

Interview of Toshiharu Kano

Tosh Kano: He'd probably be the best resource you're going to have.

Interviewer: He was in the 10th Mountain Division, I think.

Crew: No, he was military intelligence.

Interviewer: That's right, so we've interviewed him, didn't we? Yeah.

Elizabeth: Yeah, but he was there after the war.

Interviewer: There we go. Okay, tell us your full name.

Tosh Kano: Okay, my first name is Toshiharu Kano.

Interviewer: Okay, so tell us, start it out the way you want. Tell us this story of your father and you and your family and Hiroshima, just let it unfold like you want to.

Tosh Kano: Well, my father passed away in 1976. He gave us, my sister and I, a manuscript for us to keep. He kept his childhood and his military experience and also what he saw during the, right after or just before the atomic blast on August 6th, 1945. He also told us what he knew and he felt about the wars, so I'm just following through. His last wish was to publish his manuscript. He wanted to tell the Japanese side of the story from the beginning to the end -- when I say end, August 6th, 1945. So I really feel that it's my duty to convey that message to the rest of the United States and the Japanese people.

Interviewer: All right, so, let's start out. Start out with your father's story. Where was he born?

Tosh Kano: Well, he was born in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1914. He went to an all white elementary school in Honolulu. I think when he was in fifth grade or sixth grade, he was asked to leave the elementary school and go to the other public school. My grandfather didn't want that to happen, so he sent him back to Japan to be educated by his father and mother. So he went back to Japan to be educated. He went through junior high school and high school in Japan, and the University of Nippon, Nippon University and got his civil engineering degree in 1935.

Interviewer: So your grandparents had immigrated to Hawaii?

Tosh Kano: Yes, in 1880.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. So, were they worried? I'm confused why they sent him back. I'm not quite clear on why they sent him back.

Tosh Kano: Well, the reason that they sent him out is that he was kind of a disgrace, at that time, to be expelled from elementary school. My grandfather was a very successful business man. He felt ashamed that his son was expelled from the elementary school, so to save his face, they sent him back to Japan to be educated by his father and mother.

Interviewer: In traditional ways?

Tosh Kano: Yes.

Interviewer: Traditional

Tosh Kano: Traditional Japanese way.

Interviewer: Could you tell us a little bit about that?

Tosh Kano: Well, the, uh, as you know, the Japanese culture is very strict. What they call – traditionally, you are supposed to obey the elders, you are supposed to obey the school, city, or whatever. My father did not do that. One of the things that he did not obey was, being born in Hawaii, he loved not to wear shoes. This all-white school required wearing shoes. One Sunday, he was delivering newspapers, hoping from the street car to street car delivering newspapers and the principal of the school saw him doing that without the shoes. Being an all white school, you're not supposed to do any, what they call, a “side-business” to make money. Because of that, he was expelled from the school. So my grandfather thought that it's time for him to go back to Japan to be educated in a traditional Japanese way.

Interviewer: And he was how old at that time?

Tosh Kano: I believe he was either eight or ten.

Interviewer: So he got to Japan. Did he feel like he was an American kid, or was he confused?

Tosh Kano: Well, he felt out of place. You could imagine him going to Japan, all of a sudden, not knowing the language. He really felt out of place and awkward. Of course, the Japanese people were very awkward with him because he could not speak Japanese. So, for the first couple years, he really had a tough time, but my grandfather and grandmother really stayed with him and taught him Japanese so he could live through the educational system there in Japan.

When he graduated from civil engineering degree from Nippon University, he was forced to join the Japanese military system. He was drafted into and became a private first class. They send him to Manchuria, China to defend one of the fortresses there. He served in that capacity for about six months, and he did not like being a private first class. So he got himself into the officer candidate school in the Japanese system and he became a second lieutenant in 1937.

Interviewer: And where did he go from there?

Tosh Kano: Then he went to Singapore in 1944 as a civil engineer. Then when Singapore surrendered to Japanese forces, he was given the opportunity to command the British and Australian soldiers POW camp because he was one of the only officers able to speak English to communicate with the soldiers.

Interviewer: What year was that again?

Tosh Kano: That was in 1942.

Interviewer: All right, what were they again? What nationalities were they?

Tosh Kano: They were British, and Australian, and I believe a little bit of New Zealand soldiers.

Interviewer: Tell us what he did. How many were there and what was his position again?

Tosh Kano: About 7 to 8,000 POWs, and they put him in charge of the POW camp. He was a commanding officer in charge of the POWs.

Interviewer: At what age?

Tosh Kano: At age 28.

Interviewer: How did he feel about that?

Tosh Kano: He was not comfortable with that at all. Being a civil engineer, he had no clue of managing all these people. Yes, he was able to speak with them, but he had no clue of managing these people. So the first thing he did, he gathered all of the British and Australian officers into his office and asked them a question, "What do you want me to do with you people?" The

officers replied back to him, saying, "Don't ask us. You're in charge." He was just stunned. He still didn't have any idea what to do, and he thought about it for a minute, and he said, "Okay, if you say so. If you give me the opportunity to be a manager of you, let's make us comfortable. We might be enemies today, but we're going to be friends tomorrow. So let's share everything I have, including the sleeping quarters and any foods that we have. Let's share it. If you guys want to escape from my camp, you're welcome to do so. You can swim across the channel and go to the main land of Malaysia. You're welcome to do that. But I'm not going to put up the fence of guard towers. So let's be comfortable and live together."

Interviewer: What did they say to that, the POWs?

Tosh Kano: Well, the officers were stunned. They thought he was crazy. He said, "No, I'm not kidding. Let's live together and make us feel comfortable." But he said, "We have a problem here. I have no clue what to do with you guys. So what should we do?" He asked for the officers' recommendations. Colonel Smith from the British Army said, "Well, let's help you rebuild the bridge that we destroyed which connected to Singapore and Malaysia. Let's do that first, and then afterwards, we'll be happy to help you build a shrine memorizing the memorial for the Japanese soldiers. Also, let's build the memorial for the British and Australian and New Zealand soldiers that we killed during the battle." He said, "Is that okay with you, Tosh?" And he said, "That's fine with me. Let me gather the materials that you need, and let's go to it."

So, from that point on, everyday, my father was able to get the material and rebuild the bridge across the Strait of Singapore and also they built the memorial for Japanese and the memorial for British and Australian soldiers.

Interviewer: Does still stand there today?

Tosh Kano: No, right after the Allied forces took over the Singapore, the first thing they'd did was destroy the memorial shrine for Japanese and also the memorial for the British and Australian soldiers.

Interviewer: Little island, isn't it?

Tosh Kano: Singapore is a small island at the tip of Malaysia. There was a British colony in 1942, and that was kind of a key point in defending the Southeast Asia because that's protruding into the Indian Ocean. So that was a very, very key defensive spot for Japanese to occupy.

Interviewer: No, was your father in any of the fighting?

Tosh Kano: He did a very little fighting. He was in charge of putting the bridge up, or taking down the bridge. So, being a civil engineer, he was put in charge of restoring the roads that were destroyed by the bombing and then rebuild the new roads.

Interviewer: Did he have any criticism or trouble from his superiors how he treated the POWs?

Tosh Kano: No, because, uh, he was doing a really good job managing the POWs, so the superior officers just kind of left him alone. The only problem that my father had was getting enough rations or food for his men and POWs, so they both starved.

Interviewer: Tell us more about that.

Tosh Kano: Well, they were supposed to bring in a ration every month. It was okay for awhile. The ration came every month, but pretty soon, it didn't come one month, and then didn't come for two months. They really had to scrounge what they had to survive. So one of the missions that they did after working all day, they went out to the ocean, and improvised to catch fish to eat

them. In order to sustain other proteins, they set up a trap to catch birds and rodents so they could eat them as a part of their food.

Interviewer: So, tell us about what happened to your father next in his illness and everything that unfolded.

Tosh Kano: Well, in 1943, actually, in 1944, he came down with real bad malaria, so they relieved him of his command and sent him back to Japan. It took him about three months to get back to Japan. When he landed in Hiroshima, he was skin and bones. My mother did not recognize him. He lost over 100 pounds due to the illness. Unfortunately, his POWs were dispersed to other camps. Some of them in to Burma to build the Burma roads and build the bridge over the River Quai.

Interviewer: So, I am sorry, I should have gotten to his. When did he meet your mother and when did he marry her?

Tosh Kano: Well, that's kind of interesting. Before he went to Manchuria, my grandparents wanted to have somebody in place to take care of them. They felt the only woman that could look after our possessions and look after my grandparents was my mother. So my grandmother approached my father, said, "Tosh, I know that you are going to go to war, but I need somebody to be here to manage us and manage our property. So how would you like to marry Shizue?" He said, "Hell no, because she's my cousin! I'm not interested in her. I'm interested in other woman, and I am not going to marry her. Besides, she's ugly." So he went off and went to his room, shut his door, and didn't want to talk to my grandmother or grandfather for quite some time. My grandmother went to his room and said, "Tosh, if I were you, please reconsider. She's the only person that could really take care of us and look after us." She kind of peeked through the corner

and my father had his sword out and she thought he was going to commit suicide. In fact, my father was cleaning his sword to calm him down so he could think logically. My grandmother panicked and she asked my grandfather and his other caretakers to knock down the door to go and get my father so he wouldn't commit suicide. So they knocked the door down, went into his room, and my father was shocked. He did not know what was going on. He told my grandmother, "I wasn't going to commit suicide. I was just cleaning my sword." In any case, a couple days later, he decided he will marry my mother, and they got married. So my mother and my fathers are first cousins. My grandfathers were brothers. So I came from the same tree.

Interviewer: Fascinating.

Tosh Kano: So being a mother, you know, she told us she really didn't want to marry him, either. She thought that he was absolutely spoiled rotten brat, coming from Honolulu, and so she did not want to marry him at all. Since they got married and they lived together for awhile and they got my sister Yori, and my brother, Toshio, and myself. So, we have two boys and a girl.

Interviewer: Alright, that takes us back to Hiroshima where he rejoined her?

Tosh Kano: Yes, in 1944.

Interviewer: So, tell us about that. Him coming home and then, what his new duties were.

Tosh Kano: Well, after he recovered from malaria, being a civil engineer, it was of course to the end of the war that the military, the Japanese military knew that Allied forces were going to be invading Japan. So they give him two responsibilities: the first was to train personnel to go to Iwo Jima to fight against the Allied forces. When I say "train", these people are elderly, after 65

years old; younger, 12 and 11 year olds; crippled, one eye, so they could defend the Japanese mainland.

Interviewer: What were they training them with?

Tosh Kano: They trained his people to build bunkers and also they trained them to shoot the gun, or throw a grenade with one arm. So my father did not appreciate that and he used to come home and complain to my mother, "I know that these people are never going to come back. How can they come back? They can't even take care of themselves."

Interviewer: Your mother was even trained. Tell us about that.

Tosh Kano: Well, my mother, through the neighborhood community, she was trained to use bamboo spears to kill Allied forces if they were invaded.

Interviewer: Were all the house wives trained this way?

Tosh Kano: All the house wives were trained, yes.

Interviewer: Tell us, okay. So now we are getting close to August 6th. Lead up to that and tell us about what happened.

Tosh Kano: Well, the--

Interviewer: Oh, and by the way, tell us where you were at this moment.

Tosh Kano: Well, I was inside of my mother's womb. I was 12 weeks along. That morning, August 6th, 1945, was a clear day, but it was really humid. Being the officer of the military system, my father was given a horse to write to the headquarters. That horse was taken care of by the private first class to feed and to bathe and bring the horse back to my father's house and

then taken to headquarters. But that morning, he over slept, so he did not come on time to bring the host, so my father could ride to the headquarters. My father was a very punctual man, and he was getting really up tight because his host did not show up on time. So, he was pacing back and forth in front of our house, and he told my mother, I'm going to be late, so I will just take my bicycle to the headquarters, so he took off. Not more than a half a block from our house, both of his tires on the bicycle went flat. Of course, he could not proceed any longer, so he pushed the bicycle back to the house and told my mother, "There's something not right this morning. My horse didn't show up, both tires on my bicycle went flat. Please don't let my daughter follow me out to the street. Keep her inside of the house and yourself inside and don't go out." Then he took off walking to the headquarters. By this time, it was 8:10. About 5 minutes later, the bomb exploded. Before that, he was walking through the overpass of the rail road structure and he saw three B-29s coming into the city. One took off and two came straight into the center of the city. You know, if you happen to hear the B-29, you never miss it because that has a very deep humming sound -- the deep, deep sound. He looked to the sky and then he looked to the ground and there was three junior high school girls going the opposite way to go to school, not paying any attention to the B 29 up ahead above them. He warned the girls not to be messing around, "just make sure you take a cover in case something does happen." Then the blast happened and he was one step outside of the over pass. The shadow from the overpass structure saved his life. Only the head was exposed to the light. We call it the "light", that is the explosion, and that light was so hot, it was the same as the surface of the sun, so he suffered a burn on the back of his head, but the rest of his body was not burned. He was saved. But being outside of the overpass structure was like a canon ball. He was blown away probably a hundred yards into a ditch. He had very heavy prescription glasses, and he lost his--

(Cell phone ringing)

Interviewer: Sorry. Okay. Let's start that over about the glasses. Tell us about that.

Tosh Kano: He had a very heavy prescription glasses and, of course, when he got blown away, he lost his glasses. He was blown into the ditch. When he came to, he realized that everything surrounding him was just dust. He could not see very well, so he kind of got on the hands and knees to get out of the ditch. When he was finally able to get out of the ditch, he was wandering around the road area. Then he touched something that was hot and melting, so he put his nose to that object and it was a body part of the junior high school girls that he just spoke to. The flesh was melting. Of course, he was absolutely shocked and stunned and he recovered his composure and then he ran toward his headquarters and pretty soon, he realized his uniform was starting to disintegrate. He lost his pockets. He lost his sleeves. He lost his pants. Then he started to feel pain in the back of his, the back of his head. Then he walked through the headquarters gate and looked at himself, he had nothing but a white t-shirt and white boxer shorts. That's all that was left, was a belt with a sword on his left and a revolver on his right. Then, one of his engineering officers came to him and asked him whether my father is okay or not. He told him that he's okay. The first thing he asked the officer, what happened to my men? He reported to him that all his men are safe, survived, except one was critically injured. So he took him to the bomb bunker. He looked around the head quarters. All of his buildings were gone and nobody around except his men and his building, engineering building was still standing, ready to collapse. He asked his officers to gather his men so he could tell them what to do. When his men came over, he had over 300 of his engineering soldiers and officers, he told them to gather food and the water and take anything available for clothing back to the bomb shelter and set up headquarters there. He was riding his horse, by the way, his horse survived, so his PFC came over and gave

him a chance to get on his horse, so he was riding his horse and giving orders to his men. Then my mother walked through the gate.

Interviewer: All right, so go back to where your mother was.

Interviewer: We have plenty of time.

Tosh Kano: Okay.

Interviewer: All right, let's backtrack? We will start at your mother's story. This is a perfect time to start telling where your mother was and where you were.

Tosh Kano: After my mother father left and gave, he gave my mother instruction to stay inside of the house. She took my sister and my brother into the house and she was talking to them, praying with them inside of the house. My sister was praying with a belt that they traditionally used to put babies on the mother's back. She was praying with that with a shield on it. My mother had my brother on her arm nursing my brother. Then the bomb exploded. She said that the force came from underneath the house. So she was uplifted. Of course, she was holding my brother, and she threw him, lost him. Then, a split second later, the force came from the top, so she was just crushed from the force above. When the force came from the top to crush the house, one of the main supporting beams supporting the house was coming toward her and apparently that beam knocked her unconscious. She does not know how long she was unconscious, but she suspected it was about 10 minutes or so. Then she heard, when she was unconscious, she told me that she heard the voice calling her name three times: "Shizue. Shizue. Shizue. You've got to wake up." Finally, she opened her eyes and she could see nothing but red and heat. She thought that her house blew up and was on fire. The first instinct, being a mother, is look for my brother and my sister. They were just screaming for help. She got on her hands

and knees to go over the debris, the house was totally crushed. She finally managed to find my sister, her legs were sticking above the floor boards. She yanked her out and when she yanked her out, her back was just absolutely cut from the flying debris and the blood was just coming out fiercely, so she tried to find -- coming to protect her back. She found one of the coats that she was wearing. So she tied that up and she had the cloth belt to tie the baby on her back. So she tied my sister on her back. Then she started to look for my brother. She also found him under the debris, the legs were sticking up above the floor boards, so she yanked him out. This time, his head was just covered with blood squirting out. She thought his head was crushed, so she didn't want to touch his head, afraid that she was going to find the head was crushed. To her amazement, the head was not crushed at all. It was just cuts all over the face, so she tried to hold him in her arms, but he stuck his arm out. He didn't want to be held. Somehow, she managed to hold him in her arms and she didn't realize that when the beam knocked her unconscious, cut her forehead and she was bleeding profusely from that cut and the blood was going into her eyes. That's why she saw nothing but red. Then she said, "Oh, I've got to get out of the house." So she looked toward the main gate, to her amazement, the main sliding door of this house was still intact. Not a single glass pane was broken -- it's open, intact. So she was able to crawl to that door way, and she was able to get out of the house. When she got out, she couldn't see any of the neighbor's houses at all. It was just blown away.

Interviewer: Okay, I need you to back track just for about a paragraph. Tell us how far the house was from the epicenter. Tell us where -- paint a picture.

Tosh Kano: The house that my mother was in was 800 yards, or 2,400 feet, or half a mile from the epicenter. Our house was located right next to the Hiroshima Castle that stood there for 400 years. When she got out, she could not see any of the buildings or the Castle, so she knew

something strange happened. Then she heard our neighbors cry for help, so she ran over to our neighbors and she was trapped under the roof half way out. Apparently when the bomb exploded, she was outside and the house collapsed on her. She tried to pull her out of the debris, she could not budge her. So she told the neighbor that, "I'm going to go to the headquarters and get you help. Please be patient." She was ready to take off, and there was another lady, her neighbor, came out asking for help. She was holding one of her boys, and his tummy was sliced wide open and the guts were spilling out. That's obvious he died. She tried to tell her that, "I'm sorry, I cannot help you. There's nothing I can do for you and your son." The neighbor just took off. Of course, she ran toward the headquarters. She realized she did not have any clothes on at all. The explosion force ripped her clothes away, so she was running with my sister on her back, my brother in her arm, stark naked toward the headquarters, with heavy bleeding from the head. Then she realized her arm started to hurt. She looked down, and right where the vein is on the elbow, she was cut deeply. Blood was just coming out. So she used my brother to hold him tight to stop the bleeding on her arm. Then she walked to the gate and she saw my father directing these men on his horse in his underwear. She went over to talk to him, and he did not recognize her because of the blood and not having the clothes on, but he recognized the belt with our family shield. He asked her, "Are you Shizue?" She said, "Yes. I am Shizue." So he said, "Come on, let's go." So he took her to the first aid station that he set up in a bomb bunker to take her son and daughter. They stayed in a bomb bunker for the next month or so. When she was being tended on, the sky got dark.

Before that, I've got to tell you about -- well, before she went there, she begged my father to send some of his men to our neighbors to assist them to get her out of the debris. He dispatched six of his men to assist our neighbor. Six men came back to them after the entire city caught on

fire. They reported they were just about there. They could see her trapped underneath the house just a stone throw away, and everything caught on fire. They couldn't get to her. Right after the bomb, about 20 minutes afterwards, spontaneous combustion caught the entire city on fire. If you look at the documentary that was taken at the White Sands, you see a flash and you see a face of the building smoking, the explosion force going out, and all of a sudden, explosion coming back to the center and putting out the fire. That's exactly what happened when the bomb exploded. A split second -- everything caught on fire, but a split second later, it was put out because it created a vacuum, took the air out of the area. So the fire was put out. It took 20 minutes to come back and catch everything on fire. My Mother was really lucky and able to get out of there in time before the fire started.

Interviewer: Alright. Tell us what the scientists said about your mother's survival.

Tosh Kano: They thought it was impossible for anybody to survive within a half a mile because they knew the light was so hot that anything the light touched melted, including human flesh. They could not imagine anybody was able to survive the fire and able to come out alive. They were just stunned that we were able to survive being so close. They cannot explain why we survived.

Interviewer: So tell us what happened to your mother, your brother, your sister, and your father after that, with the radiation, and what had happened.

Tosh Kano: Well, another thing that my father wanted to convey to the people in Japan and in the United States is that about four hours later after the bomb, the sky got dark and it started to rain, hail. Hail came first with the size of a marble. It was absolutely black marbles, hail. Then the rain came. The rain was absolutely black. Those hails and rain was absolutely covered with

radiation, falling out radiation. So you might have been able to get out of the structure after the bomb, wandering around the street. "What's happening? What's happening to them." But they were covered with rain and hail. Those people that survived the initial blast that was covered with the rain and the hail passed away within the next two weeks. When that was happening, my family was inside of the bomb bunker away from the fallout radiation.

Interviewer: So, what happened to your brother?

Tosh Kano: My brother suffered the radiation sickness. He was only 18 months old. My sister was three years old. He lost his eye brows, started losing his hair. Again, he was given the treatment of a raw onion, one a day. He was recovering marvelously, but in October, they had to go back to the country house that we came from, so my father took him on his back and rode a bicycle for 20 miles and he passed away that evening from a massive internal injury.

Interviewer: And, your sister, your brother, and you -- tell us what happened.

Tosh Kano: Well, my sister suffered massive cuts on her back. She recovered from that and she did not suffer radiation sickness because she was able to stay inside of the bomb bunker. Of course, my mother also stayed in a bomb bunker, except in September, when my brother was getting the treatment, they moved next to the hospital so they would be close to my brother. She received quite a bit of radiation with me, inside of my mother.

Interviewer: So, tell us what happened from that time on wards and your father's feelings about all this.

Tosh Kano: Well, when I was born on March 6th, 1946, I was very, very small. I believe I was only a little bit more than three pounds. Doctors told my mother that, "I don't think your son's

going to be able to survive.” My mother said, “I’m not going to lose another soon. I’m going to do everything I can to make him live.” I owe a lot to my mother for that. I was able to survive through the hardship after the war. Unfortunately, because of the radiation that I received, I was really weak. I suffered several mumps, tuberculosis, and all of the childhood diseases you can think of except for polio and diphtheria. I was not able to receive that, but I received everything else. In other words, doctors gave up a long time ago, but because of my mother, she was able to nurture me and able to make me what I am today. I didn't know whether I would be able to make it or not, because through the elementary school years, I was sick months out of the school years. I made it through their system, barely. On the other hand, my sister was very strong through, up to about 15 or 16. Then she started to fatigue easy. She had some problems with her health, but she's a 65 year old today. She is relatively healthy and able to enjoy or life. On the other hand, after I hit 15, I have not been sick at all. In fact, 30 years of my career, I only lost 10 days because I had a hernia operation.

Interviewer: Tell us about your father and his feelings and what happened to him after the war and what your mission is.

Tosh Kano: Well, my father, right after the war, he was arrested by the Allied forces because he was in charge of the POW camp and put on a trial to be executed as a commanding officer of a POW camp and he was waiting for execution. That's why Colonel Smith from the British military system came to Tokyo with the petitions signed by all of the survivors of the POW camp that my father was in charge of and presented to the Supreme Court begging for my father's mercy. Because of that, he was spared.

Interviewer: Did he come to the United States after that? What was his--

Tosh Kano: Well, apparently Colonel Smith heard about--

Interviewer: Do you need to take a break?

Tosh Kano: Yeah.

Interviewer: Let's -- it's all right.

Tosh Kano: Excuse me.

Interviewer: Let's just take five minutes. Is that okay, Liz?

Elizabeth: That's all right.

Interviewer: Let's take a break just for a minute.

(Break)

Interviewer: They got to get the machine going again. Here we go, alright.

Tosh Kano: Apparently Colonel Smith heard about my father's dilemma, so he went throughout Great Britain and contacted all of the survivors and gathered a petition. To my father's surprise, when they were dispersed, just before they were dispersed, a lot of the POWs had written a letter of how they were treated by my father, written a letter and put it in a bottle and buried it in the sand. They found some of those letters that my father treated these people with dignity. So Colonel Smith got one of the letters with the petition, went to the Supreme Court, and asked them for mercy. Of course, my Father was given the opportunity to speak and defend himself and he was freed. He was one of the few that were not executed, being the officer of, the supreme commander of the POW camp. He told me a long time ago that his statement that he

made to his POWs that “we may be enemies today, but we're going to be friends tomorrow” saved his life. He taught that concept in myself, to treat people equally, and with dignity.

Interviewer: Tell us what your father thought about Japan and Hiroshima and MacArthur and everything that happened, what his philosophy was about the bomb.

Tosh Kano: You know, being what he was, he was born in American territory as American citizens, he firmly believed that the a bomb dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended the war quickly. He firmly believed that the lives on both side were saved because of that. He read many articles in the early 60s and late 60s. They got into why these events occurred, but to set aside, he firmly believed that the bomb did save lives on the both sides. He wanted to say a bygone is a bygone, and proceed forward into the future. He wanted to convey the message to the United States and Japan that we'll never use this nuclear weapon to benefit themselves because he saw horrible sights -- people being melted, structures being crushed, and pain and suffering that went on after the bomb. The bomb did not end the suffering for these victims on Hiroshima Japan and Nagasaki. It went on and on, it's still going on today -- people are dying from leukemia and mysterious radiation sickness after 60 years. So, the pain and suffering, physically and psychologically have not ended.

Interviewer: Tell us about MacArthur and your father's feelings about that and your feelings and what happened to Japan.

Tosh Kano: Well, my father taught me that MacArthur single-handedly saved Japan and his Japanese culture. He said that MacArthur put his foot down and told the Allied forces to stay away from his command. MacArthur did not want Japan to be split up like in Germany. He wanted to keep Japan whole, and told Russia -- especially Russia and Great Britain -- to stay out

of his responsibility. He told me that the Japanese people owe a lot to General MacArthur because of that. Not only that, he felt that MacArthur helped teach them the democratic way of living. In other words, man and woman are equal. Remember, before the war, the women were not equal, and MacArthur showed the Japanese men that we need to treat the woman equally with dignity. I have never, never forgotten that.

Interviewer: So, if your father was here, you told me when we talked recently about this, he had a mission. He had a thing he wanted, through you, to tell the world, and what this mission was.

Tosh Kano: He told me over and over again that, for some reason, we were able to survive being half a mile from the center. That he really felt that we, all of us, have a mission to tell the world that atomic weapon is a terrible weapon, that we cannot use it again, ever. That's why he has written a manuscript to tell his side of the story and tell the world that we cannot use that weapon ever again because physically, psychologically, it's a devastating weapon. If I stayed in Japan, I would not be able to marry. I would not be able to receive a good employment because I'm a victim of the A-bomb. The people in Japan feel that somehow we are damaged because we received such a huge amount of radiation and the victims are not reliable for the workforce because they are sick all the time, they do not show up to work reliably. So, I'm really glad that I was able to move to the United States and given the opportunity to prove to the world that that's not always the case. I'm healthy. I have two sons, married. I have a successful career. So all of this is part of a mission that I wanted to tell the world that, uh, so I firmly believe that my mission is going to continue to the day I die.

Interviewer: When did you come to Utah?

Tosh Kano: In 1961. My father's and my mother's citizenship was reinstated by the United States Congress in January of 1961. So, we decided to come back to the United States as soon as possible because my sister at that time was 17 and a half years old. If anybody, an American citizen out of our country, had siblings or a child outside of our country and turn 18 years, that child will lose American citizenship, so we only had six months to spare. We packed up everything and came back to the United States.

Interviewer: How are we doing on time?

Elizabeth: It's about 26 after.

Interviewer: Okay, we're fine. Okay. Is there anything we haven't talked about, anything I haven't asked that you would like to say?

Tosh Kano: Well, there's a couple things that my father wanted to also convey the message, was how to survive the radiation sickness, and also, how to treat yourself when you receive the third degree burn because he was saved from the radiation sickness and his friend, his superior officer, Mr. Kubota. He was saved from the third degree burn. I wanted to convey that message to the world that there is a way to treat radiation sickness and treat the third degree burn without the skin graft.

Interviewer: Tell us.

Tosh Kano: The radiation sickness my father had -- you have to understand that his case was a severe case of radiation sickness. He lost his eyebrows, he lost his hair, he was breathing through the lungs, but his doctor put him on the onion treatment every single day for two weeks.

Interviewer: What is the onion treatment and where did he hear about it?

Tosh Kano: He heard it from the old, what do you call, unconventional treatment that he read through the books long ago that this type of sickness -- losing hair, breathing through the lungs will be cured by eating onions. The doctor put him on the half-an-onion-per-meal treatment for two weeks. After two weeks, he stopped losing his hair and stopped breathing through the lungs and able to be cured from that radiation sickness. So the onion, something in the onion, that cures the radiation sickness. As you know, radiation sickness is destruction of the white blood cell, and somehow, something in the onion stops that and brings back the white count to normal. So, I don't know what it is, but that was the treatment

Interviewer: You were a witness to this, or your family was a witness?

Tosh Kano: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: And actually used and survived with it?

Tosh Kano: Yes, my brother and my father were treated using an onion. Then Mr. Kubota, the morning when the bomb dropped, he saw the B-29s, two of them coming in toward the center. He was watching with a binocular, with nothing above his waist because it was muggy in the morning. So he was watching through the binocular as the B-29 came in and he saw white smoke coming from the belly of the B-29, so he was really interested in that. So he was watching that puff of smoke. As it came down toward the ground, he realized that was a parachute and then blew up. When that happened, remember he had a binocular protecting his eyes, but the rest of his face and chest, the arms were exposed to that light that I mentioned to you. The next thing he realized, he was blown away and then he realized that his flesh was burning on his arms, his face, and his chest. So he tried to put the fire out by touching. Then when he was successfully able to somehow put out the fire, the skin on his face fell off on to his

hand. Then he realized that his arms and the top of his hand were burning also, so he started to put out -- like this. Then his entire skin on his hand slipped off and hanging by the nails, and his chest, the entire skin just fell off.

Interviewer: And he used this onion treatment?

Tosh Kano: No, doctor treated him with human ashes.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Tosh Kano: They went over to the place that they were cremating people on the bank of the river and he gathered the human bones and they crushed them into a powder and they put them directly on to his flesh. Remember, he did not have flesh, I mean the skin, to protect his flesh. So the odor, the fluid from his body was oozing out. The doctor used the human ashes to absorb the fluid and give him a shield to protect his flesh. They changed the dressing every hour and a half or two hours. At that time, all the fluid had absorbed through the powder and turned into, kind of a doughy cake type of mixture, and they were able to change it. They put it on again, but the biggest problem that Mr. Kubota said, "That wasn't the painful process." The most painful time was when a fly landed on to his flesh, laid eggs, and the eggs hatched to maggots, and maggots were crawling through his flesh. The doctors were picking those maggots out one at a time, and that hurt him.

Interviewer: Wow.

Tosh Kano: Maggots, when I look back, maggots were doing really a good service for the flesh because maggots were eating away all of the dead tissue that he suffered, and stuck to his--

Interviewer: Yeah.

Tosh Kano: --oozing bodies.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Tosh Kano: Then the human ashes absorbing the liquid and then putting back into the flesh, somehow a combination of the maggots and the human ashes made Mr. Kubota skin to rejuvenate.

Interviewer: Fascinating.

Tosh Kano: And today, you will not recognize him that he ever suffered a third degree burn on his face and arms and his chest. He's back to normal. He doesn't have hairs, but he's back to normal tissue. He's a little bit pinker than the other areas, but he has rejuvenated the skin.

Interviewer: All right, how are we doing on time?

Elizabeth: I have a question.

Interviewer: All right, anybody have a question?

Elizabeth: You need to talk to Jeff when you answer, but what did your father think when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor?

Tosh Kano: He never conveyed.

Interviewer: (Inaudible).

Tosh Kano: He never conveyed the message to me, but, let me tell you our family story about Pearl Harbor. My grandfather was a successful contractor, general contractor. In 1939, he was given from the military, especially the United States Navy, a contract to renovate Pearl Harbor --

millions of dollars of contract. So, my grandfather was renovating and rebuilding Pearl Harbor when the bomb dropped on Pearl Harbor. So, when the first bomb exploded, seven FBI agents stormed in to my grandfather's house, arrested him, handcuffed him, blindfolded him, and took him away. My grandfather's comment was, "My God, what's going to happen to our family?" He knew the Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor, and from the American side, it makes sense because my grandfather was the only person that had the blueprints of Pearl Harbor renovating. They added one and one together and said, "He must have passed the blueprints to the Japanese side." So without trial or any charge, they arrested him, sent him to Wyoming, and he spent next three years there without compensation or without trial.

Interviewer: Where'd they send him again?

Tosh Kano: Wyoming, Heart Mountain Wyoming. As far as I know, my grandfather and my grandmother were shipped the United States, I mean the Japanese forces attacked the United States.

Interviewer: So

Tosh Kano: Afterwards, my father indicated that there was a mistake on Japanese side because he thought the Japanese military had no clue that what United States were capable of. You know, we repair those ships within six months of Pearl Harbor, put them back in service. The Japanese forces military have had no idea that would ever happen. By attacking Pearl Harbor, destroying the Pacific Fleet, they thought they would have about a year and a half to two years so they could take over the entire Southeast Asia.

Interviewer: So, your grandmother and your grandfather were in an internment camp?

Tosh Kano: My grandmother had a real bad illness, so she passed away in a military hospital in December. Excuse me, not December, two months after December. So she passed away in February.

Interviewer: Of '42?

Tosh Kano: '42. When my grandfather was in the Wyoming camp, they relinquished all the property to public sales. We lost every property that we had in Honolulu. Then, in 1944, they sent him back to Japan and took away everything and sent him back to Japan through the Indian Ocean through Southeast Asia back to Japan instead of going across Pacific Ocean.

Interviewer: Did your father and your grandfather have a reunion at some point?

Tosh Kano: Yes, remember my father suffered malaria, so they met briefly at the Singapore.

Interviewer: Liz?

Elizabeth: I'm curious what battle the British and the Australians were fighting in that they became POWs. Was there a specific--

Interviewer: It was the battle of Singapore and Malaysia.

Elizabeth: Okay.

Interviewer: It was December, right when Pearl Harbor and all of that -- the Philippines. The Japanese invaded Malaysia and Singapore.

Elizabeth: What would have happened, his father would have been -- he was drafted?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Tosh Kano: Well, right after he graduated from Nippon University, he was gathered by the Japanese military and they asked him to join them to go into their system. They indicated to him, "If you do not sign the paper to join us, you will be executed as an enemy combatant"--

Interviewer: Yeah.

Tosh Kano: --"because you were born in Honolulu." So he had no choice but to sign the papers to join them in 1935.

Elizabeth: Okay.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you

(Recording skips).

Tosh Kano: I really feel that my sister and I and my sons have a mission to accomplish. It's just absolutely amazing that I'm talking to you today, because the doctors in Japan had given up that I would ever get to this point. Of course, the scientists from White Sands, the Los Alamos, cannot believe that I have survived that, either. A half a mile is not that far away, and they cannot understand why my mother did not abort, have a miscarriage at that time, but I stayed in there. I used to kid my mother, "The voices that you heard calling your name? That was me telling you to take up because I didn't want to be burned up." (Laughter). So, she said, "No, that wasn't you. That was somebody else." She said, "That was a woman's voice." She believes that her mother, my grandmother, that passed away in 1928, was with her and trying to save her. The day that she died, she carried her ashes in her possession because she said her mother had always protected her and saved her.

Interviewer: What year did your mother die?

Tosh Kano: She died last year on June 25th at age 93.

Interviewer: Amazing. Thank you, Tosh.

End of recording.