tokyo Boeki Holdings Corporation], and this is a really Tokyo trading company Tokyo Boeki, this is not the biggest, [holds hand high off screen] like Misti—Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, so on so on, and—but second class, but still, few thousand working for this company, and they did almost international—worldwide trading, and I asked them that—you know, and people said that, yeah, we need 30,000 Christmas cards. [shouts] 30,000?! Wow, this is a big [looks left and right] business! So, I said, “Gosh, for sure, I’m going to get this!” So ended up knocking up door for almost every other day, and then—and then finally, they said, “Ah, [shakes head]Tak-san, Yoshida-san, [speaking Japanese]”, you know. So, then, they gave me the orders! So my brother-in-law,

“Unbelievable! How did you get that?” So, he was so happy, and I still remember, [Namiura, you know, Namiura Hiroshi, speaking Japanese? Hand gesturing] 30,000 print. And some of them Chinese inside, some of them French, some of them English printed [emphasis with hand motions]. And so, now, I—fill—I mean—started talking to those staff in Tokyo Boeki, and started telling my story, right? Said I’m going to--I’m—in future, I’m heading to—immigrating to Canada. “Oh, really, eh?” says them. “Do you have any boat going to the, somewhere around, Detroit, Chicago, whatever, Montreal?” “Oh yes, we have them—next April, May, June. We have three boats, Norwegian cargo boat, going three, we chartered [holds up three fingers] those boat.” “Is anything— [shrugs] it’s possible I can get in there?” “I don’t know [shakes head],” he says. So he went, asked them. He came back, “Yes! It’s—we supposed to—you know, fill in one [holds up one finger] gentleman from our company, every time, on our boat, and maybe we can ask some other people to changing to you can go into that.” [emphasis with hand motions] “How much do you think?” “Oh, it’s nothing, almost nothing.” “Really? That’s fantastic.” So I believed it already.

[35 minutes]

TY: Then by the time December came in, and this guy came in, “Tak-san, [shakes head] Yoshida-san, only woodblock print business relationship, my boss told me that I don’t think we can just do for you.” I was kind of pissed off because I [put hands to chest] already believed it. “Wow, I can go by boat! [emphasis with hand motions]” But I said, “[speaking Japanese; hirameta?] Okay, that’s fine, no problem. I’m going to speak to your boss. President. [emphasis with hand motions]”. If I speak to President, president says no, I give up. So next day, eight o’clock in the morning, I start—sitting—not sitting, with the security guard. And I spoke to the security guard, “Excuse me, this is my cigarette.” That time I was working to PX [unsure about the acronym], Yokohama-yone, Fukushima PX, and selling musical instruments. [emphasis with hand gestures] And I had easy to get in, with some yo-moku, which is the American cigarette. So, I gave a few to security guard, “It’s you know, president, of Tokyo Boeki, the—what’s his name? What’s his name—” I asked them all kinds of questions. Say, “If he comes in, can you let me know?” They say, “Yeah, no problem, no problem.” So first day, whole day. Second day, whole day. Third day, whole day, from eight o’clock--geez! The security guard said, “Yoshida-san, I don’t know—maybe he’s [speaking Japanese] somewhere, [unclear]!” [looking around] So fourth day, around 10 o’clock, and Mercedes-Benz stopped, and came up. And with a couple of guys together. And security guard said, [speaking Japanese], because. Then, okay, so just people get on the—I mean [raises arm] escalator, right? Elevator? So, “Excuse me please,” I just grab the—you know, arms, and, “My name is—” and such and such and so on, so on. And he said, “Hm, [speaking Japanese], so, “why don’t you come to my room,” right? “Oh, thank you very much!” So, his room

happened to be ninth [raises arm upward] floor, and we been dealing with those guys, they're all working there, you know? So, you think about those guys, you know, right after president, I'm just walking down to—right after the president, those guys—, “What the heck this guy doing,” right? So, and went to the inside—nice size, this size, [looking behind his shoulders, left and right, pointing to the room behind him] of the president's office, and he started asking me, “Okay, I see, we bought Christmas cards from you guys, oh, I see, okay. So, anyhow, Mr. Yoshida-san, what do you want? What—what do you—you know.” So, I explained to him— “I don't have money, no money, but I heard you had some, you know, chartered boat going to Detroit, Chicago, whatever that. I would really like to get in”. He said, [slapped the table] “Okay, why don't you bring in \$800, US dollars.” “Oh that, that's fantastic! Thank you very much”, right? So, I came out of the office, with those [speaking Japanese]. “Thank you very much, I have a chance to go to Canada. Your boss told me okay!” “What!?” [slapping thigh and laughing]” So anyhow, following week, my Kichihiko brothers, and also my sister—husband, and three, we went to make an appointment and we had about that size [uses hands for size] of beautiful woodblock print, I gave to them, and appreciating, thank you very much for the business—can you imagine, right after I came to Canada, 20 years, Tokyo Boeki given [emphasis with pointing fingers] to my brother-in-law as a business. It's nice, eh? The first time I went back to Japan with my wife, so, of course I wanted to see him, so I made an appointment. The day happened to be April 1st, or April whatever—[unclear], you know [nūshaki?] I think they hired maybe 100, maybe 200 people, every year. [nods] And he had to speech, and he gave me a time for 15 minutes, before he goes that morning. So why don't you come 8:30 in the morning. So, my wife and I took some gifts from Canada and went to see him. He was so happy, [nods] and he was telling me all kinds about stories about Canada, and so and so.

[40 minutes]

TY: Then “I'm-- I'm doing this, I'm doing this in Canada, without you, I couldn't go—” and so and so, then I went back after few years later to see him, he was telling me, “Hey, Yoshida-san, [unclear], that time I had a good speech about you.” About, you know, to 200 new—new employees, yeah, so. His name is Mr. Matsumiya, Matsumiya, it's the president of—yeah, he—without those people, I couldn't come. But, you know, it's--that time, I really felt [speaking Japanese], you know, if you're not going to try—this is again, those [emphasis with hand motions] guys said, “No, I'm sorry, we don't--I can't give it to you”, so that's it, okay, I have to find some—cargo—not a cargo boat, or maybe passenger boat, absolutely, there's no flight—I didn't have money to fly into Canada. So, [speaking Japanese], I tried [laughs], that's what I did. [emphasis with hand gestures] Because you think about it, that time I didn't have a normal father and mother, right? All brothers having a tough time,

sisters having a tough time, nobody looking after me. So, I only have to make decisions right there, any decision I have to make. [hand gestures] Oh, that was a really good opportunity, came to Canada. Then after I came to Canada, and I met so many good people. Oh! One of them, I started really 1960—I came in '66, after a year—two years—no three year—two years later, I start practicing kendo, then Mr. Roy Asa said, “Let’s start practicing kendo in the Cultural Centre”, so start coming to the Cultural Centre year—I was in the year 1968, then I met the many nisei people, you know. One is Roy Shin, and—oh, at that time, Sid Ikeda happen to be there, a lot of nisei people. And I was so comfortable speaking with nisei people. [nods] That’s the difference between [points up two fingers] new—right now—new immigrant people, they, they're not much—they should be more involved in more nisei and sansei people here, at the Japanese—within the—especially, [unclear], I want to learn English in here, fast as possible, [hand gestures] year 2000—1966, [unclear] came in, and that year, or year 2000, before I made it to house boy I went to so many times, it’s called Nanking Restaurant, it’s called Nanking Restaurant, it's right beside city hall, okay? Chinese restaurant. Every weekend, if you go there, guarantee half dozen nisei people there. Always. [motioning with head] So, you know, if you start drinking, you know, couple drinks, a beer with them, those guys, speak, so understand—easy to understand English. [emphasis with hands] All from Nanking nisei people! [laughs] Yeah. Then after that, I want to catching more, fast as possible English. So, I still remember Roy Asa, John Asa, Kenji Asa, whatever those Japan Camera boys said, “Tak, if you want to go into—my suggestion is, why don’t you become a house boy?” Then, I went to house boy, and—you know, you really into like [unclear], go to school, come back, washing, ironing, cooking, looking after six kids, so, you know, nothing but English, right? So, [nods] pretty—that time was really—I felt I never had [unclear]. I said to myself “what the heck, I came to Canada many many—and I—” [phone starts ringing] just a sec.

EF: Mhm, no problem.

[Part 1 cuts at 44:41]

[Part 2 starts, 00:00]

TY: —for three years. Long life. So, three years, if you really don’t have to work, and—you know, all my friends wanted to—want to buy a car, wanted to play golf, because they were making pretty good money.

[45 minutes]

[0:21 on Part 2]

TY: But meantime, I was a houseboy. But I had a fantastic experience, and I met good people there. [nods] That—that—without those people, I'm not going to be here today.

EF: Hm. I have lots of questions. [laughs]

TY: Yes, go ahead. [laughs] Maybe I've been talking too much.

EF: No, no, no, it's good.

TY: Yes.

EF: So, let's see. I'll start— I'm going to go back a little bit.

TY: Yes.

EF: So, you said you really loved basketball, and you were—you were probably in music from—like you were interested in music ever since you were young, so—

TY: Yes.

EF: —so, for those kinds of things, was there anyone else in your family interested? Or was it something you found on your own, or—

TY: All my brothers— [phone starts ringing] hold on.

EF: Mhm.

TY: All my brothers, sisters, better than me. [Elizabeth laughs] It is! They're so good, their singing—like ability, is unbelievable. [emphasis with hand gestures] My sisters, so good, and my oldest brother was in like, like a church choirs and so and so, and my second brother is also very good, and every time I go to Japan and go to karaoke, better than me! [emphasis with hand gestures] They're so good! But, by the time at Hitachi, and three years in school. And I was crazy about Elvis Presley, Paul Anka, Ricky Nelson, Neil Sedaka, and even Harry Belafonte, and one time, in English, I studied in English for the Danny Boy and Harry Belafonte, and [shrugs] in the school, I all of a sudden start singing, everybody say, "They made a special stage, Tak, come on, let's sing it!" You know. That times, already singing. Then I start believing that maybe, maybe I think I'm going to be okay. Then, every time I buzz off—I mean in the working place, and get on the *yamata-sen* [likely referring to *Yamanote-sen* train line] *Yamata-sen*? In Tokyo, there's a—you know, *yamata-sen*, train goes. [pointer finger moving in circular motion] So, it was almost about an hour and a half, to run around. And I don't —even when empty seat, I won't stand—sit. And standing up in those sections, [mimes standing] and the noise, it's really—learning the English Elvis Presley song, and all those Paul Anka songs, and reading—you know, [holds up phone] little bit of singing, you can't hear other people, right? So, I was so good, within one round of the *yamata-sen*, I rem—memorize one [holds up one finger] song—one English song. That much, I was good. And that time, I was only singing all English songs. [emphasis with hand motions] So, even I was on the TV, [Japanese contest], and, you know, but almost three—like yo-sen, like, you know, really— almost hundreds of [holds out hand to the right] people came in, and then next stage only 50, then next stage 20, and the final stage only half a dozen, and I happen to be half a dozen, I had the chance to go on Nihon television—TV station. And that was Neil Sedaka's "Choo-Choo train". [starts singing], you know, I was

singing like that an English song! So—that—you know, before that, and I was in a band, right? And, when the production company gave me a jacket and pants, and so and so, believe it or not, [Sei Akira?], he is a very famous singer, he happened to be, he happened to be a [band boy?]. I was already in the stages singing that! [emphasis with hand motions] I can't believe after now, so many years later, and I was already Yokohama stage, and Ginza, Shinbashi, Shinjuku, and all jazz—you know, jazz, you know, stage, jazz *kissa* [*kissaten*] with a band, you know, so every time I come home, almost one o'clock, and so and so. So one night, I came home, I was tired, oh my gosh, my apartment, it's all brothers is there. Kichihiko, my two sisters, and [mumbling]. Then he start asking, "Why don't you sit down."

[50 minutes]

[5:20 on Part 2]

TY: "What are you doing, Tak?" You know, he was asking. [moving head back and forth] "I was singing with band," and so on so. "Well, if you want to pursue, you know, you want to be a singer, I want you to pack up, now, get the hell out of my house. If you want to become, like more of a hobby, then make sure keep on working with Hitachi, and then if you want to become hobby, singing, then we have no problem. So, why don't you think about tonight?" Believe it or not, I was crying that night. I didn't know what to do. [moving with head] Should I do this? But I didn't have really 100 percent confidence, I don't know if I could live with it, singing, so I quit. So, it became hobby. [emphasis with hands] Then I went to jazz, and they have so many contests going on in Tokyo area, right now, jazz *kissaten*, you know, about 3000 yen, 5000 yen, and so and so. So, every time I go, and I made some pocket money, then I—contests with the TV and so and so, so after that, and by the time I—you know, start thinking to come to Canada, I completely forgot about—just absolute that time I wasn't singing, nothing at all, and, and I never—that time we didn't have any karaoke, right? So, I completely stopped singing. [shakes head] So, I was more like concentrating to come to Canada, make a new life. Then one day, after—I don't know how many years [shakes head], and even I was married, a friend of mine invited me, and he had an eight-track karaoke. [emphasis with hand motions] And he was telling me, "You know, Tak-san, you can sing, you know?" So, I said, "What kind of song can I sing?" "Oh, yeah, this is this—let me show you." Then I start—"Hey this is really good!" That was the first time having experience with karaoke. So even I came to Canada, 20 years, I never had a chance to—have a chance to singing. Well, I had some, yes. I happened to be at Patrick Watson's house, I was at—almost two and a half to, less than three years at [Zuckerman?] family, six kids. [holds up hand] And right after, they didn't fire me, in between they fired me, and [laughs]—because I was drinking a bit—then, then, Mr. Zuckerman said, "Tak, I want to stay, my—fam—you're the oldest brother, you stay with us forever. But, you know, you have your own life, why don't you find a job?" But I didn't have much

confidence with English, so I found—friend of mine recommended one of a family, happened to be Patrick Watson’s family [gestures with hands]. And their family [shakes head] is completely different family, you know. Zuckerman family is no drink, no smoking, no chasing women [laughs], and it was so, you know, [emphasis with hands] not really Orthodox Jews, but really, good family, like family structure Jews. And this Patrick is, he was working for [stretches arm out] CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Company], and that time, he had lots of friends, so every weekend comes, and Patrick has a party at his house. It was a nice house, Yonge and Lawrence area. [emphasis with hands] And Barbara Frum, Adrian Trackson [likely referring to Adrienne Clarkson], and also Moses [Znaimer], and also—remember, I don’t know—CTV anchorman, uh, Lloyd Robertson? Or—those guys came in, they were so young, you know, Moses was young, he was a CityTV—not the City—yes, CityTV. And they all came in, drinking like a maniac, unbelievable, I don’t know how many bottles goes out every—that weekend. Then Patrick said, “Tak! Why aren’t you singing?” [looking around the room] Then so now, Patrick starts playing—he played piano. [mimes playing instruments] He had three kids, all three kids played—one is a drum, one is a guitar, one is a bass guitar. So now, jams coming out, until maybe three or four o’clock in the morning! Every weekend! [laughs, shakes head, slaps leg] I had a ball, that was—yeah, it was a completely different type of, you know, structure of family, so. [emphasis with hands] But still, wonderful, wonderful people.

[55 minutes]

[10:21 on Part 2]

TY: And so—I don’t know how many years ago, just only three four years ago, Fumi, was—my wife, has been working for—now, she retired—William Ashley downtown. Then I happened to be in the store, and she, my wife “Tak, Tak, Tak, [taps own shoulder] Adrienne Clarkson and her husband came in!” They came in. I knocked the door, [mimicking knocking] “Adrienne—Hi Adrienne, how are you?” “Are you Tak?” [laughs] I couldn’t believe it—are you Tak? She was—she remembered me, I couldn’t believe it. Unbelievable, you know. [crosses arms] So, it’s a—I had a different type of family, and Patrick gave me a very very—he was always—wanted to see Japanese peoples, and after he became president of CBC, and he moved to Ottawa, and so I had to, you know, I had to leave their house, then we really start working with Japan Camera centre.

EF: Hm. Wow, your, your love of music has led you to many places.

TY: Yeah, so, then [moving head back and forth] after 20 years, then somebody asked—Mr. Tanaka Tsutomu, Tanaka-san, he passed away a couple years ago, and he called me that—“Tak-san, would you like to come into Kohaku [referring to Kohaku Utaga-Sen, a performance show at the JCCC], you know?” I said, “What is it?” I really didn’t know it. So, that was, I don’t know, 18 years ago, or whenever Kohaku

started. Then, year 2000, and [zuzushi?]. My wife always said, [unclear], [zuzushi?] Well, what do you mean, [zuzushi?]? So, I set it up, one man dinner show, right? So, I asked Mr. Tanaka, “Tanaka-san, I want to raise money for the Cultural Centre. And can you help me out?” So, he said, “so what are you going to do?” “I want to do one man dinner show.” “Dinner show?” he asks. “So, who’s helping you?” Jim Ura, Dave Ohashi, and Tanaka-san. That’s it! Then we raised money over 20—close to \$20,000! And then, second year, 2006, I did second one, that time I gave \$5000 to kendo. That time, that year was kendo championship, and they really needed the money so. But that time, also Tanaka-san helped me, [unclear], and that was a very—good successful dinner show. You know, at that time, there happened to be NAJC [National Association of Japanese Canadians] people had a conference that time, at the Cultural Centre that weekend, and it almost took 20 to 30 people, NAJC members, bought the tickets came to the show! And they were so happy, because happened to be that particular show, and Bob Nishikawa came here, “Tak, if you’re going to do that, why don’t you sing two or three songs for old, old *enka*? Eh? Before World War?” So, “What is it?” He says, “Oh, it’s [lists Japanese songs] Three songs, [holds up three fingers] gave me a recommendation. So, I studied it, had a karaoke to study it, and I sang those three songs. Then can you imagine, those NAJC people [points off screen] [laughs] were so happy with those, nisei people. “My dad and my ojichan, you know, when I was a kid, they were so happy to singing that song,” they said. Yeah, that was a big successful show. You know, I said—my wife said, “[zuzushi?], [speaking Japanese] Whatever you do or not! [laughs] If you’re just talking, [emphasis with hand motions] it’s not good! What the heck! Do it!” Meantime, people came in, they paid, raise the money, you know! That was a good time! [laughs]

EF: Oh, this tape is just about to run out. I’m going to switch tapes and then we’ll keep going.

TY: Okay.

EF: Okay.

[Part 2 cuts at 14:46]

[Part 3 starts at 00:00]

EF: Here we go.

TY: What else, Elizabeth? [laughs]

EF: Yeah, I guess—So, some of my questions now are a little bit about, I guess, what your, what your reflections are. Like, why do you think you started singing, or why do you think you started being interested in music? Was it just because your siblings were doing it, or did you feel like you really wanted to do it yourself?

[60 minutes]

[0:27 on Part 3]

TY: I think it's, you know, the time I was in Hitachi and in school, and all my buddy said, "Tak, you're really good," and, you know, I don't know whether I was good or bad, but they were saying, that you know, you should be pursuing a singer, and it's no problem! So, all my friends were, you know, really pushing me, and then I started realizing, oh, maybe, I— become. Then meantime, I went to production, and they had some tests, passed, and I really didn't have to go to [band boy?] Lots of, lots of young people, young kids, girl and boy, especially boy, want to become a singer, usually you going to the [emphasis with hand motions]—once you're accepted by production, and they start to helping the band, like setup the drums, set up the sound system, for maybe a year or so. Then, little by little, they, "Why don't you start singing a for a little bit?" and so on. But I [puts hand on chest] happened to be, I was so lucky, I didn't have to do it. Right away, they wanted—I want—they want me, me to get on stage, right? And, I don't know that time, what was a—very popular with the—like a Paul Anka, Neil Sedaka type of song. And Elvis Presley, and so on and so on. So every jazz *kissa*, you know, jazz *kissaten*, *kiss*—and they were expecting those kinds of songs. And so, I would say, I did almost six, seven months? Then finally, my brother and sister said, "What the heck? Why Tak comes home late?" And so and so, they found out. And why? I think it's my mom. And beginning the—going to those clubs, I asked my mother—just, she still lived there and then alive and you know, I said, "Mom, if I wanted to become like Misora Hibari, are you going to be happy?" "Oh, yes, I'm so happy! Why don't you do—try that?" So that's why I have— okay! I said, "Okay, I'm going to try!" [laughs, nods] that's why I think I start with singing. But meantime, my brothers and sisters, they knew that, you know, "I'm better than you, [emphasis with hands] Tak, even if I don't become a singer, how could you, you know want—become a singer?" That's why they said, our family is more like a Katai family, like you know, more like—architecture and so and so. Like, remember that, even at—even now I don't know—younger, start working for restaurant, even that, in Japan, is still, don't like that. [emphasis with hand motions] See? So, [gestures with hand] year 2006—no year 1960 area, even like a singer, and those lifestyle, is like people say, *mizu shobai*, that means working for bar, working for restaurant, and so and so[emphasis with hand motions]. Same category of that kind of lifestyle, right? So now, my family is completely different, more like hard, like [*majime ra?*], you know, family, dedicated. You want to become a *mizu shobai*? No, [shakes head] you can't do that. The first day, they're against. That's why I had no choice, I had to quit. But you never know, that time I pursued it, this is again, you never know, right? So. But I had a—you know, after all, and I changed my mind, and now [emphasis with hand motions] I'm into Canada, and now my life is just wonderful, I never—I never [laughs] even one bit of regret. It's a fantastic life I'm having. I've been trying to tell [shakes head] all young kids, "Please come to Canada." You know, new world,

freedom, nobody tells you what to do, you can make your own decision, you can do whatever you want, you know. This is beautiful country.

EF: Hm. Let's see. So, when you, when you started singing again, like when you came to Canada—

TY: Yes. [nods]

EF: —and you started singing again, I guess— maybe this sounds like a strange question, but, for you, what—I mean, how did you feel about that? Because you would—you hadn't sung for such a long time—

TY: Yes.

EF: —and then you started performing for people. Like what do you enjoy about, about singing?

TY: Well, what happened at—I came to Canada, I mean then second—I mean the first sort of Kohaku, [emphasis with hand gestures] and Mr. Tanaka said that “No, no, no, there's no English song right? Tak, there's no English songs.” “Oh, what do you mean by that?” [phone rings, Tak answers phone]

[65 minutes]

[Part 3 cuts at 5:32]

[Part 4 starts at 00:00]

TY: Tanaka said that *enka* must be sung, you have no choice, you only can accept—we only accept *enka*. “*Enka*? Okay, what kind of song do you think I should sing?” And [emphasis with hand gestures] he came up with some ideas. So, first Kohaku, it's called *iwaibune*, this is more like waiting times in singing. It's a very nice song. Then I had a chance to sing, and everyone accepted, and everyone enjoyed it. So, I think I can do that, it's no problem. So, I started more singing, *enka* singer songs, [emphasis with hand gestures] then I felt that—if I'm giving you my song, and everybody—nisei peoples enjoy, at that time it's almost 70—75 percent nisei people. Nisei issei we're talking about 18 years ago, and everybody enjoyed my song, so why—why not? So, this is really fantastic volunteer work. You know, it's totally over 100 people [raises hand upward] to set up for Kohaku. And if they enjoyed all the people enjoying, then [shrugs] this is a very good thing to do. That's why. That's why, I think year 2000 I came up and—you know, it was difficult. I even went to Japan, to prepare. It is! I spent a lot of money. I bought a kimono, [mimes wearing clothes] I bought the half a dozen CDs—new CD songs, and—17 songs to memorize is really not an easy task, you know, that was. And, first song was kind of—I confided it, and I did it pretty good. We did it at Shokokai Court. And year 2006 happened, and wow, I said, around 12 songs I have to memorize. And then I started asking for other people to bring in live band perform, [emphasis with hand gestures] and I still remember, just prior to that day, I—My voice was just having a tough time, so I was upstairs, in here, [points upwards] and my wife gave me a nice

sugar tea, and so and so, “Are you sure, dad, are you okay or not?” And I was a little bit worried, [shakes head] and if I—in between, if my voice won’t coming out, I’m out? But anyhow, it worked out pretty good, and my son-in-law also helped me out, son-in-law, him and I had a duet, and one of our young—young three or four people, live band, helped me out. The piano, and two flutes, [mimes playing flute] and drum. And I had a few English songs for that time, and—yeah, that was a very, very successful—good, successful. Jim Ura helped me out a lot, they made a beautiful signage, and Mr. Tanaka was always—been helping out for master? ceremony, and so and so, and Dave Ohashi did all sound system, yeah, it’s--it’s fantastic, half a dozen people made it for 20,000 dollars, Kohaku is a 100 something people and we only made it—something like 5000 dollars, you know. [laughs] You know, no wonder why [points hand offscreen] James [Heron] wanted me to do another one. [laughs, crosses arms] What else is there, Elizabeth?

EF: Yeah. Do you have a favourite song? [laughs]

TY: I think one song—I had last year, Kohaku, it’s called [Japanese song title], [EF: Ahh] yeah. I had a chance to sing last August. My second daughter, Kimi, had a wedding, in Los Angeles. And I offer, if you set up the sound system, and so and so, I don’t mind to sing for you. Then, three daughters came up, for this song. Somehow, they heard it before, “Daddy, I want you to sing *Kanpai*.” Right so, okay— Then, that particular place is unbelievable, Peter [to interviewer]. Middle of Los Angeles, beautiful sunny day, we’re talking about, you know starting cocktails starting seven o’clock, and dinner starting at eight o’clock, I was thinking singing around 10 o’clock, right?

[70 minutes]

[4:56 on Part 4]

TY: And this is downtown Los Angeles, all tall banks [emphasis with hand gestures] and so and so, in the middle, there’s a beautiful restaurant, and the restaurant owns a park, small park. And we’re talking about after 11 o’clock, midnight, and so and so. Big noise, [makes noises] downtown Los Angeles, I said, “Kimi, is that [unclear]?” “No, daddy, this—this area is, there’s condominium, nothing but the office, right? So, weekend, nobody is there. So, city said okay, no problem.” So, I was singing with the wireless microphone inside, singing that *Kanpai*. And that was very very good. [nods] So, I said to myself, what the heck—this is last year’s December—and I wanted to sing *kanpai*, so everybody [enjoyed it?]. More like—not the *enka*, this is more like new music, but nice melody. [nods] And I could sing—I sing Hiroshi [unclear Japanese] Sen Masao song, and I like Sen Masao song. Like a, someone who wants to—asking for right away, I memorize all those [Japanese song title], that’s a nice song for them. [nods] Yes?

EF: [laughs] So, I guess, one question that's a bit curious to me. So, you said that your decision to come to Canada, it was a little bit like — I think you said it kind of like— just kind of came to you.

TY: Yes.

EF: Why do you think you decided—like—do you, do you— like, thinking back on it now, remembering it, can you think of any reasons why you might've thought, okay, [speaking Japanese]?

TY: I'm the type of guy [gestures with hand motions]—like something—if you have a challenge, hard things come with it, right? Anything you want to challenge—you want to do something, pursue something, make—make a goal, you really—hard things you have to accept it. So, I said to myself, “Why am I complaining? I don't want to complaining, you know, this is [speaking Japanese], I'm not particularly like the job, what I make here is”— The time I'm 15, the going—because my brother told me to go, to—”You're going—you're going to become a machinist sooner or later, you are going to be foreman, or maybe whatever that.” [holds hand out in front] Hitachi for life. But I—by the time when I was 18, 19? [emphasis with hand gestures] There's so many opportunities, and so and so, then, I'm still complaining about Hitachi, I'm still complaining about—and I really didn't want to complain [shakes head] anymore. I want to do something challenge [emphasis with hand gestures], something different, and I think it's to—to immigrate to Canada, is something—my life is really sensation things. So, I don't want—anything is new, bad thing is coming new, good things coming, I don't know. But my attitude is something challenge, what the heck, it's go for it. Let's try, right? So that's why I made that decision. And even that—why I picked that Zuckerman family, and I went through almost 20 families. Some families are fantastic! “Mr. Yoshida, you don't have to do nothing. Unfortunate, we don't have kids.” That's what I didn't like. “But I will pay you, one— every night, you wear the tuxedo, [mimes wearing clothes] you just give us service. That's all you have to do. You can go to school during the day, you can go to school, I give you money, you have a beautiful room--” But I don't want to. I wanted to have the toughest family, I wanted to have. [emphasis with hand gestures] So that's why—after 21—20—21st family happened to be York Mills and Bayview , the Zuckerman family. That time, [countdown with fingers] the oldest boy was nine years old boy, eight years old girl, seven years old boy, six years old boy, five years old boy, three years old boy! I looked at the kids, this is unbelievable! This is the way I should take it! I should be—I'm going to be punished, and disciplined, this is the way it's supposed to be! [emphasis with hand gestures] And then everything's— my—always believe in that kind of attitude. So, same as why I came to Canada. Yes, I think that time, young kids, like—you know, I tell all my friends, why don't you get out, if you don't like it, Japan, or—get out to other countries! To do something! Maybe something new things come!

[75 minutes]

[9:51 on Part 4]

TY: So, it's not really—you know, I didn't have anything, [emphasis with hand gestures] I came—that's one thing I'm so happy, I don't have—I didn't have to do machinist here, because nobody told me—nobody telling me anymore. That's one thing—good thing is, I was in Japan, always my three brothers [looking up towards the left], lousy brothers, [makes grumbling noises]. [moving head side to side] “Oh, you know, you can't do this, you can't do this—”, now, I'm in—that's why, year, year 1966, [emphasis with hand gestures] June 14th, arrived in Union Station, “I'm freedom! [moves hands outwards in circular motion] I'm— nobody tells me what to do! I can do whatever I want!” I was so happy. So, happiness from that day to today. Really! 47 years, I'm so happy. [EF: laughing] [laughing] Yeah.

EF: Hm. Did you ever consider going back to Japan?

TY: Absolutely not. [shakes head, laughs, Elizabeth laughs] No, no, I'm going back in October, to have a good time, other than that [shakes head], absolutely—this is my country, and this is all of my friends, and this is—all family is here, this is a beautiful place.

EF: If your parents were still around, do you think—what do you think they might think about your decision to come to Canada? Do you think they would've supported it?

TY: I think so, [nods head] yeah, yeah.

EF: It sounds like your mother was very supportive of whatever you wanted to try.

TY: Yeah, [nods head] yeah, she's always—she always protect. Like, you know, [looks offscreen] my father was a really tough, tough man, and also oldest brother. But mother was always protective. Very kind person. [nods]

EF: Hm. So, just a couple more questions—

TY: Yes.

EF: —I promise, and then I'll let you go. So first one, you've got three daughters, is that right? [Tak nods] Yeah. So, your three daughters—first of all, sorry, what are their names? I don't think I wrote it down.

TY: Mari, Kimi, Yuri.

EF: Oh. Yuri is my Japanese name.

TY: Oh, really?

EF: Well, I'm Yuriko, but Yuri, yeah. [laughs] Do they—do they have an English name too, or just Japanese?

TY: No, [shakes head] that's it.

EF: Okay. And so, for your three daughters, have they ever shown interest in learning about their heritage, like about Japan or Japanese culture, or do you think they feel connected with their background? Or do you think they feel very, you know, Canadian? Or—

TY: Pretty Canadian, but oldest one, when she—the time she goes—was going to university, and she decided to go to Japan, instead of going to—she was almost everything—university—I thought she was going to University of Toronto, couple months before, she decided she wants to go to Japan. So I said, “Dad, I can I go?” “Oh, it’s your life, you know, that’s— if you want to go to Japan, just go.” And she was there for three years, and she came back, and fluent in Japanese, English, and so and so. Other than that, Kimi is—is one [of the best girls?] She’s doing a very good job in Canada, so she found a fantastic, you know, job, and—but she knows—they all three come Cultural Centre quite often, and Haru Matsuri, Bazaar, and so and so, special occasion time, come. And also, they’re helping me, my—the September 21st, they have a—NAJC have a 25th anniversary, and all three is going to help me out, and yeah.

EF: Do you think it’s-- do you feel that it’s important to you that your children are connected with their background?

TY: Absolutely, absolutely.

EF: Yeah. So, it’s a—maybe a silly question, but why is it important to you? [laughs]

TY: Well, very few Japanese come to immigrant—you know, new immigrant, like NAJC, not many people there, and I’m the really beginning, 1966, it’s really early stage, came to Canada, and I really want them to know your dad is—did something, you know? Came to Canada, you know.

[80 minutes]

[14:54 on Part 4]

TY: All those three went to Japan, they know my sisters, and then they know what dad did, and so and so. So, I think it’s important to, to, to me, this experience is more new Japanese in Japan, want them to come to, to—if there is a—[shakes head] I don’t know how many people have that kind of attitude, I want them to come to Canada, to have—you know, to establish them in Canada. And right now, the only working holiday people is coming into Canada, and almost 80 to 90 percent is women, want to stay in Canada. The men, very few people—everybody wants to go back to Cana— Japan. But I don’t know—there is so many opportunities in here, but—that’s really, never mind my daughters, but all other Japanese, young generation, to think that— it’s called [speaking Japanese], should have a dream [emphasis with hand gestures] to other countries, biggest problem with Japanese is all still [speaking Japanese], you know, like, you know, inside the island, and they don’t want to get out. You know, compare—no comparison to Chinese, to Korean, to all other nation. Japanese—because I think it’s living is so spoiled in Japan right now. [nods]

Unknown Individual, likely Peter Wakayama: Do you think that’s the reason why the current attitude is [unclear]--

TY: I think so, when they were growing up, [nods] and spoiled, and it's— anything— a lot of people don't have—never have the experience with hunger, whatever, tomorrow, there's no breakfast, there's no serious—always food is on the table, in Japan, there's very few people having a tough time. [nods]

PW: Do you think that the people of your age and people who immigrated, the Ijushas who came in the '60s, have the same kind of attitude that you have, [a lot?] of them have become entrepreneurs, and, you know, set up their own business and all that. And so, it's like the niseis, [Tak nods] having gone through the hardship of the [TK: Yes] internment, it's the same kind of attitude, [Tak nods] and that's why you see [TY: That's right [nods]] them doing what they do volunteering at the centre.

And so, there is a difference in how people were brought—and what the experience was. [Tak nods continuously] As you say, you know, you've gone through the hardship of being poor, doing things on your own, and when you have that kind of background, seems to me, that what you do, you know, makes a difference in—

TY: I think so, yeah —

PW: —what you become. And that's what you become. A lot of your contemporaries, [Tak nods continuously] have the same kind of hopes, that they same kind of attitude, the same kind of experience in Canada, so it's quite refreshing.

TY: It's quite difference now, the last 20 years, [unclear] young people coming into now, before the '60s. And remember, in 1966, it was still 365 yen—

: Yes, that's right —

TY: —to Canadian dollars [unclear] And a lot of people said, "Tak, we didn't have money. But if you want to take money, why don't you—money put it in socks [points to socks], whatever, put it in here," [laughs, gestures to the waist] You gotta be. "We didn't have enough money," I only had [rises left hand] 120 dollars! [laughs] 120 dollars when I came to Toronto. But, it's a change. Right now, it's a lot of people—even now, quite a lot of people, I still remember, last 20 years, they came to Canada, with immigrant status. Like they got immigration in Japan, they have a job, yet they really didn't want to study enough English, and wife start complaining, kids start complaining, ended up after 10 years, 15 years later, going back. That's why, I would say that language is so important.

[84 minutes 30 seconds]

[19:35 on Part 4]

[conversation regarding New Japanese Canadian Association and JCCC board redacted]

[88 minutes 20 seconds]

[23:25 on Part 4]

TY: Okay, Elizabeth, done?

EF: So, very last question, I promise.

TY: Yes, okay.

EF: So, if someone asks you, would you say you feel you are Japanese? Or Canadian, or Japanese Canadian? Or something else? Or, how would you answer that question, if someone said, you know, what, what do you—

TY: I'm Japanese Canadian. Yep. [nods]

EF: And, would you mind telling me why you think that way? [laughs]

TY: I'm already Canadian passport, [laughs] and I'm proud of Canadian, but yet I'm Japanese-born, [emphasis with hand motions off-screen] and I still love to talk about—with Japanese in Japanese, and [shrugs then nods head]— Number one, I'm proud of Canadian, so that means I'm a Japanese Canadian, yeah. [nods]

PW: When did you take your Canadian citizenship?

TY: Right after! Which is five years—

PW: After you came.

TY: Yeah, five years, [PW:71 then] so, you know, I'm a landed im—immigrant, and, you know, they were saying that the five years you have to stay here for five years to become Canadian, so. Canadian—

PW: Did you speak Japanese with your daughters at home? Or English, or both?

TY: [speaking Japanese, laughs] Some—

EF: Mix—

[90 minutes]

[24:54 on Part 4]

TY: If I'm a little bit pissed off, then I'm in Japanese, [nods] other than some English, and so and so. Amazing, Fumi speaks nothing but Japanese.

PW: Really?

TY: Yeah. But her situation is English is better, right? She came to Canada when she was 12. So, she went to—

PW: High school.

TY: —school, high school, to college, to—so, she's much much—80 to 90 percent better, English is better than Japanese. [nods] But speaking, happened to be— mother was so powerful, [Tak nods] like strong attitude, to learn Japanese speaking, so that's why she can speak good Japanese. [nods]

PW: Oh, okay.

EF: Hum

TY: Alright?

EF: I think so!

TY: Good. [nods]

EF: What do you think, Peter?

PW: No, that's fine, I think [Elizabeth and Tak laugh], we touched a lot of grounds.

EF: Alright! Well thank you very much.

TY: That's okay. [leans forwards]

EF: Yeah, thanks so much for your time.

TY: So, tomorrow—

[91 minutes]

[Part 4 ends at 25:56]