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Title: Junji Sarashina Interview
Narrator: Junji Sarashina
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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NW: Now, at any, I mean, you've been living in the States for a long time. Also, you were originally, so to speak, from Hawai'i, You went back and forth at really crucial times in history, during the war and so forth. And you even served for the Korean War. At any time in your life, do you think that your image of Japan or America got drastically changed? Because some people, I ask you this because some people have told me that, "Well, you know, I hated America, even though, I was originally born in America because America was attacking Japan." Well, it doesn't have to be, you know, love or hate. I just wondered if you had . . .

JS: I didn't have any resentment against United States, you know. I hate the fact that the bomb was dropped and so many people got killed. But maybe because I served in, during the Korean War, and have seen quite a bit of actions, too, maybe because of that, maybe I, you know, maybe my mind is too soft, maybe I am not committed to anything 100%, maybe I was born as a flexible person, in fact, maybe it's too flexible, too soft, maybe. I know about the good part about Japan, bad part about Japan. And also the good part and bad part about the United States. I think it's a very important to be able to compare things. And, this is how you have to make a judgment, you know. You just can't say this is bad.

NW: Yeah, I think I can, I can see that. So, I mean, in connection with that, I know that early in the history of the group of A-bomb survivors here in the States, in the 1970s, um, survivors wanted to get the medical treatment and support in other ways paid by the American government, not the Japanese government. But then, it didn't go through the Congress, and so forth. And so, you know, they decided to go to the Japanese government. How do you feel about that? Those are very, two different approaches.

JS: Yeah. I know that they tried to get the government's help, and they went through the city, and they even took it to Washington, too. But maybe it was not well organized. They were, they could have been much more precise, and you just cannot say I want this, I want this, I want this, I want this. You had to have much more political support. Without it, no matter how much noise you make, you are not going to gain anything out of it. Because Japan is their enemy country. Back in 1972 they really hate, still hating Japanese. And just think about it, some of those people who opposed to assist the A-bomb, maybe some of their family member might have been, you know, might have been killed by the Japanese too. You see many cases like that. You see many cases like that. And people at that time, they still hate Japanese. Look at Korea. They still hate Japan. And how many years ago? They hate Japanese in a way. They communicate with

Japanese. And the same thing happened, you're asking, people hate Japan, and then you're asking them for a favor.

NW: But you are not Japanese, you are American citizen, right? So, in a way, you are not really asking the American government to help Japanese people; you are asking the government to help American citizens.

JS: Yeah, yeah. But I think, I think, I am more Japanese than American. But, but what I got out of being, you know, Japanese and American is, what I was able to obtain, from places like Northrop Corporation was more plus than what anybody else can give me, you know. Like, I bought a house. Where did I get the money? Northrup. I got a nice job, good job, and a respected position. Where'd you get it? It's all from United States. In Hawai'i, I was comfortable, got a nice job, working there, made money. So, but when they applied, the Japanese A-bomb survivors applied for the assistance from the American government, it was a bad timing. It was not a be . . . good time to . . .

NW: Why you say that?

JS: Because they don't like Japanese. 1972! Around that era, 1971, 1970 or 1968, if you go to North Carolina, the Japanese sat at the backside of the seat, bus.

NW: Right. Discrimination.

JS: Yeah. And you, it didn't happen to me.

NW: Oh, you didn't personally experience any . . .

JS: Well, I was in North Carolina one time. But you know, if you are a Japanese, you sat at front, and if you are a black, you sat at the back. Some people would say like that. But you go to some places, you're Japanese, that's where you seat. And you are asking for a help. In California, they understand. But in the Washington, you know, in North Carolina area, they don't understand you, you know. "Why should we help our enemy?" So that's, I think it's part of the history, huh? If you go there now, they might do it. And must have political backing to ask for, ask for, what do you call this, approval from the government, that's my own opinion, yeah. I wasn't involved with those things, it wasn't my time. I just went to the examination.

NW: Right, right.

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