

Densho Digital Repository  
Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and  
Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS)  
Oral History Project Collection  
Title: Lisa Doi Interview  
Narrator: Lisa Doi  
Interviewer: Anna Takada  
Location: Chicago, Illinois  
Date: September 6, 2019  
Densho ID: ddr-chi-1-20-17

<Begin Segment 17>

- AT: 01:12:40 Um, thank you for, for sharing that. I guess, um, um, if you had to, uh, I don't know exactly what I'm, what I want to ask, but I want to ask it so bad. Um, I guess like for this, um, you've mentioned the Kansha project's role in, um, connecting a lot of young, um, Chicago based Nisei to, um, the incarceration history. Um, and I'm wondering, I guess I just, I would love to hear like more of your thoughts and maybe like on a bigger level, uh, like a, about why here, let's do it this way. Each generation within our community is so vastly different as an I'm, I'm say- saying that like fact. Um, and I guess I would love to hear from you, like if you were to kind of like classify and uh, you know, it will be generalizing, um, if I can ask you to do that. Um, like how are I guess how the, the Yonsei generation is maybe unique, um, like wha- or, or just sharing your thoughts about, or reflections on what you see or notice, observe about the Yonsei generation in this community.
- LD: 01:14:32 So as a disclaimer, I think these are just my thoughts and this are going to be very generalized statements.
- AT: 01:14:37 At best, what I asked you to do.
- LD: 01:14:39 So I think, you know, the Issei, if you think maybe beyond the Japanese American community in terms of what immigration, what happens, uh, for second and third, fourth generation, um, ethnic communities more broadly. You know, I think the Issei were not dissimilar from a lot of immigrant generations in coming to America and their, their primary goal was sort of like making a life or like making this country hospitable for them and their children. Um, I think that got sort of dislocated. And so I think some of that got also transferred to Nisei who really felt this. Like I feel Nisei in general felt this sort of like sense of establishing themselves in America, um, often starting having to start over after the war and sort of like trying to build families.

- LD: 01:15:30 Um, so then I think a lot of the Sansei I know grew up, um, with expectations that they would go to college. Um, sort of moving their families from maybe middle class to upper middle class or upper class lifestyles, um, in a sort of suburban experience. Um, and then I think, which is not dissimilar from other groups. Yonsei I think have, have a lot more flexibility to sort of deviate from maybe more prescribed pathways. Um, and so I think that that's where, you know, I think a lot of the Yonsei I grew up with also college was, you know, very inevitable. Um, but you also see this ability to sort of explore more creative responses or, um, more politicized responses. And I think that's not to say that I don't think that the Nisei and Sansei also had politicized responses.
- LD: 01:16:29 I think the other piece of this was like, I think for the Sansei there was very much, um, you know, movement around redress. Um, and so that really fostered engagement of, uh, academics and lawyers to really document, um, this experience in a very particular way that I think again, leaves the possibility for Yonsei, to have much more divergent and artistic engagements. Um, I think my mom would probably say something about the difference between parents and children and parents or grandparents and grandchildren. Um, that for her, the people who were incarcerated were, um, again, that they're sort of like less flexibility in a parent child relationship, but that grandparents sort of get to be, or at least grandparents in the 80s, 90s, and 2000s get to be much more like whimsical people in the lives of their grandchildren than parents who sort of have to like maybe struggle with more on a day to day sense.
- LD: 01:17:32 Um, so that it's maybe both that relationship to who was incarcerated amongst the Yonsei as well as sort of like flexibility in terms of trajectories. I think like Jason is a great example where he, um, you know, I think if I think about his parents and if they gave up their banking jobs to start a film production company, like I think Dr. Ben would have, uh, not known what to do. Right. But you know, like I think his parents, um, he, he has the, he has the luxury of being able to do that and to sort of pursue this and to get support from his parents and his family in a way that I think would not have been the case 30, 40 years ago.
- M: 01:18:18 Talking about that, do you think it has to do with timing the fact that we're able to hear and tell the stories now rather than 20, 30 years ago and maybe something that could have affected, you know, Nisei and even Sansei when they didn't have the platform that we now well or at least you as Yonsei have to share these story stories. Do you, and maybe the fact that

information is available for you, and I'm not saying that it was easy to obtain, but maybe easier than it would have been for maybe your mother or maybe your, you know, like apart from the fact that it was so close to the time that it happened, maybe that detachment that you as Yonsei have to look at the history, can allow for that exploration of this thing that happened. And what do you think about that?

M: 01:19:10 Because that's kind of like the approach that the legacy part is like going back and we're you know retelling this story through the voices of like very like older Sansei and you know, like in oh, like young Nisei and we're using their testimonies to kind of end, you know, like the end line is that Yonsei are primary, the people we're hoping that we'll see this as well as, you know, like anyone in the community, but the fact that oh, this happened and eh, why didn't we know about this? So it's kind of like an informative thing. So do you think that, and I guess my question goes back to, is it a privilege, eh, that we now have, that you guys now have these Yonsei to be exploring these things and maybe now is the time, what do you think about that? Do you have an opinion on maybe the timing of things and you know, pretty much why is it important to even discuss this now? Because some people are like, oh, it's history. It's past. Why even like put the finger in the wound, I don't know if that's the expression. That's pretty much that.

LD: 01:20:21 Yeah. I think one other thing that's really crucial about the timing, and I think often the redress movement gets overlooked or sort of like, it's a footnote in the history. But I think amongst the things the redress movement did is it opened the doors of people telling their stories. Um, so I think in terms of the number of oral histories or interviews or memoirs that you might have gotten, you know, in the 60s or 70s versus after the mid-80s and 90s and 2000s, you know, I think it was this synergy of suddenly the technology made it much easier. And there was, um, you know, this moment when people were really asked to testify and to tell their stories. And I think that that really just opened a flood gate of possibilities for many other people to, to tell those kinds of stories. Um, I think that was crucial in terms of making it intelligible for future generations.

**<End Segment 17> - Copyright © 2019 Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS). All Rights Reserved.**