Interviewee: Sachiko Okuda
Interviewer: Theressa Takasaki
Date: April 21st, 2026
Location: Ottawa, ON (at home interview)
Accession Number: 2026-07

[Interview start]

Theressa Takasaki: I'm doing this completely on my own, but numbers are working. I'm just going to check that we have sound. She showed me how to do this. Okay. You know what? We've got sound, we're going to trust.
Sachiko Okuda: Okay.
TT: We have multiple things. Okay. So, thank you very much for allowing us to come into your home to do this interview, we are so excited. My colleagues have been asking me for weeks, "So when's Timothy coming home? When's Timothy coming home?" Because they knew that this was the plan. So, we do know that you've already done a Landscapes of Injustice interview in 2016, but we're hoping to get a little bit more detail for our research for the Diversifying Accountability book that PWFC is creating. So, we've already completed the release forms. And if at any time you want to take a break, just let me know: we'll pause the camera, we'll take a break. So, today is April 21st, 2026. I'm Theressa Takasaki, here in Ottawa, conducting an interview with Sachiko Okuda. So, Sachiko, can you tell me your full name?
SO: Sure. My full name is Sachiko Eileen Okuda.
TT: Mm-hm. And did you ever have a nickname?
SO: You know, I didn't really have a nickname, but when I was growing up, I would pronounce it '*Saa*-che-ko.' And I guess people shortened it to 'Satch.' But as I became more aware of the Nikkei community, I improved the pronunciation, so it was 'Sa-*chi*-ko.'
TT: Yeah. Excellent. And where were you born?
SO: So, I was born in Verdun, Quebec, so it's a part of Greater Montreal.
TT: Okay. And did you grow up in that area?
SO: I did grow up in Verdun, yes.
TT: Okay. And how did you relate to your Japanese Canadian identity growing up?
SO: Okay. Growing up, I barely related to my Japanese Canadian identity. I grew up in the '60s, and I would have to say that Verdun was not a multicultural, friendly kind of place. So, I did experience a lot of name-calling, a lot of… um, yeah, sort of racist incidents from children. And from adults. So, it was not a great thing to be of an ethnic minority at the time. And I'd have to say that multiculturalism was not a thing

yet. We hadn't had the pride instilled in us of being Nikkei. So, I'd have to say, I kind of hid from my Nikkei heritage.
TT: Were there other Japanese Canadian families in Verdun?
SO: You know there was- as far as I know, just one that I knew who wasn't a relative, and we didn't really, sort of, relate.
TT: Okay. Yeah.
SO: Although there was a Japanese Buddhist church in another neighborhood. And we did- That's I guess where I got my dose of Nikkei exposure.
TT: Okay. Are there any stories from your childhood that still resonate with you today that you would like to share?
SO: There are. And there's two of them, and they both involve incidents in department stores, okay. So, the first one, I was probably 11, so let's say late 60s. And I was with my mother in a downtown department store, Ogilvy's, in the shoe department. And a large multi-generational Nikkei family came into the shoe department. And it was like the classic granny with- you know, she probably even had a hairnet [gestures around head] or at least a hat, and dressed, you know in dark clothing, and then the nisei children and the grandchildren. And right away, my mother's whole countenance changed. Her face just went slack, and she just went gray. And they came to talk with her in Japanese, so I didn't really understand. But I could understand they were talking about somebody, and that they were shocked to hear that that person was dead. And I assume that that was one of my grandparents that they were referring to. And, you know my mother talked with them, but in short- you know, very short sentences. And then afterwards, I asked her like, "Who were those people?" And it turned out to be people from [internment] camp, 20 years earlier, let's say. And she said, "I don't want to talk about those times."

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And I remember thinking, or perhaps I thought about this later, and I thought, ‘if you met somebody you knew 20 years ago, you probably would be happy to see them or want to engage in conversation,’ but my mother just did not. Okay. So that's one incident from my childhood. And the second incident happened at Eaton's, and I was probably 14, out with my girlfriends. And this was- it was a racist incident, and it also reflected the way my father reacted to it later. It sort of reflected on him as well in a positive way. But backstory: my father at one point was very involved in advocacy for the Nikkei community. He was at one time the national president of the precursor to the NAJC [National Association of Japanese Canadians]. But by the time I was a child, he had already retired from that kind of advocacy work. So anyway, I was in Eaton’s with several girlfriends. We went to the snack bar in the basement,

and it was a round counter. And we all ordered the same thing, a hot dog. And the waitress wouldn't serve me. So, she didn't take my order. So, my friends put in my order for me. And then when it came time to pay, we all pulled out a $5 bill, and she accepted it from all of the other girls. But for me, she said, "I don't have change. I can't take that." So, my girlfriends just pooled the change that they had received from their $5 bills and paid my bill. And that's when the server said to me, "Next time you come in here, I'm not serving you." And I was just very hurt but didn't know what to do. I didn't have the wherewithal. So, when I went home, my father, who was very- by that time, he was very non-assertive. He had just- he was a very calm person. He got visibly agitated. He was really angry. And he got on the phone to Eaton's and made a complaint and canceled our credit card. And then afterwards- He was spluttering, he was so angry. Then afterwards, he got off the phone and he said, "They said, 'Oh, we don't- our staff wouldn't do that. We don't allow our employees to do that.'" Which was, yeah, a non-answer. But I thought, "Wow, Dad got angry about it." So, it validated my hurt, which was a good thing, I thought.
TT: Absolutely. Yeah. Horrible story, wonderful support from your parents.
SO: Indeed, yeah.
TT: So, can you describe your education?
SO: So, I went to- I was educated in Quebec, public school, high school. I went to CEGEP. I went to an English language- I went to McGill for my undergraduate, and then I went to Université de Montréal, a Francophone institution, for my master's degree. I was a librarian, so it was a library science degree. And as for career, I worked in libraries pretty much until my retirement over 10 years ago.
TT: Did you face any discrimination at school or in your career?
SO: Certainly discrimination, not at school or in my career, but in the street. Even, you know, surprisingly, until young adulthood, people would say racist things, even just as an opening line. It was very odd. Why would you be attracted to somebody who said "ching chong" to you as an opening line? Anyway. But in terms of career, I'd have to say that because I grew up at a time when, at least my generation of Nikkei, we were told to fade into the background, not stand out, not be loud, and be humble. I'd have to say that that impacted the way I presented myself in job interviews. So, I never was comfortable in doing self-promotion and- quite non-assertive. And I know that that played a role- or I sense that that played a role in my job progression or perhaps non-progression.
TT: Seen as being meek and maybe not leadership?
SO: Exactly. Or sort of hiding your light under a barrel.

[00:10]

TT: Mm-hm.
SO: Yeah.
TT: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. In what ways have you been involved with the JC community?
SO: Well, I've been involved with the JC community since, I would say, my late teens, in small ways, and then I'm still involved in the community. So, in the intervening, whatever-
TT: [20?] years.
SO: Yeah, 50, 60 years, I've taken on various responsibilities. So, I was president of our local community association, the Ottawa Japanese Community Association, in the late '80s. In those heady days after the redress agreement, when we were in full community-building mode. I was president again in the mid-2010s for perhaps five years. I've been- and in the intervening years, I've done things such as our community TV show. I was a co-producer, community co-producer, for probably 15 years. Various things, both small tasks and larger responsibilities.
TT: What was the name of the TV show?
SO: Oh, the TV show, it's still ongoing, called "Contact Japan" on Rogers Community 22. And we were really lucky to have that show. And I must say that in that role, it did influence my future activities because as producer, you have to reach out to people and bring them together, and I love doing that. So, I retired from the show during COVID, when they went to a more remote model- not going into the studio, you did the production from your house-
TT: Yes.
SO: -which didn't work out for me. But since- in the last few years, I've been doing, I would say, kind of like a producer role for various cultural institutions. So, for example, The Canadian War Museum was looking for some programming involving sansei. And as it so happens, I knew two sansei researchers who were looking to give a presentation, and I brought them together. That kind of thing, which I love.
TT: Excellent. Do you know that Susan Yatabe and Mandy Shintani are bringing-
SO: Yes. It's that presentation of the samurai and the teacher.
TT: Excellent. Yeah.
SO, One researcher coming in from Vancouver and the other coming in from Deep River.
TT: Mm-hm. I wish- Ottawa's far away, so I won't be coming in for that one. Were you involved in the 1977 centennial activities?
SO: I wasn't involved in the centennial activities. I was in Montreal, and it just- I was not aware of what was going on. But now that I look back, I realize that that was a watershed moment because it restored pride in our community. And many, many great organizations were born out of that centennial celebration.
TT: Why is it important to you to maintain Japanese Canadian culture?

SO: It's important for me to maintain Japanese Canadian culture because it's a part of us. It's what makes us unique. It's our contribution, and I think it's a lovely thing, and growing up, I didn't value it, so you know, I'm sure as heck going to value it now.
TT: Excellent. Okay. So, I'm going to skip the next question because... Well, were your parents or any of your family involved in the centennial celebrations?
SO: No. By that time, they'd kind of withdrawn from that kind of community activity.
TT: Sorry, just taking a note.
SO: Yeah. Although my father was very involved in post-1967, so post the Canada Centennial, the creation of a Japanese garden at the Montreal Botanical Gardens. He worked very hard on that project. It was a very uphill battle.

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SO: The garden was eventually built, and I think by that time, because it was a very difficult process, he had tough challenges. By that time, I think he'd withdrawn from big community projects.
TT: Knowing the challenges that similar projects faced across Canada, I would imagine it was that much more difficult to do it in Montreal.
SO: In his papers, the box of papers that I inherited after he died, I found letters from members of the Nikkei community asking for their donations back because the garden hadn't been built yet.
TT: Oh.
SO: This type of, you know, headaches, which in large capital projects, delays happen, but it's very hard to explain that to community members.
TT: Mm-hm. For transparency, I should tell you, my dad grew up in Quebec.
SO: Okay.
TT: He grew up in Drummondville, but English-speaking. So yeah, the challenges are there. So why don't we get into a little bit of the redress topic. So, can you tell me about your involvement with the redress movement?
SO: Okay. I'd like to talk about my involvement in the redress movement in two parts. One is working on the April rally on Parliament Hill, and the other is the day of the announcement in September in the House of Commons. So, in the spring of 1988, I'd been living in Ottawa for six years, and I wasn't connected to the Nikkei community here. I just knew the Japanese food store and Suisha Gardens restaurants. But I went home to Montreal for the weekend during Keirokai, where they were having a fundraiser, and my sister was- my sister voluntold me to go to the fundraiser with them and serve the chow mein and spareribs. Okay. And the fundraiser was 'Issei to Ottawa' because they wanted to charter a bus to take them to this rally, which was going to happen in April. So, I served the chow mein, and I met

Audrey Kobayashi. She was in the kitchen doling out the spareribs, and I met David Murata. So, David Murata was the co-coordinator or the coordinator of the rally, and he was in from Vancouver at Keirokai in Montreal. And he told me he was going to Ottawa in the next couple of weeks, and he would introduce me to the redress committee in the local community, and he said, "They're good people," and I remember that. And at that time, we didn't have a place to meet, so we met at a community centre. And I'm trying to remember, but I believe we also met at various times at the home of Amy Yamasaki, who was a wonderful elder in our community. And I started to get involved with the Redress Rally, which was the next thing on the agenda. So, I met people like Aki Watanabe, he and his wife, Molly, were instrumental in organizing the community for that rally. They did outreach as best they could. They went through the phone book. They went through the white pages, and they looked for names that appeared to be Japanese, and sometimes they weren't. Sometimes they were like, Nigerian. But, yeah, they contacted people and tried to drum up enthusiasm and interest. And there were other people on the committee, Jimmy Doi, and Paul Kariya. Paul Kariya, the cousin of the NHL hockey-playing- Paul Kariya. And if my memory serves me, Paul and I were the only two on the committee who hadn't been interned. We were sansei.

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And so, our goal was to get people out to the rally, and one of my jobs was to take these printed napkins around to restaurants and bakeries. And what was printed on the napkin was a map and the telephone number of David Murata and of Aki Watanabe, and some promo for the rally. It was days before social media or- even email wasn't very common. And Paul Kariya and I went around and we distributed these napkins. So that's how I got involved. Little jobs, okay. And then… well, I went to the rally, and the rally had a banquet the night- There was a banquet the night before the rally, and I don't remember eating at all, but I just remember the excitement and meeting all these people who had come in from, well, Montreal, Hamilton, Toronto, and points west. People who I knew were my father's friends, but had never met them. I'd heard their names, like Harold Hirose from Winnipeg, and just their excitement about going to be in a demonstration the following day because it was a new thing for them. And I remember working on the placards. So, after the banquet, the meal part- And Amy Yamasaki gave some remarks at the banquet. We worked on these placards, and I remember one of them was a slogan from the 1837 Rebellion of Les Patriotes, and it was "Un Canadien errant banni de ses foyers." And I wanted to spell it a certain way, but another member of the placard-making group, the spontaneous placard-making group said, "No, no, it's spelled this way." And he

had been educated in France, so I deferred. But last night I checked the spelling, and I was right. However, it doesn't matter. So, there was just such this electricity in the air before the rally itself. And the day of the rally, I took the day off work and met the group at Parliament Hill, and I had asked my former boyfriend, Gordon King- Well, actually, I didn't ask him. Gordon King, at that time, was just establishing himself as a commercial photographer, and even though we were no longer together as a couple, he volunteered to do photo coverage of the rally, which I think was terrific because some of those photos have become iconic. And he very, very generously donated his time and also the rights to use the photos freely to the Japanese Canadian community. He gave the negatives to Roy Miki, and for somebody who was just starting out a business, I think that was really a-
TT: That was huge.
SO: -big contribution. And he also did coverage of the day of the settlement months later, which, again, was very generous of him. So, the rally on Parliament Hill kind of had two parts: [one], a rally, so a procession on the hill. And it was just so dignified, and people walked slowly with these placards with gigantic photos and slogans, and they had these yellow ribbons of hope on these poles, I guess. The Ribbons of Hope were donations, represented donations from people who could not be at the rally, but who wanted to support it, and they had names on them. And in the front row of the marchers were some senior members of the national community who had been interned, including the mother of a local person, Kay Shimizu, who was a mom of- a local member of our organization.

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And in the Gordon King photos that you can see to this day, she's in the front row in a white raincoat carrying these banners. So, it was just so moving and lovely. Then we all crowded into a room in the West Block for the forum. So, the forum was basically- consisted of very powerful speeches from our supporters and members of our community, with the minister who had just been named, Gerry Wiener, to do- to continue the negotiations with the NAJC. He was a new appointee to the negotiations. He was there as well. And I remember that- I was told that he had asked to speak first or among the first speakers, but he was given the last slot, so he had to listen to all of the other speeches and presentations. And we had civil liberties representative, church representatives, Mary Jo Leddy, Sister Mary Jo Leddy, who was at the time a nun, a very strong activist Catholic. Labor representation, David Suzuki spoke. Lewis Chan, the president of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, who was a- The Canadian Ethnocultural was instrumental in helping the NAJC build

coalition and also interact with federal government officials. Lewis Chan is the father of Patrick Chan, the figure skater.
TT: Okay.
SO: Yeah. Anyway, it was such a golden event. And Hide Hyodo Shimizu, whose children live here, she brought- she led the charge of this procession of sacks of petitions and these yellow "I Support Redress" cards. I think there were 15,000 of them signed by Canadians across the country. It was like the scene in *Miracle on 34th Street* when the post office delivers sacks of mail to the courthouse proving that Santa is real. So, these sacks of mail that were opened up and strewn on the floor of the West Block, they show that we had Canadians behind us, and we had a lot of them. So, it was a really, really wonderful event, and a pivotal moment, I think, in the campaign for redress. And later on, I read that the negotiations got going again. It breathed new life into them. So that's the long-winded story about the rally.
TT: That's wonderful.
SO: Shall we talk about the day of the settlement?
TT: That would be great.
SO: Okay. So, in the intervening months, I did meet with the negotiating team. Like, I met them, but not as part of the team. I would do things like, for example, give- provide information on restaurants that were open late at night because the team members would come in- some would come in from Vancouver, so it would be quite late for them when they arrived here, and restaurants were often closed. And I know they stayed at the Lord Elgin Hotel, and one time they had to order a pizza and eat it in the lobby. So, I did small things for the group. And I think the decisions for the internment and ultimately redress were made in Ottawa, but the bulk of the people and the bulk of the energy behind the redress movement was not in Ottawa because the community here is very small.
TT: Mm-hm.
SO: And because many people here work for the federal government, it was a little dicey in terms of...

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SO: Well, I have read from Kay Shimizu that- Kay Shimizu, who was carrying a placard, that she convinced people, her peers in the Nikkei community here, that no, what we were looking at was a justice issue. It was bigger than the Japanese Canadian community, and we should not feel hesitant- It's rather difficult. The community here is smaller, was smaller. It's a little different than, say, in Vancouver and Toronto, where there was more of a groundswell and indignation about what happened to us during the war and in the years afterwards. So, where was I going

with this? We're getting to the day of the settlement in September. But sometime in early September, in August, I got a call from Roy Miki, and he seemed very ebullient, and he just said, "Something big's going to happen." And so, looking back now, I realize that, well, the NAJC must have settled, but the announcement won't be until later. But at that time, I didn't know because it had been such a long struggle. The NAJC had negotiated with many different ministers. It was hard to tell: what- was it really going to happen? But the day before the settlement, which was on September 22nd, so on September 21st, I got a call from the House of Commons, asking me to come to question period the following morning because there would be some elderly Japanese Canadian people in the gallery, and there are stairs and whatnot. And they just wanted somebody from the community to be there in case they needed assistance or some reassurance, okay. And that's when I knew. That's when I knew that we had obviously settled. So, on September 22nd, I went to the visitor's gallery. So, I had the privilege of being in the gallery when the announcement was made, and when- there was all-party support and testimonials. And the elders from our community, including Molly Watanabe, I remember she was in the gallery. We were on one side, and the negotiating team was on the other side of the gallery. And there wasn't a dry eye in the house. And then afterwards... Well, Ed Broadbent was moved to tears himself as he gave his remarks. And then afterwards, we went to the press conference, and the details of the comprehensive agreement were detailed for the press and for us, too. And it was just a wonderful, wonderful day. Yeah.
TT: It sounds like it would've been amazing.
SO: Mm-hm.
TT: So just let me look through the questions… I think you've answered most of them. So, you've talked about some of the people who were involved in redress in Ottawa, but that they were mostly nisei and issei. You also mentioned that Amy Yamasaki used to host events in her house.
SO: Well, I can only speak from my own recollection, and I came on board fairly late in the process, so the spring of- early spring of 1988. I don't know what happened before that. And I know that Amy hosted meetings because we didn't have, at that time, we didn't have a cultural centre. But whether those were redress committee meetings or not, I cannot say for sure.
TT: Okay.
SO: But she was such a wonderful presence who represented the older generation of Japanese Canadians. She was just a supporter, and yeah.
TT: And would they have been large meetings?
SO: No. What I'm talking about is committee organization meetings.

[00:35]

TT: Okay.
SO: So, I do not know what happened in terms of the whole community because I wasn't even a member of the OJC[A?]. I didn't know they existed until I went to Montreal, and David Murata introduced me. So yes, definitely. There are other people, I'm sure, who can speak to the background of what happened leading up to 1988. I know that Jim Tanaka, another member of our community, was involved in the redress campaign because I inherited his scrapbooks and his binders. And they're in our piano room, okay. And I know, for example, that he did things which are really important, working on coalition building or network building with other communities. So, he has, for example, the conference materials from a conference organized by the Ottawa Jewish community on 'where were human rights during the war?', okay. So, there was definitely- some background work going on, but I wasn't aware of it.
TT: Completely understandable. What was the community reaction in Ottawa after redress?
SO: I can only talk from my own-
TT: Absolutely.
SO: -point of view, right? I think it was so joyous for those who finally got an acknowledgment because- Well, I don't have to tell people in the Nikkei community, but like in a recent presentation I gave to non-Nikkei people, I had to explain that there's a certain kind of shame to being a victim, especially in the absence of anybody acknowledging that what happened to you was wrong. But because the word was out now: "it was wrong," and we were acknowledged. There was such, I think, a lightness. And I have to give a shout-out to Anne Scotton, who was part of the negotiations on the government side. But after the agreement, she was responsible for the implementation of the terms of the agreement, and she looked after our community very well. For example, in the secretariat that was formed to hunt down people and evaluate their applications for redress, she made sure to hire Nikkei people who would have an understanding of the issues and even the people themselves, right? And Anne presided at a community meeting that Aki Watanabe had- or, hastily organized. And I know this is post-agreement, right? I know these happened in other communities as well, but Aki very wisely reasoned that, "Why don't we get a notary to attest to the documents in a group setting so that people don't have to go out and find their own notaries, and we can answer questions and make clarifications as required." And Anne came to that meeting and helped us.
TT: That's amazing.
SO: And I remember- like, that was perhaps the- one of the two gatherings that I can remember of people who were directly affected by the internment and were eligible

for individual redress and for whom the acknowledgment was extremely meaningful. So even people would come up and say thank you to me, and you could see their joy.

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SO: And the other event that I remember was a banquet that we held, like banquets were held in many communities, and just the happiness of finally being acknowledged. Yeah.
TT: I've been able to witness people whose families did not talk about internment at all learn about it for the first time, and it's all the emotions. It goes from devastation to, "Wait, it was acknowledged? The government accepted that this was wrong?" And just watching that cycle, I'm sure watching it in real-time must have been incredible.
SO: [nods]
TT: I'm just reading through the questions we've got.
SO: For sure.
TT: It was a brain dump. How did being involved in redress affect your life going forward?
SO: You know, being involved in redress really did affect my life going forward and now that I'm looking back at my life, okay. Because until that time, I wasn't so involved in community activity. And then right after the agreement, not only did I join the board of the Ottawa Japanese Community Association, but suddenly I became president. I became president immediately because I was about 30 at the time, and as you can appreciate, the volunteers were ready to pass the mantle. They were tired, and just as- you know, these things happen in organizations. So suddenly, I became the president, which launched me into a whole series of other activities. And because it was a period of great community development nationally and locally, I started interacting with more Nikkei than I'd ever met before in my life. Then I also went on the JET program. I was motivated to go on the JET program, so the Japan Exchange and Teaching program of the Japanese government. And I went to be an assistant English teacher in Japan. And you know, suddenly, my sphere of activities have been very focused on the Japanese Canadian community. So, I was co-producer of our community TV show for 15 years or so. Yeah, there was a lot of getting to know people, and- which I hadn't, which was totally absent from my life beforehand, so. And I like knowing people because I get a great satisfaction about putting people together to work on projects or initiatives, yeah.
TT: What kind of projects did the redress funds help to build in Ottawa?

SO: Well, I'm going to talk about two projects that were significant. And, you know, as time goes on, it's not always apparent that the kick-starter was the redress agreement. So, one was our little cultural centre. Of course, the community development funding from the redress agreement did not finance the whole building, but it got us started. And so, we have the redress agreement to thank for that. And our taiko group. We did not have a taiko group; the community development funding was enough to get it started. And there was interest in taiko. We had David Sunahara, who had come from Edmonton, and he knew taiko. We had a garage here that supplied tires because before the drummers had drums, they practiced on tires. There were the components there, but the community development funding from the redress agreement made those components, enabled them to move forward, yeah.

[00:45]

TT: Excellent. Can you tell us a little bit about the Japanese Canadian community in Ottawa?
SO: Okay. The Japanese Canadian community in Ottawa is quite small, but it's bigger than Winnipeg, okay. So, we are a small community among small communities. There are about 3,725 Nikkei.
TT: [laughs]
SO: [smiling] I know because I looked it up for a presentation in Ottawa-Gatineau, and in that group, it's very diversified, okay. I like to say that if Ottawa-Gatineau were 1,000 people, our community would be represented by a pregnant Japanese-speaking woman and a male, unrelated, who doesn't speak Japanese, okay. So, we run the gamut of newly arrived immigrants to Yonsei, Gosei, mixed race. The growth in our community is coming from Japan. [chuckles] And also, the fact that because we're an intermarried community, we grow that way. We get more bang for our buck, if you like, because you only need one Nikkei to produce Nikkei offspring, shall we say, in a mixed-race union. And just last weekend, our board participated in a two-day strategic planning workshop, and one of the things- one of our objectives was to revise and renew our mission statement, and it's still not- this is not the exact wording, but it's to create a sense of belonging or community through the sharing of Nikkei cultures, histories, and stories. You don't have to be Nikkei to benefit from Nikkei histories, stories, and culture. And the reason we talk about Nikkei is we're looking at Japanese immigrants, Japanese Canadians, but also other Nikkei. So, we have Japanese Brazilians in this community. So, this is what our small community reflects.
TT: And do you find that they all come together at the Centre?

SO: They come together at community events, which don't necessarily take place at our Centre, which cannot accommodate hundreds of people who do come out to our events. And, well, it's no secret that Japanese culture is very attractive to the broader community, so our events attract a lot of non-Nikkei people, but what draws them in is Nikkei culture.
TT: Excellent. Excellent. I'm just going to look through and see if I missed anything else.
SO: Mm-hm.
TT: Okay, just because it's highlighted: in your experience, what is the role of activism in Japanese Canadian communities?
SO: I think activism- Well, in my experience, we are very good at coming together when there's a crisis or a very big issue. And redress for Japanese Canadians was a very big issue, so we did come together and rally. I'm not saying, in fact, the whole community, because we're a small community spread out across a big country. But it was- that issue did draw us in and could create enough of a groundswell movement for us to move forward. Activism brings people together. But we are, I would say, careful in not- in being knowledgeable and informed participants in activist initiatives and movements.

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But I think, yeah, the important feature of activism is bringing people together for a cause.
TT: Excellent. Sachiko, is there anything else that you want to share with us that perhaps our questions didn't address?
SO: Well, yes. I guess, it is- I would like to address the downstream impact of my involvement in the Nikkei community on my family. So, I have- Because when I was growing up, I did not want to be Nikkei. I just wanted to blend in. But now I really- I 100% identify as Nikkei, as sansei, okay. And because I'm so proud of being Nikkei, the benefits have spread in my family. So, my son, Alex, is very involved in our community, both locally and nationally, and he does it out of a genuine sense of wanting to see this community thrive. When I became involved in Nikkei community activities, it was out of a sense of duty. And I think there's a sense of duty that- my son, Alex, has a sense of duty as well, but it's also a sense of purpose and joy, which perhaps I didn't feel at the beginning. I just felt I had to help people. So, there's Alex, who's very involved in our community. Our daughter, Myma, who lives in Hamilton, she's more involved in her sports community, but she participated fully in the Tomoshibi tour sites of redre- um, sites of- internment sites last summer with me, and it was a real joyous and- experience that awakened her sense of being Japanese

Canadian. And when we did a kind of an open mic at the end, she said that she was always conflicted when people asked her what's her ethnic background, because she'd say, "I'm half Japanese," but she felt she wasn't Japanese enough to be able to claim to be even half Japanese. But now she could say with conviction that she felt Japanese Canadian, or she was Japanese Canadian because she felt Japanese Canadian. So that was amazing.
TT: Mm-hm.
SO: And you know, my husband, Bruce, who is not Nikkei, but he's been a really great supporter. He's informed himself a great deal about our history, and he does community theater, and the last production he was in was a Japanese American play, where he was the only non-Nikkei character. And that's another way of getting the story out- getting our stories out. So, I appreciate all the family involvement in our history, yeah.
TT: I was recently introduced to somebody- to an elder in the community, and I told them that I had married into the community, and she said to me, "Oh, so you're pretend Japanese." And I said, "No, I am chosen Japanese." And I feel like your husband probably fits in that category as well.
SO: Well, he's certainly done his part, shall we say, to become aware of our history and our reality. And there is something else I would like to say.
TT: Mm-hm.
SO: I'd just like to give a shout-out to some- particularly women in our community, because at one point the questions that you sent me talked about women and redress.
TT: Yes.
SO: So, I like to give a- speaking of chosen Nikkei, I'd like to give a shout-out to Ann Sunahara.

[00:55]

SO: So, Ann was married to the late David Sunahara. And Ann is a lawyer and a historian, and author of the seminal work, "The Politics of Racism." She was also an advisor to the legal committee of the NAJC during the redress campaign, and she was instrumental in the NAJC submission to the legislative committee that was responsible for the repeal of the War Measures Act, and its replacement by the Emergencies Act. So, I'd like to give a shout-out to her.
TT: Absolutely.
SO: A shout-out to Molly Watanabe, who worked side by side with Aki Watanabe on the redress rally. I'd like to thank Anne Scotton for her support of our community, still. Anne is still a very close friend of Art Miki, and it was wonderful for her to be

involved in our- the redress settlement and implementation. And I'm sure I'm forgetting somebody. Kay Shimizu. Kay Shimizu who just was such a thoughtful and a wise person, and who during the redress years, did speak with her peers about redress. She wasn't afraid to speak about it. And yeah, that's about it, yeah.
TT: Excellent. Thank you so much. I'm going to turn off the camera now.

[00:57 - Interview End]