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Title: Junji Sarashina Interview  
Narrator: Junji Sarashina  
Interviewer: Naoko Wake  
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**<Begin Segment 1>**

NW: So, once again, thanks for making time to talk with me.

JS: You are welcome, welcome.

NW: Usually I ask people to start with, probably, telling me something about what they remember about their parents. I like to know about what your father and mother did, and, probably, what childhood memory that you have of them.

JS: My father is a Nishihongan-ji, Buddhist temple minister. It's like—keep talking?

NW: Yeah, yeah, you don't have to wait for me, yeah.

JS: He was born in Hiroshima in the countryside, and he has a temple in countryside. He spoke a little bit English, so he was, he went to Hawai'i as a minister, Buddhist temple minister.

NW: Or was it, because he was able to speak in English, he was sent to . . .

JS: In a way, yes, he was able to speak and that's a plus for any minister to go to Hawai'i. [laugh].

NW: Sure, sure, that's for sure. Did he have any experience of going to America?

JS: No, not at all.

NW: Yeah, so, that was the first time.

JS: He was, he was a minister in the countryside, and he was also a high school teacher, too. So when he went to Hawai'i, that was, my guess is about, oh, 1923. He arrived in Honolulu, and visited, or worked as a resident minister in Oahu Island for a while, then about 1926 he was sent to Lahaina Maui, and he built the Lahaina Maui Hongan-ji temple. And, I was born in 1929, and as a little kid, when I was about 4 or 5 years old, I remember that, all that church members working on, to build the new temple.

NW: Ah, so that was, you were born in Hawai'i?

JS: Yeah. In those days, we had lots of immigrants from Japan, working on the plantation field, pineapple field, sugarcane field. And, when they were on the peak time, they had about 600 Japanese students learning Japanese.

NW: Oh, at the temple?

JS: At the temple. That was the only thing they had. And in the morning they go to English school and in the afternoon, they all came to the church, and then, I think that the church made them *musubi*, too. *Musubi* and *takuan*. So, it was a good place for the kids to hang around. My mother is from Hiroshima also. When they were in Lahaina Maui, what I remember about my mom was she was teaching so-called young ladies, the eligible age, the *hanayome gakkō*. For the young girl, before they get married. They learn and train many new skills, like cooking, sewing, baby, babysitting, baby care, and also, music. So actually my house was filled with young ladies just about everyday. I think my mom, my mother was the center of the activities for the church. Because of her teaching or involvement with the young girls. Of course, the regular ministry was all constantly going on, and it was far away in Lahaina Maui, but it was a very bustling community. Just about every weekend, they did show movie, old Japanese movie.

NW: Oh, Japanese movie, yeah.

JS: Some kids will run the projector, and run the *samurai* movie. It was a busy place for the, the so-called adults to enjoyed the old Japan. The church had a big bus, which was used for picnic, for the younger generation, or for older generation, or wherever they wanted to go, always somebody, the younger people drove the big bus. As a little kid, I remember going to picnic quite often, away from the home. So, when I was a little kid I really enjoyed that life, people were so kind, of course they know you, I was too little to know them, but at least they knew who I was. So, I had a very warm, comfortable feeling, hanging around with all the church members. Then he moved to Honolulu, Betsuin, that's the main church in Oahu, and we stayed in Honolulu for a while. And my parents decided that my older brothers must take over the church, so we have to return to Japan, to learn Japanese and take over the church. So all the kids and my mom went back to Hiroshima. My father stayed in Honolulu.

NW: How many siblings do you have, remind me?

JS: Altogether five.

NW: And you, are you . . .

JS: I am the youngest.

NW: You are the youngest.

JS: I had 2 brothers and 2 sisters.

NW: So, what year was it that you all went back?

JS: 1936 . . .

NW: 1936.

JS: . . . we went to Hiroshima. Since my father's church is in the countryside, they decided to rent, my mother decided to rent a house in Hiroshima. And right in front of my Nakajima shōgakkō, Nakajima grade school, and Nakajima is the place where they had the A-bomb peace park. Which is only about a mile away from where I used to.

NW: A mile. Right, right.

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**<Begin Segment 2>**

NW: Now, so you were pretty much growing up in Hawai'i, as a child, and so by the time, you were born in 1929, and you went back to Japan in 1936, so that means that you were 7 years old, right? So, were you already in school in Hawai'i by the time you went back to Japan?

JS: Oh, yes, yes. In fact, from Lahaina, I remember some of those school, Can Third [?], they called it, the grade school. It's right by the beach, and where they had famous Banyan tree, large, large trees, in the center of, Can Third Grade School, right next to it, and I remember having a lunch, goofing off around the beach from the school. [laugh]

NW: [laugh]. That's hard to resist, when there's such a nice beach around you.

JS: Well, you know, everybody is a swimmer in Hawai'i. Especially in Lahaina, you have nothing else to do but swim. Then we went to Hiroshima.

NW: Now I have a few more questions about the school. So, what were your classmates like? Were they mostly Japanese or Japanese American friends, or . . . ?

JS: No, no, it's all mixed, whoever, a lot of Caucasian, of course a lot of Japanese too. At one time, one-third of the population of Hawai'i was Japanese, Japanese, Japanese, you know, connected with the Japanese, but. So, I remember a lot of Japanese friends in the grade school, and also remember some of these Caucasian friends.

NW: Other groups of ethnicity? Um, ethnic students?

JS: There were a lot of Portuguese in there, as I remember. The reason I remember the Portuguese is whenever they baked a bread, they used a stone oven, which is outside. Used log wood to burn it, and you can smell that aroma one mile away. And that's when the, my Portuguese friends used to cook, bake those bread, so. I don't remember the face, but I remember the smell. [laugh]

NW: [laugh] I can understand it, yeah. It must have been pretty impressive.

JS: Those days, of course, it's a long time ago, it was a safe place for little kids to wonder around the town, or wherever, because it seemed like everybody know each other.

NW: Would you say mostly, your friends were Japanese American friends, or did you become friends with Caucasians or?

JS: I think it's Japanese, Japanese American.

NW: Yeah. What kind of food did you have, did you grow up eating?

JS: I think, I think it was a mixed, American food and, like hotdog was a popular thing. Also, remember the *nori musubi*, *takuwan*, they even made . . . pickled a lot of mango.

NW: Mango!

JS: Everybody makes it, the Japanese people when they came to the church. They would all bring whatever they can. So, well, what did I eat? I don't remember [laugh]. But I remember milk being delivered every day, and bread being delivered every day. The reason that I remember the way the bread was delivered was we, my dad had, or the church had about 5 dogs, used to be strict, and the dog used to steal the bread, and I was after the dog all the time. That's why I remember the bread!

NW: [laugh] Yeah, yeah.

JS: And I remember some of these senior helpers, early in the morning they come in, used to drink coffee. And being a little kid, I just had to try the coffee. And they used to dilute the whole thing with milk, and they said "Don't tell mommie, Don't tell mommie!" So, you know, as far as food was concerned, it was mixed.

NW: Mixed. What was your favorite food? What did you like to eat?

JS: I think it was omelet, I think.

NW: Omelet.

JS: She used make a lot of omelet. I didn't eat fish those days; I didn't eat fish, but fish was plentiful out there.

NW: Of course, you're surrounded by the sea.

JS: Yeah, nothing but, you know, ocean. Oh, I remember a lot of people used to bring crabs to the church. Well, you know, not to me, but to mom. They catch the crab, or they catch the fish, and they would always bring there, those fish. So-called Buddhist Women's Association, the mothers, were constantly working at the social hall and preparing food for members and occasions, I think in a way it was a social gathering for so-called adult ladies. And they had more part than all the people, because they were the one who bring kids, they are the one, the ladies are the one drag their husbands to the church. [laugh]. So.

NW: Right, right.

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**<Begin Segment 3>**

NW: So your mother was already married before she came to the States?

JS: Oh yes.

NW: Okay, okay. So, because they are both from Hiroshima area, there was a . . . yeah, okay. When you were growing up, did you think of yourself growing up outside of Japan? Or did you think that, it's probably a difficult question to answer, I guess my question is "Are you aware that you have a home country back, far away?"

JS: No, I didn't, not at all. Even though my parents spoke Japanese. Of course, all kids learn English or Pidgin English. I wasn't aware about Japan whatsoever.

NW: What image of Japan did you have, if you can remember?

JS: Hm, It's hard to say, it's hard to say. Because, maybe I wasn't aware of it. I wasn't aware of what kind of country it was, except when I see some photographs and ask what is this? And being a little kid, they would explain to you, but well, I don't, I don't remember that. I know, like my mother was telling me, it's a beautiful country and beautiful ocean. She lives in a place called Tadanoumi, in Hiroshima, right by the ocean, and a lot of cherry blossoms, and Tadanoumi is a fisherman's village, and a lot of *tai* and things like that. Fish was caught in that area.

NW: Right, right. Snappers, yeah.

JS: Her, I think her parents, or brother, was a *chōchō-san* [mayor], and he had a, he or the family had a bank, and the family had a theater and some properties around there. So she was quite comfortable. That's the reason maybe she learned how to play piano and sewing, you know. She had a proper . . . it became very useful, when she was in Lahaina, because of all her skills, including the flower arrangement . . .

NW: Was it a Western style flower arrangement? Or Japanese style?

JS: No. *Ikenobō*. So, those type of training, she spread those teaching to the young girls.

NW: Ladies, yeah.

JS: So a lot of things learned, with, from my mom.

NW: So she was a suitable, skilled teacher for that purpose.

JS: Yeah, for that period of time, for younger people, it was, yeah.

NW: So, do you think she enjoyed teaching it?

JS: I think, as I told you earlier, I think she was the center of activities, because, well, you know, when you take care of the daughters, mothers are gonna join, fathers towed to help. [laugh]. She had a fulfilled life, I think, because of that. People were always hanging around her.

NW: Yeah, very active, it sounds like. So, when you went back to Japan, what did you think? Did you have any, like a first impression of that?

JS: I liked the country, enjoyed it, first time I got in there. And you know, of course they are all same face!

NW: [laugh]

JS: That's the first impression that I had. Oh, these guys, they all look alike, you know.

NW: That's funny.

JS: And I started to live there, and started to serve a lot of fish. I couldn't, I couldn't take the fish, even though I like sushi now. [laugh].

NW: You do? So, you must have learned over years.

JS: I couldn't eat fish. So I had to have meat. In the form of hamburger, or steak, or pork, or that type of thing. And I had to have milk.

NW: So you kept on have it delivered to your house? Yeah.

JS: Yes, that's another reason. And, when I first went to school, grade school, second grade or so, I think, I don't remember, second grade or so, of course, I speak, my English is stronger than my Japanese. So some of the kids, said there is damn nut coming around, you know [laugh], to school. And it really upset me. I'd never been called dumb nut.

NW: Yeah, because of the language barrier.

JS: That's right, that's right. So I went back to my mom, and said, gosh, they called me *baka*, damn nut!

NW: [laugh]. Yeah.

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**<Begin Segment 4>**

JS: So my mother said, alright, if you want to get smart, you got to learn Japanese grammar. So I started to study, she taught me Japanese grammar from the second grade on. And because of that type of education, like you have to memorize certain things, after 80 . . . 78 years, I still remember some of the grammar that I learned from my mother. *Ga-no-o-ni-he-to-kara-yori-de-ba-to-kemo-kirido-ga-shi-te-nagara-tari*.

NW: Oh! Very good! [laugh, applaud].

JS: But anyway, that's how she taught me. I remember stuff like that, hm, that's the only way to learn. But certainly grammar is very hard, you know. You're a teacher, so you know. [laugh].

NW: I don't teach language. I think it would be really hard to teach language.

JS: But it's hard to learn for young kids. But that's how she taught me. Singing along, made a song like that. Then, after the third grade, I used to call them "*baka*." [laugh].

NW: [laugh]. Now you are much superior, I guess.

JS: Even though I didn't understand Japanese, at least some of this when it comes to grammar. Because, in Japan, kids don't have to learn grammar. They get it automatically; they speak the language. But kid from Hawai'i, some of those thing, when it comes to a question, when teacher

asked what is this, and I could answer before any so-called native Japanese students, so I call them “*baka!*” Yeah, that’s, I remember that.

NW: So do you think teachers, or I guess the school kids, your friends, first treated you differently because of where you’re from?

JS: The first year.

NW: What about teachers? Do you think they were . . .

JS: They were very kind to me, they were tremendously nice and kind. Maybe because we, my mother rented a house right in front of the school, so she was involved in the grade school a lot, for being so close. And she had get to know the teachers, because it was right there. And of course my brothers and sisters, they are all in the, you know, in the same school.

NW: When you say involved, exactly what do you mean?

JS: Well, she was, when they had to do some clean up, she was out there helping. And when teachers need some help, preliminary form of PTA.

NW: Oh, I see.

JS: She volunteered to do those things.

NW: She sounds, surely she sounds like a very active woman.

JS: So the teachers know me, and naturally all the teachers were very kind.

NW: Yeah, that’s nice.

JS: And then of course, as I started to go to school, I had older brothers, who were much stronger than I am, so kids didn’t want to tease me a lot . . . I’m going to tell my brother! [laugh]

NW: That would be the last, the last word you’d have!

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**<Begin Segment 5>**

JS: And then the grade school started, and then I became pretty active in sports. From 5th grade on, I think it was volleyball, and then, on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I think we took the grade school champion. Anyway, continued in . . .

NW: In competition, you mean.

JS: In Hiroshima-ken.

NW: Prefectural, yeah, right.

JS: And it comes to swimming, I think from the first grade on, fourth grade on, I think I was either trying for the champion or what not, because . . .

NW: [laugh].

JS: . . . when you were born in Lahaina, that's all you can do, before you walk you do swimming . . . [laugh].

NW: [laugh] Well, probably not that.

JS: But anyway, I enjoyed swimming, and then became a champion, you know, in Hiroshima-ken. How come you are good swimmer? That's the reason. So, my grade school I enjoyed, you know, later on, second grade I had a hard time, but after that, you know. And the funny thing about it is that, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I represent the school, at the send out, *sotsugyō-shiki*, the graduation time, I was the person who gave the speech to the . . .

NW: Valedictorian?

JS: Yeah, to the kids going up, kids graduating. When I was 6<sup>th</sup> grade, no, no it was the 5<sup>th</sup> grade sending up,

NW: Oh, yeah, yeah. I got it.

JS: 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I was saying, again, they elected me to speak to the, say goodbye to the . . .

NW: Quite an honor.

JS: So, my problem is things that I learn, the grammar I learn, really helped me, so. Of course, my, as I said, I think I owe it to my mom and my brothers and sisters, and they helped, they're older than them, whenever question I had, if my sister didn't know, my brother was there, well, mom, my mom might not be able to help too much on the grade school, but at least I had my brothers around. So they were a help.

NW: Do you think that your mother might have been worried? How well you, or her children, may be able to adjust to a Japanese school? Because you were saying that . . .

JS: No, I don't think that they were worried. They were, they were always concerned about, you know, the kids, but not worried.

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**<Begin Segment 6>**

JS: My oldest brother, came back from Hawai'i, and then he went into Sōtoku University in Hiroshima, religious, Buddhist school. I am sure that he had a hard time. Because of the language, you know. But when he graduated, he was the first student to enter Hiroshima Kōto-gakkō. And then, the war started. He was *kaigun no shikan de*, he was sent to, he was in, sent to Mie-ken *no*, Mie kōkū-tai, Air Base. He was teaching so-called the young soldiers who make diving. How do you call that?

NW: Oh, *ningen gyorai*?

JS: This was airplane, like *kamikaze*.

NW: Oh, like *tokkō* . . . you mean, to, like a suicidal.

JS: Yeah, suicidal. He was teaching those kids, and even though my brother was still a young, young officer.

NW: He was a teacher of these . . .

JS: He was a teacher for the, for instance, if the kid's gonna fly out tomorrow, then he'd talk to him.

NW: Is that *tokkō-tai*, that you're thinking of?

JS: Oh yeah, *tokkō-tai*, *tokkō-tai*. Yes, yes, yes. And then, after the war, I am jumping the story, *gomen nasai*.

NW: No no, that's okay.

JS: We were talking about education, so, you know. After the war, he worked for the American troop for a while, but he went to Tō-dai. So my mom's always after education, education. Study. So he went to Tō-dai, so he did okay. So did my whole family, but somehow, you know, related to. My dad also, but he was a high school teacher too, he was teaching at Japanese school in Hawai'i too.

NW: Oh, at the temple, you mean?

JS: Yeah, at the temple, and a high school. So when it comes to education, did my parents worry about us? Yes, I think mom did.

NW: I just, well, it's a pure guess, but, you know, because you told me that your mother was really active doing the volunteer work at school. I just wondered if that might be partly because she's trying to make sure that everything will be all right with her children.

JS: That could be. Maybe she was worried about us, that she didn't tell us. But by helping the school, or getting to know the teachers, and I am sure it's a plus.

NW: It is.

JS: It sure is a plus, because they know each other that way. And when the teachers see me, they go ah! at least we had some type of connection. Maybe you are right, maybe she was worried about us, maybe that's the reason she did a lot of this.

NW: Parents always worry about their children, so.

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**<Begin Segment 7>**

NW: So, did you have any other schoolmates in your school who are also born in the States? Like Kibei Nisei like yourself?

JS: Yes, we had two of them. One was an A-bomb victim. He died ten years ago.

NW: Oh. But was he, was he here when died?

JS: Yes, yes. He belonged to our organization, ASA [American Society of Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-bomb Survivors]. He was a member of the ASA. And his wife is a tea ceremony teacher. And my wife and this, my friend's wife, they see each other once in a while. Another person was living here, but maybe about 8 years ago he returned to Japan, and he is living in some place in Tokyo now. So I have no, no communication with him.

NW: Were you good friends with them when you were at school?

JS: Casual friend. This is how we met, so, you know, about twice a year or so we get together and eat. That's about it.

NW: Oh, I see. But at school, when you were all students, you weren't . . .

JS: No, no, no. And another person, this is very interesting, do you have time? Can I say stuff like this?

NW: Yeah, well, of course.

JS: His name Ted Kawasaki, used to be jūdō instructor, 5<sup>th</sup> degree, in Sawtell near Santa Monica. We went to same school, in Hiroshima, Hiroshima Icchū is the school. And he was 2 grades above me, together with my brother. And when the war started, oh, *gomen nasai*, I said the war, but the, jumping the gun, Korean War started, so it's been quite a few years after I finished school, but, I used to know, I used to see Mr. Kawasaki, the jūdō instructor, at the jūdō place in San Jose. And when I met him, he said, Junji, you know my wife? He said, oh, she used to be my classmate. At grade school! Yeah. Oh, know, you know! It was a surprise, and we became very close friends. And then my wife was, when we met this Mr. Kawasaki's wife, and they went to the same school back in Japan!

NW: Oh, so everybody had a connection, previously.

JS: Okay, now, when the war started, I was drafted, and volunteered and I was sent to Korea. First, I was going to go to Japan, but when the war started, they sent all us to Korea. I was assigned to the military intelligence service, they call it MIS. They were sent to Korea during the war time. Still go pow pow pow, yeah? Then, when I got to the Seoul station on the train, there was a Sergeant, waiting for me, at the gate. Mr. Kawasaki, the friend of mine, the jūdō instructor.

NW: Oh!

JS: He was waiting for me, "Come here Junji, you come with me."

NW: [laugh].

JS: So I was assigned to his organization. And right in Seoul, that's where I was assigned. Otherwise, they could have sent me to the front line, a platoon, a regiment, not regiment, mostly because it's small sized throughout Korea. But I was right in Seoul with him. He put me in there. So that's one of my classmates. 2 grades above me, my brother's friend.

NW: He might have saved your life, then.

JS: You said it; you said it. And when I was in high school, he was doing *jūdō* too, and he used to throw me. [laugh].

NW: [laugh]. Did you throw him as well?

JS: No, no no. [laugh]. Yeah, so we used to know each other that way too, doing *jūdō*, you know. Upper grade, he was almost like an instructor. You know, strange thing, when you go to Korea, you're so scared, being a young GI, and don't know anything. So. But he passed away about 10 years ago.

NW: Hmm. Too bad.

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**<Begin Segment 8>**

NW: Now, going back in time, in time a little bit, so, you were telling me that you still had to have milk delivered to you even after you went back to Japan. Now, are there anything like that other than that, uh, like, habit that you had as an American kid, but you continued to have it even after back in Japan?

JS: Yeah, we always had, milk, egg, and bacon.

NW: Oh my god, how did you get a hold of bacon?

JS: There was a store in Hiroshima called American Store. So we went over there, my mom went over there, you know. And bought cheese and ham and bacon, the bacon might not be as good as today's bacon, but somehow they made similar bacon. Hamburger was also there too, that kind of thing. And let me tell you a very interesting story. We, when I was in grade school, at first people thought that I was a damn nut, but as they get used to me, they all started come to my house. It's next to the school, right in front of the school, anyway. One thing was this; because my sister, because I had two sisters, we had milk, and they made ice cream, sherbet. We had a refrigerator those days.

NW: Ohh! No wonder everybody wants to come! [laugh].

JS: Yeah! [laugh]. So, they made cupcake, and my older sister, cupcake, and ice cream, all this baking stuff. And once they found out that hey, if you go to Junji-san's place, you can have ice cream. Man, oh man, I didn't know I was that popular. They all wanted to eat the ice cream, those days, my sisters baked a lot.

NW: Like cookies and . . .

JS: Yeah, cookies, yeah. So I remember, you know, man, I had a lot of friends. [laugh]

NW: Yeah, I wonder why? [laugh]

JS: It's because of my sisters, you know.

NW: Were you able to eat omelet, your favorite food, then?

JS: Oh, yeah, fortunately, we were able to, maybe quite comfortable, so. So it was . . . Yeah, I guess, I used to go out to eat *udon*. Yeah. And the whole family, all the kids, and sounds kind of strange, but they all get into a taxi, we used to, to go eat *udon*. Because my mom had a favorite place that we had to go there. For me, I couldn't care less, but being a kid, what are you going to do, you just follow your parent. But my brothers and sisters, they enjoyed *udon*, *yakiniku*, huh? That's some of the pleasant memories.

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**<Begin Segment 9>**

NW: Before the war, I assume. So when the war started out with America in 1941, did this kind of aspect of your life change?

JS: Oh yeah, oh yeah. Like when I was in grade school, I remember, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, a person with a military uniform was there. I was playing in a school yard, and he just happened to be next to me. And since I didn't know how to address them, "Mr.," I called him, I called him "Oi!" So he was a Sergeant in the army. Instead of saying Mr., I said, Oi, hey, you know. He got really mad at me; he wanted to kill me. So I ran home. And then my momma came up to apologize . . . I remember that. And then I remember, every morning, we have, we had the, where the Emperor's picture was stored, you had to bow. And the *kenpei*, the military police, had a lot of power. Yeah. I was kind of afraid of them. But my, right next to my house, it was a medical captain, Army captain was there, we know each other, so he helped us a lot. I was thinking, gee, this guy rides a horse every day. Every morning a person would bring a horse, he jump on it, and go. I used to watch him all the time. And when the war started, the food is the thing. They didn't have enough. So, a lot of people starve, started to starve. They didn't die, but they at least started to starve. But fortunately, in my family's case, my mom had to go to the countryside, the church. She commuted a lot, because she had to take care of his church in the countryside, too. She had to take care of us in the city. So whatever food she can get, she would bring back to the city of Hiroshima. And I remember all the young soldiers, drafted, they all sent them out, you know, with the flag, and they all left. And a lot of wounded soldiers would come back, you see them quite often. And then, all the people living in Japan, ladies, and girls, and kids, they gave us a bamboo stick, and you got to train. I couldn't believe it, but you got to train. And those days, my farther used to come back to see us from Hawai'i.

NW: Okay, oh, sorry, I forgot, your father was still in Hawai'i.

JS: Honolulu. Yeah. He was living there all by himself, next to the church. And he used to come back quite often. And he had a chance to visit to Manchuria, China, India, all these areas.

NW: Before the war, you mean.

JS: Yeah, yeah yeah. Before the war. During the war, you can't do that. Anyway, he was out there. And he used to tell me, he knew the situation, you know, the relation between the United States and Japan, because Japan was 100% militaristic. You know about those things. So, even the cabinet was being controlled by military people. And a few times, my father told me, ahh, *dame*, *dame*, you know, you can't fight against the United States.

NW: Right, right. He thought that Japan is gonna lose.

JS: This is, in Japan [United States?] there is thing called bulldozer, and everybody has a car. In Japan, they carry it *mocco*, on the shoulder, carry the dirt and things like that. Um, this is no comparison. *Yamato damashi* is great, but you can't win against bulldozer.

NW: There is some truth to that word.

JS: You said it. Yeah.

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**<Begin Segment 10>**

NW: How did you feel about the beginning of the war? So, you were a teenager . . .

JS: Well, I was brainwashed, yeah. Totally, thinking, die for the country. You got to win this war, do everything you can. That's the way it was in Japan. If you said anything else . . .

NW: You'd be punished.

JS: You are right. There is a lot of *kenmei*, too, you know. So you don't dare say anything bad about Japan, or the Emperor, or the war. The war didn't start yet.

NW: Right. How about you being an American citizen because you were born in Hawai'i, you had a citizenship naturally, right?

JS: Yeah, yeah.

NW: Do you think people treated you differently now that Japan is fighting against the U.S.?

JS: No, no. To me, it was a strange thing. I never was mistreated because I was American citizen. Dual citizen was those days the common thing. Japanese, Japan and . . . American. But I was there. But in high school time, in high school, junior years, so, you know, during the wartime, you know, the war started already. A lot of my folks, you know, you are gung-ho, you are going to die for the country. A lot of people are drafted to go to Kaihei, the officer's candidate school in Etajima, or Rikugun Shikan Gakkō, and they're all getting drafted. And they never asked me. Because why should they ask the American guy with American citizenship to go in there. That's the only thing, you know. Otherwise I was not discriminated. So you know, in a way, I was thinking, why can't I go to Kaihei-tai, because all my friends are going, I know they're going too, you know, nobody told me, but at least they knew about it.

NW: So, because you were brainwashed, as you said using your own words at that time, you were eager to go.

JS: I don't know if I was eager. [laugh]. You see, by that time, I had common sense, that when you see all the people go to the war, nobody was coming back.

NW: So there was that as well.

JS: At least I was aware of that. And a lot of these people, *byakui*, you wear, the kimono-like white thing, those are the soldiers, throughout Hiroshima. By common sense, you look at it, and you . . .

NW: That's what happens though.

JS: Even though if you read the newspapers these days you hear about winning, winning, winning. But, you know that's all propaganda.

NW: Yeah, yeah, right. The reality was a little different. Very different, actually.

JS: Yeah, yeah. And in Atsuto, Atsu Island, they all died, the soldiers died, *gyokusai*. The whole island, everyone died. Why? Because America won. And Saipan. You hear about it. And all the boat, *Yamato*, something like that, just common sense. You know what's happening, you know. They won't come out and say it. You are not supposed to say it.

NW: But you see it.

JS: Yeah, You know, but common sense, you know.

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**<Begin Segment 11>**

NW: Now, you were saying then that your father was in Hawai'i, was he then, was that where he was after the war started? Was he in Hawai'i during the war?

JS: Yeah, yeah.

NW: I know that there are, it's not a mass relocation of Japanese Americans, like what happened on the West Coast during the war, I know that there are a few people, especially leadership type of Japanese people who were placed in relocation camps. What happened to your father during the war?

JS: [chuckle]. When that bomb was dropped, Pearl Harbor, it was Sunday. So they had a Japanese Buddhist Church Sunday School, or service going on. So, this is all, we've got to forget the service, we've got to stop it. The FBI was there in the church. And they says, "You Revered Sarashina, you come with me." They were going to take him away. Reason, he was the minister, teacher in high school, who went to China, he was in Manchuria, he was in Thailand, India, and why did he go back and forth between . . .

NW: Japan and America.

JS: Yeah.

NW: Looks suspicious for FBI.

JS: That's right. So he was arrested. You know, the list was already reading books [?], already made. He was going to be picked up.

NW: They acted very quickly then.

JS: Yeah. Because the list was already made. United States knew exactly what was happening, and what was going to happen. They were going to be bombed by . . .

NW: What irony we say it's a surprise attack, right? If they knew it in advance?

JS: Well, we are not going to say anything you want. I belong to both sides. I am a United States citizen and went to Korean War, too. If you are going to say that you are a winner, oh, you are fine. If you are a winner, then you can say "We're the winner!" You can say anything you want. This flag is red, right, whatever you want to say. You can say that because you are the winner. But in any, in my father's case, he said, alright, you can take me, but let me take the young kids home. So, he took these kids home, and they drove, and they followed him all the way around. [laugh]. They thought that my father was going to run away to Japan or something. So, took all the kids home, and went back to this place where he was living, next to the church, and okay, pick up whatever they want, handful of things. And then, from that time on, he was in the camps in the, in the Sand Island, you know, all that area, and he was sent to the mainland, over here. And he traveled to all the relocation camps. Almost, like every six months.

NW: He was moved.

JS: Uh-huh. Reason is this. Person like my father is an organizer. They don't want anybody to organize, event or activity . . .

NW: Or revolt, as they were afraid of.

JS: Uh-huh. So before they got to know everybody in a camp, simplest thing is move him around. So they don't have that many acquaintance. At the National Museum over here, they have names of all the persons in the camp. My father's name is not there.

NW: Well, why not?

JS: They could not catch up with the record.

NW: Ah. There was no record for him because he just moved too frequently around.

JS: There was only one record in Hawai'i, that's when they had that Shinji Sarashina, as a reverend moved to the United States.

NW: Did he go to Tule Lake Camp, as well?

JS: Yes he did.

NW: That's where most of the people who were considered to be risk factors were sent to.

JS: That's right, that's right. He was sent there, too.

NW: But he also moved away from there.

JS: Oh yeah. Like, six months.

NW: But you probably did not know anything about it while it's happening because you're in Japan, right?

JS: More than that. He used to write a letter through Red Cross, and maybe about eight months later we get the letter, since, well, I beg you pardon, I don't know how long, but anyway, we used to get a letter. And, but the tail end of the war, Hiroshima was bombed, that's all they knew. So he didn't, he said, what happened to my wife? What happened to Junji? What happened to Tetsuko? You know, he was worried about us. He didn't know, we had no way of communicating with him, you know. So.

NW: Right, right. And you did not know what's happening to your father, either.

JS: No, no, no. Just ... so,

NW: There's no way to communicate. Yeah.

JS: So, immediately, he said, okay, I am going to come back to Japan. From, from ... so he picked up his gear, whatever he had and went back to Japan.

NW: What year was it? Was it possible?

JS: 1945, I think it was about, wasn't '45. Either '46 or '47. '46, yeah. If it was 45, forget it, because A-bomb was there, so, I remember that year distinctively, so.

NW: I'm not really sure, when was the first ship that America sent out to Japan after the war? The other way ... yeah.

JS: I don't know. '47 maybe.

NW: '47, okay.

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**<Begin Segment 12>**

NW: So, going back a little bit in time, tell me about August 6. So you had your family members, all of them in in the city of Hiroshima, except for your father?

JS: No, no, no. Things were getting pretty bad at the tail end of the war. So my mom, maybe about 1943, she moved back to the countryside church. And then, my oldest sister, went to, with mom, and then, about 1943, my other sister right above me, she moved to the country side, too. And my ... the sister right above me, Tetsuko, is her name, Jane is her name. Jane worked at the, um, *hihuku-shō*, clothing making for the military in the countryside, close to my mom's church. Yeah. So she started to work there. My oldest sister began to work there, too, *hihuku-shō*, in uh, very close to my church.

NW: Right, in the countryside. And what's your older sister's name?

JS: Mariko.

NW: Did she also have American name like Jane?

JS: No. Mari, is, how everybody called her Mari, but we called her Mariko.

NW: How about Junji-san, yourself?

JS: No, I don't have one. I was too poor to give me an English name. [laugh]

NW: [laugh] I don't know!

JS: No, I didn't, I didn't have. And . . . skipping the story so much. I told you about my . . . So we were safe, you know, they were safe. I was then in Hiroshima, and I stayed in the dormitory, high school dormitory for Hiroshima Icchū, and that morning, this is . . . went here to . . . high school students had to work in the morning, and I worked at an ammunition factory in Hiroshima.

NW: I see. It's a student mobilization.

JS: Yeah, that's what happened. But one thing I forgot to tell you is, a little bit earlier, we didn't have communication with my parent, my father, because he was, my other brother was in the, I told you earlier, his name is Bob Kanji Sarashina, that's the one that Mie-kokutai, Navy officer. He was in Mie, so he was okay, he survived. But my other brother who was 4 years older than I am, Tommy Takuji is his name, Tommy Takuji. When he was in the high school, the Army drafted him. He was a little bit older than the rest of the kids because of language, yeah? But he was drafted and this trained him about one month in Japan, they sent him to China. From China, the whole, well, the group, battalion, I don't know, regiment, they moved into Manchuria. When they got to Manchuria, the war ended. And the Russians came in. So the whole battalion became a prison of war.

NW: Oh . . . so your brother was also. Yeah.

JS: And they send them to Siberia. He was telling me that they put him on a train, and they send him to . . . what you call, to Russia, they don't know. Then, he remember seeing the lake, Baltic Lake? Day after day, day after day, he would see the Ocean, so he thought that he was seeing the Japan Sea.

NW: Ohh .... Oh my god.

JS: Then he went to the camp, and he stayed, he was in the camp for 2 years. As a prison of war, laborer. Cheap labor. He suffered, he had a little bit of beans, and a little bit to eat. A lot of people died. Things were so bad that people used to, according to him, they washed dishes and pots and pans. So people waiting until foodstuff to come in, and they used to pick those things and eat. They were starving. They thought that they was pretty bad, but native Siberians, or Siberians who were sent over there, they had hardly anything to eat either, also.

NW: Were they prisoners? As I understand it?

JS: Could be. They go to reasons, you know. They might be sent there, they were just as bad as those Japanese prisoners. Handful of beans, sometimes they ate just a handful of dried *daizu* beans. At that time my father did not know after the A-bomb, what happened to the family, what happened to these two brothers, and his guess, my father's guess was that because they were drafted, they were in service. So one was in Siberia, but my father did not know anything about

it, so “I’ve got to go back to Japan.” So, those are some of the missing connection we had. And some of the stories of the family, in August, you know.

NW: Well, I guess, one of the most difficult things is that you don’t really know whether or not your family members are safe, and where they are and if they’re still alive even.

JS: Because my father probably felt that he was responsible for him, because he was the one who sent all the kids to Japan. That was his decision. We didn’t go to Japan, you know, we would rather in Hawai‘i, with all friends, we were just kids. Can’t make any decision. The main thing was to go to send my oldest brother to Japan to learn English, to take over the church.

NW: Right, right.

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**<Begin Segment 13>**

NW: So you were the only member in your family who was in Hiroshima?

JS: Yeah, yeah.

NW: And you said earlier that you were only one mile away from hypocenter?

JS: Yes, I was one mile or 2.5 km away from the hypocenter, as a factory worker, steel factory worker. And, so you want to know about the explosion things like that?

NW: Yeah, tell me anything that you remember, yeah.

JS: Oh, okay. So we were working in the factory early in morning. What we did was that we worked in the factory in the morning, they fed lunch, and afternoon we had to study, in the factory, a big hall. But during the war, you know, surviving is the only thing, hardly any food to eat. Specially in the dormitory. Rations so scarce and at the factory, I was making anti-aircraft bomb, it’s about this big, about 2 feet long, and about 8 inches in diameter. 16 year old young kids were making something like that. Not a skilled machine maker, but you learn, and 16 years old kid was making. I was making, they called a reversed gear, you know the thread, you know, cut the head, make a thread like this, and shape the bomb. [laugh]. I don’t know if it was good or bad, but young kids were working. That morning, I got there, and then, I walked out of the building, fairly tall factory building, the bomb exploded. And this building did not collapse, but you know, it came down this way, and all the glasses, everything like that were flying around.

NW: Were you inside the building at that time?

JS: No, I was outside. I came out here and was next to a tall building, the reason this building did not collapse is there’s steel structure inside the building, for pulley, heavy equipment to hang or pull it up, because of the internal structure, the building did not go [f-shew], it was . . . but glasses flied. When that bomb exploded, of course you do not know, such a tremendous force, you know, you floated or you hit down on the ground. Somehow, you just, boom! on the ground. I didn’t hear a thing. [laugh]. I did not hear noise, I didn’t even hear the bomb. And I know that there was such a tremendous light, flash, and I can feel all kinds of things on my head, my arms,

and everything. And the first thing I said, is it the direct bomb, where did the bomb explode? You can't see dust and everything is just like having your eyes closed. And so many things on my head and everything, so I first thought, did I get hurt, did I die? Amazing, I didn't even have a scratch.

NW: Huh.

JS: I couldn't even open my eyes, I couldn't hear a thing, I couldn't see a thing. But I know that I was covered by all kinds of junks. Somehow I got up, then walked through this next building, where there was a first-aid station. I was the first one to get there. The whole place is built with almost like glass and windows, windows. I walked in there and a nurse was standing there, and she was covered with blood. And she opened the mouth, and I saw a piece of glass, about an inch square, stuck in there in her tongue. So uhh, she was yelling at me, and I went over there, pull the piece of glass from her, and she collapsed and she started to rest over there. I was scared, too, you know, I didn't know what I was doing, and she was scared, too. Even though, she is a nurse. And I thought, maybe I could [get] the first-aid equipment. And it's locked. So I found a block of wood, broke the case, and pulled like iodine and bandage, you know, not much you can do. Even with the first-aid kit in the first-aid station. So I gave that to the nurse, and picked up a handful of things, and went back to where my work station was. And I didn't know that it was A-bomb, nobody knew it was atomic bomb. But that's all I happened to know, because of that confined area. And we went to some of the people said I got to go home, I got to go home to my mom and dad, so the teacher said, okay, you guys can go home. In my case, a dormitory student, so we were going to go together, leave the factory, cross the river, and cross the town, and go to a dormitory, which was about 5-6 miles away. So we left the factory, and walked along the river, so I saw a lot of people in the river, yeah. And then tried cross the bridge, but I could not cross the bridge. We could not cross the bridge.

NW: Hm, why?

JS: Because Hiroshima was burning. Everybody there, burned from the fire or burned from the A-bomb. They all wanted to cross the bridge and get out of the center of the town. So there was no way for us to go fight the traffic. And not only that, some of the people who tried to cross the bridge, they thought that the safest place was the middle of the bridge.

NW: Oh, so they just stopped the traffic.

JS: There was no way we could move. Not only that, some people might have died right on the spot, too. That's when I saw about 500, 600 people floating either alive or dead. You can't tell. But anyway, it just wasn't going on the stream because it was low tide. So seven of us decided hey, we can't go into the town, let's stay at the factory. So we went back to the factory. At least you can sleep. They had blankets etc., they didn't burn, didn't burn. So we had blankets, and they cooked up some *musubi* . . .

NW: Was it from a rescue?

JS: No, from the factory cafeteria.

NW: Oh, from the factory cafeteria, okay. So it was more or less functioning, even though there was damage?

JS: It was damaged, totally damaged, I don't know if we actually cooked the rice. But at least some of the people realize that they can't go into the town. So they cooked the rice whatever it was they gave us something to eat.

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**<Begin Segment 14>**

NW: So how long did you stay at the factory?

JS: So we stayed at night, we sat at the bank, and watched the fire and saw the Hiroshima city burning, it was only two and half kilometer from the dead center, so it was not that far. So you can see fire burning, oh, it's burning over there, burning over there, watch smoke and everything coming up. And then, in the morning, of course, we all get up at seven, we decided that seven of us go back to the dormitory or back to the school. So we were headed to cross the bridge. And then, after I crossed the bridge, the first thing I saw was mother hanging onto . . . they are all burnt, you know, you can't tell mother or father, male or female. I saw this mother, hanging onto a little, they are all burnt, you know. You can't tell if it's a mother or father or man or female. I saw this mother, hanging onto black object, a baby. And I looked at that. It really shook me then, you know. I have seen maybe 500, 600 dead people. When I saw that, the baby, I think the mother, I think she was dead, too, and you know, there was this black little bundle, you know, maybe less than 2 feet object, you know, and you think, oh, no, you know.

NW: So did you think that this not just a traditional, usual bomb?

JS: Oh yeah. But we did not know what it was. But there was, it must be really something. Because after we crossed the bridge, this way, it's in the city now. This way you can see the islands and the ocean. You look this way, you can see the mountain on the other side of the hill.

NW: Which is very abnormal.

JS: Oh my. Where am I? Just like standing in a, this side and that side. And of course it's burning too, and to the ocean you can see, but on the town, there's still some of the old concrete building maybe collapsed but still standing. No pine trees, no nothing, nothing is growing. And people were just wondering around. Along the street. You see so many, you look at people, you don't feel like it's dead people. It's just, it's there, you know, you lose certain sense of what, immune? You are used to looking at objects like that. So I was kind of surprised, too. Oh, I am not sensitive, you know. I'm not feeling anything. I guess I was so immune to the situation.

NW: Because you are surrounded by it.

JS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's it. And then we entered the city of Hiroshima and we said hey, we should go back to the school where we . . . you know. So we went to the school, happened to be 0.5 km from the center. Can't find the school. Where is it? Oh, there is a stone, *mon*, the gate, oh, this is our school. That's how we found, because everything was flat.

NW: So you're lucky that you weren't there, in a way.

JS: Oh yeah, yeah. So the school building was just totally gone, nothing but stones here and there. But there was a swimming pool, our swimming pool. So we went over there, the water was low, but there were about six, seven students in the pond, um, in the swimming pool. So we asked them, do you want to get out of the pond? You want to get out of the swimming pool? And they said yeah, I grab on a kid and tried to pull up, and his skin came, peeled off, you know. But somehow we got him up the swimming pool, but I don't know, he just rolled over and went back into the pool. We couldn't stay there any longer. That's when I understand that a lot of my lower classmate students, um, died. About 1 km away, the second grade students were assigned to demolish some of the wooden building to make a fire break. So they all went over there, under the direction of the teacher, and the Army, the defense, they were making a fire break to demolishing some of the building. That's when the bomb dropped, which is about 0.5 km from the hypo. So they all died. Yeah. And one of the monuments, the building, in the schoolyard, I think 250 names are listed, and I think only six or seven survived, 250 dead, six survived. So survivors for some reason didn't attend the class, they were away from the school. So the second grade was kaput, they were gone, demolished, disappeared, melted. That's some of the story. And then we left, left the swimming pool, we left the school, and on the way home, there was a Red Cross building. About 1.5 km from the hypocenter. And whenever we went into the school, Red Cross, it's a big hospital, Red Cross Hospital. When I walked in there, I saw one of the students over there, happened to be in the same school uniform. Because of the uniform, yeah, you could identify it, so I talked to him for a while. And, you know, oh yeah, we talked, I talked to him for a while, and he said that I want some water. So. Everybody. You were told not to give water for the people who want it, but I looked at him and . . . he is not going to live. Because he was burnt. And you know it's almost like twenty-four hours after the bomb and he was down to nothing. You know, a glass of water, some I found, glass or can, I don't remember. Because the water was running, yeah. It was broken, but I think Ōtagawa has the water system

NW: Just keep on coming.

JS: Yeah, so the water was somehow running. And then the spigot was open. So he said, he looked at me, and that was it. So yes, at least I gave him water. And when I tried, the yard in the Red Cross building was, you could hardly step in there. Maybe 600, 700 people in the Red Cross entrance way. So I went to the Red Cross building and I could not get in there. It was full of doctors and nurses, all hurt.

NW: Ah. That's right. That's right.

JS: All the nurses were hurt, all the doctors were hurt; they can't do a damn thing. So I walked in, so can you help the doctors? So some healthy people were walking around, you know. So we did as much as we can. But we said we'd better go. So we left, we went back to the dormitory. Which is about maybe three kilo, five~six kilometers away.

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**<Begin Segment 15>**

NW: Now, your mother must have been worried about you.

JS: Oh yeah. But she happened to hear from some of the people in Hiroshima who returned to the countryside, the village, and she talked to these people, and they said, oh, your son is probably safe. Because, you know. This is, the whole town is burning, so no sense going in. She wanted to come in to look for me. But she learned from the people, and they said oh ladies should not go in there because you can't do a thing. So she said okay, so she stayed. But at least she was aware where the factory was, and thought I was probably okay. So after I got to the dormitory, I looked and two of my roommates, they did not come back. So I heard about where they were, so I knew, you know, they're not gonna come back. I got all of these gathering, put in a box, wrapped up, put their name on it. Two of them. Kamata and Ikeda. [laugh]. That's the student's name. And I wrapped up and put it there. Since I was in the dormitory, they gave us some food, sweet potato, Asian sweet potato. And we have to burn some dead people, so come and help. We went by the river, and built, you know, a burn.

NW: Did you eventually go back to where your mother was?

JS: Okay, and then, the second day, alright, this is enough. Another thing I didn't like was, I couldn't stay there was, I tried to sleep there, *nomi*, flea. Ay, I don't know why, they all started to come around. I am very weak, you know, I got swollen like this, you know, my legs especially. So I can't stay here anymore.

NW: It wasn't like that before the bomb, right?

JS: It wasn't like that.

NW: I wonder why.

JS: I don't know, and thousands of them, you know.

NW: Oh, you have to flee from it.

JS: Oh yeah. So I said, gosh, I can't stay here anymore. You just have to leave. So I went back to the station, Hiroshima-eki, and then the train was not leaving from there, you had to walk a mile or so to the next station, where the train was. Of course, nobody had money, so whoever wants to ride, they let you in. That took me down to my house. And of course, when I walked in, my mother just cried, you know, oh Junji-san. Yeah. And she was happy. She tried to feed me but for some reason I couldn't eat. But I was drinking a lot of water.

NW: Did you have any symptoms, anything?

JS: I had a diarrhea. I had a diarrhea. It wasn't that severe, but diarrhea, and she fed me all kind of things, home remedy, you know, whoever, she heard what's good, what's bad. And oh, jumping a little bit, my church, my father's church, this big place, so we had military people living there, too. So they had quite a bit of information, yeah. That's why they had the kitchen: for the soldiers. So they did cooking and sleeping there, too. So I am sure that mom got a lot of information from them. So, anyway, I stayed, got home and slept about three days. And the

diarrhea and . . . But somehow I got up. On August 15, I even got up and heard the announcement that Japan lost the war.

NW: You remember that. Yeah. How did you feel?

JS: I was very sad, you know, when I heard this announcement, but some of the church members were there, too. Some of them just collapsed and they cried. I think I cried, too. Because, you know, we lost the war and a lot of people died. I think it was very sad. And, I remember that particular time, I heard that, afterwards, in the evening, I was standing on the church balcony, or the bank side, and then I was singing some song, you know, a stoic song. Singing and just, it was in a sad mood.

NW: Now, did you think of the bomb as something that America dropped, which is your country of citizenship?

JS: No, I think I was more Japanese than American at that time.

NW: At that time. Okay.

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**<Begin Segment 16>**

NW: Now, you must have come back to the States pretty shortly after the war.

JS: Yes, I went to the Dōshisha for a while.

NW: Oh, no kidding? So you were in Kyoto?

JS: Yeah, just for one year or so.

NW: So, what, it must have been right after the war, then?

JS: Yeah. 194 . . . I don't remember the exact year when I came back to the United States, 1949? Or so. Let's put it, 1949. I think it was '49.

NW: That's early though.

JS: Yeah?

NW: Yeah, well, comparatively speaking. So, where did you go?

JS: Okay. I decided to come back, and then got on *President Wilson* and went to Honolulu. And then that's when I said bye-bye to some of the friends and they all went to the stateside, United States side. And I went to Lahaina Maui, Oahu Island.

NW: So you went to Hawai'i?

JS: That's where my dad had built the church.

NW: Yeah, wait a minute, though. So your father was already back in Japan, but did he go back to Hawai'i?

JS: No, no, no.

NW: He stayed in Japan.

JS: He stayed in Hiroshima-ken. They called it Akitakata-shi. Now, it's a *shi*, see, it's not *gun*, Takata-shi.

NW: So he was in Japan, but you decided to come to Hawai'i.

JS: Yeah, all by my self.

NW: Well, how, why did you decide to do it?

JS: I think, I was looking at the situation in Japan, and what I know about the United States, I said, probably it's much more comfortable to go to Hawai'i and make living. Talked to my father, and he says, if you feel like going back to Hawai'i, I can make an arrangement for you to go back to Maui, Lahaina. So, I was, I went to Lahaina, and then I was determined to go to Lahaina Laguna high school, which is a dormitory system.

NW: So you kinda went back in terms of your schooling because, yeah, you were already a college student in Dōshisha?

JS: Yeah, English was the main thing, see. English. And they, the people in the Laguna high school, they says, maybe it's good for you to learn English some more, something in there.

NW: Right, right. So did you get to school at the same time as working? Or did you go to school . . .

JS: Oh, okay. This dormitory system is Lahaina high school, it used to be an old King Kamehameha school. And a lot of Hawaiian blood was in there too. But they have a working system. They have a cattle field, farm field, chicken, and shops and automotive. So, you earn your living by working there . . .

NW: But you are also a school student at the same time?

JS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. In the dormitory, since I was older than the rest of the people, they gave me, sooner or later, assignments, jobs, you know, help with the kids and what not. So I was lucky, in a way, you know.

NW: You were 20 years old at that time, right?

JS: Yes, something like that. Then, when I was school, the funny part about it is, of course, you know, my main goal was to learn English. So the teachers were very helpful. They said, Junji, if you want to learn English, you can't learn Pidgin English, but I was very bad.

NW: I'm not really familiar with that.

JS: Okay, next time you go to Hawai'i, you'll hear Pidgin English. They call it Pidgin English, strong accent. The Japanese and English learned combined, they combine many words together, so it's hard to understand.

NW: So it's a mixture of Japanese and English. Okay.

JS: They use a lot of "that kind, that kind, that kind of story, you know that." [laugh]

NW: Oh, okay. Yeah.

JS: And teacher helped me, I remember, putting a candle in front of me and trying to talk English. And after a certain teacher they said, Junji come and clean up my yard for me, you know, so I did gardening work for them. And then one of the senators from Hawai'i, or congress, or senate, whatever you call it, uh, he had a summerhouse in Lahaina. The present KaaNapali where they have all the tourist hotels out there, he had a summerhouse there, so, he said, can you take care that for me? So I said, okay. So, my roommate is an older man, he is the foreman among all men in Lahaina high school, and he had a truck. So, since I was responsible for the summerhouse for the senator, every weekend, they told, hey, you kids wanna go with me? All the kids want to leave the dormitory and go down to the beach, beach house, yeah? It's a beautiful beach house. I said no beer, no drink, but you guys can do all the work, clean up, yard cutting, trimming, cutting, all Japanese kids. They wanted to work, they helped me. So, you know, I had the good kids from the Lanai Island, Kauai Island, so that they can't go home. So, they, they wanted to go to the town. So I said, okay, I can buy all the hotdogs you want to eat. [laugh]. So they helped me clean up the place. And, boy, that place was painting job. So that was part of my work.

NW: How about the high school friends, did you, did you make friends?

JS: Oh I made a lot of friends, because even though they didn't know me, their parents knew about my brothers, or my sisters, or my father or mom. They are all used to be church members, the parents were.

NW: So they were mostly Japanese Americans, the high school kids?

JS: Yes, yes, yes.

NW: Were there any other kinds of students, ethnic groups?

JS: Oh, yeah, a lot of Hawaiians in there too, and a lot of Caucasians in there, too.

NW: So, just like before the war?

JS: Yes. And I remember, one thing is that in my algebra class, to me it's a review, you know.

NW: Right, you already know it.

JS: Yeah. And teacher, call on me during solving and  $x$  minus one times, during trigonometry and algebra and she gets stuck, and then she goes Junji, and I go up there. [laugh].

NW: [laugh] Come help me!

JS: So I had a good time, because the people said, what, Junji?

NW: "You must be really smart!"

JS: That's all I know. But they thought I was, gosh! My, you know. The teacher was proving the trick also, she knew that I already had that. Intentionally, I think she make a mistake, and said, Junji, what's the problem?

NW: That's the education. [laugh]

JS: So I go, *ehen, ehen*. [laugh]

NW: So how long did you do that in Hawai'i?

JS: I did that for about 2 semesters. And then one day I was reading a Japanese newspaper and there was ad, they opened up a new radio station, called, [laugh], I forgot, KAHU, looking for a Japanese announcer, and must have some knowledge of English. So I got on the phone, telephone, and then said, I am so and so, interested in working as an announcer. Talked to the owner, or the president. I was talking to him, of course he was asking a lot of questions. I was still in school. So he said okay, then, as soon as you finish this semester, can you come up?

NW: Where was it located, KAHU?

JS: It was in Hawai'i, Honolulu. Can you come out, I said, I'm still at Laguna high school. So okay, as soon as the semester is over, come on over. I said, do I have the job. Yes, he says. I said, am I going to get an interview? They said no, you are hired. Oh, okay, you know. So it was over the telephone I got a job, not too many people get that. But anyway, that's what I got. And then worked in a radio station. In the morning, I said on the way to the station, because it opens 6 o'clock in the morning, and the news cast, and I did the news cast and some of the, whatever was necessary. Main thing was the news cast. On the way to school was McKinley high school in Honolulu. It was close to my working place. So I decided . . .

NW: Transfer?

JS: Yeah, so, I went in there, this is where I work, I want to . . . So they says okay, you can go in as senior. So I went into senior and I started to work there, and go to school, and met a lot of Japanese friends there. So, in fact, those people I met, I still communicate with them. We, whenever I go to Hawai'i, they have a reunion for us.

NW: It's nice to have your friends in Hawai'i.

JS: So I go there, and have, you know, good time talking, we have, we eat together.

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**<Begin Segment 17>**

NW: So when did you move from Hawai'i to the mainland, then?

JS: Okay, that's another story. That's when the Korean War started.

NW: Oh, okay. So, you were stationed in the mainland first?

JS: When the war started, you know, I was out of, I was out of, what do you call it, high school. But the war started, and then I got the draft notice, it said report to camp so and so by so and so. The war was going on. And to make the story interesting, Hawaiian regiment, Cav Core, Fifth, . . . I forgot the name. Cavalier, they were stationed in Hokkaidō during the occupation period, before the Korean War. When the war started, they sent all these soldiers stationed in Hokkaidō, close to Hawai‘i, um, close to Hokkaidō, they sent to Korea. They didn’t win the war in Korea, you know that.

NW: No, I don’t.

JS: Okay. North Koreans and the Chinese, they would send any number of person, no matter who gets killed, they keep coming and keep coming and keep coming. And, so you have an American regiment there, and they keep coming, sooner or later, you know . . .

NW: Yeah. I guess I know the result of the war, but why, how did it relate to, I mean, you told me . . .

JS: Okay. Now, when I was in Hawai‘i, you hear all these Nisei soldiers getting dead, killed because they were sent to Korea. Those are the ones who are fighting against the Chinese and the Korean. They might have been winning the war, but they get wave after wave of these Chinese soldiers coming in, and sooner or later, all these American, Hawai soldiers, they died. And of course, we hear all the “so-and-so” died, or you know. Some of my old friends said, Junji, don’t go in as an infantry man. You go to infantry man, so volunteer and go to language school, military intelligence, so MIS. So few of us go together, we all got the notice, friends, we went to volunteer, and went to the Army language . . . , Fort Brag, North . . . , Fort Brag, California. That’s where they trained soldiers. Six months training we had as infantry men. So Fort Brag is on the way to San Francisco.

NW: So, that’s the first time you went to the mainland U.S.?

JS: Yes, yes, yes.

NW: So that was after the war started, so, 1950s, at one point?

JS: Yeah.

NW: Okay. Then you went to Korea, and then you came back in a year?

JS: Yeah. No, before that. After I finished my basic training, the last day of the service in basic training, the whole company got together, and “Private so and so, Private Smith, assignment, Korea. So and so, Korea, So and so, Korea. Private Junji Sarashina, Monterey, California.”

NW: Oh, that’s where you went first.

JS: Monterey, California is about fifty minutes away from where we were taking training, the language school. So everybody else was going to Korea, and I was going to fifty minutes away to Monterey! I tell you that the whole camp said “Ahh, damn it!” Why?

NW: They envied you!

JS: Oh, naturally, because they were going to Korea. And I was getting assigned to the city of Monterey, in California. Well. I'm going to go to the language school to learn Japanese. And you could say, what did you learn, you know? So I got assigned to language school. And I talked to the instructor there, a lot of people were learning Korean, or German or different languages, at this language [school], in Monterey, California. That's where they have a beautiful museum too, they used to be a sardine country, and fish. And teacher says, "Junji, are you going to learn Japanese?" Well, you know, okay, alright. "You already know the Japanese."

NW: Of course, of course.

JS: So, anyway, I could help some of the students, you know, they don't understand. So I went to the language school for about six months or so. But since I had all the time, of course I help a lot of people when they can't do the homework well, I help them because we're in the same barracks. I had a lot of time to go out fishing. The Army sent out recreational fishing, paid by the government. I started to go there, everyone started getting sea sick, I'm the only one not getting sea sick. So, all the fish I catch, I used to take it to all the teachers in Monterey language school, a lot of Japanese teachers. So they said okay, okay. But that's where I learned my . . . methods of interrogation, things like that. Then I was sent to Korea, and that's when I met Mr. Kawasaki, from Sawtelle, the *jūdō* instructor. That's what all tied it together.

NW: That's right, that's right.

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**<Begin Segment 18>**

NW: So you came back from Korea after the war. And then, where did you go?

JS: Okay, I was, before that, I got married in Japan.

NW: Oh, you did? Okay, on your way back from Korea, so to speak?

JS: Oh, yeah, I was in, in, stationed in Tokyo, instead of coming back to States right away.

NW: So, it must have been, what year was it? 195 . . . ?

JS: We got married in 1953, I think. She is from Hiroshima, she used to my sister's friend, classmate, no, lower than that, but her classmate. Those days, all the students, going to the same school, they traveled together to go to school in the morning, you see? One of the stops was my sister's house. So, my wife is . . . , they would walk all the way as a group, they would stop, my sister would join them, and then go to school.

NW: So they knew each other.

JS: That's when I met her. And I got married.

NW: Now, you got married then, in Japan, and then came back together to America?

JS: Yeah.

NW: Yeah. And where did you go?

JS: First I was stationed in the . . . North Carolina.

NW: You were still in the Army.

JS: That's the language school, not that, military intelligent center. I was in the mil . . . North Carolina, gee, I forgot the name already. Gosh. Anyway.

NW: And you were there for a while, in North Carolina?

JS: Yeah, then I got discharged, and went back to Los Angeles.

NW: Ah-huh. Now, in all of these years, you were coming back to the States, and you were, you went to Hawai'i for a while and then you went to Korean War, and then you came back to the States, North Carolina, then in Los Angeles, were you thinking of yourself as a victim of the bomb, or a survivor of the bomb, in other words, did you have any identity like that?

JS: No, no. I didn't have any problem, like physically, I didn't have any problem. Even though I had visited Japan often, not all the time but often, I knew about the A-bomb services and something like that. But physically I was okay, and you know, I didn't have any problem. So for a long time, I didn't have any connection with the so-called *hibakusha*.

NW: Right.

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**<Begin Segment 19>**

NW: But by the 1970s, obviously, there was a group of, things like ASA.

JS: 1972.

NW: Right, okay. So, were you a member from the beginning, then?

JS: Ah, well, it wasn't ASA. At first, when it started, approximately 1972, the office workers from Hiroshima, ABCC is the name.

NW: ABCC? Well, okay.

JS: Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission.

NW: That's this institution in Japan.

JS: Yes, and maybe they call it, *hibaku, genbaku hōshasen kenkyū* . . .

NW: . . . *eikyū kenkyū-sho*.

JS: Yeah, yeah. It's in Hijiyama. People from that office came here and talked about examining, something like that. Just happened that the representative who came here is my sister's acquaintance in the ABCC. Mr. Yamada is his name. He died many years ago, but. So my sister happened to know him, and of course, you know, at ABCC they met each other. So Mr. Yamada

came here and came to my house. And you know, we took him up. And he says, “Oh, there’s going to be a, and please come out to the meeting, come out and talk to us.” So I said okay, for my sister’s sake, I went along.

NW: Oh, so they wanted to know about survivors here in the States and your sister, because he was that sister’s acquaintance, you agreed to do that, okay. And that was before the group of survivors here was established, was it? It was before 1972?

JS: I think it was semi-established by then.

NW: Ah, okay, okay.

JS: Mr. Okai, Mrs. Okai, was one of the A-bomb [survivors], she passed away many years [ago], but was one of the organizer, and she spoke in typical Hiroshima-ben, *kocchi kinsai-yo! iu yō na chōshi*.

NW: She’s the first president of the CABS, right?

JS: Yeah. So I attended that meeting, and then I think it was 1972, 73, Mr. Thomas Noguchi, doctors, started to examine us, physically, the doctors can’t touch us, the Japanese doctors can’t touch, but he made an arrangement for us, you know, talked to him, he was a supporter of our group. And, that’s how we started. Mr. Okai, I mean Mr. Arai, Mrs. Arai *ka?* Mrs. no, forgive me, *gomen nasai*, um, Mrs. Okai started, as the president, and then Mr. Arai became the second president. And that’s how we started. And I got involved with it.

NW: So would you say that your awareness or your identity as a survivor might have been prompted, prompted by your increasing engagement with this group of survivors in the States? I know, I am, I am wondering, you have been very active in this group ASA, and I think you kind of need to have some kind of identity as a survivor to be that active. I don’t even know if it’s true, but I just wondered what prompted you to be that active and have an identity with that.

JS: Well when I talked to Mr. Yamada that was the main thing. He sort of explained everything to me. Until that, I think, by that time, I was working for a company called Northrop Corporation, which makes . . .

NW: After you were released from the army.

JS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Northrop Corporation, and they were, well, they had a good insurance and well taken care of medical program. And I, insurance in the medical proper, they were taking care of me. And maybe that’s the reason why I wasn’t too concerned about the A-bomb survivor, because of the company was well established.

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**<Begin Segment 20>**

NW: Did your wife also work or was she a housewife?

JS: No, she had a beauty salon.

NW: Yeah, I think you told me, yeah. For, what, quite a while?

JS: Maybe 15 years or so.

NW: Oh, that's a long time.

JS: The reason she made a beauty salon is, main reason was we don't have anybody in the United States just my wife and myself and boys, two boys. And the first thing that came to my mind is if something happens to me how is she going to survive? So I said, "you have to have a skill." And she is from Japan, so you know, then the only thing you can do is get a skill. So she went to school and she got her citizenship, and she went to school and learned the beauty trade, and got a license. And then bought the store, yeah. And a lot of church members [laugh], they were customers.

NW: Yeah, yeah, right. So she had a good business.

JS: Yeah, she had a good time playing with her friends. Working with friends, because I remember they were saying "we are going to have a board meeting, BWA, Buddhist Women's Association's meeting at Kyoko's beauty shop."

NW: [laugh] And then, if you need to have a haircut . . . [laugh].

JS: [laugh]. So, they all brought their, you know, goodies and food, "what's going on?" And they said, "we are having a meeting today, so Junji, get out of the room." So, okay, you know. So, she, by having her own shop nine o'clock, ten o'clock, they continued the meeting.

NW: And you said there was a little kitchen area in the shop as well.

JS: Yeah, in the back. They did whatever they wanted to do. They were ladies, anyway. They prepared their food, and made their food, each, enjoyed each other's food.

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**<Begin Segment 21>**

NW: Why do you keep on being so active for this organization for American survivors? I mean, I understand what prompted you first, but then you kept on going, and not everybody does it. What would be the interest that kept you going?

JS: I think it's the family tradition, being a son of a church, I am the youngest one there, but. The people of the village, they were so kind to you, you know. They like you so much, they treat you as, you're a part of their family. Because their grandparents, and their grandfather, and grandmother, and all, everybody was together with the church, for many, many generations. And then, they think that oh, it's a family. So, I was raised, with the surrounded with the people that's so nice to me, all my life, from Hawai'i to Hiroshima. And they always bring in *matsutake* or things like that, oh, they bring, we got beautiful *kabocha*, so they bring . . .

NW: Are you talking about survivors? Or are you talking about people in the Buddhist church?

JS: In the Buddhist church.

NW: I'm asking you about the reason why you kept your interest in survivors group?

JS: Okay, that's how I was raised, when I was young.

NW: Okay, sorry.

JS: And, that's how I was raised, and then I found out about this A-bomb survivors' group, and I got involved. I say, they needed a little bit more help, given what's going on now. Financial reasons, the way [it was] set up, that's not the proper way to run the organization.

NW: Oh yeah, you looked at their finances and they did not look good. [laugh]

JS: Look at that, immediately you know. I had my some, my personal business, here and there too, besides working for Northrop, but.

NW: Did you do that then, accounting type of work?

JS: No.

NW: What kind of work did you do in your company?

JS: Oh, I was an engineer.

NW: Engineering, okay, sorry.

JS: And we had a lot of people from Mitsubishi. And what do you call this, *jiei-tai, jiei-tai*. It all came to Northrop, you know, defense contract.

NW: Oh I see. Defense contract, yeah.

JS: So when they come over, first thing what they are going to do is, "Oi, Junji!" So I was involved with them quite a bit. It was, it was a phone call and then, you know. That's how I got, kept myself busy, I retired about, 19 . . . well, I forgot the year but, about 25 years ago.

NW: Okay.

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**<Begin Segment 22>**

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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**<Begin Segment 23>**

NW: Did you go to the examination from the beginning? From the first time? You did?

JS: Yeah, I went to some of those, Dr. Sakurai was there too, at the beginning. So, you might hear about those.

NW: Yeah, yeah. I'll definitely ask him tomorrow. For sure.

JS: Examinations were held at many . . . City View Hotel, it just came to my mind. City View Hospital, not Hotel. City View Hospital. That's where the examination and that, so.

NW: They started there.

JS: Yeah. So I started to go. And then attended quite a few of them. That Dr. Noguchi was, right now, it's a USC hospital, seven story high hospital. But, that's where the examination was held. Like, often Noguchi would doctor because he's here, but the Japanese doctor, and they were just the observer. Looking at you, talk to you, and rest of the doctors, so the young interns can say, okay . . .

NW: Is it important for you, then, to have that medical checkup? I mean, you already told me that it is, but, for you, personally speaking?

JS: Yeah. What they do is the routine physical checkup. And, but having those doctors there, they treat all the A-bomb survivors, therefore, they are much more familiar. So they say, okay, you have a kidney problem, so this might get worse, you've got to be careful [about] what might happen to you. And they are talking to you. And when they find out that you have cancer, then, that doctor will tell you, "I'm going to send you to Japan." All expenses paid. "But I can't walk." "Take your wife along. We'll pay 50% of the expenses." You get to the airport, the medical association driver will be waiting for you. He'll pick you up, he'll take you to, put you on a train, then go to, if you're at airport, ambulance will be there. Who can do that? You go to the hospital, Red Cross Hospital. And they take you to the head, and the head doctor, or whatever they're called, the top person will go, "Konnichiwa, he'll talk to you." And from that time on, the nurses will jump. Cuz the top man came out, greeted you, you know. That's the kind of facility. That's

the kind of service you can get. It's only through this examination. And some of the people in the north, or some of the people in San Francisco, say, "uh-huh, we don't want that."

NW: Why do you think that, I mean, are they more interested in getting compensations, the monetary . . . ?

JS: I think so. And some of the people don't know. This, you talk to Dr. Sakurai tomorrow. All of the expenses, the money coming out of HICARE. And HICARE is not a dinky organization, it's well established organization, government and city, Hiroshima-shi and Hiroshima-ken are involved. The budget coming out of medical association. It's an established organization. So, that's how they can go to Germany, um, Russia. And examine those people, help those people, go to Korea, go to, wherever, Brazil. But they said forget it, we don't need that kind of set up. We would rather have a hospital in the United States. We are in the United States. Who's going to take care? Doctors are expensive. And if you want one doctor to [do] all of these for you, who is going to come from Florida all the way here to, you know, California. So, my way of thinking is I helped more people who went through this examination because we found out this person had certain kind of sickness, I can talk to the, eleven doctors, and explain it to them, they will talk together with this person, and then the decision is made almost at that time.

NW: Uh-huh. Right. It's a very quick response that patients would want. Yeah.

JS: And the person called me, and she said "I've been trying to get *techō*." You know about *techō*? "I can't get it! I've been trying for the past so many years." So she asked me to help. Okay? [?] So she came to the examination, and then she went through the routine, and she had certain things bad here and there, and that was it. She couldn't get a *techō*. So, I took her in, took her to doctor, and said this person is a *hibakusha*. She is, was away from hypocenter, but symptom is, you know that she is a *hibakusha*. And all the doctors talked to her, and I explained to her how she was, and the mother was helping all the victims and she was going along, and said "You guys got to help her." This is the reason.

NW: So what you are saying is that the strength of the medical checkups is, assembled by HICARE, is even without having a certificate, *gembaku techō*, you can have an access to it. I got it, yeah.

JS: You said it, you said it. So, one month later, *shiyakusho* called me, and we talked about this, and Hiroshima-ken called me and we talked, and the doctors talked, and said, get all the documents ready on this end, this is what we need. One month later, she got a *techō*. She couldn't get it.

NW: Oh I see, I see.

JS: And then, a couple of months later, she called me and she said "I started to get the monthly allowance." They even back tracked the payment.

NW: So, through the medical checkup system and by getting to know Hiroshima doctors, it really smoothed out, facilitated the process of obtaining the *techō*, as well as the monetary allowances. Is that what you're saying? Because there is this people connection.

JS: Yes. They had that much power.

NW: Oh, they have that much power.

JS: They are all HICARE, and they are all respected doctors in Hiroshima. And they are, who is going to say, “Oh, this is not a . . . “? You are fighting against eleven experts. And the one clerk is not going to say no, no, no. You know. You cannot do that. That’s how powerful those people are. But they don’t know that. Nobody knows that, you know. Like they are the one who meet Deborah. They are the ones meet Dr., Mr. Han, the head guy. They are quite respected persons. But A-bomb survivors in some of different areas, they are saying “Oh, just a doctor from Japan.”

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**<Begin Segment 24>**

NW: How do you feel about Korean survivors? I ask you this because they, in a way, are very similar to American survivors because they are also, you know.

JS: Yes, exactly the same. Exactly the same.

NW: Do you feel sympathetic to them?

JS: Oh yeah. They were forced in a way to come to Mitsubishi in Hiroshima to do the work. I said forced, I don’t know if it was forced or not. Maybe they were trying to find a work, maybe they trying to find a good paying work in Mitsubishi. But they were.

NW: It wasn’t a good pay, but anyway.

JS: Is that so? [laugh] Okay, you know about it. Anyway, that’s how they came. They were mistreated, and they worked hard, maybe they did not get paid. And then, boom, you know.

NW: So, how do you feel about, I guess I ask you because, among other things, they are after compensations. They are, they like to have medical checkup system just like the system that you have here, but, and then they have this, you know, going back to Japan kind of medical support, intensive medical treatment system as well. Well, but they are also asking for, not all of them but many of them are asking monetary compensations from the Japanese government. And they do it through the window of lawsuits, bringing the lawsuits against Japanese government.

JS: They are getting it.

NW: Yeah.

JS: I’m helping the survivors here, too. I think I helped close to 100 people already. It’s almost like my full time job. For the lawyers and the *chihō saibansho*, Hiroshima-ken. All the paperwork, I prepare it.

NW: So, do you work, I guess you, you don't directly work with Korean survivors group, but . . .

JS: No, no, no. But even though I have Korean survivor here; I took care of her paper. She, she's got the compensation, compensated for. And she comes, "Junji! Thank you!" She called me. She speaks mostly, a little bit of English, let's put it that way. But yes, I have worked with Koreans.

NW: Are there other Korean American survivors that you got to know through [ASA]? She is the only one?

JS: No, she is from, only one from Korea.

NW: Hmm, okay.

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**<Begin Segment 25>**

NW: How do you feel about, I mean this is kind of big, broad question, so if you don't have immediate answer, please, don't worry about it, but how do you feel about the impact that the bomb made on your career, on your life experiences, on your, um, well, activism, obviously must have been related to it, but how would you describe the meaning of it?

JS: Okay. Not the bomb itself, but one thing I can say, I survive that bomb because either one second or one second earlier or one second later, there would have been a different story. And I have seen the, the human waste, human life being wasted, even though United States won the war, it will, if you start using the atomic bomb or hydrogen bomb, it will destroy the human being. And it will destroy the earth. The radiation effect is so deep and so wide, and we don't know much about it. My case, I am healthy now, but what is going to happen to my personal family? My son, or my granddaughters, or their siblings. Nobody knows. It's in the future. Like things happening in Fukushima right now. They don't know anything yet, and it's been more than a year and three, two months or so. And still they are trying to find out what kind of effect they're gonna have. Nobody knows. It's going to affect a lot of human life. Now they have a hydrogen bomb, the United States, it's 1,000 times stronger than . . .

NW: The bomb dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, yeah.

JS: So maybe atomic weapons are not the solution, and the solution might be, without the war, peace, it's the only solution right now. But the United States is, it's gotta defend themselves at the beginning of whatever is happening, so therefore they are studying, you know, they are making a lot of new bombs. Russia is making it. But I'm strictly anti-nuclear war. It's, it is not the solution. But personally, this is way and above my thinking, but I don't know when it's going to be resolved because we are involved with the emotion, the human feeling, and strength of the country. So it's going to continue forever. But somewhere, sometime, all of those strong countries must learn the lesson. They are never going to learn the lesson, as long as we have ego, you know. That's a broad picture, you know.

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**<Begin Segment 26>**

NW: Now, more specifically, through your, you know, activism through this organization of US survivors, do you feel like you met with new people? I'm asking you this because I know, for instance, in the 1970s when the group of survivors here was working to get support by the US government, there are some young generation Japanese Americans, lawyers, or you know, medical doctors, who were, you know, very becoming politically aware. And they wanted to kind of increase the voice of Asian Americans, not just Japanese Americans, you know, other Korean Americans and Filipino Americans and so forth, coming together and try to raise a voice about their concerns about American minorities, and then, I wonder if you had a chance to work with the younger generation of . . .

JS: Not so far, I have had any chance to work with any so-called lawyer or professional type of people. In fact, it's almost impossible to get the second generation to help us.

NW: Why is that?

JS: Hmm. Maybe it's our fault that we haven't told those people. That we have a situation like this, and it's a very small group of people. And they are mostly housewives, the A-bomb survivors; they are not spokesmen. If there is some person like me, they are, you know, 80 years old, 83 years old, and they are old men, old ladies. So, that's one reason it's not exposed that much. And by helping the A-bomb survivors, as a lawyer, what's the reward?

NW: I guess earlier, in the 1970s, there were some lawyers who were in younger generation, Japanese American lawyers who worked for CABS [Committee of Atomic Bomb Survivors in the United States of America], for instance. But I guess, in your generation, you said you became active, probably in the 1980s? For . . .

JS: Yeah.

NW: So probably by then, there was no, not much of collaboration between generations.

JS: There was no organization, as I told you earlier. It was not an organization. It was there, okay, let's get together, have a meeting. Even today, it's my fault, too, but it's not much of an organization. So among small A-bomb groups, we don't like each other. That's a typical Japanese. [laugh]

NW: [laugh] Internal conflict.

JS: Instead of working together and making it comfortable . . . but . . .

NW: But also, it's an irony because . . .

JS: But we have Republican doctor, and Republican and Democrat are totally different ways of thinking. One is deserving, one, like this one, one is deserving like, we were originally one, but we got separated. We started ASA; from ASA, this group started here. And one of the guys started here, he came back, came from San Francisco. And he is the one . . .

NW: Kuramoto-san? Tomosawa?

JS: Tomosawa, right. He's the one. Now he wants the government to pay them some money, wants, at that time, they were having trouble here. At the CABS, and Kuramoto-san had to resign. One of the members over there was Tomosawa, so he decided, well, we'll get some people from ASA; we'll organize one in Santa Monica. So this is how he is right now. I know his brother, we served together in Korea. So I know his brother personally. But I don't want to associate with that person whatsoever because I know him. I think I have 1001 other [?] friends which I would associate, but. That's the way he is, so. My personal feelings.

NW: I understand.

JS: It's up to you to make that decision. But any organization who change its bylaws two weeks before we get there, I can't. Yeah. You are not a member, what, are you trying to help me? I'm trying to help, but you're not a member. So I cannot vote? No, you can't vote because you didn't pay your membership. Membership has been collected whenever they had an examination. That was not, but you didn't pay it this time, so, Junji-san. I said, "Holy cow, this is baloney." Anybody can do that, is, is, who can change the bylaws. [laugh]. So, you know, that's your problem.

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**<Begin Segment 27>**

NW: So, what do you . . . this is gonna be my last question, but what would be, um, what do you like to see in the future of the ASA [pronounced as an initialism], ASA [acronym] I guess you say?

JS: Well, we have to have more people working on the board, board level, yeah. We might have to have the second generation A-bomb survivor, whose mother was exposed, the kids, to come out, and look after our organization. Fortunately, we have person like Midori Seino, yeah. In her case, that's the girl in Japan. So, she came back, maybe a couple days ago.

NW: So, she is the second generation.

JS: Um, no, she's not a second generation, but she handles the computer. So, she takes, she started to take care of the finance side, the membership side. I have the checkbook, but. The second generation is Darrell Miho.

NW: So, is he, is he then, he's a child of a survivor?

JS: No, he's not.

NW: He's not. He's younger, that's what you mean.

JS: But he is younger. I asked him to pick up Suyeishi-san, and he volunteered to help me, to tell me the truth. Everyday, if it's necessary, guess what. So that type of people we need.

NW: Do you hope to see medical checkup continue?

JS: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

NW: How about building a hospital that's specialized in treating this kind of problem. I mean, HICARE is really about training physicians or nurses.

JS: The way I think is, financially, it's impossible.

NW: Impossible. Okay.

JS: I would rather have those Japanese government people or the HICARE people come over here, and examine  $x$  amount of people, at 2 or 3 days, concentrated, instead of, you know, every year, any time you come. They might have 2 or 3 patients a day, in a doctor's office, baloney! You can't have a business with that type of operation. Unless some doctors gonna volunteer to say, "Okay, I'll take care of A-bomb people, too." But when you reach our age, I have to go to San Francisco to get an examination, or San Diego to get the examination. Who's gonna take me? Nobody can, my son might be able to drive, but, you know. It doesn't sound too logical to have it established. But if it is possible, instead of bi-annual examination, annual examination.

NW: Every year. I see that.

JS: If that much expenses coming out, and they need to have to establish an office in San Diego, every six months. We get, it's going to be busy for the office workers, you know, okay, come out and get an examination, you know. I think that's a much more.

NW: I see.

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**<Begin Segment 28>**

NW: How about, I said that was the last question, but this is the real last question, which is really a technical question. So, the medical check up, is that 100% paid by *kōsei-shō*, Japanese government now? Or is this also funded by Hiroshima Prefectural Medical Society?

JS: I am not too sure, but as far as I'm concerned, *kōsei-shō* carries the dollars, okay? Money. But Hiroshima Ishikai, those are *inin*. *Inin*, or is that what you call it, *inin*?

NW: Yeah, well, *itaku*?

JS: *Itaku*, okay, okay. And it's up to the Hiroshima Medical Association, which is connected to HICARE to conduct that type of examination.

NW: So actual operation of the program is done by Hiroshima doctors?

JS: Yeah.

NW: Yeah, got it. So, *kōsei-shō* pays money, but they don't get involved directly with the program, actual operation of the program. Am I right?

JS: No, they don't get that involved. But, about, until about three, maybe eight years ago, there was a representatives of *kōsei-shō* together with those doctors. Then, you know it gets a little bit more technical, the HICARE people, that's what they get all the money from Hiroshima-shi and

-ken doctors, a lot of that members come to see us, and the ABCC, like the one I mentioned, they are changing the name, to *Hōsha ken* something, they are also part of the examination, a vital part. In their case, they have stat, statistically they're collecting information. But, they're doctors, medical doctors, and they come, too. So a lot of expenses must be coming out of their side, too. I don't think it's 100% *kōsei-shō*. They all work together. And, it's a pretty big expense. I am sure that they get a lot of donations from, you know, media people, just like the way we get donations. So, that's. So like you said, you know, do you want to establish a hospital here, it is not fair to ask a person like me, because I speak English, and I can go to any doctors, you know what I mean, it doesn't have to be a Japanese doctor, it doesn't have to be an English doctor, it could be any doctor. And, PPO, or Medicare, depends on the person, see. PPO, like us, I can pick up any nice looking doctor and go there. And I don't have to go to a male doctor because the insurance covers it. But when you are in the certain type of insurance, you're limited, and then if you're on the lowest one, CAL8, then it's tricky to go to only one [?] . . . that kind of place.

NW: That is difficult.

JS: So, it's all different cases.

NW: Yeah, yeah. I see what you mean, but, I mean, I was just curious about your opinions.

JS: And now, if I am going to see the doctors, one or two doctors, one or two patients, or let's say, we have two hundred-something in our organization. And another group might have a hundred or so. You establish an office somewhere, how many people are going to see a doctor? One a week?

NW: [laugh] Probably not that many.

JS: Two a week? Because the one with the HMO, they can't jump, they have to be on a one doctor, assigned doctor. I can go to . . . it's not like me. So the insurance [they] got, started to get very tough.

NW: Right, right, especially here, in the United States.

JS: In the United States. In Brazil it might work, because I've been to Brazil, too, but. Yeah. They are all . . . they are in countryside. You see tall, beautiful buildings, but you get close by, windows are cracked, air conditioning is like this, diapers hanging from the windows. It's not a like the United States, they don't have a dryer there. So.

NW: Well, thank you very much, Junji-san. You know, I feel like I probably wanted to talk to you even longer because I think you have such a rich story. So is that okay with you if I call you sometime?

JS: Anytime, call me. I am willing to help you. But you have to tell this to your students that, explain it to them, that A-bomb survivors are here and how they are making their living, how they are doing. And without nuclear weapon. We have to live in peace, peace is what man [?], no nuclear war. Even though I was involved with *Taiheiyō sensō*, Korean war, Vietnam war, and all kinds of things, yeah? But some time, somewhere, some politician will learn. The nuclear bombs are not the answer. So, the students understand that or hear about it.

NW: I will do my best.

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