

**JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII**

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**with**

**Masako Ebisuzaki (ME)**

**June Shigemasa (JS)**

**Additional Family Member (FM)**

**July 24, 2019**

**Interviewer: Mel Inamasu (MI)**

Note: Comments in brackets [ ] are by the transcriber. Inaudible words or sections are identified by ((?)) in the transcript. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability.

MI: Today is July 24, 2019. We're in the conference room of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii to interview two people - first, Masako Ebisuzaki and her sister June Shigemasa. Masako is from the Big Island [Island of Hawaii]?

ME: Right.

MI: And June is from...Where? On the mainland?

JS: From the Big Island.

MI: Oh, you're both from

JS: She's from California.

MI: Oh, I got it wrong. Okay, Masako is from California. What part of California?

ME: Hmm, north of Berkeley and the Bay Area.

MI: Bay Area, okay and June is from the Big Island. My name is Mel Inamasu. I'm a volunteer at the Resource Center, the Japanese Culture Center and I'll begin by asking, we'll start with Masako.

ME: Mm, hmm.

MI: Can you introduce yourself? Give us your full name, month and year that you were born and where you were born? Go ahead and tell us a little, just a little about yourself.

ME: Okay, I'm Masako Ebisuzaki.

MI: What month and year you were born.

ME: (Laughs) Oh, that's right.

MI: And where you were born.

ME: I was born in Hilo, August 27, 1933.

MI: Okay, and let's go to June.

JS: My name is June. June is a given name, my legal name is Mitsuko. All the records that we come across, I'm Mitsuko.

MI: And your maiden name?

JS: Odachi. Mitsuko Odachi Shigemasa.

MI: [Masako], did we get your middle name?

ME: I don't have a middle name. Odachi is the last name. I never did have an English name. Just Masako, all my life.

MI: Okay, okay. Okay.

JS: I need to give my birth date.

MI: Go ahead.

JS: September 27, 1935, and I was born, same location, at Shinmachi [Big Island] on that day. We'll talk about Shinmachi later, I guess.

MI: Okay. Who would want to...I'm going to ask about your parents and things like that. Who should I ask? Okay, can you give us the names of your parents?

ME: My father's name was Kinzaemon Odachi, and my mother was Kameki.

MI: How do you spell that?

ME: K-A-M-E-K-I.

MI: Kameki? Okay.

ME: They are Tenrikyo ministers from Japan.

MI: From Japan?

ME: Yeah. Early 1900s, 1903, I think, they came to Hilo.

MI: Okay. They came as a married couple to serve the Hilo Tenrikyo Church?

ME: Yes.

MI: You know roughly when they came, what year?

ME: I believe, roughly around 1903, yeah?

MI: Wow, that early they came?

JS: I have pictures, would you like to see them?

MI: Not yet, later on.

JS: Okay.

MI: How old were they when they came to Hawaii?

ME: Well, I was not born then.

MI: Yeah, but when they came?

ME: When they came, my sister was, how old was...

MI: No, how old were you?

ME: She was about six years old...

JS: He wants to know how old our parents were.

ME: Oh, my parents. I thought you had it?

MI: Okay, you can look it up.

JS: Okay.

MI: I want to get that kind of information.

JS: Oh, when they arrived?

MI: Yes.

JS: Oh, okay.

MI: 1903 is when you said?

ME: Oh, I see what you mean. Yeah. They were...

MI: Young adults?

ME: Ohh, I can't remember (Laughs).

JS: 1903, and he was born in 1887, yeah [Sixteen years old]?

MI: Born in 1887, your father? Where in Japan?

ME: She has all that information. I know...

MI: No, don't have to calculate. As long as you give a year.

ME: Co...

MI: What part of Japan did they come from, Hiroshima, or Yamaguchi? Don't know? What part of Japan did they come from? You don't know?

JS: Yeah. We've never been to Japan but...

MI: Okay.

ME: But my parents have.

MI: Okay.

JS: Oh, if we knew ahead of time what you were going to ask, we could have looked it up and have a record, you know.

MI: No, that's okay.

JS: So we'll have to look it up later.

MI: Okay, and mother was about how old? Do you know?

ME: Well, she was born in 1900. Here we go, yeah, so.

MI: Wait, wait. So...

ME: Her age is easy to remember because she was born in 1900, so every year she was, you know.

MI: But you said, they came in 1903?

ME: Yeah, but that doesn't sound right now.

MI: That doesn't sound right. I mean but you sure they came as a married couple?

ME: Yes, they did.

MI: Okay, okay. I guess we'll have to get the dates later.

JS: Yeah, we'll get it later.

MI: So they came as a couple, they were called to Hawaii to serve at the Tenrikyo church. What's the name of the church on the Big Island? Was it on the Big Island?

JS: Yes, yes.

MI: What's the name of the church, the full name?

ME: Tenrikyo...

JS: Hilo Tenrikyo.

MI: Hilo Tenrikyo? Okay.

JS: And he was responsible for forming a church right in Hilo.

MI: There was no church there, before they came?

JS: Well no, he, they rented a home which was restructured into a chapel, yeah. I didn't know this but according to her, my father did a lot of carpentry.

MI: He was able to build the church?

JS: Yeah.

MI: Is the church still there?

ME: No, as we go along, we were in the 1946 tidal wave so we lost everything then. The church is not there.

MI: I see.

ME: But they did continue and there is a Hilo church. And right now it's declining because they have not been able to find someone to come in and take over the church, but there is a church, Tenrikyo church.

MI: And is there a congregation at the church?

ME: Yes.

JS: Barely, barely.

ME: Yeah, most of the congregation has passed on.

MI: As far as your parents, your father was the minister, mother was also a minister?

JS: Also a minister. They were both ordained ministers.

MI: Okay. Other children in the family, if you can go down the list and if you can tell me, more or less, what year they were born? Just the two of you or were there other children?

JS: There was a sister above her. Do you want her name?

MI: Yes.

JS: Michiko.

MI: Michiko? Do you know roughly what year she was born?

ME: She was about, she was three years old when she came.

MI: She was born in Japan?

ME: Mm, hmm. She came with our mom and dad.

MI: I see. Okay.

MI: Of course later, she did get her citizenship. So actually, would you consider, when you come as a child...

JS: She was a naturalized citizen.

MI: She was a young child when she came, and how much older than you was she?

ME: Ah, let's see. She was three or four...

JS: She was six years older than me, so for you, it would be about four.

ME: Yeah, about four years.

MI: So we can sort of figure out, I think, when they came.

ME: And then, yeah...

JS: 1931.

MI: 1931? Not 1903, is when they came. That was kind of...

JS: Yeah, 1931.

MI: 1931 is when they came, okay.

ME: She [JS] was my younger sister and we had a brother.

MI: His name?

ME: Michio.

MI: Michio...

JS: Odachi.

MI: Odachi. Okay, okay. Okay, so they came in 1931, and built the church, developed the church. Anything else happening to them during that period, before the war? I just want to get a sense of what's happening to them before the war time.

ME: What happened to my parents?

MI: Your family, your parents and your family. Anything unusual happening? Were they helping also within the community? With the Japanese Consulate or anything like that? Or would you know something like that?

ME: No, but they did have their congregation. It wasn't that large a congregation but I remember little things like their church, the Tenrikyo church, consisted of having morning worship service and evening worship service, both at seven a.m. and seven p.m.

MI: Okay.

ME: And I remember one of the ladies that came ... they had a lot of detailed music in their service and I remember we had a *koto* [Japanese musical stringed instrument] and one of my sisters-in-law came as a Japanese dancer. I remember those things but I did not speak Japanese that well so I don't remember what my father said. But that was what they did. We had a second story above...

MI: Now, what neighborhood was this that you grew up in, in Hilo?

ME: We grew up in Shinmachi, it was called.

JS: Have you heard of Shinmachi?

MI: No, what was Shinmachi?

JS: Do you know Hilo at all?

MI: Not much, not very well.

JS: Oh.

MI: It's a portion of Hilo?

JS: Yes. The front of...

MI: It's still named that today? Or is there a...

JS: There's no longer a Shinmachi.

MI: Because of the tidal wave [1946]?

ME: Yes.

MI: I see. What is the area called now?

JS: When immigration began, this must be about a five, six miles stretch of land that was occupied by churches...

MI: This was Hilo Bay?

JS: Yes, right. Residences, businesses, factories and I'm not too sure where the Kaneko Jelly Factory was in this location, but maybe outside on the outskirts of Shinmachi. That's what it consisted of.

MI: Okay, and the 1946 tidal wave...

JS: Wiped us all out, yes.

MI: Wow.

JS: And previous to that, when the war ended, we came back in August of 1945. Then the following year, on April 1st of 1946, is when the tidal wave hit, and we became displaced once again.

MI: Okay, okay, we'll get back to that later on. Let's go chronologically. On the Big Island, I'm going to jump to December 7, 1941, that's when Pearl Harbor was attacked, okay? So you folks are comfortable in Hilo. What happens on that day to your family, specifically, in Hilo? Do you remember anything?

ME: I was almost ten years old.

MI: Okay

ME: And it was, you know, devastating to me as a child, but I didn't really understand how or who and why it happened. But we were in school, so at school we immediately learned about the gas mask and the shelters and we prepared for possible invasion.

MI: On that day, specifically, December 7, that was a Sunday. Do you remember anything about that?

ME: Um, hmn.

JS: I don't, either. (Laughs)

MI: What about your parents? Do you remember anything about how your parents may have reacted? They were religious leaders, they were, you know, under suspicion even before the war, yeah.

ME: Right, right.

MI: Remember anything within your family on that specific day?

ME: Possibly. I would think that my mom and dad would be quite concerned that their homeland was invading us and I don't think they understood either why, because they only went back to Japan for certain things. I think his brother died or something so he went back to Japan.

JS: Yeah.

ME: They did return back to Japan for their church reasons and family reasons but they were there and in my mind, they were planning to live there till they died.

MI: You mean, live in Hawaii, stay in Hawaii?

ME: In Shinmachi, yeah.

MI: So you don't remember anything specific on that day?

ME: No. (Laughs)

MI: For some families, they gathered everything Japanese, they either buried or they burned ... you don't remember anything like that? All your Japanese dolls were?

ME: No, I don't.

MI: You don't have any recollection of that kind of thing?

ME: I think if it was ten years prior [later] I would remember more but somehow, being, going to school, it was what everyone else went through [that] we went through.

MI: Your life didn't seem to change regarding that specific day?

ME: Yeah, yeah, right.

MI: Okay, okay.

ME: And then I don't remember trying to explain to mom and dad what happened, huh?

JS: I have no recollection.

MI: Okay, (Laughs) that's fine. We understand that. Okay. So what do you mean, trying to explain to your parents what happened? They didn't speak English?

ME: No.

MI: How did you hear about it, from the neighbors, from the radio?

ME: Radio, probably from the radio.

MI: Then you tried to explain to your parents what had happened.

ME: Right.

MI: How about in the community? Were people talking about it?

ME: I'm quite sure they were because Shinmachi was like a camp. And right now, there's someone writing the story about Shinmachi. It was like a little, people say village, but it wasn't a village. It was like a camp. You had several homes and I'm quite sure my mom and dad were concerned, but I don't remember talking to them about it. Do you?

JS: I have only one incident.

MI: Well, tell us what you remember.

JS: Okay. I've repeated this many times but the thing that is stuck in my mind, you know it's funny...

MI: You were how old then?

JS: I was two years younger so I was about eight.

ME: Yeah.

JS: But there was a special moment when my older sister, above her [ME] and she and I, I don't remember my kid brother being around, but there was a point in time where two very large, white men, Caucasian men, came and we kinda stand, stood in a circle. It was my other sister, Masako and myself. And the question was asked by these two Caucasian men that came, "Would you like to be with your husband?"

MI: This was after your father was taken?

JS: Yes, yes. So through the interpretation of our older sister, it was explained to my mother the question is, "Would you want to go and be with your husband?" And she said, "Of course." That's how it started.

MI: If we can go back a step, do you remember the time when your father was taken away? Cause this happened, I guess, months later.

ME: No, not months. It was weeks.

MI: Weeks later?

ME: Yes, it was quite soon.

MI: What about when he was actually taken away from the family? Do you remember that?

JS: You don't remember that? Do you have memory about that?

ME: No, I don't.

MI: You don't remember that at all?

JS: It's almost like in the still of the night, he was gone.

ME: Yeah.

JS: He was gone. And so in my child's mind, I must have wondered, "Where did *oto-*

*san* [father] go?" And then these two men showed up.

MI: Okay.

JS: Then the scenery just stops, right there. And my next thought is hopping on that Army truck and riding to the wharf, boarding the boat called Lurline and sailing for five days, a whole week, getting to the west coast. That's my memory.

MI: Okay. Do you [ME] have any memories at all of that period, from December 7, your father's taken away and then, I don't know how much later, where these two white men come to your house? Any hardships for your mother? Remember how your mother reacted to your father being taken? All of a sudden the family had no father.

ME: Yeah, yeah. I really don't remember because I myself don't have a picture in my mind [of] what had really happened.

MI: What happened to the church without your father?

ME: Without my father, my mother continued.

MI: The church just continued?

ME: Yeah. She was also a priestess so she could consider((?)) and the services. So they did. That's what they did.

MI: Okay, do you know when your father might have been taken? For many of these people, it started on December 7 or December 8, the first few days after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

FM: It's December 14.

MI: It was December 14 that he was picked up? And when was the family asked whether or not they wanted to join him, months later?

ME: We have a special friend, Mr. Hoshida ...

MI: George Hoshida?

ME: Yeah, George. We became very close to their family.

MI: Did you know them in Hilo, before internment?

ME: Yes.

MI: They lived in the same camp area?

ME: No, no. They had a home in House lots.

MI: In where? Home was where, their home?

JS: It's called a, mm, a residential area called Houselots, Waiakea House lots. Are you familiar with that?

MI: No, Houselots? Okay.

ME: But we didn't know them.

MI: You didn't know them at that time but you got to know them in the camp?

ME: Aa, ha.

JS: Well, even before we headed out for camp we, somehow, because you see the Hoshida family had younger children than we were.

ME: Real babies.

JS: So we kinda adopted each other.

ME: We were at the Registration Building.

JS: At the Federal Building.

ME: Federal Building.

MI: Say that again? Can you say that again? What about the Federal Building?

ME: We met Mrs. Hoshida with her three children and that's the first time that we met them.

MI: Which Federal Building, in Hilo?

JS: In Hilo.

ME: In Hilo.

MI: Okay. We have interviewed Sandra Hoshida. Sandra was about two years old. Yeah?

ME: So they became...

MI: I'm sorry. Can we, anybody figure out when, roughly, that the family was asked if they wanted to join the father? Okay, you can be looking it up...

ME: Yeah, most of the papers [we have] are from Mr. Hoshida, helping my sister request for my father to come to us in Arkansas because when we were, right after you know, I'm getting so confused. Okay. After the tidal wave, I'm trying to think, we were in camp for three years. You knew that?

MI: Okay, let's stick to this part. Try to learn as much as we can. Anyway, a few months later, the family decided, made a decision ...

ME: Yeah, yeah.

JS: To go.

MI: So there were five of you. Your mother and four children?

ME: Yeah.

MI: When the family made that decision, how much time did you have to pack and to get ready to go? Do you know?

ME: Not really.

MI: Where did you go? Step one, I mean we heard about you going on the Lurline but did you go to Kilauea Military Camp?

ME: No, we didn't, but my father did. In fact, we just visited the camp and my father's picture was there.

MI: Did you know, getting back to 1941, did you know that your father was there when he was picked up?

ME: No, I didn't.

MI: So the family had no contact with your father?

ME: No, cause we didn't have a telephone.

MI: Yeah. You had no idea what happened to him, where he was?

ME: Right, yeah, correct.

MI: And then these two men came and asked if the family wanted to join him and the decision was made to join him. Then you come over to Oahu and get on the Lurline? Is that what it was?

JS: No, from the Big Island ...

MI: The Lurline went to the Big Island.

JS: Yes, all the way to the west coast.

ME: But we stopped off in Honolulu, didn't we?

JS: I don't know that.

ME: Yeah, we did.

MI: From what I understand, the Lurline was on Oahu and people came to Oahu. Never, any other families who were with you at this point. You're starting to remember from this point?

ME: You mean, going to the mainland?

MI: Yes, on that ship.

ME: Yeah, the Hoshidas.

MI: Hoshida family?

ME: Ah, huh. Because we were helping Mrs. Hoshida with the children because Carol was a newborn child, newborn, so she had her hands full with Sandra [JCCH Oral History collection], Carol and June [Honma]. She had another daughter, three girls. So we became very close and I am still good friends with them.

MI: Any other families on that ship that went up with you?

ME: No.

MI: Shiotanis?

ME: Later at camp, I remember [them].

MI: Not on the same ship?

ME: Not on the same ship.

JS: The only memory I have is that I was seasick for five whole days. That's all that I remember.

ME: Yeah.

MI: You remember riding on the Lurline?

ME: Yeah, I did.

MI: Were you sick also?

ME: I didn't get as sick as they did. I do not get seasick. But I remember all my siblings slowly going down to the room and they just plopped on the bed because they were all sick from the seasickness.

JS: I didn't eat for five days (Laughs).

ME: From there we went straight to California.

MI: Was there any thought on your mother's part about not going? Just taking care of the family and waiting for your father to come back?

ME: No, no feelings like that. I remember our feeling was, we want to be with our dad. And that's what we thought we were doing. But we didn't even know that we were going to be going to Jerome, all the way to Arkansas.

MI: So on the ship you go to the west coast. Remember how you got to the west coast to Arkansas?

ME: On the train. They put us on a train and that was my first train ride. You, too, right?

JS: I remember riding the train and the train went tat..tat ... tat ...tat.

ME: Yeah.

JS: Just blocks of memories, that's all.

ME: I think it took about three days to get to Arkansas. And there are stories about the California internees meeting us. Because it was late at night, it was cold, it was snowing, too.

MI: When you arrived there, other internees met you?

ME: Yes.

MI: California internees?

ME: Yes and they did bring warm clothing for us and I think some people didn't even

have shoes. They brought [us] shoes and I've seen articles where the mainland internees were so surprised that when the Hawaii people came that we were not dressed properly for the winter weather. So they went and got some winter clothes for us. And we were always separated. We were the Hawaii Block 30, and even the mainland internees knew about the Hawaiian internees.

MI: When you got there, were there already Hawaii families there, in that block, or were you the first?

ME: I think we were the first.

MI: About the first? But how many [families] were on that ship?

ME: Coming over?

MI: Yeah.

ME: That, I don't know.

MI: And as you stayed there, more and more people came, groups came from Hawaii to join your Block?

ME: Yeah, yeah, but you know, there weren't that many from Hawaii, because somewhere along the line, they decided only a certain number will be coming to these camps, because they couldn't possibly send all the Hawaii Japanese to the mainland.

MI: So you mentioned the Hoshida family, any other families you remember? The Shiotani family, I guess, yeah? Any other families you remember at Jerome?

ME: Kiritas, I know.

MI: What's that?

ME: Kiritas. K-I-R-I-T-A.

MI: Kirita? Okay.

ME: And Esther's [Kirita] sister, who was my classmate but...

JS: Well, her name is Noguchi but I don't know...

ME: She was a Wong before. She lives in Hilo right now.

MI: But you don't remember the Japanese name, maiden name?

ME: Yeah, Kirita.

MI: Oh, Kirita family? Okay.

ME: Yeah, Kirita family.

MI: So there's a Pat? Is there a Pat Kirita?

ME: Patsy. Oh, yeah, yeah. Oh, you know about them? Because Pat's my classmate. I just recently, in the last few years, met Esther.

MI: Esther is her sister?

ME: Yeah, Pat's sister.

MI: Okay.

ME: And, ah.

JS: Can I tell you how we met?

MI: Yes, go ahead.

JS: There was a presentation at the, I think this Cultural Center came over and did a presentation.

MI: In Hilo?

JS: Yeah. Someone, the speaker asked, and [said,] "Is there anyone here, who was connected or went to the Jerome Relocation Camp?"

MI: Mm, hmm.

JS: Way down there, Esther stood up and I stood up. She and I were the only ones. And till today we have become, Esther and I, have become good friends.

MI: But you don't remember her from childhood?

JS: [Nods, No]. And they came from Kohala. The family came from Kohala. She's borne her testimony. She did really well. And she remembered camp things and she remembered me in the camp. But I have no idea. I just blocked everything out. So today, we're pretty good friends.

MI: That's nice. Okay. Who were your playmates there?

JS: The rest of the Camp children, yeah?

MI: I'm trying to get the names of Hawaii family internees for the record, so we can, you know, link everybody together, as many as possible.

ME: Well, the Hoshidas were very important to us.

MI: June [Hoshida Honma] was your friend, is that correct?

ME: June was my friend. Plus, my older sister had Mr. Hoshida's help in contacting whoever was responsible in bringing my father [ashes] over. She wrote several letters.

MI: Mr. Hoshida was already there, in Jerome?

ME: Not Jerome. He was in, see these men were sent to Lordsburg and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

MI: So when the families got to Jerome, the husbands were not there?

ME: No, no.

MI: They were at other camps?

ME: They were in Santa Fe and my father, too. And that's where he was, he became seriously ill and so in Santa Fe my father was hospitalized and so the man from the camp collected some funds and my mother, my brother and my sister, Michan, three of them went by train back to Santa Fe and they got to see him.

MI: They were taken there. They were allowed to see your father.

ME: But June and I were not able to see my father before he died because we kept writing but they were responding and saying they were not quite ready to send our fathers back to us.

MI: Who took care of you, when your mother went to Santa Fe?

ME: There was a friend of my mother.

MI: What was her name?

ME: That was ah, eeyah, but I can't remember his name either.

MI: Okay, that's okay. Okay.

ME: And so we stayed back while my mom went to see my father.

MI: How long after you got to Jerome before you learned about your father being ill and then your mother, sister and brother going to Santa Fe?

ME: It was quite soon.

MI: Could you tell, a few months?

ME: Several months, about a couple of months. Cause he died--what's the date when he died?

FM: October 21.

MI: 1942?

FM: 1943.

MI: '43?

ME: Yeah. I have several pictures of him. Mr. Hoshida...

MI: '43? So when did they go to Jerome?

FM: Well, there's correspondence in here that shows that they were looking forward to getting with their dad in February.

MI: Of 1943 or 1942? So they were in Jerome for a while before they were asked to go to Santa Fe?

ME: Yeah.

MI: Maybe a year or so?

ME: And we kept writing. And we have letters saying that they were not quite ready to send him back to us. So eventually they did, but by then my father had died.

MI: He did get to...

ME: Pardon?

MI: He did come to Jerome, your father?

FM: No.

ME: No. His ashes.

MI: His ashes.

ME: Yeah, they did send us his ashes. He had a funeral service.

MI: So do you remember the year, the date that your father died?

FM: October 21, 1943.

MI: Okay, October in '43. So then your mom and your brother and sisters came back to Jerome with the ashes?

ME: Oh, yeah. They came back.

MI: Jerome, with the ashes?

ME: Yeah. They used to...No, no. They sent us the ashes.

MI: Huh?

ME: They came back and he died after they had gone to see him.

MI: After they came back, he passed away? Do you know what was wrong with him? Was it his heart, or?

ME: Kidneys, something about bleeding but it could have been a bleeding ulcer or something.

MI: But before he was taken away, December 7th or whatever, was he healthy or was he a sickly man?

ME: Good question. He was not sickly. He would constantly go out to, up and down the coastline, walking. And he walked and I remember my mom having all her babies at home. But I don't remember my father ever being sick, you know, that he couldn't walk or do his ministry.

JS: Would you be interested in seeing his Death Certificate?

MI: After we're done. Let's get the story first. Yeah, okay.

ME: So it was a hard [time], I feel my mom suffered the most. And I know she wanted her husband to be, you know, beside her, but they did not feel, I guess, whoever was in charge, was not quite ready to send him back [to Jerome].

MI: Now, was Mr. Hoshida there in Santa Fe with your father?

ME: Oh, yes. He was the one that wrote all these, he drew pictures.

MI: He was writing letters to the family in Jerome?

ME: Not to us, but to his family.

MI: And they were telling you what was happening with your family [father]?

ME: Yes. They were able to speak English with Mr. Hoshida because he was fluent in English. And of all the men there, I don't think there were that many that could speak English. My father didn't speak English. I guess he just felt that he was a law abiding citizen and was a priest and all so I think it was just a shock to him as well as all of us, that Japan would do such a thing, you know, to attack our country.

MI: Do you remember this part, where your mother left with your brother and sister to go to Santa Fe and you were left alone?

JS: I do remember that.

MI: How did you feel at that time?

JS: Confusion is the word that I'd like to use. Not knowing what was happening, not knowing what to ask.

MI: The two of you lived in the family unit? You stayed in the same room?

JS: In the same barracks, yeah.

MI: Alone, just the two of you, in what was originally ...

JS: I think we were cared for by friends and neighbors of the area. I'm pretty sure at our young age ...

MI: You couldn't take care of yourselves.

JS: We were well taken care of.

MI: Any particular families you remember who took care of you?

JS: No, I don't.

ME: No.

MI: And you were going to school and they had activities in Jerome?

JS: Yeah, they did.

ME: I remember a lot of things. There's a picture of me dancing a hula and we also every year, just about right away, they did have the school, so we were educated, those three years we were in camp. First in Jerome and then Arizona.

MI: Actually the two of you never saw your father, once he was taken in December 1941. You never saw him again.

ME: Yes.

JS: I'm not too sure whether the rest of them were able to go to the infirmary or

hospital or whatever [wherever] it was. Did they get to see him?

MI: In Santa Fe?

ME: No, they never did.

MI: They went to Santa Fe but they never got to see him in Santa Fe?

ME: No, we never did get to see him.

JS: No, no, Michan folks, when they went. Did they get to see him?

ME: No, they did get to see him.

MI: They were able to spend time with him.

ME: Yes, they did.

JS: In the hospital?

ME: But I don't think they realized how seriously ill he was. He was serious.

MI: So when they came back, they expected him to come back and join you?

ME: Yeah.

MI: Instead, he passed away.

ME: Yeah.

JS: But prior to that, Mr. Hoshida was very influential in helping Michiko, our oldest sister. There are letters in her name asking for having our father [to be] released due to severe illness.

MI: He was helping to get your father transferred to Jerome?

JS: Yes, yes. There's more than one letter out to the authorities.

MI: But they would not...

JS: He just gave up and passed away before--they couldn't even bring him home, bring him back, because he was cremated later. They weren't able to bring home his ashes, right?

ME: No, they didn't know that he died. He died after they came back to Jerome.

JS: They left before they knew he was dead?

ME: Yeah, we found out that he had died after they came back.

MI: From what you had said earlier, they expected him to come back and join you in Jerome, but instead he passed away.

ME: Hm, mmm.

JS: Is there a date on that [Death Certificate]? I mean...

FM: I don't have a dated one.

MI: How was your mother when they came back from Santa Fe? Remember that time? You must have been glad to see her. You two were all alone.

ME: I think, in my memory, I remember that she was very sad. She missed her husband, you know, and we didn't talk too much about [it], we weren't that close that we could just share and say how we felt. But I knew she was very sad.

MI: And then he passes away.

JS: My mom was very stoic, very stoic. I remember, you know, in Shinmachi the parishioners really took to her because of her very compassionate, strong and kind mannerism. I remember her as being that kind of a person.

MI: So your family is very unique in the sense that the internee has passed away. When he passes away, what happens to the family? Are you released to come back to Hawaii?

ME: We didn't go back to Hawaii. After he died, we were still in Jerome and so we stayed there until the group was told that we would be going to Arizona, you know, Gila River.

MI: Do you know when that was, roughly what month, what year, you went to Gila River?

ME: We went to ...

JS: What month, when? Is there a record on that, when we went to Arizona?

FM: What's interesting with these records is these were your dad's records.

MI: If you don't have it, that's fine. It's a little bit interesting to me that you went there to join your father, he passes away, why are you not sent back to Hawaii?

ME: Because the others weren't sent back. They wouldn't send just us.

MI: The others still had their father there, though.

ME: They [Santa Fe fathers] came, they came back after my mom and ... they came back then. By then those orders came through that the fathers can be with their families.

MI: Eventually the fathers, like Mr. Hoshida, joined the family, right?

ME: Right.

MI: But you didn't have a father to join you.

ME: But they wouldn't ... I don't think the way the situation was ... they wouldn't just send us back to Hawaii. We were still part of the group that came, so they sent us to Gila River. We just thought that they were going to send us together.

MI: This was when they were closing Jerome [camp site], not everyone, a part of the Jerome people got sent to Gila River. Some of them went to different camps, huh?

ME: Yeah.

MI: Then a part of the Jerome people were sent to Gila River. Some went to different camps.

ME: Yes, and even then, when it came time to go back to Hawaii, the Hoshidas were sent from Arizona to California and came home. We, they sent us up to Seattle and from Seattle, we were sent home to Hawaii. So I don't know what their reasoning was. Maybe they didn't have enough room for us.

MI: But you were sent to the west coast the same time as the Hoshidas were sent.

ME: Aha, aha.

MI: You never got released early, even though your father had passed away.

ME: Right, right.

MI: That's the part that's a little bit interesting to me.

ME: It might be too ((?))...

FM: She was a priest as well.

MI: But she was not picked up [at] the same time as her husband?

FM: No, no.

ME: Who?

FM: Mom.

ME: No. Oh, yeah.

ME: But I don't know.

FM: Was it because they did not have money?

MI: Umm, I have no idea. It just seems interesting, different to me, this particular part of the story.

ME: But you know, in those days they didn't have that many, umm, oh, you know that big picture you have of all the women sitting in the front. I don't know why but the Tenrikyo family, the women could be priests and they could conduct services and everything so they had women, like when my mom and dad passed away, they sent a woman, we call her *Sensei* now, and she came and she continued the church in Hilo.

JS: But mom was able to do that.

MI: When she returned.

JS: Yeah.

ME: Yeah, and she kept the church going until she developed cancer and became very ill and she passed away. So up to then, she took over the church when we went

back to Hawaii.

MI: So from Jerome [Gila River], the people were sent to the west coast, different places, then they all came back. This was when? What year was this?

ME: We were there for a total of three years. A year and a half in Arkansas, a year and a half in Arizona.

MI: So in 1945, you came back.

ME: Yeah.

JS: In 1945, we came back.

MI: Remember that?

JS: Coming back, yeah. And I was going to mention about Seattle. I remember Seattle being so cold.

ME: Yeah. (Chuckles) It was.

JS: You know, "Make sure, get that pot belly stove going because it was so cold."

ME: Especially going from Arizona, too.

JS: Yeah, hot to cold.

MI: Well, let me ask you about Jerome and Gila River. What was the difference to you, as young children, young girls? Going from--how were the two camps different?

ME: Oh, my goodness, Arizona was a desert. Gila River, when we got to Arizona, there were all the lizards and mmm...

JS: Where was the snow? The snow was in Arizona?

ME: No, snow was in Washington and in Arkansas.

JS: We played a lot in the snow though because I remember the icicles hanging on the roof and we'd crack it and we'd crunch on it like ice.

ME: (Laughs) Yeah, yeah, that's Arizona, that's Jerome, Jerome.

JS: Jerome.

ME: Yeah.

JS: Spots of memories.

MI: Anything else you remember about Jerome?

JS: Just that and we did a lot of hiking on our own and I remember we went gallivanting and we came upon this huge barn and we saw a man.

MI: Within the camp area?

JS: A distance [away].

MI: Was there barbed wire around the camp?

ME: Yeah, there was, aha.

MI: But you were allowed to go outside the barbed wire and go hiking?

ME: Uhuh.

JS: Probably, that's how we got out. But my memory is that we went on our own excursion and we came upon this huge barn and we saw a man hanging from one of the beams. Someone had committed suicide.

MI: A Japanese man or Caucasian?

JS: I don't even know that. So we got so frightened.

MI: This was outside the camp?

JS: Yes, so we just ran home. That's what I remember. We saw this man hanging.

ME: Did she tell you that story [at the time]?

ME: Yes, we knew somewhere. June [Hoshida] Honma and I knew that there was a man ... we were there, too, I think. I kinda vaguely remember.

JS: Probably.

ME: We all ran back and told them.

JS: We didn't know who it was. He was hanging there.

MI: Scared. Any other memories of Jerome, either one of you?

ME: The watermelons.

MI: What about the watermelons?

JS: (Laughs)

ME: The internees, the menfolk especially, became good farmers and they grew the vegetables you know, like so we had lots of what, I don't know if you remember, but we had lots of watermelons.

JS: Watermelons, yeah, we had lots of watermelons.

MI: In Jerome?

ME: Yes.

MI: It was not swampland?

ME: Ah, yeah. People say it was swampland but once the men folks started planting things, we had...

MI: They could?

ME: Yeah.

MI: What else did they grow, besides watermelons?

ME: I don't know.

JS: Probably vegetables.

ME: Yeah, vegetables, yeah. I don't remember chickens and things like that. Do you? They didn't have it around where the camps were.

JS: I don't know where we got our protein from. We got enough protein, I guess.

MI: Then you go to Arizona, Gila. Tell us about that camp. You were a little older. Remember much about the Gila River camp?

JS: Just that it was dry and like you said, more lizards there. And that's why I don't like lizards today because Arizona and Arkansas. [Laughing in background]

ME: And we used to think that there were these nuts over there and it was like a laxative. We all got sick from eating too much of the nuts, what was that?

JS: Really?

MI: Castor beans.

ME: Yeah, that's it. Ah, not constipated, diarrhea, I think.

MI: Huh? Uuu. Are you the one that...

ME: Pardon?

MI: What's her name, Hoshida? Sandra Hoshida almost died from that thing. Are you the one who ate the castor beans with her?

ME: Pardon?

JS: Were you the one who ate with Sandra, those beans?

ME: Yes. Yeah, but I didn't...

MI: The Castor beans, with Sandra?

ME: Yeah.

MI: You were the one. She told us that story. She almost died from eating the Castor beans.

ME: (Chuckles)

JS: Dehydration, huh.

ME: I don't know if I gave it to her or not. (Chuckles)

JS: Oho.

MI: Are you, she mentioned that she was with a friend and they both ate the Castor beans and...

ME: Yeah (Laughs).

MI: You're the one?

ME: I think so, yeah. (Laughs)

MI: Ohh.

JS: Guilty as charged. (laughter)

MI: (Laughs)

ME: Oh, gosh.

MI: She was quite sick. I mean, you know, they thought she might die that night, poisoning.

ME: Yeah, yeah. She was frail. Sandra was very frail.

MI: Have you seen her recently?

ME: No. Yeah, yeah, it was at June's fiftieth anniversary, ah...

JS: Oh, wedding anniversary.

ME: Yeah, 50th wedding anniversary.

MI: Okay.

ME: That's the last time I saw her, yeah.

MI: Oh, that's interesting.

ME: That was December. Oh, and when my husband was alive, we went to dinner at her home. That was back in...I was trying to remember the last time I went home with Masa.

JS: '83.

MI: Remember any other families? You met many new families in Gila River, from Hawaii. You had new friends there?

ME: Funny how we didn't get that close to other families.

MI: I guess because you came from a different camp.

ME: Yes, but I've been to several reunions. She hasn't. We always talk about the camps and different things and meeting new people. So I've gotten mixed up when I've met some of them at the reunions.

MI: That's okay. So you're not too interested in these reunions?

JS: Well, it's because she lived in California.

ME: Yeah. And I...

JS: And I lived in Hilo.

MI: And you live here.

JS: In Hawaii. So her interest, certainly I wasn't up to par, to her (Laughs) I think it because of availability and she kept track of everything that came up that had to do with internship and she used to beg me to come. But I had no interest at all. Yeah. So this has been quite emotional for me.

MI: You had no interest because you don't remember much or because you want to forget about it? You don't want to talk about it?

JS: Probably both.

MI: So from Seattle, I guess, you come back to Oahu and then to the Big Island. How is life for your family on the Big Island, now without your father? Do you go back to the church?

ME: Uhuh. Yep..

MI: Same house and everything?

ME: Yeah.

JS: Yeah.

ME: We had the same house we went to because this man stayed.

MI: What happened to the house, all the years you were away? Was somebody else living there?

ME: Yes, there was a man, a member of the church, that moved in and he stayed. He kinda didn't want to move out after we got back. I mean, for three years he was there, you know and he...

MI: Remember his name?

ME: Goto-san. G-O-T-O. And then, sadly, from the tidal wave we told him to please come upstairs cause there's a big tidal wave out there. And sure enough, he said "No, he's going to stay here." And so he stayed downstairs and he was killed.

MI: That was about a year later, the tidal wave?

JS: Not quite a year.

ME: '46, April 1, 1946.

JS: August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April.

MI: Months later.

ME: Yeah.

MI: In that period, the family's getting settled back in their own home and everything.

JS: Going to school.

MI: Your mom is back in the church.

ME: Yes.

JS: And trying to re-establish the church.

MI: How is it for the family, in terms of [finances]. Is your mom able to support the family?

JS: We went under welfare, public assistance.

MI: So the state [territorial government] helped.

JS: There was no way we could survive.

ME: But after the tidal wave, it was very difficult because we lost everything. But gradually it opened up. They provided housing for us and everything and then one of the church members had a home and we were able to, my mom was able to rent the home, to make it her church.

MI: Okay. You mentioned that the Hoshidas went to L.A. and you went to Seattle. Did you keep in touch with the Hoshidas when you all came back?

ME: Yes, we did. In fact when the tidal wave happened, we were with them for about three or four days. We stayed with them because they were staying at Mrs. Hoshida's grandmother's house, Hisanaga's. Hisanagas was, um, we stayed with them until we found another home to stay in, in Oloo. But I was telling her, it's difficult to remember because when we were caught in the tidal wave, everything was washed away except my father's ashes floated in front of us while we were in the river. I told my mom, "Mom, mom, that's dad's ashes. I'm going after it." She said, "No, no don't because it's too dangerous." So about three or four days after we were with the Hoshidas, on the radio the police department said, there's a container of ashes with my father's name, Kinzaemon Odachi's ashes. It floated into someone's basement. Can you imagine that, in the tidal wave and ...

MI: Wow.

JS: It's still legible.

ME: Yeah, yeah.

MI: Now where did you get the ashes, when you were in Jerome or Gila River?

ME: When we were in Jerome. They mailed it to us.

MI: Mailed it to you?

ME: Yeah. So she took it back with us when we went to Hawaii.

MI: Oh, I see.

ME: And she had her service and, you know, she put the urn by her, whatcha call that?

JS: Altar.

ME: Yeah.

MI: So you still have that?

ME: My mother passed away in 1958, so I buried my father and my mother together. So they're in Hilo.

MI: I see, okay.

JS: And part of it went to Japan, remember? Part of it went to Japan.

ME: Oh, yeah, the ministers from Japan came to the funeral and they asked if they could have some of the ashes and I heard that they buried it in an area where they had...

JS: All the priests.

ME: I guess so, someday I hope I can get to Japan, but it's getting harder and harder to get back to Japan to travel.

MI: Now Mr. Hoshida was an artist, he sketched.

JS: Ohh.

ME: He did.

JS: He was a writer.

MI: Did you get to see his work in oil in Gila River? That's where you met, did he join the family in Jerome, Mr. Hoshida?

ME: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MI: Did you see him drawing?

ME: Oh, yes. He was with my father from the beginning. So my father, he drew a lot of pictures of my father.

MI: Oh really?

ME: Yeah.

MI: I remember those sketches of individuals, yeah, the faces, yeah. So he did your father?

ME: Yeah.

ME: Last week we were at the KMC, Kilauea Military Camp where they first were there [incarcerated]. There was someone there that took us on a tour of the camp. And lo and behold, there's my father's picture, you know, and I thought, "Oh my goodness, you know."

JS: Dr. [Jadelyn Moniz-] Nakamura [Hawaii Volcanoes National Park], she said, "I chose that," she told me.

MI: Oh, that's her name, Nakamura? Oh, she's a Japanese American?

JS: Yeah.

MI: Jadelyn Nakamura?

JS: Jadelyn Nakamura. She gave us a personal tour of KMC. The building that they slept in, the cafeteria, and she was responsible for displaying all these outdoor plaques.

MI: So he was there for a while before coming to Oahu?

JS: That's the thing that we don't know, when he left KMC, actually. So there are pictures of...

MI: They should be able to figure that out depending on when they came to Sand Island and then which ship that he [took to the mainland].

JS: We have no date on when he left KMC. There's no record of him being at KMC

MI: I see.

JS: So the pictures, you know, I looked at each man. [I thought,] "That's not my dad. He was not there because he was already dead."

MI: Um, say that again?

JS: The pictures that...

MI: The faces that he drew?

JS: The faces, you know.

MI: When did he draw them?

JS: This is a photograph.

MI: Oh, you're not talking about Hoshida's sketches?

JS: No. I'm talking about a photograph that was taken at KMC, of the men that were there.

ME: Although we do have a photograph of his funeral [at Santa Fe]. What else do we have?

JS: My question is, there's no record to say when he left KMC.

MI: Kilauea?

ME: Oh, yeah.

JS: It's almost like...

FM: I think it was the summer months when they fully, they were all out by six to seven months. I think it was like June of 1942, when they pretty much moved.

JS: So he moved with everybody, then. Oh, okay, and because he was ill, he landed in a hospital or infirmary.

ME: No, I think he became ill at Santa Fe.

MI: After he got there?

JS: After he got to Santa Fe.

ME: Yeah, because they went to Lordsburg [New Mexico] first. They didn't stay in Lordsburg very long, I don't think. From Lordsburg to Santa Fe, I was able to go to the Memorial where they have a stone. Above the Santa Fe camps, there's a huge housing complex. So instead, there's a park right above, so the person who was in charge of getting that statue, not statue but the...

JS: Memorial.

ME: Memorial, yeah, umm, was an Army Colonel and he made it his job to get that memorial in Santa Fe. So to this day, when you go to the park, we can see that stone there showing that these men were incarcerated here, but none of them was ever proven that they were enemies.

MI: And your father's name is on that list?

ME: Yes, because he died at Santa Fe, you know. Mrs. Honma [June Hoshida Honma] was supposed to come to the thing because by then people were knowledgeable of Mr. Hoshida's qualities and his artistic abilities and writing so his pictures were all over. In fact, I have one from a newspaper [article] where my father is sitting up on a bench, bed.

JS: Cot.

ME: We called it a bed.

MI: Yup, that's a sketch that Mr. Hoshida did.

ME: Yeah, we did recognize him from many, many of the [sketches]. In fact, he drew quite a few pictures of these men there. For myself, that's where I found out what *ken* [prefecture] my father was from and different things like that.

JS: Have you ever met Mr. Hoshida?

MI: Mr. Hoshida? No, just Sandra.

JS: Oh, just Sandra. Have you met June Honma, her older sister?

MI: No, she lives on the mainland.

JS: Yes, so June and she have been in contact.

MI: Mm, hm.

MI: Mr. Hoshida has passed away, huh?

JS: Yes, yes, he died here on Oahu.

MI: So this sketch that you have of your father by Mr. Hoshida, is that something, do you have the original?

ME: You have the original. Yeah, remember the picture I gave you?

JS: That's the big one, that's the original?

ME: Yeah, yeah.

MI: You have it? No, no. Okay, I just wanted, maybe at some point, if we can copy it or something, that would be important. Most of his sketches have gone to the Japanese American Museum in Los Angeles. So there are very few that have not gone there. If this is something that has not gone, I think it might be good if we could, if you would allow us to copy it. You can keep the original but you know, yeah, to keep with this story.

ME: Yeah, that would be wise.

MI: So when the family came back, we're talking about before the tidal wave, how was life for you folks in Hilo? Were you accepted by the Congregation, by the community, or did people, you know, keep their distance from you?

ME: Yeah, I don't remember any kind of

MI: At school?

ME: They're just happy that we're back. They were just happy that we were back.

JS: But as a child, I remember this. We were made fun of, by the way we talked. We lost the whole pidgin English.

ME: Yeah.

MI: How did you lose that if you were with Japanese [from Hawaii] in camp?

JS: I don't know. When we came back, I remember playing with my playmates and they made fun of us because we spoke so well. And that really stuck to my mind, I don't know why.

MI: Actually there were a lot of mainland Japanese in the camps, although you didn't interact a lot with them.

JS: Oh, we must have played, day by day, in school and playgrounds.

MI: You went to class not just with the Hawaii [children]?

JS: Probably not.

ME: Yes, it was the whole camp.

JS: We were interspersed.

ME: Yes

MI: And you said as far as education it was fine.

ME: Oh, it was wonderful. I, for one, was able to go in as a ten year old and came out and I went into the junior high. They said, "What class would you like to go to?" So I looked at the names and I remembered my classmates in Waiakea town, cause that's where I went, Waiakea Kai School. And I said these names and so I was

fine, slipped right in.

MI: What grade was that?

ME: Seventh grade.

MI: And how were you, compared to the other students in that class?

ME: Mmm, I think I was average with them. But my sister, being younger, she didn't adjust.

MI: You went to the same school?

JS: I was held back two years, and I did catch up.

MI: Why was that?

JS: I went to the next one and I was okay.

MI: How was school for you in Gila River and Jerome? You went to school also, but somehow you fell behind?

JS: I fell behind but I didn't know I was behind until we came back to Hilo.

MI: What I meant was, you went to the appropriate level of school in the camps?

JS: Yes, I did.

ME: That's why she is very close to June Honma, the oldest daughter of Mr. Hoshida's because they were the same age, same class.

MI: You're the same [age] as June Honma?

JS: Yes.

MI: How did you feel when you came back? Were you treated like any other student or were you treated differently because you had been in the camp.

JS: I felt I was. I don't think [I was treated differently]. Except for the fact that because we spoke well. I remember being teased about how we spoke. I don't know why but that stuck in my mind.

ME: Especially the pidgin language, yeah.

JS: Yeah, somehow, we lost the pidgin. (Chuckle) Somehow we lost the pidgin.

MI: And in a few years you caught up to your [classmates]?

JS: Yes.

ME: Yes, she did.

MI: How about your mother? How was she when she came back? Was she back to her old ways? Was she different?

ME: Well, I think that Mr. Goto had a hard time giving up because he ran the church and he lived there.

MI: What was he? He was a Congregation member?

JS: He was a bachelor so he didn't have a wife to help him.

ME: He had a wife, Mr. Goto.

JS: And where was she?

ME: He didn't want to go back to his house. He wanted to stay at the church, take care of the church. That I remember.

JS: Really?

MI: But he had not gone through training to become a priest or anything?

ME: No.

JS: Just a lay member.

ME: But the Tenrikyo religion, they train their members. You remember all these people that came? They're trained like the priest and when they have them enter the church, they sort of made them official members of their church, Tenrikyo church. They would have a special Japanese gown and they can conduct those special services that they have at seven in the morning and seven at night, every day. And he took care of the church while we were gone. I know once he told my mother that he wanted to stay on. So he did stay on with us, even if he had his wife. And then his son, he had a son, came back to check on him.

JS: Really?

ME: Remember, we had to tell him his father had died in the tidal wave.

MI: Now, did your mother, was she like a priestess in the internment camps? Did she have a congregation while in the camp, Jerome or Gila River?

JS: I don't think there was any...

ME: Yeah, she didn't have a congregation but...

MI: They had religious services, right?

ME: Yeah, she did her own service.

MI: For a group of people or for herself?

ME: I don't remember a group of people but she would do her thing, that was her calling, she felt. So when she came back, she took over. But Mr. Goto had a hard time giving up that position because he had it for three years.

MI: When she came back, the family came back, did she ever talk much about the experience? Was she angry about what happened to her, to her husband, her family? Did she ever...

ME: She never talked about that.

JS: She kept a lot of feelings and emotions to herself.

MI: So for the rest of her life, she never really talked about this part of her life?

ME: No.

JS: That's why she died so early.

MI: How old was she when she died? When did she die?

JS: When she was fifty-seven. She had cervical cancer and she passed away from that.

MI: About what year was this?

ME: She was able to go back to Japan.

JS: 1958.

MI: 1958.

ME: She said she wanted to go to Japan. So I said, "Alright." And then part of this...

JS: But she did go to Japan.

ME: I sent her back.

JS: She [ME] had a lot of responsibility.

ME: (Laughs) But she really, really enjoyed her trip back. She came back and she said ...

JS: She had symptoms of the cancer.

ME: She was happy. She enjoyed the trip, but she didn't want to ever go back to Japan again.

MI: Oh, is that right? Did she say why she didn't want to go back to Japan?

ME: Partly it was the weather. It was really, really cold. And I heard that it can get real cold in Japan. She had warm clothing, you know, but still...

MI: So that time she went back, where did she go? I mean, family in which prefecture?

ME: She went to Tenri City, they called it, in Japan.

MI: Where was that?

JS: Tenrikyo has a ... it's called Tenri City.

ME: Yeah, it's still there.

MI: What prefecture or where is that?

ME: I don't know about prefectures.

JS: That's a good question.

MI: That's okay. Let's go back to the tidal wave now. Tell me about the tidal wave. Did you folks have [a] warning that it was coming? How much warning?

ME: No, we didn't have any warning.

MI: 1946?

JS: April 1st.

ME: April 1st, 1946.

JS: "Ai! [Oh no!] The tidal wave come, *do* [affirmation]," is what we used to hear and everybody thought it was a big joke. Yeah, I remember it was...

MI: So nobody evacuated?

JS: No no time.

ME: Nobody could evacuate because they didn't have any warning. When it hit, it hit without warning.

MI: No warning?

JS: Yeah, no warning. I remember as a child...

MI: So what were you doing? Were you sleeping and...?

ME: No, I was getting ready for school, seven o'clock in the morning.

MI: Then what happens?

JS: And then there was a parishioner that came to the church and [was] ready for service because they would have rituals, dance and offerings of the food and all of that [at that time in the morning]. There was this woman that used to come all the time. Then we heard somebody yelling, "Tidal wave come, *do*." You know, and so ...

ME: She said, "*Tsunami* [Tidal Wave]." Remember?

JS: Well, *tsunami*, or whatever, and everybody split.

MI: When they said, "Tidal wave coming," that was because they could actually see it already coming?

ME: Yeah, yeah

JS: There was no siren....

MI: There was no siren or anything like that? No warning?

JS: No warning at all. But our church had a basement and as you went up the stairs was the altar. So I was the last one to go up in front of the altar so I remember, when I looked out the basement door, I actually, I remember this one, that the wave was coming like this. It's coming. So what I did was, I just shut the door and put, you know in the old days, this was our lock right, just put the board up

there and we went up. Then the wave hit.

MI: Now, how far away from the shoreline was your house?

ME: We weren't that far away. Our house was the last house. The next step was a little roadway and there was a river behind us.

JS: About a block. So we went in and out, maybe a couple of times and then our home went right into the Waialua River.

MI: You were in the house at that time...

JS: Oh, yes.

MI: And the house is going in and out?

ME: Yes.

JS: Oh yes, in and out.

MI: You're looking out the window? You can see what's happening?

JS: Oh, yeah. You can see people flowing.

MI: Really? People in other houses?

JS: Yeah.

ME: Yes. So I lost a friend who lived in the lower area. Because they were all single homes [single storied homes], not double like ours.

JS: I think probably that's what saved us, because we had two stories, yeah. And then it went into the Waialua River. We call it, "Uppgates", where the river goes up to as far as the river could and then we jumped off from the house.

MI: When the water receded, there wasn't enough to take you out into the ocean?

JS: No.

ME: No, no.

MI: It ended up still on land.

JS: Somehow that 1946 tidal wave did not have that receding. See, I was caught in another tidal wave in 1960, and that one, it receded. I mean, you could see the bottom of the canal, more than one time.

ME: Wow.

JS: It was building up the momentum.

ME: But when you got out of the house, you went out in the water?

JS: Every time you recede, the momentum gets bigger and bigger. And that's when the big wave came.

MI: So you've had two? You experienced two tidal waves?

JS: So I told my husband, “No more.”

MI: And you kept living in the same area?

JS: Huh?

MI: You were living in the same area, both times?

JS: More up towards downtown, you know, compared to Shinmachi.

MI: You didn’t move?

JS: Yeah.

MI: What happened to that whole village, or that Shinmachi, after the 1946 tidal wave?

JS: Oh, it leveled out, yes. The only building that is there now is called the Iron Works and all the rest is gone. I would say, maybe about five or six miles?

MI: And they never, never rebuilt in that area?

JS: No.

MI: It’s a park now.

JS: It’s a park and a soccer field. And our house was, they built this nice bathroom, you know, for the whole community. I always tell my friends, “That’s my bathroom. You can use my bathroom.” (Laughs) Really nice one, the county built.

MI: But the second tidal wave, what happened? Your house was again swept away?

JS: Oh, yes, 1960 was our second one. So...

ME: But you folks survived, you and Jeanette.

JS: My young daughter was just a year and eight months [old] and my husband had to close her mouth and nose and dive underneath the water, out the window and then he tried hoisting her up on the roof. That’s when she got really scared and she started to cry. I went first.

MI: On your own?

JS: Yeah. So I went on the roof. And then when she came out with him, and you know the roof is like this, yeah. So I took her and we sat on the bridge of the roof, like this. And then...

MI: Then someone came to rescue you?

JS: No. And then my husband said, “If another wave comes, what can happen is that we’re going to go this way.” So we’re certainly going to be drowned after that. So he went and he got a really wide side of a house, you know, maybe about this size. So he tried to paddle and it was too large. So he got rid of that and he got a smaller one, about this much, and he put us on that, and then tried to, and we climbed the mango tree. No other wave came after that. So that was good. Who came to get us was the National Park Rangers. Yeah, so we have a lot of aloha for

them.

MI: Wow.

JS: So I told my husband, '46, 1960, I said, "There's not going to be any more tidal wave for me. You can stay down here but I'm going way up the mountain." (Laughs) I've shared this story with a lot of people and children to educate them that the warning system is nothing to be ignored. When you have a warning system, you just have to obey.

MI: Was there a siren the second time? You had a warning, 1960?

JS: 1960? No, because the only information that we went by in 1960, was that we heard over the radio that Kona had only about a foot and a half of rising water. That was not, it probably was and then the receding of the...

MI: You didn't expect that?

JS: Yeah, because every time you have receding water that goes this way and comes back, it's gaining momentum. The wave is getting stronger and stronger. And then by the time it came, it just destroyed us. There was a man that was running up the street, "*Ai*, the tidal wave come, *do*." We saw him in the list a... we knew the Filipino man's name. We saw his name in the newspaper.

MI: So when you look back to all of this, I mean, this was a big part of your life. How has it affected you?

ME: How did it affect me?

MI: You ever think about, you know, the hardships that your family had to go through?

JS: You can bear your testimony like you did on Saturday.

ME: What?

JS: Did you know that you bore your testimony about God in your life?

ME: Testimony about what? [Laughing in the background]

JS: You did a testimony, you know, with Heather? You remember the interview we had with Heather?

ME: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JS: That was a good closure.

MI: What did you tell her? Who's Heather?

ME: She and I loved our mother because of what she went through. She was very special to both of us.

JS: The three of us. Don't forget Mi-chan.

ME: Oh, yeah, yeah, and Michio, too. I'm sad that she had to go through all that without any help from people to explain to her why she had to go through all that.

I think it was...

MI: She didn't understand what was happening?

ME: Yeah, yeah. I don't think we understood why all those things were happening.

JS: What was your question?

MI: Your mother didn't understand why all of this happened?

JS: I think she did. She internalized a lot. She was very stoic and she didn't share her misery or her... I just admired her for that.

ME: Yes, yes, she was strong enough to continue, even after the tidal wave.

JS: Very strong, emotionally, spiritually, mentally.

ME: She had a really nice little home from one of her members and so she continued the Tenrikyo church religion. But I became a Christian and I went a different, you know ... and she never ... she always allowed me to find my way and I shall always remember her and my dad.

JS: The only sister, the one above Masako, is Michiko. She's passed on. She followed the Tenrikyo up until she died.

MI: And there is a brother? Is he still living?

JS: He passed away two years ago. First the older one died on Easter Sunday in 2016. Then in '17, Michio died on the same Easter Sunday exactly, was it a year apart? So it's just the two of us.

ME: A year apart.

JS: So it's just the two of us.

MI: Briefly, what's happened to you? Your life now.

ME: My life?

MI: Yes. What year?

ME: Well, I know that God had a special reason why these things happened. I graduated high school and I had a wonderful Counselor helping me and I was accepted at Queen's Hospital here in Honolulu. She says, "How are you going to pay for your education?" I said, "Well, I don't know but I'm going to Queen's and I'm going to be a nurse." She said, "Well, let's try and write up for a scholarship." So she helped me form a letter and asked for a scholarship to go to Queen's Hospital and lo and behold, they wrote back and said I'm accepted as a scholarship student. So I went through three years of Nursing school and graduated and became a Registered Nurse. And I went through...after I graduated, my husband and I met each other in Honolulu at a church, but he had to finish his undergraduate work.

MI: I'm sorry, met where?

ME: Pardon?

MI: You said your husband and you met where?

ME: Oh, my husband that passed away?

MI: Yeah.

JS: Where did you meet him?

ME: Oh, well, small world. He and I went to kindergarten together, first grade together and in the tidal wave, they were watching all those homes being washed away and he was further down by the Suisan Fishing Store and saw us, saw the houses floating out, and there I was. But I didn't meet him until after high school because he came to Honolulu during his high school years to go to MPI [Mid-Pacific Institute] and he graduated from MPI and then went into the service and they kept him at Schofield [Barracks, Oahu] for two years. So that's when I met him, when he was finishing up in Schofield. So he and I decided, well after he finishes his undergraduate, we'll get together. So he and I were married in 1958. After we were married, he said, I need to finish my education and get my Masters in Math, so he and I, after we married, went to the mainland. That's when I left Hawaii. We were there for a year then we went to Illinois for two years where he was a school teacher. Our first year, we lost our first one and that was really hard. But somehow through that, a year later, I had another son and God blessed us and I have five children. Boom, boom, boom (Laughs).

JS: Boom, boom, boom, and she's the last boom.

ME: And my grandson, her son, went to MPI, too. So MPI is very special to my heart and my husband. And my mom, my mom knew that I was getting married to my husband cause I was engaged in November and he had sent me my engagement ring. So I showed it, when she was ill. She knew that eventually, I was soon, in June I was going to be married to my husband. So she died knowing that I'd be taken care of, cause I was the last one to get married. And I had a wonderful life with him. Fifty years of marriage together. But I still miss my mom and your dad. But God has blessed me.

MI: As far as the internment experience, how do you think that it has affected your life, or has it affected your life or has it affected your life?

ME: Oh, it has affected me in different ways. It helps me to be patient and to understand. In life, you have to go through all these tragic experiences in order to grow and if you can use that as an experience to grow, then that's a marvelous thing. So I have a home in California and I have my grandchildren and my five children.

MI: How do you feel for your parents, what they had to go through?

ME: Pardon?

MI: How do you feel about what your parents had to go through?

ME: I'm not bitter, but I was sad that they had to go through that. It was really sad. And there are some people that are bitter, but because being a Christian, I feel that I don't have the bitterness that lots of people have because they did take care of us and some, I'm learning through life that some things do happen that you can't control and I think it's helped me as a nurse, too. I nursed for thirty some years on the mainland and this has helped me to become a better professional nurse. Hopefully, I'll go another thirty years. (Chuckle)

MI: Did you receive the Letter of Apology and the twenty-thousand dollars?

ME: Yes, I did, I did.

MI: How did you feel? Did that bring back the whole experience?

ME: No, no. I was so busy with my children in school that I was just thankful for that and all. But she took a picture. But I didn't...

JS: I took a picture when I got the check. You know, I took a picture with my grandson. He was three years old, just to remember, you know.

MI: Why don't you tell us about your life, since the two tidal waves? (Laughs) What's happened to you, in your life?

JS: I think my number one theme would be how precious life is.

MI: Now, you stayed on the Big Island.

JS: Yes.

MI: What kind of work did you do?

JS: I went, I graduated from high school and then I worked in a doctor's office and then, she was the one who talked me into going into vocational nursing. So I went to Honolulu and lived with my husband's family for a year and got my vocational nursing license and I came back and I did private duties for a while and then I got a job at Cooperative Extension Service as a Nutrition Aide for a nutrition program that is still existing today, sponsored by the federal government, for working with low income families. And so because of my work with the expanded food and nutrition program, I learned so much about basic nutrition and what you eat can affect you health wise. So I'm so thankful that I got that job.

MI: You mentioned that when the family first came back, you were on welfare. The government helped to support the family.

JS: Yes, yes. So I can appreciate that because I did work with many families who were on public assistance.

ME: She followed her mom's footsteps. She has been a Pastor for several years at her church and so I believe my mother's influence helped her to have that.

JS: I think so.

MI: Which church is this?

JS: It's called the Community of Christ, now. We used to be the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and we changed our names. So I've been an Ordained Minister and I've pastored our congregation for, I think it lasted about eight years and we all take turns. That has been a learning experience for me.

MI: Do you ever look back and think about what happened to your parents and what they had to go through?

JS: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

MI: You do. How do you feel about that?

JS: I try not to ... when I do things like this ... I've done a lot of interviews because of the tsunami. There's a museum in Hilo. If you ever come to Hilo, go and visit the Hilo Pacific Tsunami Museum and I think they may still have my story, in one corner.

MI: Oh, is that right?

JS: Because people come and tell me, "I saw you at the Pacific Tsunami Museum." I thought they would change things but they haven't, yet. But anyway, I forget where I was gonna go with that. (Laughter)

ME: That comes with age.

MI: Do you feel badly for your parents, what your parents had to go through? Or do you think about those kinds of things?

JS: I try not to think about it too much because it really gets emotional and it saddens me. But like Masako says, this is the life that was put before us and you need to move on. You need to move on.

MI: Did that Apology Letter and the check do anything? Did it affect...

JS: You know, with that Apology Letter, I had written to [Senator] Sparky Matsunaga because our program was being, funding was going to be cut off and so I personally wrote a letter to him asking that the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program is such a vital program in our community and you know, we'd really appreciate if he would speak for that program. He wrote me a letter, personally. I did tell him that I was an Internee and all that and in his letter, he said, I still have that letter at home, "I would like to one day meet you." Course, he passed away.

MI: Oh, I see.

JS: Yeah, and then, after that, we got the money. The money that was given to me personally, I kept so much of it because I wanted to take my personal family and pay homage to where we were at. So that was maybe, that was my completion,

my closure for me, I think. I took my family to Arizona, so we spent some time there. The rest of the money, I made a decision that I was going to invest it so somehow I can use it to teach my children and grandchildren what happened. Not to just spend it. So that was my decision. I have that money. Hopefully the economy will provide for it to grow. (Laughs) I'm watching it. I'm watching it.

MI: Is there anything else you want to add, at this point, to the story?

ME: It's been quite...

JS: You're retired but I, I'm supposed to be retired but I'm not but I'm going to put a plug in here for my--my family, my husband, myself and my two daughters, one with a husband and one is single, we have a Hilo Lunch Shop, in Hilo. So if you ever come to Hilo...

MI: That's the name of it?

JS: Yeah, come to Hilo Lunch Shop and I will buy you lunch. (Laughter) That's what I tell everybody.

MI: Thank you.

JS: Come to Hilo Lunch and I'll buy you lunch. So we're in our fourteenth year of this business and pretty soon, my husband and I will have to kind of back off a little bit because we're both in our eighties. He's strong but I have some physical stuff that I've got to deal with.

MI: Let me ask your family, do you folks have any questions?

JS: Yeah, ask them!

MI: I mean about the history.

FM: I have a question. What happened to uncle during the tidal wave, where was he?

ME: Uncle who?

FM: Uncle Michio, your brother?

ME: What happened to what?

ME: Where was he during the tidal wave?

JS: We just grabbed him by his throat. (Laughter)

ME: He was young, yeah.

JS: Yeah, yeah. So we really had to watch him. I remember just grabbing him and pulling him out of the water, yeah.

ME: Yeah.

JS: Our house really floated to an area where we could all jump off the house, the roof.

ME: Mom couldn't swim, but...

JS: And we went to this grassy area and we had Hoshida's family come to rescue us. And we stayed with them for a few days and then my in-laws, we stayed with them. And then public housing was offered to us. That was in 1960. But in 1946, when the tidal wave came, they opened up barracks in a certain area ...

ME: Several months afterwards.

JS: Where the Civic Auditorium is and we lived in, again, in barracks. So we had a communal laundry area, communal showering area. So mom had to go through that all over again. That was really hard on her.

MI: I'm going to call Allison and have her come in and maybe we can go over some of these things if you brought too.

JS: Oh.

MI: We're running out of time, so, okay?

ME: How much time have we got?

MI: About fifty...