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Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:00:39] [speaking Japanese; Shiozawa is on the telephone and the interpreter is on camera] Maybe in his elementary school days, it was natural for him because he was born in an area which is really rich in nature and water. [speaking Japanese] It was a very natural choice because everybody did it.

James Thull [00:01:06] In about what year would have that been?

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:01:16] [speaking Japanese] He was born in 1930, so he thinks he was six years old so it was nineteen thirty six or something pre-war. [speaking Japanese]

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:01:25] [speaking Japanese] When he was younger, when he started out, everyone was natural. So he cut out some small diameter cone of bamboo and fixed the cotton line and tip and tie some hooks which were sold. And he waxed cotton to strengthen the line and the bait typically was silkworm because his area he was born in was Silk Central. So he had a lot of silk worm. So you know that that was used as a bait. Typical one. Everything was almost natural.

James Thull [00:03:38] And this would of been freshwater? Was it for trout or?

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:04:08] [speaking Japanese] In his area close to his home, everything was almost carp family. But if you go up in the mountain, which is nearby, you always had access to trout family and bigger river so of course bigger carp So he had a variety.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:05:21] [speaking Japanese] So right after the war at war nineteen forty seven. He found a job in the distributor in Tokyo, fishing tackle distributor. He found job, so he came up to Toyko and worked there for some time. [speaking Japanese] So he worked for the company 13 years and he started off as a sales person. He went on to become in charge of the development. Finally, he took full control of the production development. He had a big promotion during his, you know [unintelligible]. [speaking Japanese] So he mainly he made a split bamboo when he was working for that company, but he saw the possibility or the near future of the fiberglass. So he consulted to the Governmental Research Institute and studied the property of FRP, fiber reinforced plastic tubes and searched for the application of that into fishing rod. He had that in mind when he began on his own. So he had a vision and he just launched the business after that.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:09:59] [speaking Japanese] So, of course the went into, started from fiberglass, and then went into graphite. And you see all the material evolution of glass and graphite. There was, the fishing market was so niche and small, so it didn't have any really suitable fibers off the rack. So he negotiate with the fiber manufacture to to develop a fiber. Well, the prep rig that is specially suitable for fishing rods. So.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:10:52] [speaking Japanese.] He use everything.

James Thull [00:10:55] Does it depend on the species or does he prefer bamboo for trout?

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:11:42] [speaking Japanese] So he has he likes bamboo, too. Going back in time, but he likes it. And he is a big collector of the personalized bamboo rods the individual makers and all the huge influence in a stimulus as a rod maker. So he just keep the stimulus from the side flowing in into the the stuff that is working for his company, Tendu.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:12:58] [speaking Japanese] Well, he doesn't have many rods made the America makers pretty anonymous some Japanese makers but varied from various makers.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:15:08] [speaking Japanese] To start off the tenkara topic. He wants to tell you that he was a little bit surprised finding a tenkara rod that he made years ago was displayed in the Federation of Fly Fishers Museum in Livingston. There was a coincidence: he got to know a tenkara fisher amateur. He was a painter, but and he was asked by the fly tackle shop owner to create a custom made tenkara rod for him. That dates dozen of years ago so he specially created the tenkara stick using fiberglass that was the production model. And he forgot about it. And about maybe four or five years ago when he visited the museum, he found out that the Tendu Tenkara rod, the signature rod, was displayed, and it was a coincidence, and was very moved by that. [speaking Japanese] And talking about the American market he remembers that he make here, he made a line of the conventional fly casting rod called Spin Stick. and he tied up with the Bass Pro bass fishers in the States and they make a commission to [Tiemco?] Japanese maker to produce rod and export it to the US and that was like 1968 or 69 70 something like that that was a pioneering effect, I mean effort, for Japanese fishing rod makers.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:18:06] [speaking Japanese] So he thinks the material revolution started with the shaft material started with bamboo maybe from wood then bamboo then glass fiber then graphite. He's seen it all and he noticed the swing back into more natural thing like bamboo, but generally it was progressing toward the more high tech lighter stiffer thing. At the same time, he sees a revolution in evolution of the hardware, like guides. Back then, everything that's kinds soldered metal using whatever metal, maybe tungsten or stainless. And then the Japanese maker called Fuji Tackle developed the ceramic guide and then moved on to the titanium frame SIC then. Whatever is improving. So he was very much involved in the development of the guide design and the material design. So you he had a bit of a lot of contribution in the field too.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:22:23] [speaking Japanese] Yeah he admits there is a big change of internet, internet affected the way fishing tackle is sold and he had no choice but to be in the wave and survive in that context.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:22:23] [speaking Japanese] Many, numerous, difficult to pick one. [speaking Japanese] So he have quite a few targets that he likes. One of the Favorite fishes in the mountain stream trout like Yamani and cherry salmon char. It is coincidence, but he found a friend in Pensacola, Florida, was out of the fishing context, then he decided to come over to Japan now. He wanted him to guide or introduce a guide? Incidentally, Pensacola is a place that he used to land on to the U.S. When he made a business trip to to produce the bass rod back in the 70s. So there was an interesting link between the fishing through the fishing, so he kind of liked it. And then right now, he is a president of the affiliate Club of fly-fishing named JFFA Japan Fly-Fishing Association. You know, show his enthusiasm toward fly fishing. Plus, he like the local native trout of Japan called Bewa Massu, which is a native to Lake Beewah, the big lake in Japan. That's

a lakefront fish. You know, he likes to troll for that, plus tenkara. So he has a lot of varied interest.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:29:38] [speaking Japanese] Besides the result of the weak economy you know the sales was down. Of course that's the that's a universal problem that the Japanese economy has. But besides that, nowadays, for the younger generation, the choices are many. You know, they can choose many hobbies they want which want to pick up. In the old days, the choices were limited. If you are in the rural side, you either go out to the river or to the mountains. But nowadays they have numerous choices. And can fishing be one of their positive choices? Now it's a huge question.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:31:50] [original Japanese possibly edited out] It was so natural choice for him. He never thought about it because he had to fish and that was the only choice. So it was very natural for him to pick it up. And he likes the aspect of travel to visit the many exotic places, beautiful places. he think that's part of the reason But, you know, from the start, it was the only choice you've got. No, he never thought about it seriously.

Mike Miyoshi Shiozawa/interpreter [00:32:32] [speaking Japanese] He has too many of them. Difficult to pick one. [speaking Japanese] A recent story He went to bass fishing. He used to do a lot of bass fishing, of course, in the 70s when he was making bass rods with a U.S. Distributor. But he picked up recently again. And then, and he fish with the bass pro in Japan sharing a ride fishing. The pro use a really stiff one, which is modern. But Shiozawa-san used the really soft rod in the tip but with enough back power And that's not modern. The modern guy, modern bass pro, like a really fast action rods. But the soft tip really in a cushion, the fight of the fish and he doesn't doesn't lose any fish, but the bass pro. and if the bite is you know, picky. I mean, subtle. They lost. They lost. And Shiozawa-san caught 100 percent almost. But the bass pro lost quite a few fish. That was very interesting. He got a kick out of it. So the old is not necessarily bad. And that's that's the point for amateur anglers. He really want us amateurs to enjoy the process. That's a good point. I like it.