Interview with Pastor Dr. George Takashima

September 3, 2019

Oral History Recording Summary

Interviewee: George Takashima

Interviewed by: Kimiko Karpoff

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Time Log (minutes)	**Description of Content**
00:01	Beginning of Interview. Introduction, permission, and information about early life.
01:30	Kindergarten and church experience
08:47	Father's business
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		Time
KK:	This is Kimiko Karpoff. It is September the third 2019, and I am here with George Takashima on the telephone. Do I have your permission to proceed with this interview?	00:01
GT:	Yes you have.	
KK:	Great. Thank you so much George, for agreeing to be part of this project for the Vancouver Japanese United Church Archives. We're really just looking for stories from people who were there, and I know that you were one of the people who actually grew up in that community. Can you just give us a little bit of background about that?	
GT:	Yes, my parents were already members of Powell Street United Church, so when I was born, I was baptized in Powell Street Church by the late Rev. Dr. Shimizu. I was born in 1934, August, so I know that I was baptized before Christmas of that same year.	
KK:	Okay, great, thank you. And so you were baptized there and your parents were members, so you started attending church right from the get-go.	
GT:	Yes, I went to kindergarten—I think I was around three years old when I went to kindergarten. Kindergarten was something like other kindergartens, but there was an added component to it. Because we came from homes where Japanese was the main language, in order to prepare us for public education, we had to learn to speak English and there were teachers on staff at the kindergarten, especially Powell Street Kindergarten where we spent a lot of time learning the English language and learning it properly. Speaking was a very important component of that particular project. Learning to speak English, so that there wouldn't be that Japanese accent tied into it. They spent, the teachers spent a lot of time making sure that we spoke good English before we entered the public school system.	01:30
KK:	And were all the children at the kindergarten of Japanese heritage?	
GT:	Yes, all students, yes.	
KK:	And your family, where did they live at that time?	
GT:	I'm sorry?	
KK:	Where did your family live at that time?	
GT:	101 5th Avenue East. In Vancouver. One block West of Main Street.	
KK:	So that area of Vancouver. You weren't right in that neighbourhood that was called Japantown, then?	

Time

GT: No, no, no. We were in the Fairview district. We were at the Eastern end of the Fairview district.

KK: And what do you remember… So you went to kindergarten there, and do you have other memories of the congregation? 03:59

GT: Well, I know that every Sunday, at least in my father's group, every Sunday after the morning service, a number of people—my dad's friends, would gather for lunch in the Chinese restaurant on the second floor. I remember that. I was only, probably, maybe either two or three other small children my age at that luncheon. Otherwise, they were all adults.

KK: I wonder if you have memories of any of the other children from the kindergarten, or the kindergarten teachers?

GT: I don't remember any of the kindergarten teachers, but some of the people I knew. There was the Yano brothers: George Yano, Fred Yano and their sister Setsuko Yano. Now all three are gone but they were, I know their parents and my parents are very close friends and so, and they, you know, would get together quite often throughout the week as well. Mr. Yano was the, was known as the "Red Cap Porter'; he worked for the CPR, he wore a red cap, and he helped passengers with their luggage and things like that. Fred Yano went to University of Manitoba and he became an engineer, George Yano who was the younger brother, went to McGill University and became an engineer. Setsuko went into nursing and then she did degree work at the University of Western Ontario in London, back in the '50s.

KK: And how long did you attend the kindergarten?

GT: I'm sorry?

KK: How long did you attend the kindergarten?

GT: About a year and a half.

KK: So you…

GT: The reason why that happened was, we had lived in Toronto, we had moved from Vancouver to Toronto, we were in Toronto for about three years and then we moved back to Vancouver. And I moved back probably around April—March or April—and I had started kindergarten in Toronto and I ended up in kindergarten in Powell Street and then I continued on for another year because they, the teachers wanted to make sure my English, conversational English, was perfect, shall we say? And there would not be any trace of Japanese accent and things like that.

		Time
KK:	And did you continue to go to the Church after you started public school?	
GT:	Yes. I was in Powell Street until the war broke out.	
KK:	So can you tell me a little bit about your memories of what was happening at that time?	
GT:	You mean when the war broke out?	
KK:	Yeah, so you had been attending the church and your family was living on Main Street.	
GT:	No, I lived on Granville Street.	
KK:	Granville Street.	
GT:	Granville and I think it was Granville and Nelson. Somewhere in that area.	
KK:	Right.	
GT:	But on Granville Street on the second floor.	
KK:	So you were…	
GT:	Dad had a business there, so…	
KK:	Your Dad had a business. What was his business?	08:50
GT:	Well, he was a physiotherapist but in those days physiotherapy was not well known, so he was a registered masseur. Did massage.	
KK:	Oh.	
GT:	But, he used shock treatments, which is part of the physiotherapy discipline.	
KK:	Interesting. So, if you can think for a minute and just kind of put yourself back into that time: how old would you have been when you would have become aware of the war?	
GT:	I would be about eight years old. I was in grade three when the war broke out.	09:40
KK:	And what are your first memories of that?	
GT:	I went to school one day and I was told to go home. I didn't know why I had to go home, but I went home. And then we found out that Japanese children were not welcome into the, or were not allowed to continue with their education in the public school system in Vancouver.	
KK:	And so it was your teachers telling you to go home.	

		Time
GT:	Um-hum. Yeah.	
KK:	And then when you went home, what—how did that, like what—How did that conversation happen with your family. Like, how did you learn about…	
GT:	My father found out. He had phoned the school and learned what was going on.	
KK:	So you were in grade three, you went to school one day, and you were asked to go home.	
GT:	Yep.	
KK:	And then what happened with your family?	
GT:	My dad left and went to somewhere in the Revelstoke area. And then my mother and I had moved around to live with friends. And then, we ended up going to New Denver by train and bus. And that was in the summer of 1943. When we left Vancouver and went to New Denver.	11:06
KK:	And did you participate in church in New Denver?	
GT:	Yes, we had. There was a *hakujin* United Church in New Denver and so we went to church there. And Sunday School. The minister came from Nakusp.	
KK:	Who was that? Do you recall?	
GT:	I think his name was Rev. Dovvy. D-O-V-V-Y. I think that was his name.[1]	
KK:	Hm. So your family was in New Denver and…	
GT:	Yeah, we were there for five years.	
KK:	And did you go back to Vancouver afterwards?	
GT:	No, in November of 1947 we left New Denver and we went to Fingal, Ontario—that's in Southwestern Ontario. And we were there for five months or so, and then we moved to London.	
KK:	And so your actual connection with the Vancouver Japanese United Church is strictly from the before years of the war	
GT:	Yeah.	
KK:	I wonder if you can think of any particular story of something that happened during that time when you were in kindergarten. Can you think of, like, the day in the life of the kindergarten?	13:33

[1] The full name of the minister at Nakusp during that time was Rev. Olav Grondahl.

Time

GT: Well, a lot of it had to do with learning the English language properly. You know, we had other kindergarten-type activities, but the teachers were very strong on making sure we entered the public school system without any disadvantage in a way. Without any—oh, I can't think of the word—anyway, they wanted to make sure we could fit in. Language was very important. The English language. The manner in which we spoke and understood the grammar and all that kind of stuff.

KK: So how did they teach you that?

GT: Pardon?

KK: How did they teach you, that?

GT: How did they?

KK: Yeah, how did they play games with you or was it more like going to school?

GT: A combination. We played games. Games were centered around helping you develop the English language skills and then they also had formal classes and language training.

KK: So from the time you entered public school until the time of the war, you were in just the regular school.

GT: Yeah. Grades one, two, and part of three

KK: And do you have any memories or, what… Before that time that you were asked to go home, did you have a sense that people treated you differently because you had the Japanese heritage? 15:50

GT: Yeah. I didn't know much about the outbreak of war. I, we didn't and my parents never talked about it to me when the war broke out and what was happening to the Japanese people in the winter of 1941-42 and the Spring of 1942, and the Summer of 1942. I didn't really know what was going on. Life was, you know, daily life was just as normal as before the war had started, for me anyway.

KK: So either children…

GT: It was only when we were leaving Vancouver to go interior to a place called New Denver that I had a little inkling that something had happened. But nothing more than that.

KK: And what, what is your kind of general memories of being in New Denver?

GT: I got to know a lot of Japanese kids. I got to know -- like, remember I never lived in Japantown in Vancouver. Most of my contacts are with the 17:25

hakujin people, the *hakujin* children and so on. So the only time I ever had contact with Japanese was on Sunday when we went to church and Sunday School in Powell Street United. I learned that I had very little contact with Japanese and so when we went to New Denver I was flabbergasted that all, that I was with all these Japanese people and that was okay too. It was easy to make friends because none of us knew one-another that well when we moved to New Denver. A few would have known each other from pre-war days but for most of us, we had come from a variety of places on the West Coast so, it was you know, making new friends and not only making new friends, but Japanese friends. That was kind of interesting. And I remember we spoke a lot of Japanese as little kids, you know, we made our "made-in-New Denver" Japanese language and so I would come home and use the same language as my parents and they were horrified, [laughs] you know. "There's no such thing as that term, you have to speak good Japanese." But, anyways, we continued to use Canadian, New Denver Japanese among the young kids.

KK: So what was it like, aside from finding yourself in a place with lots of other Japanese people? What was it like moving from the city to that more remote community? 19:36

GT: For us, for the children, it was good. We had a beautiful lake, Slocan Lake, we could swim there in the summer. In the wintertime there were plenty of hills and we learned to make bobsleds and sleds and we would just go up and down the hills. We didn't have money to buy real sleds and all that, but there were several older men who, who could teach us how to make sleds and bobsleds out of the, whatever wood we had. You know, pine, oak wood and we made skis and there was a, oh—in the town there was a, sort of like a foundry where you could go and the people in the foundry will help you bend wood and things like that, you know. So when we took narrow pieces of wood to make skis, they would bend the front part for us and things like that.

KK: So you had summer swimming and winter snow…

GT: I'm sorry?

KK: I said you had summer swimming and winter…

GT: Winter skiing, yeah.

KK: Winter activities like skiing and…

GT: Yes.

KK: Tobogganing.

Time

GT: Yes. Well I imagine there was a lot of skating too. Yeah, there were, there were a lot of… but there were outdoor rinks, so skating was limited because of the weather conditions, you know? It was never constant. It could we warm in January, it could be warm in February. Other times it could be cold, and so the weather dictated whether you had good ice for skating in the winter.

KK: What kind of accommodation did your family have in New Denver?

GT: We had little shacks or little cottages about 400, 450 square feet, if that.

KK: And just for your family or did you share?

GT: No, just for my family. They had, they had families for—they had buildings for small families as well as big families. Like, a regular building would have two bedrooms (one on each side) and in the centre would be the kitchen, the living room, the whole bit, dining room, and there was a pot-bellied stove right in the centre of the building so that that pot-bellied stove served not only for cooking, but it also provided heat for the house in the wintertime. And of course in the summer that pot-bellied stove would be hot as blazes throughout the building.

KK: So, what are your memories then from the time when the war was ending?

GT: Well, I know that during the 1943/44/45 older young people, you know, people in their early 20s, would move to Toronto. They always had somebody they knew in Toronto and that person would say, "Come to Toronto. There are jobs to be had." And a lot of guys did go to Toronto and was able to find work, simply because of the war. The Canadian—the *hakujin*—men went to war and that left a big hole in the factories and foundries and other job sites and so these guys would be able—the Nikkeis would be able to fill in. And so that provided opportunities for the, for the Nikkeis to move east. 23:51

KK: And is that why your family moved there?

GT: No. My dad was a physiotherapist and so he had, he decided to move in November of 1947—don't forget we lived in Toronto before the war years for three years, so this was not a new adventure for us in that sense. We knew where we were going, we knew that we wanted to live in Southwestern Ontario, maybe Chatham, maybe Leamington, maybe Windsor, but we settled in London.

KK: [Pause]

I'm just um—I'm just holding all these stories that you're telling me for a minute.

Time

GT: Okay.

[Pause]

KK: So, um [pause] when you—I'm just going back to New Denver and back to the church life there. Um, the church that you went to was just the community's church? 26:07

GT: Yes. Turner Memorial United Church. New Denver had about 500, a population of about 500 or so *hakujin*, and so when we moved to New Denver, we lived on the south side of Carpenter Creek. Carpenter Creek separated the main part of the town from the orchard. The orchard was converted to living quarters for the Japanese.

KK: And that's where they built the town, well I guess it was like a town that you lived in then.

GT: Well that's where all of our living quarters were built and we could walk into town, into the *hakujin* area because they already had established stores, you know, they had two stores, grocery stores, there was a pharmacy, barber shop, and other enterprises and this was a big boom for the businesses because of the number of Japanese people who had moved into town, into New Denver. 27:37

It also provided job opportunities for the Nikkei women, young women, you know, they would be hired on as store clerks and—I remember one or two were hired on to work in the Bank of Montreal that was there, and uh. So there were a lot of, I shouldn't say a lot, but there were job opportunities for the Nikkei, more for women than for the guys, and um, and it was, you know, once the *hakujin* people got to know who these Japanese people were, the relationships became pretty good between the two cultures. Most of the guys would be hired on in logging camps. They would be picked up by trucks, seven o'clock in the morning and taken to logging areas, and they would be brought back home by five o'clock in the afternoon. So job opportunities were good.

KK: And what about your father then, was he able to do physiotherapy, or was he also working in logging?

GT: He worked for the hospital in Nelson and he was also commissioned to go into Castlegar to do, not medical work, but paramedic work in Castlegar, which was sponsored by the New Denver hospital.

KK: So at the church, did they also have Sunday schools there?

GT: Yes.

KK: And that was, I guess, like, what are your memories about that?

Time

GT: Well we had one student minister who came every summer from Toronto and that was Edward Yoshioka who was the son of a United Church Japanese minister who was in Kelowna before the war years and during the war years. Edward had gone to Emmanuel College to be, to the theological seminary there and when he was ordained he went into *hakujin* churches, but as a student, he came to New Denver in the summertime. In the wintertime we had Reverend Dovvy from Nakusp and periodically Dr. Shimizu from Kaslo would come into New Denver to minister to the United Church people in New Denver.

KK: Do you remember after the war, hearing any stories about what happened with the Vancouver Japanese United Church? 31:28

GT: No, I haven't.

KK: So basically after your family, um, left Vancouver…

GT: Yes.

KK: That was the end of your connection to the Vancouver Japanese United Church.

GT: That's right, yeah.

KK: Did you ever keep in touch with any of the people from there? 31:57

GT: Well, the only people I had kept in touch with, and he passed away several years ago, and that was Rev. Shimizu's son, Victor. Victor became a philosophy professor at the University of Winnipeg and he and I got to know each other more closely and so we were friends until the day he passed away.

He had a brother Ted. As far as I know he lives in Ottawa. And then he has a sister Dorothy living somewhere in South-Western Ontario and the older sister Grace lived in Fairbanks, Alaska, married to a Japanese professor from Japan, who had gone to Fairbanks to be professor at the University there. So Grace married him and she still lives in Fairbanks. She had written a book about her father several years ago.

KK: About Rev. Shimizu.

GT: Yeah. It was written in Japanese and later translated into English, or vice-versa. I guess it was written in English and then translated into Japanese.

KK: So, when—this is just my own curiosity here—when the, you spoke at the Vancouver Japanese United Church the other day —a few months ago, when they were awarded the compensation.

Time

GT: Yeah.

KK: And so, how was it that they knew about you and knew to connect with you?

GT: Oh. Um. There was a picture of the original Powell Street Japanese United Church—picture of the—pre-war picture. It appeared on a Facebook or somewhere, I can't remember and I was in Vancouver at the time and I said, "Oh! I went there as a child in kindergarten". And Keiko Norisue picked up on that and said, "You better come and speak about that." That's when I spoke a little bit about that. The one that you refer to?

KK: Yes.

GT: Yeah. Keiko Norisue picked up on it when I happened to mention that: "Hey, I went to Sunday School there."

KK: Oh that's interesting. So, that was just by happenstance.

GT: Yep. That's right,

KK: Wow. That's amazing. Do you have, like, any particular or special memories of stories from that time that you tell people or that you want to tell? 35:21

GT: You mean, the pre-war era?

KK: Yeah.

GT: Um. What I remember is that the adults, including my father, always went to meet the ship that brought people from Japan into Vancouver. And they were instrumental at meeting the people and taking them over to the church and, you know, helping them find places to stay, helping them to, in some cases, helping them to find work and to try and address the needs of these people when they had come across from Japan. That's what I remember. And so, and then there were kids—and of course none of them spoke English—but then most of us still spoke Japanese, so we were able to make friends with a lot of these Japanese kids who came over with their parents. And many of them then came to our Sunday school and uh, a lot of the people settled in that Japantown area, Cordova Street, and so on. And got to know them quite well.

KK: So, that's interesting that people from the church would meet the ships, and…

GT: Yeah, there were people like—well there was my father and there was Dr. Shimotakahara, there was Kamitakahara, Shinobu, Nose, um, people like them. And there were a few others Takiya and they would meet the 37:37

Time

ship and bring the people to the church and get them all settled down. Find jobs, places to live, things like that. And many of them then became—came to church and eventually became members of the United Church.

KK: Yeah, that was another question I had because I would image that many people coming from Japan would not actually have been Christian.

GT: No. I shouldn't say that. I shouldn't say no. I'm assuming that they would not have been Christians although there were Christians living in Japan at that time and I'm sure many of them came over but, you know, I can't prove that.

KK: Do you have memories of some of the activities of the church, like, before the war, did they have the bazaars and that sort of thing that happened after?

GT: The only thing I remember is that my dad and his friends or families would go to Chinatown after morning church service and have lunch and visit. It often took about three hours before they decide to go home. Ha!

KK: Ha!

GT: That's all I remember about that. Um, I also remember when my father was involved with other men and helping to establish the Fairview United Church. And then, most of the people who lived in Fairview who had attended Powell Street Church would then go over to Fairview Church and attend services there. My father never did. We lived at the east end of the Fairview district, but we continued to go to Powell Street. 39:34

KK: Was the Fairview Church a Japanese church as well?

GT: Yes. It was the extension of Powell Street.

KK: How many people would have been at the Powell Street Church?

GT: Gosh, I couldn't give you any numbers. I would say maybe two, three hundred people.

KK: Yeah, I'm just wondering, yeah, what size of a congregation it would have been. So it was a good sized congregation.

GT: Oh yeah. Yeah.

KK: I'm just thinking then that that would indicate that many people went to church

GT: Yeah. Um-hm.

KK: I guess that was the era.

Time

GT: Yep. And um, a side-line: there was a Salvation Army, Japanese Salvation Army. And the head of it was Captain Yamada. And oftentimes Captain Yamada would come to Powell Street United Church and I think there was a connection there. I think the Salvation Army, the Japanese Salvation Army, met in Powell Street Church, but I don't know that for sure. Because [phone connection interruption] have a temple of their own. The Japanese Salvation Army.

KK: Oh okay. [Phone interruption]. So you've mentioned a couple of times memories of your father and his friends and what they did. What kind of things do you remember the women doing at the church?

GT: Yes. Let me just backtrack—something else that comes to mind. My father was very much involved in the Kendo organization and sometimes the Kendo organization met in the Powell Street Church hall. My dad was one of the captains of the Kendo organization. Like he was a, a Kendo instructor. Taught other young men or even older men the art of Kendo. 42:37

KK: So it sounds like the church space was kind of a bit of a community centre.

GT: I would say so, yes.

KK: Do you remember some of the other activities that would have happened there?

GT: Well the Kendo was one, and then I remember high school students, or teenagers, they had social activities. I remember them gathering Sunday afternoons as well as weekday nights for different kinds of activities. I can't remember what kind of activities they did because I never attended their events on a weekday, but I do know they had made good use of the church hall. And there was, as I said, in the kindergarten we learned English language conversation, especially. Now whether they had English for adults, I don't know, I can't answer that. My father had attended the YMCA and he learned English at the YMCA English School and was certified from there. I still have the original certificate that my dad received from the YMCA.

KK: Wow.

GT: In the English.

KK: And did your mother also speak English?

GT: No. Just my dad.

KK: So do you have memories of what the women did in the church?

GT: No, I really don't. I can't recall anything in particular.

Time

KK: Did you ever have community meals and that kind of thing in the church?

GT: Not that I remember, no.

KK: And the service would have been in Japanese then.

GT: Yes.

KK: All the…

GT: There were no English services at all. All in Japanese.

KK: Does that include all the hymns?

GT: Yep. There was a Japanese hymn book.

[Pause]

KK: Yeah, interesting.

[Pause]

But when you were in New Denver, church would have been in English. 46:37

GT: Uh, yes.

KK: Yeah.

GT: Although they had Japanese services too. They had Japanese language services there. My dad was one of the lay leaders, but often times Rev. Shimizu from Kaslo would come down to do services as well.

KK: Okay, so when you went to the church, did you also attend the English church in New Denver, or only the Japanese services?

GT: Uh the English.

KK: Okay.

GT: Yeah.

KK: So the Japanese ones were like a, an occasional thing.

GT: Yeah. Um-hum.

[Pause]

KK: Are there any other stories, if you sit and you imagine that that place and that time, that rise up that you would like to talk about? Or that you think would be of interest to people? 47:30

GT: Um. I think, you know, it took time for people to realize that this was their home. New Denver was their home. And once they learned to accept that, then they had a variety of Japanese activities. For example, one I remember, the Japanese women and young girls did *odori*.

Japanese dancing was very popular among the young Nikkei girls and young women. Another thing that I remember is that my mother taught Japanese cooking to different groups of ladies. She even went to Rosebery, she walked to Rosebery and back. And in Rosebery there was a group of women who made a, formed a Japanese cooking school and that's where my Mother went and taught Japanese cooking.

KK: Who was she teaching?

GT: Huh?

KK: Who would come to that school?

GT: Uh, mostly younger Nikkei women. By younger, they were 20s, 30s, maybe even 40 or, people in their 40s as well. But they would mostly be Nikkeis, Nisseis.

KK: Yep.

GT: And so, they would learn the art of Japanese cooking. The other thing was being where they were living, they would not have access to all the, you know, the proper way of making sushi, so my mother taught them that you don't need seaweed in order to make sushi, you could use egg. And so she would, you know, show them how to make the eggs, how to fry the eggs, so that they would be thin and you would use them to cover the sushi in place of a *nori*, and then she would make use of what was available in the woods—fiddleheads, was a very common… You know, there were plenty of fiddleheads, so she would teach them what to do with fiddleheads. And fiddleheads was also used as something you could put in a sushi, and carrots, things like that. And um, and of course the thin layer of egg to use as a covering in place of a *nori* for sushi. She also taught them how to make, I don't know what the term is for Japanese but, it's wrapped in seaweed, but it's a bowl of rice and you put different things on the… a pot of rice and you put different things: vegetables and what have you, and you use some vinegar and other…

KK: Like *chirashi* sushi?

GT: Yeah, something like that, yeah. What did you call it?

KK: Well my mother makes something that she call *chirashi* sushi.

GT: Yeah!

KK: So it's just…

GT: Yeah.

KK: Yeah. It's just the rice with the vinegar and then…

GT: Yeah. Yeah.

KK: It's got like carrots and peas and…

GT: Yeah.

KK: Well I don't know all of the different things that… Marrow?

GT: Um-hm.

KK: I don't think it's called marrow. Anyways, the stuff is mixed in.

GT: Yes. She, she taught them how to make use of what was available in the forest or mountainside or, and as I said, fiddleheads, there were plenty of fiddleheads. And she also taught them how to make tea using certain kinds of dandelion leaves.

KK: So, that's interesting because of course a) coming to a new country, and then b) being in a remote area, you don't have access to the things you're familiar with.

GT: Nope.

KK: So what about things like tofu?

GT: We had several ladies in New Denver who knew how to make tofu. So, they had a little thriving business going. You could buy tofu at that time for 10 cents. (Laughs).

KK: Wow.

GT: But 10 cents was a lot of money then.

KK: Yeah.

GT: You know, so…

KK: And then, but they had access to soybeans?

GT: Yep. They sure did. Once the town merchants knew what the Japanese people ate, they were able to get those supplies like rice, beans, um and other kinds of vegetables that were needed for Japanese cooking. One of the, one of the things I remember in New Denver was a goodly number of families would make sukiyaki. Meat was available. It wasn't overly costly and besides that, you didn't need that much meat to make sukiyaki. So they used to make sukiyaki.

KK: So they had beef.

GT: Huh?

KK: There was beef? Or did you use game?

Time

GT: No, there was beef. Meat was available in New Denver. Unlike some of the other ghost towns, in New Denver we had already had an established *hakujin*[2] community and so there were, as I said, two stores and a meat market in New Denver and once the merchants knew what the Japanese people wanted, they were able to get it. It wasn't like Slocan City, where there were no *hakujin* grocery stores as such, other than in Slocan City, you know? Lemon Creek, Popoff, Bayfarm… they had no stores until a Japanese person opened a little store in, I think it was in Popoff. Otherwise they would have to go to Slocan city to buy their food.

KK: Aside from fiddleheads, do you remember what other particular sort of local foraging…?

GT: Mushrooms.

KK: Ahh.

GT: But, you had to be careful. There were "eating mushrooms" and poisonous mushrooms. So there were people in New Denver who would check to make sure the mushrooms you picked were edible and not poisonous.

KK: How did they check that?

GT: I don't know. Through sight, you know.

KK: Right.

GT: They could tell what's poisonous and what's not. And I think smell is another way of checking it out too.

KK: So they were just knowledgeable.

GT: Yep.

KK: So people were able to adapt what they could get and continued to cook in a more familiar fashion.

GT: Yep. Uh-hun. [Coughs]. Excuse me. And because we had two ranches in New Denver, there was: the Harris Ranch, and the Nelson Ranch, and they both provided eggs to the stores or directly to the people themselves. You could buy eggs for, um, 15 cents a dozen or 20 cents a dozen in those days. 57:33

KK: Wow. Were there other adaptations? So you talked about used egg instead of seaweed. Were there other adaptations in particular that you remember?

[2] *Hakujin* is the Japanese term for Caucasian.

Time

GT: Uh, that's the only one that I can recall. I can't—there may have been others, but I wouldn't know what they were.

KK: I mean, I guess as a child you just ate what was there! (laughs). So…

GT: Yeah. Um, in New Denver they were fortunate that was the—there were these two grocery stores downtown and once the owners knew what the Japanese needed, or wanted, they would be able to order all those foods into their stores and make them available to the Japanese people. So we were fortunate that way in New Denver.

KK: Yeah, you were.

GT: I suspect the same would be true of Kaslo because there was a *hakujin* community there and there was a *hakujin* shopping area in Kaslo as well.

KK: Right.

GT: But not so in Sandon. Sandon people often came to New Denver to pick up their supplies, even though there was a store or two in Sandon, they did not really have the kinds of things that the Japanese people needed and wanted.

KK: You mentioned your mother walking to the cooking school. How far was that?

GT: Four miles. Rosebery. About, I would say about, between three and four miles, one way.

KK: Wow.

GT: Sometimes she would get a ride if there happened to be a *hakujin* driving by, you know.

KK: Right.

GT: Yeah. But most often she walked.

KK: Wow.

GT: So it would be in the springtime and the autumn. Not in the winter.

KK: Not in the winter.

GT: No.

KK: I'm noticing that we're, we've hit the hour mark, which is a fairly long conversation. Are there any other final, sort of thoughts as we just touch back on the Vancouver Japanese United Church. Any final thoughts about it, or things you wanted to say? 01:00:55

Time

GT: Um. Well I think Powell Street Japanese United Church played an important part in the life of the Japanese community at large. It was not as ecumenical as churches are today, but still they did not reject the needs of non-United Church Japanese people. They tried to address those needs the best they could. And…

KK: When you say that, what kind of needs are you thinking of?

GT: Well, hard to say, you know, people have—the older people had different kinds of needs. What they are, they could be physical needs, they could be needs in terms of everyday living, you know, things like that.

KK: Alright. So they were a part of the community.

GT: I'm sorry?

KK: They were really part of the community as a whole.

GT: Oh yes, yes. There was uh, *Sei Ko Kai*, that's Anglican Church, there was a Japanese Anglican Church, but it was a hit-and-miss from what I could tell. And so, some of those people who were Anglicans came over to the Powell Street Church.

There was also another religious organization and it was called the Foursquare. The Foursquare. That played a prominent part in the Japanese community in Vancouver. And along the West Coast. The Foursquare after the war years, the leader of the Foursquare—I don't know what his name was—but he moved to Montreal and so the Japanese Foursquare Church was in Montreal. Eventually, it kind of died out, but somebody said it was a Presbyterian Church of a kind. It was kind of a Presbyterian Church but I don't know that.

KK: But they were in Vancouver and they also played an important role.

GT: Yeah. I think all of these spiritual communities played an important role. 01:04:28
I can't remember where the Buddhist Church met. They were in Japantown somewhere, but just where I can't remember but, at that time, Buddhists and Christians didn't really associate with one another, as they do today.

KK: Um-hm.

GT: And I don't know why. I remember, as a little kid I asked my dad why I couldn't play with so-and-so, but later I found out that the reason I couldn't play with so-and-so was that he was Buddhist. And I didn't know what, you know, why that would prevent us from—or at least prevent me—from playing with them. I remember that kind of stuff going on.

Time

KK: Hm.

GT: I think part of it was, Buddhism was connected to Japan and the majority of the Japanese people who were not Buddhist did not want to be connected to Japan in the same way as the Buddhists would.

KK: Oh that's…

GT: I don't know if that makes sense or not, but I remember that was an explanation my dad gave me way back when.

KK: That's interesting. Yeah, that's an interesting take on that.

GT: Yeah.

KK: So would you say that people like your parents, they immigrated to Canada and their, sort of, sensibility was: we are coming to a new country and so this is now who we are?

GT: I kind of think so, yeah. I kind of think so.

KK: So how did that then impact them as they were considered enemy aliens? 01:06:34

[pause]

Did your family…

GT: Well, I, well at that time, you know, the *hakujin* people would not know much about Buddhism. You know, they would look upon it as a sect. They would look upon it as an organization that was in tune with Japan, you know.

KK: Right.

GT: There was that kind of thinking going on.

KK: Yeah. [Pause]. Yeah. Wow. [pause]

GT: And also, you know, there were some outspoken Japanese people who were pro-Japan. And I think the RCMP of the day kept in close touch with those people. I know that some were arrested and what happened to them, I don't know. But I remember my parents talking about it. That so-and-so was arrested because of Japanese loyalty or things like that. 01:07:28

KK: And so as your family was caught up in the war and was being sent away, did you, did your parents talk about that a lot, or was it really that sense of *gaman*?

GT: Uh, you mean after-war years?

KK: Well…

		Time
GT:	Or, well yeah, they talked about it.	
KK:	Yeah.	
GT:	Yeah. And they talked about it after the war too, with friends.	
KK:	Right.	
GT:	You know, they, that was part of their life, you know.	
KK:	Um-hm.	
GT:	And they weren't about to forget about it.	
KK:	No, I wouldn't have anticipated that.	
GT:	I know there are, even today, there are still some old-timers in their 90s who won't talk about the war. And so their descendants have no idea. One of the things I do right now, as a matter of fact tomorrow morning at seven o'clock, I'm at a breakfast meeting talking about the internment. Because a lot of *hakujin* people didn't know anything about…	01:09:00
KK:	Right…	
GT:	This happening until break of war, so I do a lot of talk on internment in different places here in Alberta.	
KK:	Well and that part of our goal, I think…	
GT:	Yeah, well I'm one of those that want to keep that story going. To let people know what had happened. Because this is not written in history books for high school kids or even elementary school kids. Maybe just a line or two, but there was never a chapter written about the internment era and the fact that a group of Canadian people, [of] Japanese ancestry, were treated in this manner.	
KK:	Um-hm.	
GT:	The War Measures Act, you know, being imposed upon a group of Canadians until break of war. So these stories have to be told.	
KK:	Well, thank you so much for sharing your story today.	
GT:	Oh, you're welcome!	