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Title: Thomas T. Noguchi Interview  
Narrator: Thomas T. Noguchi  
Interviewer: Naoko Wake  
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**<Begin Segment 3>**

NW: Maybe I can back up a little bit so that I can ask you a few questions about a few things that you already told me and then we can move on with the rest of your statement. But, I'm wondering if you can . . . So, you told me that you were not really aware of a large number of Japanese and Japanese American survivors in America. What got you interested in them? I know that you had a meeting with Mrs. Okai and Mrs. Suyeishi, but what was so interesting to you when you started to work with U.S. survivors?

TN: Yeah. Well, I have been blessed to have community support for many issues that, for example, my final appointment to the department head, there were . . . some discrimination perhaps. You have an Asian American to be a county department head and that county is one of the largest counties in the United States. There are a lot of positions. And the Japanese American community came all out to support me and it required many months, but I was finally appointed and I was ever-grateful.

NW: Mm.

TN: And I was not just uh, do the job. I thought that by being a first Japanese American, that I should, uh . . . assist the uh . . . pay more attention to the public health matters. Although medically from this work I had run into some public health . . . this beyond that, but I was willing. And of course I did not do it by myself. I concurred with the legislature of Los Angeles County and uh . . . all the department head agents I called and made it work. Nothing more then . . .

NW: Huh. So you talked about maybe subtle discrimination against Japanese and Japanese American people in 1960s and maybe even early '70s. Could you tell me a little more specifically about that? What kind of discrimination do you think was there?

TN: Uh . . . Well I thought, I'm myself from Japan . . . I have never been personally subjected to discrimination, but the discrimination was of many of the Japanese Americans, Issei, Nisei, have gone through. Uh, history tells you that there is uh . . . Asian exclusion type of legislation that finally ended in 1952, the year I came. And there was a . . . certain houses where Japanese Americans were not welcome to buy because they are afraid that they lose what they call cross-referenced placed, it was something like that. And further, a neighbor who excludes any major professional [?] excludes Japanese Americans—and not only that minority—member or student that were systematically limited to stay to agents in . . . the 120 medical school. Something like

that. So there's no denying that I personally did not feel. But many supporters did mention that some of their . . . reasons I was not, reason I chosen to be department head although I came at the top in the civil service examination. And uh, part. And I even checked some of the leading university professor, he said, you're a good man. We think I should be a [?] not a [?]. Something like that. And now, subtle discrimination is pretty much gone by now. And in 1970s, you might know, way back other community activities were not even aware of Japanese Americans that were once known as a quiet American. Uh, we became a lot more . . . more assertive. And I was one who actually asserted to, um, I did not take no for an answer. I organized, or friends organized a couple of groups and I mean I finally became a department head. But I wasn't—I wouldn't say—quiet. Anything that I could do, I would do. So that the A-bomb issues came up [?]. I had done many other things. The most that . . .

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