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Title: Paul Satoh Interview
Narrator: Paul Satoh
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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[Mr. Satoh's son Gordon Satoh was present at the interview, and when he speaks, he is denoted as GS]

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PS: Well, I have a question to you is, obviously you're much younger than me and probably um, you—the reason why you get into it—do you have any personal relationship with some—the relatives or somebody that has been?

NW: No, I do not have any personal relationship. I am from that area. My family is from Hiroshima area originally. And that's where my family grave is still located. And um, my father was, um, maybe in a similar situation as yours. Uh, went to a school in the countryside of Hiroshima, even though he—before the war, was living in Kobe and uh, he and his mother went to this country in Hiroshima, and I think my grandmother remembered seeing the mushroom cloud from where she was, although she was not in the city in any sense of the word. So, um, she was not affected by the bomb, but this is part of the family story that I was told as I was growing up, and I—I guess just growing up in Japan, I was exposed to much information about the bomb. I mean, much, not in the sense that was enough—was sufficient, but much in the sense compared to what American children might have been exposed, which is not that much, about the history of the bomb. And then also exposed to the bomb literature. Literature was very deeply, um . . . yeah, it was something that I remember even as I became older. So, I guess I was always interested in issues of the bomb, but um, as a U.S. historian there was not much immediate connection. But then when I realized that there are people who are living with the bomb, uh, in America, as many of them being American citizens, having this fascinating history of belonging to both Japan and America, I thought that I have to know more about those people. So that's— that's where my interest is from.

PS: That's good. It's—yeah. Uh . . . good luck with your project, and uh, you—you're eventually going to make it into a book?

NW: Yeah, that's what historians do. We write books and sometimes articles as well. But books are . . .

PS: That's good. Okay. Yes, that's . . . I was wondering . . . Do you—so, they have time—do you wonder why Japanese have a hard time to make decision. Because when I was teaching of their business schools and business-oriented students, one of the characteristics of Japanese companies or their organization is they don't make decision. And recently I learned, you know for the medical part of it, interesting thing is that Japanese is the most pessimistic people.

NW: [Chuckles]

PS: And uh . . . they have uh, the largest population of the people who have the short form of the gene that transform—transfer the dopamine, so dopamine-transfer protein. And I think, the longer the dopamine receptor gene—the longer, you're optimistic. And the most—the, the largest population that have the long form is the African and South Pacific. Americans about, about ten times higher than Japanese. Japanese on the other hand, short for most pessimistic form, and the most people have—in Japan—have the short form of the dopamine transfer protein. Therefore that reason bring things that you can't afford make the mistake. So that's one of the things—I was wondering whether you have studied something like this, so it's very interesting. Um . . .

NW: Mhm. Yeah, I don't directly study it, but in my opinion, as a historian, uh, I do not agree with biological determinism. I think, uh, actually I teach many pre-med students in one of the joint departments I teach in, and uh, they are science majors and one thing that they are really recently trained in—in science courses but also in history of medicine and science courses that I teach, is that it goes both ways—nature and nurture, to put it simply. So, uh, when I hear stories like that, you know, difference between Americans and Japanese, my inclination in response to your question is to say that I do not think that Japanese people have difficulty in making decisions. I think what counts as a decision differs from one culture to another.

PS: That's true.

NW: Yeah.

PS: But, don't they—more perfectionist? And they—because, you know, one time—that was about two years ago, I was invited to a friend of mine's high school. There was about 300 students in my, the talk I gave. I mentioned that the students, you don't have to be perfect. You can be—B-plus and maybe the eighty percent, is just fine. Enjoy your life when you are young, because the perception of life is so different. And I—the principal said, I don't want to talk to the students in the same way because I—we perceive to be perfect. You know, I don't—we don't want to see anybody less than perfect. So, 100 percent is ok. But 99 is not ok. Ok, fine, I'm sorry I mentioned that. But, are they happy? Well she said, no, it doesn't matter. As long as they can go to the university. And that's one of the interesting experience I had. Uh, they're really perfectionist.

NW: Mhm. I think their societal expectations and institutions and, you know, all sorts of things that are around them, are going to affect them very much. And then they continue to do so. So I think that's a big part of the difference.

PS: The same way—Americans, you know, C-plus is ok.

NW: [Laughs].

PS: So, that's one of those things that I thought was very interesting.

NW: So, thank you very much again.

PS: Thank you.

NW: For both of you—both of you. And um I will, like I said earlier, I'm going to send you a copy of this signed form. And you know where to find me.

PS: Okay. PDF is fine.

NW: Uh-huh. That sounds good.

GS: I'd like to hear this—when the publications come out. [?]

NW: I would love to, yes. Sure.

PS: Yeah, I'd like to hear about your publication. And also if there is anything that I can help you with in your lectures, or teaching, let me know.

NW: Yeah. That's great.

PS: Perhaps some of those medical students would like to hear my views and things like that—truth, and I'd be very happy to do that.

NW: That's a very generous offer on your part. Thank you very much. I will consider that.

PS: Thank you. Okay. Good.

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