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Title: Geri Handa Interview
Narrator: Geri Handa
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 10>

GH: And so I remember one time I went to India, we were travelling on a Buddhist pilgrimage, and so, we were just going, you know, we'd, everyday, we'd just do our *sutra* chanting and, and, you know, and one day I found that I had lost this watch and this ring. The ring had been given to me by a friend [?] and the watch had been given to me by my parents. And I, it was lost, or got, you know, anyways, missing. And so I just felt really bad about it. I felt so bad and so even though I was going around, you know, chanting, all I was thinking about was . . .

NW: A little absentminded?

GH: Hmm, oh my, you know. And then, and then, all of a sudden, while I was chanting, I felt this like [makes wind blowing noise], you know, kind of wind blow, and then I heard this voice "You have lost and yet you have gained." And I said "I know exactly what I've lost, what have I gained?"

NW: Yeah, right. That'd be the question.

GH: "What does that mean?" And then I said "Well, what did those things mean to me?" And, you know, those things were given to me by somebody who cares for me, who loves me. And then I said "Well, those are just things, but that doesn't mean that I've lost their love, you know?" And so I said "Yeah, that's right!"

NW: You were thinking about it and feeling bad because you care about this person.

GH: And so with that realization, I told my friend. I said "Donna, I had this kind of insight." And then so, it was a full moon, and she says "Great! Well then, we should offer thanks to the Buddha," you know. And I said "Oh yeah, let's do that." So we were, just happened to be very close to the Buddhist kind of a temple . . .

NW: When was that?

GH: In India.

NW: Yeah. When was it?

GH: I, I can't exactly remember; it was the 1970s.

NW: So you were young, yeah.

GH: Anyways, and so, so then I said “Well, yeah. Let’s do that.” So we happened to meet this Indian family and they said, “Well, you know, you have much to be thankful for! Here are some candles and, you know, to offer thanks.” And so they, and so we went, and we offered our thanks and then we realized that we got separated from the rest of the group. And so we saw the family again, and we told them where we were staying and, oh, very simple. We stay on this road and at the end of this road is the hotel we were staying at. Oh, great. So that’s what we did: we went back on the road, and, sure enough, at the end of the path was our hotel. And we said “Oh, that’s amazing.” But, you know, things like that would happen to us, you know, while we were traveling throughout India. And so, always different things, you know, people you meet, you just come to realize that, working together with others seems to get you so much further than working alone.

NW: Yeah, I can see that.

GH: You have a choice: either to work alone, or work with others.

NW: Isn’t there a different kind of project from, you know, just working on one thing, just all by yourself, it’s your project, but it’s not a collaboration.

GH: Not really. It’s not really my project, it’s really something that belongs to everyone, and if people are going to step up and take leadership, ownership of it, that’s something better.

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