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Interview with Takeshi Ken Kayano

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Dr. Joseph M. Juran Collection, "Interview with Takeshi Ken Kayano" (1992). *'An Immigrant's Gift': Interviews about the Life and Impact of Dr. Joseph M. Juran*. Paper 23.
<http://nsuworks.nova.edu/juran-transcripts/23>

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Takeshi Ken Kayano

(Interviewed on 16 March 1992, Tokyo, Japan)

Video Roll # 7

Q: Mr. Kayano, could you tell us, in English, the spelling of your name, please?

KAY ANO: Kayano, K-A- Y-A-N-O.

Q: And your given name?

KAY ANO: First name, Take shi , T-A-K-E-S-H-I.

Q: Do you have a title or a position?

KA Y ANO: No, no. No, I don't have any now. Let me think.

BLACKISTON: He's chairman of Oken (?) Associates.

KA Y ANO: Oken Associate.

Q: Thank you. We would like to talk about the quality revolution. You were there at the very beginning.

KA Y ANO: Uhm.

Q: Why did the revolution in quality happen here in Japan?

KAY ANO: There are two issues: One is -- well, it was the situation since post-war, but during the war, particularly, what we strongly felt was that Japanese quality was very bad.

Take, for example, if you shoot a machine gun -- I was in the war for a long time, and I've learned how to use a machine gun and so forth. But you see, of course, I was the leader of a troop, so I wouldn't shoot myself. But, you know, the machine gun wouldn't function any more sometimes. Then you wouldn't be able to continue shooting.

And so, three people would share one small machine gun. One would shoot, one would load the gun, and the other one would remove -- would be there with a screw-driver to remove the bullet that stuck in the gun. And so we needed three people to operate one machine gun.

And the thing that's -- there were lot's -- it was in the war front so we saw a lot of Czechoslovakian machine gun on the ground. And it was called Skoda? And this machine gun functioned really well and, you know, only one operator was needed.

This is only one example, but even with these, the necessities of war, like a machine gun, was of that inferior quality. And, you know, during the war, this is something that I really, really felt -- not only about the machine gun, but about different things -- the bad quality of Japanese made goods.

And there is -- what we call NHK, a national broadcasting corporation of Japan. And I was a member, before I was drafted to the war, I was research member of this NHK Research Institute. And so working for that institution, I was

always thinking about how much should be done in order to improve the quality of different things.

And then after that I went to the war, used the weapons, and really, really felt that Japanese quality -- the quality of Japanese products are really not good.

And, you know, there were different reasons, but I resigned from NHK. And NIT -- the Nippon Telephone and Telegraph Corporation -- in those days was one of the sections under the Ministry of Post. And I joined the research institution of that organization.

And before I was able to involve myself in my field of expertise, I had discussed with many people -- we all got together and discussed and we concluded that we need to improve the quality, at least of the telephone. And all of the members of this research institute really hard about it; how to improve the quality.

And this is when we had studied quality control. And I was assigned to be in charge of introducing quality control. And the reason for that was because, before that, I was in the war and I was in managing position of Japanese air force. And even in that workplace, too, I always had a problem of quality.

But my expertise is electricity. Yes, of course, you see, electricity was my expertise but I had to, you know, being in an administrative position, I had to take charge of all other areas, too, not only electricity. But in all other areas, too, there was a problem of quality.

And so it really would give me a headache, and with that experience of encountering these problems, I was assigned to be in charge of introducing quality control, and that was the first time I got involved in this area.

Q: It seems so easy now -- quality. Everyone wants good quality. But what led people to do the work that moved them in the direction of quality? To take that first important step?

KAY ANO: Well, how should I answer?

Q: Mr. Kayano, someone decided some place: we will have to improve quality. What made someone make that decision to spend the time and the resources to make quality get better in Japan?

KA Y ANA: That's very simple: well, we would use certain things and, naturally, we would take for granted that it can be used, but we couldn't. And this would cause a problem, right? Or when a certain level of work is required but that cannot be done; this is a problem, too. And on these things, you know, everybody felt these things. But they took for granted that was all they can do. And so people would do their best, but can accomplish only a certain amount of the objective. You know? People were doing their best all the time but, to do best and how to make your effort effective is different.

And so we decided in those days to think as to what we should do in order to maximize our efforts. And this has been the concept or the attitude for quality in those days. And another important point is that -- of course, this is always important -- and that is more cost effective. Good quality leads to low cost.

Q: What effect did the outcome of the war have on Japan's decision to improve quality?

KA Y ANO: Yes. The war really had an effect. Because, during the war, people couldn't get a lot of things that they wanted -- you know, the various goods were not available. And if some people wanted to get something, it would be very expensive or, if not, they just have to do without it. Therefore, if one product --

Many people really expected the quality from certain products. And people were in need of quality. But, you know, due to various reasons, like lack of raw material or didn't have the purity of raw material and so forth, it couldn't be done.

That's why this is something that everybody had wanted, but the situation did not allow these wishes of the people to be fulfilled. And that's why people really felt the necessity of quality.

Particularly, in my case, I was working for the headquarters; I was managing a factory of Japanese army for a certain period, and, at that time, the problem of quality caused many, many problems. And so I, myself, personally, really felt strong -- many more than many other people -- of the importance of quality.

However, I didn't know what I can do.

Q: I've hear, Mr. Kayano, that you said that if Japan had won the war, quality in Japan -- and when the movement got started -- might have been very different. Is that true that, because Japan lost the war, it said, wait a minute? Could you tell me about that

KA Y ANO: That's a difficult question -- difficult to answer. Probably, I would think that the quality movement wouldn't have been what people would want to today.

Rather than quality, I think people's attentions were more focused on something else.

Q: What I heard was that because Japan lost the war --

(OFF CAMERA DISCUSSION)

*Q: When you had lunch with Dr. Juran, and Dr. Juran asked the question: why did Japan get involved in improving quality. Dr. Juran was very impressed; felt very well about the answer that you gave; which was the, **if** Japan had won the war, it would have been so arrogant as to say, we do everything right, we don't have to change anything.*

But because Japan lost the war, it said, there are countries that are doing things better than we are doing and, therefore, we must improve. Do you remember that answer that you gave to Dr. Juran?

KAY ANO: I don't remember.

Q: Does that sound familiar to you, that story, at all?

KAY ANO: Yes, I know there is that story. But I don't remember when it was. When it was that I talked with Dr. Juran. I would like to have it translated into Japanese.

(OFF CAMERA DISCUSSION)

BLACKISTON: IN 1990, when Dr. Juran made his last trip to Japan ... with some of the people (INAUDIBLE - BAD STATIC ON TAPE) and Dr. Juran asked one question: he said, what one reason, more than any, has led to Japan's

success in quality. And, according to Dr. Juran, his answer was the fact that you lost the war, and Dr. Juran is so impressed that he thought that was very insightful. I wanted you to tell that story.

KAY ANO: And so you're talking about that. I really don't remember what occasion I mentioned that. But I've always thought that way.

Q: Could you tell me ... (STATIC)

KA Y ANO: Put it in a nutshell, before I referred to Schuhart's quality control book, I thought quality and production technology and cost were not something that I really thought very hard about. I didn't really think about these things before.

But going to the war front, I really felt how bad a quality Japanese weapons were. You see, I fought in the war. Like, you know, Japanese guns. People put effort into developing these guns. But they weren't first class. And I really felt that.

Not only guns, but everything else; like airplanes, too. Nighttime fighters -- radar was something that I had to develop. And I was assigned with that work. But the tube used in the radar, or the vacuum tube used in the radar, or various other parts used with the radar were not satisfactory.

But we couldn't help it because we had to manufacture it -- it was during the war -- in large volume. So this couldn't be helped. But it was of no use -- I thought it was of no use making things that couldn't be used.

That why, at least, I personally really felt the necessity of quality. That quality is of utmost importance -- very

important. But I think there are still arguments as to the definition of quality. It's very difficult to define quality.

And reading Mr. Schuhart's book, I really felt this is what quality is. But when we find out what quality itself is, then the method to control quality. We had various ideas about the method to control quality, after we found out what quality itself was.

That's why it was in this way that I went into the field of quality. And, therefore, many people in Japan, I think, re-acknowledged quality, was due to the movement led by a person like Dr. Schuhart in the United States.

But since two or three years ago an Englishman, also, had come to Japan along the same line. And, when I met with him, and asked him the question, and discussed why Britain didn't think about this very important issue. And, at that time, I mentioned about Dr. Fisher -- he's on the area of statistics. And we studied design of experiment, elucidated by him, and we learned a lot from it.

Dr. Fisher was an Englishman, and I mentioned to this Englishman that, you know, he is from your country. But, in spite of that, he didn't know Dr. Fisher. Well, he was involved in management and so, I mean, I may have been natural for him not to know Dr. Fisher in the statistical field.

But, in Japan, I mean, from us, in Japan, it was just unthinkable that he didn't even know about Dr. Fisher and his design of experiment.

And, as I've mentioned, England didn't lose the war.

Q: Let me ask this question just one other way and we'll move on to something else. Let me ask the question as Dr. Juran asked it: what one factor, more than any other factor, was responsible for Japan's quality evolution in the war?

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KAY ANO: That is well not precisely war, but Japan had lost in the war -- Japan, as a country, had lost in the war. If Japan had not lost, then the quality control may have been considered important as today, but the seriousness of the attitude towards quality may not have been as much if it had not lost.

Q: Where at the time that Japan for its role models?

KAY ANO: The United States.

Q: Why? How did you know to look at the United States as a role model for quality?

KAY ANO: That is, Japanese people, like for myself, I was working for NIT, and we knew about the United States. That's why we were aware that in the States that you were promoting quality. And I went to the States, and I visited different places.

And in those days, the impression I got was that, in one sense, people may have made mistake in the States. But, from a different perspective, I really think that the Americans were doing very good, in certain other things.

But, in Japan -- I mean, I went to the States because I really felt -- not only the United States, but visited various other countries, to see how people were doing -- because I really felt that we should do something in Japan. And because, in the States, people were being successful in one.

Not only in the States, but in other countries, too. In spite of the fact that they were more advanced than us in certain ways, in those days, they didn't realize about, and that's why, because Japan was virtually in ruins after the war, we really

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felt the necessity to do something about it. And looked for different ways as to how to reconstruct the country. And one answer was quality. And we were able to be very serious about it. But some other countries couldn't be as serious as us.

Q: Here you went to the United States to learn how to do it --

(END OF TAPE NUMBER SEVEN)

Takeshi Ken Kayano

Video Roll # 8

Q: You saw the United States as doing many things right in quality. And yet, in this 40-year period, the United States somehow lost its way, it fell off the road. Why do you think that happened? Why was Japan able to pass the United States in quality?

KAY ANO: That is because Japan had to do it in order to survive. That, from that point on, in order to survive, the Japanese people had to think what was necessary for them. And this is what everybody in Japan felt.

And, in any age, you know, there are people to tell you, this is what's important for right now, for that particular time. And the listener is not serious and wouldn't lend their ears to such views. But, losing the war, Japan didn't have the food to eat tomorrow, for example. And that's why people were very, very serious as to what they should do in order to survive.

The reason for this was because one answer that I can think is that if a product isn't of good quality, it wouldn't sell. That's why. Even if people worked very hard, if they made products of bad quality, they wouldn't sell, and they wouldn't be able to make a living.

Q: Now, Japan is no long in the same kind of crisis. There is food on the table. The products sell all around the world. Honda, Toyota, Sony. What will keep Japan moving forward now that the crisis is over?

➤. KAYANO: I think -- I was in the world, and gone through various experiences, and I'm still alive. And I still feel -- I still remember what I've gone through. But 20, 30 years from now, I don't know what's going to happen.

Today, I still remember that. Because products are of bad quality, they wouldn't sell. That the consumers wouldn't be satisfied.

Q: I heard another story, and I'm not sure if it was about you, during your travels in the United States. That you attended -- I think it was in Texas -- a concert?

KAYANO: Yes.

Q: And the host was trying to make an announcement on the microphone?

KAYANO: Yes.

Q: Is that ... ?

KAYANO: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Could you tell me that story please? I want to make sure I have it right.

KAYANO: That was when I first went to the States, it was the Rice Institute University in Houston. And a business administration professor was the person that I wanted to talk with and went there. And, however, a conductor of the New York Philharmonic, Mr. Stokowski, and the orchestra that he conducted -- I was very fond of him; he was very good -- different from other conductors.

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And I saw a lot of leaflets and posters with his name on it in Houston, and that's why I really wanted to go to his concert. And then, Mr. Stokowski had resigned from New York Philharmonic Orchestra and he had moved to Houston. And he wanted to make the orchestra in Houston number one in the world. And this what he had explained through a microphone at that time.

And just about that time, a master of ceremony appeared and was about to say something; then, the microphone didn't work, no sound. And I think he was working with the switch, turning it on and off, and so forth.

And then he held the microphone in his hand and sighed, and said that, oh, this is made in Japan. Then, everybody just burst out laughing. And, at that time, I really felt that what made in Japan meant was bad quality.

And today, in the world, Japanese products are known as being of good quality, I think, in many cases. But, in those days, made in Japan meant bad quality in the States. And it was like that in Houston. But also, in Japan, it was the same way.

In Japan, we had the Japanese term for made in Japan, or produced in Japan, and imported. I mean made in a foreign country. And people, even in Japan, also took for granted that something made in Japan was bad in quality.

But this necessarily didn't mean that what Japanese made -- everything was of bad quality, because there are traditional craftsmanship that nobody else outside Japan can do. And so made in Japan was more of an industrial product -- but of bad quality.

But it didn't mean bad in quality, but made in Japan was considered equivalent to bad in quality, and made in a foreign country was considered to be of good quality. Anything

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made outside of Japan was considered to be of good quality, and it was like that in Japan, the same thing in Houston.

And this really struck me. I really felt that this really is a quality issue. And before that, I had read the book by Dr. Schuhart, and I had an opinion of my own, and I really felt that, after I returned to Japan, I should do something about it.

But the reason why I went to Houston was for a completely different reason: it was for NIT's management problem. Like, you know, I wanted to study the management organization -- how to control the management organization for NIT. And I wanted to learn things from the States, and went to the States for that.

But it was at that time in Houston, I really was struck by the fact that quality is a really important issue.

Q: Mr. Kayano, I would like to spend a few minutes talking about Dr. Juran. I know that you have a great deal of respect for Dr. Schuhart. But let's look for a moment at Dr. Juran. What contributions has Dr. Juran made to the quality revolution here in Japan?

KAY ANO: Well that, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, I myself personally was a member of the research institute of NIT, Nippon Telephone and Telegraph. And I was involved in improving the laboratory for telecommunications.

And after that, I had to do the same thing for the head office, and for NIT organizations throughout Japan. And engage myself in reforming NIT to give new life to it. But this didn't consist only of quality control. It was the management organization, organization control, all these were under my responsibility.

And I became extremely busy. And so when Dr. Juran was in Japan, of course I always came to this JUSE,

whenever I had the time, but I had so much to do in those days for NIT, that when Dr. Juran was in Japan, I really did my best to come here, but compared to some other people, I was not really involved with Dr. Juran's visit to Japan and so forth.

And so I really am not very much aware of his impact on Japan. But, as far as I know, I really feel that he certainly has given a big impact to Japan. Because I myself, when I went to study U.S. management, and met and talked with professors of business administration and so forth.

And there was a book called Top Management, in those days, and I read that book, too. Peter Drucker. Even since those days, every time he came to Japan, I met and talked with him. And so that was my expertise and my responsibility in those days.

And so I have not much to say about Dr. Juran. However, the reason why I have great respect for Dr. Juran is based on what I heard from other people. Of course, I cannot say that Dr. Juran had a philosophy just the same as mine. But I really felt that -- and I heard -- that he had given lectures which were very convincing to the Japanese people.

And even if a Japanese, for example, a person would come up their ... and their process and so forth, other Japanese wouldn't listen to you. Because the reason for that is because a Japanese does not respect his fellow Japanese so much.

And another reason is because even if you want to reform the management, for example, or administration, Japanese management people don't tend to lend their ears just to you.

But when a person like Dr. Juran says it, they are always willing to listen. This is not necessarily typical of Japan, but I think the Japanese nature tends to be that way. Maybe stronger than some other people. Like, you know, a foreign

expert of a certain field would be very much listened to very carefully by the Japanese management.

An expert, a foreign expert -- you know, Japanese people would always listen to a foreign expert, but even if they were considered expert, they may not be an expert. But Japanese people would listen to them more than a fellow Japanese expert.

But, in the case of Dr. Juran, he was an expert of experts, and that's why, naturally, Japanese people would listen to him here. And that's why, in that sense, I had heard about Dr. Juran had said, and also I read his book and so forth. And so I really had been thinking, whenever he visited Japan, that we really are fortunate to have him visit us.

Because regardless of how much we strongly try to appeal to the Japanese people, they don't listen to you. But, you know, in our case, we haven't really gone into the field in experience, we only just studied it through a book. And that's why what Dr. Juran taught us would not only to convince the management, but was also very useful for us, too.

Q: You are, in Japan, 40 years, almost, in front of all of us in the United States. What are the most important lessons that we in America can learn from your experience in quality he re in Japan.

KAY ANa: Today, you're talking about? In my office, we have two main work. One is foreign -- I mean, Taiwan, Korea. We are working for these countries, and also domestically, too. I don't know if you know or not, but Taguchi Misso, soybean paste. The Taguchi Method, and I think that this method is appreciated more in the States rather than in Japan.

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And another thing is this is related to what I have been involved in. Total quality control. A corporation, as a whole, would work to consolidate the quality, would lead to cost affectivity, with this kind of concept. I think this is similar to the Taguchi Method. But there's more emphasis on management.

And so we call this TQC, or total quality control, and there is, in fact, two groups: we have a group which has been involved in TQC for many years; and another group involved in Taguchi Method, in my workplace. But I really feel Taguchi Method is one of the essential way of thinking. But it is not necessarily appreciated by many people in Japan; it may be a little too difficult for some people.

And so I think Taguchi Method, if it can be promulgated in the world, it would really contribute greatly.

Q: One last question about Dr. Juran: many people in America only know about quality, about the things that go wrong, things that break, things that disappoint them. They don't all know about Dr. Juran, the way people in Japan know about him. From your experience and what you've read and what you know about, what should the people of America know about Dr. Joseph Juran, and his contributions?

KAYANO: You're talking about Dr. Juran's contribution?

Q: Yes.

KAYANO: What we should do for the Americans to recognize Dr. Juran's contribution, is that the question?

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Q: The question is what should Americans know, learn about Dr. Juran?

KAY ANO: I don't think we should -- in my opinion, there's nothing special that I should point out. I really don't know how to word it, but --

I may be off the point, but to sincerely -- how should I say -- rather than criticize, but to accept what Dr. Juran has been teaching us is important. Japan, thanks to Dr. Juran, was because -- and we were able to enjoy such success, is because we listened sincerely to what Dr. Juran told us.

I think this kind of attitude is stronger in the Japanese nature. When one thing is considered good, then everything else would be considered good. Like, you know, in Japan there's a saying that if you are attracted by one thing of a person, then you would think that person is just great, and everything that person says is all great.

And so this is considered to be a shortcoming of Japanese. When you consider something good, then everything related to that person, or everything that person says is all good.

But, in the case of Dr. Juran, like when society is becoming so complex and in this kind of environment when we think as to what quality is in this environment, and what we should do about quality and so forth.

In this kind of circumstances, you know, regardless of what that person says, just listen to what other people say and do whatever that person advocates. And just give it a try and see how it goes. I think this is necessary, to have this kind of open mind. But if you don't lend your ears to what a person has to say and don't try to do anything, then it would lead you nowhere.

(END OF TAPE NUMBER EIGHT)

