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Luong Tan [00:00:11] I got into fishing when I was a little kid about nine years old or so, and I remember that during the war, U.S. and Vietnam and US was bombing Hanoi. So I was living in a city boys and we have to move to the countryside. And when I was in the countryside, I just pick up fishing. I watch people doing that and I just--it was illegal when I was I was in Vietnam, North Vietnam is everything belong to the people. That means you can not take the fish out of the pond the fish belong to the people. So you consider illegal. But for kid I just go in now. Nobody care about me catch little fish and it's only about that big. Maybe a little bigger. And so I begin to develop my own fishing rod I craft it out of bamboo so the rod can be bend. Otherwise it wouldn't bend. So it doesn't feel good. So I begin to carve and we don't have any good material. So we just use a broken portion and carve it out and make it. Shave it. Very thin. So we can catch out of a little stream like that, I get a U-shaped bend of the rod. And those are my hobby. So that's how a start with the fishing and building my own rod in my spare time and that was that was about how we started.

Luong Tan [00:01:34] I have not been back, but in the mountainside, when my brothers who live in a mountainside, we do school and next to the Chinese army, they build a road engineer to build a road. So what a Chinese did was they just put a dynamite onto the river and boom. And whole bunch of fish floating on a river. That's quick way of fishing. So thats how they do that. And other than that in Vietnam now when I grow up, there's not much of fishing going on because its illegal. So not many people will go out fishing so much in the pond. So we've got a lot of fish on the pond. But once every few months the government just emptied out pond and a co-op to go in and harvest all fish and it can harvest. They no use net they empty to whole pond and they capture the fish. And either go to a supermarket or go somewhere. I got no idea. Not much fishing going on. I grow up in North Vietnam, not into any fishing, you know, fishing much. So I just myself learning how to do it.

Luong Tan [00:02:44] Oh, yes. Eat fishes is it basically is a main meal you can get a fish on a market, but you cannot fish it. I don't know where the fish on the market coming from. But the store just is a lot of snakehead fish in Vietnam is very popular, is a very expensive fish. And the way you want to get snakehead in Vietnam when I was little that we just go kids to go out and play and sometimes snakehead fish in Vietnam is really interesting way. And I watched that parent of snakehead jump up onto the side of the river on onto the side because he can live for a couple of days. I believe they're going to live up for y- up and and ant come over them and then they jump back to the river. I can see a little fish snake baby go out and eat to the end. So that's why my grandma won't let me catch it. Snakehead. Because heartbroken to her.

Luong Tan [00:03:43] It's fantastic.

James Thull [00:03:44] It's delicious.

Luong Tan [00:03:44] Yes. It's the best fish you can get. It's taste so sweet and it is not, you know, it's not so many bones like in other fish we have in Vietnam.

Luong Tan [00:04:01] I never go back to Vietnam to catch fish. Never been back in Vietnam. So what I doing to my business, doing a lot of development. I went to China and I teach people who are building rod for me about this kind of fishing technique, fly fishing techniques. And I have learned all the rod makers over there got no idea what we use it

rod for. They just make the rod it mostly like telescopic, rod and today we called this Tenkara rod to sell in American market. It basically it designed to they in China, they just use that for bait fishing for worm and sometime we call carp rod and sometimes it depends on whatever they want to call it. But most popular they call it carp rod you go on to catch carp. So I introduced this thing and I teach them how to cast with fly and they really fascinated with that. And that was when I first caught my snakehead on the fly and it was just fantastic. Good fight. I love it. Yeah. And I'm going back to China. The second time I go in was focus to teach them how to cast the fly rod and it seem to me they're willing to learn and the whole Shanghai get only about one hundred and twenty fly fisherman. And you think, well, millions of people and they invited me to come back another day and try to do some fly fishing with them.

Luong Tan [00:05:25] Yeah. That is new rod that I just developed and it called a Pocket Ninja because this one can leave it in the glove compartment. It designed for I call that is fly fishers best friend. For people who like to do backpacking, traveling or hiking. And this one very compact. And to bring it with them and also leave in glove compartment so like we can do. I am a back road driver, is about a half million miles traveling around a country to fish with a fly rod before. And we describe what do they call it Tenkara rod. But actually, this one, not a Tenkara rod. I call this Tanuki rod. Because Tenkara fishing a little bit different. It doesn't require casting. And this rod I'm working with I'm a members of Oakland casting clubs and San Francisco Casting Club called Golden Gate Casting Clubs and Long Beach, and Pasadena casting clubs. And we really focus on a casting. I enjoy casting a lot. So the rod designed for casting the rod more and how you use fly, fly manipulation. The fisher can do like a Japanese way called Tenkara fishing. When I use a one fly or you can use a multiple fly but fly on one hand it depends on a fisher who want to do it. This one is designed for convenience and for fly fisher, it's a great way to use this type of rod to learn to, we call this, I call this building your muscle memory on casting. And so it doesn't have the wheel on it. So it's easy for fisher to focus on on an on a casting technique itself. And fine tuning the casting strokes in which a casting stroke based on Chris Korich, who is a coach of Team USA woman's team. And he called it efficient casting. So efficient casting. So casting using very little energy but using a lot of muscle around your body. Everything a little bit will make the casting a more effective way of casting. So that just very good does mean why I wanted to coaches student. Her name is Maxine McCormick. At the age of 12 she already got a work with the competition and age fifteen she already winning the gold medal and beat everybody out. And she already cast as far as Joan Wulff and I believe in next few years she will outcome she will, she will break the record of Joan Wulff. Record of one hundred and sixty one feet. So that is really long. And she doesn't have much muscle like a big guy. We have a man she a little bit tall and I am not that much taller than me. But she cast reall long far. A lot farther than me for sure thats right. So it's efficient casting. So I applied that to my my fishing rod and to build and building to casting some more disciplines and more like fly caster because I believe that Tenkara rod Tanuki rod is the best friends of a fisher best friend. And it's about casting. So. So when you do, when you go fishing, even though you have to fly rod, you have this thing attached to the fly rod and can be you can attach it to fly rod and acting as as a backup rod or or something. You can use that some. It doesn't meet all condition thats good for fly fishing rod. So it depends on the condition. And the fisherman need to be aware that if you go to the symphony, you get all musical instrument. So this one is just one musical instrument and it's a part of the fly fishing. So there's no difference between basically fly fishing, 40 foot fishing rod. It just like all different musical instrument to me.

James Thull [00:09:18] Well, that's wonderful. It sounds great.

Luong Tan [00:09:20] Yeah.

James Thull [00:09:20] It's a great way to put it. And so do you have a Website or your material is your material available?

Luong Tan [00:09:28] My Web site is called tenkaratanuki [<https://www.tenkaratanuki.com>]. It's my Web site right now. And also, I have the YouTube channel and called tenkaratanuki or Tanuki fishing or Tenkara Tanuki 101 that for people who are just new to Tenkara fishing. But later, I'm going to change this thing and to call Tanuki fly fishing. I want to focus with a fly fisherman. And yeah.

James Thull [00:09:53] Wonderful.

Luong Tan [00:09:54] It is a simple way to fish. The whole thing's you got just this thing. You don't need to add on more accessory which we all know fly fishing when we overwhelm with accessory. So this one doesn't take any more accessory. You need it. And this one is my newest called Spool. And you can hold a line in here.

James Thull [00:10:19] Oh wow look at that.

Luong Tan [00:10:20] And then also you got a 2 little compartment so you can put the fly and that's good enough.

James Thull [00:10:26] That's very nice.

Luong Tan [00:10:26] And you can collapse that. And also we design called UFO ship. So what happened, first when you close this thing and just in case you drop this thing in the mud. And that would be fine or some time you leave it outside. You get something fall over so it protect the line and the hook in here so when your hand on a hook poking on or hook on something out and the hooks or got tangled up. But the UFO shape is the lightest thing. So the gravity, the weight is small in the center of this line. So when it go down it will tilt little bit because gravity will make this tilt and it was it boomerang it coming back to where you are. So think about where you go now, fishing. And sometime if you get a full spool and you see and a type of spool, it go down and it's a rolling rolling into the bush. It. You lose at least 15 minutes to look for your spool already. So this one, you don't lose so much a minute. Its right here.

James Thull [00:11:23] That's great. So everything you need is right there.

Luong Tan [00:11:25] There's everything you need right here. It's just to go like this. And that's it. That's all you need.

James Thull [00:11:30] Can I ask, what are those? What are those retail for on the site?

Luong Tan [00:11:33] Retail right now between 200 to 240. And it's a very challenge to make these kind of rod because it's a shorter length of the rod, which means you can get the all the section, have to pile up at the base of the rods are thicker and. And oh, so we call it the tip. It will be more a higher gradient taper. So it's only balanced on the tip, more so the rod will be very, very stiff. And to make the that's it first thing. The second thing is also between the section that you overlap and a section on a little bit about in each and have a two inch overlap for the section to tight and to connect with each other. And those section also stiffen the rod. So combined that taper and stiffening the rod, so it make the

rod weaker and also stiffer. And what happens when the rod is too stiff? It will make you unpleasant when you cast and I believe in the casting. So what I have to take me for a year to develop that you can cast. You can make the rod cast feel like you have a good casting rod. And also, not only that, I also making the whip even thicker. So doesn't mean when you hold your hand over here its a lot easier and more ergonomic that way. And holding directly to the rod, so for people who like your nymphing, you feel the fish take directly to the rod. If you get more feeling and feeling of the fish take the rod become more lively. And it also additional, I believe, that become an additional indicator for the free-fly fisherman. You get indicator as a visual, but this one the feeling indication just totally different. It's a much, much make the rod more lively and yet more pleasant to fish with.

Luong Tan [00:13:28] What do you know, is it. I don't know, but when I be out there with the natures, I really feel like being out there. And to me. When I come over here, its not only bring me back a lot of memory. When I was a child and I was with my kid and we have a good, lovely time. And also we learn a lot about entomology with kid. So not just only about fishing. It's a lot of thing beyond fishing, but that when my son was little with me and we learned all about environment issue and ecosystems and, it's to me that it found me too connected to nature more.

Luong Tan [00:14:08] Well a lot of river that I fish, again, less fish than they used to have. And maybe the fish getting smarter or maybe there's not much fish in here. Or it could be the water's warmer In California it could be a drought. So it's a lot of reason. But every years I driving to the place its about, round trip maybe about eight hundred miles, no 700-mile for me go to go a round trip to do one thing. Clean up the river called the Owens River that I love to, used to and I love to fish there a lot and I have to go around Sierra Mountain and go in there and to great community. A lot of people go there. A lot of fishermen go over there and do the cleanup. And one thing I discover is in cleaning up in a fly fishermen site, we need one person for two mile, but another fisherman takes needs like, we need at least 20 people for two miles. So we get a lot of trash, beer bottles and you name it, a trash can. But so to me that I would love to see more people who use a fly fishing technique to fish, to keep the river more clean and catch and release it. I used to catch fish and eat. That's how I grew up in Vietnam to come over for my first four years of fishing. I do that, but it's really hard for me to release my first fish. It took me a while. And now when I release the fish, you get different feeling. It's like a giving thing. So if you are, the way when you go to to the eastern culture, you see the monk. They go on the street they are begging for food. Their philosophy is not about they need some food, but they back for food because they believe that person that give them the food, feel good and that feel good. Giving people something, you feel that you give something. So when you release the fish, you feel the similiar way. You are giving you release. In Vietnam every year it is the 23rd of what we call September. Before seven days before or even in China before the new year. People release the fish the carp. Because the carp return to the dragon and so it release feel very because its--I forgot the word--it's basically, you know, every year its called release. I'm not sure what in Vietnam call it. Is a release the fish. Its totally special feeling of it. So that's release the fish will feel good. I want to see more native fish happening and not like big fish bettors. And we stop the fish everywhere. To me, that is dumb. Maybe those fishes too is to have a special place for it. Yeah.

James Thull [00:16:53] Yeah. I was in, I got this at a Buddhist temple in Cambodia. But when I was there, I released a cage full of sparrows and it was a lovely experience.

Luong Tan [00:17:06] Yeah. Just, you know, the differece when you release thing. That you give, giving a life thats what they call giving a life. So they've got a fish about to be

eaten and they give the life back to the fish. We catching the fish is you get this special different feeling to you.

James Thull [00:17:19] Yeah.

Luong Tan [00:17:19] You feel like you, especially when I do fly fishing I tie the fly and and fool the fish and I feel good about it. And especially right now, it's all my fly hooks have to be a very, its a very fine wire, so it doesn't poke too much on to the fish. And now with this kind of rod you land a fish extremely quick. It's not like fly rod. I'm happy to talk about landing techniques a little bit if you don't mind.

James Thull [00:17:44] Please do.

Luong Tan [00:17:45] Now, in physics that every every foot depth of the water, you add on one point four pounds of per square inch of the fish. So assume you get the fish with two or three square make it 3 square inch. So every foot depth you add on 1.4 of weight onto the fish. So the deeper to fish go down, the fish the same weight no matter what up or low the same weight. But the water is that way on the fish. So what do you do? Fishermen fighting with the water, not fighting with the fish. So with these kind of rod, you raise up straight vertical you bring the fish close to the surface you can. That means you're rod's getting stronger. Less weight to fight with fish and also the line's short so the fish looking at you so any time we go to town they come to you, they're not going away. Look at I used to do fly fishing. When the fish run, I tried to release or some people tell me to go. What was it? Direction. Well, think about it this way. You get a horse running full speed and you hold a horse. It's a lot of force to pull the horse back. And it's easier for you to just tilt the horse head a little bit and get it go to the circle. Go to sideways. And that's so much easier. But a lot of fishermen, like the spin rod back and forth like that. And right now, when I look back with this the rod, I can land a fish in like less than 10 second. But I have seen so many fishermen fighting the fish for like five minutes on a river for the same size of fish until the fish cannot fight anymore and bring the fish back. I think that maybe we need to have some way of changing the way how we land a fish and not just the way we think we should be. And based on physics and I'm engineer. So I believe in the physics and I believe in gravity. And I believe in Isaac Newton. And Albert Einstein. Yes.

Luong Tan [00:19:48] Absolutely. You know, I go travel, I eat a locals food. I want to get that place every place you go. The reason you go travel because you want to experience that the native areas. So if you travel someplace and you don't want to see to see the native area, I mean the local cultures and everything like that. It's it's you go to visit the [unintelligible], you get everything's on there, so its artificial. So I feel like if I go into Montana, you know, I would love to eat food that grow in Montana, cooked by Montana people. Even beer made by Montanan, so thats experience that keep me, it's a different kind of experience that I like to do. So I don't want to come to Montana and eat instant noodle like I eat in Bay Area. And I don't want to go to Montana and try the to same beer like I drink an IPA in a in Bay area. I want to drink the Montana beer. I want to eat Montana food. I want to be with the local people. Last night hang out with local people a whole bunch of fishermen we met on a river. We just go out to a beer and we have beer and we chit chat at cafe bar, right on the--I'm not sure where it is--cafe bar there, but I get a lot of. Yeah. So we had a good time on there.

James Thull [00:21:03] Wonderful. Wonderful. So.

Luong Tan [00:21:05] It's about experience and culture.

Luong Tan [00:21:14] Fishing will be around no matter what because of fishing, department fishing. Department fishing and game will find a way to make money or to find a way to make the people for that. The question is, is it fish will survive with a new environment. And today, the environment, there's too many things about the environment that we eat. A lot of food from the environment. So we start eating farmed food. We start eating, you know, like chicken. We already done with a chicken. We already done with the pork. And and those things grow out with a lot of chemicals to put into our body. The fish is very [unintelligible] and I don't know that. Well will have the fish going to be living in the aquarium that we've fish in a fish in the aquarium or that's a concern me. I really want to fish, it became the last thing that we really want to be the nature to experience. It's not about catching the fish for the meal. We go out with catch the fish because we want to be back with the nature. That how I believe when I grow up, this is kind of giving me close to touch in nature. And I used to work as a software engineer before I make rod making. And any time I go fishing, I don't have cell phone with me. I totally disconnect with the whole world. And it's just it is relaxed and it purge my brain. So when I come back to Bay Area, I'm not so relaxing or not, but a sleep more of course. I will get a very good sleep and a get back. I feel fresher. I go to work more productive. So that's what I like about fishing and being out there. You smell the water. Now, I believe that the water give you it cause negative ions. Very good for your health. I travel with my friends a lot. Any time we're tired we just go out and sit next to a river bank and and somehow we just feel great.

Luong Tan [00:23:07] Oh, yes, I would love to all the future anglers to practice to catching the fish with the barbless hooks and to use a very fine wire hook. So its quicker to set the hook. But also today, the technology allow you to do that and also release the fish quicker and learn some techniques about how to catch release the fish quicker and landing the fish quicker and release them quicker. And yet we see flooded with photos on Instagram and everything. It be great to just get the fish wet a little bit, so don't try to take them out. You know, got a good smile. And then by the time you look at the fish, got a lack of oxygen, just try to take it a little bit more. So the more fish we take it, the more fish we're going to have to catch in the future and also for the environment issue. And I believe that the more people to go fishing, especially with this kind of fishing, the more demand for us to get clean water, to get a better water, to get a better environment for us to visit and to fish. So that, to me is a very, very important. And we this technology right now and I believe this technology. I'm a fly fisherman for many years. But I believe this technology is getting people into fishing a lot easier, especially the people like me who work in a high tech company and urban. We don't have much time to learn about fly fishing. Its a wonderful experience to do fly fishing and learn with your hand and totally different (unintelligible) but if you try to get out for one weekend, you can squeeze in one weekend this entire rod is a fantastic rod to go out. You don't have too much time to learn, but you get a chance to catch fish and get experience, put your hand on the fish. Be sure to wet your hand in its totally different kind of feeling you got.