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Title: Yuriko Furubayashi Interview
Narrator: Yuriko Furubayashi
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
Location: Kailua, Hawai'i
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<Begin Segment 1>

NW: So, usually when I talk to people, I have a few questions that I start our conversation with, and one of the firsts is usually about people's childhood. So if you can tell me where you were born, when, and what you remember about your parents, that would be great.

YF: I was born here, I mean, this side. But in Waimea, which is way up in the middle of the mountain on the North Shore. And what happened is my parents came from Hiroshima as immigrant. My mother came later, but, you know, my father and worked for this plantation, the plantation was a pineapple plantation.

NW: Pineapple plantation.

YF: Yeah, and then, understand, well, I was born '27, but the Depression, when I was little, I guess, they had the Depression, like 1930, I can't remember too well, but the, you know, the pineapple had kind of went down, and he started to work for this plantation that grow sugar cane. And this was on the shore side. You see, pineapple is, I guess, gotta be in the mountain, you know. And then so, it was in Laie. Not sure, they have to rebuild there. Around there, you know. And they call that place Kahuku. I wasn't born in Kahuku but I spent at least, more than five years, I was ten when I went to Japan, so, must, I was there six, seven years, I think.

NW: Okay. So you were born in, what year is it?

YF: 1927.

NW: 1927. And you spent six or seven years of the first years of your life here before you went to Japan?

YF: Yeah, no, no, I spent about total ten years here. I was ten. '37, if I, you know, could be '38, but right around '37. I was, I remember being around 10. Always said 10, so. And when I came back, I was twenty.

NW: Ah, so you were there in Japan for 10 years and then you came back after the war.

YF: 10 years. Ten and a half years, maybe. During the war years, you know.

NW: Right, exactly. What do you remember about your childhood that you spent here in Hawai‘i?

YF: Well, you know, we, I came from a big family. I had younger brothers, couple, younger sisters, couple, and above me, around four. I think it was nine or ten. I mean, you know, I don't remember one or two of them that died when they were little. But I think we had ten kids. Or nine kids.

NW: Nine kids, wow.

YF: I'll show you a picture. But this is not all, you know. Big family, but it was not unusual. On the plantation, people had big families.

NW: Big families.

YF: . . . about those days. I guess that's why. I was gonna show you my parents and few of ours in there but, the picture isn't great. Nope, I don't see them. Oh, here. I wish I had more of my pictures while I was in Japan, but I don't have much, you know why? A lot of pictures when I was in high school got burned. Oh, this is one of the pictures that, you know, we have. This is my mother, in a plantation, and one, two, three, actually there was another one but he died, and me and my brother. We had more, three or four more.

NW: You know, I love to have you show me those pictures maybe after the interview is over, because I sometimes ask people to allow me to make copies of their pictures, and . . .

YF: You can take pictures with the iPhone.

NW: Yeah. I have, actually, a scanner with me, so I will ask you to show me more.

<Begin Segment 2>

NW: So, tell me a little more about what your life was like when you were growing up.

YF: When I was growing up. Well, it was in a plantation, and my father works in a field and my mother used to take care of the kids, I guess, and sometimes she would help some of the single workers, you know, with laundry and stuff. She was very hardworking person. And I just ran around, I was only, before ten, right, with my brother, you know, my friends around the plantation, other kids. I'm just carefree, running around, you know. But when my aunt and uncle who didn't have, this is who's pictured so I thought maybe, might be. My aunt and uncle who, two sets of them, auntie and uncle, didn't have any children. So, see, this is my uncle and my . . . no auntie.

NW: Is this in the ship? It looks like it maybe on the ship.

YF: Long time ago. Yeah, 19 . . .

NW: Sasama-maru. Yeah, it must be.

YF: They used to go on a ship, you know? Go back and forth Japan. And then my parents' plantation, nine kids, you know, well, as I say, it wasn't unusual to have kids. Next door had eight kids, across the street, the other Japanese family had seven, eight kids or ten kids, you know?

NW: So, were they all people from Japan? They were just Hawai‘i to work for . . .

YF: Contract workers, I guess.

NW: Contract workers, right. Yeah.

YF: That's what I heard. They recruit in Hiroshima; Hiroshima has the port, you know? So it was easy to get people from Hiroshima, you know, the farmers' boy or whatever, go and apply to come to America and work because I guess that Japan was worse than here. They didn't have too much job. My father's father was a small town *kōchō sensei*.

NW: Oh, he was.

YF: Yeah, educator, but my father, I don't know, they must have had a lot of kids, I know of more than five in the family, and, you know, was, I guess, depression or something, and he had to, you know, get employment elsewhere. He didn't have too much education, but you know, a few years, because the father was educator. I'm surprised he didn't have too much, he used to go work for this brewer close by. That's how my father and my mother got together. Anyway, so that was my father's family.

NW: So, your father came to Hawai‘i around what year, do you know?

YF: I can't remember but it's, my oldest sister was born around ten years before me, so must have been 192 . . . , maybe around 1915.

NW: Right, yeah, right. How about your mother's side family?

YF: She came after a while. They kind of, the family knew each other.

NW: So, did they know each other while they were still . . .

YF: No, I don't think so. They didn't know. In Japan, they didn't know.

NW: Okay. So they got to know each other here.

YF: Well, the families said "Oh, you should go and get married to," you know, my father. Because they knew my father. My father, the family knew my father or something like that.

<Begin Segment 3>

NW: How about daily life when you were growing up as a child here? So. . . do you have a memory of any favorite food that you had when you were little?

YF: I wasn't particular. I would eat anything, but I noticed, my father used to have chicken. You know, plantation have quite a bit of yard and you know, small house with yard, yeah? And then he used to raise chicken, I guess, you know, he'd kill 'em and then we'd eat chicken *sukiyaki* or something like that for food. And then we have the eggs, you know. Because I don't think my father had too much salary. Very, very hard to raise ten kids, so you have to kinda, you know. And he used to raise vegetables, onions, and eggplant, and that was my favorite food. And then string beans and all that. So, in Kahuku, eggplant grows really good, sandy kind of soil and a lot of heat, hot place, so we used to get eggplant a lot.

NW: So, do you think that your parents cook mostly Japanese style meals?

YF: Oh, yeah. My mother cooked Japanese food only. And we hardly had meat, I don't think the market sold a lot of meat, I guess that was really hard to come by. Maybe canned kind of, beef, once in a while, but modestly, you know? We couldn't afford anything that's luxury.

NW: How about the language within your family? Did you speak mostly in Japanese or did you mix Japanese and English, or mostly English?

YF: We used to Hongan-ji, and I had a little bit of Japanese.

NW: So, you mean, like a school that you go after . . .

YF: Yeah, after school.

NW: After school, right, right.

YF: All the Japanese kids used to go to the Hongan-ji. This one Japanese temple, I mean temple Hongan-ji. I mean, most Japanese kids, after school, they go there. Some of them more, and some of them don't like it too much, but I remember all of my classmates went. So I went too.

NW: Did you look forwards to going to the Japanese language school? Or did you not like it?

YF: I never hated it, but I went because my friends went too. And then after that, we play, you know. We go in the ocean side. You see, this town is located right by the, close to the ocean. Just like this, down, close to the ocean. But we used to live quite a bit, I mean, really close, you just walk and here's the ocean. We used to play in the sand dunes, alongside the ocean, swimming, stuff like that. But the Japanese school was right in the middle of the plantation. Plantation, they supplied the house, you know? My father worked for the plantations, so we have this modest, small house, and I guess was free.

NW: It was included in the contract.

YF: Yeah, included in the, yeah. He didn't have any extra money, but we could go to the store and just buy necessity things, I think. I didn't go but my mother and my older sister used to go and, you charge it. And then the company just take it out of your salary, you know.

NW: So you don't actually use cash, you just have it taken away from your salary.

YF: We all . . . [?] money, you know? Like, but it's okay, we gonna buy bread and necessity things, they'll actually charge you, I think. Something like that. We don't have no luxury, we hardly eat ice cream and stuff like that, no. We didn't have those things, and he tried to grow vegetables and lettuce and stuff like that, so we don't need to buy them, with all the kids.

NW: Right, right, it makes sense.

YF: Like, my brother was around 13 years old, and there was a golf course. It's still there, but he used to . . . . when he was 12 or 15, he used to have a job caddying during the weekends, all that, you know? And my older sister, this one, she was, she was around 15, maybe, when I was little . . .

NW: So, she's the one like ten years older than you are.

YF: Yeah. No, yeah, yeah. She's 92. She's not ten years older, six years older. I have one that's ten years older, but she died.

NW: Oh, so she's six years older.

YF: Six years older than me. Her name is Dorothy. She's in a nursing home now and she's 91 or 92. Yeah, 92, I think. And she's living, but the next one, he died. He was in a service. When I was in Japan, he came to look for me. Occupational term, the troop. And this one, she died, early. And this is me. And this younger brother is dead. I mean, he was 82 or something, and he died. Four, five years ago.

<Begin Segment 4>

NW: Going back to your school days here in Hawai‘i, so you were going to two schools, so to speak, one is public school, I assume, I mean Hawai‘i, local school, and the other was a Buddhist church school, and I assume that at the Buddhist church school, you had just Japanese friends, right? People who were children of Japanese first generation immigrants. How about . . .

YF: Yeah, mostly Japanese, at the plantation.

NW: Yeah. How about the public school? Did you have lots of different kinds of students with different . . .

YF: Kind of a mix but Orientals, mostly Orientals, and not too many Polynesians, and then some, maybe 10, 20 percent of like Portuguese and Haoles, you know, Haoles. There were, you know, they work in office over there, in Luluna [?], they're top dressed people, you know. They're white people, they're not contract worker, I mean they're born and raised here, kinda, you know? My father hardly can speak English, so he's just a common worker. And those guys are the one that take care, I guess, the whole planation.

NW: Right, they're the owner.

YF: Around 20 percent, so the kids are going to that school, and then, the rest, maybe 10 percent is Polynesian, Hawaiian, something, but very little, those days. Now a lot of people, lot of Polynesians live there because they have the culture center. They come from Samoa and all over the place, you know. But those days [they] had the Mormon temple but didn't have those, Samoa . . . And mostly Oriental, Oriental, but maybe 75 percent Oriental, but . . . and that Oriental, half of them, not half, were out six, 80 percent, maybe half would be 40 percent, so maybe 50 percent Japanese. From Okinawa, that's still Japanese, right? And the rest, the 40 percent, are Filipinos from the Philippines and some of them have wives and a family because I used to go to school with those Filipino family, you know, the kids, the ones that married, but there were a lot of single ones, Filipinos. I don't know when they came but you know, later than my father, I guess. Single, they are not married, and they lived in a plantation, you know, two men here, and two, around four of them in one house, you know. They provide house because right in the back of our house was Filipino workers.

NW: How about Chinese, did you have any Chinese students at school?

YF: Very little. Very little.

NW: But they were there, a few.

YF: Yeah, you know, funny thing, the Chinese came as a contract workers, I'm sure. But they came before my father had came, most of them. And at that time, I guess Chinese were coming, but they weren't contract workers, you know, they come as a business, or, I don't know what they come for but they come. And most of them, very little Chinese remain, they come as a contract workers, but they don't stay on the plantation, I don't know how long they have to stay, you know when [it was] time for them, maybe five year contract, I don't know. When it's over, they're not going to stay here on the plantation.

NW: Huh. They go back to their country? Or they move to elsewhere?

YF: No, they never go back to their country. But they, if they stay on the plantation, they um, work elsewhere, or, no they cannot stay in a plantation house, but they still around there, they have a little store, or they're business-minded, you know, Chinese. Like Japanese, they come as a contract worker and probably, like my father, you know, they end up working for the company until the company dissolved. But Chinese, they don't stay in a plantation.

NW: They move on to something else.

YF: They go in Honolulu and sell monapua, you know? They make something and then sell. Very enterprising, you know, Chinese. I guess that's what they did in China. But, you know my father then, they, either they work in a farm or they work some place. They are, their parents weren't selling manopua, they weren't selling vegetables on a street or stuff like that.

**<End Segment 4> - **

<Begin Segment 5>

NW: So, your father, when he was still back in Hiroshima, when he was a young man, did he have experience doing farming or was he . . .

YF: I think he did. But also worked for a brewing company, *shōyu* and all kind of stuff. He works around, you know. I guess, cleaning, he wasn't a brewer but, you know, some, he didn't have special skill but work around, you know. And then also farming too because he was, that time that he lived in, although the father was a small, that small town Japanese school principal, that's what I heard, but he wasn't, my father wasn't working as a teacher . . . and they're all farmer's kids there. That's where the father was teaching Japanese. So he did farming too, so you know, being a contract worker, he thought the farming's gonna be over here, it's gonna be like that. But you know, he started to work on a plantation, well. So, I think the farmers' kids, they feel that if they don't have a job and you know in Japan, you have few siblings and then you have small land, normally, the farmers don't own the land, you know? There's a landlord [who] own the land. And they don't have revenue, enough revenue, that's why they go out and seek another job. So he came to Hawai‘i. And then also, his brother, younger brother came too, and he went to Hilo, on the Big Island. And they had plantations and pineapple fields and stuff. Now his younger brother was different from my father. He was very intellectual, so he writes letters for everybody. In Hilo, I understand, he was writing letters to the Japan family, and he take care of the people like the father did.

NW: I see. As educator.

YF: He used to come here and, you know, he was very different from my father. My father was quiet and he was satisfied with working in a plantation. But this uncle, he worked in a plantation, but he was connected to the Hongan-ji and take care of those plantation workers because he was, I think, educated. Like because the father was educator, right? He was an educator. So he writes letters for everybody and each, lot of things.

NW: Maybe keep family together.

YF: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that was the uncle. My father wasn't like that. Anyway . . .

NW: Did you have non-Japanese friends when you were little, I mean, I'm thinking of, did you, you know, have a friend who were Causcasians, did you have a friend with Chin-, I mean, of Chinese, or . . .

YF: Yeah. I had friends when I went to school, from Laie to Kahuku school. My classmates, you know, all mixed, right? Filipinos and white, Caucasians and Japanese and I had, across the street, had this Caucasian family. And I was a good friend of the girl, in the same class as me.

NW: Right, right, did you . . . yeah.

YF: And then I, my sister then was very close to a lot of Filipino families, and Filipino friends but I, my friends were limited to the ones that go to the Hongan-ji, all Japanese, and then some other friends, I guess.

NW: It's interesting.

<Begin Segment 6>

NW: So, tell me a little bit about the reason why your family or maybe yourself went back to Japan and how things were like once you arrived there.

YF: Oh, you see, as I say, you know, we had a lot of kids, and my parents had a hard time, you know, financially. So, and this is my mother. My mother was the youngest of eight or ten or something, in Japan, that is. And she was the youngest. And before that, this auntie. This is my mother's, you see, sister. But she didn't have any children.

NW: I see. She was back in Japan at the time, or was she also here?

YF: He is, when he was fifteen or sixteen, went to America, Los Angeles. And then they sent her, the family knew each other, so send my auntie and they got married.

NW: In Los Angeles.

YF: Yeah, because he was young yet.

NW: But they didn't have children.

YF: No, they didn't have children. And this one here is older than this one. And I only have this picture, but I have another one but, oh, this one here. See, these two are sisters, this one here is this, and older sister is this. My mother had three in the family, the rest, five or six of them were boys, they died kinda young and then three of them, um, three sisters she had, no, two sisters, so three girls, right? Two of them, they didn't have children, and my mother was the youngest and she had, you know . . .

NW: A lot of kids.

YF: Ten or something. But these aunties, both of them didn't have children. Therefore, and they were married in Los Angeles, my uncle was a very successful businessman, you know, he come from a family where the parents still had the house, but the parents used to work, [what] they used to do was, in a farm, Kabe, it's a farm district, and everybody bring, you know, the rice, when they harvest, they bring it. And his parents had a mill, you know, making it into the rice. You know, the grain, I don't know what kind of machine or what, they are making to rice. That mill that the parents had, so you know, he's gonna, but he's the second son. The oldest son is gonna have the mill and all the stage, but he wasn't gonna get anything, so when he was fifteen, he said "Okay, I'm gonna go America and see what might come." Very, very smart, and very energetic, and then very driven, this man was. This is my auntie's husband, he became, he was the one that when I was ten, well, you know, they give some money to my parents, you know. He was helping but told my parents it was 1938 and they had this Olympic Hotel in Los Angeles.

NW: Oh, you mean he was the owner?

YF: Yeah, he was the owner. And above, being it's the Olympic Hotel, they have a lot of this Japanese Naval people and all kind of people staying in their hotel, you know. Then the government of Japan said to him, we have, you know, we're negotiating with America but things are not doing too good in 1938, not doing good, and being you in Los Angeles, you had helped Japan a lot, having all those cadets, you know, all these people staying in the hotel there, you know. I think if they would have war you are certainly going to be in a concentration camp, or you might get killed because some of them, the soldiers were, you know, spying on each other, right? You, you cannot say they were bad, but you know, spying, staying in the hotel, all the cadets, not only those cadets, lot of them are high ranking people, you know?

NW: So did he then . . . ?

YF: This is my uncle. They used to go back and forth. See, these people were, see, his name is Sawano, Mr. and Mrs. Sawano and I'm pretty sure he's one of the, kinda, double-breasted, 1934, something, I don't know.

NW: It looks '34.

YF: Yeah. Those days, it was going back and forth.

NW: So, did he then come back to Japan?

YF: That's when he took me. He was going to take me and my younger brother but then, within a year, he developed a kidney problem, and he died, so, you know, it took about one year before I got the permission, you know, to leave here, you know, all kinds of stuff you have to go through.

NW: You mean, let me be clear, so he was in LA and was an important person locally, but then he was given warning that if you stay there and if the war starts out, then you'll be in concentration camp, so why don't you come back. So did he come back then, to Japan? And then he took you in. I see.

YF: Yeah. That's when he decided to sell the hotel to a Japanese American citizen because he's not American citizen.

NW: Oh, he's not, that's right. Okay.

YF: Sold to an American citizen on 19 . . . that's when I think it was, 1937 or '8. That's when I went. He took me and went to Japan because they don't have heirs, you know? And my parents were having a hard time, so my auntie always [said] "You have too many kids. You cannot even educate your kids." Blah, blah, blah. Everytime they go back and forth, my mother have to dress us up, not all of us, but that's one of the pictures, you know. And then got to meet her in Honolulu, and she's my mother, mommy you don't, so you have something, we're in between. And they used to go back and forth to Japan.

NW: What was your impression of Japan, that was the first time for you, right? What did you think?

YF: I guess it was okay but different.

NW: How so?

YF: Yeah. I was stuck speaking only Japanese, but it didn't take me too long.

NW: But you had some Japanese because you were learning it.

YF: My parents spoke Japanese, so, yeah. See this is one of the trips that they were in a boat.

NW: I'd love to make a copy of those pictures, if you can give me a time afterward. Yeah. Those are really wonderful images.

YF: Because, I think his name would be in one of those, you know, they have those old history of the American and Japanese, you know? Japanese, that I kept a lot of these old pictures. This is one of them, but most of them burned because I had it in my town in my other, this, auntie's. I had two aunties, so while I was working, you know, I would go to the auntie's house and have most of my belongings there and then her house went down.

NW: Because of the bomb, you mean?

YF: Yeah.

NW: Which one is you? Tell me again. Over here at the back? Ah, okay. The very far end.

YF: I was kinda tall, you know?

NW: Yeah, you are.

YF: When my aunt and uncle and auntie started as, when was it, you know, when they were younger, before they bought the hotel, they had this sodaworks. See, this is my uncle and this is my auntie. 1937.

NW: May I see? Yeah.

YF: They are hardworking people. White Soda, White Star Soda. They bought it from somebody, but, you know, they made it big, and was the beginnning of this, you know.

NW: So, this is in Los Angeles, am I right? Yeah. Wow, this is a wonderful picture.

YF: Yeah, this is, they worked really hard, you know?

NW: Yeah.

**<End Segment 6> - **

<Begin Segment 7>

NW: So tell me a little more about your impression of Japan. Were, did you make friends quickly, were schoool teachers kind to you?

YF: I made friends. When I went to Japan, you see, my aunt and uncle still was going 1938, ’37, ’38, ’39, they sold the hotel but they were going back and forth. Still go on a boat and go. And they left me with this auntie, they didn’t have children either, but she lives in Hiroshima city and my aunt’ and uncle’s home is Kabe, which is I don’t know how many miles, but you know, with the fast train about 45 minutes.

NW: So it’s outside the city of Hiroshima.

YF: Outside, yeah, on the outskirts, where are the farmers are, you know? And as I said the uncle’s parents used to have the mill, right in the surrounded farmers, rice paddies.

NW: Did you like Japanese customs? ‘Cuz, I ask you this because some people who were in similar situation, people who grew up in Hawai‘i or in mainland and then suddenly came back to Japan find it difficult to kind of adjust themselves to a new environment because the food is different, the toilet is different, they don’t have an easy access to coffee, which they are very accustomed to.

YF: When they are older, I think they have a harder time. I was only 10. I had nothing at home, you know, not really. Very conservative, the food wasn’t like the food. Japanese food, but very very modest, kind of. So here, I go Japan, and I didn’t, you know, I thought it was wonderful, you know. I’m better, they treat me bettter and on the language, a little bit, I take for a couple years, but I made friends and I stayed with the auntie and went to Hiroshima City Public School. And for one year or so. And then went to *jogakkō*, which is the middle school. I made a lot of friends, and it’s, you know, I wasn’t back at home, you know, I wasn’t, I was one of the 8 kids or 10 kids, I just run around and did nothing [laughter]. I didn’t have any attention. I go to my auntie’s, they don’t have children.

NW: So all their focus and affection is focused on you, right?

YF: Yeah, I never had it so good, you know. I appreciate that. Although, I miss my family, but they were wonderful to me, so it was great.

NW: That’s very nice. So, I know that Hiroshima had a lot of people like you and your family, meaning people who went to Hawai‘i or Hirosima, I mean, to America’s mainland before the war, and just came back, or happened to be in Japan during the wartime. Did you have other friends like you, like yourself, who had a family back in Hawai‘i or in mainland?

YF: You know, I had four or five.

NW: Four or five, at your school?

YF: In high school, you know, yeah. And then one of my, I wanna say they were friends but not my best friend, you know, but there were four or five nice people and they came back when I came back, about the same time. They live, one in town and couple the other side, you know.

NW: Do you think that people who had connection with America or Hawai‘i stood out or were different in any way from other, you know, Japanese students?

YF: Oh, I don’t think so. I mean, children to children, you know? I had great friends and they were really wonderful, I don’t know about the government.

<Begin Segment 8>

NW: So, when the war started out with America, did you have any reaction to it, or do you think that your auntie or your uncle . . .

YF: No. Lots of people didn’t even know I was, my close friend knew, but they didn’t care, what-you-call or not, American citizen, dual citizen I am, you know, because I was younger. But, no, I didn’t feel anything. The only thing that I remember is, you see, when my auntie picked me, every year, she goes back and forth, she ask, you know, my mother, “How’s the kids doing?” and you know, some good, some bad. My oldest sister, like the one I told you, in the nursing home, she’s the oldest, and she’s the best. She writes Japanese and she correspond my auntie [?] in Los Angeles and say, you know, “My mother had another child” or all kind of stuff, you know, she answers. So, my aunt wanted her but my parents cannot give her up because she got to take care of the, you know, siblings, right? She’s older. So, couldn’t. And she always said okay. Now, you’ve seen everybody’s report card, you tell me, who’s the next, she was intelligent, too. And who’s the next best, you know, kids, because according to my sister’s, what you call it, story, I was only 10, so I care less, you know, she said my auntie was very particular. She said “If I’m gonna bring kids, I cannot bring the one that’s not too good in school. I want a smart kid from you.” Eight, ten kids. I know she’s smart, but you cannot give this girl up, you know? Well, who’s the next smartest and who’s the next? So, I was the second, you know. I was 10, so I was this age, that’s what she told me. I was the second. That’s when, it’s only one, two, years after I went to Japan I was in that school. And then my brother was the third, but she didn’t want one boy too, the one that died, I told you, and the rest didn’t. This boy is the son, so they didn’t want to take this one. My older brother, you know. He was intelligent, but this one wasn’t too smart, this one wasn’t too smart, my younger, youngest sister who’s [in] Florence now, she was pretty good, but the others weren’t as good in school, you know. So I was picked because, you know . . .

NW: You were good.

YF: Yeah. I was good! That’s what my sister said, “You were second best, next to me.” Anyway, she wanted somebody that’s pretty smart and she doesn’t want little babies. My sister was around three years old, or two years old, she doesn’t want it. Hard enough to raise little kids because she was going back and forth. So, she wanted 8 to 10 years old, you know, just when you can still go to Japan and still get adjusted, go to Japanese school and then you can keep up. So, she said ideal would be around 8 years old or even me, you know, 10 years old, it’s too late, you know, if I’m gonna live there, that’s what they wanted, me to live there, you know. Anyway, I was picked because of that, that’s what my sister said. And I was sold immediately, you know? I had to go to Japanese school, right? But it didn’t take me too long, one or two years, then I was, you know,

just as good as the others. [Dog barking, unintelligible.] How you you speak a little bit different, you know? Japanese, yeah.

NW: People . . .

YF: Second year, very good. Third year I was just as good as the Japanese, nobody would know that I was, you know, half-American. So . . .

<Begin Segment 9>

NW: So, do you think that they were thoughtless, so they didn't really think anything about the war or do you think they had some ideas about what might happen or what could wrong?

YF: No, they didn't have, no, they thought war is war, I guess. Or, they may have, but they didn't tell me. My uncle only said that, oh, he's so lucky.

NW: Because he won't be placed in internment camp . . .

YF: He didn't have any communication then, when the war started, but he knew war was going to happen, they had, you know, the government in Japan had said it was going to be very very hard for you to live there, you know, because you had helped the Navy, you know? Japanese Navy so much that the first target, first thing they're going to do is just grab you, you know. And was all the, the thing that all the spys were there, in his hotel because not too many Japanese hotels. It was only Olympic which is 110 rooms or something, that's bigger than another one in Los Angeles, Miyako, had only two and lot of them were staying in my uncle's hotel, you know? It's gonna, you know, the admirals, and all kind of people, so he was targeted.

NW: Right. Weren't you worried about your parents, though? They were still back in Hawai‘i, right? And so were your siblings. What did you think?

YF: I wasn't worried because they bombed, what you call it?

NW: Pearl Harbor?

YF: Pearl Harbor is far from where Kahuku is.

NW: But, I mean, most people in Hawai‘i, Japanese and Japanese Americans weren't sent to relocation camps but there are some leaders of local communities who were sent out to the mainland, didn't you worry about them?

YF: No, I wasn't, I mean, I thought of it, but I wasn't really worried. I don't know. I was too young to worry about it, I think. It didn't concern me like, you know. The funny thing is, I don't know, from 10 to 18, I never worried about my family or I didn't have communication when the war started. I never worried because I figured "Why? They're gonna be safe with all of them, you know?" And because they're not in Honolulu, you know, when you're way in the country, you don't have, and my auntie and uncle, they made the most of it. They had some land which

they had to let go because the farmers, their [?] got affected, "You cannot hold unless you're a farmer, you cannot hang onto your land, you know, farmland." So he sold to his longtime farmer that you know, that he was good friend with, [whom] he really, really liked, so cheap, you know? Farmers were so lucky, that's what [you] hear, the farmer's richer than the landload. But . . . and he had some things, another land. Yeah, he sold that the 10 years, 12 years that they stayed because he doesn't have a job, you know, he did community work, a lot of community work, but he didn't have a job. And his money, what they did is they, the Japanese government, when you went to Japan and he had so much money, he did froze all the money and they give, you allow, only 500 yen or whatever, you know, just to live. When the war ended, he got reevaluation of money, because they gave him 360 to one dollar. His stacks of dollars became so little, few thousand yen, you know? And that was really hard to live.

NW: I'm sure.

YF: And, because, his down payment, his money that he got from the hotel, you know, all was in the bank. He didn't know they were gonna freeze it and then the wartime, you know, you can't take the money out, can't buy anything, and you only got to live modestly, you know. It's kinda a lot of strain, but he didn't complain, my auntie didn't complain. He thought maybe he was going to get shot anyway, in America, you know?

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<Begin Segment 10>

NW: Going back in time a little bit, tell me about how your life might have changed after the war started. Did you notice any difference between, during this time period? I mean, many people say things have changed, that's the reason why I'm asking you, but maybe your experience is different.

YF: From when to when?

NW: Before the war and after the war started.

YF: My life?

NW: Yeah.

YF: There was a lot of changes. Financially, you know, a lot of changes. But I didn't, because I didn't live there that long, you know, after the war.

NW: After the war started, that's what I mean.

YF: After the war started? Well, it's a great difference, you know, but I talked [?], everybody got to do the most of it, I didn't have any bad experience.

NW: How about things like food?

YF: Yeah, it was terrible, but everybody have the same kind of rationed food. But, I have my auntie, countryside. They had a little bit more because, as I say, they in the middle of the farmland, and the farmer, you know, is a good friend and then they didn't have too much problem with the rice, so . . .

NW: That's what I was told by others, too.

YF: Yeah. Country people.

NW: They had veggies, they had rice.

YF: So, one in the city, my uncle, the husband died in atomic bomb, and the house got burned and she got hurt and ten days later, oh! she came to my auntie's place, she was saved, we were looking all over for her. She stayed in the city. She had . . . you know, they . . . She had a little bit of problems, but my uncle in the middle of the farmland, although they weren't farming, or somehow they had enough rice. They always had rice, I don't know who gave them, or how they got it. But they had friends there, so I guess, you know.

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<Begin Segment 11>

NW: So tell me a little bit about what you were doing and how things happen on August 6th. You told me that you were going to school in the city of Hiroshima, is that where you were at the time?

YF: Yeah, you see, a couple years before that, you see, when you were 18 or 19, Japan's system was different. You go 6th grade and then you go, what's the third grade, 6th, 7th, 8th, no, 7, 8, 9, 10, four years of *jogakkō* and you graduate. I was, can I remember . . . but anyway, after that my school, you see, it was a private school, Yamanaka-kōjo. But this, during the war years, this, the owner of the school, a private, she didn't have heirs too, maybe, no. She gave that school and the big profit that they had to the government; she turned it in and then she just, I don't know where she retired, but her name was Yamanaka. Anyway, they owned it all, in the middle of the town, you know, there was this school, that's the school I was going, and she, during the war years, she gave it to the government, I don't know what reason it was, she was tired of operating the school or maybe the tax was too big, or I don't know what. But she had an enrollement, full enrollment and we were graduating with big classes and . . .

NW: Wait a minute, when the bomb was dropped, you were in what year of *kōjo*?

YF: The school graduate, and they won't, you work, are working for the . . . *Ah, dakara, teishin-tai dekara*.

NW: Ok, so you are already graduated from the school.

YF: And the school became, um, Fuzoku Yamanaka kōjo, because the government . . .

NW: Took it over.

YF: . . . Fuzoku *was* really, kinda had Fuzoku right by the university. This became, you know, another branch, you know. Because they inheirit the big property and everything, so they made the school Fuzoku. We didn't enter as Fuzoku, we went as a private Yamanaka kōjo, but in the middle, in the war time, it became Fuzoku Yamanaka kōjo.

NW: So were you sill going to that new Fuzoku Yamanaka kōjo in 1945.

YF: Yeah. Half a day we go to school, half a day we go to Mitsubishi and work. Because we were of age, I guess, you know, 16, 17.

NW: Right. What kind of work were you doing in that factory?

YF: The factory used to make airplane propeller parts. It's a stainless steel about a foot long and had this L-shaped kind of, you know. Well, sometimes it's different. It's just the plain ones, but most of the time it was like that. It's kinda heavy, you know? It weighs a few pounds, and solid stainless steel. And the machine is, a big machine, and have one machinist. And he cuts it, I guess, and asks all the students, especially the woman. We go and then we got to sandpaper it really good, you know? Sand it down, and then there's a box, you know, and we just put it right in the box. We just sand, the sanding takes three or four hours. It's . . . I don't know what else we had to do, you know, but we have to hang on to that for long time, and not only me, you know.

NW: Everybody was doing.

YF: 10 girls doing it. Boys had different work to do, I guess, you know?

NW: So is that what you're doing when the bomb was dropped?

YF: Yeah, that was my job.

NW: Tell me a little bit . . .

YF: But I wasn't doing that, I was, that's the job I was going to, just when I arrived the factory, the factory was kind of temporary, kinda, you know. I would say it was *totan* kind of roof, you know, long like that. It's Mitsubishi seikō, but for about a year, they had moved, they were on a oceanside, right on the ocean. Where the boat, not because of the boat, but right on the ocean, Mitsubishi had a big, big factory, you know? But for some reason, because they were being bombed all the time, you know, it's exposed, yeah? The factory. So, they build that complex right in the mountains. The mountain is Koi, the name of that mountain, you know? It's just like this kind of mountain. And have mountain and have a valley, you know? And right by the valley, they built, you know, the factory. And we have to go up, walk maybe twenty minutes, or twenty five minutes, before we reach the valley, we say from here to probably over there. And had houses, at the beginning, a lot of houses. And a little bit, and then really in a forest, you know. So we go up there and the factory's right there. And then we work there, you know? And you know, meantime, if there's a siren, saying B-21, B-49s is there, you know, we can, we have to go and take shelter, you know. And the shelter is, they dig this tunnel, you know, the valley, then tunnel and then we've got to go all in the tunnel, you know, we don't work nighttime but daytime. And we all, because we're student, right, we have instructors, like teachers, they tell you what to do and we just do it, we just drop everything and then go into the shelter so we don't get bombed,

you know? Actually, the factory really never get bombed, close by, yeah, but we were pretty safe while we were working there. That is, I cannot remember if it was every other day or sometimes they would change and stay one week and one week you can go to school, but what they promised was, we work for the defense, but we don't have to pay tuition, and that was already, we were in *senmonbu*, you know, *senmonbu* is college. We don't pay tuition, and you can go half of the time, you can go school, you know. It's up to you, you don't have to go to school, you don't have to, but work, you have to.

NW: Okay, okay.

<Begin Segment 12>

NW: So, what were you doing on August 6th?

YF: The middle of the, where they dropped it, was behind me, I just went on the street car, there was a street car that passed right there by the bridge and the streetcar goes across the bridge. I went through that place, maybe twenty or thirty minutes before and went to the mountains, Koi, that's the end of the, what you call, street car, and then I start walking, so I must have walked twenty minutes or fifteen. I just reached the factory and that's when the bomb struck.

NW: What happened to you?

YF: Nothing happened. Imagine it? We thought we'd, that, what you call, um, *totan* roof went [makes noise] but, you know, I was right next to this big machine, you know, this office in there. After the whole office, I cannot remember if I went to the office first or I was going to the office, you know, they have the roll call, you gotta sign in or I don't know what we did, but I reach there, and I was going to my . . . where I work. I must have passed one, I told you the machines are big, right? I was close to the machine because the roof went [makes roof screeching noise] and for some reason, they had some glasses, you know, windows, or glass windows, because I cannot remember her name, but this girl got a glass. Oooh, the blood was dripping so much, you know, on the arm. So the glass had just shattered and hit her. But I was so safe, I mean, I didn't hide or anything, I was just going to my, you know.

NW: You were in between heavy duty machinery so you were protected by them. I see.

YF: Right, you know how after I'm talking to my friends, you know, and I said, you know, you can be really lucky. You can be right next to the window or right next to something that fall on you. I'm right by the machine and I'm like, what's happened to this roof, look! You know. Everything's going down, and here the machinery, so the roof is hanging there, you know. And I was right there. I didn't purposely go there, I was just walking.

NW: Just happened to be there. So, what did you do next?

YF: So, we had to go into the shelter, you know, we all ran and said, "Oh, god, this, what a heavy duty, what you call, bomb we got." We didn't know it was atomic bomb.

NW: Right. Were there many people injured?

YF: Yeah, well, the students. I would say, you know, there's cuts and bruises and stuff, nobody got killed, I think.

NW: How far was it from the hypocenter? The center of the explosion?

YF: Uh, so many kilos, but I cannot remember it. It's, you cannot walk, it's from here, you're standing, you got to look, well where, the beach is, kinda far, yeah. Well, I would say distance from here to beach is three miles maybe or five miles.

NW: I see, okay. So nobody was burned severely or anything like that, you were, they were just sort of lightly injured. Okay. So tell me a little more about, then next.

YF: And then we went into the shelter, you know, and waited, you know, we didn't know what was going on, it was in the morning, I think, early morning because I just arrived there. So we have to stay half a day, I don't know what we ate, but whole day, because you know the factory's like that, you know. And they had some [?] too, but we don't, we didn't attend to that, we just stayed. And then I don't know if we ate or what, but we're just sitting there, and wondering, what's gonna happen next, where's the next bomb gonna be, you know. Because it was really close. We figured it's really close because the factory went [makes some sound] down like that, you know?

NW: You didn't know if it's a new bomb that's so massive.

YF: Yeah. The thing is, we been bombed for weeks, nighttime, I'm at my auntie's house and lot of time, you know, neighbor's house is burning and we got to go and help, you know, pass the water. And we all trained to help each other, you know. Anyway, those things happened, and she has a small shelter and we go in there, you know, when we hear the siren in the middle of the night, sometimes. Daytime is a little bit easier because you know, what's going on, you know. Anyway. And some houses were burninig. The city was in, already in uh, bomb, you know.

NW: Yeah.

<Begin Segment 13>

NW: So how did you find out that, you eventually went back to your aunt's house, right?

YF: Yeah. The aunt that lived in town.

NW: Right, right. So, when was it, was it the next day or later on the same day?

YF: Well, that evening, whole day we stayed in the shelter, all the students, you know, they said not to go out because [they] gonna have more bombs and we, we know it's, lot of planes were flying. B-49, you know, I think it was, they used to say. And then siren stops and goes again and here we see the flames, you know, daytime. But the strangest thing is, we're on a mountain,

right? And the city started to smoke, you know, and in the afternoon, we see fire, I mean it was fire, but daytime you only see smoke, right? And the teachers, all the instructors, teachers said "Don't go in the city." Because so many bombs, you know? We figured out that the plane that was flying must have dropped all the bombs in the – did you know that evening, the whole city was red? I was looking and I said, "Oh my God," we didn't think that much bomb, we figured thousands of bombs to get that many fires, the whole city was burning. We just couldn't think. I, we stayed whole night. And you know, the morning came and we all got restless because some of the people have parents in the city, you know, that they have a business and the city and we want to go, we want to go, because my parents, I want to see if my parents are safe, you know, all the kids start screaming, so the teacher said whoever have, we all have place to go, in case the city gets bombed, in case we got bombed, we're going to go, me, I'm going to my auntie's place, far, far from the city. I know exactly where I'm supposed to go. But everybody have places, you know, they go to a suburb where they have their clothes and relatives' house and they have a lot of stuff stashed, you know. So in case of emergency, they go there, they can live for a while. So the teacher said whoever have relative in Asa-gun and Aki-gun which is, here is Hiroshima city and it's burning. We are up on the mountain and it's burning right here in the middle of the city, whoever have, can go this way, and I have to go that way, you know, north? If you have a place tomorrow morning, you can go, but don't go into the fire because they said that the city's really buring. So, you can go, you know. So a lot of people went in the morning and it was around noon time and my friend and I, because my friend said, the parents right in the city, they get this big, big, open space, right over there, have the big city, you know, the main drag. And right over here have the parents' store. They make futon, store, she said she got to go here. Which, we weren't supposed to go, you know. She said now the fire is not that big. So, it's gonna get, subside and we gonna go and this [friend] told us, if you gonna go, follow the train track, you know, it's wide, train, bus track and a road, kinda wide road where all the streetcars, cars and so, naturally, both sides can be burning, but you know, kinda safe. Well, she told me, oh, she got to go there, the middle. She knows if the parents are dead, she gotta go here, but she thinks that we have a good *bōkugō* and maybe the parents need help, you know? Maybe [they're] alive. She want to go, she begged me. Because I can go to my, the aunt's house in town, by taking the train and go this way. And this is the length all wide open and have all those hospital. Hospital for the wounded people, Army hospital, this is the Army, big square. The hospital is [by] a big river, you know, my aunt lives right there. So . . .

NW: The aunt who was living in the city? Right? The oldest?

YF: Yeah, this one. This one lives right here. And this is the big *renpei jō*, not right there but, you know, a few blocks.

<Begin Segment 14>

NW: So, you said that you can go with your friend, then check out your aunt as well.

YF: So, I said, "You know, I cannot just go to my old aunt's place because, no, I don't know what happened." She's on a side, but maybe that place is burning too, so I wanna go, so she and I got together, and said okay, got to there, we gonna go [by] the train track, you know? And then

you go in, you know? And then you go in, check yours, and I'm going this way and then, you know, check my auntie's house, maybe she needs help. So we waited till what, the whole night, the daytime was a little bit better, it could be early afternoon, you know? The fire had, because this, this was the center. This was the center, so you know, it had burned out. And the houses were, except for building, practically flattened. Now, soon we started, but when we went, when we saw it, we went out of the factory and we've got climbed, we've got to go down the hill, right? Wow, I saw so many people climbing up, who were in the city, they got hurt there and you know something? Most of them were burned. And the skin, amazing, you know, when you get a burn from atomic bomb, or, I don't know, any kind of burn maybe, you know, sometimes, a lot of them have shorter sleeves or, I don't know anything about sleeve, burns. You know, this skin, they are all grey, you know, and then it peels and hangs. It curls like that and hang. Wow, we saw those kind of people, I guess it hurts, you know, because they're trying to climb the mountain and take shelter, you know? And then some of them with a little kid, or most of them, you know, younger. The old people cannot even climb the hill. So the younger people come in and their skin. So, first and the second one, we had . . . all kind of bandage, mask and all the, my friend and I decied the first thing we're gonna do is put the mask because it's burning, right? It's so hard for us to walk through that burn. So, we're gonna put the mask now. You're gonna have a good mask, okay? This, and in case you did burn or you get hurt, you need bandaid or tourniquet. That, you cannot let go. So we took our stuff, and we have some extra bandaid and extra this, and then we gonna get towels. Two towels, and then the water, you know, so the teachers told us, if you're gonna walk throught the burn, or you know, the middle of the bomb, you're so close with the towel, you know, with the water, and then put it around your mouth or your head or right there because it's hot, right? But this is a must, you know? Then wrap your head with a towel, we need the towel. We need the water, but the rest? Maybe we don't need it. So here comes people without bandage or anything, so we help them wrap, you know. And they said "Oh, it burns." And I guess it's more than a first degree or second degree, I don't know what degree. So we helped, you know, they sit over there and my friend take care of this one, take care of that, you know. At the beginning we thought of only these people. After we helped four or five people, the more we go down, the more people climbing up. We don't have any supply already to help those people. So, she said, we got to go quick because my parents, you know, need help, in shelter. So we went, put the mask, with the towel, and then walked that. That's when we find it, you know, that a lot of people, when they die, it's just like an animal. Dead, you know, the body becomes stiff or something, they're there, completely dead, laying there, that's human. Human, all the place, and they're in that shape, they must have really suffered, you know.

NW: It was very close to the hypocenter, right? So because you were saying there was the center and then you were going toward that, Yeah.

YF: Yearh. There's a bridge because there's a big, Ōtagawa is a big river, and then the bridge is right there, and you know even the bridge had, what do you call, right column, it's only fallen one side. One column this side. The bomb, you know, the pressure was so great that it takes the column down like to, but the bridge was, we could pass. It's not a long bridge, but sturdy, good, bridge. So we passed the bridge and that was the center, you know? It's still today, they have it, you know. *Hakubutsu kan*, I don't know what, the center.

NW: The Dome, the Genbaku Dome? Did you mean?

YF: Yeah. We passed there, there was a bridge, right? We passed the bridge, we passed the dome, we didn't know that was the center.

NW: Of course, of course not.

YF: We didn't even know that's atomic bomb, you know? So we passed there, we walked, just bombs all over the place. We passed there and we went there and this is a big intersection, you know? The road like that and the intersection. I told her, "Your parents have a store, right there, right on the big main street. And you better go check, but you know what? I'm gonna stand over here and wait. I'm not gonna go down there." It's kinda hot, too, you know? And burning, little fire here and there and I stood here and she went there. Well, she know exactly where the, what you call it, is, you know, shelter is. Well, it must have been around 20 . . . I waited so long, I thought "What's happening? I wonder if she fell in a shelter or something happened to her?" And then I saw her coming, you know, naturally, she's all weeping and she's so sad, so I knew, what was it. And she told me, you know, I think she's gonna spend the night over here. I said "No, you're not going to spend the night." And me, I have to go look for my auntie. "Now, what are you going to do? No sense you come over here because your house, you're supposed to come this side, to your aunt's place, so why don't we sit . . ." But, I said "Furthermore, you don't know if that's your parents or that's the worker, you know?" And she said, she stayed there long enough, she said she know that they are the parents. So I said "How?" And she said "You know the face, the skeleton?" She said she knows exactly how the mother had the gold filling, teeth, the teeth. The gold don't melt, seems like. She said when she saw the mouth, that was the mother's mouth. When she saw because they had a lot of gold in there, you know? Teeth, and the other one was the father. They were together. And all burned, you know? I don't know what state it was.

NW: Was this friend somebody whose family were also . . .

YF: I don't even remember a name, you know.

NW: You don't. Do you know if she had a relatives or brothers or sisters in Hawai‘i or in America?

YF: No, not in America.

NW: So she was local, so to speak, okay.

YF: She was typical Japanese. But she had two brothers. And then the parents there, they had the wife, and then she had aunties and uncles that she had to go after the war. After the war, you know, we've found out that was atomic bomb and we kind of settle down, we burned the body and whoever was saved was saved, one, two months later. I had a communication, I would like to talk to her.

NW: This friend.

YF: Yeah, this one. She either call me or I called or something. And I spoke to her and she told me she had two brothers. She told me she had two brothers, one was in Manchuria and one was somewhere in the South Pacific or something.

NW: Where?

YF: South Pacific.

NW: South Pacific.

YF: Or maybe [it] was, I cannot remember what, maybe it was Manila or somewhere on the south. But one was . . . did I say Manchuria?

NW: Manchuria, yeah.

YF: Manchuria. They're older borhter and living, in Japanese war, right? And they were occuping, they were stil fighting, I don't know what. Did you know after that? She had a word saying her two brothers were coming home. That's what she told me.

NW: Very good.

YF: I didn't see the two brothers, I didn't see her after that, but she was so relieved because she had two brothers.

NW: At least somebody in her family was still alive.

YF: Yeah. I think she only had two brothers and herself!

<Begin Segment 15>

NW: How about your aunt, then. Did you find her?

YF: Well, the house was all burned and when I went, I said "Oh no way!" You know, she's going to be safe, and this place was still burning for some reason, you know, right around the river, had some people there. So I talked to them, I talked to the people around here, and asked if she, if this [is] all her, you know, nobody, so I said "Gee, it's burned. I see, well, if it's not burned, she can be under, you know, the raft or something. But the house is burned, how can she live there?" You know? So, no sense in going to the rubble, I said okay, maybe she's all burned up. Wait until the fire [subsides], you know, it's too hot to walk in there, so I'm gonna tell my auntie. [Unitelligble voice from the phone, not part of the interview].

YF: Well, you know, that was the saddest, but at the time I was so depressed, and I had to go to my auntie's but wasn't too easy. Because I'm able bodied, I'm not hurt, I'm not burned, so I cannot, you know, have a ride or anything because a lot of trucks with a lot of body, and they all, burned or something. With me, they wouldn't put me on a truck, you know?

NW: Yeah, right. So you walked all the way?

YF: So I walked to a temple, they have *musubi* and [?] and that, only thing you have is *musubi* but at least you get something to eat. You know, Japan has a lot of small temples, you go to one

city, you walk maybe one hour and there're temples. You know, *otera.* So as long as you go *otera*, you get something to eat.

NW: Something to eat. Yeah.

YF: So I went and then evening come and I just stick around and nothing but injured people, all burned and some are dying, and all that, you know. Well, I was so depressed, I can't even help, I just, I'm just like one half dead, I eat the *musubi* and I'm, I don't know why, I gotta sleep and I sleep.

NW: Of course.

YF: And they come to me and ask me if . . . where's my burn, I tell no, I'm not burned, I'm only tired, you know. So, they said okay, there's a lot of people that come and put, I don't know what kind of medicine, all of the burn, arm and face and body, you know. But I'm not, I don't have a burn so they don't have to put that medicine on me, you know.

NW: Right, right. So you eventually arrived at that place that everybody agreed that this is the place to go?

YF: No, my auntie's house.

NW: Right. Isn't that the place you decided to go?

YF: Right. It didn't take me too long, you know? If I had walked, walked, walked, probably you know, 5, 6 days or more, but I had, in between, I had a short, maybe 20 miles of ride for some reason, I can't remember, was it a truck or ride or what. So around 5, 6 days, and I reach my auntie's. Until then, I was tired, I would rest if I could, you know, and I have food, but when I arrive my auntie's, I felt so exhausted and my auntie told me, that I had lot of bleeding nose, you know, I bled and bled, at my auntie's. I didn't do that in the temple or any place, you know. Bled probably a little, um, fallout. I didn't know what it is but after all, you know, and we didn't know that was gas, I guess, I inhaled some gas.

NW: Yeah, you inhaled, right.

YF: And [in a] couple [of] days and I was okay. And about one week later, took them one week to find out that that had had so much gas, atomic bomb is so much radiation and everything, until then, people used to go and look for their, like we were gonna go, we were just about to go to town and look for my auntie, you know, all the burn, and my uncle who left the house, but we didn't know, I thought my aunt and uncle was in that.

NW: Right, right. But were they there? Were they there?

YF: He went, according to her, later.

NW: But she was in that other auntie's house.

YF: She was in a house and she got hurt so she didn't come to that house, my auntie's house, for long time.

NW: I see, I see.

YF: Two weeks later. When she came we thought she was a ghost or something because ooh.

NW: Where was she in those two weeks, was she hospitalized?

YF: No, she . . . in the church, temple. I mean, that's the only place there's food. So she was taking shelter but not good enough to walk around too much. So it took long before she . . .

NW: Actually was able to come. Yeah, no wonder.

YF: Yeah. We were so shocked, and we were, I think we sent some people to look, you know, my auntie and uncle, they were too old to go into those kind of buring, you know, good thing they didn't go, but I decided, I'm gonna go, you know? Look for it a little bit more, maybe I can find skeleton or something.

NW: Yeah. How about your uncle then? He was not at home?

YF: We looked the market, he went on a bicycle and went to the market. You see, the center of this, what you call, has a big market here on the side, on the other side, you know. Where the train, I mean, the track is. He goes to the market in the morning, practically everytime because he has a friend and I think he was helping the friend, you know, and stuff like that. Because there were these merchants, there were shorthanded too. If they have a son, they're out in the war, no men, you know? Only women left, right? They take all the men, you know, from 16 and up, I think, and they have to go to war, you know, and that war was terrible because it spread from Peking to Manchuria to South America, you know? No, not South America, but South Pacific, like, like what, Philippines or Malayasia or whatever. You know how many men they need so all the able man, like my cousin, I had a cousin, now, afterwards, the Sawano, I came back here and I decided not to go back, that's when they adopted my cousin, my cousin's parents were dead, not from the atomic bomb but this lady had raised my cousin, so he was, you know, this lady's like, you know, *yōshi*, and he was gonna take care of them but then they lost the house, the uncle dead, and everything's so . . .

NW: So the uncle actually died?

YF: Yeah, died. We didn't even find his body. But this auntie and uncle, when I came back to Hawai‘i, I told them, I got married, your folks either come to Hawai‘i, otherwise, you know, I don't think I'll go back to Japan. The thing is this. They were so sad because my name wasn't Sawano. You see, if I'm of age, I get married and my cousin's name begins [?] Sawano and got the house and field the stuff . . . the estate that they had, but not much, you know, by the time they died. But she wanted to leave everything to me but did you know that the law says if you are American citizen you can't own anything, so she decided that her cousin, a Japanese citizen, right? And he's, house is burned, doesn't have anything. So, I said that's a good thing because my cousin come back from Manchuria, have nothing, the house, the auntie's house gone, and poor thing. So, he became Sawano.

NW: I see.

<Begin Segment 16>

NW: Okay. So, what did people talk about, or did they talk about anything, you know, in terms of what happened? I know that right after the bomb was dropped, nobody knew it was atomic bomb, right? But then there was a rumor that went around about, you know, bomb illness, people's hair falling . . .

YF: Well, you know something? About one week, and they had announced it, people, don't go in the city because there's gas and radiation, didn't say radiation, but a lot of gas.

NW: Right, right.

YF: So, there, they found out that people who come from the country looking for their loved ones, looking for their relatives, they dig here and there, searching for the body, you know, stay a few days and then go home, and they just drop die.

NW: Yeah, right. Because of irradiation.

YF: Yeah. They were thinking, how can that be? They weren't even on the scene when the bomb was dropped or didn't get burned or anything. That's how they found out this gas, they said at the time, gas, you know, radiation, but.

NW: Did you, do you think that you had an identity or awareness that you were bomb survivor at that time?

YF: Yeah.

NW: You know, you went into city and that's *nyūshi* category, right? Did you think that you were at that time thinking of yourself as a bomb survivor, so I have to worry about something, I have to be aware or I have to . . .

YF: Afterwords.

NW: When do you think that you started to thinking that way?

YF: Well, when they say that, you know, there was radiation, then we were concerned.

NW: Around when was it, do you think?

YF: Well, about a couple weeks, you know?

NW: Okay. You were already worried.

YF: Yeah, I was, my auntie and my uncle were kind of, you know, concerned because I'm young, right? And then I went through the city.

NW: Right, absolutely.

<Begin Segment 17>

NW: How about your parents? I mean, after they learned there was a bomb, a new type of bomb dropped on the city of Hiroshima where you used to go to work and go to school, they must have been terribly worried.

YF: My parents were here.

NW: Right.

YF: Well, they thought I'm dead.

NW: Right, they did.

YF: Well, for a while. And then I sent telegram, something, anyway, there's a place, the Red Cross has for communication, you cannot send that out, you know post office or besides we couldn't send. But somehow I sent, through Red Cross, you know?

NW: Right, right. Let them know you are fine?

YF: Yes, I am fine. So I understand my father told, well my brother, the brother that's over there, he didn't go to war because he's missing one of the finger over here, when he was little, you know, he got accident, cut off. So they didn't take him originally. But he was drafted as occupational. That's what's it's called. That's when my father said, you go and get assignment in Japan so you can look after your, look and see if your sister is, you know, okay? She said it's okay, but you never know, you know, maybe she's critically ill. So he came to Japan and then came to Hiroshima as a GI, you know.

NW: Right, of course.

YF: . . . and then we met and he said, oh your father's gonna send money, so I'm gonna make arrangement so you can go home, he said, you know, you, auntie and uncle don't have children, and they think that you gonna take care of them and stay with them, so I'm not saying you're going back to Hawai‘i, we got plenty siblings, your parents not gonna miss you much, so you just go home so your parents will be happy to see you and the sisters and brothers, we all want to see you, so he's gonna send you money, and I'm gonna make arrangements with the American Consulate. It took about two months or three months, and I came to Hawai‘i.

NW: Were you glad to be back? Were you glad to be back in Hawai‘i?

YF: Yeah, yeah. But I was glad because Japan was all burned and don't have anything, it was really, well, in depressed kind of mode, so I wasn't too happy to be in Hiroshima.

NW: Right, right. Well, when you went back to Hawai‘i, it’s 1947, right? And at that time, of course, there was no . . .

YF: 1948.

NW: ’48, Okay. At that time, there was no survivors, *genbaku techō*, anything like that. Do you have it now?

YF: Yeah.

NW: When did you get it?

YF: Actually, I didn’t get it right away, yeah. Must have been, you know, 30, 40 years afterwards.

NW: Ah, okay. So it was 1970? 1980s?

YF: Maybe 1960.

NW: 1960. Uh-huh.

YF: I don’t know if the *techō* existed then. I don’t think they had, but you know, I didn’t get it right away. Some people went Japan and get it. You had to go Japan and get it. But I had no, as I say, my auntie and uncle died, six years later, both of them are gone. So I had, I went to the funeral and all that, and I have gone to Japan once more in between, but I didn’t need a *techō*, I was [?] and American citizen, I was busy, so.

NW: Right, right. So, why did you decide to get the certificate? The survivor’s *techō*? What was the reason?

YF: They all told me that I should get a *techō*.

NW: Your family members?

YF: No, my friends from Japan. Yeah. They said because when you go Japan, you have benefits, you know. You go to hospital, maybe they will – Mimi! – so I thought, okay. It was a few years later, you know, after everybody’s got the *techō*, I said okay, I’m gonna get one. But still, I had to go Japan to get an examination and all that.

NW: Of course, of course.

YF: Now, you don’t have to, I heard.

NW: It changed, more recently, really recently.

<Begin Segment 18>

NW: Now, do you think that, you know, you lost your uncle to the bomb and your, you were made into a survivor because of the bomb and do you think that because of your experience during wartime and afterwards, your image of America might have changed in any way? I'm not saying, you know, either for better or for worse, I'm just saying that . . .

YF: My image?

NW: Yeah. Because you were originally from Hawai'i and then you had a connection, right?

YF: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

NW: Personal family connection and then suddenly you were in Japan and your father's and mother's country, which is America was fighting against Japan and you were victimized by the bomb. I just wondered what image of America you might have had at that time.

YF: You know, I never thought of it like, you know, America is good or Japan is good or anything like that. It's, you know, to me, well, both country had faults, they just didn't get along, that's why the people, you know, had to sacrifice so much. But I don't have grudge against any country. America was good to me and also I'm proud to be Japanese. I think Japan is a very nice, good country. Except the war that they started, I think because, you know, in Japan they had the *shōgun* era, you know, and they were kinda closed, like the communists, you know, closed too long. And sooner one day, the *shōgun* period disappeared and Westernized a little bit, but still Japan is, just, the people in Japan, born and raised, you know, and the culture. And they still have the *shōgun*-ish kind of thinking. They weren't, I don't want to stay broadminded, but they didn't know the world. They're still too, too obsessed with them being so superior because they had little wars in China, and my father went to a war, a Russian war when he was young. Hh, they won the war, you know, small kinds. That's how they got Karafuto, Okinawa, or whatever. So they thought, well, this you can, you know, if you know the world, you know how big America is. And then European world. How can you think that you can conquer a big contry like America, it's ridiculous to think that way. But some of the people still had the old, like Tojō or what. I think they thought they can conquer. That's the thing that's really bad because, you know that time, Konoe was the Prime Minister, I think, and also was trying to deal with America.

NW: Huh. How about America? After the bomb was dropped, um, do you think your image or idea about America might have changed?

YF: The bomb was dropped . . . um . . .

NW: You know, America made a decision to drop the bomb.

YF: Well, I thought that was another thing, you know, but it got to be done, I guess. In a way, you know, Japan got saved, the bomb was only isolated, what you call, the war ended, right? The war had to end somehow and they had a long war. When I went to Japan, they were fighting already, you know? They were at war.

NW: So do you think that it was a necessary, right decision to drop the bomb?

YF: I wouldn't say right, but I wouldn't say that Japan really got the shock. And of course, they attacked what you call, so they've got blame for it, I think. Their [?] casualty and that was wrong. So, but you can't say that atomic bomb totally destroyed Japan. I think it did, well in a small talk, if you're gonna talk to a kid, well, you deserve what you, you know, got, I mean . . .

NW: So, you are saying that the Japanese people deserved to be killed by the bomb? In the way that they were?

YF: Well, some sacrifice, you can't help it, you know?

NW: Uh-huh.

YF: But the majority of them got saved because the war ended.

NW: Majority of Japanese.

YF: Did you know, it was really a relief? I would say all the Japanese people thought, oh, they wouldn't say it out loud but they were relieved, of course, you know, Hiroshima got, you know, big, we got to do, we had to sacrifice, we had to sacrifice hundreds of, thousands of people died.

<Begin Segment 19>

NW: What was your life like after you came back to Hawai‘i? What did you do and how did you restart your life in Hawai‘i?

YF: Well, first thing, I had to go, you see, I was in Japan 10 years, so my English was so bad. You know, funny thing, 10 years and you, of course, you know, when I went to Japan, I was only elementary and then I went to Japan and I got to go full blast in Japanese. And I did okay, you know. Now when I came back, I got to back to English again. So I took some courses at the high school, they have English on their courses because actually I am a graduate of high school and other stuff. I do math and like that . . . I am not that . . . I am pretty good, but only English. So I went to school a couple of years, you know. I remember going to night school too, and working, you know?

NW: Right, right. What kind of work did you do?

YF: You know my sister? This one, this one here, had a bakery right in the middle of . . . and there's a high school, close by, walking distance. So I take a couple hours of classes and I work there. Because my family's waiting in Kahoku. So I stayed there and they needed help, so I worked at the big reef [?], learned how to do all those things, you know? But physically, you know, I was, some Japanese, for me, if I didn't go to defense work and work two, three years, you know, although . . . but physical work really worked you hard. And if I didn't have that, probably I wasn't going to be too good working in a bakery, you know? But, I told my sister, you tell me to cook rice and I don't know how to cook rice or I don't know how to cook but you tell me to wash the pan and do this and do that in a bakery, I'll do it, you know. And she said yeah! Physically, you're stronger than me. She was surprised because, you know, in Japan . . .

NW: You worked hard.

YF: Yeah, we worked hard, you know? I mean, all these years that I went to the Yamanaka is, it's the lady, Mrs. Yamanaka owned that private school, it's a finishing school. You learn the manners, you learn how to arrange a fan, you go tea ceremony and you, you know, when you're married, you've got to do this and, you know, talk this way, that way. To get into . . . it's to prepare you to get married, you know.

NW: Right, exactly.

YF: And married right, although I was kind of physically, I liked to be physical, tomboy-ish. So when I started to work in the factory to places, it was okay.

NW: Yeah. So did you continue to work for your sister's bakery for long time or did you move onto something else?

YF: Well, I came back 20. 23, I was married.

NW: Ah, okay. Did you stop working after you got married, then?

[Interruption]

YF: So I worked and at 23, I got married and I got married to a baker.

NW: Oh, he was a baker too! Did you work with his bakery, then?

YF: Yeah, my husband and I worked together, sort of like, of course, he had bakers and stuff and this is [showing a picture], and eventually we built a bakery and the oldest boy's name is Craig. This building, we own this building, still today

NW: Oh, that's wonderful. It's still a bakery, or?

YF: No, we just rent it to somebody. Some other people.

NW: So, you continued to work for your husband's bakery for, together, for a long time.

YF: We operated about 50 years.

NW: Wow. So, you must have been very successful.

YF: Yeah, he was a hard working person. I didn't take, you know, I'm only what you call, but he was very hardworking.

<Begin Segment 20>

NW: So, it's a question from a differernt angle from my other questions, but when you came back to Hawai‘i and started out your life and started to work and eventually you got married and

also work for your husband's bakery, do you think, you know, that social status of women in Hawai'i was any different from the social status of women in Japan?

YF: Well, you know, I . . . it was wartime. And I was busy working, going to school and I don't, you know, really know how. Well, you know in the wartime it's different, I think. Different from now, what, before, know you, I went to Yamanaka, you know, to finish school, Mrs. Yamanaka taught us differently.

NW: How so?

YF: Yeah. Really Japanese, you know?

NW: What do you mean?

YF: Well, elegant living, you know, we don't have to go and do the machine, anything like that but you gotta make sure you know your manners, how you walk, how you talk, how you serve your, you know, mother-in-law. In the morning, you get up, you gotta, you know, fix yourself ready nice, put on makeup, sit nicely and say good morning to your parents, not your parents, your husband's parents.

NW: Your husbands'.

YF: You gotta serve them, you gotta be, you, you know, how you present yourself and act. You know, that's really Japanese style, you know?

NW: And that was different once you were here.

YF: Yeah, that's different. Here you don't have to do that. Here you don't have to live with your mother- and father-in-law. I didn't do that, no body, you know. My family didn't have to do that so I didn't, my mother-in-law lived her own place and, you know. If I was in Japan, I'd probably have in-laws, that's why we get all the training, you know?

NW: Right, right. Now, did you talk about how you were a survivor of the bomb when you got married with your husband?

YF: Yeah, uh-huh.

NW: How did it come up? How did it come up? How did you talk about that?

YF: Well, I just told, you know, the atomic bomb, I was there, so he knows.

NW: How did he respond?

YF: I don't know how he felt, but you know, when I had the first son, I said "You know what I'm really worried is? Before I left Japan, we had a stigma, I overheard some of my friends said, you know, we cannot get married to a descent place. It's better to get away from, you know, Hiroshima and live in Tokyo or big city where people are not too conscious of you because you are a survivor and maybe you know, it's gonna affect the children that you are gonnna have." So,

when I had my first, when I got pregnant, I told my husband "You know, I don't know what, that's what they said." Some people didn't want survivors, you know, as a bride. Especially the one that, you know, was in the middle, like me, or so close. Hiroshima, but if you're outskirt or elsewhere, it's fine. Put you in a city or if you go there, they don't want you as a bride.

NW: As a bride. Yeah.

YF: Some people had said already, "No, no, no, she's from Hiroshima." And that age, they don't want it because, I gues, unknown, nothing. Maybe some people, it affected some people.

NW: No, I ask you this because many people that I talk to told me there was a rumor that you can't be a woman and good mother if you were a survivor, so they did tell me they were worried about that. And that came up when they got married, that kind of thing. So, yeah.

YF: Yeah. They didn't want, for about five or six years, they didn't want any bride from Hiroshima, especially if you are the city, in the city, because of that effect, they think the children's gonna be. And maybe some people got affected, you know, but I don't think I, I was kind of worried when I had the first child, you know.

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<Begin Segment 21>

NW: Now, you told me that some time in 1960s you applied for the survivors' *techō* and then I think it's in 1980s when doctors from Hiroshima started to come here to do the annual, actually biannual check ups. Do you go there? Do you think . . . did you start to go there when it started out in the 1980s.

YF: Uh-huh.

NW: Okay. What do you think is the significance, value of having Japanese doctors coming here?

YF: Well, I think they need a lot of medical research, right? They need that, you know. With me, I did okay, you know? I'm living this long and, not a lot of old people go there, so as far as, you know, that didn't affect a lot of people. They are all, you know, it seems like, atomic bomb surivors, right. I don't know which area they stayed but yeah. And a lot of old peole, so it didn't affect too much, I mean, if we see a lot of cancer patients all of a sudden when we are 60 or 70, then it would be odd, right? We get a lot of cancer people but a lot of people never affected, still, my husband had cancer and he died, you know? So, I don't know, you know? The research gonna find it, you know.

NW: So, you feel the doctors are coming here basically to do the research. Do you think?

YF: Well, that's what I think.

NW: Why do you go there then? Do you want to help their research?

YF: Yeah, in a way. I have a regular doctor, and they are good doctors but I don't mind going and then help the research and same time, yeah, they're good doctors, if something else that I can't find, they might find it.

NW: So they do a very thorough examination and you like that, uh-huh. Do you feel that because you are American survivor of the bomb, your experience might have been in any way different from that of Japanese survivors?

YF: Japanese person?

NW: Yeah.

YF: . . . and live here.

NW: Or maybe Japanese survivors of the bomb who are in Japan. As opposed to people like yourself. Do you think your experience as a bomb surivor might have been different because of your location? Which is here?

YF: Yeah. Might be a little bit. I think they suffered longer.

NW: Americans or Japanese?

YF: Japanese.

NW: Japanese. Okay.

[Child]: I got a ladybug.

YF: Oh yeah? I think so, because the condition of Hiroshima, Japan, was at least 10 years of, you know, suffering. They lost the house, they lost, you know, maybe children. And then, well, I think when I went back, their place wasn't recovered that good, was 10 years or 15 years later, you know. Took long time before the city built.

NW: So, you feel that because you were able to come back here, which wasn't damaged by the bomb, you didn't have to suffer through the difficult era in Japan.

YF: Oh yeah. I would, well, but my auntie lived in a suburb, so I have some help, you know, I could stay there and pretty safe, safe life, but lot of my friends had suffered kinda, until they rebuilt. I mean, not only rebuild the city but I think their life, you know. That it's harder, not like people who didn't get, you know, that experience. Houses burn; the cities burn; what can you do, you know? But you don't want to get out of Hiroshima, I mean, you don't have to live in the city. They have suffered a lot, I think.

NW: Now, earlier you mentioned how you had to go back to Japan to apply for the survivor's *techō.* And I think, you know, if you look at the history, Japanese survivors were able to get the monetary allowances, monthly allowances, and they can just get medical care free of cost. Around those issues, do you feel that there was a, sort of, different ways in which American survivors were being handled by the Japanese government?

YF: By the Japanese government, I don't feel, well, I never thought of it because, here, of course, you have to pay for it, but now, I have Medicare, but you can go into some kind of medical insurance, I always had, and the doctors here so good, well, I don't know about, I can't compare because I'm not there, but they . . .

NW: You don't receive any monetary allowances?

YF: I do.

NW: You do? Okay. I mean, for a long time, American surivivors were not able to receive that.

YF: No, no, no.

NW: So I just wondered how you felt about that.

YF: Yeah, they had it right away, you know. Japanese people. We had to earn for it, we got to pay, too. So it's good that finally they give us some money. But some people need it, I think, even they come back here, you know, and then earlier. I don't know, but I didn't, I didn't need it so I don't feel anything.

<Begin Segment 22>

NW: Now, especially on mainland, on the West Coast, San Francisco, Los Angeles, American survivors in the 1970s and '80s wanted to get American government support them, rather than just having Japanese government support them. Do you have any reactions to that, were you aware of that? That there was such a movement? That survivors in American who were American born American citizens like yourself, who happened to be in Japan because of, you know, for whatever reasons. Family connections. Whereas Hiroshima, they were bombed, became victimized, after the war, they came back and then they felt that America is my government, my country, so I'd like to ask my government for help. Didn't work out, but do you have any reaction to that?

YF: It would be nice if the American government would give something like the *techō*, you know? So they don't have to pay for the medical and all those things. I would, yeah, I can see they asked for, and not only that, you know, they should get it sooner because, soon, because lot of them are aged, they're gonna die off. You know? Not too many people are gonna be living 10 years from now.

NW: That's right, they are getting old, that's very true.

YF: It's . . . so, American government should give them benefit, or give us benefit, you know, so we don't have to, at least, pay a high price for the medical. We've got to pay a premium too, you know? They take it out of the Social Security. But at least American government should pay for that. Yeah? For medicine and stuff. Of course, Japanese government is trying to help. I don't know where the money comes from.

NW: Well, it's Japanese government, paid by Japanese citizens' tax money.

YF: Is that right? I thought Americans were giving them money.

NW: Oh, no. There is no money coming out of the American government.

YF: I think they should give some money, but I don't know. That's, I can see, that there's a demand. But like anything else, you know, are they gonna do it soon or not? Pretty soon, they're not gonna have benefit. Just like my, this, my auntie and uncle. Of course, they sold the property to Nisei, Nisei went into the interment camp . . .

NW: Relocation camp. So they lost it.

YF: Relocation camp. And they took the property and they tore the building and made it into a parking lot, you know. And the government took it. Who has it now, you know? I don't know, the government must have sold it to somebody that, you know, they wouldn't give to, I guess. But that's not right. And, you know, they said that, he was waiting to give up, but he sold it and the people that got it, because he didn't get all the money, he was going back and forth, you know, they cannot be, there's no loan, no anything like that, those days, so the agreement is every year they're gonna pay 1/10th or, you know. But, you know, he left in a hurry and, he went back and collect some money and in the mean time, the owner was in a camp, right? And they took everything. I think they're supposed to pay that owner, well, he has the right to ask for it, you know. That's really, that's what I don't understand about this American government. Why would they do that, when other citizens can go to jail, but they don't take their property or they don't do that to any other citizens but they did to mostly to Japanese Americans, right? And they were Americans.

NW: Right, right. Now, in connection with that, when there are American survivors, American born American citizens who were bombed, um, trying to get American government support for their health care needs, it was in collaboration with younger generation of Japanese Americans, Sansei Japanese Americans, who really wanted to improve the social status of Japanese Americans in part because they were just discovering stories like your uncle's, you know, their parents or their grandparents were in relocation camps, it's an injustice done to Asian American minorites and they created a sort of a social movement. It's called an Asian American civil rights movement and that kind of movement really helped the survivors' movement to get some attention from American government. Were you aware of that when this kind of thing was happening, it's 1960s, 1970s, you're busy working in bakery, right?

YF: Yeah, it didn't affect us too much. But I think that's a good thing. They should, you know, state when, you know, Inouye was a Senator, they should have really gotten help from him.

NW: Yeah, yeah. That's true.

YF: But we don't have too much [?]. They didn't take the lion, they only, some of them went to internment camp, they went to the mainland too, but they didn't take the property away. They didn't do justice but in California, I can see because that's what they did to, I mean, indirectly, you know? He didn't get the money because of the person lost everything, poor thing, and he's American. Those kind of people should really, you know, . . .

NW: Be compensated.

YF: Or go into that movement and then get something out of it. You know, some kind of benefit. I mean, that, you know, own, you own something and then they take it away, that's your lifetime savings, so to speak. You know how much, you know, how back you're gonna go for years and years of saving and probably those people had only that much of a land and took them thirty years to save it or forty years. And then they took it away! That is not right.

NW: That's not right.

YF: I don't care even those people are dead, you know, the ancestors, I mean, you know, the children, should somehow get some benefit.

NW: Yeah.

<Begin Segment 23>

NW: Earlier you mentioned how, given the whole context at the end of World War II, you know, maybe it was necessary for America to use the bomb because Japan wouldn't have stopped the war otherweise. Do you think if a similar situation happens now, America, or any other country, should have an ability to use the bomb?

YF: I don't think they should use it but, I have a feeling, you know, not like anything else, you have nothing to lose, that's when, you know, sometimes human being, well, I wouldn't say, in that kind of national level, but you know, like human beings, you get cornered in one area and you become too desparate, you know, you do anything, you get nothing to lose. Well, this country, I wouldn't say, you know, the leaders are that way, but you get, to me, there's a lot of leaders now, Syria, or whatever country, they're killing their own people, you know, the leaders, I just think "Gee, what are they gonna do if they kill their own people?" And then you, if they become desparate, they can drop a bomb.

NW: If they have ability to have a bomb, yeah.

YF: Yeah, some of them have. Not only that, some countries would give them.

NW: Uh-huh. So, do you worry about that?

YF: I, yeah, I am very concerned. It's not the first world, I mean, you know, it's not the big countries that's gonna do it. It's those little ones, that, you know, when worst comes to worst, they can do anything. Killing is nothing for them.

NW: Now, I've been asking a lot of your time and I'm sure you are getting tired by now, but this is a record that I like to . . .

YF: Just one second, let's have a sip of something. You know, the funny thing is, when I came back from Japan, I was young then, you know. I had some similar kind of interview with this girl

in the University of Hawai‘i, write about it. I was working for my sisters’s bakery, so I gave her all the story and everything and she also, oh, and the newspaper man too, also asked me at that time, you know, 1950. No, not 1950, 1940 something, you think anyone will drop atomic bomb? And I said, well, you know, you never know. This, it’s not gonna be America or Russia, not even Russia or I mean, England, those kind of countries. But, those small countries, that’s there, that’s kind of country, like they have nothing to lose kind of country that you’ve got to watch. And then they’ll be Vietnam War, right? And then now, the North Korea, right? And those kind of people, you know? Strange kind of leaders you get.

<Begin Segment 24>

NW: Um, do you think that, you’ll be, you like to say something for future generation that may listen to this interveiw maybe 50 years from now. I’m gonna be preserving it as a historical record, that’s part of what I’m trying to do. People who don’t know anything about the bomb, don’t know anything about the Pacific War or anything. Do you have anything that you like to say?

YF: You know 50 years ago? 50 years ago, I said, I feel the same way. 50 years ago, I had told them, yeah. You know, when you have children, if you are all by yourself, you have no worries. But when you start having children, family and stuff, then it become very, very important. It’s not for yourself, but for your children. And this kind of atomic bomb, or any kind of bomb, you know, having it is always dangerous because you don’t know what kind of leaders you have. I wouldn’t say American leaders were bad but that was sort of like, experimenting, right? But now, I think most country can have it. Somehow, they gonna, even they ban it, I think they gonna have. So, what, I don’t know what the solution is, but it’s gona be so bad for the next generation, 50 years from now. And I don’t think anybody have a solution for that. Not even America, any other country.

NW: As a survivor yourself, do you think that you can be a part of your solution? The solution for the program that you last mentioned, or do you feel powerless?

YF: I feel powerless [laugh]. I can’t, I don’t think, I only experience, I don’t have a solution. I think it’s very, very hard.

NW: Have you done anything to maybe become even a small part of the solution?

YF: I don’t think I really contributed, I only give my experience and hopefully, you know? People will be more concerned over other people.

NW: So, telling your story and experiences. Okay, that makes sense.

YF: Experiences, and they will feel that a little bit more compassionate about how people can die in a minute, I mean, in a second, you know? And innocent people, too. They’re all innocent, you know? And that’s really tragic and I hope that won’t happen. I don’t care, you reach a point, you know, there’s no . . .

NW: Discrimintaion. If you are there, you'd be dead.

YF: And not only that, lot of stories, lot of things that people won't realize, you know? The bomb and you get hurt have the effect, but there's a lot of families that have their own story of sadness. You know? Because in Japan there was an orphanage that I went to, those kids come from upper class. People who had business in Hiroshima and all that. What they did was, in the evening, you know, when they get bombed, you got to go in a shelter, you have children and they don't have enough sleep and they will be in a way . . . when there's a fire in your house and you try to, you know, or neighbors, you try to help. So what they did, what the system did, and they thought it was a good one, was all those elementary school had evacuated. In a country, you know, temple. Not permanent, but you know, temporarily, teachers go there and the kids all go there. The parents can visit them any time they want, but they have daily work to do, I mean, they gotta open the store, how they gonna feed themselves? And a lot of them, you know, the husband or the son is at war, right? They are having hard time already. But young people that had children, for their safety reason, they go to temple and what happened, when atomic bomb was over, you see, lot of kids in the temple with nobody to take care of them. The relatives that are supposed to come are having a hard time, you know? And they cannot. So they put all the kids to Etajima, there was the Naval Academy of Japan. When I was going to . . . it's a nice facility. When I went, because I had a friend who was a Christian, her family had a store in what you call it, that? We went to school together, a real, real compassionate, nice woman. She had, when I met her in Hiroshima, she had told me that she's in Etajima and if I could only spare some time, why don't you come and, I'm not married, I'm all by myself, I don't have parents but my auntie and uncle. I didn't have a job then, you know, after the war. So she said, why don't you come? I went there and I saw all the children, beautiful kids, they're all below 10, I think. And the parents are dead, or whoever was . . .

NW: They are orphans.

YF: They are orphans, all of a sudden. And they all come from a, you can tell, they're beautiful kids, nice mannered, some are rascal but they come from a city, you know. City kids, it was well provided, the parents was royalties [?], you know. Those kind of kids, I mean, people don't talk about it, but, you know, they have to live in an orphanage until 18 and they have to start learning how to peddle their own kind of . . . All of a sudden, you know how traumatic it is for the kids?

NW: I know.

YF: All of a sudden, the life had, you know? If the kids were old enough, they would commit suicide, but they don't.

NW: They don't know what happened.

YF: So, the Christian nuns and the helpers tried to be really kind, and they survived, you know? And they survived to when they were 18, I guess 18 and then they let them go, you know?

NW: Those are many family separations and tragedies that took place.

YF: Yeah, that really made me feel that, you know, things in this world sometimes, well nobody knew what's going happen now. Nobody knew life was gonna be that different, you know.

People couldn't. But of course, you know, they can stay in orphange. They have food, they have nice people, they are old, you know? Volunteers and if they have a friend like mine, you know, it was, the children would be alright, but without parents.

<Begin Segment 25>

NW: Now, this is something I probably neglected to ask you earlier. This is also related to you being a US survivor of the bomb. Do you think that your experience of the bomb might have been different because you still had a cultural connection to America or Hawai‘i in your case? And I ask you this question because some people, not everybody, but some people I talk to told me how even after the war started out, they felt really friendly to America, which, my impression is that, listening to your stories, probably more or less was true in your case as well. And some people even told me that when they looked at B-29s in the skies, they felt like, "Oh, this is the airplane from my country, this is my friend," while other people told me that, well, this is really a particular example, but she told me how, when the bomb exploded, only thing she took away with her when she was running away from her house, which was burning, was a blanket that she took back from America and she was like, very attached to this blanket that's made in America. Do you have any stories like that? I'm thinking of something that probably connects your experience of the bomb and your origin in Hawai‘i. I mean, if you don't have anything like that, that's fine. I just wondered if you have something that comes to your mind.

YF: Well, I thought well, maybe finally, I can see my parents or my family.

NW: When the bomb was dropped.

YF: Yeah. I mean, you know, no, not exactly when the bomb was dropped. After a while, you know? They surrendered, yeah. For me, it was, you know, I said, "Oh, what are we doing now?'I can see my family." And then, when I was able to, I wasn't that anxious, I said to myself, "Oh, my poor auntie and uncle, I better come back really soon." I had mixed feelings.

NW: Yeah, right. But your auntie and aunt must have missed you because they were thinking of you as if you were their daughter, right?

YF: They thought I still was going to go back. That's what my intetntion was.

NW: Right, but you never did.

YF: I didn't. Well, you know, and then I got married. I was 23 only. I got married, but then I said to myself, "Wow, I'd hate to go back to Hiroshima." It wasn't a good experience for me, seeing everything that such a traumatic . . .

NW: Disarray.

YF: And, wasn't too anxious. Although, I was obligated.

NW: Yeah, I understand that, I think.

YF: It was a long time and over ten years that Hiroshima was not moving. They said they couldn't do anything because of the fallout. But it's recovered. Seems like everything's okay now, but you know how long ago, 50 years it took them. You know, the funny thing is, but I went, my husband and I, went to this Hiroshima, the last time we went, we went, once, he went to Japan, but my classmates, somewhere around 20 or 30 of them got together at the hotel, we had a chat, lunch, you know? You know, I hear the stories and all that and I say to myself, "You know, those people, they were my age, 50, 60, they build the Hiroshima, after that." You know, they may have only been 20 years old when I was 18 or 20 and then 10 years later, of course they suffer for 10 years or stuff, but 10 years later, you know, they grow up and they have a business or did that and lot of success story, you know? I hear. So, the war, of course they went to fight outside, but you know, after the burning, you would think that Hiroshima would be a dead place but [it's] not.

NW: It wasn't.

YF: Yeah. Those people really worked hard.

NW: To revive the city.

YF: Yeah. The city's really, you know, booming now. Survived, I mean. And then, those people, my friends, their husbands, they're doing fine.

NW: Right, right.

<Begin Segment 26>

NW: Now, I have this setup here that lets me make copies of your pictures and if you can just kind of remind me of those pictures, who they are and when they were taken, around what time it came from, that would be really great. Let me . . .

YF: This is a nice picture of my aunt and uncle, so, you can take that. This is the school that, you know, when I went to Japan, I had more, but, I don't know, the rest of it . . .

NW: Yeah, and there are some pictures of your aunt, uncle, working in Los Angeles? Yeah. I'd love to have a copy of them as well.

YF: This is the people in Los Angeles, I guess, you know, they are businesspeople or what, but when he was ins Los Angeles, see, this is the Soda Work that he had. The other one, maybe this one is better.

NW: Oh yeah, that one is really terrific, and there are some pictures over there, that one with the people on a ship, I think those are the ship that went between Japan and . . . That's really.

YF: Chichibu-maru or something. Chichibu-maru. All of these Japanese . . . He was a golfer, you know.

NW: He was a what?

YF: Golfer, my uncle.

NW: Oh, I see.

YF: And those are the Los Angeles.

NW: Oh, wow. Those are all Japanese people, right?

YF: They are all, you know, and . . . It must be gone, but they were.

NW: So, this is, remind me again, she is the sister of your mother, correct?

YF: Yes, older sister.

NW: Older sister of your mother, right,

YF: She's the one that took me.

NW: And those are the people who stayed at the hotel in Los Angeles? Yeah, that's great.

YF: They are, you know, and colonels and admirals, you know. You know, I used to have, olden days, used to have this actor, Charlie Chaplin.

NW: Uh-huh. Really?

YF: Do you know? Have you heard of him?

NW: Of course!! Who wouldn't, who wouldn't know Charlie Chaplin?

YF: Those days, they didn't have sound, huh?

NW: Yeah, it's an old silent movie. I guess you don't have a picture of Charlie Chaplin.

YF: Oh yeah,

NW: You do?

YF: Him and my uncle, they're golf buddies.

NW: No kidding.

YF: Yeah.

NW: This is Charlie Chaplin? He certainly looks like him. [chuckle]. That's funny.

YF: That's him.

NW: So, remind me. So your uncle was first working in this soda company, . . .

YF: He did, before that, something else, I'm sure. But he owned that soda company.

NW: He owned the soda company. And then he became the owner of the hotel. I see. Okay. And that was 1930s maybe, right?

YF: I think so, 30s, yeah. He was one of the most successful person in LA . . .

NW: Oh I bet.

YF: . . . in Japanese community and he did a lot of community work, you know?

NW: That's why he was considered to be dangerous before the war started out, right?

YF: Yeah, yeah, that's right. So, he had to go back to Japan, you know? But the government was nice enough to warn him. Because he knows all those, you know, top Navy and . . .

NW: So they wanted to make sure he's okay.

YF: Yeah. Those people really helped him to be safe, you know, although he didn't live that long.

NW: Do you have other pictures that you haven't shown me yet? I'm very curious about people's pictures, they are really wonderful.

YF: Yeah, you never know, that's their life, you know?

NW: Yes, exactly.

YF: Like this guy must have been a famous person in Japan, you know. But he's one of the success stories. And then success, successful all his life. And he was only around 50, I would say, his life became, he had to go back to Japan because of that war, you know? If it wasn't for the war, he would have been having a, you know, good life, right?

NW: Right, exactly.

YF: And someone that worked so hard and succeed and all of a sudden because of the war? It just, . . .

NW: May I see those as well?

YF: . . . they just dissappeared, you know? This life.

NW: What did he do after he came back to Japan?

YF: He didn't have a job, he worked, he ran for the council of that area, small councilman, he did a lot of community work for Japan and he made a, it's still there, but you know, Kabe, he made this gym, a place where young kids can go and play, you know? It's like, that remind him as a YMCA and you know, . . .

NW: Oh, no kidding!

YF: . . . in America, you have YMCA and in Japan, they don't have those kind of place where the youth, the promised youth can go, you know?

NW: So, your uncle really wanted to make it in Japan as well, so that . . .

YF: Yeah. He donated the land, they built the building, a small one, you know, and he told the youth they could come and . . . have meetings and . . .

NW: That's very intersting that he would be inpired by American, you know, facilities. Yeah, educating kids, yeah.

YF: Yeah. And the baseball and stuff, you know? They have the team, baseball teams and stuff, yeah. I don't know who they are, you know, but these must be kinda important people.

NW: Right, right. How about this? Tell me about this picture.

YF: You know, I don't know what this is, I'm not too sure.

NW: It looks like it's, isn't it on a ship?

YF: Yeah, it's on a ship and why are these ladies in kimono, you know?

NW: Right. That's why I wonder, it looks like they are dressed up for a special occasion, you know?

YF: He's way in the back, here. But I don't know. This is some kind of . . .

NW: Who is he? Who do you see that you recognize?

YF: Uncle, this one, I think.

NW: Your uncle, from Los Angeles, you mean? Yeah, okay, may I see? May I see the picture?

YF: Way this side.

NW: I see, it definitely looks like a ship. I don't know.

YF: I don't know if these people stayed, but this is emperor's brother.

NW: Oh . . . oh yeah.

YF: Takamatsu no miya. And yeah, and the wife, when they were in Los Angeles, you know.

NW: So it was . . .

YF: I don't know if they stayed in the hotel or what.

NW: But, maybe they met, right?

YF: Oh yeah, definitely, had a dinner or something. He was a very interesting, I wouldn't say, interesting, but very wise gentleman, my uncle was.

NW: How about this picture, could you please tell me about this?

YF: Oh, this is a baseball team that came to play baseball, in LA, I think.

NW: So, was your uncle . . .

YF: He was a fan.

NW: Oh, he was a fan.

YF: When Japanese team comes, probably stayed in his hotel.

NW: Ahh, okay. So, that's a Japanese team that came to Los Angeles to fight against American team, I guess? Or . . .

YF: Play baseball.

NW: . . . play baseball. That's fascinating. I'm sorry, it takes for a while, it's making it into a really good quality picture, so that's the reason why it takes some time.

YF: I understand that ink is expensive.

NW: Yeah, well, this is all digital, but even with digital, um, making copies, it takes some time to make a good quality one. Those are really wonderful images.

YF: It was in an album and before, now that I'm older, I took all of the pictures and put them in a ziploc bag and sometimes my relatives, sometimes they get curious and want to see, want to know about uncle and stuff, then I, you know, just hand this to them because these pictures are . . . I tell them "You know how old these pictures are? Close to 100 years old." Then they say "Ooh, let me see!" [laugh]

NW: [laugh]. Yeah, yeah. Old pictures are really fascinating because, yeah, yeah, they can surprise you.

YF: Hm. Then I tell my grandchildren, you know, your granpa, no, grandma's sister was married to this Sawano, the uncle, he was really a famous guy in Los Angeles way back, 100, 80 years ago, you know. And they go nah.

NW: [laughter].

YF: So I say, yeah! He was very important, I'm telling you, look at him, He knew Charlie Chaplin, you know.

NW: I know, there's this picure. How about your picture from Hawai'i when you're a little girl. You know, this is taken in Hawai'i, correct?

YF: Yeah, yeah, in a studio.

NW: May I take this out and make a copy of this? This is a wonderful image. Do you think it's from, 1920s, right? 1920s?

YF: Yeah, it must be around 1920, I am four or five years old, so 1922.

NW: 22, yeah. Do you have pictures from Hawai'i, from that era as well?

YF: Not too many, not too many. You know, I don't think we had cameras, you know, we had to go to a studio to take pictures.

NW: Yeah, so this is one of the few that you have.