

Interviewee: Nori and Blanche Kanashiro

Interviewer: Lisa Uyeda

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*Note that this interview contains outdated terminology regarding Asian people and reference to an Anti-Japanese slur.

[Start]

[There is some delay between the audio and the video in the beginning of the interview (from 2:59:40 to 2:27:36) so about the first 32 (32:02) minutes of mainly Blanche and Lisa speaking where it is difficult to mark gestures due to the delayed video)

Lisa Uyeda: Okay. And then this one-

Nori Kanashiro: So, are you going to ask who- both of us at same time? Or what-

LU: Yeah. Or maybe I will start off with Blanche's family history first [Nori chuckles] and we'll make our way over. So, we will do family history and then we'll talk about prewar days and before we get into postwar days, we'll just make sure we cover everything. But here we go. Great so today is March 31 and this is an interview with Nori and Blanche and would you like to get started off Blanche by telling us your full name, so your maiden name included.

Blanche Kanashiro: Okay. My name is Blanche Kaneko [?], Kawasoye[?] was my maiden name and Kanashiro is my married name. And my parents came from Japan but first my dad was left behind while his parents came to Canada to- in those days to make money and then hopefully send it back to Japan so that would be my grandparents. And they had- so my dad was the oldest of three children so they had two here in Canada, but dad was left behind and then the parents came, and he was left with his grandma and so she kinda raised him so that. He came when he was- I don't know when- he came maybe when he was 18, 19 but then his parents went back to Japan with the other two children and so he was here alone working-I don't know what kind of work he did. But then he went back and then- he's from Shiga-ken, and then he went back to get my mother who's from Gifu-ken and she was 20, I think, when she came here. And of course she didn't know any English. And it's amazing how- to work she did housework in some hakujin family, Caucasian people, home and then they would teach her a bit of English as she would do work like you know if she was wiping cutlery they would tell her this was a fork and this is a knife and household things and that's how she learnt. But she told me one time, when she was going to one of the homes, she caught the bus and where she learned all this

little bit of English like she needed a transfer so she would say [mimicking her mother's accent] "changie ticket" for a transfer. [chuckles] And then she would ask where to get off I mean she did- I guess she looked at the landmarks to see where she was supposed to get off and then she says "get down" means [chuckles] she wanted to get off the bus, I guess. But she didn't really learn that much English I mean but she managed she never went to- well in those days of course they didn't have a ESL [English as a Second Language programs or courses] you know to learn English so she just picked up I guess here and there and when she passed away when she was 83 and she was living in a seniors apartment, which is all Caucasian people, and so. But she managed to get along with them with her broken English and[chuckles]. So, I think mainly her work was just looking after- well after she came, they had two girls before I came along but when those days dad was working for the fish cannery and he was doing a-collecting the fish from the other people that caught the fish

[5 minutes]

BK: -They called them collector boats and then- was a bigger boat, and he would bring all the fish into the cannery so that was his work. And so I think mum was mainly looking after the kids 'cause I'm not too sure what she did when my older sisters were living but they both passed away because they went back to Japan to care for a bit for-I don't know which side, parents it was and then the girls got sick. And I'm not sure where they died but the oldest one- well I'm not sure who got what but one got pneumonia and one got diphtheria. Each time they went back-and then of course there was no antibiotics in those days to treat them, so they passed away. My oldest sister was seven when she passed away and I think the next one was five and then I came along five years later. So, we were living in the fish canneries home [?]. I remember mum saying that this one time she was changing me, and I rolled off the table and I backed [or blacked?] out and of course that just [chuckles] freaked both my parents out because they had no children and now this third one she's maybe gone [laughs] but I survived. I am here. [interviewee and interviewer laugh] Yeah, and then after me came- she had a miscarriage, and it was a boy so if he lived, I would have had a brother. So now I am the only living one left out of my clan because my parents are gone and I'm the only one living. But I think mum made me- her work was just- okay, before the war I remember mum worked at the cannery, canning the fish-

LU: Ahh.

BK: Yeah so she did that because I remember this one time I was to be looked after by somebody and she was taking me and she had a bag that had her knife- they took their own knives-I guess they didn't supply them to cut the fish and stuff the fish into the cans. And she was carrying that knife in her bag and we were running and somehow that knife cut my leg, and I was what maybe three it was just before the

war so three or four. So that's what she did before we were evacuated to Alberta.

Did you want me to carry on?

LU: Ahh, Wow. Well, how long was your- or do you know how long your mother was working as a domestic?

BK: Oh. Before- probably before the children came, I would think so- and then once she had-I don't know when I forgot the year my sister was born so yeah. If they were living my oldest sister would be in her 80's, so I think she probably was you know just worked in helping [?] and then once her own family came, she probably just looked after the home, children.

LU: Did she ever mention if she had children to look after when she was working?

BK: No, no she didn't say that. No.

LU: Okay.

BK: It was mainly cleaning house and then you know doing things around the home where she learnt little bits of English. I guess it was a lot of sign language I would think. [chuckles] And that's how she learnt a little bit of her English.

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: Yeah.

LU: So, do you remember what year your father came for the first time? Over from Japan to Canada?

BK: No, I don't. I can't remember if I wrote it down somewhere but, [asking Nori?] did I ever tell you what year he was born?

NK: No I can't remember.

BK: So, no I can't remember.

LU: Or maybe what year they were married?

BK: Hmm.

LU: I know tricky questions.

BK: Yeah! [chuckles]

LU: Maybe- [chuckles]

BK: If I would have remembered you know looked at my sisters yeah see she- my sister

[10 minutes]

BK: was born I think a year after they were married because I think I found her birth certificate and-

NK: Or was it- how old was she, seven years older than you?

BK: No, no.

LU: She was seven when she passed and then you came on five years after.

NK: Oh yes, that's right.

BK: No then my sister- there was my sister, other sister-

LU: Oh, right.

BK: So, she was- I don't know [?], she would have been born in maybe 1930- 30'S-

NK: [Overlapping] [unclear] about 9 [?]

NK: [unclear] In the 20's-it would have to be in the 20's

BK: 1920?

NK: You said she was seven when she passed-

BK: '32 maybe?

NK: No.

BK: No- I have no idea. I should have looked that up [unclear].

LU: Somewhere in the 20's. [chuckles]

NK: Somewhere in the 20's yeah.

BK: Yeah, so that's when they came.

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: And then shortly after that I guess they- yeah.

LU: You mentioned your father stayed with grandmother for a little while?

BK: No, it wouldn't have been my grandmother. Or no-

LU: Or his grandmother I mean. Sorry.

BK: It would be my great-great grandmother.

LU: Right. Was that on-

BK: In Japan.

LU: maternal side or the paternal side? Was that his father? Or his mother's side?

BK: That was- hm. I can't remember- I've seen a picture of her but I don't know which side it was. Maybe it was on the father side, but I wouldn't be sure, yeah.

LU: That's interesting that he was the eldest child, but they didn't take him along-

BK: With them-

LU: -with them on their travels.

BK: No they left him behind. And then when they came over here then they had two children here and then they all went- no the middle one is a boy and he didn't go back because I know he- unless he went back and came back because he was at the Tashme [?] internment camp.

LU: Oh, wow.

BK: My uncle was there but my aunt she went back and she was 16 so she went to school here and learned some English, so when I met her- was it the first time, yeah- in 1963 I met my aunt that was born here. So, yeah there was only three children, yeah.

LU: Oh, wow. So, if your aunt was born here then technically she'd be Nisei? If you-

BK: Yeah, I guess so. Because-

LU: Yeah.

BK: Yeah. The parents are Issei, yeah, she would be Nisei. Yeah!

LU: That's very interesting.

BK: Yeah, [chuckles] I've never thought of it that way. And then her children- now where- I don't think I've ever met her kids- or yes have I- yes, I did. I did meet their children in Japan when I was there in '63.

LU: Wow.

BK: Yeah, so. And then yeah I met- and then when I went back this in [stumbles words] 2009, I met her oldest son in Saitama [?] and he was in his 70-something.

LU: Wow, wow! Very interesting. [chuckles] Now where were you born and when were you born? It was 1937 and-

BK: That I was born yeah in Steveston.

LU: In Steveston and-

BK: It's still called Steveston now, I thought it was always changed into Richmond but I guess not. Yeah Steveston.

LU: Did you grow up in Steveston as well?

BK: Well, until the war. Yeah, so I was there until I was four. And then we were evacuated not- well my dad chose not to go into the camps any of these internment camps so he chose to go over the Rockies into Alberta. So, we travelled by train to Lethbridge, Alberta.

LU: Do you remember anything about Steveston? Do you remember your family house? Or-

BK: Yes, yes, yes it was just down- not a very big house,

[15 minutes]

BK: but there was like rows of houses that the- I think it was called Canadian Imperial Canneries that they owned and I guess we rented from them and it was across from the Lord Byng [?] school which I went to after I went back after the evacuation. So the house- but I remember you know at the war time they took away our big radio because of the short wave and camera so, yeah. But the house, of course this is way way back, 'cause I was born in yeah 70-some years ago, in those days the bathroom or the toilet was outside but it was a flushing toilet outside [interviewer laughs] so you had to go- I don't know where we bathed though- I don't remember that at all. Because I remember on the farm we had these great big galvanized wash tubs that we took our bath in [chuckles] but there I don't remember some of those things what happened before the war, [interviewee chuckles] [Interviewer laughs] yeah.

LU: Do you remember any friends or games that you used to play?

BK: Yeah, I remember the friends and just this last- no not last year the year before- we went back to Rich- no we went to Steveston and I looked up one of my friends that I grew up with before the war so I went to see her. So, and- oh yes! I saw two of my friends which I haven't had contact for [quick pause] maybe 30 years-

NK: [unclear] Mm-hm, that's it?

BK: Sayoko [?] and Yuki [?] remember when-

NK: Probably 30 years [?] [quite a few years?]

BK: 'Cause I haven't been to-

NK: Where did you see them 30 years ago? Since you left there right?

BK: No, no, no because I had met Sayoko [?]-

NK: Did you? Okay.

BK: In the- '60s, 1960s but- and then just- I've been in Vancouver but never thought to look these girls up. So, yeah they were two friends that I grew up with and played with and this one girl that I saw it was- not it wasn't her sister, that named me Blanche I remember I didn't see anybody- the family that named me. My parents didn't give me the name Blanche it was another family that- one of their teenage daughters named me Blanche, I don't know where she got the name but-

LU: Wow!

BK: That's where I got my name Blanche! [laughs] It's not a Japanese name, yeah. So, playing games that I don't remember that was like I was four but the only thing I remember- oh yes, being on a swing and then- how'd I hit my front teeth- that I remember one of the- I got kicked in the face or something when we were swinging you know and then that knife cut on my leg, but that about all that I remember prior to the being moved out of the- Steveston to go to Alberta.

LU: Oh, wow. [BK: Yeah] Very interesting. [chuckles]

BK: And then we got to Alberta we were on a sugar beet farm for the first while and when we were picked up at the train station when we got there, the farmers came to pick the families with- who were- they always picked families that had boys you know to have them workman but then our family there was only my mom and dad and myself and I was four. So, I guess maybe we were like one of the last [chuckles] ones that got picked but this gentleman picked us up and took us to his farm to do the sugar beet but then other single girls came and lived with us too and they worked the farm for a while, so we all worked together, but we knew these girls from Steveston days. I've yet to connect

[20 minutes]

BK: with one of them- I just found out her phone number at this-

LU: The conference?

BK: Yes! And this lady had come from Alberta to this conference and I don't know how we met over there and then I said "oh, you know this person" and then got on so, I'll have to give her a call. [chuckles]

LU: Oh, wow! [chuckles]

BK: Yeah! So that's going way, way back. Yeah, so we'd be at least 50 years that I haven't talked to her so, yeah. So, anyways we did sugar beets for a while and then our landlord changed to cattle farming, beef cattle, so my dad did you know cultivated the land for wheat and besides looking after the cattle before they were fattened up to go to the market. [chuckles] And then we also had sheep and they were- we didn't have that many or too long that we had the sheep for mutton. So, but it was mainly beef cattle and so that's where I learned to drive the truck and the

tractor at the age of 11 on the farm [chuckles] so, yeah. So, that helped when I went to get my driver's license when I was older. [chuckles]

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: So, yeah. So, we were there 'till 40- no 1950, like from '42- was it 42 when we were all evacuated out?

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: So, we came to the farm in '42 and then in '49 the BC [British Columbia]- or not the BC, the government said we can come back to the coast right? And then in 1950 we drove back to the coast. So, yeah, so during the farming days I didn't have too many Japanese friends they were mainly all Caucasian people in the- and the children in Alberta were really not discriminating but you still felt that in some places you know that "I wish I didn't have black hair, I wished I had blonde hair" [chuckles] and to be more like the rest of them you know. But they were good, I had good friends. And then of course we went back to BC [British Columbia] and that's where I lost my dad he went fishing- we were- we arrived on Halloween, the day before Halloween, so I went trick-or-treating with my friends that I grew up prior to the war and then my dad went and bought a boat right away because he was just itching to get on that water and so it was a week after we had moved back that he went out and he was lost at sea. We don't know what happened, we never found the body- we did find the boat but no body.

LU: Wow.

BK: Yeah, so it was very strange, but I think when I look back and think about it now, I think that he fell overboard. Maybe he had a heart attack who knows you know because on a fishing boat there's a thing called a drum that holds the net, the fishing net, and when they found the boat everything was wound into the drum like the floats with the lights on it you know so they put it out and everything was just crammed into it but, that thing doesn't real in by itself so he- I don't know, must had some kind of trouble where he pulled on the thing and thing went round and then he slipped overboard. I don't know but we gassed up on Sunday night and when they found the boat on Thursday the tank was full of gas and it was chugging along, it was going so

[25 minutes]

BK: he must have gassed up again and then- so it must of so, I don't know what happened. Then after that my mother and I moved back to Alberta again and she was doing housework again for a friend that we knew, he had lost his wife, and so we moved in with them and she looked after the family and then they were married a few years after. So then I gained a brother and a sister, an older brother and a younger sister and yeah, so then-

LU: Did you go to school in Alberta?

BK: Yes. Oh, and when I went back to Steveston I went to that Lord Byng [?] school for a year that was across from the house that we had used to live but I mean we didn't live there this time, but I went to that school again, yeah. And then so yes, most of my education- well all of my education was during the war, after the war was in the farming area of McNally [?] where I went to school to Grade 7 and then when we came back I went to high school in the city and Hamilton Junior High and Lethbridge Collegiate Institute. And then after that I guess I went to work for a while in a doctor's clinic and then I went off to Bible College for four years and then I- we were married in 1964.

LU: What- just going back a little bit, what do you remember about the living arrangements in Lethbridge during the war years?

BK: [overlapping with next line] Oh. That the house-

LU: You mentioned the farmer picked you up but-

BK: Yeah. The house-

LU: -were you in the house with them? Or did you have your own house?

BK: With these girls?

LU: With the farmer.

BK: Oh no no oh we had our own house it was a two-storey house- I still can picture it- brown no paint on the outside at all. And the first floor was just a kitchen area and then I guess the other room was supposed to be like a living room but then my parents kinda cornered off a place for their bed so that was kinda like living room slash bedroom over there. And then it had upstairs and then that's where I slept in a big double bed it was there- it was already there because we didn't come with any furniture right so it was all- was supposedly furnished, not really [chuckles] but I mean there was a table and chairs and the kitchen and the bed I guess for parents and then a bed for me and then the girls slept up there too, these two young girls. So, it was very- kinda of a primitive house not really-

NK: Those, those conditions would have been very upgrade from so many of the others.

BK: Yes, our house was nicer than the other people's houses like-

NK: [Mumbling, unclear] The others were called shacks, you know pretty much.

BK: Yeah, so.

NK: But a house like that would have been uh-

BK: Oh and there was a porch on there too and then sometime later my dad made Japanese ofuro in the porch like he built one area where you stayed outside to clean yourself off and then for the place where you jumped in the hot water where it was- it was a watering trough like for cattle so he bought that and put a stove underneath to heat up the water. So, and then there was- what you call it, like a raft that you know sits on top of the water and then you jump on there and then it goes down and it covers the hot bottom of the tank because the fires right underneath right so, that's- I remember taking baths in there. This is after the first while we were using

these galvanized big wash tubs and then the hot water was just heated on top of the stove. And then

[30 minutes]

BK: these oval copper-like things for warming up water and that was water for our bath and for our washing, hand washing, there was no washing machine we had to use our hands to [chuckles] scrub the clothes. I don't remember my mom washing the sheets 'cause I remember when we lived in Steveston after we went back after the war, I remember washing the clothes with washboard and scrubbing it that way you know. That's how I remember washing clothes 'cause my mom worked at the cannery and I was 12 so then I did our washing by hand [laughs] yeah.

LU: Did you have any other chores when you were in Lethbridge during the war years though? How did you help out around the farm and then the house?

BK: Well, well I helped dad like feed the cows and stuff you know going on the truck and giving out the wheat or whatever it was that- because they were housed in a corral I guess you would say in the winter time and then we would feed them in there but the truck could go around in there. But one time I did fall off the truck and my dad ran over me, over my legs, but it was soft like- probably some of it was manure [chuckles] but that saved me though because I had no broken bones like when the truck went over my legs I sunk into this oozy ground where the cows walk around there poo and whatever. But oh, my dad when he got out the truck-

[Footage jumps]

BK: He learned to drive the tractor [finger pointing gesture] and he'd go first make a nice straight line [makes a gesture, using both hands, of a straight line] with a plow behind [points behind her] ,you know, and then he would show me [points finger straight] "now you follow that line and drive" [mimicking a steering wheel] so, that's how I learned to drive straight [mimics a straight narrow path] [laughs] Yeah and then when it was hay time, he would pick up the hay, put it on the front loader, and then I would drive the tractor and I was 11 and I could hardly reach the pedals 'cause I wasn't very tall. [laughs] So, that's what I did on the farm to help my dad 'cause it was just dad and I and of course mum just stayed home I guess and made meals for us.

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: Yeah, she learned to- from the hakujin ladies to make bread and pickles and yeah, we had little- not a little garden I guess it was a big garden to you know get our vegetables and so she would do canning of these vegetables that we had. Yeah, so she did that.

LU: Oh, wow.

BK: Yeah, so they were- we talk about these mustard pickles and dill pickles that both our parents made [pointing between herself and Nori] and we talk about now [chuckles] and say “oh they were so good” [laughs] but I haven’t tried it myself. [chuckles]

LU: Oh Wow! Before I start asking a little bit more questions would you like a bit more tea?

BK: No. I still have tea did you want more? [looks to Nori]

NK: Okay, [looks towards Blanche] I’m okay.

BK: [Takes a sip of tea]

LU: Well, maybe we’ll talk a little bit about your family history now- [directed towards Nori]

NK: Okay. [Sits up]

LU: And I’ll come back and ask the questions to both of you. I think, so what do you know about your family history and what part of Japan they came from and when they might have come over and why?

NK: Alright, our family background is in Okinawa. My grandfather came here around 1907, and he came here because at that time there was a call from the CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway], that’s the Canadian Pacific Railway, for workmen from the Orient to come to help. So, 1907 is a year that a number- quite a number of folks from the mainland Japan also came but that’s also the year that the so-called- was it called the- well some kind of riot in Vancouver which

[35 minutes]

NK: arose [hand gestures] which caused such a tremendous [hand gestures] social upheaval at the time that the CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] discontinued calling [hand gesture] Oriental people over because in those days [hand gestures] there was a lot of racial discrimination. And so there were a number of Japanese folks who were you know men, young men, who were here but because CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] project was discontinued but they were here, they had no place to go. Now, my grandfather was caught in that situation and you know there was a lot of- few years that we are unsure of what- how he managed you know but there were quite a number of also of Okinawan folks. [hand gestures] And by that time there were already a few Okinawan folks settled in the southern Alberta region of Alberta, and they were working in the coal mine there. So, many of these young men who had come, intending to work with CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway], now without you know, employment went over to the Alberta as well and kinda joined that Okinawan community there. And so that’s sort of the beginning of Okinawan community in Lethbridge which goes back to the very early 1900s. And after his few years there he called his boys which would be my father and when my father turned 15, which was immigration age you can come if you were 15 years of age, called him over and that was the year- 1914 my father came and also started to work there. In the coal mines.

A couple years later my uncle came, he would be my dad's brother, and so now there are the two sons and their father in the Lethbridge area. Okay, so that's where they spent a number of years and shortly after my uncle and my dad were here and started to work and tried to learn English and everything like that because apparently there was some intent of them staying here themselves but also sending as much money back to Okinawa as they could. But it wasn't their intent, from what I've heard, that they were going to be going back and resettling- "this is the new land we're going to do the best we can here" attitude. So, that's what continued for my dad and my uncle. However, my grandfather went back to Okinawa again after a few years. And okay, so my father continued to work there until the late '20s and that's when the Great Depression hit- coal mines all closed down, that was the year 1920-'29 to '35 was the Depression so somewhere in those early years the coal mines closed down, they all shut down so all the Japanese folks in the Lethbridge area were out of work again. But my father and my mother and I was born in '36.

BK: '35. [laughs]

NK: I'm sorry. In '30- I was born in '35.

LU: '35.

NK: Yes. 1935 but in 1936 because he was out of work at that point he went to find work in Ocean Falls. Now, let me just back up a little bit here. My mother oh I- no, no okay I'll even back up a bit further- [both Blanche and Nori chuckle] my dad had brought his wife over, his first wife, in the early '20s now they had three children but his wife passed away when the children were

[40 minutes]

NK: very small something like ages one, two, and three something like that okay so they were very young and so my dad was left with these three small children. So, the oldest was a son who okay- the son, and then a daughter, and another son okay three. He took the oldest two back to Okinawa to be raised by the children's grandparents. The youngest one was adopted to another family, Japanese family who had no children, okay so after my father took the two oldest ones back to Okinawa to be raised by the grandparents he returned back to Canada to you know, continue his work here and in 1933 he remarried and that- he married, he remarried and that's my mother, [points to himself] his second wife, and she came over from Okinawa to Canada in 1933 and I was born in '35. Okay so he had two families like you know right that's his older one and so that was his situation but as he continued in Canada in '36 we moved over to Ocean Falls, and we were there until of course '42 when the evacuation started. And while we were in Ocean Falls, that was about a six-year period, he called his son- oldest son from Okinawa that he had taken over when he was young and he was now 17 or 18 somewhere there and he joined the family in Ocean Falls. Now he was of course something like 17 or 18 and I was at the time of evacuation I was six years of age so anyway that was our

family at that time with a teenage son and a with- from his first wife and I was- and there were a couple of younger siblings that were born in Ocean Falls as well. I am the oldest of six kids I got five that were boy, girl, boy, girl, all the way down [laughter from the room] and yeah so that's what our family is you know. And then we came back after the evacuation we returned back to the Lethbridge area.

LU: Mm-hm. Oh, wow. Very fascinating. Now this question could probably go to both of your families' histories, but your parents now there's always kinda of an interest to see whether or not the parents actually knew each other first before getting married or if they had-

NK: Or a picture bride-

LU: A go between or a picture bride or what was the situation in your- with your parents? If you know how they met.

BK: I can't remember mum's side if um- I don't think he knew her from you know before he came over. I think it was probably an arranged marriage because I don't think she ever mentioned- [looks towards Nori] I don't think your side either huh?

NK: Well, no-I don't, I really don't know that part of the story although, my father grew up in an area called Kanida [?] or Kanai [?] or something like that in the area called Yomitan [?] in Okinawa that's sort of the central area and my mother came from the other end of the same province you know and I'm not really sure if they had known each other or if they had a go between or. I know they weren't picture brides or anything like that because after my father returned after leaving

[45 minutes]

NK: his first set of children in Okinawa and he returned back to Canada, I think there may have been some kind of an arrangement made later that he would re- you know after for him a remarriage to my mother and there was several year gap [gestures with hands] there between- about that time she came over which was '30 [?] and actually I'm not- that you know prior to that time is a little fuzzy you know in terms of details.

LU: Mm-hm. Wow.

NK: Yeah, so.

LU: Do you know the educational level that you parents were able to achieve either here in Canada or their schooling in Japan do you know how high they were able to go?

NK: Well, my father came over when he was 15 and I really don't know- I presume he was going to school up until that age in Okinawa but after he came here one of the things that I had heard- his father wanted him to learn English and it's because there seemed to be this intent that they were going to stay here. So, I remember another family friend telling us that "your grandfather was one of the fellas that you know was almost going against the tide," in the sense in that- in those days there still was a whole idea of you know if I make money we're all going back to resettle

and not so much- well we're going to you know stick it out here, but he wanted his boys to learn English and that wasn't all together what so many of them want- were doing. So, it was not a formal English I don't think- I hadn't heard that he went to you know a school kind of thing because he was- his main occupation was work and somehow there was some arrangements made that he would learn English. And same with my uncle so, both of them. So, I don't know exactly the details but that seemed to have been the situation there.

BK: How about your mum?

NK: Yeah, my mother, I believe finished her high school in Okinawa and she was in training to be a teacher and I am unclear as to whether she had already started to teach or not, if she had it would have been just a year or two I'm sure but there was this you know her mindset was as a teacher and she did get involve in some areas where she could but certainly with us she took a you know a lot of the opportunity to framework our day in such a way that we would learn, especially Japanese.

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah, and in regards to that - I remember coming home from school on the school bus when we were elementary, junior high age where they would be out in the sugar beet field working away in the daytime and we would arrive home about four o'clock or something like that on the bus, she would always come home from the field and have a little snack and then have about an hour of Japanese study. Yeah, she intended- she always did that [hand gestures] and then I guess she would then prepare supper and then we would go out for the evenings and work again, you know that sort of- we didn't finish a day at six o'clock in those days right, [chuckles] you worked when the sun was still out. But in Alberta you know the sun is up 'till nine o'clock easily you know. Ah, yes it's quite different than here you know. Yes, my son and daughter they go out and play sick [?]- you know 18 holes of golf after six o'clock, right now you can play golf past 10 o'clock at night in the middle of the summer.

LU: Wow. [chuckles]

NK: Anyways, that's off the subject [hand gestures] but nevertheless.

LU: A golfers dream. [laughs]

BK: Yeah. [laughs]

NK: But, yeah that's you know that's what she did. She was quite

[50 minutes]

NK: well I think she showed a considerable amount of poise in terms of academic you know she, she was- she always read a lot, we always had mag- Japanese magazines and I remember her you know what she taught us I recall was this Korako [?] book its Grade one, Grade two Japanese readers and we had those on a farm and I would wonder where she got these from but anyway so, you know that was something that she you know really-, yeah.

LU: Hmm. [towards Blanche] Do you know about your parents?

BK: I don't know anything about my dad, I'm sure he went to school in Japan but once he got here I don't think he had any formal- I don't where he learnt his English though I mean, I mean he learnt to write and to do things like that but I don't know where he learnt his English. But my mother in Japan she was training to be a nurse. So, and but she, it was kinda like not in a school setting of training like you know it would be like-

NK: Practical training, practical. [?]

BK: Yeah, working with a doctor and their office or you know because I remember she was, she was telling me that she had helped the doctor you know with bandaging and you know looking after patients, and giving out medication, and that so she was doing that type of work before she came to Canada. So, she was in that house field [?]. But, yeah so I don't know where- how far she went in the academic part [hand gestures] like you know so in those days you know sometimes you didn't go that far, like maybe six or Grade eight and then, then going into a practical type of training I think that's what she had done, yeah. I had forgotten about that until [chuckles] we started talking about our mothers. Yeah, I remember her telling me that that's what she did in Japan before she came over, yeah.

LU: Very interesting. [chuckles] Now, I forgot to ask you for your full name, is Nori short for-?

NK: Yes, my actual full name- and you'll only see it on my birth certificate but it's Mutsu-Nori [?]. And that prefix is, is on our- my half-brother is Mutsu-Hiro [?], Mutsu-Tomi [?] and you know I'm not sure if it's an Okinawan tradition but you know there were these prefixes added and we had common prefixes to our name but Mutsu-Nori [?] is my, you know my I guess legal name but I, I dropped that you know on most of my documents, in fact all of my documents, and just went with Nori.

LU: Mm-hm. Oh, wow that's interesting too. [chuckles] Now, what do you remember about Ocean Falls? You mentioned that you grew up there, [NK: Mm-hm] because you were moved after-

NK: Yup-

LU: -you were one years old. Where is Ocean Falls exactly?

NK: Ocean Falls, I think it's about 300 miles north of Vancouver along the coast. It's in a- there's a little village called Bella Coala [?], or is it Bella-Bella, one of those names and its- but it's in that same inland further in and you can only access it by boat or by seaplane, there's no roads going into it.

BK: Even now.

LU: Wow.

NK: Yeah, but it was a very you know it was a pulp and paper mill that was very productive and, yeah. And again, I'm not sure what the total population of the place was in its heyday, but it was a good community of Japanese working at that, at the time of the evacuation.

LU: Oh.

NK: So there are- have been Ocean Falls reunions

[55 minutes]

NK: along the way and yeah, so sometimes I run into people who were there.

[smiles]

LU: Oh, wow.

NK: But I was six when I left so, I have a very childhood recollections only of that place but-

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: But tell where you lived. [speaks while looking at Nori]

NK: What, you mean-

BK: Where you lived, your house.

NK: Well, you know they were company homes. The whole residential area was all built by the company for its employees but there were a whole Japanese section, where the Japanese lived, and you know they were tiered on the side of mountains like this, you know, because they- [unclear]

BK: Yeah, they had to climb.

BK: Yeah, so yeah the stairs- there is no- all the streets were built out of wood because you know you got these slopping mountain side and so you have to build off you know to get a level ground, you'd have to take large planks and they became your street. Yeah, so, it's wooden, wooden streets and tiered- stairwell that went up to your lev- you know your four or five tiers of homes that were built along the- yeah. I know our community- our community hall for Japanese there was a dirt playground there, part of it, in the front of it, because there was enough level ground there but the other half was extended with boards. [smiles] I-I didn't realize that until fairly recently and I've seen pictures of that too so yeah. [smiles]

BK: Mm-hm, that's[?] Interesting. [chuckles]

NK: Your school ground or you know yeah I think it's also school, grounds were half wood- wooden built-up play area- you know playground as well as-

BK: Dirt. [?]

LU: [laughs]

BK: So, yeah. [smiles]

NK: Yeah there wasn't a whole lot of level ground.

LU: Wow. What kind of games or activities do you remember playing in Ocean Falls when your- prewar days?

NK: I remember, I don't know who it was, but showing me how to build a kite. We used to run and these kites you know [points upwards] and we used to- especially at the picnic you know, I remember we had to walk about a mile to a picnic ground where there was always- that was flat [unclear] at the sea level too but doing that- one of my passions in those days was little airplanes and we had these little model

planes that you, you know made out of balsa wood that you glue together and- I was only six though so I didn't you know have the dexterity [mimicking putting something together with his fingers] nor the-know how to follow instructions so they were other older, young people that would help me and this one person his name is Abraham Kabayama [?], the United Church minister's son, helped me build this and that was built just before the evacuation order was and so I had to leave that there I-I remember that and that was one of my [point to himself] you know one of my greatest loss- [both interviewees laugh]

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: As a six-year-old you know but of course we couldn't bring that with us so I had to leave that. But other than that, as a- as a young kid I used to- I remember walking to go out looking for these snails. Snails, over there, they were large snails [hold up hand estimating a size from his thumb to index finger] I suspect some of them were five, six inches long as thick as your thumb [holds up his thumb] and one of the things, as a bratty kid, [Blanche smiles] would learn is to look- is to sprinkle salt on them and they would kinda melt away. [gradually closing his hand]

LU: Really?

BK: Mm-hm. [nodding head]

NK: Oh yeah, yeah that's what happens to snails if you put salt on them. Anyway-

BK: That's mean, isn't it? [laughs]

NK: You know I mean they were all over. After- and we got rain after you know day after day, after day, it would be rainy you know so it was a rain-so part of you know that's-

[60 minutes]

NK: part of the costal always that way.

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Anyway I-

BK: So then-

NK: So, I have great memories of that. [smiles]

BK: [laughs]

NK: And playing, and playing in these warm little pools [moves hand in a circular motion] near our picnic area and there would be lots of tadpoles [hand gestures] and we would go in there and you know the tadpoles would be right there [looks down and wiggles fingers] where your looking you know catching them [smiles] and playing with them. So, it's a little kids enjoy- [both interviewees laugh] enjoyment [interviewer chuckles] I do, I do [smiles] recall from those years.

LU: What about your school friends? Now you mention that there's quite a big population of Japanese individuals in that area, but did you also have you know non-Japanese friends as well and was it a pretty mixed up school group or-?

NK: No, no, actually no I was- I did not start Grade one when I was there. So I-I went to something like a kindergarten but that was Japanese section in those days so there were no- I didn't have Caucasian friends from there but no there were- you know as far as friends yes do- I remember a number of names of people that I knew were family friends not necessarily you know somebody who was my specific friend just one person who I met here in Toronto, he's now passed on, but I remember the names of some of the others that my mother who you know was a fam- was very close to the you know the other lady and the families would have you know friendship with and we- after the evacuation many of them moved here to Toronto and my mother living in Alberta at least twice a year or so would write fairly long letters [smiles] to each other and [camera sounds] and my mother-

LU: Oops sorry, I had a feeling I was gonna run out. Oh no, [chuckles] well just have to go back a little bit on your story there.

NK: You can't tell what's on there though, can you? I mean do you know-

LU: No, I don't know what part it- [camera sounds]

NK: Did it quite after- right at the time it made that sound?

LU: Yeah, but I- the last part of the tape doesn't always pick up sometimes the last about 30 seconds so maybe-

NK: What part- what was I saying? [a short silence]

BK: About your family friends.

LU: Yeah, maybe, maybe-

NK: Ok-

LU: Start at that-

NK: Oh yeah, okay yeah we, we had- I recall family friends that my mother maintained contact with over the- over these many, many years after we left Ocean Falls we settled in Lethbridge some of her friends settled here in Ontario in Chatham [?] and that area of Ontario. And at least twice a year she would write a fairly long letter. I recall one would have been at Christmas time the other time what's, late spring or summer and she, she would write of course in Japanese to Mrs. Morita [?] or Ms. Morokawa [?] or you know some of these folks that were family friends and but I would know all of their family I remember you know the young people that were part of that family you know much older than myself but we would always- mom would ask us to write the address down all the time right so [small camera lag] I often did that or my sister would do that and so you know she would also read the letters back to us to after they got- after she got something back from them so we always sort of had a kinda distant connection with some of these families over the years and so even today occasionally I would run into some of these folks and you know we

[65 minutes]

NK: you know we, we, have the- just [smiles] a great little connection again [hand gestures and smiling] kinda recalling way back in those days you know but yeah so that was interesting and what was your question that I answered that way?

[laughter from both the interviewees]

BK: Well you were talking about what you did as a kid. [chuckles]

LU: Oh, and the Japanese population size in Ocean Falls were also talking about that.

NK: You know I seem to recall, I may be wrong but, I seem to recall somebody saying that there were about 700 Japanese at the time of the you know the peak number.

There were good numbers of young or good numbers of bachelor Japanese and there was a whole row of houses-

BK: [says simultaneously] Area where they lived.

NK: Where the bachelors lived and then these homes were families that were talking about that were in rows on these tiered up in mountains [moving hands vertically] along the mountain side there and so I- I believe that would have probably been the size at that time.

LU: Oh, wow and then during the war years, moved out to Lethbridge, who was- who made the decision to go from Ocean Falls to Lethbridge and not go into the camps?

NK: Mm-hm, [says at the same time at interviewer], well okay we of course my parents must have known the option at that time either you go to Hastings Park and eventually to the interior or the option- the other option was to go east to the Rockies voluntarily and we had connections already previously in Lethbridge area right, because that's where we originally- that's where we originated from so I don't think it was too great of a decision for them so they chose to go back to Lethbridge but of course the coal mines were- they did not restart so it would have been you know okay, we get there we'll find out what we're going to do and one of the again, the option became well we'll go out to the farm and you know farmers always need laborers so that's exactly what we did and we actually went to the farm- if you recall I said that there was this one family where my, where my father's first wife's youngest son was adopted and they were living in a farm just outside of Lethbridge. So at that farm there was an extra home that the owners of the farm said you know that's fine our family could come there so that's where we went and started to work in the sugar beets as well as the, a little bit of vegetable farming this kinda thing so you know I started school while I was there on the farm in Grade one I barely could speak English because we grew up in the Japanese community and always communicated in Japanese to our parents so I hardly spoke any- and I was very shy when I was a kid and so I recall my mother saying to one of our friends, friend's son who was probably in about Grade eight at the time you know "please look after Nori because he can't speak English and we don't know how he's gonna manage in school" and stuff like that right so there was always that one fella that was kinda looking out for me [smiles], [Blanche chuckles] and this was in a school in Iron Springs and so I went to actually there all the way to Grade nine and then high

school in Picture Butte [unclear] which is a neighbouring town, Iron Spring was just a little hamlet and but there was a school there and so I basically went through school there in elementary and junior high in Iron Springs and had quite a you know- actually I really enjoyed my years you know growing up in that area. I, I didn't

[70 minutes]

NK: really experience too much the negativity of the society in those days you know the- because in that area really there were quite a lot of German farmers and some are Italian farmers and so they too, in a little milder way but they were also the enemies right in the European theater of the war so they were not incarcerated like the Japanese were but they were- some people were under surveillance, yes and you know like in a farm you're not gonna have people- there out in the country kinda thing if you were living in the city I think that would have been much more of a surveillance issue for some people that may you know that European background who were enemies in those days but [clears throat]- so I had a lot of German friends, we worked on many German farms who were so good to us because we were all the same boot [?] [unclear] sort of thing. They understood the plight of the Japanese in those days so they, they actually helped us a lot and went out of their way to help us in some cases you know so I you know I, I remember things like that too growing up and so we had, you know we had good relationships with a lot of the people there, yeah.

LU: Oh wow. How many Japanese families were you close with in that area when you were growing up?

NK: I think right in the- you know farm area because we were spread out were not close together right and, and it was a little bit difficult getting around in those days too you know we didn't have cars until into the probably into the '50s late- you know something like that because in those years in the '40s we were just barely getting along right or barely able to manage to get back on our feet because you know we lost a whole lot of stuff and so but it- we bought our first vehicle 1951 and that was of course on the farm and many of the other Japanese folks weren't [?] able to buy cars at that time yet but it wasn't cars it was mainly trucks that you bought because you got to make it you know it has to be a vehicle that would be like a work vehicle in addition to transporting so you didn't buy a car right, car would only be- is not a practical thing to carry loads of [interviewer chuckles] you know-

BK: Potatoes. [chuckles]

NK: [overlapping with BK] Potatoes to the town to sell and stuff like that right. [smiles]

LU: Do you remember what kind of vehicle it was? If you-

NK: Oh yeah, yes well we- see I, I turned, I turned 16 in '51 so we had to wait 'till I was 16 to be able to drive so I got my you know- so I was a driver in order for us to

buy the car and my dad was always kind of un [shakes both fists]- you know unsteady in a lot [shakes both fists] of ways you know physically so we waited 'till I was 16 to buy a vehicle and so from then on we you know we always had a vehicle in the home but it was mainly with the idea that this will be you know both for the farm use as well as some transportation and as hard- as growing up [hand gesture] we would you know played a lot of hockey out in the farms and its like that and so kids would be in the back of the truck and we pack six people in the cab of a vehicle [smiles] [soft chuckles from interviewer]- oh yeah you know no seatbelts, [both Blanche and Nori smile] no regulations so we drive all the way until Lethbridge you know rent the ice, ice rink for you know at midnight and play from midnight to one thirty you know things like [smiles and moves hands] that and those were youth experiences that are great memories really.

BK: She asked you what kind of truck it was.

NK: It was an International. It was-

BK: A red International.

NK: Bright red International. It was, it was really something that all of us young kids [smiled]

[75 minutes]

BK: enjoyed looking at and riding and stuff like that too yeah.

LU: [chuckles] Was it brand new or- [unclear, speaking over each other]

NK: Brand new, brand new-

LU: Wow.

NK: We bought a brand new one at that time. Yeah, later we bought an old three ton truck to haul beans and carrots, potatoes into town because that- we be- we did more than rural [?] crop farming and you know we had to put these things into sacks pile them on the truck and take it into, into the city and you know sell it there. Selling it meaning that we would take it to another warehouse where they would purchase the whole thing from us and they became the middle man to put it into small bags [mimes a small bag with hands] and send out [shoots arm upwards] right so from the producer you sell it to the middle man [hand gestures matching explanation] and they make so you know- sell it to the retailer.

LU: Oh wow.

NK: Yeah, so anyway there was that sort of thing that we- so that was my growing up work in those days. [smiles]

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah.

LU: And you mentioned earlier the handcrafted-

NK: Oh yes!

LU: Boat that you made that you had to leave behind but, what were some of the other items that you had to leave behind in Ocean Falls while- when moving into Lethbridge? And I guess you would have had left behind quite a bit as well,

BK: [nods]

LU: I imagine so, do you remember some of the things that you were able to take with you and some that you had to leave behind?

NK: Well you know what I recall I you know when you ask me individual items it kinda hard to recall that but I remember mother saying “well you know were gonna come- well come back and get that so don’t you know- listen we don’t have to take that with us” and I do not know how much of the real valuable things we took with us I think the idea was well- you know we don’t know when we’re coming back but we’ll take what we- you know what would be the most reasonable thing for us take not the real heirloom things that we would might consider real value or anything like that, not that we had a lot of that stuff either but- so we took you know our allotted baggages with us, to the max I’m sure, but exact what items and you know what we- ‘cause you know I was only- I was six at that time but I don’t really recall you know what some of these items were but the only thing I do recall is leaving my plane there. [smiles]

BK: [chuckles]

NK: Yeah. [raises hand]

LU: Do you remember if there’s any family photographs or family albums that-

NK: Oh yes.

LU: Were they taken or left behind?

NK: Oh well we, we have some of, some of those you know photographs. Good question, I’m sure we wouldn’t have brought everything, all the pictures with us because they would sort of be extra baggage right because you’re thinking you’re - we’re gonna come back.

BK: Mm-hm.

NK: So I presume we brought what was well you know what we may have thought would be nice to have with us but those were not my decisions in those days.

[laughter from everyone]

LU: That’s right [chuckles] you try and sneak your toys into the suitcase and- [chuckles]

NK: Yeah, you know I don’t recall but I, I don’t recall any pressure of you know I’m gonna have to say goodbye to this thing for sure, except my airplane again, [chuckles from the room] but everything else I- you know [raises hand] is- I think we left with the intent that we’ll be back to pick it up [BK: Mm-hm] or you know it will be ours again.

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: I think everybody had that idea you know that we’re coming back, they pack stuff up and then thinking were gonna come back you know but I remember like I

had to leave the doll, you know the Ohinasan [?] you know the girl [hand movements] -

NK: [overlapping with above ending] The tiered- [mimicking tiers with hands]

BK: Tiered [mimicking tiers with hands] you that we have- [points finger]

LU: For Girls' Day?

NK: For Girls' Day yep.

BK: Yeah, you know the shelf [mimes the shelf with hands] of dolls, I mean that we had to leave behind and then- so I, I don't know what happened to that, it never came back to us so and then we packed

[80 minutes]

BK: as he said [points to Nori] you know we're coming back so you know we packed things up and only took not good things but we took old dishes and maybe some of them were cracked up ones you know that weren't- and that's how we started out at the farm we didn't have much of course we had to take our bedding and our clothes but that's all we took but then after, I don't know how many years, they sent back some of the stuff that we had packed but it had been gone through by whoever and so my mom got her sewing machine back and few dishes and things like that but nothing of real value came back- I mean I think we got a trunk full off stuff because we left that behind and then but yeah so we really more or less loss most things you know so we just had to start all over again.

LU: Wow.

BK: Yeah, so mine was the dolls like the Ohinasan [?] the only thing I remember is that I got a picture of that with me standing beside it you know [smiles] taken when we we're there so, yeah.

LU: Do you- I know you were both very young when the war started but do you remember when the war had started and the day Pearl Harbor? - do you- was there like a shift in the feeling in, in the area or-

NK: Well you know what I recall, not specifically a day I don't remember it as a radio announcement or anything like that I, I do recall blackouts-

BK: Yes [nods head] me too.

NK: You know what the blackouts?

LU: Yep.

NK: Okay and whether we were told to you know- that blackout was gonna start immediately after or a week later or whatever it was I, I am not sure but my mother said that we had to put- well we had to pull the blinds down [mimes this action with one arm] and then put a blanket on the outside, on the outside [unclear speech from Blanche] of the blind [mimes this action with both arms] you know so that you know the light wouldn't go out [mimicking light escaping from the window frames] but the light was only candles at that point because of the blackout you couldn't put on the light and so- and the light was only a single [points index finger up and moves

arm from up to down] bulb it came down from the middle of the light- ceiling anyway so it wasn't that it was a bright lights or anything like that but blackouts [swipes/waves hand] meant that you can't put anything on like at least the power on and we- and she also said when we hear the siren we have to jump you know get under the table [points index finger down] and you know and I, I wonder to myself you know, did we have a siren? or how- why, why did they have a siren? but there was- maybe they set that up when that all you know the precaution of all of this but that was one of the things that I- or those were two things that I recall of the war experience-

BK: But I think that blackout was right after Pearl Harbor because they-

NK: [overlapping] Yeah, yep well it was but-

BK: They might come along and bomb other cities along the coast you know and so I remember we hung blankets on our- but we had, we turned our lights on but we then we covered it up with a cloth [raising both arms above her head in a circular motion] so that- it was one of these single things [moves one arm up to down] you know and in the kitchen [mimicking a ceiling light fixture] because all we had in that place was a bedroom off- [gestures hands to one side] and then there was a kitchen [hand gestures in front of her] and the living room [gestures to behind her] part so we probably didn't use the living room part [hand gestures to her right] but then the kitchen windows and this light [forms a circle with hands over her head] we cover it up so that you know wouldn't really shed that much light-

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: Yeah I remember that distinctly.

LU: Did you have a curfews enforced as well in your, in your areas or- ?

BK: No, I don't think so that we had to be in by? No, I don't think we did but-

NK: I don't think, I never heard that.

BK: No.

LU: Mm-hm, oh.

BK: I don't think we- [?]

NK: See I don't, I don't think they would have impose anything like that where I lived or where we lived because I mean what would be the purpose it's not that they need to keep you under control particularly they just wanted you know we were not- you know we were seen as a national threat but you know maybe in the city they could have

[85 minutes]

NK: if there was a sense or riot or something like that you know but I, I don't think there would have been anything like that imposed at least or anyplace like Ocean Falls.

LU: Mm-hm, wow.

NK: Yeah-

LU: Hm.

NK: Curfews though in those days were their curfews in Vancouver? Do you know?
[towards the interviewer]

LU: Some parts-

NK: Some parts were.

LU: Some parts were, so it's interesting to see where they decided to enforce curfews [interviewees nod heads] and where they decided it wasn't necessary [interviewees nod heads again] or maybe they didn't have the means to pursue you know enforcing the curfews, maybe they didn't have enough staff or whatever it may be so it's just kinda interesting to see.

NK: Yeah, Mm-hm wow.

LU: But Mm-hm. So, I guess were there any other memories or stories that you remember about the war years that I can't remember if I've asked or not I don't- I can't think of anything else-

BK: Well there was this one time we were going to go to Kaslo to see our friends that were there- my mum and I took the train from Lethbridge to Kuok [?] and then there was a Caucasian girl was riding on the- and she came up to me, and she said- she knew that I was Japanese, but she says "You're not really different then I am" and so it made me feel good that you know she didn't look down on me as you know a "Jap" you know and so that was a good feeling because you- the parents talked about how you know we were discriminated but in Alberta there wasn't that much discrimination it seemed like you know the people seemed to be kind to us and so yeah I remember that, I think I was about 11 at the time when this girl come up to me and said that. So, it felt good [chuckles] but yeah living on the farm was good I mean we had good friends and good times together, free you know.

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Well, well you know I think many of us, Nisei's, we grew up with this- we grew up in that era where there was this sense in which you were struggling with the idea that you know being Japanese is really a negative thing in our own minds and you wanted, you wanted of course to do what you can to shed this whole idea and you know some people would try to be [points to his head]- colour their hair blonde and stuff like that [chuckles] right but in any case I think we grew up with this feeling that we're not as, somehow, not perhaps as capable, we had a feeling of insecurity and inadequacies and you know we're just not- you know I certainly did you know I felt that I well you know I can't do the things as well as somebody else so this is why I think we try to do things [smiles] maybe you know put a little extra effort into some things however, you know growing up with that kind of a feeling that- of sense of insecurity the experience I had when I went to SAIT [Southern Alberta Institute of Technology] that is- okay now it's called, now this technical institute in Calgary is called SAIT [Southern Alberta Institute of Technology] back in my day when I went there it was-

BK: Tech. [?]

NK: Called a provincial, [glances at Blanche] yeah it was the only technical school in Alberta so it was just called a Tech but you know I went to school there and [small lag in camera- video and audio rewind backwards a few seconds and repeats the last sentence again]

[continuing from last sentence] you know I, I was already past high school but still with this sense of this you know “I’m still a you know

[90 minutes]

NK: I’m a Japanese” and I wanted you know- one of the things was you know we could never date English girls you know, you always felt the you know “why would any English girl want to date a Japanese guy” kind of thing you know we had that kind of a feeling but this once occasion to me was quite significant in the sense that you know I went to school for two years at the Tech in Calgary in ’55, ’56 and we enrolled in this dance club or dance lessons [hand gestures, in circular movements] and at that time it was you know the whole situation at that time you know it was the beginning of the year and you know you- I think the school was trying to mix the people up and everything like that to get everyone to know each other but there was Arthur Marie dance studio who came there to put on dancing lessons and so you sign up for that and we thought okay well let’s do that you know, couple of Japanese guys were you know we thought we go and so we went and both of us were very much similar in our personalities and our little bit of hesitation [shakes body] doing things you know and anyways we went there will a little bit of reluctance [hand gestures] but we- and anyways I recall when we went in there we had all the- we saw all the girls lined up on that side [gestures arm to the right] and all the guys lined up on this side [gestures arm to the left] and you know so and then the instructor said “okay so you know tonight were gonna have the girls select the guys as your partner for the lessons” you know and then at that time there was this one girl that, you know she’s a, she was a beautiful girl too, and I actually had met her earlier in the school year and just casually you know spoken to but anyway she came directly over to me to ask to be a [unclear speech from Blanche] you know her partner and you know to me that was really a big eye opener in the sense that you know she, she wanted to have me as her dance partner and so you know I thought, wow this is, this is, this is great this is really guys [laughter from interviewees and interviewer] kind of thing and it was, it, it sort of releases you from this kind of a bondage you feel that you know, yeah I guess I’m not that bad after all kind of thing you know but you know I’m trying to kinda convey an idea here that, that sort of had gripped a whole lot of the young people in those days who where you know grew up in that kind of a atmosphere but that kind of overture that you experience from you know a pretty girl [hand gestures] at the same time you know is, is something that is really very both releasing and empowering for you that you know okay, you’re okay kinda thing right [smiles] [chuckles from the room] anyway I do recall that as one

experience that is very you know impressed in my mind to [unclear] I do recall or it you know comes back to me every so often.

[LU: Now-]

NK: It's not [?] simple but-

LU: -could it be done the other way around? You know for example a Japanese girl dating a non-Japanese male, was that something common in- or I guess it wouldn't have been common where we seen it a little bit more but was that something kinda taboo as well similar to-

NK: Well, you know I- that's a good question I you know I didn't do much dating in those days or anything like that you know I, I dated one Japanese girl one time, prior to having met Blanche [gestures to Blanche] you know but it- I'm

[95 minutes]

NK: not sure about the reverse of that you're saying what about the girls' side of it right, you know that's a good question I hadn't particularly- you know I don't know the answer to that one.

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: But-

BK: [simultaneous speech] Were there other Japanese girls in that dance class-

NK: [simultaneous speech] Well, what did you feel? [gestures to and looks at Blanche] What, what you say? [leans closer towards Blanche]

BK: In that dance class were there Japanese girls?

NK: There was one Japanese girl there, there was one Japanese girl there I-

BK: And then, and then-

NK: [simultaneous speech] I don't know who-

BK: [simultaneous speech] You were the only two-

NK: Yep, two of us.

BK: And the rest were all hakujin boys?

NK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BK: Hm.

NK: But I don't know who the Japanese girl's partner- took as a partner she didn't come to me [points at himself, smiles] [laughter from the room] and then didn't go to my friend either but I, I don't know.

BK: Oh.

NK: So maybe she went to, you know to, she must have got a Caucasian-

BK: Fella.

NK: Fella or friend or something.

BK: Maybe she said figured 'oh this is a good chance to-'

NK: Oh, could be, [smiles] [simultaneous speech] but I know there was one- yeah.

BK: [simultaneous speech] You know pick the, because before it was always Japanese, Japanese so then in this situation you know she could have the opportunity to pick a Caucasian fella as her partner in this dancing class. [chuckles]

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Well anyway after I said that you know I gave- I did mention this at our time, we were right in this room too [points index finger to the right] and one of the fellas came up to me you know one of the other Nisei who made his presentation too, came up to me afterward and says, "you know I had a similar experience" he says it was- only this one was a blonde girl my- what I'm talking about was a brunette but in any case [chuckles] this is a blonde that you know had come up to him who under a different circumstance of course but it was really a you know [small lag with video] experience that gave him the thought that 'okay, I'm okay too' [laughs] [raises and opens both arms] yeah so.

LU: Now, was that something that you would have felt as well, Blanche, that-

BK: No.

LU: You know you couldn't- if a non-Japanese boy came up and asked you to go to a dance together, was that something that you couldn't really do or that you thought might be uncomfortable?

BK: No, I don't think so but I yeah I didn't date anybody either before not, not I mean Caucasian person so I guess as he said [gestures to Nori] yeah, I only dated another Japanese fella before marrying him too [gestures to Nori again] [chuckles] so yeah I didn't really-

NK: Well, it wasn't-

BK: I didn't feel like that I couldn't be with the- like his [gestures to Nori] you know to date I don't think I never even crossed my mind but no I remember going to Mormons dances but they were- there were no Japanese there, they were all hakujins and then so I didn't feel like you know I was different because I think during my high school days I didn't have that many Japanese friends they were more all like- so I tried to be like them and I felt like I was one of them you know except for just like in the news or things like that was you know you hear about the discrimination and the word "Jap" really I hated that word you know it just somehow it just [took a short deep breath and points to chest] ping inside [chuckles] and whenever the mandarin oranges, people would call them "Jap oranges" and oh I just hated that you know 'cause I don't know because in- this is way after [hand gestures emphasizing her dialog] the war days you know and it, it, it doesn't bother me as much now but it did bother me [chuckles] a lot to hear that word but I didn't feel like I was you know different not I, I mean I did feel different but I tried to integrate with the Caucasians more and I've gotten only to know more Japanese since marrying him [gestures to Nori] [chuckles]

[100 minutes]

BK: 'cause he knew more and then coming to Toronto here too, so my world was always kinda around the Caucasian people-

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: And even at college was all mostly Caucasian not very many Japanese, few but-
 NK: You know I, I grew up in an area, in southern Alberta where you know although it was farm, it was farm area where there, where we lived quite a few miles apart but there were still quite a number of Japanese living in- scattered all over the place [moves hands 'all over the place'], number of them were my age we used to get together play baseball and play hockey and stuff like that so you know whenever [takes his hands out in front of him] it got to the area of like sports, baseball or anything like that you know many of us Japanese were pretty good at it you know and we would always be able to compete no problem with the, with the rest of the Caucasian guys, even though they were bigger and stuff like that so we felt okay in that circle of association and you know we were you know we thought we were just as good so I never felt any of this what I'm saying to you but whenever we got to the area of [unclear] who am I you know, 'who am I going to go the dance with in this coming Friday' or something like that right away you have this feeling that kinda rises you know isn't that funny? but that's the way it was-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Because it wasn't I suppose in that sense not dealt with or somehow that it would raise its ugly head you know and you would you know sort of sit back and we would, we would you know we'd go- sometimes we'd go to the dances but not with dates, right yeah. [smiles]

LU: Did you think some of those feelings might have also been portrayed onto the Isseis as well of not necessarily dating but you know that feeling of uncomfortable, 'not sure' -?

NK: Oh I, I think so you know I think that is probably common to people who are like first generation because you're fighting with this whole concept of acceptance and being able to, in a competitive surrounding, I mean at least you put these sense of competitiveness there and wondering if you're going to you know whether you are equal, whether you qualify, whether you whatever you know and I, I think that yeah I'm sure that the Isseis felt a lot of this sort of thing and you know so they, they had to in a sense really you know ganbari [?] this whole idea had to be there [says while holding fist up] and so you struggle through it and gradually as they you know especially if who you think are not enemies or anything like that but you know a hakujin person would come to you and befriend you that's, that's a big step towards being accepted [Blanche nods head] and I think that kind of feeling has to be there and I think that's you know a lot of people out there are sensing that today I, I would think especially any ethnic community that are being ostracized in whatever you know and this is why I think it's so important that its, its necessary for those who are not having this feeling to you know they're the ones who should be putting out you know stretching their hand out to shake their hands or whatever you know the

overture needs to be this way not from them to you because there more- so yeah I think all of them is, is a very important thing and I think that the isseis struggle with that I mean and also the niseis because of who we were and certainly isseis did, I'm sure in the same way but I mean the same thing but in a different way but you know I would think that would be a common feeling in many, especially in first generation.

[105 minutes]

LU: Have you noticed it at all either in the younger generation as well such as the sansei generations because they would have been just at that tail end of kinda of the more heavily prejudice, I guess you can call it an era or timeframe just not immediately after the war years but kind of a few years after that there's still a little bit like I remember my father talking about bullying issues and the schools and I know that's still something-

NK: [simultaneous speech] Yep.

LU: Common but it was more of a racial bullying-

NK: [simultaneous speech] Yep.

LU: Then it was just you know picking on the smaller kids in the class was that something you saw as well in, in the sansei groups at all?

NK: Well, if there- if it, if there was any of that I think it would have been probably to a very, to a much smaller degree because Sansei, Sansei generation you know we hear are anywhere from 75 to 90 percent intermarried and you know I think the Sansei generation largely have grown up with a very free- with a freed-up sense of what do you say this social communication and the ability to mix with people I think their- I don't think they struggled with any of the things that you know their parent generation had but you know I think maybe some of the older Sansei may have you know have felt that but at least that's my sense I'm not so sure but you know to have a whole generation marrying you know intermarrying or yeah intermarrying interracially to such a high degree is you know makes you say 'wow, what's happening here' kinda almost you know but that's very true you know that- they're not having any problems in terms of- right?

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah in their cultural, interracial that's all seemingly an easy thing for sanseis to cross I don't know what the yonsei and goseis are now going to- [smiles]

LU: [chuckles]

BK: Are you a sansei?

NK: [overlapping with BK] Yeah.

LU: Yonsei.

BK: [simultaneous speech] Oh, you're a yonsei. [smiles and nods head]

NK: [simultaneous speech] yonsei, sure yeah.

LU: Mm-hm, yeah.

NK: Mm-hm.

BK: Yeah well, our girls they kinda want to lose the identity as Japanese [chuckles] they both married Caucasian boys you know and so my oldest daughter- I mean they don't even care really for Japanese food, and they don't try to make it or all this "Oh! We're not Japanese" [throws hand up] and you know [chuckles, Nori smiles] I mean her husband white but you know they totally want to be lost of the Japanese- [swooshes hand] they don't seem to- but, but my son while he married a Chinese girl so they feel more like and Oriental whereas the other two you know they just 'no I don't do that I don't even go to T&T' [T & T Supermarket Company] and this kinda stuff and yet their kids love sushi you know [chuckles] it- [chuckles]- [LU: Wow-] - so when I go there you know they're always saying, "grandma! are you gonna make us some sushi" [smiles] you know but the kids are into more eating you know- [nods head]

LU: That seems to be common that it's the younger generations that are really pulling the sansei group back into-

NK: Oh really. [tilts head, nods, and smiles]

LU: Kinda you know back into the culture and getting them more involved, they're the ones who want to you know go to martial arts classes [both interviewees nod head] or odori dancing or even the language I find-

BK: Mm-hm, yeah. [nods head]

LU: It seems to be a more, more common, more common [both interviewees nod head] interest for the younger generation because I think, well just my own personal opinion, but there that search for you know your identity [Blanche nods her head] and in every cultural group not just Japanese but so, it's kinda interesting to see now, a lot of Sansei

[110 minutes]

LU: groups are coming here for the cooking classes because their kids [chuckles] want to start eating homemade Japanese food now so-

BK: Mm-hm.

NK: Oh. [nods head, smiles]

LU: It's kinda interesting- [chuckles]

BK: Yeah.

NK: That is, that is.

BK: Yeah because our kids are not into it [shakes head] you know especially the ones that are married to the Caucasian ones [chuckles] but like our sons are married to, like our oldest son is married to a Korean girl so she makes a lot of Korean food and Japanese- kinda they're- it's very similar, their flavouring and that is close to Japanese and they love sushi too and so but the girls are just the opposite you know but their boys like, yeah.

LU: So, what about family holidays? Now, do you celebrate New Years and the big New Year celebration and was that something you always did growing up with your

parents, was there always you know birthday celebrations or Christmas or- you mentioned Halloween and nobody has ever spoken with me [Nori smiles] about trick-or-treating before, I never even thought to ask the question of you know if you got dressed up and what kinda treats you would get [chuckles] that's, that's something I never thought about so-

BK: But that's, I mean that was with I guess the thing that you do here like you know amongst the Caucasian people and so then these Japanese kids they just all went out you know I, I don't think I dressed up because I just arrived there [chuckles] but just to get the treats I you know went out with them but no-

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: Growing up we, we had News Years and then after marrying him, [gestures to Nori] their side News Years is a big thing like his, and his nieces would be sanseis, and they make the sushi and yeah, and its extended- gone to the extended family so that-

NK: Well, it's a two day- it's at least a two-day thing you know I mean it wasn't that way; it is now [overlapping] but you know my mother-

BK: [Overlapping] But it started out in the parent's home and then it got too small there [laughs] so-

NK: Yeah, my you know my mother and traditionally yeah my father too you know I mean Oshōgatsu [?], that's New Years, is always a big thing now we're a Christian family as well so Christmas was a big turkey and there's more family, more direct family at Christmas time but when it got the New Years that was very both traditional, you had to get together an always have [Nori coughs] your regular mochi and in the Okinawan community it was butanashi [?], or that's pig feet soup [smiles] well you know that's technically what it is [laughter from the room] but its, it's very good! very good okay let me, let me [waves hand, chuckles] take that sour face, [points at interviewer's face, laughs] wrinkle off that face but in any case its really good okay [Blanche chuckles] but that was one of the favourites at New Years time, I love it too but my- when my mother was alive [hand gestures] it was always a big thing at our, our home [makes a ball shape with hands] and our you know my siblings and you know later as we all married out and so on you know families, extended family gets larger [expresses with hand gestures], while we've always kinda maintained that in Lethbridge and after my mother passed away my brother [hand gestures], who was still living in Lethbridge [points to the side], you know they always enjoyed getting together like this and we're fairly a close family so my sister would carry on making this [makes a circle with hands] special treat as well special butanashi [?] soup along with sushi everything else too it's a big spread. [expressing with hand movements] And now it's come to a point where the third generation they have taken over and because of our extended family we can't just meet in a single home you know they used to have three houses in a row in Lethbridge you know the girls, my brothers-

BK: They had three girls.

NK: Yeah, they had three girls

[115 minutes]

NK: and they bought houses right next to each other in Lethbridge [smiles] so there was a couple years where we would have our celebration there [hand gestures in front] but anyway later now this- when I say later this now goes back maybe 10 years where we rent a party room at the Lethbridge college and it's a large open hall [expresses the room's size with hand gestures] like- so we had anywhere from 80 to 100 people that come together for Christmas or for-

BK: New Years. [smiles]

NK: New Years Day celebration you know-

BK: [talking over each other, unclear speech]

NK: And then, and then the following day there is a bonspiel we you know, that is a curling bonspiel that they organize and then in the afternoon- okay that would be from morning 'till-

BK: Noon, noon-ish.

NK: Morning to noon we'll have the curling bonspiel and then we'll go out for dinner or have- go out for lunch then there's a civic centre that already- that also rented for skating-

BK: Family skating and hockey. [chuckles]

NK: And hockey on the double rink [reaches arms out in a circular shape] building and the guys would play hockey and the rest of the family and the kids could do you know skating stuff like that for about a couple hours [hand gestures] and then another big dinner so it's a two day affair that's its sort of grown into [smiles] so it's sort of a fun time and then now they bring their family, you know other friends in so it's more than just our family now so anyway its, it's now getting to a point where it's almost too big to do that [smiles] [interviewer chuckles] so they'll be doing something else differently at least but anyways it's so New Years sort of been a big thing for you know our family and the- it's really led by the Sanseis-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah, [chuckles] this is all in Lethbridge.

BK: Mm-hm.

LU: Do you remember the celebrations in Ocean Falls at all? Do you remember having little celebrations or-

NK: You know, in, in Ocean Falls, no I don't, I don't recall anything like that, yeah- [shakes head]

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: The that only thing I recall there apart from the-

BK: The picnics.

NK: Experience in the home is yeah summer picnics, going up to Salmon Creek and, and the United Church. Going to Sunday school there and running around as little

kids do and [interviewer chuckles] something like that you know but I don't recall any like the New Years or Christmas celebrations there-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Talking about Christmas though growing up you know when you were in open farm we used to have these coal stoves where you put the coal in and you know very little wood out in the farm but often had a little bit of wood to start the fire but the coal was one of the big thing we would be burning and but every Christmas- just before Christmas my dad would clean up the you know [looks up, reaches hands above head, mimicking a stove pipe] the stove pipe chimneys on these stoves and we were so young and we- naive in those days but you know Santa Claus comes down the chimney right so that's the reason my dad would always clean the chimney flutes [mimics the structure of a chimney with hands] - [simultaneous speech]

BK: [simultaneous speech] chimney. [smiles]

NK: You know take it all apart because they're in sections about like that [mimes a size with hands] and then- [overlapping speech]

BK: [overlapping speech] And it's only this small- [mimes a size with hands, chuckles]

NK: Right, so anyway he would always clean that's his- he would always have to do that to clean that flute, chimney before Christmas because Santa Claus comes down there, [smiles] I remember that. [chuckles from the room]

LU: [Towards Blanche] Do you remember Christmas? Or even birthday celebrations for birthdays, something to celebrate at that time or-

BK: Well, being the only child you know we- I don't even remember what we did for Christmas or New Years you know when I was young growing up its only more after like my mother remarried and you know and our family got bigger so that you know we had Christmas dinners but I don't remember- but I remember one, my birthday is in August so it was harvest time on the field- on the farm so often I wouldn't get any party because they were

[120 minutes]

BK: too busy and because my mum- that's right my mum would sit on the thrashing [?] or the [looks to Nori] what do you call those things? It was a certain name for it but anyways it would cut the wheat and then it would make it into sheaves and it would- the wheat would come in and then you had to step on it so the string would come and tie it up [mimics tying a string] and throw the buddle out, my mother did that I remember she- [looks at Nori again]

NK: Sitting on the machine doing that-

BK: Yeah she sat on the-

NK: Okay.

BK: Thing but so for one of my birthdays my mom- so in the evenings this one time for my birthday she made me a pink satin dress and she worked all night on the thing because during the day she was out in the field that's something special that I remember she did but I can't remember if I really had any real party maybe I did have a few friends in but that was the only one that I really [chuckles] remembered I can't remember what age birthday party that was [interviewer chuckles] yeah, so I remember mum working all night at that so when I started sewing for my girls I always think of my mum staying up late sewing because I would do the same [chuckles] that I did for my daughter for a wedding we were going to and I was sewing all night almost like getting it finished [chuckles] so doing something mum would have done.

LU: Now, was religion always a big part of your family? You mention you were also a Christian family so were you parents Christian as well or did they carry on any sort of religions-

NK: [speaks over interviewer] Yeah they- well we were always- I'm not sure what my parents religious background was prior to Ocean Falls but in Ocean Falls I think many many Japanese people because we were fairly close in the community you know one side of the- that little village was just Japanese housing and [coughs] I think many people went to the United Church that's what I- it's also part of the social fabric of the community too, is to attend the church together and stuff like that and I think there was a Buddhist church as well and I'm not sure of any other but I am aware that there was this United Church that my parents too were apart of and so we you know we sort of was almost traditional for our family to be a part of in a United[?] Church after the evacuation and, and the same minister who was there at the time of the evacuation, Mr. Kubayama [?] also moved to southern Alberta, and so we had this connection with him as well-

LU: I'm just gonna pause you there. [chuckles] [camera sounds, switching tapes]

NK: You were only supposed to take one tape of us weren't you?

LU: [chuckles] No as many tapes[?] as it needs. [chuckles]

NK: While you're expecting a lot of errors that's why you're taking lots of them. [smiles] [laughter from the room]

LU: Okay.

NK: Well we yeah so I grew up with the church background in the United Church and my folks were a part of that you know in my- at least in my lifetime as far as I know and so I grew up you know through my youth years too I went you know as part of a youth group in the church and so on and my life carried on you know with that I, I really became much more dedicated and committed to my whole experience in the Christian faith after about it was '59 that was the year I accepted Christ

[125 minutes]

NK: as my lord and saviour and from that point on there was a whole change in my life that gave me a new perspective and a new reason why I really wanted to even carry on, so as far as my involvement in the you know in the religious field if you want to call it that shortly after we were married we both became missionaries working right here in Canada amongst the niseis and sanseis in Alberta and BC [British Columbia] and we been involved ever since that way.

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah, so. [smiles]

LU: What about your family were your parents-

BK: [speaks over interviewer] Well my, my parents were Buddhists and so in in southern Alberta there wasn't- there was a Buddhists church far away so we would for certain things but my mum used to go to Christian meetings in homes and, and then I went- then they allowed me to go to a Christian Sunday school which is- was started by the Canadian Japanese Ministries which we are involved with now and so I went to that Sunday school and that's where I learned you know more because you know the Buddhists didn't really teach us anything, there was no Buddhists Sunday school as such so I didn't really learn anything there so then after like religious teaching came through the Christian Sunday school that I went to and I think I was age of nine just like Nori [tilts head towards Nori] said that's when I accepted Christ into my life too and when I was 13 I think that's when I wanted to give my life over to God and say 'do whatever you want with my life' so then I went to- and that was with my new, my stepdad was a Christian so then we went to church with them and then after high school I went to Bible [?] college for four years and then that's- then after that we were together too- we were thinking of going to Brazil as missionaries but then we decided to work amongst Japanese here in Canada so that was my-, and my mother became a Christian too so she left her Buddhists faith and she became a Christian so but as far as my dad, my blood father was lost at sea before he became a Christian [shrugs and nods head] yes.

LU: Mm-hm, and how did you two meet? I don't, I don't think I've asked yet how, how you knew each other before getting married.

BK: [stares at Nori] Well, we met at the church kinda right? Do you- came to church meetings-

NK: Youth group, youth group or something like that

BK: Yeah.

NK: Yeah I had several friends who attended the church and this is before I went there and this is in Lethbridge and my friends attended there regularly and there was a very active youth group meeting every Friday night and so on, and so it was sort of a fun time and we- and of course I was invited to come and that's when I met [tilts head towards Blanche] Blanche and you know and numbers of others and you know gradually after I accepted Christ I, [one hand gestures] I saw a whole lot more meaning and a purpose in, in attending the church and there was a good reason for me to be there and so on and so I guess you know things developed from there [one

hand gestures] because we'd see each other from time to time and you know we and our friendship [camera lag, missed a word or two] from there but we were sure-

BK: We were courted for five years before we were married-

NK: Yeah-

BK: And it was long distance-

NK: Most of the time yeah because shortly after that I went to Bible [?] college and, and then that was for three-year period and sort of in between I was elsewhere because I had to work and stuff like that too and so anyway

[130 minutes]

NK: it became a, and even though we were from the same city we weren't always there at the same time- [smiles]

BK: [overlapping speech] Together. [chuckles]

NK: Kinda thing when I was there, she [points to Blanche] was away when- vice versa kinda thing it seemed like, but it was five years before we were married yeah.

LU: And what year were you married?

NK: '64.

BK: June 27th, '64 and that's the date of our youngest birthday, son's birthday so he was born on our anniversary [chuckles] yes.

LU: Ahh, [chuckles] [Nori coughs] and after you were married you stayed in Lethbridge, I believe it was or-?

NK: Well, that was still our home for a while [overlapping] but immediately-

BK: [overlapping] Then we went to training down south [?] in Michigan-

NK: Yeah you know yes you mentioned that we were thinking that maybe we would go as missionaries to Brazil and so we connected with a missionary organization that has work out there and they suggested because we said to them you know them we are unsure whether we should go there or whether we should just remain in Canada and work the you know the work that we are very familiar with and so they said 'well you know take one year of the training that we always send our people to in Detroit' and we were living in Lethbridge at that time and so we said 'okay that would be good we'll pray and see what the Lord wants us to do, what direction to go' and so on so we said 'okay we'll seek to determine which way in this one year period'. So you know so that became sort of a decision making time for us we were in this training session connected with a church there as interns and this sort of thing and but it was a very, very, productive, very meaningful time for us to have spent that time but you know getting towards the end of that year we, we really felt that we should just come back to Canada to work here because going to Brazil as much there was a whole lot of need for missionary work there we would have had to learn Portuguese, we would have had to learn Eng- Japanese in addition and you know years would go by and even then we wouldn't be as effective as working right here [points to the ground] and get right into the work and you know we start youth

work right away, children's work right away, and, and things like that were you know so anyway it made sense that we should just remain here and carry on because the needs were here too in, in BC [British Columbia] [coughs] so that's really what you know the direction we went and, and we've actually and that- was a we work with a mission called the Canadian Japanese Mission at that time and that's the one I was mentioning to you earlier about Margaret Ridgeway having started at the evacuation time and through her contacts and so on you know there were many young people who became Christian in those days and, and then churches were started in Lethbridge and in Kelowna and eventually here in Toronto, the church that we're connected to, the Japanese Gospel Churches were you know has its roots back then [points behind him] and but we were working in Alberta and Calgary and we started in Kamloops, BC [British Columbia] then they transferred us to Calgary and so we carried on there and the church was born in Calgary and you know we spent many years there our kids were born there and it was over 20 years we spent in Calgary and then in '88 this church here [gestures to ground] which was started through our mission, other missionaries who came here to start the work in '50s was going through its difficult times and so on but you know so they said 'well can you people you know consider coming here to help us out' and so we prayed about that and discussed it and our kids were already [coughs] you know they were growing up, our two older ones had already finished high school and they were taking further studies or [overlapping] working-

BK: [overlapping] They were both working-

NK: At that time they were working

[135 minutes]

NK: and you know we discussed it with them too you know about the fact that we, people in Toronto are asking us to consider coming here and moving here and so on. And so our two oldest ones particularly they said 'you know why don't you go' you know we had a house in Lethbridge or in Calgary and they- we were gonna leave it there so they could stay there and so on and our intent was to come here only for about six to eight years or so until we helped to stabilize the work you know so, so we came and you know our six years or eight years have now become 22 years- [smiles]

BK: Somewhere between 22- [?] [smiles]

NK: But you know it's not [chuckles] but you know we could have gone back after about the eight years because the church was pretty stable at that time. However, you know life changes along the way my, my son who remained in Lethbridge at that time came here he got married and, to a girl here and along comes grandchildren [smiles, hand gestures] right? And so and also I was getting- I was approaching 62 you know at 60 years of age and so for me to go back to Calgary and try to find some work was probably very difficult you know so you know I could continue to work

here at that point you know I was working at Momiji[?] and you know I could work until my retirement age. So things kind of have a way of changing [chuckles] even though your expectation was maybe eight or eight years and head back and so we felt we you know remain here and finish my working here and its already 10 years since that time already too [chuckles] but yeah we have grandkids here now so we have family in both ends of the country it's just as easy for us to live here as it is over there you know I mean we got slews[?] of friends over there that we could you know so easily just go back and enjoy but same thing here [smiles] so we just thoroughly enjoy our life here right now too and both with the church and the community and this has just all just been a great experience for us.

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yes.

LU: Were you in Toronto during the years of redress?

NK: No.

LU: [overlapping speech] So would have been-

NK: [overlapping speech] Well, we came in '88 that year-

BK: That we got our-

NK: The redress was announced with the you know so [coughs] that was the year we came but all the years prior to that we were in Calgary look- reading all the articles in through the *New Canadian* at that time because there was no-

BK: *Nikkei Voice*.

NK: Or maybe *Nikkei Voice* but at least we weren't getting that we were getting the *New Canadian* and we were seeing what was happening here and all of that and it was you know great to be reading that you know but there was a, those days there was whole lot of contra- well both you know there was opinions on both sides-

LU: Right.

NK: A whole lot of that you know so community was quite divided in this whole redress issue but I think they came to a right decision and I think we're all very grateful and richer as a community in so many ways because of that and anyway so I think that through all of our experiences as a community yeah I think we have a lot to owe in terms of what the other ethnic communities are going through and you know what we can do to be there for them you know I think we owe it to them.

LU: Mm-hm, now were your parents still alive during the times of redress or had they passed just prior to that I guess?

BK: [overlapping speech] Yeah, my mom- [unclear]

NK: [overlapping speech] [looks at Blanche] Your mother passed away '86?

BK: '86 so she just missed out by two years.

NK: Yeah, my mother was here. Her passing

[140 minutes]

NK: was what [looks at Blanche] 1994 or something? So she but she was in a nursing home already at that- in '88 so she probably wasn't, I'm not aware at least thinking back whether you know she had any-

BK: Redressment.

NK: Redress understanding you know-

BK: Oh, yeah.

NK: Well, she received the, you know the redress money but you know her opinions about it you know I don't think she was in a position anymore.

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah.

LU: It makes you wonder a little bit if redress really would have made a difference for the Issei generations had they have been around during that time if you know if it was something they would have sought after.

NK: You know, not that there would have been any real power from that generation to give in any further impetus to this. I don't think that, I think they were already beyond that. However, I think those who were still cognitively alive and really still sharp enough to understand it all, I think they would have loved to hear that this what you know there wasn't an apology, there wasn't an acknowledgement of the fact that this was you know a wrong move on part of the government on them you know so you know we're I think we're all, we all feel bad[?] about the fact that it took so long. It took that Sansei generation to bring this up, but you know nisei generation themselves too are rather you know they were not in power to do anything in this, on this matter you know, they would have preferred to let it slide too, I'm sure.

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah, so yeah.

LU: Let me just check the rest of my questions I wrote down here. [chuckles] What shiitake [?] mushrooms you know those really special BC [British Columbia] mushrooms or-

NK: Yes. [smiles]

LU: Are they in Alberta as well?

NK: No.

LU: No, Mm-hm.

NK: No that's- they are in the mountains in basically in BC [British Columbia] where you need to have a lot of pine trees, they're under the Matsu trees and-

BK: And then patches that people have found they don't let anybody know that they just go in-

NK: Oh yeah. [smiles] [overlaps]

BK: [Overlaps] Pick those, [laughs] it's a secret spot [laughs].

NK: That's what they are right [smiles] I mean you're aware of that there not-

LU: I know they're secret and they're very special, but I don't know really too much about them and it's just-

NK: No it's not that we know anything about them we're Albertans so Albertans don't know too much about that [smiles] but we do know that they are such prized mushrooms that- but they are in BC [British Columbia] there are people from Alberta that know where to go as well but you know, You ask about, yeah, I wish I was younger when I had heard about this sort of thing and we could have- [laughs]

BK: [overlapping speech] Gone out there.

NK: [overlapping speech] Got out there to try and find some of that ourselves you know but-

LU: Have you-

BK: Eaten them?

LU: Eaten them before?

BK: Oh yeah.

NK: Oh yes.

BK: Oh yeah people have given it to us, yeah. [nods head]

NK: Yeah, because we haven't been out there to pick it or anything like that ourselves but, yeah. [smiles]

LU: You know how it's cooked or how it's supposed to be eaten properly or is it just like any other old mushroom you can just throw it in anything?

BK: Yeah I think you can but because it's so not rare but special kinda you know you don't get it everyday you just can't go out and get so easily so a lot of times the Japanese made mushroom rice you know put it into the rice and cook it they called it Matsutake Gohan [?] so-

LU: Oh.

BK: Yeah, chopped up so I haven't had that in years-

NK: Yeah, it something very special so [overlapping] you know-

BK: [overlapping] So, you don't really gobble it down- [laughs]

NK: [simultaneous speech] Yeah.

BK: [simultaneous speech] Yeah, so yeah, we haven't eaten it- [looks at Nori]

NK: Yeah, it's been a long time since I've had that too.

[145 minutes]

BK: [looks at Nori] Are there patches of it here in Ontario?

NK: Well northern Ontario I'm sure there are, I mean you don't know but because only the people that know about it know about it- [laughter from the room]

LU: That's right. [chuckles]

NK: But I'm sure there are.

LU: Mm-hm, very interesting. [chuckles] Blanche did you ever go to Japanese language school or any sort of-?

BK: Not during my high school days I don't know someone told me I should go, I remember in Grade 10 or so in high school and I said 'no, I don't want to go to no Japanese school' I says 'I'm having enough hard time with my English' [laughs] so I

never did go to Japanese school like lot of the children do now here you know but after I started working, I did take a private, I think maybe for half a year or something private Japanese- but I didn't really learn to speak it or anything it was mainly to write it you know so I found that not that profitable you know because I wouldn't really use it for writing but when I was going to college to write to my mother I was given one of these Grade one books and so then to get the you know the Hiragana [?] out of there and then I would write it in Romaji [?] then I would transfer that into Hiragana [?] and I would write a little page [mimes size of page with hands] with double spacing and it would take me half a day [points to in front of her] to write to my mother [laughs] because she can't read English so I was more or less self-taught so then I know some Hiragana [?] now that I can just read but that's about it, yeah so I never really went to school as such [smiles] [interviewer chuckles] yeah so I really learned my Japanese, maybe 30 years ago to speak it a little bit more fluent than I was because I know one lady said to me 'your Japanese is terrible' [laughs] one lady said to me in the '60s and then she lived in Calgary and then she went back to Japan because of her work, her husband's work and when she came back and I started speaking to her she praised me for my Japanese that had gotten better but it was just through practice talking to the young people from Japan mainly I was self-taught-

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: Yeah, so then I try to keep it up now by speaking to Japanese people in Japanese so that's how I got my Japanese. I always tell people English is my first language and Japanese is my second- [chuckles] it's just the other way around, yeah.

LU: [chuckles] You mentioned letters that were your parents corresponding with you family back home in Japan or-?

BK: No, no this was no, this is when I was in outside- [?]

LU: Oh. [?]

BK: Out of, yeah my mom corresponded with her siblings in Japan but she was having a hard time with her Japanese too [chuckles] she says like if you don't write it [mimes writing with hand] you know and I'd ask my mum for some words or something and then she'd say 'oh, I don't know what that was' [mimes writing with hand] or when she was writing to yeah she wrote to her brother and her sisters in Japan, yeah 'cause she yeah I don't know how many trips back she made to Japan but they were way after she- her initial you know after she got married and came here and then she went a few times when my sisters were living but then after that for a period she hadn't gone back to Japan for I don't know how many years, yeah.

LU: Wow and when was your first visit to Japan?

BK: My first was in 1963.

LU: And did you go [overlapping speech] together or-?

NK: [overlapping speech] Like- [?]

BK: No, no we weren't married then yet, so it was the first time I met my relatives in Japan I went with my mother in the dead of winter in February, oh it was so cold 'cause there is no

[150 minutes]

BK: central heating right and in those days, 46 years ago, the houses were way more primitive of course the first place we went to was my grandma's house which was 100 years old so it was very holey you know the wind just went through from one side to the other and we slept right through the middle. But I got sick right away but then next time I went with- just in 2009 that's when we went together [points to Nori and herself] and that was his first time [points to Nori] for him.

LU: What was your reaction on your first visit to Japan and you know-

BK: My first-

LU: You arrive at the airport, or you arrive at your family home and get settled in and-

BK: My first impression was, - I compare it now with the two visits and that first time was quite, well I wouldn't say primitive [chuckles] but kinda like you know because we were way out in the country and yeah, we yeah there was no running, flushing toilets it was like an outhouse outside where, well- that was grandma's house too and then we went back this time was these heated toilet seats and the water [chuckles] you know you could wash yourself off and its totally different like when- and then the way they save water like for washing your hands over the toilet bowl there's a tap like- you wash your hands over the toilet- there's like a little base [forms shape with hands] and then that water goes into the tank and that flushes the toilet they save water that way-

LU: Wow.

BK: Which is really good oh, we should do that here too [laughs] but so a lot of things and then they didn't have escalators or elevators on the train platforms so if you were going this way [points to the right] and you had to go that way on that rail [points to the left and back] you had to climb stairs and down over top, when we went this time there's escalators, elevators, and [unclear] in the 40 so really Japan is really modern and then I had, they didn't have- I don't know if they had bullet trains then or not but we board on a lot this time so yeah it was really different.

LU: Mm-hm. [chuckles]

NK: My first time was only two years ago, and my first impression was that you know 'this is so clean' you know the railway station-

BK: No garbage.

NK: Yes, there's no garbage around you'll see these people going around just wiping off the railings [mimes this action with hand] and so one of those people maintenance I'm sure scraping a gum off right you know where you hardly see it you know around the pillar but around the corner of it you know, scraping gum off the

floor and you know things like that and you just don't see garbage in Japan at least the main place that you you know that you would travel. And but it and everything was so efficient and we were there in the spring time in fact right now we were there in Japan in fact I can tell you this is 31st of March, we were just hitting up to Omura [?] right now up in that area where the disaster is that where we were two years ago right now but it was such a beautiful, beautiful country every place was immaculate and I really just so thoroughly enjoyed everything and we were in you know Kyoto and Osaka places like that, Himeji[?] and Miyajima [?] at the peak of the Sakura-

BK: Cherry Blossoms.

NK: Sakura time-

BK: It was beautiful. [smiles]

NK: It was so gorgeous all over the place you know so we happened to catch it right at the right time and

[155 minutes]

NK: so, you know my impressions that is left in my mind, and we went all the way from Omura [?] at the very top end, we didn't get to the [simultaneous speech] Hokkaido-[?]

BK: [simultaneous speech] Hokkaido[?].

NK: -island there but from the top of the Honshu [?] all the way down, down to Kyushu [?] at the very southern tip and we did the whole thing and it was so beautiful almost every place now we had relatives to visit and you know other mission stations that we visited and [coughs] and friends and you know we spent most of our time you know not necessarily [simultaneous speech] sightseeing-

BK: [simultaneous speech] sightseeing, seeing people. [chuckles]

NK: Although we did see, and we visited while doing sightseeing you know so it was very nice and very meaningful and then from there we flew to Okinawa and enjoyed a few more days there. So, for us that one month spent two years ago was like a trip of a lifetime yeah.

LU: Mm-hm, Mm-hm.

NK: That was really an exceptional trip.

LU: Oh, hopefully another trip coming up soon if everything works out okay.

NK: Yes, yes that is going to be of different nature, but you know-

LU: Mm-hm, because it's now another component which is a huge part of Japanese history-

NK: Oh yes.

LU: So even though it just happened it's already become something-

NK: Oh, this is, -

LU: -exponential.

NK: Oh, yeah this is historic in every dimension. So, you know we hope to be a part of that in some way and-

LU: Mm-hm, now did you have any friends or family up in that part of the island?

BK: No.

NK: We have friends-

BK: Yeah, friends-

NK: [overlapping speech] Actually, we have a number of friends-

BK: [overlapping speech] Missionaries friends, missionaries.

NK: Yeah both missionary friends as well as not family friends but our friends-family friends, we made new friends, lived in Tochigi [?] is one of the provinces which is not at the sea shore but they really got the jolt there and there's damages even to their homes, Ibaraki [?] we have friends there, Fukushima [?] the pastors family lives there, Yamagata [?] there's a church that we know there and further up north not in Miyagi [?] or you know-

BK: Sendai [?] we don't have anybody there.

NK: Yeah but-

BK: My relatives are all south like near Kyoto area so-

NK: Yeah.

BK: They haven't been affected but I mean I think there're like probably having a hard time too with food and water and the shortage you know because one of our friends in our church their children are up Akita [?] and then their rationed like for buying food you know they can only- so they said oh that one time they couldn't get any bread and milk was only, they only could buy a little bit of it and water but they're rationed now 'cause they don't- [?] so hopefully you know they could fly food in from somewhere else you know because-

NK: Well-

BK: The Sendai airport runway is cleared now-

LU: Oh, is it?

BK: Yeah [nods head] so they can land- I hope they take some stuff from here I mean we have so much here in America, North America that they will fly some of the stuff into-

NK: Oh yeah, they are-

BK: Oh, they are?

NK: There're, there're, oh yes-

BK: Are they getting it to them-

NK: There're getting a lot of stuff in there so in, even in Miyagi or in

BK: Murikawa. [?]

NK: Ah, no [?] what's that place just north of Miyagi, well it's a province it's one of those that also really got-

BK: Iwate. [?]

NK: Iwate, [?] their gasoline had been more you know replenished so there're not waiting as long-

BK: An hour to get two liters or whatever you know-

NK: But it's not like that now the lineup is much smaller and in fact sometimes there're not even, there's no lineups food is now being replenished but you know where [?] the these horrific stories

[160 minutes]

NK: are still part of is mainly along the coastal area where the villages and the towns have really been decimated and there are small towns that we understand still haven't really had the government rescue or you know the reliefs teams really haven't been able to do much yet you know so a lot of still remains a rubble so you know I mean it's gonna be a massive mess and we were talking about cleaning up you know were only talking about two and a half weeks since that time yet so how much clean up you can do [chuckles and coughs] at this point if it was two and a half months you can say 'yeah well how haven't they cleaned this up' but you won't be saying that in two and a half months because there's no way their gonna get all of those miles of debris out of there.

BK: They don't know where they're gonna put it.

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah, that's one problem is where we gonna put it?

BK: Yeah.

NK: We can't burn them you know they can't even you know their normal way of even taking care of-

BK: The dead.

NK: Remain yeah, remains of the people are to cremate them [overlap]right-

BK: [Overlap] Cremation, but then they can't, no gas so shortage-

NK: Yeah, they can't keep the crematoriums going-

BK: There's so many- [?]

NK: So, they are temporarily, temporarily burying them until such times as things normalize and then I guess they'll go through the process of, of digging them up and cremating them 'cause it's on a temporary basis that they're burying-

BK: Burying them yeah-

NK: So, you know it's a you know 'when is this gonna be over,' it'll take years really-

BK: Yeah, it'll be years-

NK: So, it won't be- [small camera lag, possible footage loss], saw you know we went through there on the Shinkansen [?] and saw the beautiful [overlapping] countryside-

BK: [Overlapping] Yeah, we said it will never be the same this is-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah, but the rail you know is gonna take a long time to-

BK: Rebuild.

NK: Get[?] the rail, rail tracks going again.

BK: Mm-hm.

LU: You're not going though, are you?

BK: No not on this trip, [gestures to Nori] no.

LU: Mm-hm.

BK: We hope to go in October if funds come in but for the Okinawan festival in October but we'll have to see.

LU: Mm-hm, what's the- what's the festival?

NK: You know every five years in Okinawa they have what they call a homecoming, they call it Uchinanchu [?] Worldwide Festival, homecoming festival so all people of Okinawan background are invited to return-

BK: To Okinawa.

NK: And there's a government sponsored festival, just a huge expose [?] of Okinawa and so you know it's just a fun time you know and so it happens to be this October so we still have our name in there but you know since this has happened I mean our situation I'm not sure whether we're going to go or not now but there are literally thousands, thousands of people who would come to that you know Okinawan people are- see a good-, the big population in Ok- in Hawaii are Okinawans and-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: And out of Ok- out of Hawaii, Hawaii and-

BK: California.

NK: California alone where over 3000 people were gonna be coming to that, and Brazil, Argentina, Peru, there's a whole lot of Okinawa's there-

BK: And there's people in Europe too and-

NK: [Overlap]Yeah, all over, yeah.

BK: [Overlap]They all come to- so the hotels were getting all booked.

NK: So anyway, yeah there's that every five years.

LU: Wow.

BK: Yeah.

NK: We've never been to that before but it sounds like a very interesting and well, well organized four days of celebration.

LU: Only four days? [interviewees nod heads] But I imagine most people would stay a bit longer and then-

BK: [simultaneous speech] Oh yeah.

NK: [simultaneous speech] Oh yes, yes oh yeah,

NK: That's right but it's, it's very interesting. [both interviewees smile]

LU: Mm-hm, oh wow, [chuckles]

[165 minutes]

LU: just recap here, but were there any other stories or comments that you wanted to make before we finish off? I don't think I can recall any other questions at the moment it's always after, half an hour after the interview's over that I I'm like, 'oh! I should have asked, [interviewees laugh] why didn't I talk about this' and- [chuckles]

NK: Yeah, yeah.

NK: [overlapping speech] Hmmm

LU: [overlapping speech] But you can only cover so much. [chuckles]

BK: [simultaneous speech] I can't think of anything-

NK: [simultaneous speech] Don't know-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Did I, did I mention during the interview or was it before about my mother returning from the field when we were kids to teach us Japanese?

BK: You said that in the interview, [overlapping speech] you talked about it before, and you talked about it- yeah.

NK: [overlapping speech] I did. Okay, okay.

LU: Oh! What we did talk about before the interview though was, thank you that reminded me, was you mentioned your mother was sowing socks-

NK: Oh yes!

LU: Yes! Did-

BK: In Ocean Falls.

NK: Yes, this was in Ocean Falls when we were living there and the war in Europe was you know right so we we're- I think the whole Canadian population were trying to do what they can to help the Canadians involved in the European theater of the war. In Ocean Falls our many Japanese ladies, I believe, it could have been through the church, kitted socks for soldiers and of course they were then sent to wherever [?] and but that was one of the things I remember being told that my mother was very much involved in and of course other ladies too. So, I don't know much more beyond that particular you know, I am [?] related to that but yeah that was part of their contribution to the Second World War but then you know then I'm sure it was after that, that the Pearl Harbor blew up you know.

LU: Mm-hm, I've read in history books before that the Issei ladies would make kinda like these, I think they're white sashes with red, the red, red dots on them-

BK: Oh yes! [nods head]

LU: And then the soldiers would take them with them onto the field and I, other than that I don't know really remember anything else about it and I can't seem to find anything, [Nori coughs] anything more-

NK: Who, who made these sashes?

LU: The Issei ladies, they were kinda like belts or-

NK: Okay is that that's-

LU: Girdles? Or-

NK: Yeah, [interviewer chuckles] they were sort of a symbolic thing that this will bring you good luck or it's meant to keep you safe or all of this sort of thing right, is it that's? [looks to Blanche]-

LU: [simultaneous speech] Yes, Mm-hm.

BK: [simultaneous speech] Mm-hm, Mm-hm.

Mm-hm

NK: Yeah, I you know-

BK: The first time I heard about it was reading in the book, [looks towards Noir] 'that enemy' by that lady from the coast it was in that book that's where-

NK: Oh, *Looking Like the Enemy*-

BK: *Looking Like the Enemy*, [looks to interviewer] have you read that book?

LU: No, I haven't read that one yet, no.

BK: Oh, it's really-

NK: Yeah Matsuda, Matsuda that's, yes-

BK: That's a good book.

NK: Yeah, that's very-

BK: And she, she wrote about saying that the- her, was it? some relative of hers made one of those- and yeah for, it was for her brother he went to war-

NK: Yes, that's right.

BK: And so, they- she, her mother made it and sowed but other than that I don't recall just from reading from the book and then someone mentioned that somewhere else I remember yeah but my mother or nephew-

NK: [points to interviewer] You must have heard this from other interviews have you?-

BK: No, she said she read it in a book.

NK: Oh.

LU: I read it in a book, yeah and so far, no one really has very much information on them so-

NK: You know I think that, that's yeah probably very much a personal home situation possibly I you know I don't know if there was-

BK: No, other people did it too-

NK: Oh, is that right eh-

BK: No, yeah-

NK: Yeah maybe a whole ladies group of a church or ladies group in the community would do something like that and send it with people-

BK: No, and then for the soldier to wear-

NK: Yeah, okay.

BK: So that they would come back and I know-

NK: Yeah.

BK: It was mentioned in this book, yeah so-

NK: Yeah.

LU: Mm-hm

[170 minutes]

BK: And different people would sew on these little red dots think the more-

NK: Oh yeah four, in this case yeah they had all different yeah [smiles] different people added to this or something- [unclear, overlapping speech]

BK: Yeah so it was kinda more like-

NK: Community.

BK: Like a prayer thing you know each one contributed onto this one band yeah but my parents didn't have anything to do with that.

LU: Mm-hm, interesting. [chuckles]

BK: But another thing about the wartime after we moved to Alberta my dad used to smoke so in the cigarette packages is the tin foil, so we were told to save anything that was of-

NK: Yeah.

BK: Metal thing until we make into a ball-

NK: Tin, tin foil. [nods head]

BK: Yeah, so then they used it for what? [looks at Nori] [overlapping speech begins] For making bullets [?] or whatever-

NK: [overlapping speech] Well, it's metal so you would contribute to anything that was metal-

BK: Yeah, you didn't throw that away and-

NK: Tin yeah.

BK: Yeah, I remember saving that and I remember we had no chocolate bars in those days-

NK: Oh, oh yeah that's right I mean Eat-More's, Eat-More chocolate-

BK: But that wasn't really- Eat-More wasn't really chocolate-

NK: No.

BK: So that was the only thing closest to a chocolate bar, we didn't have chocolate bars, no gum-

NK: And rations, yeah, a lot of things were rationed you know in those years. [?]

BK: Yeah we could only get so much and that's what it is like in Japan now they're rationed with their food and water and when they you know the water contamination in Tokyo for the babies they were rationing water bottles, bottled water, to the mothers 'cause they couldn't buy it I think they were- and there was that on the news so yeah, so I remember we were rationed food- [nods head]

LU: Wow.

BK: During the war.

LU: No chocolate- [chuckles]

BK: No chocolate-[smiles]

LU: I don't know what I would do- [laughter from the room]

BK: [overlapping speech] Yeah, no chocolate bars.

NK: [Overlapping speech] That's why you know one of the very difficult things that's happening in these you know shelters in Japan now you know it's already two weeks for many people if not more right- the youth are having a hard time you know you can sort of imagine you know teenagers and the young people who have never experienced anything close to this now have to live side by side just like you know they hardly have cots to sleep on right-

BK: It's right on the floor.

NK: And they're right on the floor and things like that and they just can't go out and say 'okay let's go out with my friends' and things like that or go to the store or mall or anything like that-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: And so, this whole area of you knows the post traumatic syn- you know stress issue is going to be increasingly mounting. It is now and you know for particular for the youth and the children it's going to be very traumatic unless there is some way for them to be able to you know release this otherwise, they're gonna grow up crippled in a lot of ways inside so, so this whole psycho-social area of treatment is so very, very important-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah, and that's part of what were involved in you know in so called this chaplaincy a core [?] that we're trying to- training in Japan so that's what these trainers are trained to do-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: Yeah so, it's a big area but it's not just saving them out of you know physically but beyond physical you know there's a whole lot of issue that arises right-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: So that's another big area that Japan needs to be very aware of.

LU: That's one of the things that we've tried to do and we're recently working on the project with the Toronto District School Board

[175 minutes]

LU: and the Toronto Catholic School Board to have the schools here fold cranes in hopes to bundle them up into the thousands and have them also write letters and you know we might not be able to translate-

NK: You know-

LU: Them but the moral support that we can-

NK: Yep.

LU: Actually, show them is [overlapping speech] just a little thing we can do-

NK: [overlapping speech] See anything, yeah that's right,

NK: You know anything like that can make a child smile something that 'oh, this is very nice' just anything that could begin to have them experience that kinda thing again and the more often they can sense that kinda a thing throughout the day you know they'll be much more protected from this you know the constant barrage of negativity that you see out there.

LU: Mm-hm, Mm-hm.

NK: So whatever can be done it would be so, so great- I'll be taking back or I'll be taking for this university it's a Mennonite university in Winnipeg that one Japanese you know fella wrote to me and said "oh I hear your going to Japan you know would

you mind taking this sheet” it's like a large sheet where they're gonna be writing words of encouragement [mimes out writing with hand] and you know “can you take that for us” so that you know they haven't told me where to take it except to Japan but, but you know anything that is of positive you know that will ring positively in that kind of a setting is gonna be helpful-

LU: Mm-hm.

NK: I think that's a wonderful thing you know as little you know nothing is little whenever you get into it our thinking here is we're, we're not stressed out with that kinda of thing but to see you know a little beautifully folded crane and that gets to be yours in that setting-

LU: Mm-hm, well [chuckles] some of them are not so beautiful because we even had kindergarten grades -

BK: Oh! - [smiles, chuckles]

LU: -folding cranes, yeah

NK: There you are wow. [smiles]

LU: We started off thinking okay you know middle school ages would be-

NK: Yeah.

LU: A little tricky but then the younger kids heard about the project-

BK: And wanted to-

LU: And were like 'no, no we want to fold a crane too!'-

NK: [unclear] [overlapping speech] That's gonna be so much better- [?]

LU: [overlapping speech] You just take your time, they're not very nice but-

NK: That's okay, yeah! [smiles]

LU: But they're so tiny,-

NK: [overlapping] Oh, you know,-

LU: -incredible,

BK: [chuckles]

LU -yeah, so.

NK: Oh, I think those things like that speak volumes.

LU: Mm-hm, I hope so yeah-

NK: Very good.

LU: So we're currently right now still planning with all the schools and trying to send out volunteers to go and help fold these paper cranes with them and but the Catholic School Board alone has over 100 schools that they want us to go to [both interviewees smile, chuckle] and they've ordered 75,000 sheets of origami paper [both interviewees smile, laugh] or 7,500 sorry 7,500-

NK: Wow. [smiles]

LU: Oh no, no 75,000 that's right-

NK: 75,000. [smiles in awe, chuckles]

LU: 100 schools, 1,000 each yeah-

BK: [smiles in awe, chuckles]

LU: Origami papers so-

NK: Wow. [smiles]

LU: We're hoping even one string of 1,000 to each school you know I- we haven't worked out all the fine details for that part yet but hopefully, hopefully, and hopefully around the world people are doing the same thing, so I think that's what they need.

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

BK: Mm-hm. Yeah when we to Hiroshima they have these 1,000 cranes you know from different people have sent them, they have- it's in a glassed area you know-

NK: This is in Hiroshima at the-

BK: Bomb site.

LU: Yeah.

NK: The war memorial site-

BK: And this is for the children-

NK: It's a children's memorial that's there and they have that.

LU: Is that where they have the statue of the young girl Sadako? The Sadako statue-

NK: Yes, that's Sadako's, right there.

LU: Is that where it is?

NK: Yes, right there.

LU: I was trying to figure out where was I, I thought I'd might be there but-

NK: That's right, there's that little glass like almost like a phone booths kinda stuck together and these are full of that.

LU: Oh.

BK: Cranes.

NK: Yeah, so there is an association with children, and you know these cranes, 1,000 cranes you know there is- [video ends]

[End]