

JANE TOMEKO SUGIMURA

MR. TADAKI: Today is April 15, 1980. I, Wayne Tadaki, am privileged to interview Mrs. Sugimura at her home in Dinuba.

Before we get into the interview proper, can you tell me your full name and where you were born?

MRS. SUGIMURA: My name is Jane Tomeko Sugimura. I was born in Malaga, near Fresno.

MR. TADAKI: And what year were you born in?

MRS. SUGIMURA: 1914. My birthday is November 17th.

MR. TADAKI: Shall we begin at the beginning. Can you remember how it was like when you were a child? Are you the oldest in your family?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No. I was the third.

MR. TADAKI: Have you both brothers and sisters?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I have just one brother.

MR. TADAKI: And your parents, where were they from?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Japan. Father was a farmer in Japan before he came here to farm.

MR. TADAKI: Were your parents married in Japan?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I think they married in this country. My father came first, then he called my mother to come as his bride.

MR. TADAKI: So when he first came to California he came to Malaga?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, that's right.

MR. TADAKI: Do you know why he came? Did he say why?

MRS. SUGIMURA: He came to America to make some money. That was the main reason.

MR. TADAKI: Did he return to Japan?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. I didn't ask, but I think most Japanese came to the United States to make money, hoping to stay three years or five years, but most people stayed a long time.

MR. TADAKI: Why do you think this was? Perhaps they didn't have enough money, or they liked it in America?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I think they liked America, yes. They sure were treated well, you know.

MR. TADAKI: I understand you went to Japan for education.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. My father and my mother made money, so they went

hack to Japan for a visit. They took me and my next younger brother.

MR. TADAKI: When did you go to Japan?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I went with my father and mother then. I don't know how long we stayed, but they took us all over. Then we went to my home town, Hiroshima. Little ones stayed in Hiroshima. Then they came to this country, but before they came to this country, I went to Hiroshima station.

MR. TADAKI: What kind of a station is this, a train station?

MRS. SUGIMURA: A train station. And it was just to say good-bye, farewell, but I said, "I don't want to go to the United States. I want to stay in Japan." And my uncle said, "If you want to stay, stay and learn some Japanese language." That's why I stayed in Japan.

MR. TADAKI: So it wasn't your parents' plan, it was because you wanted to stay?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, I wanted to stay there. So I stayed there. I didn't want to go back to America. I was stubborn. I graduated from school in Japan.

MR. TADAKI: So you went there when you were five years old?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Around five.

MR. TADAKI: And you left Japan when you were 15?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No. Maybe I was a little more than five, but I left Japan when I graduated from high school. I was 18.

MR. TADAKI: Did you like that school in Japan?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, I liked it. Everybody was friendly and we played together. In exercise and running I was on the running team. I sure liked that. In Japan when you are in sports they compete with other schools, and I won along with another one of my two friends, all girls. I went to other school competitions in running.

MR. TADAKI: Oh, you were a fast runner!

MRS. SUGIMURA: Oh, not too bad. Not too good, either.

MR. TADAKI: And during that time you were in Japan, did your parents come to visit?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Never, never, no.

MR. TADAKI: You didn't see them for 11 years?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I didn't see them for more than 10 years. When I graduated from high school my uncle wanted me to go to the United States because I had already graduated from high school. He didn't want to be responsible. He was afraid marriage problems might come up. One thing, I wanted to see my folks. That's why I came to this country. I like this country.

MR. TADAKI: So when you returned to the United States, you didn't know how to speak English, or did you?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No, none -- maybe one word. I came in by sea, not airplane, but ship. It took more than one week. I met some ladies, and I wanted to say "pretty." I didn't learn "pretty" at high school, so I said "beautiful." They understood "beautiful," so I didn't talk anymore. I had lots of fun.

MR. TADAKI: So when you returned here, did you go to an English school?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I studied at a grammar school. My mother said, "Now that you are going to stay in this country, you'd better learn the language." So she forced me to go. I didn't want to go because I was old. She told me a neighbor who had come from Japan was going, too. So why not me? So I started grammar school. Good thing people are so kind in this country. I had to start school, and the teacher began by teaching me one, two, three -- numbers and colors -- red and white.

MR. TADAKI: Was this a Japanese teacher or a hakujin teacher?

MRS. SUGIMURA: A hakujin teacher. An American teacher. She was kind. I can't forget that.

MR. TADAKI: Was this in Malaga when you began to learn English?

MRS. SUGIMURA: This was Reedley. Reedley Winter School. They still have that school there.

MR. TADAKI: Can you remember the first time you returned to America when you were 18 years old? What did you think of it?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Oh, I thought America was a wonderful place. They say America is a golden place, just like money growing on trees. I thought that in America they didn't wear any Japanese clothes, but that everyone wore dresses. But there was a Japanese Buddhist church and they wore Japanese clothes, and they had Bon Odori. It was a surprise which made me happy.

MR. TADAKI: What did you think when you hadn't seen your family for so long?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I sure appreciated them and was very happy to see them. My folks got up early in the morning and went to work on the ranch. They were farmers. I stayed home and cleaned the house. At noontime, my father hollered from the fields for me to bring lemonade. I don't blame them because they worked hard and they wanted something cold.

MR. TADAKI: That was your job, too.

MRS. SUGIMURA: That was my job. We have Thompson grapes, peaches, and plums. So we made jam and grape juice, and raisins, of course.

MR. TADAKI: During the time when you lived in Reedley do you remember what the town looked like?

MRS. SUGIMURA: The town looked like Dinuba. A little larger than Dinuba.

MR. TADAKI: A little bigger than Dinuba is now?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Now Reedley is bigger than Dinuba. At that time Reedley was very small.

MR. TADAKI: At that time everybody drove cars?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. They had cars. We had a Chevrolet. Everybody drove a car. I didn't drive a car. I was to go to a YMBA meeting, so an old friend said I'd better learn, so I guess I tried.

MR. TADAKI: Do you drive a car?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I drove a car all right. I was scared. Some car came from the front, just like a drunk man. They thought I was drunk because I didn't drive straight. In olden times cars were pretty hard to drive. They had gear shifts, it was hard for me. So I just gave up. I didn't learn. My brother always took me.

MR. TADAKI: At that time did all the young people about your age speak Japanese?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. They spoke pretty good.

MR. TADAKI: So they could speak both, (Japanese and English)?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, they spoke both. Right now Sanseis don't speak Japanese, but in those days everybody spoke both. They used to have oratorical contests.

MR. TADAKI: And did they give speeches in English or Japanese?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Japanese. They had this once a month here. All the Buddhists got together and chose one speaker from each town; Dinuba, Reedley, Parlier, Fresno, and other places. Then at that time we also had Shibai.

MR. TADAKI: What kind of play was that? Did you make your own plays?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No, somebody taught us.

MR. TADAKI: Were the Shibai stories based on Japanese stories?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. TADAKI: Like samurai and things like that?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No. That's modern. I forgot the names of the plays, but they were very interesting.

MR. TADAKI: Did people dress in Japanese costumes?

MRS. SUGIMURA: They were dressed in Japanese style, Japanese kimono or dress. That was a lot of fun, a lot of fun.

MR. TADAKI: At that time when Nisei learned how to speak Japanese, did

they have to go to Japanese school?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, they had to go to Japanese schools, but they knew the language because their parents talked in Japanese. In olden times the Nisei didn't know English. The Issei didn't know English, so the children had to learn how to talk to their folks in the Japanese language. Their Japanese was good.

MR. TADAKI: So you didn't have any trouble speaking to younger people your age at social events?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No problem. They talked in Japanese. That made me happy. It is an English speaking country, but I could speak in Japanese and be understood.

MR. TADAKI: At age 18 did you go to a grammar school?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, I went to a grammar school. When I graduated from that school, my folks said, "You'd better learn more." So I went to high school.

MR. TADAKI: An English high school?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. Reedley High School. It is still there, but I didn't study too hard. It was a lot of trouble.

MR. TADAKI: It must have been hard for you, too.

MRS. SHGIMURA: Yes. I learned from Mr. Araki. He used to teach at Dinuba Buddhist Church. They still have that church. Now that church is a factory for making baby cribs.

MR. TADAKI: And did you graduate from Reedley High School?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, I graduated from high school. And then the war started.

MR. TADAKI: Pearl Harbor?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. We had to go to the relocation center.

MR. TADAKI: Was that just before you graduated or after?

MRS. SUGIMURA: After I graduated. In 1941.

MR. TADAKI: The same year that the war started.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. That's right.

MR. TADAKI: You didn't work at that time?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No, I didn't work. I just would go to school and come back, and I helped a Japanese schoolteacher.

MR. TADAKI: What about your brothers and sisters?

MRS. SUGIMURA: My younger brother was going to school, but all of the other brothers were helping my father farming. When I came back to this

country my elder sister was already married. She was living in Los Angeles. She was working at a flower shop.

MR. TADAKI: You father's friends, your mother's friends, and your friends were mostly Japanese people?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Mostly Japanese.

MR. TADAKI: When you got together with your family did you have a kenjinkai or things like that?

MRS. SUGIMURA: We never had kenjinkai. We just had Buddhist religious services once a month.

MR. TADAKI: So your family was Buddhist?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. But when I went to high school I heard a lecture by a woman who had been a missionary in Japan. She wasn't married, but she was quite elderly. This program was held at the Reedley College Auditorium.

MR. TADAKI: So you listened to her.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, I listened to her, and she asked me if I wanted to go to Japan with her. But I didn't hear from her after that.

MR. TADAKI: So were you a Buddhist or both?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I was Buddhist, but I was interested in Christianity. I didn't mind since it was good to listen to.

MR. TADAKI: So I guess both can help you.

MRS. SUGIMURA: That's right. I didn't know much about Buddhism either. Not too deep. So some people asked me if I wanted to change to Christianity. I told them that my folks believed in Buddha, and so I didn't want to change. My husband is a Buddhist.

MR. TADAKI: When did you get married?

MRS. SUGIMURA: 1946. After the war. After we went to relocation center.

MR. TADAKI: Did you meet your husband in the -

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, in the relocation center. He was quiet and polite.

MR. TADAKI: Before the war when your parents or your family worked on a farm, I guess everybody worked very hard, right?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, everybody worked pretty hard.

MR. TADAKI: Did they take vacation?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No, no vacation. Straight work. Nowadays poor and rich have vacation. Kids go to school and they want vacation. If they don't go anywhere they feel embarrassed. Now parents are more understanding

than before. Now it's easier for kids. But in olden times it was just work and work, always pennypinching.

MR. TADAKI: You never visited your friends or Los Angeles?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I went to Fresno for shopping. That's all. Once we went to the Exposition in San Francisco and when they had a conference of Sunday school teachers I went to San Francisco. They wanted somebody to tell a story in Japanese so I went there.

MR. TADAKI: You told stories in Japanese? So you were a storyteller?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. That was fun.

MR. TADAKI: So you were pretty active with the church.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. Actually I was pretty active. When I went to the relocation center they needed a Sunday school teacher, so every Sunday I taught a class. Those days were the best days. My children are Christians.

MR. TADAKI: My parents are Buddhist, Shingon-shu. But they are not very active. They go only on special occasions. And before the war when your family was working very hard, did the people around you live very close to you?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No, kind of far but they were friends.

MR. TADAKI: When the families got together, you didn't have a vacation, but you must have had a lot of fun together.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, a lot of fun.

MR. TADAKI: How did you have fun? Did you picnic together or--like New Year's -

MRS. SUGIMURA: New Year's was a lot of fun, because all the Japanese went around and took sake.

MR. TADAKI: How did you get sake? You bought it or made your own?

MRS. SUGIMURA: We bought it. My mother-in-law made wine, but we bought sake. And before the New Year's Day, she made everything; sushi, sashimi, chicken teriyaki -- I don't know how she did it, but she made everything; yokan, kamaboko, tempura -

MR. TADAKI: She learned all that in Japan?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, I think so. She was a hard worker. She wore plain dresses.

MR. TADAKI: In your home did they still wear kimono or American clothes?

MRS. SUGIMURA: American clothes.

MR. TADAKI: But you still ate Japanese food.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. Food is Japanese. But every morning I ate pancakes. My father liked it.

MR. TADAKI: Not misoshiru?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No. My father made pancakes and made "koppe." They didn't say "coffee," Every morning pancakes. We called them "hotcakes," and with butter. In those days you didn't have an icebox.

MR. TADAKI: Did you have an iceman come?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No iceman. We were kind of poor. We had a ranch, but we didn't have electricity either.

MR. TADAKI: So at night it was all gas?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Lamps. They were pretty bright.

MR. TADAKI: Do you remember what Fresno was like?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Fresno was not big like it is now. It was quiet.

MR. TADAKI: So when the war started, you were in the relocation camp?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. TADAKI: Whole family went there?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Whole family from Visalia. From Visalia we got on the train. We had to pull the shades down. We couldn't see outside.

MR. TADAKI: So you didn't know where you were going.

MR. SUGIMURA: No.

MR. TADAKI: Did you remember what happened on December 7th?

MRS. SUGIMURA: On December 7th we were in school. And the teacher said the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and Hawaii. So everyone, teacher and students, started to talk to each other. We Japanese sure felt bad.

MR. TADAKI: Did they say anything? Did they get mad at you because you were a Japanese?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No, they didn't, they just stared at us.

MR. TADAKI: And after that you continued to go to school?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. We continued to go to school. They didn't say anything.

MR. TADAKI: They understood?

MRS. SUGIMURA: They understood.

MR. TADAKI: That you were an American?

MRS. SUGIMURA: American citizen. So we didn't have difficulty.

MR. TADAKI: So when did you get the notice to go to camp?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I think it was maybe March of 1942. There was a pretty strict curfew. They said we couldn't go to this street and that street. My elder brother had a girlfriend, and she was a Parlier or Fowler girl. My father liked her and my mother liked her. But the bride-to-be was scared to come. And my brother was scared to go visit her, so they were unable to get together.

MR. TADAKI: Otherwise they would have gotten married if it were not for the war.

MRS. SUGIMURA: It was too bad. I feel that it is better for Japanese to marry with those of Japanese background. Now people don't say too much about interracial marriages. The thinking has changed.

MR. TADAKI: Maybe this is a little bit out of place. I'm jumping way ahead. I understand you write articles for a newspaper.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. I'm still writing.

MR. TADAKI: When you were young did you like to write?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. During my high school years I wrote for the Nichibei. Then I started to write something simple about daily American life. There was a Japanese exchange student who studied English at the university who was interested in reading my columns.

MR. TADAKI: What kind of things did you write about?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Don't put the gum under the chair was one of the topics I wrote about. I forget the title.

MR. TADAKI: Did you write poetry?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I'm not interested in it. I don't know why.

MR. TADAKI: And everything you wrote was in Japanese.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. TADAKI: You still have any of those stories?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I don't have the old ones. And in 1977 I started to listen to the radio every Saturday and Sunday. One day I heard Otake Sensei of Fresno. He was a Christian teacher. He told us that old people shouldn't stay home, that they should go out and meet people and talk and relax. He said that by holding conversations with others you don't lose your mind. I listened and thought I should write. So I started to write about some little things. I write once a week. The editor told me to write once a month and not too many. I understand and try to write once or twice a month.

MR. TADAKI: But you write about things which are happening now?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. I write about things I have read or when you get mad. I make up the title first. If I talk to you that's something I

write about.

MR. TADAKI: Something interesting that happens to you?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. Something interesting. I make the title first and then I start to write.

MR. TADAKI: I think what would be interesting for younger people is if somebody could write about what happened when they were young, when you were young -

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. That's right.

MR. TADAKI: That would be very interesting.

MRS. SUGIMURA: For instance, in olden times smiling face wasn't smiling face. I try to write about something you've never heard of and something impressive. So the reader will say, "What does it mean?"

MR. TADAKI: Some point that you want to make?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. You have to make a point. Anything, you have to make a main point. Otherwise people would say, "What does she mean? I don't understand." Just like the Buddhist preachers, they always talk about Buddha or God, sometimes they don't make a point.

MR. TADAKI: One lesson or one thing to learn. When you were in relocation camp, did you continue to be a Buddhist or a Christian?

MRS. SUGIMURA: They needed somebody to teach about Buddha. So I taught every Sunday.

MR. TADAKI: How long were you in the camp?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Three years. Two or three years.

MR. TADAKI: Which camp were you in?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Poston in Arizona.

MR. TADAKI: Many people from around here went to Poston?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. Dinuba, Orosi. Many people stayed in one place but blocks were different. They went by blocks.

MR. TADAKI: How many people were in each block?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Many people.

MR. TADAKI: So the whole camp had many, many people?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. TADAKI: It's like a little city.

MRS. SUGIMITA: We had Camp I, Camp II, Camp III, I don't know how many people were in, but quite a bit because Camp I was for those from Los Angeles, Camp II was for

central people.

MR. TADAKI: Central Valley?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. So all the people stayed together, and we had movies, shibai, judo. All kinds of things. Then they had a factory where they made blouses. They taught me how to sew, how to make flower arrangements. We made friends with the people from the other camps.

MR. TADAKI: So you were in your 20's at that time? 27?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I think so.

MR. TADAKI: Then you met your husband?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. I met my nice husband, a sweetheart!

MR. TADAKI: You remember how you met him?

MRS. SUGIMURA: He was in the same block. He was in 307, and he was the block manager. We met in the camp. I didn't talk much, but he started to like me. That was the beginning.

MR. TADAKI: And you weren't married in the camp?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No, I didn't. My brother got married in the camp. Not me.

MR. TADAKI: You were married right after you got out of the camp?

MRS. SUGIMURA: That's right.

MR. TADAKI: When you got out of the camp, did your family come together?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. We got out of the camp, and my husband-to-be talked to my mother. We stayed at our folks' because my father, mother, I, and my husband-to-be stayed together in the same camp. My elder brother was in Salt Lake. He married and stayed there. My younger brother stayed in Salt Lake, too.

MR. TADAKI: Did somebody take care of your farm when you were in the camp?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No. That was a big mistake. When we went to relocation camp, my father talked to the bank manager, Bank of America in Reedley, to take care of the farm because we still had a mortgage. My father should have had a signed statement but he didn't. It was just verbal. It was a mistake.

MR. TADAKI: Was it a family ranch?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. TADAKI: And the bank took it away?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. It was our fault. When you ask people to take care of your property you have to sign a paper. He didn't do that. He

trusted people. When we were at the city relocation center, a schoolteacher asked me by mail saying somebody wanted our ranch so why don't we just sell? My father said no. So we didn't do anything.

MR. TADAKI: So your father wanted to keep the ranch.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. But we couldn't keep it. We didn't do the right things. He should have signed the contract.

MR. TADAKI: He thought it would be okay.

MRS. SUGIMURA: He trusted them. It was a big mistake. They took away our ranch.

MR. TADAKI: So when you came back where did you stay? You found another ranch?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No. Since my folks had no ranch, they stayed with us in a labor camp in Dinuba. My husband had a labor camp. My father didn't work. He retired.

MR. TADAKI: You were working for another camp?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No, we had a labor camp. We didn't have a farm anymore. My husband was in the camp business. So he had to find work for people. People stayed at our camp and ate and slept. In the morning they went to work. My husband took them to work. Farms asked us for so many people, so we supplied them with people. They came, and we took them to work.

MR. TADAKI: He was like a manager?

MRS. SUGIMURA: That's right.

MR. TADAKI: Did he give them a place to stay?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. He gave them a place to stay. He had something like motels.

MR. TADAKI: At that time most of the workers were Japanese, or -

MRS. SUGIMURA: Japanese.

MR. TADAKI: Not Mexicans.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Mexicans, too.

MR. TADAKI: Together?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. TADAKI: Did Japanese and Mexicans live together in the same place?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, in cabins.

MR. TADAKI: And they were all men?

MRS. SUGIMURA: All men. No women.

MR. TADAKI: How did Japanese and Mexicans work together? Did they work well together?

MRS. SUGIMURA: We had a Mexican cook and a Japanese cook. The Mexican cook cooked Mexican food, and the Japanese cook cooked Japanese food for the Japanese.

MR. TADAKI: But they didn't have any trouble?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No, they didn't have any trouble. They worked together.

MR. TADAKI: But Japanese could only speak Japanese, right?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. And Mexicans spoke Mexican Spanish. They got along pretty well

MR. TADAKI: What about the manager of the farm. Was he an American?

MRS. SUGIMURA: American.

MR. TADAKI: How long did you and your husband manage the camp?

MRS. SUGIMURA: From 1946 to 1958. More than 10 years.

MR. TADAKI: Were children born in the camp?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. All of them.

MR. TADAKI: Then where did you move to?

MRS. SUGIMURA: In 1953 we moved to the country. We still had the camp, but we moved to the country in 1953. Some white man said, "Why don't you buy the ranch? Why don't you buy the house?" We had a lot of chances to buy, but my husband didn't like to buy. We had money. We didn't want to buy. He wanted to live in Los Angeles because his cousin was there. Anyway, in 1953 we moved to the country. The contractor urged us to buy because he thought that was a good place and a good buy. He felt good about it, and my husband tried to buy about 20 acres. There were grapes and fruits. But my husband wasn't satisfied. The house was too big, just like a church. It was a two-storied house. It was a good buy, but my husband didn't want to buy after all, so we didn't buy it.

After a couple of years, we moved here. Same with here. We had a chance to buy, but my husband didn't like to buy. So we stayed here, and my son wanted to buy a house. But right now interest rates are very high. So our son said, "How about a mobile house?" He wanted to buy a mobile house, but I don't like a mobile house. He almost bought it. He makes pretty good money. He pays a lot of tax, so he wants to buy a house. Young people are like that. They just can't make up their mind. "So I don't care," I said, "I don't push you because I'm old."

MR. TADAKI: So you've been in Dinuba since the early 1950's?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, my oldest son was born here. He is 32 years old. That means we have lived here for 33 years.

MR. TADAKI: In this house?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. In this house.

MR. TADAKI: So you must have seen many changes in Dinuba. Is Dinuba getting bigger?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Population is not getting any bigger. That's all, I think. Maybe more shopping centers were built.

MR. TADAKI: Kind of slow? Not like Fresno.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Not-like Fresno. Not fast. The big shots don't like to build factories here. There are many factories in Sanger, but they make problems. So they don't like to build factories here. No factories in Dinuba. Now they have a rug factory in Dinuba. But I don't think Dinuba will become like Sanger, or Reedley, or Visalia.

MR. TADAKI: So you don't think it's growing too much?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No.

MR. TADAKI: The problem is the young people move outside?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, they move to another city or state.

MR. TADAKI: To a big city?

MRS. SUGIMURA: To a big city. That's why at the Buddhist Church the members are getting less and less. Not too many children. I don't know what's going to happen. We don't have a big Japanese population and it's getting less and less. All the young generation have moved to a big town.

MR. TADAKI: People that you live with and grew up with when you had a young family, are they still in Dinuba or around here, or did they move out?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Some of them moved out.

MR. TADAKI: Do you keep in close contact with many of your people of your age?

MRS. SUGIMURA: My age?

MR. TADAKI: Your friends from a long time ago?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. But they are always busy. Our children are married so they go to their children's place. They do things with their children. I do things with my children, so it's the same thing.

MR. TADAKI : Did you ever visit Japan?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No. Before I had a stroke and my children were grown up I tried to go to Japan. But I had a stroke. After that I don't feel like going anywhere. I can't go. I can't walk well.

MR. TADAKI: So you never visited Japan after you first went there?

MRS. SUGIMURA: No. Never. I am just like a gunshot. I left Japan and never returned. Japan is a nice place. I told my dad to visit Japan. You've never been to Japan? You did? Oh, how nice! I've never been there after I came back. For 56 years.

MR. TADAKI: Thinking back over all this time that you've been in the Central Valley, can you think of one big change or what was the most important change that happened?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Maybe the community has changed. Before we didn't have any benefits for the Japanese such as Nikkei Center and the hot meals and some Japanese communities teach the Japanese about high blood pressure. Before there was nothing like that. And on Saturday and Sunday we can listen to religious services in Japanese on the radio. We didn't have anything like that before.

MR. TADAKI: In those ways, it's maybe helping a little bit better.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. Lots of help. And they are sure nice to senior citizens. They give you a hot meal and they show Japanese movies. When you want to go to town they take you to town. That's a big difference. Before they didn't have Japanese books in the library. Now they do at the libraries in Dinuba and Fresno. It's convenient for everybody. It's good.

MR. TADAKI: If you could tell one thing to young people, maybe a little advice or something -

MRS. SUGIMURA: Now young people are different from the older generation. In the older generation for instance, you couldn't be married to a white girl. "I want to marry a white girl. I want to marry a black girl." Both, no. In olden times it was pretty strict. Now you do anything you want.

MR. TADAKI: Too much difference from before?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Too much.

MR. TADAKI: You think it's too much freedom?

MRS. SUGIMURA: I think it's too much freedom. Before it was very strict and they always checked up the background. Now you can marry anybody. You don't care. Nobody says anything. Too much freedom. That's why nowadays we have too many bad people. They just think of themselves. They don't think of other people. I don't think it is so good. That's why everyday you read the newspaper and hear news about murders and fights. All kinds of things. That's terrible. They don't know what shame is. If they knew, they wouldn't cause so many troubles. Now everyday trouble is all over.

MR. TADAKI: You think it's because of too much freedom.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes, I think so. Selfish. They take drugs, too. They didn't take drugs in olden times. Smuggling. Burglary. Before, if you heard of murder you were shocked. Now it happens everyday. People are killing, fighting, stabbing, it's very different from the olden times.

MR. TADAKI: That's why young people like me have a lot to learn from people who are experienced.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. They are well-educated, but they don't think too much.

MR. TADAKI: I guess everybody has a lot to learn.

MRS. SUGIMURA: Yes. Before the young people always went to Sunday school and church, but now I don't think so. They don't care. Before, we had a get-together at somebody's house every once a month. Every once a week. Nowadays nothing like that. Relationship is getting less and less, too. I like the way it was before.

MR. TADAKI: Do you have anything else important to say?

MRS. SUGIMURA: Now people spend too much money, too. Young people don't eat the right kind of food. They mostly eat meat, I think. They are not very healthy. They don't eat vegetables. People have to eat more properly.

MR. TADAKI: Thank you very much for your time, Mrs. Sugimura. I had a lot to learn.