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Title: Keiko Shinmoto Interview
Narrator: Keiko Shinmoto
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 1>

KS: Survivors, A-bomb, is everybody, all too, right?

NW: Yeah, youngest person must be, so, 45, 55, 65, 66, years old. Even for people who were in their mother's stomach, or womb, it's pretty much 66 years.

KS: I read about it. Some of the book, I forgot that, anyway. He was carried, um, his mother was pregnant with him. I guess, he was scared, I guess some kind of harm [?] happened to her, but, anyway, yeah, yeah. I understand that.

NW: People, yeah, yeah, like that. Okay, so, let me ask you some questions.

KS: So whatever, let's.

NW: So, probably, we can start our conversation by talking about your parents. Your father and your mother, where were they, and what kind of people they were, what you remember about them.

KS: Well, my father loved the trouble.

NW: He loved the trouble, okay.

KS: So, he had a business, in Japan, usually, family business, take over [by a son], but he doesn't like it. Of course, you know, he was helping too, whenever the chance he got. And he started to coming to this country. I don't know, what year was it? But, at that time, his uncle lived in Portland. So, he just, you know, looked to see that uncle at that time. Oh, I don't know what year, they don't have airplane. I heard he went there all the way to Russia, Russia all the way to Seattle.

NW: Wow! That must have been a long trip.

KS: He loved to travel. That's what my mom told me. And the uncle had a grocery store. So he went helping the uncle. And, I think, well, after that, my mom went after, to go, they were together.

NW: Okay, so they were married in Japan, is that right?

KS: Yes, yes.

NW: You remember the year?

KS: I don't have no idea, that part.

NW: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

KS: Well, I have a big family. I didn't know you were . . . [inaudible]. This is my mom.

NW: Oh, she looks like you!

KS: This is my father, of course, he died at 54, 55 he died.

NW: Oh, he was young.

KS: Yes, after the war, though, atomic bomb *de*. I have a [inaudible].

NW: Okay, so you are.

KS: I'm the one, this is me.

NW: Yeah, this is yourself and then, you have three sisters, oh no, four sisters?

KS: I think I have five sisters.

NW: Five sisters. Okay, wow!

KS: And one of the sisters died atomic bomb, yeah.

NW: Well, five sisters, you mean including yourself?

KS: No, I'm one of . . . Let me see, Hideko, Aikiko Michiko, three. And Yuriko, four. Oh, I think he missed Sachi, Sachiko.

NW: He missed one person? Okay.

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<Begin Segment 2>

NW: So you have five sisters. Oh yes, that's a big family. And two bro . . .

KS: Two, ah, three brother.

NW: Yeah, brothers. Right. So, were they, oh yeah, you told me that your brothers and sisters, older ones, were born in the States, right?

KS: Yeah, older one, born in this country, but after my grandfather was sick, they called my father to come home. So he did, with two [of] my older sisters. [He] took [them] home together to show, this is your granddaughter. And, I think, at the time, my mother was pregnant, and they don't allow her travel a long boat trip. So my father and two sisters go back to Japan. And I thought my father could [be] back right away after my grandfather passed away. [But] my grandmother hide his passport, so he could not come back to this country. So, my mother was pregnant then, after he was born, she came home with another sister and this baby, and they all joined together in Hiroshima.

NW: So, around what year was that that he went, that your father went back to Hiroshima?

KS: Oh, my sister, my oldest sister, right now, 82, 83. Well, maybe eighty years ago?

NW: 80 years ago.

KS: Because she was a . . .

NW: So, it's well before the Pacific War started.

KS: Just about it. Well, then, maybe, a little bit . . . timing. Maybe, I don't exactly . . . My sister was maybe five? Or six. Then, yeah, just before everybody had to go to camp, then they came back to Japan.

NW: Okay, so, let me try to capture it right.

KS: So, '40 . . .

NW: '41, '42?

KS: '41, '42, I think yes.

NW: So, wait. So they . . .

KS: Yeah, everybody, you know. Uncle, auntie, they did not want to go in the camp. So, I think that's why they went to, gone to Japan. I mean, here in the United States, but at that time they were at Portland.

NW: Oh, so, because they probably, did they renounced American citizenship, and then they came back to Japan?

KS: My two sisters were born here, that one, and oh, three sisters. They had citizenship.

NW: Right, yeah, right, but uncles and aunties.

KS: I don't think so, they don't. They just, that part of it, I don't know. I wasn't born. I don't know what, only I know, I was born in Japan, and I grew up in until that's . . .

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<Begin Segment 3>

NW: So, you were born in Japan and you said that you were born in 1938?

KS: 1936.

NW: '36, I'm sorry. So that means that well before 1936 your family was already back in Japan. So your father was back to see the sick father of his, and then, your mother, after giving birth to your sister, . . .

KS: Older sister.

NW: Older sister.

KS: Older brother. Doctor took a look and go back to Japan.

NW: I get then there were three children for your parents?

KS: I think so.

NW: So then they came back to, came to Japan. And then they were in Hiroshima. What kind of person was your mother?

KS: She was real gentle, and she doesn't say too much, you know. Of course there is nothing, [no] activity there at that time. Well, she just raised the kids, had how many kids, so that's what . . . She was a very good mother.

NW: How about your father? Do you have any childhood memory of him?

KS: Well, only a bit I remember, he doesn't too much say either. But when he was junior high, I think? Not junior high, earlier. Maybe fifth or sixth grade, um, we started to learn English at Japan, and he fluently speak Jap- I mean English, so he teach me a lot.

NW: Oh, that's nice, that's nice. So, English as a language is something you were more or less familiar with when you were growing up because of your father?

KS: Well, of course, I went to a Japanese school, yeah. But when I came to this country, I couldn't speak at all. But, whenever [there was] homework, you know, paperwork at home, he teach me that English. He was very good, fluent, [in] English. Because when he was working in Portland, at the grocery store, a lot of Japanese came too, and [when] they needed some kind of paperwork in English, and he'd help them a lot, that's what I heard.

NW: So, that was a really a skill that was valuable. So, you were saying, your father started to teach you English after you were back in the States, after the family was back in the States?

KS: Yeah, Of course, I was born in Japan.

NW: Yeah, right, right. So you came to the States with your parents. Yeah, I understand.

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<Begin Segment 4>

NW: So you were born in '36, you were probably, when you were 5, wait a minute, the war started out in 1941, so you were 5, 4 years old when the war started out.

KS: Yeah, I believe so. And after that, when I was 8 years old? Yeah. From 7, 8, 9, 10, I think, if people don't have [relatives in] countryside, everyone had to go *shūdan sokai*. That's the one I joined, yeah.

NW: So, your family was within the city limit of . . .

KS: Oh, yeah, just the middle of the city, the Bomb Dome, you see. We lived in, right there.

NW: So because you were in *syūdan sokai*, you were able to survived, in a way, that's right?

KS: Yeah.

NW: Now, after the war started out, do you, of course, you are very young, but do you have any memory of like, um, food shortage or a kind of things didn't work?

KS: Of course. We, well, after war finished, we all got together to live, I think that maybe, after the war finished, two years, year and a half or two? We, my mom, the sister lived in a little suburb out on the city, little bit out city, so, . . .

NW: Outside the city.

KS: So she had a, not the city, maybe 5 mile out from the city. They had a small house here, there, rental house. So my mom asked if we all gonna come to live there, in one of the rooms. They says naturally, it's a good home. So I came home from the city. But that time, we didn't have any food. So, that's the only thing I remember, the sweet potato. So my mother said, dinner ready or lunch ready, and we go down to the table and a look at the plates: one potato.

NW: Hm, that's right. Did you have one potato per person?

KS: Just, only, one potato.

NW: Were you able to eat three times a day? Or?

KS: Well, it's not that, well, after that my mom, mother's devoted mother. We have a lot of sisters and brothers, so they have to keep them alive. So she went to the countryside. There a lot of people from Portland, together who had come back to Japan. They arrived at countryside, and they were farmers. So they said, well, anytime you need food, come over, we gonna have food. But, do you know *yamiichi*?

NW: *Yamiichi*, sure.

KS: Actually, we cannot do that. So mom has just a, back, *rukku sakku*, we call it, backpack. She go visit friends. Only the mom. we were so small and my sister was working so only the mom had to go. And, sweet potato, vegetable, and a little rice, general things like that. Yeah, then, everyone say don't ride on a train or bus, because police is looking for *yamiichi*, you know, *yami*, everything that's under that, whatever that's called. So mom walked all the way, how many miles, I don't know. Yeah. And my sister had a little bit land, farmland. So they grew there something, we all gonna get it, from there, too. In the mean time, a little bit rice, I think only the rice or wheat. Whether we could get it from the government, that one, yeah.

NW: It's ration, yearh, it's . . . the kind of the food you can get is pretty limited.

KS: Yeah. You cannot choose anything. Whatever put on the place, you have to eat it.

NW: So was it true even before or during the war? Or is this something that became worse after the war was over?

KS: To me, it's after the war.

NW: After the war. War is over, you mean.

KS: Over the war, for while.

NW: Do you mean during the war ?

KS: During the war, I was at *syūdan sokai*, so that's no problem.

NW: So, relatively, food was alright.

KS: They provided for us food, for children. Yeah. I am pretty sure that time my mom thought that's okay, too. But anyway, when atomic bomb dropped, everything [was] burned. Everything, just nothing. So I'm pretty sure rough time my parents had to take care of all of these kids.

NW: So, yeah, during the war, you were in the countryside, so food was practically okay, whereas, after it's over, because you're already back, it was very difficult in terms of, yeah, access to the food.

KS: But, sometimes after the war, you know, *shinchū-gun*, America no soldier comes to that. Then, oh, today they're coming, so we go over there. And that was nearby my aunt's house. They were training or something because of big field. And when they come, all the soldiers were so kind, or, you know. We five or six kids would go over there, come on, come on, at first we were a little scared, but oh, they share chewing gum, chocolate. So, you know, "Thank you for the candy!" That's was the first time I remembered my age to have it, chocolate.

NW: Yeah, especially for small kids, sweets are very, very important.

KS: Yeah. And after, what I remember is that there was a professor from Harvard. I don't know where, from, he came to, but our elementary school, after I go back to the city, across the street from the Atomic Dome, that was my elementary school. Then, uh, they brought a lot of supply

for children, you know. At that time, too, one thing, funny thing happened. Toothpaste. We don't have, everybody want to, some of the candy, some of the toothpaste, this and that. And one boy opened it and he put in mouth.

NW: Oh, he thought that it's sweet?

KS: Yeah, it's candy, you know what I mean?

NW: Yeah, I do, oh my god!

KS: I never forget that one. We just laughed and laughed and . . .

NW: But isn't toothpaste, depending on, the flavor, it kind of tastes sweet, so you would think "Oh, I should be eating this."

KS: Because other people, other friends had chocolate, or candy, and he got the toothpaste. And it was "Oh my gosh! You have bubble coming out of your mouth!" So you know, we all laughed about it, of course.

NW: They shouldn't have mixed it up! You know, sweet has to be food. Yeah, toothpaste is sort of . . .

KS: Yeah, That's what I remember.

NW: Yeah, that's kinda a striking story.

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<Begin Segment 5>

NW: Now, going back to when the war was still going on, you know you were in the countryside, but some of your family members were in the city limit. I think you mentioned your sister was probably . . . , yeah. Could you please tell me a little more about that?

KS: Well, I didn't see her, because I was, um, already [on] the other side of the countryside, but my mother was in city, you know, to take care of my sisters. Half body burned, the sister, yeah. I mean, she died. I understand it, August 15th.

NW: Uh-hm. So, you mean, let us get the story clear. So, your sister was the only person who was in the city at the time?

KS: Oh, my brother too.

NW: Okay, and are you saying that your parents went to look for them after . . . ?

KS: No, I don't think so. You know that's a, situation like that, every family had an agree- or make a setup. If something happened, everybody gonna work around and go school, that's one way. So something happened, everybody go meet my aunt's house. That's the way.

NW: Which is where?

KS: That's just. Before, I told you, that's, she had a little farm, maybe three and half miles away from the city.

NW: Uh-hm. So, it was outside the city.

KS: So everybody meet there. That's the way they agree.

NW: But your sister and brother, your sister obviously didn't come back, did she?

KS: I think she came back. Yeah, I think. And then my mom and aunty took care. But half died, half burned body. Yeah, that's what I heard.

NW: So, you didn't see her.

KS: I didn't see her. After everything, after my sister died, [we] cremate. And I think that's my brother over there inside. I remember whether my mother carried a white, you know, box. And that's my sister.

NW: So at that time you were not at that aunt's house? Was that the reason for?

KS: I was in the countryside, the other side of, my sister and another brother [were] there because they were transferred to their job, that somebody moved to another side.

NW: I see, okay.

KS: So Momma, my father, mother lived this long. I live in this country[side], and my other sister, brother, this side of the city, on the other side of the countryside, so but, something happened and so we gonna meet at my aunty house. They agreed.

NW: That's the thing to do. Right.

KS: Yeah. Then my sister, I guess, how she got there, I don't know, I don't know. Everybody same situation that's, uh, [inaudible] Anyway, my mom and father took care of her, and at that time, my sister wanted to drink water because, but you know, . . .

NW: She's burned.

KS: But they say don't give her water, don't give it. I don't know why they say that. But my mom said that if she is going to die, I want to give her water. But at the time, doctor, whatever, that's a nurse that helped her, [said] don't give her water. So, but anyway, she died, on the 15th.

NW: So it was pretty soon after.

KS: Yeah. At the day was, the war ended, right. That's my, this person, Hiro. That's the time, I was already moved to this way. Because that one said after the bomb dropped, 3, or 4 days after, my father said that we have to go after Keiko, the family have to be together so brother and

sisters came, too, after me. That's the time when I went through the city to go that way. That's why . . .

NW: Yeah. You were exposed because it's pretty much right after!

KS: Yeah, radiation. But still, I could see that edge of the city still burning, yeah. They say that three day, three nights, it's burning hot. That's what I heard. But I didn't see that at night time, because that was, according to . . . you know.

NW: So, which day was it, that you traveled through the city of Hiroshima, then? A few days ago, you said . . .

KS: I think August the 12th? According to that one say, it was the 12th, 13th, something. I had a copy, so I could loan, you could read that one, too.

NW: How about your brother? You said that he was also exposed to the bomb?

KS: Yeah, but he was lucky to . . . um, Of course, this is the sister and my brother, they were going to school, high school. But that wasn't studying, they were all helping the city. Something, clean up or something. My brother was up the second floor of the building, so the whole thing was blasted up, but he was lucky to.

NW: So he survived.

KS: Yeah, he survived. No burn or no glass or anything. But anyway.

NW: Did he suffer from the radiation sickness?

KS: No.

NW: He didn't.

KS: No. He came to this country, I don't know when, what year. Because he had kept his citizenship.

NW: Oh, right. So he was the one who had a . . .

KS: He said, you know, right now, it was tough to live there, Hiroshima. So I guess he lived a little bit, some company, he wanted to come back to this country, so he came back, I think so. But when my mom, at that time, she still had glasses in her face, yeah. And hand, too. Yeah.

NW: Okay. How about your father?

KS: No. He was just to go to a walk from the city to the, the edge of the city, in a street car. So he survived that radiation. And no burning. But my mom was, it was eight in the morning, everybody sent out to work or school, and then she was cleaning windows. Then right there the window blasted. Glass to the face. That's what I heard.

NW: Ah-ha, so, she was cleaning the windows, so of course she was nearby. Oh, wow. Now, of course, your sister died because of the bomb and your brother was also in the city and your father was in the street car, your mother got injured, did your family talk about the A-bomb, or anything that's related to it after it is over, war was over. I just wondered what kind of conversation that you might have had.

KS: Well . . . Anybody, relative, neighbor, and friend, all in the same situation. They just don't [have] too much to say. I lost all my relatives, too. Uncles and aunties, everyone in the city. Only auntie lived, that one is a little bit away from the city; we borrowed the rental house, that's the one, only. But my mom, she doesn't want to go see the atomic bomb that's . . . you know, we call it the Peace Park, over there, yeah. When I go back to Japan I took my grandkids, too. But [my mother said] you guys go inside, I don't want to go see it. So she doesn't want to remember. She doesn't want to talk about it, probably, such a horrible . . . yeah.

NW: What, you know, kind of puzzles me is that, okay. you say, everybody went through the same thing, so they don't want to talk about it, but in a different environment, different situation, it could be a reason why everybody wants to talk about it. I just wonder why Japanese people, Hiroshima people at that time went to the direction of silence, as opposed to, you know, talking about it. Because, in a way, you can assume, that because everybody in this room went through a similar situation, we can probably talk about it. What do you think was at work for people to be silent?

KS: Ah, I don't know why. Of course, I was not ages. Maybe I didn't go through all the horrible situation.

NW: But later on, you were in the city.

KS: Yeah, now [at] my age, I think about it, I have time to think about it back, you know what I mean? At that time, I came to this country, everyday, and before coming [to] this country, everyday, we were busy to survive, and work, and go school. And, I know that even when I came to this country, I got married, I had kids, and send them to school, I was kind of busy, and . . . Yeah, I don't know. Japanese people just kept it inside? Or, I don't know. *Shikatakagani*? That's the way? We say it, right? Can't help it. Everybody's through. Just go look, forward, you know, at that time.

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<Begin Segment 6>

NW: After the war, you went back to your elementary school? Did you go back to school?

KS: Yes.

NW: How about teachers? Did teachers talk about the bomb at all? They didn't . . .

KS: No. I guess, I don't know. Now you are telling me, come to think of it, we never talked about it. Huh. Maybe did not want to remember, or they did not want to, ah. Yeah. Not too many people, yes.

NW: How about your mother? Didn't she tell you things like . . . Well, especially because you came to the States, um, you'll be far away from her. I assumed that she stayed in Japan. Didn't you tell her, didn't she tell you that because you were exposed to radiation, you have to be careful about this and that kind of thing? Was there any conversation like that?

KS: No, I guess, at that time, we, people, not too much interest or this atomic power? What do you think? I mean, you know. Everyday was kind of busy. I should say too busy, but. Nowadays, we say that Fukushima, that earthquake, that one. People talk about that a lot. Because we extrude [?] to experience A-bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, so that's why they talk about a lot, right? But now, you are telling me, really, I don't remember we talked about it like that. Yeah. When I came to, became pregnant, I went to the GY, you know, the doctor, and [he said] oh, you are from Hiroshima, oh, where was it, do you know, and oh, radiation, and he was concerned about it. And I said, well, today, you're telling me I don't have any problem, health-wise, you know. So, "Oh okay, that's good." But then my first son was born, everything was okay, and my second son, he was okay, so maybe you are okay. But, like radiation, around that time, I think about it. Oh, come to think of it, I [was] through to the city, to go in, back together, to family. Then, I talked about it with my brother by telephone. Say, was I okay that time with radiation? [He says that] Keiko, everybody had radiation. Even now, we are very . . . talk about radiation, food, or, . . .

NW: Water?

KS: Yeah, or something like that. But look at us, we all went through it, but here we are all okay, so you don't have to be that nervous about it. That's what my brother told me. Oh, then, that's true, that's true. Yeah.

NW: But when you had your first child, what year was it?

KS: '64.

NW: 1964. So, four years after you came. So when you were pregnant, did you think about it, because that's kind of what people say?

KS: No. I never thought of it, yeah, because, at that time, I'm not a survivor. That's what I thought. You know, I was in the outskirts, in *Sakotani* [in] *shūdan sokai*. Then, four, five years ago, my brother said, hey, each time I go visit back to Japan, my cousin, my brother, says, hey you went through Hiroshima. Why don't you apply, what it looks like. Maybe you are not qualified for, what, atomic bomb survivor. So I said, Oh that's okay, I'm going every year the physical. So, for a while, it's okay. But you never know. Then my brother said, okay, I am going to do it. That's why he did it.

NW: So that's relatively recent. So, you applied for this in what year? You say, [Heisei] Age 18 must be six years ago?

KS: Yeah, six, five years ago, isn't it? Something like that.

NW: So until then, you didn't even think about applying for . . .

KS: No, I never think about it. I'm okay, you know, so.

NW: So, you didn't even think of yourself as a survivor, that's I guess what I'm hearing.

KS: Yeah, I guess I never think about it. Yeah.

NW: So, would you say the only reason why you decided to apply is because your brother sorta encouraged you to do that?

KS: Yeah, of course, the brother. I give it to you, this a copy. Um, yeah, I think that's, you have it, too. Ah-huh.

NW: So how about with your husband? When you got married or even before then when you were getting to know him? Did you talk about your experience at all? Of being in Hiroshima?

KS: He is a *Nisei*. Yeah. His mother came from Hiroshima, too, mother, father, and already they were at the United States, they both were. And, of course, naturally my brother, I mean, my husband born in this country, so, then I met him, then, he never asked me like that, atomic bomb, at that time, I wasn't, I wasn't, think of myself as atomic bomb survivor.

NW: But I thought during the war time you told me that your husband was in the internment camp, in a concentration camp?

KS: Yes, I think, Gila. It's called Gila

NW: How do you spell that?

KS: I don't know.

NW: In what state?

KS: Arizona.

NW: Arizona, yeah. I mean, to me, you have to tell me how you met your husband, but, to me, it's very, it's very interesting to think of those two different kinds of life histories meeting each other.

KS: Well, I was in Los Angeles, at that time, going to school, and he was here.

NW: So you were already here.

KS: Yeah.

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<Begin Segment 7>

NW: Okay. You have to tell me first what prompted you to come to the States, you said it first, it's 1960's. What brought you to the states, probably you can tell me.

KS: Actually, after high school graduate, I like to go to college too, but we did not have money.

NW: At that time you were in Japan.

KS: Yeah, Japan. My parents don't have enough money to send me to college. So I was working at a bank. Then my father's friend came back to Japan to see me, and of course, you know, family, and [I said] "Oh I like to go to school." I guess he remembered that. Then, he came back to this county, and meet my brother Roy. His name is Roy. Keiko want to come to here, this country, to go to school. So my brother said, "Well," he was married had one boy at that time, and okay, if she wants it, then we are gonna help her. Then, he said, you come to this country. And I got, luckily, I got three years passport [for] the school, usually one year or two years, but I got three years, so enough to go to school.

NW: Was it a student visa or . . .

KS: Student visa.

NW: How do you spell your brother's name? Roy is –

KS: Shigeru, Roy. Shigeru is Roy, this country's named him Roy.

NW: So he was already married in the States with one child. Okay, so he was able to be a sponsor of you as a student. Now, tell me a little about what might have been going on in your mind at the time because, you know, to me in a way, it's very striking that being in Hiroshima or nearby at the time of the bomb and you lost your sister and some of your family went through some injuries and then you decide to come to the States. What kind of image of the US as a country you think that you had at that time? Because in a way, it's a former enemy country.

KS: At that time I was not scared of anything. Because my brothers and sisters were here. So my mom, being in this country, before, you know what I mean? And my, his sister says, how could you, your youngest daughter, send America? Alone? You know. And my mom says, well, that's the way she wants to, and I know America. So it's not like a horrible place or something, you know that! Besides, his brothers and sisters there. So, mom [was] never against me. So, yeah, go, if you want to. So I was so happy to. Of course, first, the school said it's okay to come, application to get the okay, that one had to come first. So, I have to wait until then, I was working after I graduate high school, I was working in a bank.

NW: So, do you think, in a way, the only way to get the college education is to come to the States? Because your family didn't have the money to send you to a Japanese college,

KS: Yeah, in that way, my brother, who sponsored. That's the reason I got the permit. I don't have no scholarship or anything because I don't have no . . .

NW: But your brother paid for that college education.

KS: Yeah, brother. You know, trip, you know, coming to this country, the trip, and school, guaranteed sponsor, Yeah.

NW: So he must have been very successful in his line of business.

KS: No, he was struggling, too. He went to that, we went to, drafted, too, after came to this country, drafted, yeah. Then after the army, he went to work that grocery store, Safeway. Safeway.

NW: Oh, yeah. It's a big market there.

KS: And at the time he said that I've got to go to college, too. So, he had a, I guess he got scholarship? No, we don't call it scholarship, you know, isn't that the army help going to school . . . I don't know.

NW: Oh yeah, it's G.I. Bill, right.

KS: G.I. Bill, yeah, that's the one he went to the college. Business school college, Los Angeles, and graduated. That's why, I think, when he heard that Keiko wants to come to this country to go school, oh, then I'd help.

NW: Now, you said Roy, Shigeru-san, came back to the States right after the war? Do you know around when?

KS: After the, I don't know what year he came to this country.

NW: I'm wondering if he actually went to the Korean War or . . .

KS: Yeah, yeah. Korean War.

NW: So it was early enough, yeah.

KS: But even himself, too! He was drafted, but he couldn't speak English. So he said "I don't know why I got drafted." But he survived it.

NW: He couldn't speak any? He could have, he must have been . . .

KS: Oh, I don't know, of course, first he went to Portland, so a little bit of everyday conversation, a little bit. But he himself was surprised.

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<Begin Segment 8>

NW: So tell me a little bit about your life after you came to the States. You told me you were excited, what do you remember from that time period?

KS: I was lucky, at the time I was in Las Angeles, yeah, living with Roy together, and that was a little be further, Torrance, and Los Angeles, but my school was in Los Angeles the city, in side. So my cousin lived in Los Angeles, long, long time, said that, well, Keiko, the best thing is to do the School Girl.

NW: Oh yeah.

KS: That way you learn English fast. Of course besides, I am going to school, English school, from 9 to 2 o'clock or 3.

NW: Oh wait, though, I heard that, somebody told me that, the School Girl was a system in which your American host family so to speak, pays for your education.

KS: No, not the education. They don't. I think that was my brother paid, tuition. Only I got from this host family, \$50 a month. At that time, that was my only spending money.

NW: Yeah, but they feed you, so to speak.

KS: Oh yeah, and nice bedroom, you know, it's really nice, because his family had a business, steel company business. So, parents, these are Mr. and Mrs. Brookes, that's . . . they go all the time, social life, and three kids [needed] someone to watch. So it's such a big house, they had one maid room type, you know. I lived there. I just stayed after school, and helped cooking, she cooks, but dish washing or table setting, that's the kind I did. But twice a week, that colored lady [*sic*] came to clean the house, I didn't have to do, clean house or anything. Most of the time I just stayed with the kids until the bedtime, when the couple go to the meeting. Yeah, and that was a very nice family. I remember, I never forget. They had a beach house at Balboa, that beach, [in] Los Angeles. They had a beach house though, summer vacation, one month, always go together, yeah. I don't have to, she said, but this is my chance to see, I have to go back to Japan, too, at the time. But I like to go with them, and [they said] "Of course you can come with us." You know? Yeah, very nice.

NW: That's nice. Now, do you remember anything we might call as a racial tension or tension between different nationals? So you talked about . . .

KS: No, I never had it. I never had it. Even this English school, is all over the world to come to that, this country, before, go to school, whatever that would be, they all mix it. So I learned a lot of nationality people. They were all good people, too, of course. I never had difficult time myself. Yeah.

NW: How about school teachers? Did you, I guess you were working for this family as part of this School Girl system . . .

KS: That's, yeah, the school is all English. Yeah, none speak any Japanese, so everybody has to. But lunch time, everyone the Japanese group got together and talk in Japanese. And then the teacher sometimes passing by "Speak English! Speak English!" You know!

NW: Yeah. So, you didn't even hear about any biases or prejudices that somebody had to suffer from, because I talked to many people and some of them actually say, yeah, it was hard to find a house to buy because landlord or certain neighborhood, they don't want to sell house to Japanese Americans or it's really hard to find an apartment.

KS: That's too bad. But after I finished this English school, I went to trade, technical college in Los Angeles. And I studied designing, in the meantime, of course I liked the sewing. And my

teacher recommended me and [said,] “Keiko, what are you doing in summer time?” “Well, I don't have any plans.” You know. “If you want to, in Beverly Hills, some dress shop, a Japanese girl, not a . . . she is a middle aged person, she is looking for some dress maker. So [she] said, you want, I'd introduce you.” So I went there, maybe a couple of months, weekends, and all the customers were, of course, in Beverly Hill, all the rich people. All the Hollywood actors, actresses, you know. Then I learn so many American customs, too. Maybe one side of that American style, too. I was in a way lucky. So I could see the people. Yeah.

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<Begin Segment 9>

NW: So it was around that time that you met with your future husband?

KS: Yeah.

NW: How did you meet?

NW: That one too, his mother, and my grandmother, cousins in Japan, so, my husband, Hank, his parents tripped [traveled] to Japan, they see each other, cousins, and “Oh, I have one more son and he has to get married. We are looking.” And “Oh, Keiko is in Los Angeles. Let him go see it.” Then we meet.

NW: So, he heard about you when he was back in Japan? Then . . .

KS: His parents went back to Japan. My husband never been to Japan.

NW: Oh, never?

KS: Never. So, parents came home from Japan. Oh, Hank, that one girl lives in Los Angeles. And why don't you go see it.

NW: Oh, okay.

KS: You know, we at the time, *kettō*. You know *kettō* mean.

NW: Uh-huh

KS: We are very particular about it. So we don't have to worry about it, because we already know that it's cousin. Relative. But anyway, that's the reason he came to see me. Then, that's when . . .

NW: So, just to get the story straight: So, you were saying that your husband, his name is Hank? Hank's mother was living in Japan but then she heard about you?

KS: No. Hank's parents live here. And they took a trip to Japan to see a cousin.

NW: See a cousin. Got you, okay, okay.

KS: Then, at that time, Hank's mother told cousin, oh I have one more son to get married, and oh. Japanese, that's Keiko in Los Angeles, I don't think, not too far from Stockton to Los Angeles and maybe, you gotta, you know, go see Keiko.

NW: Go see her. So the cousin knew about, the cousin of Hank's, knew about you. Is that how it works out?

KS: No, no, no. We don't know anything, so do I. And Hank is here, this country, right? And Momma, Papa went to Japan to see the cousin and to talk to, and they came, Mama, Papa, came back to this country. At the time I was Los Angeles, right? And, meantime, my mom heard about it, this cousin is my grandma's cousin, too.

NW: Oh, okay, so that's the missing connection.

KS: And then, my mom said, [in] Stockton, one boy, Shinmoto boy there, they've been looking for a girl, why don't you meet it, have a chance to meet it.

NW: So, it's a relative knowing each other and then eventually . . .

KS: And background. You've got the background. We, each other, Hank and I don't know anything about it. Then, one day, they called.

NW: What was it like to meet with him?

KS: Well, he was a typical Nisei boy.

NW: What do you mean by "typical"?

KS: Oh, I mean, very simple, to me, frankly, everything he telling me, his is life size [?]. What I am doing and this one. And we meet at my sister's house, yeah. Then my sister's husband, after that, he left, said that, oh, he came in the three days, some kind of holiday weekend. So I'll be back tomorrow, you know, at that time, he had a friend in Los Angeles, too, so he stayed over there. So he left, and my sister and my brother-in-law, that's who, my sister's husband. He asked me "What do you think?" You know, like that. "Oh, I don't know." Just only the one day you meet, you cannot tell. But they said that well your mom said that *kettō* is okay, as long as they both liked each other, why don't you think about it. And after the next day, of course, he came, too, I went to his friend's house. I guess he wanted to show me to his friend, too. And oh, they are from nice family, too.

NW: They were Japanese Americans as well?

KS: Japanese Americans, too. So they both went to the same school, or something like that. And "Oh, that's a nice family," you know. Then he went back. And "It is alright if sometime I call you?" "Oh sure," on telephone *no*, right? And meantime, my sister and my brother-in-law, too, [they said] he seemed like a nice guy, why don't you think about it. If you want to go back Japan, that's a different story. But if you want to stay this country. You know. Your mom, my mom wanted me to stay in this country, you know, because when you go America, and go school, and come back to Japan, they don't have no chance to get married.

NW: Oh? Tell me a little more about it.

KS: You know what I mean. That's . . . the time was very old-fashioned. So, oh, girl went to an American school, oh, that's too . . . you know [laugh] . . . level is different, you know. That's way the Japanese think. That's the way, oh I think if you . . . Of course, I used to live in America too, and probably think that Keiko is going to be happy in America, its life is easier than Japan. That's [what] my mom said. So I guess a year later we got married.

NW: So that was in 196-?

KS: 5, or 4!

NW: 4. So, immediately after you got married, you had a first child. Right after you got married.

KS: Because we were not young. My husband said that I don't want to wait.

NW: Yeah, you have to hurry, yeah. It makes sense.

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<Begin Segment 10>

NW: So, at that time, did your husband tell you about his family experience of being in internment? How did it come out?

KS: Yeah, not too much. No too much. All he said, of course, he was young. So [he said] "Oh we all had a good time." What I mean is that's . . . "we didn't have to worry about food, living space, because it's not a big house we called it a barrack. But everyday we have just . . . played baseball, and had a lunch, um, meal was free" [laugh]. Something like that he used to tell me.

NW: Uh-huh. But by, I don't know, probably 1960s probably too early, but you're probably familiar with how, in late 1960s and '70s there are Asian Americans who started to just notice that, oh wow, there is a concentration camp and that was not a right thing to do. American government shouldn't have done it. You must have heard about such a, a sort of a rise of social movement.

KS: Yeah. That's I guess the JALC? That's the one, I guess, official people, looking for that. Yeah, so that's good, yeah. And really it isn't right. To put in barbed wire inside.

NW: Right, right. Well, what did you talk about that? He is the person who had been through it.

KS: I don't, . . . I wasn't there anyway, so that's why I don't want to say that's why, when it is in the conversation that I just listen-side. I just listen, that's all.

NW: What did you hear then? What did your husband tell you or what did you hear from other people?

KS: Oh, he is, of course, more like, um, what am I gonna say? They took away their freedom, right? Just limited lifestyle, that's all, right? And they took all of their property before they go to

the camp. That's the kind I heard about it. And gees, that's not right. That's what I thought. Yeah.

NW: Do you think it might have in any way changed your view of America? Because earlier you came here very excited, you were coming to college, and you were excited about new life experiences, but then you learn about this thing that was not right done by the US government and your husband, and his family also went through it, and I'm sure his family lost their belongings and property and stuff, as well. Do you think it might have changed your view of America, what you think about America as a country?

KS: Well, to me, no, no, I am still today, I am the luckiest one, I think. Because I went through the A-bomb. We lost everything. Compare that. I am lucky, I am, today, I am here. Yeah, I never . . . To me, I didn't go through that camp. That hardship. I don't remember my age at that time. What I mean is, the camp is 19 . . . what?

NW: '41, and '42 . . .

KS: I don't remember. But today, oh, if I think about it, that wasn't right. Yeah.

NW: So, in other words, you didn't particularly feel that, oh, my view of America has changed because of that, now that you know about . . .

KS: Of course, that's, we are Japanese. But we are also American, too, I got American citizenship, too.

NW: When did you get it?

KS: Gosh, that's 19 . . . I got married and after that. Roger, Kevin, they are elementary school. And because [when] anything comes to school, you have to record, father, American citizen, mother, Japanese. I don't like that, either, you know. And kids said, why don't you mama be American, too. And when we go trip, if I go to Canada, or Mexico, I am the one on a separate line. I hate that, too. So.

NW: Right, uh-huh.

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<Begin Segment 11>

NW: Now, it's a little different question from the other questions I've asked you so far, but do you think the fact that you are a woman has changed any part of your life experience or made it different from men's life? I mean, I know that there are many Japanese *hibakushas*, survivors, from Hiroshima or Nagasaki for that matter, who came to the States and, of course, this group of people includes both men and women, and I just wonder as a woman who came here to study, and at the time I understand you don't think of yourself as a survivor, but any part of your life experience after coming to the States was shaped by the fact that you're a woman. And I ask you this because some other people have mentioned how "Because I was man, I had to do this" and

“Because I was woman, I had to do that.” I just wonder if you think of any part of your life experience as in terms of the fact that you are a woman

KS: Well, maybe, if I continued the school, may be, I might, this way. I mean, what I was gonna say [was] probably out going myself, too. I probably, in Los Angeles and I like to go [into] more professional type designing, I like to be that way, too. But since I married to this, Stockton [laugh]. You know, Stockton is, . . . right now, it’s changing. You know, before I came to, oh it was very, very local. Of course, the first time I came here, the French County, the place as a real farming, um, what am I gonna . . . um, farmland, surrounded by farmland, only the one house, like that. So, well, I can’t go back to LA anymore because I’m married I have to do something to myself. But, you know, *sumeba miyako*.

NW: [Laugh].

KS: Exactly. And now I’m just a mother with two kids. And moving to this side of Stockton now. So. I like it. So when I go to Los Angeles. Oh my God, that’s busy, oh it’s noisy. You know, like that. Of course, my husband had a business. Automobile repair shop.

NW: Oh, automobile repair shop in Stockton. That’s why you moved to Stockton. Okay, alright. Was he good?

KS: Of course, before that, start business, he was working for Chevrolet, the company, as a mechanic. So he’s experienced that, you know. He worked how many years? Maybe 10 years, maybe, and after that he started his own business.

NW: Right, right. Yeah. So after being trained by Chevrolet, so to speak.

KS: Yeah. Then we moved to Stockton, then I got to raise kids, I got to take care of his business’s book keeping, so I was kind of busy.

NW: So you were helping him out, by taking care of, looking at the management book, so to speak.

KS: He had four mechanics, so pretty busy. I have to take care of all the book[s]. So, but I don’t have any, I would like to be this or that way, at the time. I don’t have that [now]. Just as a mother, a wife, now I am a grandmother, too.

NW: Right, that’s great. So, you think that the fact that you became a mother of two children really changed your views on anything? I’m just kinda wondering about it in general.

KS: No, I am okay. I am not changed, just . . . I hope I am . . . I hope they think I am a good mother [laugh], good grandmother. Or something like that. But yesterday, I got my son, the older son, they went to vacation at Lake Tahoe, on their way coming back, they live there, Sunnyvale, the Bay Area, they stopped by. Oh, how am I doing? I said oh I am okay, but I am getting old, too, so. Any time, [they] come up, you know, [they say] live with us. I might have to do because I’m all by myself here and supposing something happens, the Sacramento in Sunnyvale, you know, closest one only the friend, you know, just [in] Stockton, I always, [when] something happened, I call her. Maybe I think about it, you know. When you get old, you never know.

NW: When you are old . . .

KS: Everybody, [when] one side it gone. Everybody go nearby the son or daughter. I said, oh gosh, maybe now it's time. I'm thinking but, you know, my age, too. Yeah.

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<Begin Segment 12>

NW: How about your husband? Was he . . .

KS: My husband died from cancer.

NW: Oh. When was it?

KS: He died in 19 . . . thirteen years ago [in 1998].

NW: So you have been living here all by yourself since then?

KS: Well, you know, I live the, this is the one, two, third house. Yeah. I lived in Stockton, across by the elementary school, because of kids, being close and good schools, naturally, every parent think that way. So we just picked the one, this, and after that, they finished high school, each one college, started; one in UC Davis, one in San Jose. And at that time, my husband, he grew up in country, you know. So he likes be in the countryside. So we found that . . . of course in Stockton, but east side of the highway 99, we found 1.5 acres lot to house, kind of a big house, but it was okay, he worked hard, and that's the way he wanted it, so I said, I am never against anything, whatever he wants, he does it . . . I mean, he did it. So, even this one, too, I thought, my gosh, now you're ageing, and you gonna move in another, bigger house? His brother was kinda concerned about it. But I said, well, that's okay, that's the way he wants it, he worked so hard, so. So let him to. So we had a good time to, the country, it's not so far from his business, only [you] travel about 15 minutes, and it's perfect, good area, too. Everyone's house is big cul-de-sac. And after he died, I know everyone said that are you going to live yourself in that place? And I was, well, I don't have no place to go. And my son said, this is your house. So, whatever you wanted to, do it. And at that time, we had a business, we had an apartment, and a rent house, so I had to take care of everything myself. I mean, you know. So business, I lent it to someone, lent it, I said, okay, go ahead, so we did that. And timing was perfect for me. Property was up, at that time, even before the bubble broke. I thought oh, maybe, this a time I'm going to get rid of it. Because I was getting old, I can't take care of it myself. And kids is all out town and kids said anything you want to do, do it. So I said, well, okay, then, I think it was perfect time. So everything at once, I sold it. And this house was a model home. And this area is, just, the last one to sell, this house. So of course there are a lot of waiting list. But anyway, luckily, I got it.

NW: Was this last ten years then?

KS: This was, I have been here 7 years. This is perfect for myself, yeah. Even the office combined, four bedrooms, this one. So, you know, it's okay, I can manage it.

NW: And you have your children come visit you sometimes?

KS: Yeah, sometimes, sometimes.

NW: Do you talk to your children at all about your experiences? Do you . . . because I know some people, even if they are just *nyūshi* [*hibaku*], like you were, worried about how it might have health on their children. Do you talk at all about that?

KS: No, I don't talk about it. Yeah.

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<Begin Segment 13>

NW: But you, yourself, that's how we met, you came to this medical check up. When did you start to come?

KS: This was my first time.

NW: First time. Okay. And that was because who told you about that, remind me, I probably . . . forgot.

KS: In Sacramento, that's uh, whoever that was . . . Dote? Mr. Dote. I mean, he said, it's every other years, *kenshin*, [in] this country [it's] said physical, but I am going every year, physical. So I myself take care of that myself, you know. But maybe that, this *kenshin*, maybe that's different. I thought. That's why I went there.

NW: What did you think?

KS: Well it's not that particularly good, just like [makes a noise to stress the speed!]. Just like that. Yeah, of course, I am doing over here, the same thing, yeah. But a couple of years ago I went to Japan. I went there. And since I was here, let's, we gonna go see it. So I went there [to the exam for survivors]. They took it very thoroughly. Yeah.

NW: It was much more thorough.

KS: Of course they had machinery there. Over here they just . . . looks like rent the place. Rent the room . . . that's the type, I think, yeah.

NW: You told me because your own physician is a white, American physician, am I right to remember that way? You were hoping that those results would come in English.

KS: Yeah, the results to come in English. I asked that one doctor, you know, my doctor is English, American, and last time I was in Japan, they sent me all in Japanese, and my doctor said "Hey Keiko, I can't read Japanese." I wonder if you got doctors sent in English. I'd like to show it to my doctor. And this doctor, I forgot the name of it, he is *naika*? I think. *Naika*-doctor, but, he said, yeah, this year, we are going to give in English and Japanese, so I said that's very good. Very nice, I told them. That way I could show that to my doctor.

NW: So when you were back in Japan, you had a health check that's especially designed for A-bomb survivors. Okay. Was it in Hiroshima Hospital then? Did you do it only once so far? Or?

KS: At the Hiroshima, I did it twice. Because I applied, check[ed in] the first [year]. And after that, two years later, I visited Japan. At that time, my brother said since you are here why don't you go? Of course they're very close by, we lived in the city. Yeah, that's true, I don't have anything to do today, so let's go see it. So that's okay.

NW: Okay.

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<Begin Segment 14>

NW: Well, as I told you earlier, I teach American history to American students, and I wonder, let's say, let's suppose that you are the teacher for them and then you are invited to talk about your experience. What would you like to tell them given your own life experiences?

KS: Hmm. I was so busy when I was young so I never think about that. But, um, of course, each one's life style is different, too. But . . . I never think my past life I spent as sad or you know, I was, maybe, before, I told you, I was maybe the lucky one. Everything comes to [went?] smoothly, and I never went through tough times, only that's during the war. Of course as a child I go to the *syūdan sokai*, that was a kind of, I miss it, my childhood with my family, so I don't remember my family, you know. Then I always think nowadays, I was born under this star or, I mean, I am always away from my family. From *syūdan sokai*, and after that, you know, I came to this country, away from my family. I guess that's my life, that's the way I was born, probably. But I never felt sad, or, you know. I have to make it, I have to live. That's the way I think. Of course I am lucky, I have [my] own two children, yeah, that's why I feel I am lucky. Some time I feel of course lonely, I miss my family, too. I feel I want to rush back to see them, you know. Brothers and sisters luckily, I still have them. So . . .

NW: Do you keep in frequent touch with them?

KS: Yeah, I call them over telephone. Nowadays, you know, telephone is easy. That's why I don't have a computer. My son says you've got to have a computer. That way I could send you email, you could send me the email. [So I say,] Roger, I don't want that. Because I dial, in telephone, I could hear your voice. You know, that's better than the email. Well, nowadays, I could have picture in computer but, oh, no, no. I don't type, that's why. But of course, you know, one by one I could do that. But you understand my English is not perfect, just I learn it from hearing. Sometimes watching television "Oh what does that mean" and I rush to and open a dictionary, you know.

NW: Do you still do that?

KS: I still do that. I like that, I like to do. Sometimes I couldn't understand, and I call my friend, oh, yeah, that's what she's telling me. She is a *Nisei* girl, *Nisei*. Four years older than me. But she is like my sister to me. She is really good for me.

NW: So she lives nearby?

KS: Yeah.

NW: Oh, that's nice. Yeah, to have a friend like that.

KS: Yeah. I don't know. Um, luckily, I get to know her [because] we both worked together at a grocery store. I worked at the grocery store, taking care of business, my husband's business, book-keeping. Besides, I worked at the grocery store. I think I worked 16 years. Well, that time, too. Because my insurance, health insurance is very high. You know, that . . .

NW: That's a problem.

KS: Private only, own business, and expensive. Insurance. And, in fact, yesterday, at the church, one member told me, I pay for my husband and me, \$1,100 a month. That's what he said. Oh my Gosh. But being work in the grocery store, of course money was good, too. And I got to send two kids to college, too. So. But the most important was the health insurance. My husband opened our own business, we don't carry, we can't afford to carry four mechanics, that's why I think I had to get up and do it. And lucky I got a job, too, in a union shop. So, that's . . . today, this union, if I don't have it, I know I am going to be done. I mean, broke.

NW: So, thanks to the union, you have a decent health insurance. Are you retired now or?

KS: Yeah, I am retired. But still the same cover. Which is good. Yes. My husband said, I never worked to [at] the grocery store, *hakujin*, you know and everything, but. So I thought if it is too tough, I'd quit it. But the first time I saw the check, Oh, I cannot quit. [laugh]

NW: [laugh] That was good!

KS: You know how that goes. Since I worked there for 16 [years?]. Time goes by fast too, sometimes, all paycheck goes to sign and it goes that way.

NW: That happens too! But still, you can pay. That's important.

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<Begin Segment 15>

NW: I asked you many questions, I'm sure you're getting tired . . .

KS: Oh, no!

NW: . . . but is there anything that you feel like you didn't have enough time to tell me about? I'm sure, you know, no one can talk about his or her life stories in the matter of an hour, I understand it's impossible. But is there anything in particular you like to tell me or something you think was an important part of your life?

KS: *Uun, betsu ni*. Um, I don't think. I know, sometime, people, some of my friends say, hey Keiko, you are from Japan, and up to today's [?] you went through a lot of things, why don't you

write down, that way. Later on your kids might enjoy to read or your grandkids might gonna do it. Well, I think it is a good way to, I have been thinking about it, too. But I don't know where to start, or how to, you know. That's the kind of . . . I don't have the knowledge to. So, maybe someday, I think about it. Yeah, I told them, too.

NW: If you were to write about your life history, with what episode would you like to start your book, if it's at all possible, to think about it now?

KS: Well, probably, probably, of course, I went to *syūdan sokai*. That was my good, good experience to become, um, independent. You know, I had a lot of sisters like that, and [I was] the youngest. So I am always, I was depending on them for this and that. But when I went to there, my God, 8 years old, still baby, I was never away from my parents, but I had to do that or this, that. But *syūdan sokai*, only one hobo-san, that's your care person, and the class teacher, from Hiroshima, the group teacher. And they can't take care of 15-20 people. So, we learned this and that. That was a good experience. Independent, yeah. If I don't have that, probably. Of course, I was young, I don't know how to, I did it. Someone nighttime, someone lonesome, someone start crying and next crying, this one crying. You know, like that. But to me, I just don't want to cry. I am going to make it. I'm gonna make it through. That's the kind I went through. That's why I came to this country, all by myself, away from my sisters and brothers, although they were in LA, I married to, away from them. But I think I made it. That's the way I think, too. And even after my husband passed away, I cannot cry right now, I got to take care of all the stuff, too. You know, so, in a way, I was young at that time. 60 years old, I did it myself. Well, kids say don't worry about [leaving] anything to us, just that whatever you want to do, do it. So, are you sure that you guys don't want it, [they say] oh if you don't want it just give it to Salvation Army. Things like that. Easier for me, too. I can make decisions myself. So that's the kind of independent. I learned from that point. Yeah.

NW: That's a wonderful story.

KS: Of course I came to this country, and went to live with this Caucasian family, oh, they were very, very nice to me. That one I never forget, too. Yeah. So, that's why even if someone may be suffering or need something, I always give my hand to help. You know, yeah, that's good, too, I went through, yes. Otherwise, I don't think anything else.

NW: Do you think of yourself as Japanese American? By which I mean, a minority American? Ethnic American? There are different ways of referring to it. I mean, I guess what I'm trying to get at, is if you think about history of minority Americans in this country, you know, you always run into matters of prejudices or social movement that came out of this prejudice against minorities. Do you see yourself [as] part of that history or do you think that your experience was more or less an exception or what do you think of yourself?

KS: I always think I am a Japanese, too, you know. I don't, I am not going to say I am an American. Of course, it's always Japanese American. But I don't [go] against American. You know that. I am, in a way think of myself I am an easy person, probably. I am never against it, never prejudiced.

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<Begin Segment 16>

NW: What I'm wondering is other people's bias towards minorities, including people like us, I am a minority in this country, right, because I am not living in Japan. And I do experience certain kind of different attitudes that I pick up on because, you know, I'm a minority, I suppose. I just wondered if you have that feeling, yourself as well? Or probably not. I don't know. What do you think?

KS: No, I don't, I never think about that. To me, yeah.

NW: I wonder why? Because, I mean, I'm living in 21st century America and supposedly this is a country that's fair and just to everybody, right? But I think I do experience certain kind of prejudices and, or, sometimes it feels like I am just treated differently because of who I am. And to me It's just surprising to meet with somebody who also is from Japan or any minority background and then you experienced this School Girl system, for instance, where you were basically working for a white family, right? It wasn't the other way around. You weren't offering this opportunity to white kids. It was the other way around, right?

KS: Not only that Caucasian family, but I also worked at the grocery store. Caucasian store, too. So, I don't know. I just do not think that way. I guess I didn't have no, how am I going to say that in Japanese? Do you think I should [have been] against it?

NW: No, not, I am not saying against or for. I just thinking what you might have noticed. I think my question is coming out of the fact that many people notice it and if you don't notice it, there's nothing wrong with that. I just wondered what you think about it, if you ever noticed it.

KS: Hmm, no, I think I don't, I don't. Maybe that's because all surrounding Caucasian, that's a reason. I don't. I only the church, this is a Buddhist church, so all the Japanese.

NW: Oh, so you do have a connection with Japanese Americans.

KS: Yeah. I guess this Buddhist church, including Caucasian, too. It's not even 100 % Japanese.

NW: Where is the Buddhist church located? It's in Stockton?

KS: Uh-huh.

NW: Oh, wonderful

KS: Yeah, it's a big church. In fact, we are going to have a bazaar this weekend, this week [inaudible; she walks away from the recorder to get a picture of the church]. It's a very nice big, big, bazaar.

NW: Oh yeah, it's a nice church.

KS: They just finished it last Saturday. In fact, this year we have a new minister, she is a lady, first time. She is, she came from Hawai'i, very nice lady.

NW: Huh, so that's something to look forward to, to work with her. Well, thank you very much for your time, I really, really appreciate it.

KS: You're welcome.

NW: I learned a lot.

KS: I don't know this is helpful or not.

NW: Yes it is. It is very helpful. It is very wonderful to hear your experiences. Thank you very much. I really appreciate it.

KS: You are welcome.

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