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Janet Daijogo: A Life's Journey

From Child of the Incarceration to Master Teacher,
Translating the Truths of Aikido for the Kindergarten Classroom

Interviews conducted by Sarah Selvidge in 2011

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“Janet Daijogo, A Life’s Journey: From Child of the Incarceration to Master Teacher, Translating the Truths of Aikido for the Kindergarten Classroom” conducted by Sarah Selvidge in 2011, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2014.



Janet Daijogo with husband Sam, daughters Maki and Tane
Courtesy of photographer Ming Louie

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Center As You Enter documentary film on Janet Daijogo by Jennifer Golub. Available for viewing in The Bancroft Library.

Introduction

When you are blessed in this life to meet Janet Daijogo, in person or as the subject of this Oral History, you are in the presence of someone who embodies wisdom. That is a rare place for any of us to find ourselves; but Janet is the rarest of human beings.

Wisdom can be, and usually is, hard earned: from life or work experience, from difficulties or suffering, from decades of study or years of a dedicated meditation practice, or any combination of the above. But as we know too well, none of these pre-conditions necessarily make a person wise, although they may lead to success, acclaim or even a Nobel Prize. Wisdom is something else...intangible, hard to define, but instantly recognizable when we are in the presence of it. “You know it when you see it” is not always a cliché. To illustrate, I will share a story with you.

As a longtime student of the art of Aikido, Janet, along with her husband Sam, studied at a Mill Valley, California dojo near their home. In addition to the local instructors, famed Aikido masters from Japan would come to teach. On one of these occasions, early in Janet’s studies, such a master came to visit. He was instructing a class, and midway through his teaching, he abruptly stopped. He started to rail and rage at the assembled students, in apparent anger, disgust and frustration. Janet was towards the back of the room, enjoying a moment when her petite height worked to her advantage. The master was yelling to the group at large, “You are hopeless, you know nothing,” and as he yelled he kept walking. He walked right into the crowd of cowering students and they parted as he proceeded across the room, continuing his rant. “You know nothing—none of you.” Then he suddenly stopped, when he found himself standing in front of Janet. He looked directly at her, and then he paused before resuming. “Except for you. You understand everything.”

Truth is in the moment. The moment is where Janet lives. She teaches her lucky kindergarten students to live there, too. From her own lifetime of experience and practice, she has translated the basic truths of Aikido and of mindfulness into a language five-year olds can master and understand. They learn from her the concept of their “center” and the skills to get there: a place within themselves of being, a place to find their own power and control, a place of calm and truth and understanding, of forgiveness and refuge, and potentially, a place of wisdom.

A professional filmmaker, whose lucky daughter was in Janet’s class, asked to do a short documentary on this work. In that film, the students themselves, as well as Janet and other faculty, describe what they are learning, and teaching. The name of the film is *Center As You Enter*. The title reflects what Janet asks of her students as they enter their kindergarten classroom each day. It also describes Janet as she crosses that threshold and enters into relationship with each and every child. In that same spirit, I would respectfully ask that you “center as you enter” the story of Janet’s life.

As I write this introduction, Janet is approaching her 78th birthday and she is still teaching, as she has done for a milestone 53 years. Incredibly, she has just committed to Marin Country Day School for yet another year of kindergarten, which will be her 54th year as a teacher, a true Master still practicing her craft.

Janet is the essence of modesty and humility as she both embodies wisdom and models a way of living...all the while teaching those lucky students that travel a path through her classroom. My daughter was one of those lucky ones, for which she, like many others, is ever grateful.

I myself have the priceless gift to know Janet in this lifetime, to be able to call her my friend, and to have the privilege and honor of introducing her to you.

Colleen Haas
Sausalito, California
November 2014

Interview 1: July 7, 2011

Selvidge: It's July 7, we're in Mill Valley, California, and this is Sarah Selvidge doing an interview with Janet Daijogo. Let's begin, Janet, and talk about your family. But first, why don't you introduce yourself, and tell us your name and where and when you were born?

Daijogo: I'm Janet Daijogo, Mutsumi Janet Daijogo, and I was born on March 21, 1937 in San Francisco, California. So I'm seventy-four years old now. Wow, amazing!

Selvidge: I understand that you are third generation Japanese American?

Daijogo: Yes, in Japanese that's "Sansei". So my parents were both "Nisei", second generation. My father was born near Hilo, Hawaii, and came to Berkeley to study at Cal when he was nineteen. My mother was born near Sacramento and she grew up farming in an agricultural family in that general area. She also ended up coming to Berkeley to attend Cal.

Selvidge: Did your parents meet at Berkeley?

Daijogo: No, they actually didn't. My dad was eight years older than my mother, so he had finished before she ever started. They met later, when they were introduced in a traditional way—through a "baishakunin"—which is a marriage go-between. My father was in his thirties, and he hadn't married yet; and my mom was maybe in her late twenties. I think a mutual friend arranged their meeting, and they just took to each other—it definitely wasn't a forced marriage. They were introduced, and then they began to go out together. I don't know exactly how long their courtship was, but during that time I know that he was farming in Pescadero, California, and she was living in Sacramento. And I know that they were married in Sacramento at a Methodist church because I remember that picture.

Selvidge: Did you know your maternal and paternal grandparents?

Daijogo: I did, but just barely, since I think I was very young, like under two years old, when my mother's parents died. She died first at fifty-six, and he died later. I think he was in his sixties, and my mom always maintained that they died young because they worked so hard, which I'm sure was probably true.

Selvidge: Yes, a lot of physical labor on the farm—

Daijogo: Yes, and the stress. They had seven children—

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: Yes, they had seven children in this country and one more child whom they left behind in Japan, as a sort of “hostage” for their return. They were supposed to come back, but they never did because they were just too poor—and life rolled on.

Selvidge: Can you tell me what you know about your grandparents’ emigration story, and where they came from in Japan? Just to clarify, we’re still talking about your maternal grandparents, right?

Daijogo: Yes, and those are the grandparents I know a little more about. My grandmother’s name was Keiko; I forget my grandfather’s first name. Their last name was Miura. They were married in Japan, and they lived in rural Hiroshima. He inherited, because they had the law of primogeniture where the oldest son gets everything, and everybody else has to move on. I think he was a schoolteacher and a poet: he wrote a lot of haiku and tanka, which is a seven-set poem—I forget how many syllables. I remember being told that he was very philosophical and a wise person.

After he married Keiko, [and after the birth of their first child] he decided that he wanted the rest of their children to be born in the United States. He wanted them to have a different opportunity. So they left the farm, this small farm that they lived on, which was the Miura ancestral land. And although they were poor, they left behind a place that was very pretty and rural and where they had a little house. I remember visiting there when I was young—I was probably eight or nine years old. They had a graveyard on the property where five or seven generations of Miuras from that area were buried. Some of the gravestones had sunk and were like this [gestures]. There was a tradition of taking tea and a kettle, and watering, pouring tea over the gravestones. I remember doing that.

Selvidge: So your [grandfather] was the eldest son?

Daijogo: That is a good point because my grandfather was not the Miura’s eldest son. He actually had a different surname. He was not their biological child—he became a Miura through marriage, taking my grandmother’s family’s name. There was a tradition that if a family had run out of male heirs, when their daughter married, the family could take this new person in and the new son-in-law would bear their family name. That way their family name and lineage would continue. But in order to take on the Miura name, my grandfather had to have other sibs in his own family, brothers, that could stand in for him to carry on his own lineage. This is how it was explained to me when I was growing up.

Selvidge: That is very interesting. And how wonderful that you had the opportunity to go and see this ancestral place. It sounds like you went there with family when you were very young?

- Daijogo: Yes. My father worked as a translator for the United States Army after the war, so we were living in Japan. My dad had located, and made contact with, the son that my maternal grandparents had left behind when they emigrated to the United States. He would have been their eldest son, my mother's eldest brother. I remember we helped him out with food and other things because Tokyo had been bombed and fire-stormed; and they were in need. My parents used to bring them bags of food, which I think may have been illegal; cigarettes definitely were, but I remember they brought him cigarettes anyway. I met my cousin there, who was his only child—he must have been in his late teens or early twenties. We would visit them in their small little house; and it was a cold house, I remember, because there was no central heating. I think central heating wasn't common there until the last thirty or forty years.
- Selvidge: Right.
- Daijogo: So we were able to visit them and then go to Hiroshima, which my mother always called the ancestral home. There was a great kind of wooden structure with all the names of the people from the Miura family on little wooden plaques. It's still there, even though no Miuras live there anymore; and you can see the lineage tracked—not that I cared back then.
- Selvidge: As a child you didn't care?
- Daijogo: No, I just didn't, and my parents really didn't either. My mom was never that interested in it and apparently neither was my dad. I have a cousin in Kentfield who became much more interested [in the family tree] and who went back there later and did some sleuthing.
- On my father's side, the Munenos, also came from the southern part of Japan, but on the Inland Sea; they lived on an island. I remember taking the ferryboat in order to get to the island. It was quite a beautiful place, and very serene. There were these great pine trees, and you could walk from their house right down to the beach; it was from here to the street—about 40 yards—so it was actually on the Inland Sea. We visited there a couple of times when we were young. I don't remember going as a teenager.
- Selvidge: So in the year or so after you arrived?
- Daijogo: Yes, we sort of made the rounds; but not often after that. We were in Japan from the time I was in the fourth grade until I graduated from high school. And there were four of us children in my family. I think as kids we never wanted to go back to these places because it was always hot, and the food was different. We were, you know, we were just terrible!
- Selvidge: Well, you were kids.

Daijogo: Yes. And we wouldn't speak Japanese because we weren't Japanese, to our way of thinking. We just didn't want to be there. We were Americans, and we did not relate to this country that was poor with poor people. And all the people on the Army base who worked as maids and houseboys were all Japanese, of course; and it was like a different—it was a different tribe. So we missed our opportunity to speak Japanese. If anything, we became more Americanized because we lived on an Army base and all of our friends were Army brats. We went to DOD [Department of Defense] schools and really didn't have much to do with the nationals, the people who were citizens of the country.

In fact, I remember this story about my mom. There must have been some law that was passed where you could no longer have dual citizenship; and I remember trekking into Tokyo with her because she had to give up one of her passports, because her father had registered all his American-born children in Japan as well.

Selvidge: All of them?

Daijogo: I'm not certain—but my mom definitely had the dual registration. She was, I think, the second or third oldest of the seven children that were born in the United States. She said to me, "Well, that's it. I only have one country now." She never related to being Japanese, although she did speak fluent Japanese.

Selvidge: She did?

Daijogo: My mom and dad both did. They both spoke a dialect of Hiroshima, but they learned standard Japanese—well, I think Papa already knew it. I was told that my mom's Japanese became very pretty when she didn't speak the dialect anymore.

Selvidge: Do you remember other stories that they told you about your grandparents and about their coming to the United States?

Daijogo: Yes, a few. They came, and they worked on the pineapple plantations—

Selvidge: In Hawaii?

Daijogo: Yes, for a couple of years until they had enough money to come over to the mainland. All I know is that their life was hard. Just recently I found out that when they first arrived on the mainland, they worked in the salt flats near SFO. When you fly over that area by the airport, you know the salt flats you can see? They worked in those salt flats. It just sounds like horrible work; and then they got enough money to move inland because they wanted to farm. So eventually they got some land. My mom and her sibs called it "the ranch"; and I've seen pictures. It looked like an old weather-beaten house, a wood frame house. One of my aunts said that they built it, but I don't know that for sure. It

was a largish house like you would need for that many children, and they farmed melons, and vegetables, and whatever else they grew in the Central Valley. My aunt said that when they were kids and young teenagers one of their jobs was harvesting the melons: putting them in these big burlap bags and dragging them over to the levy and hoisting them up. So the work was really taxing, hard, and my mom would say many, many times, “You children have no idea what hard work is.” And she was totally right.

We are that generation that stood on the shoulders of the generation under us. We were able to get an education and not have to do that kind of work unless we chose—and nobody chose that. One of my mom’s brothers, who also went to Cal—he majored in business—ended up making quite a lot of money by arranging crop transportation and distribution for the Japanese farmers. But that was later on, after he had gone to Berkeley. In the early days I think there was just really hard work.

My mom always said that her family were very kind people. Her father and mother never yelled at them or raised their voices to each other. That was something she repeated often. I think my grandmother was very kind and patient, and my grandfather was very friendly. He said, “No matter who it is, you must look at them, and you must smile and raise your hat.” I remember she said that on the Fourth of July the big treat was her father would go into town; and he would come back with a case of soda water. So soda water was a special treat, something they only had once a year.

Selvidge: This is a story your mom shared with you?

Daijogo: Yes, she did. And I remember when we were growing up soda was also a sort of treat. We were fairly poor—not that poor—but we were only given soda if we were sick. We could have a Pepsi if we had a fever, but otherwise we didn’t drink it on a normal basis. That’s something which turned out to be a good thing.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: I remember my mom talking about how the Japanese American community was strong in all these different areas, and how they banded together, and they would have picnics and large meets where they would have races and play games. My mother was very athletic and very proud. She lived to be 101. She said, “I would win all the races. I would run around the track once and win first prize, and then I’d run around again and win second prize.” And she did go to Cal and major in PE.

Selvidge: Oh, wow.

Daijogo: In the thirties, can you believe it?

Selvidge: That is amazing.

Daijogo: We have little pictures of her in a fencing costume with her foil at Cal. Auntie Chiye, who was the oldest girl, did not go to college because it wasn't considered that important for girls to get educated. So Auntie Chiye became a seamstress. But my mom wanted to go to Berkeley. She wanted to go to school, so she went and worked in order to help the family out [and make that happen].

She went and worked for a woman named Miss Dunne, who lived in Sacramento on Capitol Avenue and lived in a great big house. Her father had been a sea captain, and it was a wonderful old Victorian house, it was cool in the summer. She worked for Miss Dunne from the time she was about fourteen, I think. She learned the niceties of how to set an American table, how to make biscuits, and how to have good table manners. She was always a stickler about folding your napkins and which side the forks went on, and put the napkin in your lap, and do your spoon this way for soup, all things she learned from Miss Dunne. She was very fond of Miss Dunne and Miss Dunne was fond of her. She took her to Yosemite in the summertime, and my mom got to do things that she normally would not have been able to do.

After Miss Dunne's, Mom went straight to Cal. She didn't start out at a junior college like my father did. My father went to junior college in Sacramento somewhere. And my mom continued to work as a house girl while she was at Cal.

Selvidge: In Berkeley?

Daijogo: Yes, in Berkeley. She worked for somebody on the other side of the California School for the Deaf and Blind, which is now Dwight Derby Complex. So she would walk across the California School for the Deaf and Blind to get to her job, where she kept house and did a little cooking. By doing that she got room and board and a little spending money. So it was by working, she got through by working.

Selvidge: So she really put herself through school then?

Daijogo: Yes, and then her two brothers came, they were right behind her in school. I don't know if they put themselves through; the girls always worked a little harder.

Looking back before Cal, my mom went to a small elementary school in the rural part of Sacramento. I saw a school picture from that era. She and her two brothers were the only Japanese Americans; the rest of the children were white. There was a period in the beginning where they were yelled at and mocked, and the other children threw stones at them. They were chased home. These kids would wait until they were off the school ground, at a place near a

streetcar line, before throwing the stones. My mom was the oldest—her two brothers were still small—so she was the one who told the teacher [what was going on]. The teacher, whoever she was, took the streetcar to that same spot and she stopped those kids right there. She apparently really read them the riot act, because the harassment stopped. They didn't do that anymore.

Selvidge: So they grew up in a time of great prejudice?

Daijogo: Right. My mom was about eight or nine in that school picture. It was a country school—it looked like a one-room schoolhouse. They were all in this white building, a little white schoolhouse.

Selvidge: So it sounds like where she grew up there was not much of a Japanese American community in the immediate town, but people in the region would come and gather together?

Daijogo: Yes. And by high school all her friends were Japanese Americans and they went to school together and graduated together.

Selvidge: Oh, so once she was in high school, that was more of a regional school, I guess, with a bigger school population?

Daijogo: Exactly. She didn't really talk about that time very much. My mom was a doer; she really wasn't a scholar, kind of like me. I teach kindergarten, and I don't want to read all that stuff anymore.

So they got married when I think my dad was in his thirties, and Mom was probably around twenty-eight or so; and then they started having children. They had me in 1937, and I was delivered in San Francisco at Saint Francis Hospital by a Dr. Togasaki. We lived in Pescadero, and a really well known Japanese American family, the Togasakis, were dear family friends. They must have been very smart because they produced two women doctors and one nurse who ended up being the head of Nursing at a VA Hospital in New York. Their daughter was the doctor who delivered me, and it was very unusual at that time to have a woman doctor, and a Japanese woman doctor.

I remember the Togasakis bought a home in Alameda, beachfront property, so that whoever wanted to from the Japanese community could swim in the bay and use their beach. The Japanese weren't allowed to use the regular beaches then. I remember visiting that house which was right on the water. And I think he had an import business, importing Japanese goods so that the Japanese Americans of that generation could have familiar stuff. Then one of the people in the family started a newspaper. So those are the people who should really be doing an oral history, except most of them are probably dead. They were held in very high esteem.

Selvidge: It's really something your parents thought to come from Pescadero to San Francisco for your birth—

Daijogo: Well, the Togasakis were trusted family friends, and even though I don't know how they and my parents were connected, they had known each other for a long time, and so it was natural that all of us, the children, were delivered [by their daughter] in the city—except for my youngest brother, Ron, who died a few years ago.

He was born in the internment camps, so we called him the “sagebrush boy”. I didn't know my mother was pregnant with him when the incarceration happened, but he was delivered soon after that. We were taken—when those notices went out—we had to pack up. Me, I was four or five. We went into camp sometime after Pearl Harbor. It was winter, so probably that winter—he was delivered somewhere in there.

Selvidge: Can you explain the nickname?

Daijogo: The sagebrush boy? Oh, because we were interned in Topaz, Utah, and it was total desert. Total desert, and there was sagebrush all over, and there were always these winds, desert winds, and the sagebrush would tumble all over. I guess we thought it was amusing because there was nothing else there.

Selvidge: I see.

Daijogo: This was very interesting. I said to my mom once, “I remember, Mom, when you said you looked at a tree in the winter, and icicles were hanging from it, and you pointed it out to me.” And she said, “Janet, there were no trees. There were no icicles hanging from trees.”

Then another thing I remembered is we had a small Christmas tree next to the door, and she said, “You never had a Christmas tree when we were in camp. Where would we get one?” So I must have been imaginative.

Selvidge: Yes, I guess so.

Daijogo: I keep thinking about that. And I said, “Well, wasn't there one somewhere, like in the mess hall?” And she said, “Of course not.” So I guess I can make things happen in my mind. I do remember that we went from our home—we were told to report to Tanforan racetrack. We went to Tanforan for a couple of months, and we lived in tarpaper barracks with cracks in the floor like this [indicates an inch or two]. And my brother Hito was a rascal, he would put everything he could down the cracks so they would be hard to retrieve. He would even pee in the cracks.

Selvidge: That's pretty funny.

- Daijogo: I know. He really was funny. He could verge on being a bad boy at times—well, maybe “frisky” would be a better description.
- Selvidge: Okay. Let’s go back for a moment and talk some more about your dad—your dad and his family.
- Daijogo: I know far less about them—except that their ancestors came from that island on the Inland Sea. My mother used to like to tease that her family, the Miuras, were from a samurai class, which is a source of pride for Japanese people. She would say, “Your father’s family, they were from a tribe that kept losing battles until they got pushed onto this little island,” – I don’t know if that was really true or not. But my dad’s father and mother were only in Hawaii, not the mainland; and at some point they returned home, to this place.
- Selvidge: To Japan?
- Daijogo: To Japan, to the island which was their ancestral home, and they both died there in that place. They had a lot of sons. My father and the oldest boy, and at least two or three others who went to Santa Barbara and ended up there. I don’t remember if I might have met them once—I don’t have a memory of it.
- Selvidge: They weren’t part of your daily life or anything?
- Daijogo: No, not at all.
- The older brother stayed in San Francisco and was probably the support of my father while he went to Berkeley. My father had wanted to be a doctor, but that didn’t happen. Maybe he didn’t have the grades, or maybe the means, to attend medical school? I don’t know. He majored in biology and then he went back to farming in Pescadero. Because he was a citizen, he was allowed to farm land and rent land. So he would lease land and then he would sublease it to other Japanese farmers who were not citizens, so that they could earn a living. That’s what he did until the war broke out. I think he was a kind person. He did that, and he didn’t do it for money. He farmed himself. They raised sugar peas mainly, and my mom said that in those days the fog was so dense that they didn’t even have to irrigate.
- Many, many years ago when she was taking apart the house in South San Francisco after my dad had died, she found this little glass jar of peas, little peas, that he had carried around and was experimenting with because he was trying to develop a pea that had a certain kind of flower. She said, “Oh, he was always doing little experiments in trays and things.” So that was a part of him that was interested and scholarly and thoughtful; he was always thinking.
- Selvidge: I guess you were pretty young, but did you start working and helping on the farm when you were a kid? Do you have memories of that?

Daijogo: No, because I would have been too young, like a toddler or anyway under the age of five. But they have pictures of me with a nail and a hammer and hammering the nails into cabbages, which they gave me to amuse me, to let me do something.

Selvidge: To keep you busy?

Daijogo: Yes. They said that they took me out to the fields when they were harvesting or planting, and I would play underneath the trees or somewhere. And then one day they came home, and there was no Janet because they left me in the fields!

Selvidge: Oh, they just thought—?

Daijogo: Each thought the other had me, and they arrived, and there was no Janet, and I guess I was sitting in the fields probably screaming about being hungry and left and abandoned.

I don't know much about my father's family. Oh, his sister, his sister also went back to Japan, like his parents did. She married a dentist in Japan who practiced in Kobe; and when Sam and I were married we went over to see them. He was a devout Christian, just like a "born again". He taught himself Hebrew so he could read the Bible in its original form. During the war he had been imprisoned by the Japanese because he refused to say that the Emperor was a God. So he went to prison, and then when the atomic bomb fell, the prison fell apart, and he got out. People were so hungry that they were eating grasshoppers just to stay alive. He was an interesting character.

Selvidge: Sounds like it.

Daijogo: I do remember waking up in his house, and they were singing a hymn; and I think he taught about God, about Christianity, to whoever would listen. So that was the little Kobe branch of my dad's family, but other than that and visiting that island on the Inland Sea, which was so beautiful, I don't have a lot of memories. But I do remember a 500-year-old tree there, a pine tree that was so magnificent at dusk when the sun was setting behind it. And many years later, the daughter of that couple came to study here, and she told us that the tree I had remembered finally died and had to be taken down. But when you were a kid you thought, "Oh, it's been here forever, and it'll always be here."

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: "Been here forever"—it was such an icon. And it was huge.

Selvidge: Like a monument?

Daijogo: Yes, and it was so beautiful, framing everything right off the sandy beach.

Selvidge: It sounds beautiful. So it seems like your dad didn't tell as many stories as your mom?

Daijogo: No, he was very silent. My mom talked all the time, and he was really quiet; he really rarely said anything at all. He had very little to do with our upbringing—except if we didn't do something right. And because I was the firstborn I definitely had a favored position among the children.

Selvidge: With your dad especially or just more general—?

Daijogo: Well, I think with both of them, because they thought, they just thought I was the cat's meow! I remember when I was in high school I became the president of my student body, and my dad bought me a gift. And when I started geometry he bought me this beautiful ruler—I don't know where it went—that was three sided and was a triangular prism with a tiny little attachment. He was just so proud of you if it had to do with your schooling; that was very important to him. They never pushed me. I went to Cal when it was easy to get into Cal. I went there because they went there. But that was how I remember his presence with me in terms of books and academics and being able to read and write and to think a little bit. And then the other part, the practical part, was from my mom—I learned to cook and iron and do stuff that girls do.

Selvidge: Was it unusual then, among your friends, to have a mother who had gone to college?

Daijogo: Yes, I think it was, except for people like the Togasakis. My mom had lived with Miss Dunne during high school, who really helped shape that part of her life. Miss Dunne knew somebody at Berkeley who helped students find jobs. And between Miss Dunne and this woman, they facilitated my mom finding a job. I forgot what that woman's position was called at Cal, but she was actually still there when I went to Berkeley.

Selvidge: The same woman?

Daijogo: Yes, she was just about to retire, and she couldn't get me a job because I couldn't do anything—I would have been a disaster!

My mom having gone to Cal was unusual; it was unusual and it was also an important part of her identity. She was very proud of Berkeley, and proud that she and her sibs, the two boys, went there. It just meant a lot to her. More than it did to my father, or at least he never said anything about it. She was so pleased that I went there, also. My sibs didn't go to Cal; they went to San Jose State. One of them became a pharmacist—he went to UCSF and did pharmacy school. The other brother got a PhD from USC—he was the psychologist. My

sister was a teacher like I was. She graduated from San Jose State, and she worked her way through school. And how my mom set all that up, well, that is a different story.

Selvidge: That's okay. You go ahead.

Daijogo: Well, she set it up by saying, "Okay, you're two years apart. Janet, you will go to school, and then you will get a job; and when you get a job, you will send the next child through for two years, and then your job will be over, and then that person will graduate, and then he will send the next person through for two years." So that's what happened. We got out of line because one of my brothers dropped out of school for a while; but I put my sister through two years of school without resenting it just because that was the way it was set up.

Selvidge: So your parents did it for you for the first two years, and then—?

Daijogo: Well, they actually did four years for me [since I was the first to start college]. But once I was through it became my duty—

Selvidge: Kind of like a student loan?

Daijogo: A student loan, exactly; and it really worked out just fine that way until we finished. We each gave up two years: not our whole salary, but enough to put the other sib through. Luckily we all went to state schools when it was cheap.

Selvidge: Right.

Daijogo: Because otherwise we couldn't have done that. When I started Cal, the incidental fee was \$45.00 a semester.

Selvidge: Wow, that's affordable.

Daijogo: That was totally affordable. When my kids went it was maybe \$7,500.00 or something like that a semester, or a year—I really don't remember.

Selvidge: Probably a year? Because I think it's about that amount for a semester now—or close to that.

We are actually getting near the end of the tape, and we've heard stories of your grandparents, and of your parents. Is there anything else about your parents in your early years or any other stories you want to share?

Daijogo: I think the legacy was and the expectation was, "You should be kind to people, especially your family," in the sense that family was everything. That was my mom's expectation; and her dying hope was that we would all be friends. Now, our family is a little splintered, so it didn't quite turn out that

way; but as the oldest child I find it's still in my heart and it feels like my duty to try and achieve that.

And then, you had to be educated. There was no option, it was so ingrained in us, or particularly in me. I remember I came home one day as a senior in high school, and I said, "Mom, do you know that lots of my classmates are not going on to college? Is that legal?" Because I actually thought it was like a mandate: you finished high school, you chose a college, and then you went to college. But really—I was so naïve that I thought that's what everyone was doing. I think that over half of my classmates didn't go to college, but they didn't talk about it. When it was time to take the SATs—or whatever we had to do—I think I just didn't notice that everybody wasn't doing the same thing.

Selvidge: Right.

Daijogo: And it was so much simpler in those days. I just wanted to go to Berkeley; and that was the only place I applied.

Selvidge: It was more like signing up in a way than applying?

Daijogo: Yes, yes. You just had to take Subject A [the UC Berkeley preliminary writing requirement] or whatever else you were supposed to do, and then get on a plane and go, which is what we did. Most of us, a lot of us did, but as I later found out, a lot of us didn't. I don't know what they ended up doing—maybe they stayed at home and they probably got married.

Selvidge: Well, I think especially since we're doing this oral history which is going to 'live' at Berkeley, it will be great to talk about your experience there.

Daijogo: Yes, although Berkeley was a double-edged sword.

Selvidge: How so?

Daijogo: Well, I came from a DOD high school, and I graduated with something like seventy-three kids. Then I ended up at a college the size of Berkeley. I was so overwhelmed and so anxious, and I just about got done in because I didn't know how—I couldn't negotiate. There was a culture shock anyway coming to the states and being separated from the rest of my family. I was living at an aunt's house to save money. She took me in, and she had two young boys that were in kindergarten and first grade or so. I remember just being terribly unhappy, and thinking, "I can't do this." And the work was so hard. Before Cal I had never written a paper or anything else that was longer than one handwritten page. I have no idea how I passed Subject A. I still have no idea, none. Everyone would say, "Oh, most of us have to take Subject A because we didn't learn to speak English right." So I was going to sign up for Subject A—but I was told, "You don't have to take this; you passed it already, you have to take English." Or they said, "You have to take either English or

Speech,” and I said, “I don’t like to talk.” So Berkeley was a fantastic experience, but it was also very hard.

Selvidge: Well, we’ll talk more about that. I look forward to it. I think we can stop for today.

Daijogo: Thank you.

Interview 2: July 20, 2011

Daijogo: I used to say, and I think it's true, that I was a better teacher before computers.

Selvidge: Really?

Daijogo: Yes, and I think doctors—probably some doctors—would probably feel the same because now when they talk to you, they're looking at their screen, which means they're talking with their back to you. But the information they need is obviously on a screen.

Selvidge: Yes, for some people that might be natural, they're accustomed to it, but for others it's harder to negotiate.

Selvidge: So let's start. It's July 20 in Mill Valley, California, and this is our second interview. I'm Sarah Selvidge, and I'm speaking with Janet Daijogo. Shall we start off with your grandfather's name?

Daijogo: Sure. His name was Hoyemon Miura. I never knew it until I asked my cousin, who had to ask his mother.

Selvidge: Okay. So let's just talk about that a little. You didn't know his name because you never talked about him by name, or because he wasn't talked about much in your family?

Daijogo: He was talked about quite a lot. But my mother and her sibs always referred to him as "Papa". So we knew his last name, but his first name never ever came up in my memory. It was, "Papa said this," or "Papa did that." He was an influential person in their family and in their community. He wrote poetry, he was wise and he gave advice to people who would come to him from within the community.

Selvidge: So he was a leader?

Daijogo: Yes, he was.

Selvidge: As I was telling you before we started taping, I was reading a transcript from last time, and one of the follow-up questions that occurred to me was that you were talking about the generations. You were talking about being Sansei and also about being in a generation that was able to build on the accomplishments and the hard work of the previous generation. I was thinking that your story is a little bit different from what we think of as a typical immigration story—because your family came so early. For a lot of people in your generation, age-wise, it's their parents who came over, not their grandparents. So I was wondering if you have come across people who are second generation, and if you have noticed differences between them and you?

- Daijogo: You know, I actually don't know anybody who would be Nisei, second generation, of Japanese American parentage. That's probably because of the way my life happened, that I was not in that community for many of my formative years. I don't think I know anybody who's second generation European or Middle Eastern either. I don't, that I can think of.
- Selvidge: Okay, I just thought I would ask. Because it's interesting when you were talking about your father renting land to other people who were his age, or in his generation, who were not citizens as he was. So I think in some ways that positioned him as a leader?
- Daijogo: Yes, by default, just because he could do that, and they couldn't. It was natural that he would do that, and in his generation there was more of a tribal sense that you were in this together and they all cooperated to make things happen. I think that's probably true of any immigrant population, where you are the outliers in a sense, and that you gather together to consolidate resources and strengths.
- Selvidge: So I think this is a good transition to what we'll talk about today. I think we will go into the war years and that whole period—because if I understand correctly what you're talking about—this kind of community togetherness, this was all before the war when you were a young child?
- Daijogo: Yes. So that means we are talking about up to the age of five—since the incarceration started when I was about five. I was probably five and a half, because I was born in March. That means my brother Hito would have been three and a half, and my sister Sharon would have been one and a half, about like that.
- Selvidge: Right. So from your very early memories, there is a community togetherness?
- Daijogo: Yes, yes, there was. But these are images and feelings more than stuff that is conceptualized, I think. And almost everybody that I see in those images was like my grandparents. They were family members, and they were almost all Japanese Americans. Although I know there were Caucasians in our lives—I think the doctor was—I cannot remember any. I don't have any memory of them or of other people, like storeowners or the Duartes, who still have the family place in Pescadero called Duartes' Restaurant. My earliest memories were of black-haired, brown-eyed people, basically.
- Selvidge: Are there other stories about those years before the war that you grew up hearing?
- Daijogo: Not so many. I do remember we lived close to the beach, I think a mile or two away. Abalone was in such abundance that at low tide my parents would go out with crowbars and take it—I can actually still smell that abalone. We could eat it that way but also, because it was abundant, they would salt it or

something, and then they would dry it. So I remember the taste and the smell of dried abalone—that memory makes my mouth water. And just being out on the beach, where they would surf fish and get fresh perch. I'm not sure what all the different fish were.

And I think I said last time, that once my parents left me in the cabbage patch; they told that story a lot. And we were carried around in baskets, one of which I have in the garage, that kind of basket.

Selvidge: Oh, wow.

Daijogo: They put a pillow or a little mattress, some kind of padding in it, and they would just take the basket and plunk you down somewhere, so there are pictures of that, of my brother and me.

Selvidge: I wonder if you have ideas about why that story of the cabbage patch was one that stuck with the family and stuck with you?

Daijogo: Well, I think for more reasons than one. It's a story of abandonment, and I have a huge fear of that still. When I was in Los Angeles with my granddaughter, Josie, her mother, my daughter Maki, said to me, "Don't lose her." And I remember the shiver; it was like coming through my body. So I think that was one of the issues. That was a good question you asked. The story was said over enough times that I still might not have remembered it except that it was something that happened in my own life. Actually, I'm a personality type that has a fear of that, of being abandoned. There is a system, I think it's from the Sufi tradition, of the Enneagram; which categorizes different personality types by numbers. I had a reading once with Helen Palmer, who is one of the Enneagram teachers. She said, "I'm just going to tell you what category you are because you will be waffling after you've learned all of them." That was apparently one of the issues for everyone when they start to study the Enneagram. My number is Nine, and one of the characteristics of a Nine is a fear of abandonment or of separation from the other. Interesting isn't it?

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: So it was something that was already in place.

Selvidge: Yes, I've actually heard that what you think of as your earliest childhood memory has a certain importance, but not because it's necessarily your first memory. Just that having that association as your first memory means that you've placed a certain importance on it, for whatever that's worth. I don't know.

Daijogo: Oh, I think that's worth a lot actually, as I think about issues in my life. When my husband died, it really took an extraordinary amount—well, maybe not

extraordinary—but a long amount of time to really recover from grieving. I thought I was doing fine, like into the third or fourth year when the grieving [started to subside]. I said that to my daughter the other day and she said, “It was more like eight years, Mom”—from her perspective. I did not go into it with her, I just went, “Oh, really?” At that moment I didn’t perceive it like she did, but I think your children know a lot about you— whether or not you like to think about it. Not all flattering.

Selvidge: They know a lot about everything, I think.

Daijogo: Yes, they do.

Selvidge: So given there was a lot of importance on this idea of abandonment for you, I wanted to also start talking about the moment of your family having to leave home, and the relocation to the camps. This must have led to a lot of these same feelings of abandonment and confusion and change?

Daijogo: And fear.

Selvidge: Fear, yes, for a young child, especially.

Daijogo: I don’t know why this is associated—but I remember my mother and father had guns in the house.

Selvidge: Your parents had guns?

Daijogo: Yes, because the squirrels would mess with their crops, and evidently my mother was a sharpshooter.

Selvidge: From what I know about your mother it doesn’t surprise me—

Daijogo: She could take a shotgun or BB gun or whatever they had, and she would say, “Look at that squirrel,” to my father, and then she would shoot the squirrel off the fence. So they had that farm or frontier kind of feeling about protecting crops and being able to take care of themselves. That’s just a side story.

My mom told this story about the start of the war—I really don’t know if I remember it from the retelling or if I was actually there —the son of one of the neighbors came running through the fields—he was like thirteen or fourteen— saying, “Uncle Saiki, Uncle Saiki,” which is my dad’s name. “The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor,” and he was very emotional and excited. So that’s my first memory.

But my first real memory—and there was a lot of charge around it, just the energy of it—was loud knocking on the door. “Bang, bang, bang.” My parents answered the door, and there were the military police, and they were there to search the house. I was and probably still am a sensitive person, so I pick up

things not so much through my brain as through my body and feeling. I'm more intuitive than anything else. I remember just grabbing onto my mother, and then at some point the military police were going into the bedroom, my parents' bedroom, and they were going through their drawers.

Selvidge: The police were going through the drawers?

Daijogo: Yes, and the military police were in uniform; they had army uniforms on. They were probably twenty-year-olds, but to me they were like something dreadful. I was sitting on the side of the bed like this, and my little legs were dangling down, and I was just looking at my knees and noticing that they were really ugly. Where does that come from? Nobody ever said that to me but that's what I had the sense of, and I really wanted to scream. In order to stop screaming, I dug my fingernails into my knees to cause pain so that I wouldn't scream or cry or anything. I remember thinking that there was something terribly wrong; and also there was a helplessness because nobody could protect me from this experience and from what was going to happen. When they left—later on, my parents said, "Oh, they found a lot of pictures of Papa's childhood in Hawaii," with hula dancers and things, and they were looking at those.

Selvidge: They were checking out the hula dancers?

Daijogo: Yes, because that was part of his childhood.

Selvidge: Right.

Daijogo: When they left, my mother said that for two and a half hours I couldn't stop shaking. I only learned this when I was probably fifty and I was just talking to my mom. Because they did not discuss this, any of this, unless it was brought up.

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: I now know enough about young children and trauma—it was traumatic. My mom said, "You were shaking like a leaf, and we couldn't do anything to stop it, you couldn't talk, you just shook." So I think that is like a body imprint—even though I didn't remember it and I was only told way later—into my adulthood—what had happened. I remember thinking, "God, why would she not have told me?" It just never occurred to her to talk about with me, or it just didn't come up since they never talked about the relocation or the incarceration years at all.

So that was my first real memory, the living memory of the event, and then the getting ready to leave the house, the farm, and the talking that went on. But the whole thing was just shrouded with fear. I'm not sure where this next image came from—but there was a neighbor's white horse that had died, and

the tractor had to pull it into a grave. So I remember standing there; and this horse was slowly being dragged away to be buried. I don't know if that happened after, it may have happened before, but it's all in the same memory, a nasty memory.

Selvidge: It's a memory that you associate with that?

Daijogo: Yes, another scary, nasty memory—well, the image of the horse wasn't nasty—it just was sad. This big old horse had died.

Selvidge: I wanted to ask you a couple of follow up questions, if you don't mind, about when the military police came. Do you remember what the police looked like?

Daijogo: They were Caucasian. They were white. That would be my first memory of white people, and I would have been five. So that's a really interesting question—because those were the first white people I remember. One of them had brown hair; there were two of them. They were just the white guys that came in uniform and messed up our lives. In that turmoil I can only imagine what it was like for my parents, who were in their thirties. My dad would have been in his late thirties. My mom would have been in her early thirties. They had given me a puppy, a little brown puppy, and because the internment orders came out, they had to give the puppy away. Then there was talk about that, and they used to spell things out like the P U P P Y, the J U N K man is coming; the junk man is coming. We're giving the puppy to the junk man. So when I saw the junk man coming with his wagon, I just started screaming. My mother said, "I don't know how you knew." Well, because I was smart, and I could figure out J U N K was junk. That wasn't so hard. I had such a tantrum that they didn't give it away just then. They waited until I was sleeping, and then they gave the puppy to the family doctor. So when I woke up, there was no dog.

So I have a dog phobia. I'm better now, but I remember years ago saying to a friend of ours—one of my kids was going to have a play date at her house—and I said, "Do you have a dog?" She said yes, they had two dogs. And I said, "Well, can you keep it in the house while I come and pick her up?" Because I was afraid of dogs and when I saw a dog, I would break out in a sweat, my hands would start sweating. We lived on a mountain, and one day I was walking with one of my kids or maybe both of them, and a dog was being walked on a leash across the road, and my daughter said, "Mommy, you're hurting my hand," because without knowing it I was squeezing on her little hand from the tension. A friend of mine, who loved animals better than people, decided that I should have a dog or I would always be afraid of dogs. So she gave me a white German Shepherd, and I finally got a dog.

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: Which was so cute because little white dogs are cute. And it did take care of the sweaty hands, but I am still not a person who goes up to dogs and loves on them; and there are certain dogs, big dogs, that scare me. Where I used to live, that family has a black lab rescue, and I'm fine with him unless he sees another dog; and then I'm afraid he'll jump. So I still have dog issues.

This is the beginning of the neuroses stories from the incarceration. I sort of remember my parents packing the suitcases because I think they were allowed two suitcases, and some of that had to be our plates and forks and stuff.

Selvidge: I wonder if you remember from this moment—when you remember the police coming—do you remember your parents in that memory image, or is it more something between you and a sort of outsider?

Daijogo: I think it was more between me and the way I react to change, or my tendency to react. My parents were always there; and during that time I'm sure they were a source of comfort, but I didn't feel that. I didn't feel that love and nurturing or that I was going to be safe. In fact, I was never sure that I was going to be safe—until I did Aikido. Even when I answer a door, if I saw you coming as I was headed toward the door, and I knew it was going to be you, Sarah, then it's okay; but if somebody knocks, there's momentary fear for me every single time. Then when I open the door, I always think I might be shot or something. It's fairly intense.

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: You know what, I think nobody knows that. Nobody knows it except you now. I don't know if my children even know that. But there's always a momentary flash of fear instead of, "Oh, who's at the door?" like a normal person.

Selvidge: Right, right. It's interesting that you talked about your parents having guns. Do you remember the military police having guns specifically?

Daijogo: Yes, they did.

Selvidge: And you must have been at their eye level?

Daijogo: Yes, yes, and that's what I remember, because what I could mainly see was their legs, except when I was sitting on the bed. And then I remember seeing the back of their heads looking at those pictures of Hawaii.

Selvidge: So strange isn't it?

Daijogo: Isn't it? Because they were probably just young guys, just doing their thing.

Selvidge: Right.

- Daijogo: Perhaps knowing that this was weird, what they were doing?
- Selvidge: They probably had not seen pictures of Hawaii before?
- Daijogo: No, they probably hadn't. This was, think of it, the early forties.
- Selvidge: Yes, it would have been '42. So I have another question—thinking about you remembering this as a young child. It's occurred to me it's so interesting that this was all happening when you were five.
- Daijogo: Yes.
- Selvidge: Right? And it's hard to remember, of course, things when you're five. But for you, on the other hand, you have so much insight into five-year-olds. It's true; I mean you really are aware of the perspective of a five-year-old and what kind of world that is.
- Daijogo: Yes, I am. It's very concrete, and you're still moving from here [indicates heart] rather than your mind, and you paint what you feel, not what you see. That is a different level of development. It is interesting, and I think there is a reason that I have never left kindergarten once I glommed onto it, once I got over my fear of being with little kids. Because when I came out of Cal I always thought I would teach upper elementary grades. It was like, "Ah, I don't want those little kids, I don't get them." But life just threw [these experiences] at me, and now it's like, "Okay." Plus I never got to go to kindergarten because it wasn't mandatory at that stage. So I think it's one of those serendipitous opportunities. Because when a kid cries or is terrified, I'm very strong with them, I think; but I also know what that feels like.
- Selvidge: Right.
- Daijogo: I can be there, and I can comfort, and I can say the words that are going to make them get through this experience, just like my training has taught me. And my experience.
- Selvidge: Do you think that you have a unique ability to connect with kids on an emotional level at that stage because of having gone through so much at that age yourself?
- Daijogo: Yes, I think that was one foundational experience. Another one was that I taught emotionally disturbed children before I went to Marin Country Day. So I taught the other end of the spectrum there. We were under the umbrella of a psychiatrist and the training I got was psychological; and in fact we were called therapist teachers. So we were trained to look, and part of our training was to get to know ourselves better. One of the things I had always thought I was responsible for as a teacher was making sure my children were happy under my care. James Donovan, who was that psychiatrist, and my mentor,

said, “What makes you think that these children have to be happy in order for you to feel like a good teacher or be successful?” He said, “Those children are going to feel what they feel, and that’s the way it is. You did not cause that, and it is not your responsibility to make them well at this moment. You’re going to be part of the journey.” And I can’t make them well if they’re not ready.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: So I do, I have a depth—it isn’t that other teachers don’t. But because of the training I had and my own personal experience, the only thing that matters to me is a child’s psychological well-being and the child’s ability to operate successfully in the world. By that I mean to feel a sense of confidence and a fair sense of happiness of being in the world, of “okayness”, of being okay in the world. I do it through the curriculum, but the curriculum is not paramount for me. It’s not, for the record.

Selvidge: That’s fair.

Daijogo: Yes, it’s how that kid is going to manifest in the world. Yes.

Selvidge: I want to ask one question when you were talking about the psychological training and also learning about yourself. Did that experience shed some light on your own childhood, having to think about all that?

Daijogo: Some, yes. If you look at an Eriksonian model, the time when I experienced the childhood trauma of the incarceration was right at the age and stage of “initiative” versus “shame” and “doubt”. I just reviewed this because I have to talk about it soon; I don’t just remember it because I’m not like you, I’m not an academic. Anyway, those have all been issues for me. It’s like I can be very passive; and I go along—go with the flow and don’t ruffle—don’t mess up the waters, or whatever that is. And taking initiative is not a high priority for me. I’m perfectly happy for someone else to do it, and I’ll be the good soldier that comes and backs you up. It’s just the way I am; it’s not a negative or positive to me. It’s just like I’m old now, and I can say these things. It’s like, “Oh, yes, that’s who you are.” But I think that process probably did get messed up for me, because from my mom’s perspective and my father’s perspective, I had the smarts to do whatever I wanted or needed to do.

But all I did was go to Berkeley. And then it was like, “Oh my God, what am I doing here with all these smart people?” I can’t. I really thought in my first semester I wasn’t going to be able to do it. I was scared because all those things came back to me. It was like, “Oh, God,” it was scary and depressing, and I cried until I moved into the dorms; and then it was better. But the first semester I lived with my aunt and uncle, and I should never have done that, be isolated. It’s just not a good idea for my personality type or for who I am.

- Selvidge: Right.
- Daijogo: As my friend said, I never liked living in my own house. I like a beehive, and I thought, “Right, I am a busy bee kind of person.” It’s true.
- Selvidge: Yes. You need the right world.
- Daijogo: Yes, yes, we do.
- Selvidge: You started to talk about your parents packing the suitcases. I want to hear more about that. And one thing that I really wanted to ask you is: Do you remember how you thought you should behave? Or if you felt like your parents expected you to do certain things during that time? Or if you felt like you were trying to behave a certain way in reaction to this really traumatic situation?
- Daijogo: I think that I was a “good girl”, as opposed to my brother, two years younger, who was “bad”. And because I can pick up what people want, what they expect of me, that was an easy thing for me. It was not going against my ilk. I just wanted to be a good girl, and I think I got to be a very super quiet good girl. I didn’t want to say what I felt or thought because I wanted to be sure that it was within the constraints of that moment.
- In fact, that is a big thing with me now as a teacher: I will take the shyest child and work with them ad nauseam until that child has a voice in my classroom; any way that they can say what they want and say what they need. And I say to them, “You can say what you want, and I can say yes or no, and if I say no, you will be able to stand it. I will help you with that if that’s a big problem.” So that’s a standard in my teaching that each child has a voice and knows that they can use it and isn’t afraid of it. Because I think for years, in a weird way, I didn’t know that myself, even though I was president of my class, and I was the student body president when I was a senior in high school.
- Selvidge: So you were outgoing?
- Daijogo: I was outgoing enough, but on the inside—I don’t know how I got to be president. It wasn’t like I decided I was going to be president, and then I was. I don’t remember being pushed to do it either. We must have had an election, and it feels like somebody just did it for me, maybe nominated me or something, and I ended up president. I like people, and I have energy around people. I can engage, but I can also become totally invisible. It’s one of my great gifts, not to be noticed if I’m uncomfortable—I totally can become part of the wall.
- Selvidge: It sounds like that was what was going on for you during camp?
- Daijogo: Yes, to just be quiet.

- Selvidge: But it's like the best thing you could have done for your family?
- Daijogo: Just be quiet, and don't make trouble. My brother, he took the other part. He was always scurrying around and making trouble, and—I didn't even try to help rein him in. I just stayed out of the way.
- Selvidge: It seems like part of that might have been being a girl, too?
- Daijogo: Yes, oh, yes. That's true. That is absolutely true. It was a different era than your age.
- Selvidge: Yes, the boys were expected to be rambunctious—
- Daijogo: Yes, rambunctious and all that, exactly. And in my generation to achieve more than a girl did—
- Selvidge: Boys were expected to achieve more—
- Daijogo: Yes, but my daughter Tane said that one of the messages she got from me was, "Anything a little boy can do, you can do." She said that was a constant, a given, and I'm sure that was true because it was in the sixties, and women's lib was just starting, and I thought, "Oh, my God. I have two girls. They have to do what they need to do."
- Selvidge: Yes, and you didn't have the same thing. You experienced something different?
- Daijogo: Yes, I had; to be a nurse or be a teacher; that was good. Yes, but boys get the PhD's, so both my brothers got one. Hito is a pharmacist, so he studied that; and my other brother Ron, who died, was a psychologist. So they both got the PhDs, and my sister and I are both teachers. I didn't even get a Master's Degree because I got a black belt in aikido instead.
- Selvidge: A different kind of advanced degree?
- Daijogo: It was, and it served me much better than a Master's Degree in Education. Oh, my God, those are the worst courses in the world, Ed courses.
- Selvidge: Why, why is that?
- Daijogo: I don't know, but it was really deadening.
- Selvidge: A lot of times probably far removed from what happens in the classroom?
- Daijogo: Yes, or they give you no idea of how to function in a classroom. Now they have programs that are much better.

- Selvidge: I hope so.
- Daijogo: Yes, they do. I know because I've mentored two people who have been in the Bay Area Teachers Training Institute, like my current support teacher is now. So it is, it's much better. It wouldn't have taken me so long to become a good teacher [if I had that kind of training]. I had to muddle through for five to seven years, thinking, "What am I doing? I am so inadequate."
- Selvidge: I want to ask, in a similar vein to the expectations for boys and girls, did you have the sense when you were young that you were expected to be a certain way, as a Japanese American girl? Was that was part of it?
- Daijogo: Yes, there was some of that. I remember being on a movie set and I had a purse; and I was going to put the purse under a chair or something to kind of hide it. We were among all Japanese Americans then; we were all on this set—and my mom was saying, "Are you hiding your purse? We are among honorable people." So in other words, not white people or black people or Chicano people. I could tell she was miffed, definitely miffed, and that there was a tribal sense to it.
- But now, if I am among Japanese Americans, a whole bunch of them, which didn't happen very much before, there is an instant comfort level that I feel. Whereas I'm just a little more cautious with other people, although my training has taught me that this is my problem. The only Asian group I belong to is our hula group, which happens to be mostly Filipino, Japanese, and Chinese, or mixtures of that. And it's very comfortable for some reason. It's just that thing of people looking like you, I guess that's it. So there's a lot of instant hugging or, "Oh, Auntie Janet [makes a kissing sound]." It's just comforting, and I missed it in my growing up or my experience; and I know my daughter is interested in having that for her daughter, Josie, who looks more Asian than she does Caucasian, although she's biracial.
- Selvidge: That's interesting, that says a lot about the community feeling and basic togetherness.
- Daijogo: Yes, the tribal.
- Selvidge: I wonder also about the cultural things in your family: were there certain traits that your parents expected or certain behaviors or characteristics your parents expected from you that you are aware of, just because you were Japanese?
- Daijogo: Yes, yes, aside from the honor thing—
- Selvidge: That sounds like that was important.
- Daijogo: You did the honorable thing; they have a term, it's "gaman," and I'm not sure what the literal translation is. But basically the way I think of it is you bite the

bullet, and you do it. You persevere, and so that's a huge thing. You never give up, because that is dishonorable and it will not bring honor to the family. There was that thing of, "You do this for your family, and you do this to make us proud." You don't just do it for yourself. You cooperate, you work with people, and you don't go against the norm. And I think that's a girl thing, too, but it's also a strong Japanese American attribute. Part of persevering is you try your best.

You always put your best effort out—like you don't chop great big blocks of carrots; you go chop, chop, chop, chop, and you make them uniform, which my children are better at than I am, actually. But there is a way to do things that is right and proper, that shows attention to what you're doing, like a mindfulness, which is the big word right now on the education scene. And part of that culture is attention to detail, attention to behavior, attention to doing what's right in terms of what's expected, and meeting expectations. So, yes, those are parts of it and not letting the family down. And shame, that was like the worst thing that could happen to you as your punishment, to be shamed. Or to do what you want against what your family wants. That was like, "Oh, do what you want," which was a bad thing, different than—

Selvidge: Different from the parenting of today?

Daijogo: Yes, yes.

Selvidge: At some point we can talk about these sorts of trends in parenting and education— I'm sure you've seen a lot of things come and go.

Daijogo: Well, in terms of curriculum I have. But one thing about working with five-year-olds and six-year-olds, they stay the same. People ask me that, "Are the children different?" No, they aren't different.

Selvidge: They aren't so different?

Daijogo: No, they don't feel different over thirty years.

Selvidge: Maybe they would feel more different at the end of their schooling?

Daijogo: I think so. I think that's a good reason to stay in kindergarten.

Selvidge: Okay, and actually, believe it or not, we're getting close to the end of this tape.

Daijogo: Is that right?

Selvidge: And we haven't finished talking about the moment that we started to talk about, packing suitcases. Do you want to wait until the next tape, or talk about it a little more?

- Daijogo: Well, I can tell you about the packing of the suitcases. I just remember that it was some big deal trying to get everything into those four suitcases or whatever we were allowed.
- Selvidge: I think that each person was allowed two, I'm not sure —
- Daijogo: You said two, so I'm not sure about the children. Does that mean we had eight?
- Selvidge: I doubt it. I bet it was probably four.
- Daijogo: Yes, I think it was just adults. Mainly I remember a lot of the loss, like they couldn't take my brother's and sister's crib, of course, and for some reason that stands out in my mind. I can see the crib sitting there and thinking, "We can't take that." I think it's mainly about losing the place you thought you were going to stay, your home, and you were going to somewhere but nobody knew where you were going.
- Selvidge: Right. What a horrible thing.
- Daijogo: So, I'm very good at school with helping my kids make transitions. This is really interesting actually. Because I will go over something ad nauseam, I'm sure, for the children. "We are going to the gym right now, and the gym is a big place and we saw it."
- Selvidge: So you're very aware—
- Daijogo: I'm very aware, yes, and so I am probably always over-prepared. It's like "Enough already, we want to go to the gym now!" But I am good at transitioning.
- Selvidge: Do you remember your parents trying to explain some of the things to you? It seems like you really didn't know at all what was happening?
- Daijogo: I know I didn't know.
- Selvidge: You didn't know? They probably didn't know?
- Daijogo: They didn't know. How could they say? They didn't know [what was going to happen to us]; they just knew they were going to Tanforan, the horse track. I don't think they knew, and I knew even then that they didn't know.

There was a split in what I probably experienced as comforting, and the feeling, "It's just you". Another child probably would have said, "Oh, my mom held me all the time," or whatever. I do not remember that. Plus Japanese are not touchy-feely people. Not like the Jews. My friend Colleen is always—she always wants to hold your hand—or, you know, touches you and

it's very comforting. But I had to learn that much later in life, that whole other thing, the white people way of being together.

Selvidge: But certainly your parents were comforting to you at the time?

Daijogo: Yes. But I don't remember.

Selvidge: You know that as an adult, but don't have the memory of it?

Daijogo: No. Isn't that interesting?

Selvidge: Yes, it is.

Daijogo: I just felt like I was alone. I don't know; you're alone, and things happen to you more then. Probably my brother, being a different personality, thought he made it happen. And he's still like that.

Selvidge: Did you remember if you had a sense that you would come back to your home?

Daijogo: No. I knew it was lost.

Selvidge: You knew it was gone?

Daijogo: Yes, that's a really interesting question. And yes, I knew it was gone. And as it worked out, it was gone. It was not anything they ever returned to, or a style of life they ever returned to. That was all definitely gone—even in the fragmented sense that I have of it. All those Japanese names were erased from my memory. They would talk about Shig down the street or whoever, but all those names—it's like it was erased—or I hadn't been at the point where I knew them. Except I bet I did know them. Yes, because a five-year-old knows all that stuff. But it was gone after that. Totally.

And for me, I don't remember names anymore, it's one of my little weaknesses. But this is really interesting—there's more than you think, and then it's in your past.

Selvidge: [To resume], this is Tape 3 on July 20. So where were we? Suitcases were packed?

Daijogo: Suitcases were packed. We're going, we're going.

Selvidge: You are leaving and not coming back—that is what we were talking about—

Daijogo: Yes, we're leaving and not coming back. And I don't remember how we got to Tanforan. I bet there were buses that took us. So from Half Moon Bay to Tanforan is what, half hour, forty minutes? So we were there, I just remember;

and it was dusty, and there were soldiers with guns and barbed wire. It was fenced—I'm not sure it was barbed wire—I just remember wooden fences there; but I bet there were barbed wires on top. And you could see out—you could see beyond the fence.

We were assigned to barracks. Some people got to live in the horse stalls, which I thought would have been more fun. I just remember thinking, "Oh, we're not going to be in those horse stalls," and I have subsequently seen pictures. I think they're Dorothea Lange pictures, and they were horse stalls. Anyway, ours was the barracks; and you climbed some wooden stairs, I don't know, three or four of them, and there were wooden floors. And you could look down at the dirt in the floor because the slats were not close together. There were little cracks in the slats. There were cots, army cots, with metal springs—well, they weren't actually springs—they were more like chains.

Selvidge: Oh, right.

Daijogo: So there were little rectangular cots, and we had to go fill our mattresses up, so we had mattress ticking for these pillows and mats. And we had to go get straw and fill the mats up, fill the ticking up with straw. Then some people said, "Don't fill it too full because then they're shaped like that [indicates convex curve], and you'll roll off of it." I remember that. Later my mom said that the first night they must have been filled too full because we kept rolling off the mat, and going "clunk," she said, all night long, "clunk." One of us would be on the floor, and she would pick up whoever fell, and put them back on the mat. I said, "Well, who gave us the sheets? Where did the sheets come from?" She said, "Sheets? We didn't have sheets. We were in camp." So we had army blankets that were brownish and mattress ticking. That sounds nasty.

Selvidge: It does.

Daijogo: I remember going to the place where we ate and holding on to the back pocket of my father's pants so I wouldn't get lost, just holding on I remember; and he had my brother on his shoulders. Probably my mom was with the baby.

Selvidge: Your sister was a baby?

Daijogo: Yes, my sister, Sharon. And the food was not great, and it was not sanitary. And a lot of children, including my sister, got trench mouth—I'm not sure what that is, it must be a bacteria.

Selvidge: I'm not sure. Is that the one where they have purple—?

Daijogo: Okay, yes. They had purple gentian violet that they used to treat it. They put it on her mouth, and her breath was really bad. And the only place she would sleep was on my mother's chest so my mom had to be breathing that in.

Sharon was maybe eighteen months old—she was also born in March. She had started toddling. She was a toddler, and during that time when she was very sick for a couple weeks, she forgot how to walk. So she couldn't walk anymore and she had to be carried around until she relearned—

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: So that was her trauma; and that was how it manifested itself.

Selvidge: Do you remember more specific things from Tanforan, like you mentioned the food wasn't good? Do you remember eating and daily things like that?

Daijogo: Not so much in Tanforan, but I remember Topaz, where they had mess halls. And we had metal plates or metal dishes that they would fill, that would get filled, and there was a lot of waiting in line.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: What they called the mess hall would have lots of dried ice around it, and the dried ice would kind of be in puddles; and also the dried ice does that steamy thing? And that became part of my memory of that time. I guess the mess hall must have been right around the racetrack somewhere, because I remember that where we stood had at one point been the racetrack, and then beyond—

Selvidge: Where you stood waiting in line?

Daijogo: Yes, and we were waiting in line because I think that there must have been lots of us.

And I remember being very afraid. Those fences—you could see out of the fences—and what I saw, what was outside of the fences, was the rest of life, the people out there. But what I remember seeing were dead people. To me, beyond the fence was where people were dead, and I thought I saw dead people with their feet and arms sticking up. I was really afraid to get near the fence, so I think it's like a kid not wanting to be near the surf in the ocean. So if I were near a fence, I just stayed back. I would step away and not go near it. Wasn't that weird?

Selvidge: Oh, it sounds so graphic.

Daijogo: Yes. It actually was a delusion, but it was real to me.

Selvidge: Can you see that, when you look back?

Daijogo: Yes, it was all grey out there, really grey, different shades of it, and people lying around; corpses were just lying around. And so I never looked back beyond the fence again because it wasn't what I wanted to see. But what is

interesting is that in reality all of that wasn't there. So I was creating something, or something triggered that created the image. And I wouldn't go near there.

Selvidge: I bet you stayed far away from it. So you were there some weeks you think, something like that?

Daijogo: A few weeks, I think. I know they tell stories of my brother at Tanforan, of him sitting on the porch or sitting on the stairs cursing at people saying, "God damn son of a bitch." They said, "We don't know where he got that language."

Selvidge: Maybe from the soldiers?

Daijogo: Maybe, yes. So he would be yelling at anybody who passed by, and they tried to get him to stop. He was really mischievous and creative, I think. He would find things, and he would drop them between the holes in the slats. Things would disappear like your knives and forks because he had dropped them down there. He had gotten them, and then wedged them in. But I don't have too many memories of that, or of Tanforan, except the horse stalls and the fence and the dry ice, and the mattresses, and not wanting to get lost. That was a big priority for me.

Selvidge: It must have been quite a shock after living with just your family; and all of a sudden there are so many people around you?

Daijogo: Right, but I have no memory of those people at all. It's very interesting. I should ask my brother if he remembers anything. There are no details that I remember, but that's also the way my mind works. I can see big pictures, but I totally space out on details, like people's names.

Selvidge: Do you remember the food being different? You must have only had food prepared by your parents until then?

Daijogo: Yes, until then. And no, I don't remember, except that I think it wasn't good.

Selvidge: That doesn't surprise me.

Daijogo: Your basic concentration camp food.

Selvidge: It must have been pretty different in many ways?

Daijogo: Yes, because in a mess hall you ate with a lot of people; Topaz is clear, I can see that. I don't know why I don't have detailed memories of Tanforan—I think I was still in trauma.

Selvidge: The change was still happening, you didn't have a chance to get used to it?

- Daijogo: No, no, we didn't. It was all in flux, and I have no idea how long we were there. I would think maybe a couple months, and then they put us on trains, and we went to Topaz.
- Selvidge: So you remember the train to Topaz?
- Daijogo: Yes, it was hot. It was hot, and it went on for a long time; it just seemed to go on for a long time. At one point, the train stopped. My mom pulled down the shades. Did I tell you this? I've told this story.
- Selvidge: I think I saw it in the Urban—
- Daijogo: The Urban Oral History Project.
- Selvidge: Why don't you tell the story?
- Daijogo: Well, the train stopped, and my mother pulled down the shade, and I said, "We want to get out", because they said we could go for a walk. She said, "You're staying here." So the train stopped, and the shades were pulled, and we couldn't see out. Many years later I asked her about that because for some reason I remembered it: the train stopping and not being able to get out like the other people. She said, "I didn't let you out because they surrounded the train with the GIs with guns, and they were pointing at the semi-circle of people getting out; and I was not going to have you subjected to that"—something of that sort. So that's why she didn't let us out—because she did not want us to see and experience that—so all we experienced was the hot train.
- Selvidge: Right, but she was protecting you.
- Daijogo: Yes, she was, she was. And she was very angry.
- Selvidge: Do you remember your parents being angry at other moments during the incarceration?
- Daijogo: No, no, I don't, because that's part of the Japanese culture. It is the "gaman", the "We can get through this kind of thing, and we do not complain." Well, we've changed, but I don't ever remember—ever—they never said it was an injustice that we were there. I was at Cal when I figured that out, when I read [Jacobus tenBroek's] *Prejudice, War and the Constitution*, a little slim book in the Doe Library. And I remember reading it and hyperventilating because I couldn't believe it. And I went home that summer, and I said, "Why didn't you ever tell us about this?" This is outrageous because you're a sophomore in college; and of course you think you know everything. My mom said, "What good does it do to continue the anger, what good does that do?" Good question.

- Selvidge: That is a good question.
- Daijogo: So that shut me right up because that was their way. She said, “There was nothing we could do about it —.” Well, they could have gone to prison; a few people did, who refused to relocate.
- Selvidge: But for your family—that was not an option? You weren’t aware of resistance or people fighting against it, I guess? It was a thing like you said, something that just happened to you. It seems like you had that sense, and your parents did as well?
- Daijogo: Yes, yes, very much so.
- Selvidge: You did not see them fighting against it?
- Daijogo: No, they just made the best of it. That was one of the mantras too; you made the best of it. It was just three years.
- Selvidge: Yes, but where they took away your whole livelihood and who you were and subjected you to that?
- Daijogo: Yes. But my parents didn’t see any point in resistance. They didn’t have that in them. They just thought it would be better for everybody to just go and do it and hope—I don’t think they ever thought they were going to get killed.
- So when everyone got to camp they just set up another village. It was like they set up a whole system of governance and of who worked where. Some people taught high school, like my father. They wanted my mother to teach, and she said, “Who do you think I am, I have four young children?” Who was going to take care of them, all under the age of five or six? My brother was born in camp, the youngest one. There were four of us by the end.
- Selvidge: Yes, a lot to manage right there.
- Daijogo: Yes, I think so. And my mom was very handy and a can-do kind of person, kind of no nonsense. There was no furniture, so she picked up wood from the construction of the camps that was lying around; and she made us a table, then she made chairs. But her best accomplishment was making a high chair for the youngest sibs. She said that was quite difficult. But otherwise she banged out stuff so that we had a place to sit and a table to sit at, there in the barracks. There were four barracks—I think there were four units—and we had the B one—30-10-B.
- Selvidge: Was that the address? Thirty Ten B?
- Daijogo: Yes, it meant Block 30, Building 10, Unit B. So that’s something that stuck in my mind. “Do not get lost. If you get lost, it’s 30-10- B that you have to get

back to” because, of course, everything looked the same. All the barracks looked the same and they were all made of tar paper. There was one central mess hall, and central washroom facilities, toilet facilities and laundry facilities. So if you had to go to the bathroom you had to walk outside; it feels like about from here to that street [gestures].

Selvidge: So like thirty yards or something?

Daijogo: Yes.

Selvidge: That must have been pretty scary?

Daijogo: Oh, it was a little strange and creepy. And you ate in the mess hall—you stood in line, and there were tables, long tables and benches, and you got your food on a tray. You sat down, and you ate with your family and other people whom I don’t remember at all. Apparently, the kids who were older than I was, the teenagers, would go and eat at somebody else’s table because they were teenagers, and they wanted to be with their friends. It really messed the family unit up—I remember my mom saying that was an issue for some families—that the kids had too much freedom from the family in a way.

Selvidge: Right, because the community structures were so different?

Daijogo: Yes, yes, just that whole eating thing. And she said that later on you could take your meal, if you wanted, and eat in your building, in your B place. But I don’t remember eating there very much. I do remember eating in the mess hall and they did serve rice.

Selvidge: But if she made a high chair for your brother, was that to eat in the unit, I wonder?

Daijogo: Yes probably. Or maybe it was for my sister, too—I don’t know—but whenever anybody sat in that high chair my mom was really proud, proud of that high chair. I wish I could remember exactly how that high chair looked.

Selvidge: You’re not kidding, your mom was very resourceful.

Daijogo: I know. She could do things with a hammer and nails, and saws—all her life. Years later she lived with us for eight months when we lived up in the hills in Mill Valley, where our lot slope was at a big grade. I was going to help her shovel something. My mom and dad were gardeners, and she saw that I didn’t really know how to use the shovel. She was in her eighties, late eighties, and she said, “Here, give me that shovel, this is how you do that.”

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: They were farmers.

- Selvidge: Once you know how to do those things, you always know I guess?
- Daijogo: I know, so she showed me how to work a shovel, which I don't think I do very well yet!
- Selvidge: Do you remember other kids from camp beside your siblings?
- Daijogo: Yes, from after we started to go to school there. I went to first grade, and I remember a girl named Lily Morita, and some other girls. I remember being in the schoolhouse, and we pledged allegiance to the American flag every morning.
- Selvidge: Wow.
- Daijogo: Which I didn't even realize was weird. We just did it. And we had friendships, especially within our block. We would play jacks, and the boys would play marbles in the dirt and jump rope and say chants and things like that. So once we started to go to school, that became sort of a normal part of your life.
- Selvidge: Yes.
- Daijogo: So we went to first and second grade there. Then when we came out I was in the third grade, so it must have been summer that we came out.
- Selvidge: Do you remember other adults besides your parents?
- Daijogo: Yes, I remember neighbors coming over, different neighbors, and my parents would go and play mah jong with different adults at night. I remember hearing the click of those ivory things, those little cubes. They had friendships, and even now if I meet people who are older than I am, they will ask— before they ask you your name—they will say, “Which camp were you in?” Because that is a touchstone: if you were in Topaz or if you were in Manzanar or Poston, the one in Arizona. That gives them location, so they will know if that generation will know people from there. I was too young to remember, but they knew families through their family associations in camp.
- Selvidge: Do you know what the association people have with Topaz, as a particular camp?
- Daijogo: I think they were all similar, just sort of desert camps; mainly it's the people that are associated with them that mattered. Like, “Oh, yes, he was in Topaz, and she was in whatever.” It was more how to track families rather than the experience of being there itself. Now in some camps, like Poston in Arizona, these were Indian reservations that the government “borrowed” again. People who were there, like my friend Tom Suzuki, said he and his older brothers raised melons in camp—they helped farm there and grew food. But in Topaz I

don't think anything grew. It was really arid and you could find shells and things in the sand, little tiny ones from when it was at sea level.

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: The women were very creative, like my auntie, my oldest aunt. She was an artist; and she, along with many other people, collected the shells, and then they made them into little brooches and things, and they painted them, and some of them were really exquisite. Somewhere I had a broken piece of one which was pink—my auntie had painted it. It was in the shape of a heart with little pink flowers on it. In fact, they just recently had a show at the Smithsonian, based on a book *Art of Gaman* [by Delphine Hirasuna]. Anyway, it was a book about the art that was produced in camp. One of my friend's fathers carved these exquisite birds out of wood that was just lying around and he painted them, and they were in this exhibit. So it was that generation that did sculptures that were really extraordinary, made out of what they just found lying around, like driftwood and stuff.

Selvidge: That sounds a lot like what your mother did on a more practical level?

Daijogo: Yes, it does.

Selvidge: Just working, being more resourceful in making things out of wood—

Daijogo: Yes, whatever was there. The Japanese have a philosophy; they have a thing about using what is there. When Sam and I were in Japan years later, we visited many folk art places, and we visited a lot of potters. The clay that they had was local, and that was what they used. They didn't just order clay from somewhere else. They made glazes from the minerals that were around, at least the folk craft potters did. So I think that was in their tradition.

The Japanese are, I think, a very clever people. In camp they would take a two by four, or a smaller board, maybe one by four, and they made cigarette cases from that. Somewhere we had one that Mom had made. They made shellac out of burlap bags that the food and rice came in, and then they braided them and wove them and I just remember it being really beautifully finished; and one slid into the other, and it was a cigarette case.

Selvidge: Did your parents smoke?

Daijogo: My father did, but not my mother, she never did.

Selvidge: So she made it for him?

Daijogo: She probably made it for him. Everything for the guys!

- Selvidge: So what about the other adults that would have been there? You talked some about your family and some about the others—
- Daijogo: Well, the nurses and the doctors were people who were Japanese Americans that were in camp, and so they did the clinics. When I was in the first grade my teacher's name was Miss Light, and she was a Quaker that came from somewhere outside; she came and volunteered to be a teacher in the camp. So there were people like her who came and did good. I think she wasn't that old and she was probably really idealistic and honorable. She taught me to read and to draw. I think she didn't exactly teach us to draw, but she put drawings on the walls, so I was aware of artwork for the first time: that you produce it, and you could hang it on the wall.
- My parents weren't very musical, so I especially remember Miss Light teaching us songs. One of them was:
- “Once I had a marble as blue as blue can be, and once while sitting in the grass it slipped away from me. And I have never found it yet and can't because you see, it turned into a violet as blue and blue can be.”
- That just came out—it is a song that I remember. I often think about that song and what it meant and why it stayed in my memory bank, obviously. And I think that's because it was about transformation, which has always fascinated me.
- Selvidge: It's about loss too.
- Daijogo: Yes, that's right. You're right. The other song she taught us was *Waltzing Matilda*, which I thought was such a great song.
- Selvidge: I don't know if we can find the psychology behind that one?
- Daijogo: I know. I don't know either, but it was just a happy tune. But I did love to waltz.
- Selvidge: Really?
- Daijogo: Yes, my husband was a really good dancer. Sam liked to polka, and he liked to waltz. So I still remember, when I hear a waltz, I can feel myself waltzing with him. Maybe it came from *Waltzing Matilda*? So Miss Light was a very positive influence, that figure of somebody who came in and taught us when she didn't have to. I kept in contact with her until I was at Cal, and I think around that time maybe she died.
- Selvidge: So you kept in touch with her for a number of years?

Daijogo: Yes, she lived in the Berkeley area for a while, maybe El Cerrito or Albany? I remember writing letters to her occasionally, and then she moved, she retired to North Carolina—to Black Mountain, North Carolina, I think.

It was a retirement community, and she was very happy there. Oh, it's so interesting that I brought that up—because I'm thinking of a retirement community for myself now. Anyway, after about two years she had a stroke, and she wrote to me and said, "My writing is very shaky. It's shaky, and I hope you can read it because I have to write with my left hand now."

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: I think somewhere along the line she must have passed away—I don't remember how—but I didn't get any more letters.

But I kept in contact with her for all those years. Well, I was about eighteen or nineteen when I went to college, so between the time she taught me as a six-year-old, it wasn't all that many years, but it feels like a lot—

Selvidge: Actually important years—?

Daijogo: Yes, from my perspective now.

Selvidge: Right. When you're growing up, and you keep in touch with someone all those years, I think that really says a lot.

Daijogo: Yes. There was a little girl named Alice in my class a few years ago. I think when she was only a second grader—she would be a third grader now—at the end of that year she started coming into kindergarten and looking around. Then she'd ask if there was anything she could do, which is really unusual for a second grader. I thought, "Oh my God, what's going on with Alice?" But I didn't call her parents or her mother or anything because I didn't see them around school very much. Then on the day before Step Up Day [the last day of the school year] she came in and she said, "I'm moving to San Diego." And I thought to myself, "That's why." I said, "Okay," and I talked to her about San Diego and told her I had lived there once. Her mom was an alum herself of Marin Country Day, so I knew it must be a huge jolt for them to be going; her mother really loved that school. So I got her address in advance, and on Step Up Day when she came to say goodbye, I said, "Be sure you look in your mailbox when you get to San Diego." I had written her a letter of welcome, and she had told me the name of her school; and she knew a lot about it. She just wrote me a postcard from Hawaii, where they were on vacation, and hoped I was having a good summer—and I wrote her back—and just yesterday she sent me a little necklace.

Selvidge: Oh, that's so sweet.

- Daijogo: Yes, I know, and I thought, “You just never know which person will remember or has a tie that lasts.” So, I may be writing Alice when she’s in college.
- Selvidge: Yes, you might. It sounds like this teacher, Miss Light, was a really important person for you?
- Daijogo: She was; she was. She taught me to read, and that’s a huge thing. She taught me about art and making things, and she taught me about music. That’s a lot.
- Selvidge: It also sounds like she was one of the first people in your life who wasn’t Japanese American and who was a positive influence?
- Daijogo: True. And who wasn’t a scary person doing scary things like taking you away. Yes, yes, I think that’s quite true. I think she was a very good-hearted person to be pretty young and to do that—to volunteer to go into the camps and teach—it would be like going into the Peace Corps or something like that.
- Selvidge: Right, yes.
- Daijogo: There were other white teachers that came into the camps—I heard about them in later years. But she’s the only one that I remember, and she was a very positive person. I think she came from Berkeley, but I don’t know that for sure. I do know she ended up in the Bay Area, though, because that’s where I would write her. I remember writing her from Japan while I was in high school. I think maybe she lived in Albany. God, it’s good to be able to remember. As a historian do you ever keep things?
- Selvidge: Not that much. Sometimes I’m so glad other people keep things that I want to look at and think about, but I don’t do that myself.
- Daijogo: I know. Right now I’m reading four volumes of letters that Bob Haas wrote when he was in the Peace Corps in the Ivory Coast. They’re just for family to read, and eventually they are going into the shelves—he actually said “the dusty shelves”—of the Bancroft Library. They’re not to be looked at for twenty-five years or something. They were letters he wrote when he was about twenty-two years old. They’re fascinating; he’s a really good writer. So I said, “Bob, why aren’t you doing an oral history”?
- Selvidge: Maybe his time will come?
- Daijogo: Well, he’s resisting. Levi’s commissioned the Bancroft to do one for him, and that’s why I feel so silly my doing this.
- Selvidge: Well, getting back to you and your time in Topaz, can you think of any more stories from your memory of camp?

- Daijogo: Well, I could tell you about getting lost in a dust storm. I was coming home from school, and a great desert dust storm started, a sand storm. I was walking, in between blocks, and so I was a little disoriented because the sand obliterates everything. It is a storm, and sand is everywhere, and you cannot see. It's like a snowstorm, only the sand is all over; and it's stinging your legs because the force of the wind is driving the little pieces into you. I was so frightened, and for some reason I was walking home alone. Well, my brother was probably too young to be in school. The sand was coming down, and I just started to pee in my pants because I was so scared. I remember looking down at the warm pee trickling down my legs and the sand getting stuck in the way of the pee. It was a horrible memory, very shameful. And then the sand storm was over and I was walking back, I suppose, to home. But imagine, being lost; I think I had some terrifying experiences when I was little.
- Selvidge: Yes, it sounds like it was very scary.
- Daijogo: But a good outcome obviously. I didn't get lost forever, and I came home. But I remember walking home and thinking to myself, "Oh, no, I peed in my pants," or "I did "shi shi" in my pants," which is the Japanese word, in baby talk, for pee.
- Selvidge: Do you remember what happened when you came home?
- Daijogo: Yes, I think my mom just said, "Oh, we'll have to change your clothes." I didn't get spanked or anything. I just thought I might.
- Selvidge: You were concerned about it?
- Daijogo: Yes, as all kids are. Kids pee; they do that in kindergarten every once in a while. When it happens to one of them, there's always that moment of "What's Mrs. Daijogo going to say? What's Janet going to say?" It's just that moment, and once they know it's fine, and that's why we have a change of clothes at school, you get their little change of clothes out; and then they're fine. They can change themselves.
- Selvidge: It's just the anticipation—
- Daijogo: I know, like, "Oh, this is not good." Anyway, that was a memory of school life for me at camp, and of walking. I also remember walking in the evening to somewhere near the canteen, which is what we called the little store where you could get gum and candy, and going to a building where I saw the first movie of my life, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." And seeing that movie and then walking home, just terrified, because of the witch.
- Selvidge: Well, that's a scary movie.

- Daijogo: Yes, it was really scary, when you're holding onto your parent's hand and walking home, thinking about the witch—who cares about the prince coming—and the lightning, that was really scary.
- Selvidge: And the poison—
- Daijogo: Oh, the poison apple. Yes.
- Selvidge: Did they have other movies, too? Do you remember after that?
- Daijogo: I'm not really sure what I saw after that, whether those were in camp, or later in Japan. But I scare easily—I always did. My youngest brother Ron, who was the psychologist, said to me, "You are a very anxious person. You have to be careful with your children because they will get anxious the way you react to things."
- Selvidge: Oh?
- Daijogo: So, yes, we pass on our neuroses if we're not careful; and even if we are careful, we probably do anyway.
- Selvidge: We probably do. We probably have the opposite effect sometimes, too? Like children react to things we do by not doing it the same?
- Daijogo: Yes, there's that. And then there's that scary thing of filling out a psychological assessment or inventory for yourself and then for your mother and your father, and finding out you are your mother! Or thinking perhaps I should be kinder? It's fascinating being a human, and then being lucky enough to have children and, in my case, grandchildren.
- Selvidge: I was thinking about your dad—he left the internment camp before you did, right?
- Daijogo: Yes, a couple of years before we did.
- Selvidge: So he wasn't there too long?
- Daijogo: No, he went off to teach at Ann Arbor, Michigan. He went and taught Japanese to the Navy personnel. He was at the University of Michigan I think, I'm not sure. I remember he sent us these piggy banks, three piggy banks, and I think my brother still has his, but I don't. Mine was blue with a white piggy, and my brother and sister got brown ones, and each piggy had a little cellophane pack on its back with candy in it; and you could put your pennies or whatever in the piggy bank. We saved those piggy banks and I know there's at least one in existence. Either my brother or sister has it. I remember the piggy banks were this high [gestures] with their cute little piggies. The bottoms were ceramic, and they had two holes in the bottom, which is

probably where they were made in molds and the clay came out. My mother, being a frugal person, took a file when the piggy banks were full, and she filed between the two holes so that the coins could drop out. Then we didn't have to bang the piggy bank and break it.

Selvidge: Oh, so you can reuse the piggy bank?

Daijogo: We could reuse the piggy bank if we put a piece of cardboard or something on the bottom, and so they were in our closets all our lives. I remember that.

Selvidge: So you really held on to them?

Daijogo: Yes, I don't know why, but we were very fond of our piggies.

Selvidge: Well, you probably didn't get too many things like that?

Daijogo: That's true, we didn't. I can still remember that the candy at the canteen came in red cellophane. This was way before the age of sodas and stuff like that. We never had sodas except for treats when we got out. We were allowed to get candy once in a while at the canteen after it opened. I always chose the same thing; it was a little box about yai big [gestures], and they were called Chuckles, and they still make them. They are gumdrops because I like gum; little rectangles, and they had five colors. I would eat the black one first because that was the one I didn't like as much; and I would save the orange one for the last. There was a hierarchy of desirability.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: I remember thinking, "How could this beautiful box of candy exist on this desert?" I remember thinking that it was like this magical treat that I was getting, a far cry from my grandchildren's lives. It's just a land of plenty here, and they have so much. And I remember my parents saying that about my generation, "You have so much, and you don't know what hard work is," and they were absolutely right.

Selvidge: Yes. Did you have a sense that while your dad was away he was in like another world—?

Daijogo: Yes, he was on the outside. I remember my mom getting letters, and he'd write us letters, too. I think I could write letters, too, so there was that little interchange. By that time the world out there beyond the wooden fences didn't seem quite as dangerous to me, but maybe that's not completely true. Once towards the end of camp, I remember my parents' friends, one being from the Department of Interior, took us in a truck out of camp to a place where we could have a picnic. They had a son who was a teenager, I think. I guess they would let you out if you had special permission or something.

- Selvidge: Right.
- Daijogo: I remember it was green, and there was water. There was either a river or a stream or something, and it was probably very beautiful compared to camp. But I remember I couldn't wait to be back in camp. It was nice, but it was a change, and it was not something that I wanted to do, to go out again. It's that prison complex, you just want to stay there.
- Selvidge: Do you remember wanting to go home?
- Daijogo: To where? Home did not exist for me. I didn't think of that as home. Oh, home then was camp. I wanted to not be in that pretty picnic place; I wanted to be back in camp, in our home, in our barracks at 30-10-B.
- Selvidge: So when I was asking you that, actually I did mean back to what your home had been before camp, but you didn't have that sense?
- Daijogo: No, no, that was gone.
- Selvidge: That was gone?
- Daijogo: It was. That's an interesting theme in my particular life because I've been in many different places. And it was sort of weird when Sam and I built our house in Mill Valley because after about five years I thought we should move. It was like: we're still here, what is wrong with this picture?
- Selvidge: Yes.
- Daijogo: I really felt that, it was very strange. Sam would just laugh at me and say, "This is home. We built it. It's big enough, we're going to stay." I said, "Well, shouldn't we get a bigger house or something?" What was at the bottom of that was just—moving is what I did—not staying.
- Selvidge: So you got restless or something?
- Daijogo: I guess, or something in my cells was saying, "Go, go."
- Selvidge: Well, change can become the constant sometimes.
- Daijogo: True. In fact, it is the only constant in life, especially in the Buddhist way of looking at things.
- Selvidge: Right.
- Daijogo: So that was one really profound memory of just getting antsy. "When are we leaving?" You know how kids always ask, "Are we there yet?" "When are we getting there? When are we going back?" It would be a good theme to follow.

Selvidge: Well, we are getting near the end of the tape so we can stop for now.

Daijogo: Okay, thank you.

Interview 3: July 29, 2011

Selvidge: We are on Tape 4, Interview 3, and it's July 29. I'm Sarah Selvidge talking with Janet Daijogo. Where we left off last time you were recalling memories from camp in Topaz. We had talked about your journey there with your family, and the incidents leading up to it, and some of your memories there of your family and your own experiences. I thought that I would ask you in this interview to start by talking about leaving camp after the war ended.

Daijogo: Yes, it's a little strange because I don't have as many memories of leaving; that is not as clear as the going to camp. My father was already out of camp; and he was employed by the Navy teaching Japanese at Oklahoma A & M in Stillwater, Oklahoma. I don't know what the school is called now, if it's Oklahoma State or not, but then it was the agricultural and mechanical college. Anyway, there is a campus in Stillwater, and he was waiting for us there.

We must have gotten on a train or something; I was about eight. So we went to Stillwater where my dad had rented a house. We lived within walking distance to the campus where he was teaching. We lived at 410 Hester Street, a place with great big trees in the yard. We lived in a house of stone; we called it "the rock house". It had a façade of stone, at least, and it was two stories high. It seemed very big to me. I've seen pictures of it since, and it was really not that big, but it was big compared to where I had lived before. I remember the climate was hot when we arrived, and it was also very humid, which is so different from the desert. So things were kind of sweaty. There was an oppressive feeling, and there was a great abundance of vegetation and those huge trees. And there was grass all over, and flowers growing in the garden, and these big plants—they were tall, up to my shoulders—we called them snowballs, but I don't know what they were. It was kind of a hydrangea-like flower, but more delicate. The neighbor's back yard had a great plum tree and the branches came over into our part of the yard; and I remember just being stunned because there was fruit on it. I don't know why that was. Well, probably because I'd never been exposed to that before.

It was like a fairy tale—there was this gigantic ruby-colored plum just dangling, and I picked it, and ate it. I still remember the sweetness of it and the juiciness of it. There were so many plums. And in the neighbor's yard there was a huge pear tree, and there were so many pears; they were just rotting on the ground. When we made friends with the neighbor kids we went over there, and I remember we threw pears at each other, big squishy pears. Sort of awful, but it was the part of the land that was just giving out and exploding with fruit and flowers, and things to see and smell and feel. There was a honeysuckle in our back yard that grew up the backside of the house, and the neighbor children taught us how to pick the leaves and suck the honey out. It felt like a fairy tale to me—that part of it—visually.

Selvidge: The sort of abundance and fertility, all these things that are the opposite of where you had been—?

Daijogo: Yes, sort of this opulence that was so different from desert life, and I think I was stunned with that change and also with the weather. There were sudden rainstorms and then heat, and it was dramatic. One night there was a lightning storm which was very scary, especially because the Japanese tell their children that there is a Thunder God, Kaminari-san, who comes and steals your heso, your navel, your belly button. [laughs]

You should never tell somebody like me stories like that because, I don't know, they make me nervous. So here's this incredible lightning storm that would be incredibly exciting—if you didn't have this worry about some God that was trying to get your belly button. Which is interesting because that's also the place where your center is. But that's a different story, for later.

One night we were in our beds, and I think there were three of us in one double bed, three children, my brother and my sister and I. And this thunder and lightning storm was happening, and I was lying there with my hands holding the wrought-iron frame of the bed, and suddenly I have what I think of now as an out-of-body experience. Suddenly I was sort of catapulting through space, but I was tethered to the frame of my bed by this kind of rope or a leash, and I was just floating up above the thunderstorm. I could see down. I was quite high in it, and it was quiet in space—it was very peaceful, and I just kept going and going and looking at stars. It was very dark except for the heavenly bodies. It was like a little adventure I took, and then I began to get cold, so I decided I should go back. I had the safety rope around me, so I could just go down. Then I was in my bed again, holding on. I think it was just an interesting experience, but it also made me a believer in something that was bigger than me.

I think probably about that time we went to Sunday school, but it wasn't really coming from there; it was that sensing of something that was bigger and peaceful and exciting at the same time, and very beautiful, a place where you could go.

Selvidge: Was that the first time you felt that?

Daijogo: Yes, and I don't think I've ever had another experience exactly like that. So I think it was interesting, and probably a really important experience, although it was imagined. That's when I was eight.

We went to the public school somewhere near our house within walking distance, maybe six or seven blocks away. I was going to be in the third grade, and I remember going with my father to get the list of books that we needed to buy at the bookstore to be ready for the start of school. And I remember being

just terrifically excited about going to this bookstore and getting my books for school.

So school was a very positive experience. I thought that was a good thing because even when I was in Berkeley—I was not a great student—but I would always get excited in the beginning to buy my new books at the bookstore, and return with that stack of books. There's a real energy in them. I don't know; it's like you're getting ready to explore something out there, so there was that same feeling I had when I was in astro space, or wherever I was, in my imagination.

Selvidge: Of exploration and beginnings?

Daijogo: Yes, and the excitement of it, of learning.

Selvidge: You were talking earlier about the weather in Oklahoma. It all must have been a culture shock in so many ways?

Daijogo: It was.

Selvidge: Can you remember other things that were surprising about being there?

Daijogo: Well, there were a lot of white people. Everywhere you looked there were white people; that was the way it was. Our neighbors were all white, and my classmates were mainly Caucasian children who had grown up in Oklahoma and probably might still be there. I don't really know because I've never kept in contact with them. I do know that the neighbors right next to us were very friendly and welcoming; and my little brother must have been very cute, because they just loved him. He was probably two by the time we got out of camp—two or two and a half.

So Ronnie was a favorite of these neighbors. He was very bright, and he seemed to love words because they would have him say these big, long words like "Encyclopedia Britannica," and they thought it was so funny that he could say that. Let's see, I was about eight then, and I think this family might have had children sort of my age; and then there was their grandmother who lived in a rural area near Stillwater. A couple of times I went to her farm house, and I remember my mother saying, "Now, you have to be a good girl and use good manners and eat everything they give you that's on your plate."

So they have a food in Oklahoma, and the South, called hominy grits. And they were just awful. Oh my God, I remember thinking that mound of hominy grits was so big, and my mother had told me I was to eat it all. They were kind of slimy. I was so afraid we were going to have hominy grits the next morning; I probably worried about it all day, knowing me. But we didn't.

They were just really, really lovely people, and I actually corresponded with the grandmother until I was in high school. Her name was Grandma McChesney. Every once in a while we'd write and send letters to each other. But I remember the first night I was there at her farmhouse, I wet the bed. I was so upset, but they were very lovely about it.

I have done this in the past, too, when I've gone somewhere new, even as an adult. I think there's still something very [disquieting]—I don't like traveling still—there's some anxiety when I have to go somewhere. Once I was going to an aikido retreat at Dominican, and I was going on and on, "I don't want to go, and I'm nervous," and my friend said, "Is it in the Dominican Republic?" And I said, "No, Dominican College in San Rafael." And she said, "Oh God!" [laughs]

- Selvidge: When you got to Oklahoma do you remember if your neighbors and friends would have known that you came from a incarceration camp, or do you ever remember talking about that?
- Daijogo: No, never.
- Selvidge: Would they have had any idea?
- Daijogo: None, never.
- Selvidge: Never, like you never talked about it?
- Daijogo: No, we never did.
- Selvidge: So you just sort of showed up one day, and you came from wherever, and that was it?
- Daijogo: Right, yes, we would just say Topaz or camp. They wouldn't know what "camp" meant because to them camp meant something else. And I think there are still people today who don't know about that time, that little shadow in our history. Now there's more and more being written about it.
- Selvidge: Then my next question is: did you feel that you had to be secretive about it?
- Daijogo: No, not really. Our parents—and I think this was pretty typical—in referring to that experience in Topaz, they merely called it camp. "Oh, you did that in camp," or "You started school in camp," or "Oh, yes, there wasn't a Christmas tree in camp." But it was more matter of fact, and it was never gone into. I told you that I didn't even know it was an injustice until I went to Berkeley; not only [because my parents didn't verbalize that] but also I was not, and still am not, a terribly inquisitive person. I'm inquisitive in some ways, but I probably don't have the same intellectual curiosity that you would

have, as a historian. Then another big experience in Oklahoma was the black/white race issue.

Selvidge: That was going to be my next question.

Daijogo: It was? Well, there we were, and I think that was probably my first experience seeing that many black people. One experience that really stands out in my mind was being in a public area, like a train station, and I had to go to the bathroom. My parents pointed, and I went off. And there was one bathroom that said “black” and one that said “white” and a water fountain that said “black” and one that said “white”. I remember running back to my mother and father and saying, “What do I use?” Because I knew I was neither. So I used the white one; but I was a little uncomfortable because it didn’t seem quite right. They should have had a middle one—for brown people.

Here is another memory about race. Stillwater was an area where pecans were grown; people there loved them and they were sort of prized. One day we drove somewhere to go pick or get pecans. I think we went with our neighbors. Suddenly all the paved roads turned into dirt roads, and instead of groomed lawns and stuff like that, it was kind of a dusty part of town. Instead of painted houses, the houses were just wooden, unpainted, at least they were that way in my imagination, or in my memory. It was such a contrast to where we lived near the campus. But this was the area where the pecan trees were growing. I remember that black people were the ones who were selling the pecans. So we, along with our friends, bought some. Then we came back to town. But that experience stayed with me—of having and not having, the contrast of the way the streets looked and houses looked, and even the trees looked dusty; probably they were.

Then in the summertime the Stillwater area was great watermelon-eating-contest country. A truck would come loaded with watermelons, and a black man would be driving the truck, and stopping, so you could buy these gigantic watermelons right off his truck. So that was another thing. Talk about the stereotype of the African American and the watermelon.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: Then, of course, I would go to the library, and I fell in love with the books called Nicodemos, who was a little black boy who loved watermelons. I read all the Nicodemos books because they were, I don’t know, fascinating to me. I think I was trying to figure out what was black and what was white.

Selvidge: It’s so interesting—that moment of you standing between the two bathrooms and thinking, “What about me?”

Daijogo: Yes.

Selvidge: Did you have that feeling in a larger sense as well, of being caught somewhere in the middle of this divided world?

Daijogo: I think so, I do. I think at that moment and that experience in Oklahoma, I realized that I was not of them. I was not white, I was an outlier. I was somebody on the fringes. And the black children didn't go to school with us.

Selvidge: Right.

Daijogo: So I must be closer to white than black? You're kind of dealing with that as an eight-year-old, figuring out what this meant and not really getting it because I didn't know the history of it. My parents were not really tolerant of African Americans. They would rather not be put in that same category because it was lower down the ladder; and they were determined, I think, to get higher on that ladder. And that was the whole thing about education, that it was your way out and up, the way to achieve or to be successful or to make it.

Selvidge: Do you remember your parents explaining that to you? For example, you mention they told you which bathroom to use. Do you remember other moments of them explaining things to you about race or segregation?

Daijogo: No. It's a funny culture. In retrospect I realize there's a lot that's assumed, and there's a lot that you are supposed to intuit. What I intuited was—if you're not white—it was better to be what we were, brown, or Asian, or whatever we were, in-between people. Or I used to think of us as half-baked; it's like too brown, and too white, and the medium baked; I used to think like that. Where did I get that idea?

Selvidge: When you were a child, probably?

Daijogo: Yes, probably at Sunday school or some weird thing.

So that's what I knew. It was better not to be black because the blacks in the South or in Oklahoma were the people who were the porters on the trains and the street cleaners; and those were things that you didn't want to be when you grew up. You were going to do better than that; it was a thing of, "You must be better." But there was no liberalism. It was not Berkeley. So that came later. I don't know, I think that generation was just doing the best it could to survive. And to survive—they were conservative. I was the first Democrat in my family.

Selvidge: Oh, yes?

Daijogo: Yes. My father said he always voted Republican, as most of that generation did. But I went to Berkeley and of course I thought, "What?" What were my parents thinking?" My father was greatly amused when I told him of my

politics, and I'm pretty apolitical. Unfortunately, I'm not that interested, but I am more liberal leaning compared to my parents.

Selvidge: So how long did you spend in Oklahoma?

Daijogo: Just a year.

Selvidge: Just a year, and then you went to Japan?

Daijogo: No, we went next to Richmond, California. We were in Oklahoma for my third-grade year. Then my father got a job with the Army as a translator for documents that were captured during the war. So he went ahead to Japan and he was going to call for us. So my mom and me and my sibs, we went to Richmond, California, and we lived in the projects. I think we were only there for three or four months. On one side of the street were blacks, and on the other side of the street were Asians, for some reason. The blacks drove big, loud cars, I remember. And the people were loud, maybe they were drinking? My mother did not want us on the streets, so we went to bed at 7:30. Seven thirty! It wasn't even dark, but I remember that was bedtime because she did not want us out there or looking out there or learning anything out there on the street. We'd hear these big cars rolling by; and we were told that some black families would get together and they'd buy one big car or something. And they were big cars, like Buicks and Cadillacs. So there were these spoken and unspoken kinds of judgments—that was not the right way to spend your money; my mom was saving that money.

I went to Stege School, which is still in existence in Richmond, until October. About two weeks after the start of the school year, I remember this black girl started to chase me home every day. She'd be waiting for me, and I would just start running because I was so scared. Then finally my friend, who was not scared, just turned around and screamed at her to leave me alone. So the girl backed off. But she was still lurking. I think she could see that I was somebody who scared easily, so it was amusing to her.

Selvidge: She just wanted to frighten you?

Daijogo: Yes. She never laid a hand on me or anything because I ran too fast.

Selvidge: So it sounds like there was a good deal of tension?

Daijogo: There was. What we were supposed to do was stay out of the way and not mix. I didn't know anything except to be aware and wary, and a little fearful. Not a positive experience and not a good way of dealing with it, but that's the way it was. So I never had a black friend until I went to high school.

Selvidge: Really?

- Daijogo: Yes, then in October we left Richmond for Japan. We took a train to Seattle, and we chug-chugged to Seattle. Then we got on a boat, the General John Pope, which was a military transport; my mom loaded the four of us on. We got on this boat, and we were so seasick. My brother and I had to be hospitalized because we couldn't stop throwing up.
- Selvidge: Oh, no. Sounds awful.
- Daijogo: I know. My sister was hospitalized, too, but not for the whole time.
- Selvidge: On the boat, you were hospitalized?
- Daijogo: Yes, in the infirmary or whatever. I remember they gave me an IV because they didn't want you to get dehydrated.
- Selvidge: Wow, sounds terrible.
- Daijogo: It was, for ten whole days.
- Selvidge: No wonder you hate traveling!
- Daijogo: I do. I don't have one single good thing to say about it. Then my father met us in Yokohama. He was already there, and he was living in bachelor quarters in Tokyo near his work. When we got to Tokyo, the housing wasn't done yet, so we went up into the mountains in a really beautiful part of the country; it was called Shiga Heights. In fact, the Nagano Olympics were held there some years ago. We lived in this hotel, a medium-sized hotel, I think, for two months until our housing units were done. That was a beautiful experience to live in a hotel, because you had these nice meals, and all these Japanese people took care of you and fed you and cleaned your rooms. There was a swimming pool and a hot bath. My brother fell into the swimming pool. He was with a friend, and he came in sopping wet and probably could have drowned because he didn't know how to swim.
- Selvidge: Wow.
- Daijogo: But he was a rascal, and he got out. He somehow hauled himself out. It was very pretty there. I remember apples were being harvested, so there were these really beautiful apples to buy and to eat. If you bought something—they called it “on the economy”. Oh, they really brainwashed you. They didn't want you eating Japanese food, and they didn't say why. I found out later it was because they wanted that food to be available for the Japanese population to eat, instead of Army people buying it. We had our own food.
- Selvidge: They were concerned about food shortages?

Daijogo: Yes. They wanted Japanese people to have first access to their own food. It was right after the war, and things like apples and oranges were probably in short supply for the local people, unlike on the army base, where we had an abundance of oranges. I remember when we were kids we might be on a train, and Japanese kids would be swimming in the rivers underneath the train crossings; and the GIs along with us kids, would throw oranges down for them. That was kind of like a game where they would catch the oranges. And it was also at a time when the GIs, or your father, or other adults, would give cigarettes to people as a tip for helping. They'd give a little money, but they'd also give some cigarettes because those were hard to come by. So it was definitely difficult, a transitional time.

Then we moved to Grant Heights, which was an Army base. I don't know how large it was, but maybe it was as big as Topaz? It felt pretty big with broad paved streets. Our base was built on the site of a former Kamikaze airport where Kamikaze fighters took off to bomb American ships. So that was an interesting little side story.

So my experience from fourth grade through high school was being on this army base in "Little America". Years later I took a workshop in Hawaii—and for a Japanese and especially for me, I was very outspoken compared to my Hawaiian counterparts. So I said something in class to this guy—we were on the same team—and he said, "Well, you are over-colonized." So that was the beginning of my "over-colonization".

Selvidge: On the Army base?

Daijogo: On the Army base; where all my friends were Caucasian except for my brother. There was one other Japanese American family that lived on a nearby Air Force base that I became friends with—we were cheerleaders together when I was a junior. Their names were Aoki, and they were Hawaiian Japanese, I think. But all my friends were Caucasian. When I was old enough, when I was in high school, all the boys I dated were Caucasian. So I was just basically one of them; I had completely assimilated. When my daughter Tane went to Berkeley, she used to say—and she used this term with me again just the other day—"Well, Mom, you are a banana, yellow on the outside, white on the inside." Have you heard that one?

Selvidge: I have not heard that.

Daijogo: Well, that might be an insider thing. Tane was in a sorority, and she might say, "I'm taking So and So to a dance and he's an Oreo." I said, "What is that?" "Black on the outside and white on the inside. You know, like Curtis," who was a friend she grew up with at Tam [Tamalpais] High.

Selvidge: Oreo I'm familiar with, but a "banana"—not so much.

- Daijogo: Now you know a new term. So I was a banana in the making, banana-hood in the making. I was very much into high school and loving it and loving my friends and making decent grades. It was a very positive experience in my life.
- Selvidge: I want to ask a couple of questions about your early time in Japan, that transitional period. But I wonder, was it comforting to be in a place where you were around Japanese people when you first got there? Was there a sense of homecoming—?
- Daijogo: No, in fact it was weird. I felt just weird. It was strange because I knew that they were the defeated people, and I didn't want to be identified with them. I couldn't speak the language. I didn't dress like them. And I remember when we were at the hotel we were out on a hike, and we crossed paths with the wood cutter, and he had a lot of branches on his back because they were used as firewood for cooking—
- Selvidge: Right.
- Daijogo: And I was thinking, "Oh, no, that man is really poor; he has to burn firewood." Then once I had the same experience in the rice fields, being on the edge of a rice field and watching the rice farmers bent over. They were probably harvesting rice, and I was thinking, "Those people are really poor farmers, and they're picking what they're going to eat; and I could have been one of those people." So there was this distance I felt—I did not really identify with them even though they looked like me. I would rather have been my Caucasian friend with blue eyes or something. That was a little problem.
- Selvidge: In a way it seems like it almost reinforced the assimilation, the feeling more like an American than like a Japanese person?
- Daijogo: Yes. It definitely did. Somewhere early in my high school years—or it might have been junior high—we went to visit what I think was a very innovative school in Japan. It was called The Freedom School, and it was in a very beautiful location somewhere around Tokyo. The children there were not in uniform, which most Japanese children were; and I remember feeling more of a kinship with those children because they were speaking a little English for one thing.
- I don't know why we visited there. We were always going around "broadening our horizons" or whatever we were supposed to be doing; and we visited there maybe two or three times during that year. I wonder what happened to that school and what it really was.
- Selvidge: Interesting.

- Daijogo: Yes. I was very taken with the name of the school, The Freedom School. Just the name is interesting because the Japanese are very constrained in their educational system.
- Selvidge: So this was very different?
- Daijogo: It was very different, and I don't know who went to school there. I think they were mainly Japanese. I know where a lot of the missionary kids went—they went to ASIJ, the American School in Japan, or places like Nishimachi or the Catholic school that was established after the war.
- Selvidge: I have another question, which I think you've mostly answered, but I'm just going to put it out there because it's occurred to me at different moments. The question is about your father. He worked for the Army as a translator for quite some time during the war as well?
- Daijogo: Yes. Seven years, yes.
- Selvidge: Seven years. So I just wonder: have you ever talked about it with your parents, did they have any mixed feelings about that? And you've described your feelings about Japan as a defeated country—and of course it was an enemy country—do you ever remember complicated feelings about that, or was it pretty clear for your parents?
- Daijogo: I think it was very clear for them. There was that whole thing in the camps: the “yes, yes” and the “no, no” people; and my dad was definitely “yes, yes”. They were very proud Americans. It was simple. Their allegiance was always toward this great country. They were good Republicans.
- Selvidge: It's just so amazing to think about that now; their allegiance was towards this country—
- Daijogo: That had put them in the camps. I said, “Mom, there's something so wrong with that. Why didn't you rebel?” She said, “And what good would that have done?” Okay.
- Selvidge: What's your feeling about that?
- Daijogo: Well, the first time that I emotionally dealt with it was in front of 150 people, I think, at a self-esteem conference. Something came up, and I started talking, and I burst into tears, and then I started screaming. This was a good place to do it—because everybody was Californian—it was an accepting environment. So I had these buried feelings of rage which I vented in front of all these people; and I cried and yelled. That's when I first realized how not okay it was, that it was this shameful, humiliating experience that these people, including me and my family, endured. I realized for the first time that it was something that interfered with my feelings of self-esteem or who I was. My

mother and father would have been appalled if they could have seen or heard me, just appalled. But I was American. By then I'd lived in Marin County for a long time, so it was one of those distancing things. I mean differences in the way that two generations deal with something.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: It was much more healthy, the stuff comes out, and then it's, "Okay, that happened, now we can let it go." I think I was a better person because it came out, and things got straight in my mind about who I was. Like that was my experience, and it was not good. It was not a good experience, but it was who I am, and it was freeing, like good therapy should be; so it was very inexpensive therapy. But my parents never had this kind of release. Did I tell you this? When the restitution was made, the reparations were instituted, I called my mom, and I said, "Did you get your letter of apology and the check?" And she said on the phone, "Yes." And there was a long pause, and she said, "No amount of money can pay for the humiliation." So there was that.

Selvidge: So she did have anger?

Daijogo: She did, she did, all that time. But the Japanese thing of "gaman" is stronger, and gaman is like you "stiff upper lip" it, and you bear it, and you endure what is given to you. So that was their way of dealing with it. So she never, ever talked about that again.

Selvidge: The reparations?

Daijogo: It was probably just put in the bank. My father never said anything, but I found a letter the other day in a book about the final government report, which is so fascinating. Maybe I should give you that book?

Selvidge: Yes?

Daijogo: If you ever do work on this subject, it is the final report on the internment of Japanese Americans. Talk about euphemisms and, oh God, bias—

Selvidge: You feel like it didn't do any kind of justice to the experience?

Daijogo: No, it defended the camps. Like, "We did it for their good so they would be out of danger; and we could not have Japanese Americans on the Pacific Coast particularly because that would endanger the country."

Selvidge: Was it written around the time of restitution?

Daijogo: No, I think it was before that—it was way before that—and it was shameful, and there were pictures of smiling Japanese Americans in camp doing normal

things. I think that parts of it were accurate: it's accurate because they did play baseball, and they did get to eat; they did do all these things. But to only describe that, it was biased and one-sided and defensive. So it would be interesting as a historian for you to see a document like that. My dad had it, and it was the only book I took from his things. There was a letter inside the book that he had kept—I think it was in response to his being on the list to receive restitution and reparations from the government. It was just tucked in there.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: I just came across it a couple days ago, and I thought, "Who am I going to give this book to?" So I'm going to give it to you so you can look at it. It's appalling.

Selvidge: Were you and your siblings on the list as well?

Daijogo: Yes. So I received \$25,000. My brother, who was born at camp, received that too. So we just put it away. I don't know, I think some people may have given theirs to the Japanese American Historical Museum in LA and different places. I'm not sure what people did because we never talked about it.

Selvidge: In the family?

Daijogo: No, never. Sam and I attended a couple meetings when the conversation about reparations was going on. But I have to say at that time he was not that interested, nor really was I. We went because we knew it was important historically that this be done. But emotionally, that was before my outburst. That came afterwards.

Selvidge: So you were in a place where you hadn't dealt with that yet?

Daijogo: No, so I was dealing with it more as an interesting historical event of which I was part. But at that point I wasn't in touch with the emotional part. It was more a fact of my life; and that's the way my parents dealt with that, too.

Selvidge: Had your husband also been interned as a child?

Daijogo: Yes, he was in Tule Lake, where people were sent who were in a different or difficult category. I think his stepfather was one of those "no, no" types that I mentioned before; and the people in Tule Lake got segregated from the people like my parents who were "yes, yes." They were waiting to be deported, or to be allowed to return to Japan. According to Sam, his stepfather wanted to go back because he was what they call Kibei, which means he was educated in Japan and just came to this country as a nineteen-year-old to earn a living. He was a gardener.

His family wrote back and said, “Do not come back here. It is very bad. There’s not enough food.” “Japan is going to lose this war,” is the message they got. I don’t know if they actually wrote that in the message, but that’s what Sam’s parents deduced from it.

So Sam was up there at Tule Lake, and he had a totally different view of camp; he said it was fun. I said, “Fun? I was scared the entire time I was there.” He said, “No, we used to soap our bodies up with soap and slide down the laundry chute in the laundry room because it was really smooth cement.” So that was just a very different way of dealing with stuff. And in fact, Sam was a very optimistic, very authentic kind of person. He was the real deal: what-you-saw-is-what-you-got. He was direct, and he wasn’t afraid. He didn’t overthink that much; he didn’t manufacture anxieties. He said, “Your problem is you think too much.” I think he was right in that way. It’s like I can manufacture up all manner of threats and reasons to be fearful and reasons not to do things. So his experience was that it was a great time to hang out with your little friends; and he played marbles, and did sling shots. So he had a completely different emotional perspective than I did.

Selvidge: Then, of course, you did observe things that were going on, and the shame and all those things that really were scary.

Daijogo: Yes, it was; but it was partly because it was just my personality, my constitution.

Selvidge: Yes, it’s two different, very different, levels of living and experience.

Daijogo: Yes, yes. So think of writing history from those two experiences, interesting.

Selvidge: Well, we should stop because we’re almost at the end here.

Selvidge: Okay, so now this is Tape 5. We’re still talking here on July 29.

Daijogo: To answer the question you just asked me before we started taping, high school was a very happy, positive experience for me. I went to a school called Narimatsu High School. It was probably just three blocks from my house in Grant Heights; and I could walk home for lunch.

Selvidge: And this was all on the Army base, everything?

Daijogo: Yes.

Selvidge: So most of daily life happened on the base, am I right?

Daijogo: Well, not only on the base. Once we were in high school we were also with children from other high schools. They merged schools at that time. A lot of children who lived closer in to urban Tokyo lived in a place called Washington Heights; those tended to be the children of officers and higher ranking military. They had to merge with our school because their school, the American school in Japan, went back to being private, to what it had been before the war. That was mainly a school for the children of people who worked in Japan and missionary kids. So when I was a sophomore there was this merging with our rival school. It was a big deal. They came with their “mustang” jackets instead of our “dragon” jackets. You see, it was total “high school”, but it was a very positive experience. I made some good friends—two of them I’m still in touch with. We lived the American life, the spoiled American life, because we all had servants, maids and houseboys that worked with us, worked for us. They were Japanese. In the officers’ clubs and the places where we had our dances and things, those were the people who made the food and parked the cars. So it was a very privileged kind of life.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: We were first given permission to go off base when we were young teenagers. It might be to take a train, say, to a friend’s house in Washington Heights, which would have been maybe a half hour trip away. So there was independence, and it was also independence in a place that was and felt very safe. We were never given warnings—except, “Be careful you don’t fall onto train tracks,” or something like that—about being in the population at large among Japanese. I think everybody was very trusting that we would be safe. Once I remember being on a train to another friend’s base—I think at Chofu—so that was a longer train ride. And there was a man on that trip, a Japanese man, who had lost his legs in the war. He saw us, and he started yelling. We didn’t know what he was saying because we couldn’t speak Japanese. But we knew he was angry; and he was angry at what we represented and he probably had every right to be. But that was the only time I remember being startled or uncomfortable. And we rode trains, and we rode the buses, and we rode the trolley cars and felt very safe and very excited and very happy to be young.

When I was a senior, my best friends and I wanted to take a special senior trip in the spring, and my mom was the chaperone for us. There were three of them plus me—Amy and Sammy and Perry. We went to Kyoto, which was a beautiful, beautiful city. We were regular tourists, and we were in this really beautiful hotel, an old, classic hotel. I just had a terrific and memorable time with the cherry blossoms and Lake Biwa, which is a famous lake that’s written about in the Tales of Genji.

I remember feeling very independent. My mother was talking to the hotel help one day, and I could understand a little of their Japanese. They were talking, and the man said to my mom, “Oh, this is a wonderful time of their life when

they're free of responsibility," or carefree, in other words. And it was. You were just happy to be alive and to have a future—by then most of us were going to college. Perry and I were going off to college. Oh, actually Amy ended up going, too. She went to the University of Hawaii. To have a future, and to have options, and to have the security of being supported and having friends. So my high school time was just a really pleasant, pleasant experience for me.

We had football teams and basketball teams, and I was a cheerleader, which I'm very embarrassed to say in front of my children. But it was also a way of being part of a group and being really accepted in that group, and being one of the people that had ease in movement and in feeling connected.

Selvidge: So the fact that your school life might have been sort of insular and small — those were not bad things for you?

Daijogo: No. That actually was very comfortable for me, and it was insular. It was being in a small fishpond. But it was safe, and it was happy. It was a happy time. And then I went to Berkeley.

Selvidge: Tell me—I'm always interested in this—I think it's because one of my colleagues who has also done some interviews, is writing about dating, right around this same period. I'm always curious what people have to say about high school, and dating, and especially the kinds of things that their parents told them about dating. And most especially, if there was any tension between what their parents told them and how things were maybe changing in the world of high school?

Daijogo: Well, when I went off to school I remember my mother telling me—we were standing in front of the kitchen—she said, “Now, you're going to be going off to college, and it's a very big place, and you're going to feel lost. And its huge compared to your high school”. I graduated with seventy-three kids or something like that. It was a small school; there were less than four hundred of us. It was tiny.

Selvidge: That's very small compared to Berkeley.

Daijogo: Yes, it was different. When I went to Cal the student body was about 18,000; and now it's I don't how many thousands. Anyway, my mom said, “All your friends have been hakujin,” which means Caucasian; it means foreigner actually. “You've gone out with boys who were not of your race, and now things are going to be different. You're going to be with your people.” “Okay,” I thought, “All right; that makes sense.”

Selvidge: So ironic, you're leaving Japan, going back to the United States and your mom's telling you that now you're going to be with “your people”?

- Daijogo: Yes, I'm going to be with my people.
- Selvidge: Did that feel right to you? Because it seems like you identified so much with your friends in high school?
- Daijogo: I did.
- Selvidge: Did you feel like she was right, like you had "another people" out there—?
- Daijogo: Yes, like there was a tribe that I was going to join. I'm a good girl. As I said, I'm not a rebellious type. If I'd said that to my daughter Maki, it would have been like, "What are you talking about?" She would have, with her wonderful lawyer-like intelligence, put me down quickly. But I thought, "Okay, all right, that's probably true," and off I went. In fact, I was overwhelmed. I really thought, "I cannot go to this school. It doesn't matter if my parents went to this school; it is way too big; I do not know what I am doing." I had gone to Army schools and I had gotten A's with no effort at all. I'd never written a paper that was more than a page and a half long. I was totally not academic. I was not prepared.
- Selvidge: Yes.
- Daijogo: Except, I passed Subject A. Do you still have to do that? Well, then it was the Basic English [prerequisite] of composition and grammar, and you had to pass it; if you didn't pass you had to take the class. And you didn't get any credit for it. I did pass but I thought that I wouldn't because I just felt unprepared. So academically it was a struggle for me; and on the other hand it was so exciting to be near these people who were so smart.
- Selvidge: Was it a struggle socially, as well?
- Daijogo: Oh, yes. So first there were the academics, and finally you get that together and I thought, "Okay, I'm not going to have to transfer to Chico State," or wherever I thought would be better—or not as hard for me. But starting out at Cal I was living at my aunt's house, the aunt that's really sick now, which was basically a mistake because I am a social person, and it was very isolating for me. My parents had been very helpful to this aunt as a younger sib during the war, so basically to reciprocate, she said I could come and live with them. They lived in Richmond, and they had two young boys; so I went and lived with their family.
- Selvidge: Richmond is not that close to campus, is it?
- Daijogo: No. I rode into school almost every day with one of their friends down the street who worked in Berkeley; he was a gardener. He would let me off at Sather Gate, and I would trudge into school. Then I would ride home on the bus, I don't know, it was maybe thirty or forty minutes. It wasn't that far,

going down to San Pablo and then transferring, catching another bus to Richmond. But I was homesick, I was struggling, and I was lonely because when you're doing that kind of commute there isn't time to make friends; and you're not in a dorm.

Selvidge: So you were also in two really different worlds?

Daijogo: Yes, you weren't with other people. I did my homework at my aunt's, and I remember my dad wrote me a letter. He said, "I think there were tear stains on your letter, so I didn't show it to Mama," his message being you should basically straighten up and just write your letters without being dramatic; the Japanese style, gaman. So it was a very hard transition for me. I went to see a counselor—they had some sort of counseling service there—and I took some tests, and I met with the counselor. She said that intellectually I was going to be fine, that I could handle it. But socially I was not in a good place. She suggested that my parents pay for me to be in a dorm. So my parents did, and for the second semester I moved into a dorm.

Selvidge: So your parents were willing to do that?

Daijogo: Yes, because I was so unhappy. I think my aunt probably wrote them, too, and said that she was not happy with the arrangement either; it must have been hard for her also with two young kids. I got into the Fernwall Dorms—which is up on the hill—I think it's graduate housing now. I'm not sure. Anyway, it was right across from what is now Dwight-Derby, that used to be the California School for the Deaf and Blind. The minute I got there I was fine. The depression lifted, I stopped crying, and it just made sense for me to be there. I immediately had a roommate, and I had friends, and it was just a better place for me. So I'm very thankful that my parents were able to do that. I told you, I think, how my mother had constructed this plan, how we were going to get all four of us through school? That I would get a job when I finished school and I would support the next child for two years, and then the next one would be graduated. My mother, she was a planner, and it worked. My brother had dropped out for a while, but I actually got a job in teaching and I gave half my money—which was then like \$400 a month—to my sister who was going to San Jose State at that time. So it all worked out. The girls, anyway, did their job!

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: Once I got into the dorms, then I think I had a collegiate life —

Selvidge: More of the kinds of things that you liked about high school?

Daijogo: Yes, there were other people to talk to who were doing the same things you were doing; you had somebody to go study with at the library. Sometimes one of my roommates would have a car, and we could go off campus. It was just

more freedom in a lot of ways and wasn't just riding the buses and being isolated.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: So I've learned that I don't do well in isolation. The dating thing didn't work for me. I never got asked for a date, not by anyone. It was so sad. Part of it—I was dealing with my mother's thing, "These are going to be your friends, this Japanese American community." Well, they didn't really like me that much. They were not that comfortable with me, and I really tried. I met some girls, and I went to their house, where a couple of them lived. They were sisters that lived on Rose Street in Berkeley, and I really liked them. One day I was walking with one of them on the campus, and I saw some flowers, wild flowers growing. I said, "Oh, my gosh, look at those, how did they get here?" or something like that, and Nana said, "That's the thing about you Janet; you're so open-minded." That was a fact, but it was also—it was like it was a separating fact. I was just observing these flowers. Why would that be open-minded?

Selvidge: And that was a negative?

Daijogo: It was sort of like, "You're different, you're so open-minded"; and that just struck me. I had a cousin who was a little older and didn't go to college. She was already working. She could type very fast, maybe 120 words a minute; I couldn't type 40. So anyway, she was in a group of Japanese American girls, kind of like a sorority or a club or something. They only dated boys from the Barons who were Japanese American boys. I realized at some point that some of the boys in that club went to school at Cal.

Selvidge: The Barons was the name of the club?

Daijogo: Yes, it was the boys' club. I can't remember what the girls were called.

It was really weird to me: they had their own dances, and those two clubs would meet, and they would dance, and I remember going to one of them thinking, "This is so strange." I could not make it with those groups.

Selvidge: You didn't feel like you fit in?

Daijogo: I didn't fit in; and I didn't fit in with any sorority—Caucasian, or whatever—that they had at Berkeley.

Selvidge: Were you disappointed that you didn't fit in?

Daijogo: Yes, because it's not good to not fit in anywhere. So I remember—I think it was either at the end of my freshman year or during my sophomore year—hanging out on the phone with somebody and just bursting into tears and

saying, “I just can’t make it here socially. I cannot make it with my people.” Then I just straightened up, and I thought, “You know what, I’m going to find my friends where I find my friends.” I just gave up on the classic patience thing. The people I could relate to, I would relate to. And the people that I couldn’t, I wouldn’t. But it was like, “I cannot do this, Mom. What you said isn’t working for me.”

I had dated in high school in Japan. My boyfriend there was named Fred Bremmerman, and he was towheaded, with green eyes, and very good looking. Just a really nice guy. Then he left when I was a sophomore to go back to the States to play football. He loved football. So he ends up at Tam High playing football with Sam Daijogo. Fred whips out a picture one day, and he said, “Hey, Sam, here’s one of my girlfriends.” He had lots of girlfriends, actually, as it turned out—I hadn’t seen him for three years. Fred whips out this picture of me, and Sam said, “Fred, you’ve got no taste in women.” So Fred put my picture away in his wallet. But when I came back to the US and was a freshman at Cal, Fred came to see me, and we started a relationship again.

We went out on some dates—although Fred had learned a few things—he was fast! I was like, “Not me. I don’t do that, sorry.” But Fred was very personable, and I remember being with him at his parents’ house in Mountain View. His father had been a Lieutenant Colonel in the military, and this was at Christmas time. In comes this Sam Daijogo, who had a sister who also lived in Mountain View and owned a grocery store there; Sam used to help out in the store. I thought this guy was really funny; he was such a clown. He had grown up in Belvedere, can you imagine? The son of a gardener, and a housekeeper; yet he grew up sailing boats with his friends, his Belvedere friends. He went to Tam High, and his parents bought him a car. His mom had convinced the stepfather to buy this car for Sam. Sam was a really good athlete, which in this culture brings you big rewards. And he was big. I think he said he weighed like 210 pounds. So he was big, and his friends were all the popular guys at Tam High, and he was co-captain of his football team by the time he was a junior.

So I met Sam that first time at Fred’s house; and then when I was a sophomore, Fred went off and joined the Army and was in Korea. I saw Sam the next time at a dance, and he said to me, “Hello, how’s Fred?” I said, “Fred’s gone. He’s in Korea.” And I was still writing him, so Sam said, “Can I take you home?” I said, “Sure.” Sometimes he would drive the laundry truck, but I think he might have had a car by then. I started going out with him, and he actually saved my social life because he was somebody I trusted immediately, and I just loved him. I wouldn’t call it love, exactly, because it was hard for me to say that, but I felt very safe. He had in a really strange way the same kind of life experience I had, but he actually bridged two cultures better than I did. He was very comfortable with his Caucasian friends and that was his life. He also had relatives in Stockton, and he went out with Japanese

girls from that community, too. In fact, on our second date he introduced me as Alice, which was a minus.

Selvidge: Yes, really!

Daijogo: I found out later Alice was somebody he dated from Stockton. I don't know what happened to Alice. So mainly I didn't have to have any more conflict or angst about who I was going to go out with or that I didn't have any social life.

Selvidge: When you say social life, you mean mostly dating?

Daijogo: Yes, dating; I did have a social life with girls. But I meant with the opposite sex.

Selvidge: That was a big part of college then?

Daijogo: Oh, yes, I think so. That's when people started looking for serious commitments, and this was the fifties. That's what you were supposed to do: go to college and find a good guy.

Selvidge: It sounds like that was part of the expectation, that you would meet your husband in college?

Daijogo: Yes.

Selvidge: I have to ask. Do you think that part of the reason you had trouble dating in college was that you didn't fit into the Japanese American community, and then the Caucasian guys or other guys didn't want to ask a Japanese girl out?

Daijogo: Oh, yes.

Selvidge: Did you think that at the time or—?

Daijogo: Yes, yes, it was clear to me that there was a racial divide—and so my best bet would have been to go into the Japanese American community which did not accept me, even though I truly, truly tried. I could never figure out why until years later. A friend of mine, John Korty, was making a movie about the internment called "Farewell to Manzanar". My daughter Tane had a little part, a one-liner; and she actually did some other work in sketches John Korty produced. The girl who had the lead was Dori Takeshita. Dori's mother, who I re-met a couple months ago and who is now a hula sister, reminded me of when we first met. We were sitting in a restaurant waiting to get on an airplane and fly up north. She had looked at me then in the same way that my friend had looked at me when I made the comment about the wildflowers growing on the grass, and she said, "Where are you from?" And I said, "Why do you ask?" She said, "Well, I know you're not from LA, and I know you're

not from San Francisco.” And I said, “How do you know that?” And she said, “Because you talk white.” Then I got it. So the minute I opened my mouth I was different to those Japanese Americans from LA and from the city. It’s kind of interesting because my speech is unaccented to my ears.

Selvidge: You don’t have a “Japantown” way of talking?

Daijogo: No, no, I’m not good at languages. I never really thought about it, and I didn’t have the linguistic ability to adapt to that even if I wanted to. I didn’t even perceive that was the issue until she said it all those years later. At that moment, it was like “Dong!” She just opened a block, a key to my past. Isn’t that interesting?

Selvidge: Yes. So in college it was probably a symbol in a way, one of the things that people would have noticed about you at the time?

Daijogo: Yes, certainly all the Asians did. There were some Chinese girls that lived in Proshoto Hall, which was next to my dorm, who came from Georgia or somewhere. These were Chinese girls that spoke with a Southern accent. It was so cute! It was amazing, but that was part of the experience at Cal—suddenly being confronted with a completely different environment, a much larger one, where I basically had to learn to sink or swim. I was sinking a lot of the time, I think. But luckily I met Sam, who just kept me [afloat]—it’s like he kept me honest. Studying was so stressful for me. After I had finished finals one year, he said to me later that summer, “You’re a different person when you’re not studying.” He was a good guy; and he would go with me to the library, and he would draw because he was in art school then. He’d be drawing away, and I’d be trying to memorize whatever I was trying to do. But because of him, really, my life at Cal was bearable. I also didn’t have to figure out what was going to happen to me, where I was going to end up, who I was going to end up swimming with. So I just swam with him. It was much easier.

Selvidge: So it sounds like you knew you would be with him for a long time?

Daijogo: Oh, yes.

Selvidge: You probably thought you would get married?

Daijogo: Yes, yes. “Well,” he said one day, “I think we should get married, don’t you?” He said, “I’ll go ask your father.”

Selvidge: Is that right?

Daijogo: Yes, he had an old fashioned thing. So I guess he had a talk with my father. And my father said, “Well, you should ask her.” So we got married. He didn’t want to get married until he had a job, and it’s not so easy for an artist to get a job.

- Selvidge: No kidding.
- Daijogo: Yes, but he did. So he had gone to art school, and he got out about the same time I got out of Cal. He went looking for a job down in LA, and I got a job teaching. I taught for a semester in the San Francisco Unified [School District], and then I got a job in South San Francisco in an all white community.
- Selvidge: And your parents were still in Japan?
- Daijogo: No, by then they had come back. My sibs were back here going to college. My parents were living in South San Francisco then and that's why I applied for a job there, because I could live at home and send my money off to my sister.
- Selvidge: You had enough money to do that?
- Daijogo: Yes, I didn't have to pay rent, and so it worked out well. Then finally Sam got a job somewhere mid-semester, mid-year, and I said, "Oh, no, I can't get married now; I have to finish my contract." Because I was like that. "I signed a contract, I'm committed." So we got married right after I finished that job—I was twenty-four by that time. So that part of my life was called, "Sam saved me from Cal."
- Selvidge: Before we rolled the tape, do you remember my saying that I spoke to your college roommate—?
- Daijogo: Yes.
- Selvidge: It seemed she found her experience at Cal to be this amazing time to be with other Japanese American students, since coming from Ohio she had not been able to be a part of a Japanese American community before. It sounds like she found a community that's not the one that you were talking about? I don't know, maybe connected with other Japanese Americans people who had also come from other places, rather than the Bay Area Japanese American community?
- Daijogo: Yes, I'm not sure either. My roommate, Tomi, had a cousin or an aunt, who was just a little older, maybe in her thirties; and Tomi was very close to her. I forget her relative's name. She and her husband lived in the Berkeley hills, and we would sometimes go up to their house for dinner. So maybe that was the source of connection for her. This would be interesting for me to talk about with her next time I see her. We were roommates for our junior and senior years along with Ellie and a Jewish girl named Myla Greenberg, who was sort of difficult. Anyway, I could be a part of the Japanese American community she was talking about, and my experience was similar to hers in that neither of us had a Japanese American community where we came from

before Cal. But I think she was more excited about what she found during her Cal years, where for me it was a much more of a disappointing experience.

Selvidge: Interesting.

Daijogo: I know, it's just who you are. My mom probably should never have given me that advice.

Selvidge: Well, it must have been something she really wanted for you?

Daijogo: Yes.

Selvidge: And she must have thought that it would be the best thing for you?

Daijogo: Exactly, and that it would be helpful and not as disappointing for me as it turned out. Yes, I think that was it.

Selvidge: They must have been happy in the end that you did marry a Japanese American?

Daijogo: Yes. And that was amazing to me in a way because I thought no Japanese American boy was ever going to find me very interesting. But there are more than one kind; it was good.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: So it turned out —intellectually—my experience at Cal was amazing. It was absolutely amazing to be surrounded by such talented and great lecturers and people who were passionate about their subject. I loved history. Actually, I think the only thing that wasn't good were all the Education courses. They were bummers.

Selvidge: Oh that's too bad.

Daijogo: The good thing was I think you only had to have twelve or sixteen units of Ed courses, and they were like two units each.

Selvidge: So you went into college thinking you would be a teacher, is that right?

Daijogo: Yes, so I majored in child development, which was a multi-disciplinary major. I don't know, it was okay, but my minor was history, and I loved history, it was so interesting.

Selvidge: It is.

- Daijogo: And anthropology—I loved anthropology. But I thought, if I’m going to be a teacher I should understand children, so I did the child development classes. That was before I understood energy, but that’s the way it was.
- Selvidge: You talked before about not really choosing things, about them choosing you in a way. Was that the same kind of thing with teaching, that it was something you didn’t even think about?
- Daijogo: Yes, that’s right. Because the only other thing I wanted to be was an astronomer, and that was when I was in the eighth grade. And that could have been because of my “astro” journey, in Oklahoma during that thunderstorm. So astronomy really fascinated me, but it didn’t seem like a good thing to major in. And yes, this was the fifties, and the expectations were very different: we should get married, we should have children, we should become teachers or nurses; it was much more limited. I just bought into that because I was not an envelope pusher, and it was way before women’s lib.
- Selvidge: Yes.
- Daijogo: So I really was a total child of the fifties, grew up in the middle of it. I started Cal in 1955. I graduated high school right in the middle of it; Ozzie and Harriet and all that. Luckily I didn’t have television, so I didn’t know that program. I didn’t see television until I was nineteen.
- Selvidge: Oh, wow, in college was the first time?
- Daijogo: Yes, at my aunt’s house. I remember writing back home, “You should see television. Everybody watches it here all the time here.”
- Selvidge: That’s so funny.
- Daijogo: I know. Talking about the 50’s, my roommate Tomi found her man while we were at Cal: his name was Gene Izuno. Gene was the cousin of a second cousin or something very distant. Gene was an architect, and he might have been in the Navy by then. When we were seniors she got pregnant. I said to my other roommate, who was Italian and knew everything—she was a couple years older than we were, and she was street smart, just smart in the ways of the world—I said, “What is wrong with Tomi? She’s blowing up. Do you think she has some terrible illness? She can’t hold down food. I fixed her favorite dinner, and she didn’t want to eat it.” Ellie looked at me and said, “She’s pregnant.” I said, “What? How could she be pregnant?” I was slow! So she got married in between semesters—in our senior year at Christmas time, I think. They got married at one of the seminary schools, and they had a reception at the Claremont Hotel. We nursed her through her pregnancy. It was actually kind of fun because we had to take care of her, “Well, how are you going to take this final? You better eat these crackers before you go in.”

- Selvidge: Was that her senior year?
- Daijogo: Yes. It was perfect timing in a way. She had a baby soon after she graduated, but she was maybe four or five months pregnant, maybe five months pregnant by the time we graduated. She was showing.
- Selvidge: But she was married?
- Daijogo: Yes, she was married.
- Selvidge: And she was living with her husband then, I guess?
- Daijogo: No, she was living with us.
- Selvidge: Oh, she was still living with you until the end of the school year?
- Daijogo: Yes, and then she went off with Gene to Barstow. That's where he was stationed in the Navy.
- So the exciting thing that happened when I was a senior was getting Tomi through her morning sickness, making sure she ate right. At that time I was studying nutrition, because it was part of my major; and I wrote this paper on diet during pregnancy and lactation, so I got to be quite the little expert—
- Selvidge: Yes.
- Daijogo: “This is what I read, Tomi, so are these the vitamins you are taking, did your doctor give you these vitamins?”
- Selvidge: That was sweet.
- Daijogo: It was very funny. “Now, are you going to breastfeed? You should, you know.” So I have to ask her if she did because there was a big pitch when I went to school on breastfeeding your baby. At that time it was getting to be in vogue because— what did our teacher say—the three Cs: it's cheap, convenient and comes in cute packages. [laughs] I learned that in college.
- Selvidge: That's funny. It seems a little risqué even.
- Daijogo: Yes, for that time, but it was not a risqué professor. I think she was a consultant to the UN, as a Berkeley professor would be. She had worked in third-world countries telling them that they needed to throw away the powdered milk, the powdered formula, and breastfeed; even though these third-world mothers thought formula was better because it came from America.
- Selvidge: Right.

- Daijogo: She said, “No, no, no. The breast is best.” So I told that to Tomi. We were all little mommies taking care of her. I have no idea what she did. I’ll have to ask her.
- Selvidge: There’s one other thing that I wanted to ask you about college—I guess this was in the urban interview that I read—you talked about reading a book about constitutional law in college, which was really a moment of awakening for you?
- Daijogo: It was. That was when I was a sophomore. I was taking a pilot class, like a seminar. You know how huge the classes are at Berkeley—
- Selvidge: Right.
- Daijogo: So they designed a course for sophomores for only forty-five people. You had to apply. It was an honors course; and it was called American Studies. There were three sections, each of fifteen students. We met somewhere in the library, in these smaller, more intimate rooms. It was taught by one History professor, one Political Science professor, and one English literature professor. They focused on using more primary sources to get information. There would be a few classes where all the sections would meet together; and they would talk about the current scene in politics, history, the arts and literature. So it was more integrated, and it was a really great experience for me. I don’t know if we got grades—we might have. We didn’t have finals but we wrote a series of papers, which was actually a better way for me to learn anyway because it wasn’t as scary for some reason. The blue books always were frightening. I think it was a real privilege to be able to take that class.
- Selvidge: Yes.
- Daijogo: So part of it was I was going to do a paper on the Japanese American internment—
- Selvidge: Was this something that you chose to pursue?
- Daijogo: Yes. I went to Japan during the summer between my freshman and sophomore year, and while I was there I heard a lecture delivered by a psychiatrist who had worked with soldiers, men who had fought in the Korean War, and how they responded to authority. It started me thinking —I don’t know why— about the internment. Then while I was in this special seminar at Cal, we read that book called *Prejudice, War and the Constitution* [Jacobus tenBroek, 1958]. As I was reading, it was like, “Where have I been?” I just remember sitting up straight in my chair from reading this book thinking, “Oh my God, wait until I tell my parents about this.” That’s when they told me—when my mother said, “What good would it have done to rebel?”
- Selvidge: So tell me a little bit more about the book specifically.

Daijogo: Basically that it was unconstitutional to do what they did. You do not put people in prison or in a concentration camp because of their race. So part of it was the racial basis of why they did this. It was certainly not for our own good. It was because they could do it and because there was racial discrimination then, especially in California, that had to do with Asians, prejudice against Asians. At that time—I forget the statistic—but ten or twenty percent of California’s arable land was being farmed by Japanese Americans, so there was a tremendous agricultural pot that got immediately dismantled. Within a month other people could take over this land that Japanese American farmers had farmed and worked for decades to develop. My uncle was one of the people who transported this food to different parts of the country. He was a broker of some sort, and he’s the one who had majored in Business Administration at Berkeley. All that was taken apart. So there was the outrage of what they did with our lives, and all our parents’ lives. Just take them in the prime of their life and throw them somewhere. They didn’t kill them, but as my mother said years later, “Nothing can pay for the humiliation of what they did.” It’s racial. Anybody who has been on the receiving end of racial prejudice understands it’s just unspeakable. It is something we haven’t learned yet as human beings.

Once I got into education, and I finally learned how to teach, one thing became paramount: that each child knows there is only one of them that’s ever been born, and that they are absolutely important, and that they have a voice that deserves to be heard, and that they are worthwhile doing whatever they choose. So it’s all stuff that I wish somebody had taught me. They say you have to teach what you haven’t learned, so I must still be on the path.

Selvidge: Well, let’s stop there.

Interview 4: August 5, 2011

Selvidge: We left off talking about college and the years right after that, so I thought that we could talk a little bit about that transition time for you. We talked about your mother's plan of her kids supporting each other through school, and that was something that you did in the years after college. We also talked about your husband not wanting to get married right away until he had a job. He needed to have a job?

Daijogo: Yes, he did.

Selvidge: So I wanted to ask you about that because you were sort of laughing when we discussed that. Yet in those years it would be very much in line with cultural expectations that a man would have a job before he would get married, right? So I just wondered why you were laughing?

Daijogo: Well, I think I was laughing because times have changed so much. And it also reminds me of who Sam was. He was not a complex person at all, but "he was what he was". We simply weren't going to negotiate about that; it just was not going to happen. It wasn't in a mean, rigid way in the sense of "I've made up my mind, and we're not moving off the track." It was just part of his value system, just "I'm going to support you." Later on down the line—I insisted I needed to work, too—because I think Berkeley left me with that. I really loved learning, and I just loved moving my small mind out into different arenas, and a life of just a young married person with children wasn't working for me.

I laugh now because we have moved so far culturally from that kind of mindset, and women have assumed a lot more power than they had in my day. You were just more subservient then; you moved where your husband moved, and you didn't have this bicoastal thing that sometimes happens now with men and women working in different places.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: But that was definitely a part of Sam's system that was not negotiable. We didn't even talk about it. I think I said it's kind of silly if you have a job, and I don't. But I'm not sure I even voiced that, even though I thought it. As it turned out there was only a year overlap where I had a job and he was looking for a job, and then he finally got a job. I remember the phone call because I said, "Well, how much are you—?" And my mom said: "Janet, you shouldn't be asking how much he makes." But I was curious about whether and when we were going to be able to get married or not in this system. So it brings back that kind of memory that is amusing to me now.

Selvidge: So there was a while where you were teaching and Sam was job-hunting?

- Daijogo: Yes, I was in South San Francisco—
- Selvidge: Living with your family?
- Daijogo: Yes, and living with my family. I had taught one semester in the city for the San Francisco Unified [School District], and then I got a job in South San Francisco. Then concurrently Sam finally found a job maybe halfway through that year. As soon as school was out, we got married the following June. Then we moved down to San Diego because that's what you did, girls followed the boys.
- Selvidge: Because that's where he found a job?
- Daijogo: Yes, he worked for General Dynamics Astronautics in the space program. They were doing the Atlas Missile Project at that time, which sent the first monkey into space. Actually, when you think of it, it was a perfect boy's job, because he got to draw rocket ships and all kinds of things that traditionally little boys like to draw.
- Selvidge: Was he doing technical drawing then or—?
- Daijogo: No. It turns out they had a very forward-looking art director at General Dynamics, and he really appreciated people who could paint and draw. Sam was a painter, and although "graphic designer" was his actual title, there was a lot of freedom in their art department. It wasn't like working for an individual client. Whatever the artist decided to do was what lived. They did brochures and whatever they needed to do to move their ideas and their program along, so there was a definite corporate image; but it was a great place for a young designer. That's one of Sam's paintings [points to the wall], and he was very painterly; and that picture behind you was something that he did ages ago for an illustration. He worked with people who became really life-long friends. In fact, Tom Suzuki's wife is the one who got me into quilting. So they were old friends, and we had a long relationship. Tom died about five years ago, I think. Yes, about five years ago.
- Selvidge: I want to go back to one point that you just mentioned a couple minutes ago about being at Berkeley; and how the excitement of learning was something that you wanted to have as a part of your life?
- Daijogo: Yes, I think it was, well, almost unconscious. But I see as we speak that it's always been a theme in my life. I think I came from this very small, tiny military base with a very insular kind of life; and then Berkeley sort of just smashed that bubble. It was good because a broadened perspective for somebody like me was a really good thing. I'm really apolitical and not good at talking about world vision. But I'm always interested in anything that's going on in the field of education, in kindergarten; a new book or a new idea. I have this thing where I think that I'm just getting it now, thirty-five years of

kindergarten, and I'm just getting it. I'm a slow learner. But it isn't just being slow; there's something very delicious about it for me. It's just like if you take that idea, and you bring it to here, and you add this, there's going to be energy in that process. Berkeley gave me that gift. It did, and I value it, and I'm grateful that I got to go there. Maybe any school would have done that for me, but there was something special there. And also the tradition of my parents who had gone there, so it felt like continuity, and then my children went there. And now we're trying to encourage my oldest grandchild to go there, even though she doesn't have to, of course.

- Selvidge: That brings up another question that I have. Do you think this kind of eye-opening experience that you had was what your parents had in mind in valuing the option of higher education for you?
- Daijogo: Oh, yes, in part. In that culture there was never a question that you would go to college; there just wasn't a question about that. It was, "You will be educated. We'll do whatever we have to do in order to support you to do this."
- Selvidge: But do you think this kind of broadening of your perspective and what that gave you, did that match the way that your parents understood education, or was it different?
- Daijogo: I don't think it did match, I think it was a little different. There was the generic thing; after high school you go to college. But beyond that, I definitely came away with a sense of excitement about learning that I've kept throughout my life.
- Selvidge: Yes.
- Daijogo: I think my sibs probably have that also. I'm not as sure about my sister—because in her later life—in her sixties, maybe sixty-five—she went wholeheartedly in a different direction, in this Tibetan Buddhist direction. So that carries her in a spiritual tradition that is somewhat different. That has its own energy is what I'm saying. But I go into a bookstore, and it just sort of does something for me, where there's a lot of energy speaking to me, and I get excited. Now if I go down to University Avenue—I don't go often, but when I do—I get onto University Avenue, and I sort of get jittery, like I want to hyperventilate or something.
- Selvidge: In a good way, right?
- Daijogo: Yes, it's in a good way. There's the nervousness, but the excitement, and I think something that I got out of the university, remains. It's like a little flag that pops up. I don't know what it is, but I always have that sense of excitement about it. I'm going to a workshop at the Durant Hotel on the 19th, 20th and 21st. I know a lot about the material already, but I'm mainly going to support two young teachers. One of them has to teach for me; he's in my

classroom, and I want to know how I can help him, support him, taking these ideas and putting them effectively in the classroom. I'm really excited to be going. And it's not just the subject in this case. It's like, "Oh, I'm going, I'll be near Cal again." I still get excited about hearing the songs that I associate with being there, even though I was not a big [sports] fan—like the Cal marching band songs.

Daijogo: Actually I went to more games as an alum just because a friend of ours, a neighbor where we used to live, was a big supporter of the Cal Bears, especially football. He had season tickets on the fifty yard line about thirty rows up; and so quite often when Sam was alive he would say, "Well, I've got these two extra tickets; come with us." So we'd get a sandwich, and we'd do that. I understand a little bit about basketball, but I never to this day have understood football. So sometimes I would take my knitting, and I would just enjoy the energy of it.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: My dad was there when they were raising money and starting to build that stadium—I don't know whatever small contribution he made—but he had an "investment" in it. It was just part of the tradition, and I know especially my mom was tremendously proud of having gone there.

Selvidge: Well, it's such an accomplishment in her generation.

Daijogo: Yes, it was. She graduated sometime around 1931 or maybe 1929. So there was that family loyalty toward Cal. Once she met the doctor who lived across the street from Sam and me. They had invited us to dinner, and she came along. And I remember she said, "Oh, so you're a Cal man." It was like, "That's all I need to know about you". It was so cute. But there was great pleasure for her in having gone there and having a daughter that went there and two granddaughters that went there.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: Maki actually graduated in history, the one who's a lawyer. And she gave the speech for her department.

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: I don't think my mom went that day for some reason, and I just thought, "Oh, we really should have gotten her to come because it would have meant more to her than almost anybody." We were tremendously proud that Maki did that, and she gave a really nice speech. It was better than the graduate student's speech because Maki had good delivery. Some people just do, and some people don't.

Selvidge: Let's go back to San Diego for a moment. I'm sorry if you mentioned this already—I think you might have last time—but did you work immediately when you got to San Diego? I wasn't sure.

Daijogo: I did. Let's see, we got married, we went down the coast for our honeymoon, and then we were living in a little apartment. Then, yes, I found a job late that same summer, maybe in August? In fact, my friend Virginia Suzuki, who was teaching somewhere herself, told me, "I heard they need teachers in Chula Vista, why don't you apply?" So I did, and they immediately said, "Yay. Come work with us." It was great. I commuted down from Kearny Mesa, which was where General Dynamics Astronautics was, and I taught fifth grade in a blue collar neighborhood. And during that time we decided that we should have one adventure before we had children. Sam's job was starting to fall apart because General Dynamics was going into a slide, and it was very depressing there. So he knew that he wanted to find another job. But first we decided we should go to Japan.

So we counted our money and figured we could go over there and live for six months; travel and see the sights, and Sam could take photographs and things. So some of that year was spent in planning the trip because we had to go get passports and all that. Like getting tickets. We decided to go by freighter because it was cheaper than flying at that point, and you could carry more stuff. You could bring a couple trunks as part of your luggage. So I worked only that one year in San Diego, and we basically were off in the summer time. I remember it was immediately after school was out because I think we landed in Yokohama on the fourth of July, and it was very hot. We thought, "We've made a mistake. How do we get back again?" It was so muggy and hot. Anyway, much of that year had been spent getting ready; getting ready for this adventure as we thought of it.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: Sam had to finish up in his job and to part company with the people that we had hung out with, so it was a very transitional year. And then we went off to Tokyo and were oppressed by the heat and it was incredibly humid. It was during the rainy season—so there was a distinct smell to the place. And then we had to find a place to live because we were just floating through the world then without set plans. But I think that's a good thing to do at that time in your lives—to have that experience.

Selvidge: Tell me why you decided to go to Japan as your adventure?

Daijogo: Because neither of us knew that much about Japan—

Selvidge: But you had lived there many years?

- Daijogo: Yes, but I didn't know about the real Japan. I lived on that Army base, and I was colonized, as that guy from Hawaii described my experience there. So we were just interested in knowing more about the culture and being part of the economy there, living on the same plane as the citizens did. Then we started to actually look for jobs, too, as well as a place to live, just in case something came up. Then we could have more money to extend our trip to maybe a year.
- I found a job at Nishimachi International School just by happenstance. We visited a friend, my parents' friend, who said, "Oh, my, they're looking for a kindergarten teacher at Nishimachi. I saw it in the paper." So she got me the phone number, and I rang up. Then in the meantime, we also knew a friend who guided Sam toward Light Publicity, which was a very innovative, top-notch studio in Tokyo. They liked his work, and they figured he could work three days a week. So he would do that, and then he'd go watch samurai movies on the other two days to get in the air conditioning! It was good to have a job because it brings you into a more real place. And the people where he worked were fabulous to him. First of all, they were very amused by him because his Japanese was so awful.
- Selvidge: But he did speak some Japanese?
- Daijogo: He did speak Japanese. He could actually get around with this terrible Japanese because it was an old style that was spoken a hundred years ago. The language he learned was from a generation that had emigrated, so they were no longer exposed to current Japanese culture, and their language never changed.
- Selvidge: Right.
- Daijogo: So he was using words that they would think were hysterically funny because they would say, "That's like the samurai movies." Plus he spoke Hiroshima-ben; that's what they speak in that region, the local dialect. That was far off from standard Japanese, which is Tokyo Japanese. So they would take him to parties, and you would see pictures of them there. They would all be looking at Sam and laughing; and that was because they liked taking him, he was like a little monkey. He was a very affable and likeable person, and he got along with everybody. I don't know, he just had a really positive experience there. Women didn't go to those parties—spouses didn't—because they had a whole different system then.
- Selvidge: No women were invited?
- Daijogo: No. Oh, speaking of women's rights there—this would be in the sixties—they were sort of nonexistent, and what they liked about women was for them to be invisible. Sam was complimented many times because I was so quiet even though it was only because I couldn't speak the language.

- Selvidge: Wow.
- Daijogo: I got so I could understand bits and pieces of it, and then I could say a few things, but not really well. I could go shopping and say, “I want this kind of chicken, and please cut this off, or whatever.” I could order rice on the telephone, but Sam really did most of the speaking. So that was what they liked, a traditional nice wife who didn’t talk very much.
- Selvidge: So he was complimented on your quiet demeanor?
- Daijogo: He was complimented on that, yes, on my being very nice and quiet and knowing my place.
- Selvidge: What was his reaction to that?
- Daijogo: He was very amused because I said, “What did that person say?” and he’d tell me. There were other things about the culture that he was just more familiar with. Like I used to rag on him because he would slurp noodles, and I said, “That’s such bad manners. Just be quiet when you eat your soup or whatever.” In Japan when you eat noodles, it turns out you’re supposed to slurp, you go [makes a slurping sound], and it brings up the noodles. They actually complimented him on how well he ate noodles because he could do that really well. He’d just look at me and grin, would give me the look like, “So I’ve found my place.”
- Selvidge: Were there other things you remember that were different in terms of the way that the two of you experienced the culture, living there?
- Daijogo: Well, they almost immediately knew I was a non-Japanese. For instance, when I went to get a job at Nishimachi School, the head of school asked to meet me at a very fancy hotel, and I said, “Okay.” She said, “We’ll have a lemon squash”— which meant a lemonade. It was very hot, and when I walked into the room, the lobby where I was to meet her, she immediately came up to me and said, “Oh, you must be Janet Daijogo.” There were tons of people in the lobby, and it was very busy, and I said, “Oh how did you know it was me?” because we hadn’t said, “I’ll wear a red dress” or some other signal. She said, “By the way you walk.” So there were identifiers —
- Selvidge: She knew that you were not from Japan?
- Daijogo: She knew I was not Japanese, no matter how I was dressed and how I thought I looked like everyone else. So there were the little things like that which separated us. Even though we were Japanese Americans, we were almost more of a peculiarity to them than if we had been Caucasian. Because we looked like them, but we weren’t them; because they are very Japanese. They are a people, they are a huge tribe; and it’s like we were not in it. They were totally fine with us, but we always knew that no matter how beautiful our

Japanese became or whatever, we were not one of them because we were separated, and we were outside their experience.

So I think one of the themes of my life is being the outsider and finding the comfort of that, where to be, how to be in that situation.

Selvidge: That's one of the things I thought was interesting, looking back at some of the interviews. I'll just share this reflection, and maybe you can tell me what you think? I find it such a telling example of what you were just talking about, when you were in a group of all Japanese people with your mom, the time you hid your purse—

Daijogo: Oh, yes.

Selvidge: And she said, "We're among people of honor." So I was thinking about that, and it struck me that you were on a movie set?

Daijogo: Yes.

Selvidge: So it seemed almost like that was sort of a fake community; or if not fake, then sort of a produced and intentionally created moment of community of Japanese people? And that was kind of an emblematic experience for you? It wasn't like you were at a family reunion or in Japantown where you always went, or at your church or something like that?

Daijogo: Yes, yes. True.

Selvidge: So it seems like you had that reality; and then you also had the military base as a community which is so interesting to think about as this kind of quintessential American experience. And a lot of the stories you told about high school are what we think of as this typical American nineteen-fifties high school experience as a cheerleader and all those things. Yet it was in Japan?

Daijogo: Yes.

Selvidge: And that was your "Americanization"?

Daijogo: Yes, it was kind of those paradoxes that defined you. I don't know, it's just your luck, where you land in a way, because those are the unplanned things that happened.

Selvidge: And then you made choices later to explore that in a different way, as you said, to know the real Japan?

Daijogo: Yes, so we thought. Plus because Sam being an artist —

Selvidge: Yes?

Daijogo: Well, Japanese artwork is just different and very compelling to an artist, I think; and Sam really wanted to know more about that and just be in the culture where it was produced. So we became very interested. We met somebody who was studying on a Fulbright there; and we noticed her pottery and other things, but especially the pottery. We were introduced to people, and someone drew us a map of all the pottery places that we might want to see around the island of Honshu, and actually a little on Shikoku, and also Kyushu, where we used to travel. So we went to—I forget how many potteries—just exploring that. It was Mingei pottery; and then we learned the difference between Mingei pottery, which was folk craft, and the pottery made by artists, and the conflicts between the people who produced them both.

Then we visited Kyoto and Nara where historically, especially Kyoto, their gardens and architecture, are unique and just not replicated anywhere else. The sense of history and the tradition of those places, and the temples, were very compelling for Sam. He had this camera and he kept getting more lens. Every time he'd get paid he'd come back with a new telephoto lens or something. It was a Nikon, and he had all his photographic stuff in this big bag. We'd be looking at something, and then I wouldn't see him. I'd look around and he wasn't there; and then I would find him. He'd be squatting on the floor with his camera, taking some odd angle of a lantern that took his fancy. I think I learned to see in a different way—to appreciate things—because of our experience there that I wouldn't have learned otherwise. So it was our educating ourselves in that way and having had the opportunity to do that as best we could, and to meet people.

At Sam's office and my place at Nishimachi School, they were incredibly kind to us, knowing what we were doing. And if there were tickets, they would give them to us and say, "Oh, here are tickets, you should go to this."

Selvidge: So people sort of understood this idea of you trying to educate yourself about Japanese culture?

Daijogo: Yes, yes. We got a lot of tickets for the Japanese Noh plays. Then the Kyogen, which is a comic interlude in between those really long plays, which were maybe six hours? It's the oldest theatre in existence, I think. The Kyogen is a comic interlude in between these long productions, and the pre-eminent family who did this was the Manzo family. They arranged on two or three occasions for us to have tea with them, or really beer, afterwards; with the father, and then the two sons, and then the grandchild, who was three. We were there when the grandchild made his debut. The traditional thing was to be a monkey, and he did his little monkey thing. It was absolutely mind-blowing as an educator to see a three-year-old that could do that: to move like that and to sing or say his little lines. But it's the way that they train them. They move in a different way; they kind of slide when they walk; it's the way they teach the children. That is, they put them on their feet, and they learn in their bodies what that movement is. So it was fascinating.

In Noh they use masks, and one of the players told us, “That mask is eight hundred years old, and only my father uses that mask.” They use a mask to portray different emotions or different characters, so there are these masks with these gorgeous costumes that were handed down for generations and some of which would be four and five hundred years old, carefully preserved. So we got to learn about that.

The Manzo family had many sons follow in the family tradition, but one of them, the youngest Manzo, became a rock star. I just thought, “Oh my God.” Because, of course, what he would have had was stage presence from that early age. So if he could sing as well—

Selvidge: A different direction, though—

Daijogo: A very different direction, like the polar opposite.

Selvidge: I wonder if there’s anything you can think of that surprised you about Japan? I mean you certainly would have come back with some kinds of expectations or ideas?

Daijogo: I think what surprised me—what would be surprising anywhere—was the diversity among the people in attitude and in their ability to engage with you. Once we were at a hotel towards the end of our trip, and it was in Hakone. In fact, it was a hotel that we had visited when I was a child. It was one of the hotels that the Army had taken over. In Japan the community bathing was a whole thing in itself. We were in a bath, and I guess Sam was in another one, because you bathe separately unless there were just two of you and there was a small bath. So a young couple, probably about our age, became friendly with us, and they said, “Well, we’ll bathe together.” So I was with the woman, and he was with the man; and Sam came out later and he said, “That guy asked me for a loan.” My instant thought was, “Help!” But Sam—he had a boundary about things like that—he just said no. He didn’t lend money because his grandfather had gotten into a lot of trouble lending money to somebody who never repaid it; and it messed up their friendship. So he told Sam to never lend money unless you just wanted to give it as a gift, which I think is actually good advice.

So that was kind of stunning to me—that somebody who’d known you for two hours would ask you for a loan. They were in this really nice hotel, and what was that about? We never stuck around to find out. So that was like one end of the spectrum and then there were these seriously polite people who just wanted to help you on your mission and to say, “This is a part of Japan you would enjoy and that you should see,” and who were very gracious about having you understand their culture; and were also very reserved.

Selvidge: So not necessarily open on the personal level?

Daijogo: No, not too much. But once we were in a place on the Japan seaside, and we didn't have a place to stay. We were on a walk looking at the work of a lacquer craftsman. We were so surprised because they said, "Well, you don't have a place to stay, so why don't you stay with us tonight?" And we actually stayed two nights. They told us a lot about their work that we wouldn't have known otherwise. But that was unusual for somebody to invite you into their home like that; it meant they had to prepare food for you among other things. But they were very gracious. And it was very traditional. The woman was in there cooking the food and serving it; and then she ate somewhere else later, which made me uncomfortable. But that's the way it was. I knew by then that it was like that, so I think there weren't any stunning surprises.

Selvidge: Did you find that things your parents had told you sort of made sense in a different way or that you saw some of the things they had talked about?

Daijogo: Yes. There was the sense of tradition and the civility that the culture displays and the politeness which we might think of as too practiced or not spontaneous. That was a part. But then there was also the comfort that came with expectations of how you would be treated and what you could say that would be right for the situation. I could see why my mother was always sort of harping on us that we should do nothing to bring shame to the family, that whatever we did reflected on the family, not on ourselves; and that we should always comport ourselves in a way that would make our parents happy and proud of us. We shouldn't rock the boat—and I bought into that totally.

Selvidge: And you saw that in Japan?

Daijogo: Yes. I remember the trains would be incredibly crowded, especially at rush hour, and they'd have people pushing you into the trains so the door could close. The same with the buses and the trolley cars, and you would just stand like this [gestures]—and it would be totally quiet. Nobody would say, "Stop moving," or whatever, or "Let me out." It would be "Sumimasen," or "Excuse me." You wouldn't have to say anything else. It was almost unspoken body language. You didn't need to say, "I want to get out." They could feel you doing something, just your energy, and then they'd let you out the door, or open up a path so you could get out. Sometimes you'd be stuck deep in the trolley or the bus, and it was like, "Ah! How am I going to get out? That's my stop." So things worked well considering the amount of people that were there.

And yet, there was one time we were in a theater. Sometimes they would sell tickets when there were no seats left. So Sam and I had bought tickets for a movie, and there were no seats, none. There were people standing—that was us and some other people—and suddenly this woman, this couple, moved in. They were going up a row to find—to get a seat—and they sat down. And this woman in back of them didn't want them to sit there for some reason. Maybe she was saving the seat? Anyway, she had this umbrella that was rolled up,

and she whacked the guy with the umbrella on the shoulder from his back. He didn't say anything; he just put his hand here, [indicates the shoulder] and he just continued to sit there. The woman he was with, maybe his wife or whatever, also just sat there. Then the movie started, and the lady didn't keep whacking them with her umbrella. But we thought in the States somebody would have called the police or something.

Selvidge: So there was some kind of understood interaction that was understood by them but not by you?

Daijogo: Yes, every once in a while you would see this, the whacking business; but mainly you pretty much didn't say what you felt if you were ticked off. You might be ticked off, but you didn't make a fuss to other people about it. That was very much the message I was given by my mother and my father in our family.

Selvidge: Was it comforting to see that play out on a larger level?

Daijogo: Yes, it was sort of like, "Oh, yes, okay." And the quietness of the population compared to other cultures. I think about what it must be like to be in China with the Chinese language, which always sounds louder to me, and then the Japanese language which is much softer. In fact, when I was at a workshop in Honolulu somebody said that research showed the Japanese language was processed on the opposite side of the brain than most languages—on the same side of the brain where music was processed. I don't know if that is true or not.

Selvidge: But it rings true to you?

Daijogo: Yes, it's a softer language, and so it's more like the little sound of soap moving across the room. And even in those crowded, crowded situations where you'd be on a street corner, a major street corner, there'd be no sound, nobody shouting, or you didn't hear taxis beeping that much. It's just a quieter place.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: So it's kind of restful. But then there is a lot, I think, of repressing and holding in of stuff, which we don't do here.

Selvidge: So at the end of your trip to Japan, you came back to the States?

Daijogo: Yes, it was time. It definitely was. We stayed for almost exactly a year; and probably three-quarters through that you're young and you're getting antsy, and you're starting to look forward to the next stage of what you need to do. We started casting out lines about where we should go. Actually, our plan was to go to New York because there was more happening in New York for Sam's

kind of job. I thought, “Well, okay, I could do whatever it takes to get a credential there.” Then, as it turned out, his friend Tom Suzuki, his former boss at General Dynamics Astronautics, changed jobs. He asked Sam if he would like to come back and work with him in San Diego. It was a small business. It wasn’t exactly a publishing house, but it was where they prepared books for publication. So we ended up going back there sort of by happenstance, and Sam took the job. We found an apartment on Kearny Mesa.

Oh, I just remembered—this second move to San Diego was the time I worked in Chula Vista; I misspoke earlier. The first time we lived in San Diego I worked for the San Diego Unified School District.

Selvidge: Oh, okay.

Daijogo: That first time was in Logan Heights in a very poor neighborhood, which would be like Hunter’s Point or something, but not as drastic as that because it wasn’t as big. But it was an area that was really transitional and was really poor, and the children were mainly black and Hispanic. There were a lot of issues; mainly like they couldn’t read. They were in the fifth grade—and there were so many of them; there were thirty-five in my classroom—

Selvidge: Those were a lot of serious issues. And that was early in your career?

Daijogo: Yes, so I didn’t really know how to handle it; it was just difficult. But Chula Vista was a comparatively easy job; it was middle class and lower middle class; and everybody wanted to learn. And they were respectful and the teachers were fun. There were actually five of us teachers that got pregnant at the same time.

Selvidge: Oh, my gosh—

Daijogo: So we liked that but we couldn’t wait for the year to get over because we were getting uncomfortable. School ended in June, and then I didn’t work the next year because I had Tane, my first child, in December. About that same time, there was some political thing going on at work for Tom Suzuki, and they fired Tom. This is another very “Sam thing”. Sam had been working there for maybe four or five months, and he came home one day and said, “I quit my job.” He had quit his job because he took exception to how they treated Tom Suzuki. He just said, “You fired somebody for no good reason. I quit. I can’t abide by that.” So there we were with my being pregnant, and he started looking for a job up north. That’s one of those things you just do as a couple, and I said, “Of course, you should leave.” But I was a little surprised, thinking, “Oh, we don’t have a job”. Sam came up north and luckily found a job in the city. So that April—Tane was born in December—that April during the Easter break we moved up here; and then Sam worked at 40 Gold Street at Max Landphere Associates, and I was home with our baby daughter.

Selvidge: Well, we're almost at the end, so I think I'll start the next tape.

Daijogo: Okay.

Selvidge: Okay, this is Tape 7, believe it or not. I want to ask some questions about deciding to have a family because it sounds like you had sort of assumed all along that was the plan? And you and Sam planned the Japan trip right after you got married before you had kids. So I wonder if you can just talk about that? Was that something that you felt was a personal decision, or—?

Daijogo: Well, part of that was the culture imposing itself because there was an expectation that you would have children if you got married. This wasn't the sixties yet—we were still on the borderline. It was before Gloria Steinem, just before. We both wanted to have children. So that's when we thought, "This is a good time to start a family." People were having children, all our peers. Especially Sam, who was very close to the people he grew up with in Belvedere; and among that group there were a lot of young men who had gotten married, and they were all having children. So we were just kind of on target doing what everybody else was doing.

It was very uneventful. You had a baby. But then, I had a realization that this was not going to do it for me, being a housewife and rearing children. I think I had more of an outside drive than my friends did. This young man that works for me—he's my support teacher—I asked him about this girl he was taking out, and he said, "Well, that was over last night" or something. He said, "I just wasn't feelin' it." I thought it was such a great term, "Well, I wasn't feelin' it." I wasn't feeling that this was going to be a life that I would be able to fully embrace, and I just couldn't do it.

Selvidge: Do you remember what it was about that life that didn't feel satisfying?

Daijogo: Well, there were parts of it that were deeply satisfying—just being with your children whom you love. But the part that was missing for me was the sense of purpose and personal value that comes from work. It's a high purpose to raise one's children. But, for instance, with you, would you do that without your other academic life? It felt like a part of me was getting cut off or missing because there was no place for expression of that other me. I liked having play dates with other babies and their mommies, but somehow it wasn't enough to be totally fulfilling. By this time we had our second daughter Maki who was an infant. And one day Sam came home and I said, "What did you do today?" It was like I just needed to know what he did because, to my mind, I had done nothing except change diapers and get food and those kinds of everyday things.

So it was actually at that moment I thought, "I've got to do something about this because it is not working for me. I'm going to get mean and depressed or something". I talked to Sam about it, and he was very against my getting a

job, even a part-time job, because he said, “Well, that’s what I thought my job was.” I said, “Well, I want a job, too. I want a purpose that’s beyond raising children.” And Sam was a really great dad. He was a better father than I was a mother I think, emotionally. I knew we could do this together, and I could still have a job, even a part-time job. It was not filling up enough of who I am, or who I was, at that point. So I started to look for a job.

Selvidge: Can I ask you something? Do you think this is partly related to the kind of perspective that you gained from college?

Daijogo: Yes, it was like, “I went to college. And now I’m going to do this?” So yes, there was something that I got out of being in Berkeley and having that excitement around all the time. There was excitement about being young and married and going to Japan and suddenly it was like, “Oh, my God, is this now going to be the totality of my life, child rearing?” I saw that other people were perfectly happy doing it, so there was a little of, “What’s wrong with me? What is the problem?”

Selvidge: Did you talk with your friends, other young mothers, about any of these frustrations?

Daijogo: No, I don’t think I did because they were happy with what they were doing. It was just more my thing of thinking, “What is the matter with you? Why are you not happy just having coffee with these nice people and talking about our children.” I was odd; I think it was a little odd in Mill Valley, Marin County, to be like that. I started to work when Maki was three months old, and Tane would have been a toddler. I got a job at the Marin Child Development Center.

Selvidge: I just have to ask if you read Betty Friedan’s book?

Daijogo: No. I didn’t.

Selvidge: Oh, I was just curious because you sound like you’re saying a lot of the same things that she talked about.

Daijogo: Oh, that is funny. I’ll write it down and look for it; but probably there were lots of people like me at that time where it just wasn’t quite cool yet to say, “This is not satisfying.”

Selvidge: Tell me what year this was, too, so we know. This is the year that Maki was born?

Daijogo: The early sixties, somewhere in there. I’m sorry, I am so bad with dates.

Selvidge: No problem.

Daijogo:

Yes, so I thought, “Okay, I know what I’ll do, I’ll work part-time in a nursery school because I don’t really know that much about really young children, and that would be a good thing.” So I called the director of a bunch of nursery schools in this area. Her name was Beverly Bastion, and she was a mover and a shaker. She ran a nursery school in Mill Valley, one in Belvedere, one in Sausalito, one in Tiburon, so she had four, I think. Anyway, she lived in Belvedere and I called her and she said, “Well, tell me why you have young children and you want to teach?” Then she asked me some other very good questions over the phone, and suddenly she said, “By any chance are you married to Sam Daijogo?” I said, “Yes, yes, I am.” She said, “Well, he’s one of the young men that I watched grow up,” and she hired me on that.

So that was it. I had this job at the Marin Child Development Center. First I was going to teach in the regular nursery school and then she said, “I have another job. We’ve started a new school for children who cannot make it, who are dropping out of pre-school because of behavior issues.” And she said, “What do you think about that? You make a little bit more money, but I think it might be something that’s interesting to you.” So I worked with disturbed children, and for the first four or five months— every day I went home crying. And Sam finally said, “Why are you going to stay at that job? This is just terrible. You’re in a terrible mood, and you don’t know what you’re doing.” My mother-in-law was taking care of the children for that half day. But I have to say—I just don’t give up. There was something I knew I had to learn, so I stuck it out.

There was a psychiatrist at the school who was the umbrella that we were all working under. His name was Jim Donovan and he was a great mentor, a good psychiatrist, low keyed, and he was the perfect teacher for me. He would say things like, “What makes you think that you have to make these children happy?” I would say, “Well, that’s my job, I’m the teacher; they need to be happily learning” or something like that. He would say, “These are disturbed children, Janet. You did not cause it, and you’re going to have input, but they can’t be happy because they’re not happy. They’re not programmed for that yet.”

I learned a lot just from being in a situation that I could not control. You couldn’t predict what these children were going to do because they were off the wall. One boy—he was African American—and his mother and father had both been born in Africa, highly educated. She was a professor at Dominican College in history, I think. He was a cute boy, but just out of it, really out of it. One day I was sitting in this “pretend boat” with him, and he reached down and grabbed a snail and put it in his mouth and ate it. I can still hear the crunching of the shell, and I was horrified. I was about to reach in his mouth and try to get it out, I don’t know why. And he reached down and got another one and ate that one. It was like, “Oh, my God.”

But it was kids like that who you couldn't predict. Some of them were autistic, and there was one kid that was schizophrenic and took a piece of his sister's hair—just tore it out of her scalp—a hunk of hair. You just had to learn to control them, basically hold them sometimes until they calmed down. They hired me because I had a credential and could teach reading, and because it was starting to get to the point where these children should be reading. One little boy said to me—we were having juice and crackers—and he said, “Pass the juice, you fucking bitch.” I went, “Okay, I will.” Because at least he talked to me.

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: It was unusual. I taught there for eighteen years because it became fascinating to me. We'd have maybe four children in a class with an aide because they were so out of control. I don't know. I really stuck it out, but it was fascinating work after a while, after I understood that I wasn't going to cure everybody and that some kids were probably going to be schizophrenic for the rest of their lives. But I also think it made me the teacher that I am today, that I look beyond curriculum and really care. I'm just interested in seeing what's up in the psyche and the soul.

Selvidge: Do you have the sense that your supervisor saw that in you—or that you brought that with you?

Daijogo: I don't know if she saw that in me; she was mainly interested in me because I'd married Sam. I just don't know. She was a hands-off supervisor. She did not particularly like being in the classroom or near the children really, but she made everything run. She raised the funds, she got it going.

Once we were at a party, and she said, “Well, Sam Daijogo is going to be just fine,” or something like that. And I said, “Really?” She said, “Yes, he has you. So all I have to do is keep all my teachers happy, and then you'll do your work,” and off she went. I know she was pretty fabulous as an administrator, with that style of having total trust in what you were doing. That takes a lot.

Selvidge: It does. So let's talk a little more about this idea of being a working mother during this time because you had the same job for a number of years, and in those eighteen years there were a lot of cultural changes.

Daijogo: Changes, oh, my God!

Selvidge: All around this specific issue of working mothers?

Daijogo: Yes.

Selvidge: So I'm interested in the way that you experienced that and saw these changes, especially seeing other women maybe struggling with those issues—?

Daijogo: Or not struggling.

Selvidge: Or not.

Daijogo: Of course, in those eighteen years there was a huge transition and shift because that was the time the women's movement started to take off and become vocal. I felt supported by that and relieved. It was like, "Okay, so I'm not crazy—some of us are just made to do more than what society expects you to do, even in this small context." Most of the friends that we were hanging out with did not have that same drive, or that same impulse to work outside the home. I think they were successful moms and wives, and they were members of the yacht club and stuff like that; and they had luncheons and stuff I didn't participate in because I was working.

So what I did was a little off the path of the mainstream of the people that we were friends with in Marin. Everybody was fine with that. Until my kids were in high school I did not work full time. That's when I went to Marin Country Day [School]. By that time the women's movement was fully on. My kids tell me that I used to tell them repeatedly, "Anything a little boy can do, you can do." Because both my daughters were bright, and I knew they could succeed at anything they desired. And I just wanted them to do what they needed and wanted to do instead of being limited by a societal framework. And of course they were totally supported in that where they grew up; they graduated from high school in '83 and '84, I think. They went to Berkeley after that, so they were there in the eighties.

So I didn't ever have to worry about them. Everything was open for their generation, and your generation. There was no ceiling for what they could achieve or explore as a way to reach internal satisfaction.

I was really into Aikido by then, and I had them start Aikido. They were in junior high, maybe sixth and seventh grade, and they did it for about eighteen months. After that, they were into platform shoes and makeup!

By then I had gotten on the mat in my Aikido training, and that learning process became a dominant theme in my life from that point on. I was bringing it into school where I was teaching those disturbed children. I think that for me the whole practice of this particular martial art was compatible with who I was. But it also demanded that I express parts of myself that I didn't before, like, "It's okay to be assertive, it's okay to be rude". Not really rude, but before you get good at something you're going to be a little rude or rough about it. So it served me well even though by then my kids just said, "Oh, my God, Mom's talking her cosmic stuff again." So there was the young part of my life, and by that point I was middle-aged.

Selvidge: You mentioned the women's movement. Did you read things—you mentioned Gloria Steinem before—did you go out and buy the book and read it, or was it more something just happening out there?

Daijogo: It was more happening. But I did read Gloria Steinem and maybe a couple of other books on the subject, and I remember getting in this heated argument with a friend of Sam's, John Rutherford, who was also an artist. His wife Joan really followed the path of being a great mother and, what do you call them now, housewife?

Selvidge: A housewife, yes. I think now it's called a stay-at-home mom.

Daijogo: A stay-at-home mom—okay, yes. I think stay-at-home mom says it better, about a woman's right to go out and do what she needs to do, or not, even within the context of a family.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: I think John is a Republican, too, or he was. We left for this road trip the night after, or the day after, our argument. And Sam was mildly amused because I had just been vehement, and I think I raised my voice. I was so angry. So that was part of what was going on. I think, without realizing it, I identified much more with the people who were a step ahead than I was identifying with my peers at that time. I remember talking to a friend, a really wonderful friend, Susie Witter, and I was on the phone with her one day, and she said, "I think it's great that you're doing what you're doing."

She said, "All the people, all the DGs," which was her sorority, "What have we done? Out of the DGs of my group, there were thirteen little beauty queens, the Daffodil Queen, the Homecoming Queen, all those. And you know what? We haven't amounted to anything." I was very touched by her honesty, and I didn't argue with her because I didn't know those women that well. But I just remember feeling glad that I had just done what I needed to do, which was to become a teacher and to express that other part of myself. It's like, "My God, I'd probably be very crazy by now if I hadn't done that or pursued another area where I could do well", like maybe become an artist and then do your thing or whatever. But you know what, I lived with an artist, and I could never do what he did. It was like, "Yes, in your next lifetime maybe", because I just don't want to do things badly. So I think I had a singular path.

Selvidge: Did your husband come around to the idea eventually?

Daijogo: Oh, yes, after a few paychecks. He said, "You know what? I was against your working, but it's really great. Now it's not all on me." I didn't make that much money, but it was still just a little bit more, it bought the groceries or whatever it did that month. That was one time that he came around that way, and he just totally switched. In Aikido we call that "the blend."

Here is another time. He was really against my spending so much time doing Aikido because training was from 5:30 to 6:30pm for the beginner's class, and then it went to 7:30pm for the other class. I was so into it that I just made myself advance. I had to do it; it was the weirdest thing. You know when people in a spiritual life talk about a calling? Well, that was my calling. I didn't feel like I had a choice, I just had to do it. One day Sam had to feed the children, and I came home, and he said—he swore—something like, “God damn it, if it's so much fun I'm going to go down there and see what the hell it is you're doing.” The kids were really quiet because they were like thirteen and fourteen, or maybe twelve and thirteen? So the next night he went down there, and he got on the mat; and he was like a year ahead of me just stepping on the mat, because he had had football and he had been a marine, and he just got it. It was a lucky thing for me that he just got it. He didn't say another word after the swearing. He just signed up, and we did Aikido together.

I know I thought about this afterwards. I thought, “If he had not been able to make that switch?” Because I think by that time our marriage could have possibly been jeopardized because I was so drawn to Aikido that I was absent in ways that were important to a family life. To his credit, he did the blend, and he was just really good at it. The book that I lent you, the big blue one, [*Aikido* by Morihei Saito]—Sam could learn everything out of there because he was so visual and kinesthetic, and he could just learn. Well, I know he got better than one of our teachers, George Leonard, who was a great writer, but who didn't do the techniques up to Sam's level. Sam would say, “Dang it, this isn't working,” or “something's wrong,” and he'd go do his research in his books, and then he would know, “That's the problem, they've got the wrong foot out.” I wouldn't know because I totally don't learn that way. He and George actually got into a couple of heated arguments.

Selvidge: Is that right?

Daijogo: Oh, yes, and I would say, “Sam, he's a sensei,” which means ‘teacher’ in Japanese and more—someone deserving of respect. But that was who Sam was; if something was wrong he didn't have it in him to stop. He had to go forth. George told Annie, his wife, that he was never going to get into an argument like that again with Sam because it was not worth it. It was just who they both were. Their personalities were at it, as well as the technique. So that was the beginning of Aikido.

Selvidge: That's so interesting, and I want to talk more about Aikido. But I wanted to ask you one thing that you mentioned earlier. When your first daughter was born, Sam didn't have a job until she was about four months old, right?

Daijogo: Yes, that's right.

Selvidge: So does that mean that the three of you were mostly home together in those early months—?

- Daijogo: Not really, because he immediately started looking for a job, so after two or three weeks he wasn't with us. I remember staying home with Tane, and he went off to San Francisco.
- Selvidge: Looking around for a job?
- Daijogo: Yes. And he found a job, luckily, because San Francisco was a hard place for an artist in those days to get a job because it was an extremely conservative and small art world there compared to LA or New York. Luck was just with him, and he found this job that also really worked for him. He worked there at Landphere, for maybe eight years or so. He had to draw what his clients told him to draw. He learned to adjust, he was adaptable and flexible, and he didn't take stuff personally. Well, he was a commercial artist; that's what he wanted to be.
- Selvidge: Right, but some artists have a hard time being commercial artists, don't they?
- Daijogo: Right, right. He actually always knew that's what he was going to do. He said, "I'm not going to be a fine artist because I want to make a living. That's hard to do as a fine artist." It takes so long to establish. He wasn't into starving, so he did it.
- Selvidge: Okay, well, let's go back and talk about Aikido. How did you start your first class? You've talked some about the beginning.
- Daijogo: How I got started was so interesting because at that time I was making clothing – I was doing "art to wear" clothing because that was something that you could do in the seventies. I would sell pieces and I would have sales maybe once a year. Then I would sell these things with other people who were doing artsy things. I had a friend, Nina Paine, who was a poet. She introduced me to Joan Erikson, the wife of Erik Erikson, who was one of the seminal minds in the field of psychology. Joan herself was very involved in Erik's work, it turns out; but she was also a dancer, and she made jewelry, beautiful jewelry.
- She ordered a couple of things from me. I made a jacket for Erik, and I made a couple things for her. She said, "Well, we have a swimming pool, and you should bring your children over, and they could swim in our pool in Tiburon." Then we started talking, and she had just come from Esalen, where she had done a workshop with Wendy Palmer, an Aikido teacher. Joan said, "Dear, you would love Aikido, and I'm going to teach you the two-step." So in Joan and Erik's bedroom, which was this great sunny room, she taught me the two-step. She said, "Now, Wendy teaches down there," and she told me where. So that's where it all started.
- Then maybe a few months later I decided, "Oh, the kids should learn Aikido," and I took them down to the dojo and signed them up. My kids were much

younger then, maybe between eleven and thirteen. They started, and they were good at it. But eighteen months was enough for them. By then I had got on the mat and I was hooked. So that's how I started. Joan Erikson was probably in her seventies then, probably the age I am now. She said, "Well, I would do it now, but I'm just a little too old. But it's a wonderful philosophy." So that's how I heard about it.

We also had a friend who lived down the street, his name was Sandy. He had been doing Aikido for years and would say every time he saw us, "You know, you ought to come and check these teachers out down in the city." By that time those teachers had started their own dojo in Mill Valley, right over there, [gestures], a few blocks away, maybe four blocks away. That's when I started. I can't tell you exactly why I got hooked because the whole thing was terrifying to me. But there was something about the motion of it that synced up really quickly with something inside. And I just wanted to do it. Probably even more than going to Berkeley, it informed me about what I needed to do or wanted to do. It was like a passion I had at that time and that has lasted for a long time. I still think about it, and it informs my life more than anything because I think it's very attached to the Gods. It fits into all my fairy tales, all the fairy tales I read when I was little.

Selvidge: What do you mean by that?

Daijogo: Well, when I was young I read fairy tales. I read every single fairy tale that I could put my hands on in the library. There was a series: *Under the Green Umbrella*, *Under the Blue Umbrella* and *Under the Yellow Umbrella*; and I read them all. I liked it because the good guys always won; and there were always demons, but the evil was always overcome. And there was always the shy, Cinderella-type person that would come out in the end as the winner. I know that was something that must have been a very important part of what I needed to know. Right now I'm reading a story called *The Wee Free Men* that Elise Haas gave me at their ranch a couple of weeks ago. It's probably similar to the *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* books—more like modern fairy tales.

Fairy tales have always been an important part of what I think about. I don't know, they're churning around down there; and Aikido kind of bound or grounded that kind of energy for me when it was a little far out. It was imaginative, but it hooked me because I think I understood its potential for informing my life, which it did. So I still teach these ideas at school, and we call it Energy Time—teaching about energy, the central truth of it. We've done a lot of curriculum writing about this. In fact, I should give you a copy.

In the last couple of years we started to write this curriculum down. Because before that I would get up there, and I would just do what I did. None of it was written down because it's something I do intuitively; I never know what's going to come out of my mouth or where the next idea is coming from. It's

like something feeds me if I can let go and just let it happen. But that's very hard if your colleagues want to teach it or get a sense of what is in my mind.

So Doug, one of the kindergarten teachers, said, "We're going to write this down because this is your legacy." So he started two summers ago; and then on weekends he'd come over and sit there with his laptop, and we'd take an idea, and I'd run through it, and he would ask the questions. He would say, "What do you mean? And how does this affect that, and how are you shaping this?" And he would ask the good questions of a good writer—I don't think like that. I'm lazy! So it's written down. I think there are some lessons that aren't in there, but there are basically fifteen or sixteen lessons which go through the main ideas of ET, our short name for energy time.

Selvidge: Can you remember a particular moment when you had what they call an "Aha" moment—when you realized how much Aikido could be a tool in the classroom? Because it's not necessarily an automatic association.

Daijogo: Yes. Well, first of all, the disturbed children I was working with had no idea, and most people probably don't either, of what their "center" is; of what that place is, the core of you. I thought it would be a good thing for them to know that. So I talked to our supervisor about it, and she just said get the mats and go for it. Just do it. By then that school was starting to fall apart a little bit because the funding was getting to be a problem.

Then I went to Marin Country Day, and at first I didn't say anything about Aikido because I saw Marin Country Day as a very traditional place. Now that I've been there, I would use the word innovative to describe it. They're not afraid of innovation. But on the other hand, it's like the school you went to, San Francisco Day School; it's predictable; things are done in a certain way; your teachers give out so much energy and go beyond.

Selvidge: There are definitely very strong expectations.

Daijogo: Yes, yes. So this "airy-fairy" stuff I felt I should keep to myself. One day I was talking to Kathleen Jackson, who was my supervisor; she was the head of lower school and middle school at that time. I started talking to her about the philosophy, and she looked at me and said, "Why aren't you teaching this to the children?" I said, "You're kidding." She said, "No. Now if they need those little uniforms, we could get those little uniforms." I said, "Forget the uniforms," but we got the mats; and I taught it on a stage with just my class on the stage of the gym.

I also started teaching after school for kids who were graduating out of kindergarten, and whose parents thought that it would be cool for them to continue to do this in the first grade. And although I did have this after-school program, I think it was someone else who saw its potential beyond myself, and he said, "Go for it." And that opened the way.

So there wasn't exactly an "Aha" moment. I just knew in myself what I now call the sustainability of relationships. It's a way of teaching. It seems to me the problem of everything that goes wrong in the world is that we don't have a sense, first of all, of how to have a sustainable relationship with yourself, where you could be your own friend and support yourself. And as somebody said, "Comfort yourself." Our current head of the school said that. She said, "Your children know how to comfort themselves," and I thought, "What a great thing I've taught."

Anyway, if you don't have the relationship with yourself, how do you hope to sustain it with another, if you cannot see yourself through these conflicts and through your own ego and their ego? How do you expect to teach these children anything important if you're not okay with yourself? I learned this from my mentor, Jim Donovan, the psychiatrist. You must know yourself if you're going to be effective with these kids because these kids are so smart; they know where you are weak and when you don't mean it. Because Jim told me once, "Why do you think that child should believe you if you don't believe it?"

That was an essential question. It helped me solve a lot of issues that I thought about. To go on with the sustainability, there's so much wrong with what is sustainable in the world environmentally, and in what we do, nation to nation, that it gave me a tool to work with that was satisfying for me, that seemed truthful to me, to be able to work with that. So it's great. There are five fundamental principles in Aikido, and if you can think about mastery in any of those, they all tie together. I think Aikido gives you a better grip on it than many other systems. At least for me it's a system approach that works and that I can teach.

Selvidge: It sounds like you've gotten a lot of feedback from your other teachers about what you learned in Aikido?

Daijogo: Yes, I have. And part of what I learned in Aikido was that you have to learn to shift out of the head into the body; and therefore into something that's more knowing than the head. It's like learning to trust. That is a huge struggle for me still. I used to be black and blue all over my arms after a class, from not getting out of the way of strikes. How stupid was that? It was the combination of my fear and for me the stubbornness. Now that I think of it, I thought I had to be bruised—from here down was black and blue [gestures], simply because I couldn't slide off the line and get out of the way of an attack. It's like, "Hello."

So it took about a year before I got that. All I had to do was spin or slide and that was so simple. In order to present yourself with integrity it's necessary to take some fundamental steps before you get whacked and before you get really beaten up. Why don't we just do that? Mainly for me it was fear, that I was just too scared; I was petrified, literally. I'd be glued on the spot. Then

down it would come, an arm or a strike, and then I still wouldn't learn. Until finally it starts to really sink in. Because it has to become part of your body before it becomes part of your mind. The mind actually messes up your instinctual moves, what you could do intelligently to respond if you didn't have all these thoughts. Sam could do it better because he didn't have those thoughts; he just knew when to move. And fear interferes with your basic intelligence, the way that you would relate to a situation or an experience.

Selvidge: I remember now what I was going to ask you—I'm curious what kind of feedback you've gotten from students, not necessarily a kindergartener responding immediately, but more long term? Maybe students that you've kept in touch with or see at school?

Daijogo: Well, it's a weak point, so most of that I don't know. And kindergarteners are not notorious for being reflective. I've gotten some feedback. I've tried to write some of it down, and a few of the stories are on my computer. I know one child who got a terrible cut when he was in the second grade and he had to go to the emergency room. They had to give him a shot to anesthetize him. And his parents were just amazed because he did not cry during this whole ordeal. By the time he was getting his shot, he just looked at the needle, and they said, "How could you be so brave?" and he said, "I just got centered."

Then another time a child collapsed in my classroom. It was Wally Haas's son, and Elise's younger cousin. I had him for kindergarten, and one day he collapsed because his heart started to beat like 240 beats a minute or something. He had one previous episode like this when he was four, and he was seven by then, when he was in my class. He was hyperventilating, and the short story is that I got in the ambulance with him to take him to Marin General. The EMT was in there with us, and I said, "Okay," to little Walter. "Even though you're lying down, we're going to get you centered, help you center and do your breath work," and so I started talking him through centering and breathing. And the EMT said, "What kind of school does he go to? I'm paying somebody \$60 an hour to teach me that in therapy." It was the right moment for that tense time.

There have been other things. I had a mother who was a pediatrician, and her son would come home and tell her what he was learning. She said that to this day if there is a child who is having a hard time sitting on the exam table or crying, "I take him under his arms, and I sit him on the table, and I say to him or her, 'Now get centered, and everything is going to be fine.'" She said, "I'm not sure why it works, but it works every single time." I think what she intuited from it was some sense of calmness and centeredness herself. And she's a skillful doctor, so she could transmit that to her little patients. She said, "I just want to tell you that because I've used it in my life."

But I wish I could tell you more stories about its effect. In a way that has been a frustrating part of it all. At a school like MCDS the curriculum is so

impacted, so full, that to add one more thing is, firstly, a sacrifice on the part of other teachers. Somebody just asked me about this very subject in an email. She said, “But my question is what happens after K-1 and 2?” And I answered her—I just had this image because I’ve always said we plant the seeds—and I said, “I think the energy dissipates and maybe dissolves, and then it reforms into a seed.” And I said, “If the seed is in the right circumstance, and it receives water and sun, it will blossom, and it will serve the world.” Because I know that is what I wish. That’s the fairy tale coming; but I still believe it. This foundation needs to happen so those five principles which are so simple, if you apply them, they can work.

Interview 5: August 12, 2011

Selvidge: I think this is Tape 8.

Daijogo: Oh, my God!

Selvidge: That's what happens when you've lived a long life, and there is a lot to talk about it.

Okay, and this is August 12 and here we are in Mill Valley. Yesterday you were at San Quentin, and just to explain for the benefit of anyone listening or reading, you were teaching yesterday at San Quentin?

Daijogo: I was teaching an Energy Time session at San Quentin because my friend Kathleen, whom I love and is a dear friend of mine, asked me to do it. Otherwise, I probably wouldn't have done that. It wouldn't have been my first choice of places to go, but I also believe in the energy of things. It's like, "Okay, you do it; something called, so do it."

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: We had to prepare since we were going to talk about the Eriksonian psychological model. I couldn't really remember anything about it from college days because that was so long ago, over fifty years ago. But the most interesting part of it was that I took the Eriksonian model and then tied it to my own life. Then I tied it to how Aikido helped me define who I was and to clarify some of those stages that Erikson talked about. And how basically, if you have not worked out certain issues in your life, and you live long enough, your life is like a spiral: visiting, revisiting, redoing and building on that. And that is like Aikido. It's a spiral motion that is very uplifting and helpful—just being able to repurpose your life or redo it in the places that haven't worked out. I think we're constantly doing this as long as we are alive to it, making it better for ourselves but also making it better for the people we are in relationship with, just filling it out more, life.

Selvidge: So this is actually exactly what we've been talking about, except this is later, and these are more developed reflections on all that?

Daijogo: Yes. So I got to do this class at San Quentin and you're talking to a population that's incarcerated and has limited motion or movement, and limited access to ideas. So it was a little daunting for me to think about what that was going to be like, to be with a room full of men that couldn't leave when you were done. Well, I guess they will be done someday, some of them, but others won't be; they're lifers.

So talking or teaching or trying to tell them about the philosophical basis of Aikido was very different than teaching five- and six- and seven- and eight-

year-olds about that, but in a way it was more interesting. It was obvious, had they known about some of these things, the principles, or any of these core values that we have, and had a life to be able to live them, they probably would have had a better life and a better outcome. Because whatever they did—and they did something bad or they wouldn't be there—they didn't have any time between the event and a reaction. Whereas what we're mainly given or taught, if we're "civilized", is some distance, some space where you can react in a way that's not hurtful to others or to yourself. So it was like a sadness. I felt this sadness that it was so late for them, for me to be teaching this to them. But, on the other hand, I'm the eternal optimist, I guess. It's like, "Okay, let's get with it; you can learn to get centered now, and it will be helpful to your life, I think." So it was like giving up your preconceptions of how this was going to be helpful. I don't know; it depends on how you use it.

There was a young Asian guy in the group, probably Southeastern Asian, and he was really distant. I mean his energy was moving backward and inward. I could tell he was sort of disinterested or was not being hooked; and then we did the interactive part, the hands-on part. Something in him just got there, and you could see it in his eyes. He was all of a sudden just very alive and awake, and I could even sort of kid with him. I said, "Oh, there you are." There was a recognition of something that passed between us. It's like, "Okay, you're there, you're here now, and I'm here." So there's this energy that just passes, and it's fleeting, just seconds, but it's like being able to see into that person. It's a very sacred moment when that can pass even in a place like San Quentin; and it made no difference where he was or who he was. It's what I as a teacher look for when I interact with kids, with the children. It's suddenly we're on the same track, and so it's that teachable moment. You just want to make hay while the sun shines. So I was glad I did it. A few of the men came up afterwards to thank me, and one of them said, "Are you coming back? I want to learn more because I want to be like you when I'm your age," because they knew I was seventy-four. It was so cute. But it's about the aliveness. That's what Aikido is, that's what 'Ki' is—it's energy.

Selvidge: I want to go back to one of the things you mentioned yesterday about the experience of preparing to talk about the stages in your own life, and how that was illuminated for you in the practice of Aikido. So can you talk about this really formative time in the beginning of your Aikido practice and how you started to think of this application to your life?

Daijogo: I think that in the first stages of life in that Eriksonian model I was sailing through until I was five. Then the war came, and then the internment. I think the intense fear that I felt at the appearance of the military police—the sense of pending chaos, the following chaos, that entire chaotic period of my life and my family's life, all messed up what I think is stage three, which is between the ages of maybe three to seven. The conflict of that stage involves "initiative" versus "shame"; and the virtue that follows in a successful resolution is a sense of purpose. I think what was messed up for me was that I

became very fearful and anxious; and that is not conducive to exercising initiative. It was like, “I’ll just be quiet, I’ll be good, I won’t say anything, and I won’t do anything. I’m very good at being a soldier, but I’m not the leader. But if I catch on to a good leader, then I’m okay.”

This conflict also messes up your sense of what you would pursue and what is purposeful. I am a person who will see many things and then have difficulty to make a decision about it. Then Aikido taught me; it made energy not more stable, but more concrete, to me. I learned that to follow that energy was the purpose your life was meant to follow. Joseph Campbell would have said, “Follow your bliss.” If you do that, that defines the purpose of your life; that you follow this strand of what is speaking to you, and the study of Aikido made that clear to me.

So I think this also tied to my love of fairy tales; and it also tied to that out-of-body experience I had when I was eight, and my sense of “I’m a seeker.” So it didn’t put a rest to it all, but instead it made it clearer to me what I was doing and what I felt like I needed to do. I wanted to teach young children as a guiding rule of life, to be able to lead a life that’s satisfying, because I think a satisfying life is one where you’re alive. And when that’s over, at a later stage, it’s called “generativity versus stagnation”. I think that’s like ages forty to fifty. Of course these ages are different now that we’re living longer.

But it’s still an issue for me, and as I look at other people my age—or any age really—because all the stages cycle, all will purpose love, fidelity, competence, all that is every day. And it’s a continual circle that, if you’re alive to it, you can engage with hope and integrity. I think I’m lucky. I think I’ve reached a point of my life where there is ego integrity. I know what I believe, yes, and I can allow other people to believe what they believe. So I don’t feel despair about my life. When Sam died it was the closest to despair that I have ever experienced because—this is tricky, it’s going to be tricky for you, and for everyone some day—all this energy that you don’t even know you’re expending, you’ve put into this family, this unit, this creation of this family. And your focus is on the wellbeing of the components of this family, and maybe your friends or whatever and those that have churches—you’re extending that same focus. Then this family disappears, and the children, God willing, grow up. As Sam said, “They’re not on the payroll anymore”. That was his definition of how you knew when your kid was grown up.

So they go out and make their fortune and their way, and you’re happy. But on the other hand, you’re abandoned. It’s like they’re gone, and so all this energy that you didn’t realize you were putting into this is gone. So now you’re in this transition. It’s like, “What? Where’s the ground? Where am I?” and there’s anxiety about that. But I had Sam, and that was the very stable part of my being. You meet somebody when you’re twenty, or whenever we met, and you’ve lived with them for forty-two years, I think, before he died. It’s like a fabric where you have the woof and the warp and it’s all intertwined.

It's like, "How do you untangle that?" It's finely woven, and it's not like a loose leaf, to separate out what's me and what's you; and to work that out is an intense, compelling and necessary part of the process of grieving. Losing him was like losing myself in whatever was the closest way, it was like—I just wanted to not be here anymore. I thought, "There is no purpose; there is no sense to my life now, none. I've done it." And that creative part or the part that wants to be alive for a while, I think that's where the depression comes. They say the process of grieving can take three years, four years, five years. It's like when somebody told me it took five years to get over a divorce and to get over your anger. I thought, "Oh, my God, how can you be angry that long?"

But the same thing happens in grieving. It's like how can you be sad that long where everything is grey, and you're walking, but the vitality is buried for a while; it's gone underground. But I think that's part of the process. It has to do that so that you can do the work of coming out of it, which took me much longer than I thought it was going to take. I thought I did fine, and like between year three and four it was like, "Okay, I'm going to make it." There is something for me to do obviously with the life I've been given. But my daughter, I think I told you, she said, "It was more like eight years, Mom"—which was probably true because she was observing from the outside. But I think that's the whole process of grieving and of despairing for your life—and then it's trying to find the threads of the energetic connection that are going to pull you forward. And it's good now to still follow that.

Selvidge: When we were talking about this earlier, before we started taping, you mentioned your support system. We haven't really talked about the factual aspects of this either, but I do know your husband was sick before he died—

Daijogo: Yes, he had cancer. Our family, our nuclear family, pretty much operated as an intense nuclear family—although I think I'm much more social than Sam was. For him, it was enough that he had a roof over his head, he had a lot of food on the table, he had me and the girls, and that was the source of his contentment. He had some boyhood friends that were on the periphery of our lives at different times, and he wasn't exactly a hermit; but when he went for a bike ride up the mountain, which he did almost daily after he sort of semi-retired, his definition of a good day on the mountain was he didn't meet anybody on the path of Mount Tam, and that he didn't have to go downtown. He didn't mean downtown in San Francisco where he would deliver jobs; he meant downtown Mill Valley. So he was very happy in a circumscribed small area, and I became very accustomed to that, and it sort of suited me as well.

The children were the children—they had their friends and as they grew they did the right thing, they branched out and they went off to Cal and made their lives. So all that made it harder, I think, after Sam was gone. The grieving process was more intense because we were each other's support system more

than friends. I have a handful of really close friends—I can count them on one hand—that I would say that I could be there for them and expect that in return.

I mean that it would be mutual, Colleen being one of them, and whose idea this was, this oral history. I think having a friend like that is like having an angel for a friend, somebody that does the unexpected and goes a distance that you wouldn't even imagine. She got to know Sam and loved him, too, because we would go to their ranch a couple times a year and we spent a lot of time together. When Sam was sick, she insisted on going to Kaiser with us and meeting his doctor, which maybe was terrifying for the doctor. I don't know, because she had the lawyer's mind plus she's—well, I don't know how to say it, but I've noticed the same thing in my daughter. It's like once they get on a track they do not deviate until they have gone and explored every divergent stream there can be, so it's very hard to dodge them. Then she said, "We're going to Stanford," and when I had breast cancer she did the same thing for me. "We want a second opinion, and I've arranged for you to go to Stanford, take these X-rays," and do that. So I was treated at Stanford instead of Kaiser for a mastectomy. I had a fabulous doctor, and I had the kind of care there that was different than I probably would have had—it was more personalized, and it was probably because of her. I was treated like a princess. People came in and asked how I was; they probably would not have done that normally. So I didn't want to do it. I said, "Kaiser is fine, they've done hundreds and hundreds of these, this is a straightforward mastectomy." Finally my daughter, the one who's a lawyer, said, "Mom, if you love your family and your friends, you will be treated at Stanford." So, I was treated at Stanford. I have a very powerful daughter, but I always want her on my side now that we've passed the ages after the thirteen-year-old stage. I didn't know if we were going to live through that one!

When Sam was sick, Colleen took over —she didn't take over, but she just moved us first toward Stanford and ultimately to UCSF—and she went to see the doctor with us at Kaiser. She whispered to me, "He gets a B minus." Sam died anyway, but he had a lot of care that he probably wouldn't have had. He was treated at Mt. Zion and UCSF. Out of the eleven months Sam was sick we spent four months in hospitals. And probably two of them were at UCSF and Mt. Zion, which are connected. One day he had something like twenty bags of blood infusions because he had a bleed and they couldn't figure out where it was coming from, what was happening. And before they finally were able to locate and stop it—and all that was paid for by the Haases—I said, "Don't tell me the cost of this because I will just—I can't bear it." And their daughter Elise said to her mom, "What is the point of having money if we don't spend it like this, if we're not using it for our friends."

So I think the powerful example of what that family did for my family was a big part of our support system. I also had the support of family, but it was more peripheral because we did not grow up together in those formative years. We were in Japan, and we were not with our relatives, so the relatives that I

know now, for instance, I never even knew before what they did for a living. I knew that one person was artistic, but I didn't realize she was a teacher, an art teacher in a junior college, until a couple of weeks ago. So with the extended family there was understanding and love there; family that would gather for my Mom's memorial or when my brother died. They came to offer support, but they weren't the day-to-day people. And it wasn't the hands-on kind of support. The day-to-day people were like my friend who I walk with every day and who now has Alzheimer's, and my friend Annie Leonard, who saw her husband George through a long term illness. We became very close and started our relationship again, and then she got this malignant brain tumor, and she's not doing very well right now after extended surgery.

So this is what happens when you get older. Either you fade or your friends start to have problems. I felt the support of neighbors—

Selvidge: What kinds of things did people like your neighbors do, do you remember, as far as being supportive?

Daijogo: Just that we would have dinners together once in a while, talk about our children together. One neighbor and I made pickles together a couple of times; and I made matching little dresses for a neighbor who had children about the same age as my kids. It was just dropping in, having a social time with them.

Selvidge: While your husband was sick, or just in general?

Daijogo: Oh, no, that was in general. When Sam was sick, a neighbor Harriet gave a really lovely baby shower for my daughter Maki, who was then pregnant with my grandson Sam. Just to acknowledge that as a life was going out, there was another life coming in. It was very sweet. So it was my generation, but also Maki's friends, that were there, and I think it was meaningful for Maki. I thought it was very lovely, symbolic and a happy gesture for them to do that because it was such a sad, stressful time. Maki was particularly close to Sam because they kind of looked alike; but they also shared certain things, like they both loved to fish. Tane and I didn't like to fish, so Maki said, "I'm more Daddy's girl, and Tane is more your girl." I don't know somewhere she worked that out. I said, "Okay."

So we had people who cared about us as a family. And the community that I worked in, Marin Country Day, is a very powerful force in bad times, and so they quickly organized. There were dinners that came in to us every other day, whatever I asked, because sometimes it was for six people if Tane and Maki and sometimes their husbands would come and try to have dinner or eat with us. By then, a lot of that time, Sam was not eating. You're grateful for that kind of hands-on support, gestures that are concrete and meaningful. Those dinners came for, I don't know, maybe three or four months.

Selvidge: That was parents?

Daijogo: That was parents. I don't know who organized it, but it's the great system of Marin Country Day where people are organized, they're willing, they're able. They just know what to do, and they know how to do it. One woman said, "What do you need?" And I said, "I need my house cleaned." So she said, "Okay," and she sent her cleaning people over. They vacuumed and got things just sorted out for which I was so grateful. It was that kind of thing that they could make happen, and they would just do it.

A friend of Sam's who we knew in Japan—she worked in the same field that Sam did in art—she found out Sam was ill and phoned and said, "What can I do? I'll do anything. I'll do your laundry, and I'll clean your house, whatever you need me to do." And there were people like that who sort of came out of the woodwork, and a couple of his friends would come and see him on a regular basis as his life force was diminishing. And it was good.

Another friend that Sam had worked with, George, and his wife was Jackie. George was there every week at least at the hospital, and at our house, just trying to be encouraging, but also needing to be there, wanting to be there. So all that was strengthening, and helpful too. I think there's a stage in the Eriksonian system: of isolation, of not being able to create friendships and fidelity, versus a caring so that one doesn't live in isolation. And we never did live in isolation. I think at this age and stage of my life there is more danger of that. Being a woman between the ages of sixty and eighty, there is the issue of isolation and of loneliness. And those are big enough issues of being able to sustain yourself through that, how you're going to deal with that. But the part of Sam dying was a good; I think it was a good example of a system of support that worked and got you through it.

Selvidge: I wonder, too, about the system of support afterwards when it all goes away?

Daijogo: Yes, it's lonely.

Selvidge: I have heard people talk about that before; that of course in those sort of immediate moments you have people really there for you.

Daijogo: Yes, and there's the memorial, and people gather, and there's all this stuff that people helped out with. Sam's memorial was beautiful. It was just great at that church on the corner, and everybody participated and did it for me. Tane and Maki just took it over for me. I just showed up. Somebody had little things catered, and drinks appeared and they gathered. And different parents brought Sam's quilts to hang at the church for his service. Sam and I had made quilts for the Marin Country Day Auction every year, so we went through a lot of auctions over the years.

Selvidge: This is for MCDS?

Daijogo: Yes, I would collect the drawings or paintings over the year that the kids had made. Sam would reduce them on a camera to this big nine by twelve, and then he would put the painting in front of him, and he would trace it; he would trace the painting on a little piece of fabric, a reduced one. It would take him a couple hours to do those; the kids, of course, would have whipped those drawings out in like five minutes, ten minutes. Sam would do it just because he thought it was pretty fascinating. Once he said, “Look at the way this kid used his brush.” Well, it makes sense that a child used that as a different kind of tool than an artist with a certain maturity would, because the child uses it in an exploratory way like they’re twisting the brush as they go along. Sam could see that, he could appreciate it. I would never have noticed.

So we did these quilts and then the school would auction them at their annual fundraiser. In fact, Colleen and Bob bought the first quilt we made. Then years later one of the boys from that class was killed in an auto accident at about the age of twenty or twenty-one, so they gave that quilt to his family. Anyway, there were a bunch of these quilts. Let’s see, they had the first one from my first year at MCDS, and Sam died in 1999. There must have been fifteen quilts or so, from the years in between, so somebody gathered up those quilts, and they hung them on the wall of the church. Sam and Peter Dreyfus, another friend, used to come to my kindergarten class and they would make stools for the children, help the children make stools. They would precut the wood pieces and the kids would just bang them together; and they painted them. So children were invited to the service, and the children were invited to bring their stools. They all sat towards the altar area on their little stools, so there were probably twenty kids with different little stools. It was very touching.

So MCDS has always been a part of my support system and probably a reason that I stayed there, even though I’m not that close to most of the parents. But I understand their commitment to their children, and because of the commitment to the children, the commitment to their teachers. There’s a real appreciation for a teacher who works there. A lot of us stay for a really long time. I’m obviously loath to give it up. I keep doing it. This will be my twenty-eighth year there.

Selvidge: Wow.

Daijogo: That’s just MCDS—I came in with twenty-two years of teaching before that—so I’m going on fifty. So I’m lucky. I’m very lucky in that way that I have work that I love. So I don’t have to keep searching. As long as the energy is there and I can do it, I like doing it. So every year I say, “Well, this could be my last year.”

Selvidge: And nobody believes you?

Daijogo: My sister-in-law died about six or seven years ago. She said, “You’ve been saying that for years.” She was like Sam; she could see; she was clear. They both had clarity. So I would say it’s good to have support systems; and at this stage of my life when I see my friend Annie with a malignant tumor and my friend Elaine with Alzheimer’s, I get a little nervous. Although I had a mom that lived to a really ripe old age. And it was a real gift because I was around, I was there, and often I would think, “This is happening to you, as you’re witnessing this.” There is no getting out of it. It’s all right. It’s a really important time to do the practice of what I learned from Aikido and from other things, the seeker part, whatever the seeker found, you know, it’s time to apply it. It takes a fair amount of courage, and I hope, clear seeing. It’s like, “Okay.” That’s my prayer anyway, which is, “Let me get this straight, please.”

Selvidge: What is it exactly that makes you nervous? You said it makes you feel nervous to see your friends getting older?

Daijogo: Well, the main thing that makes me feel nervous is I realize how I spent a lot of time seeing my mother decline. Every summer I went almost daily and spent time with her, and on the weekends.

Selvidge: And she was living nearby?

Daijogo: There’s a senior retirement center right across from the Safeway in Mill Valley, called the Redwoods, and she lived there for sixteen years. So I was there on the weekends and would just pop in and see her. Then, as her strength diminished, I was there more often, and there would be more crises that I saw her through. I was so grateful that she was in a place like that because I wouldn’t have been able to take care of her in my home, which is the best thing to do if you can. But we live in such a different time. It isn’t rural America, or there isn’t the time. Everybody has a job, everybody’s busy, everybody is running at full speed including myself at that time. So what makes me nervous is the stress I know my children will be under if they have to worry about me. So my solution, or my strategy, is put myself somewhere where I’m safe, where I’m going to be cared for when I need the care, and it’s tricky because right now I’m in good health.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: And I’m still working, and I have vitality and strength. So, if I go to the Redwoods, I’m going to go when I’m in my eighties because it’s dark and aesthetically it doesn’t appeal to me because I’m so spoiled!

Selvidge: That’s good. Well, if you’re able to make that choice, that’s a lucky choice.

Daijogo: Yes, it is. There is another place in Greenbrae, and it’s a fancier place, but what appeals to me there is it offers life care. So you buy in and you pay your

rent, but you're there forever. You can be there until you die without being worried that they won't be able to handle you, unlike at the Redwoods when my mom got very ill at the end. I lost five pounds in a month because it was so stressful trying to think, "What am I going to do?" and trying to find a place when they said she can't be here if she doesn't have twenty-four hour care and paying for the twenty-four hour care. I would not want my children to go through that, so it's my gift to them to put myself in a place where they won't have to do that. They better still come and visit me!

But also the third part would be to not stress my friends. I'm not sure if I told you this, but on the Fourth of July weekend I was at the Haas Ranch. Colleen and I always go for a walk just before lunch. We walk from about 10:30 until 12:30 or somewhere in there, an hour and a half, two hours. So we're walking uphill, it's over 90 degrees, we're in the shade, but it's still like 92 degrees, and the dogs are with us. She was going to water them. She's so responsible; she carries water for them with a little portable bowl. The bowl flipped over, so I stooped down to get the bowl and when I stood up, I said, "Oh, I feel dizzy." She said, "Oh, sit down, sit down," and I said, "Well, I'll just walk over to this tree stump." So I walked from about here to that table [gestures] and was leaning at the tree stump, and suddenly I hear her saying, "Oh, my God! Oh, my God!" I thought, "What has that stupid dog done?" I opened my eyes, and she's looking at me like this, and she said, "You just passed out." And I went, "I did?" I had just slid down the trunk of the tree, and I was just sort of sitting there with one leg tucked under like that. I had torn Elise's pants—I had on her shorts—and Colleen got on a walkie-talkie, the radio, and got a four-wheeler to come up and get me.

And she is the third person, because I know if something happened to me she would take care of me or feel that responsibility or whatever she does. I thought, "I'm doing this for Colleen also," so that gives me courage. When I think, "What am I doing, I don't want to do this, this is crazy," then I just get this focus. I get this focus like, "This is why you're doing it." It's about putting yourself in a place that's pleasant enough, but early enough, because in most of these places if something really catastrophic happens they won't take you. Like Annie Leonard and I were planning to go eventually to The Tamalpais together; and then one Sunday she didn't feel well, and on the next Monday she was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. It was a warning. I live in a vulnerable place age-wise. We don't just bounce back up.

- Selvidge: Are there other people you know who are about your age also trying to make their own arrangements independently?
- Daijogo: I'm not sure. Well, maybe I've done too many lesson plans in my life. I'm not really sure. It's probably because of the experience and stress of having my mom go through all this.
- Selvidge: Did your mom have Alzheimer's or did she suffer from dementia?

Daijogo: She had simple dementia, and it probably didn't start clouding up her mind until she was around ninety-five. When she was ninety-three or so we flew to Los Angeles to my niece's wedding, and they wanded her at the airport— this elderly little person who's like four foot eight. And she said, "I'm never traveling again. That's it."

Actually, I think it is unusual, my thinking this far ahead. My friends think it's premature, and I'm still healthy. But that's the point— I'm healthy, I can still get in. I also have my colleague, who's male, who was interested in what I was reporting to them all about what my research was showing. He said, "Well, I want to know about this, too." I said, "Why, you're not even sixty yet." He said, "Because I just want to know." So I told him about it, and he said, "It sounds good." He said, "It's just a place to live." It was a really good perspective. I'm not asking myself to lock myself up somewhere. I'm asking myself to put myself in a place that's going to be safe for me in future years. I might live to 100, but I also might go out before. I also know that where I am is not as important as my taking my center with me, do you understand?

Selvidge: I do.

Daijogo: So I'm taking my practice with me. Why did I do this practice if it wasn't for something hard? I don't know. I think it's a combination of experience and what I call the practice. At The Tamalpais there are about 370 people. I only need one or two friends, or a handful, which is what I have now. And they have a lot of activities there. I don't like to drive, and I've had the big driving issue with my friend who has Alzheimer's and still wants to drive us places. And they have Tai Chi, which I do, and a great swimming pool and hiking trails. All I need is a little fabric and some yarn, and I can keep myself going, and a few good books to read. They have a paperback library and a regular hardback library. I went and investigated, and their books are up to date; they're the best sellers. I mean it's better than I do for myself. The dining, the food is good, and it's served in this beautiful dining hall that has a view of the bay to the mountains like a sweep depending on where you sit. So it's like going through the fear of the unknown, and now it's just what I'm doing.

After my dad died, my mother lived with my brother for eight years and raised those children, and ultimately it wasn't working out. So she came up and lived with Sam and me for eight months, which probably felt like eight hundred months to Sam, who was not good at sharing his space. So I took her to the Redwoods and I said, "I really want you to try this for two months or so, and if it doesn't work, we'll do something else." But after four days she said, "Well, I love this place. This is such a good idea." I said, "Yes, it was a good idea." She immediately became involved with the people. My parents had worked hard all their lives, raised their family, and then she had raised my brother's kids, too. Now for the first time she had leisure time. Sometimes I'd call her and say, "Would you like to have lunch with me?" And she'd say, "Well, I would but I have this other thing. I'm sorry." And I would say, "Oh,

that's fine." So it was a good thing and I thought, "Okay, I will remember that. You're going to be okay because you're going to take yourself, all of you there, and not leave part of yourself in this place."

Selvidge: I have a question about this conversation. So you've been talking about your family, and about wanting to relieve them of the burden of making these decisions for you. And you talked about looking into some of these private residence facilities. I just wonder, especially in our current political climate, have you investigated any of the public offerings or have you reflected on the presence or lack of government-funded options or availability of this kind? Because some people would say that those kinds of responsibilities have shifted away from families and in some cases towards the government. Have you thought about that at all or just assumed that you were the person who has to take care of your own life until the end?

Daijogo: I'm more there with just taking care of it myself. I am there because it's a part of the Japanese culture that is strong. There is subsidized housing at the Redwoods, but that is filled up now, because other people need it. You can't even apply to go in with HUD funds because the need is so high. So that's one option that's closed for me, nor would I want to rely on that.

Here's an example. When my father ended his working life, his last job was with the Post Office. When he retired he had accumulated something like three or six months, whatever was the maximum amount, of sick leave. He was counseled to go to the Unemployment Office to collect his sick leave money, and it was legal. So he went down to the office to fill out the application, and he came back home because he just couldn't do it. Well, we don't, in the traditional Japanese culture, use sick leave. There's something about it; it's like this point of honor. I don't know, we just don't unless we're sick. He said, "It wasn't the deal." He wasn't sick, and he wasn't going to do it because it was not honest to his way of thinking. There is this thing about that, a little of the samurai spirit, I think, where you earn it, you put it away, you take care of yourself, and you take care of your family.

Selvidge: Well, but at the same time you've paid taxes and you've paid into Medicare, Social Security?

Daijogo: Well, and I will have those benefits.

Selvidge: Right.

Daijogo: But it's not like it's okay to take anything else. So I feel the Redwoods would have been less expensive to go to if I did that, but it's important to me that I can afford this and I can sustain it. My son-in-law Robb—this is another support system—he is really good at financial stuff, and so he is 'crunching numbers' for me to see. Basically, I'll be fine once I get used to the fact that I'm not going to work and I have to use my savings and whatever. My other

daughter's idea is to keep this place and use it to generate income because there's no mortgage on it and we could rent it right now because the rentals are high, I guess and they're in demand right now. I said, "If you want to do that, if the two girls and the boys want to do that, that's fine with me, I just don't want to have to manage it." I'd rather sell it and get it out of my hands as something that I don't have to take care of anymore.

So they're mulling it over. They think it's a good idea; it's a beautiful piece of property because it's located so well. So a lot of my life has been lucky, just blind luck in some ways.

Selvidge: Well, let's switch gears and maybe continue to talk about your daughters, because we last talked about your daughters as children, and now we're talking about them as adults with husbands and kids and putting their energy into them, having already created their own families.

Daijogo: Okay. My daughter Tane is married to Rob Lightner. Tane is very stable, very quiet and very focused. She is extremely smart and efficient, but not as outwardly demonstrative as Rob. Rob is really gregarious and talkative, and he is also very caring. As an example, when Sam got sick, Rob said, "If he's going to be treated at Stanford we have to mobilize. I'll drive one day." He was already connecting what needed to be done, so he's a tremendous support system. Financially he sort of oversees what my finances are, because I am definitely not great at that. As Sam used to say, "What do I have to do to tell you that we are going to be fine?" I would say, "Okay, we're going to be fine as long as I work." I don't get it—if I don't work, where is that money coming from? I mean I do get it, I'm being a little facetious here, but I don't really care about financial matters—it's not where my energy is. So anyway, Rob is very supportive and Tane is very efficient and will get out a calculator and say you can do this. So they are a good balance for each other.

Tane worked for Levi's in Japan. Then she came back to the Bay Area and worked at Levi's in the city. She said, "I've never worked with so many smart people as I have at Levi's." It was odd that I was very good friends with the Haases, but she found her job completely independently. It was just a serendipitous thing that happened in Tokyo. I think she worked over there for two or three years.

After Tane had Gracie and Ben, she decided to be a stay-at-home mom. She was planning to return to work when Ben was in kindergarten. She thought she would eventually work at that point part time. And she is working now for a start-up skin care company, Marie Veronique Organics. It's in Berkeley on Fourth Street. She was also doing some data work for another friend who left Levi's and joined an interior design firm. I noticed that when she went back to work for Marie Veronique she seemed happier. I don't know, maybe that's just my bias—and my innate sense that I think it's good for women to work. I guess I understand a working mother's life better than I do staying at home.

Tane's children went to Marin Country Day School, mainly because I taught there. I made the mistake once of saying, "It's probably the best independent elementary school in the Bay Area," which I believe it is. So somehow they came up with the money to send Gracie and Ben there because they weren't eligible for any financial aid or anything else like that.

Tane has been very involved at MCDS. She has worked on the book fair since Gracie was in kindergarten, and she eventually chaired it. She really enjoys volunteering and contributing to her kids' school in that way.

Then there's my daughter Maki, the one who's a lawyer. Maki practices employment law. It was a proud moment for us when she (and hundreds of others young attorneys) were sworn in and at the end the judge said, "Please be seated, Counselors." After working for a few years, she and another woman lawyer started their own law firm in Corte Madera, which is doing well. She works really hard at trying to balance her work and family life.

Maki is married to David Spiegelman. David has wit and a sense of humor. He can relate to children in a very grounded and present way. He is a middle-school teacher at Martin Luther King Middle School in Berkeley, where Alice Waters started her Edible Schoolyard Program. From participating in that experience, he has become very interested in organic gardening, apiaries, and raising chickens and ducks. He is a builder/creator. A couple of examples: he built a chicken coop with a Japanese style roof, and he had to spend a lot of time trying to figure out how to incorporate the roof element. I love that part of him. And when he redid the entry hall in Sam and my old house (where Maki and David now live), he used black slate and some of the original black rocks, and added as a centerpiece a very special tile that Sam had handmade. So he can create and make lovely gestures at the same time.

Selvidge: Tell us something about your grandchildren...

Daijogo: Well, to start with Tane's children, Grace and Ben—Ben is like his dad. He doesn't like to deviate and he is very cooperative. If I say, "It's time for breakfast, he will be the first of my four grandchildren to say "okay" and start to gear up for that. He executes. He always understands what is expected of him and does it well. He also has this wonderful and dry sense of humor. His teachers love him because he is a very focused student and does good work. His Mandarin teacher loves him both because he learns quickly and has a very good accent. He loves sports, has a huge competitive side, and plays on baseball and soccer teams. Tane and Rob's family are Giant's fans, so Ben has attended Giant's games since he was an infant.

Gracie, the oldest of my grandchildren, is intellectually gifted and has amazing talent in math. She is a wonderful student and takes tests well. Her mom asked her once why it was that she did so well on tests. She replied, "Because I don't try hard." She is able to remain relaxed and open. When she

was about to start Tam High, I told her that she would have to work to challenge herself because it wasn't going to be like MCDS. She said, "Grandma, I wasn't challenged at MCDS". I told her perhaps she shouldn't tell her parents that!

But Gracie also has a free spirit and hears her own drummer. She has her own sense of time and telling her to hurry is really not very useful. She messes around with things. She and I tie dye, and we've done different little projects together. She's the one who will take the string from tie dying that you wrap around—this is the traditional Japanese one—unravel it, wind it up on her finger, and save it, the dyed piece of string. She is a real queen of origami and does these intricate pieces. Her fourth grade teacher said to me one day, "Well, I had to ask Grace to move all her origami things off the top of the desk because there was no room for her books."

In high school her artistic talent began to emerge. She's done some amazing work. I think back to when she was three years old and used to draw with Sam every day. I once looked at one of her pieces and said I thought she might be an artist like her grandpa one day. She said in her Grace-way, "I AM an artist." Sam would have loved seeing her work now.

Maki's children are Sammy and Josie. Sammy is truly heartfelt and it is easy for him to connect with others and to form sturdy relationships. He didn't really enjoy school in his early years, but now that he is at Tam High he is thriving and doing really well. He loves baseball. Sam and Ben are very close and enjoy each other's company. They are buddies, even if one is a Giant's fan and one is an A's fan. I love to hear them bantering, joking, playing catch and "messing around." I hope that relationship lasts their lifetimes. Sam has the most sophisticated sense of design of all my grandchildren. He has his grandfather Sam's genes and artistic talent for design. So maybe it is just right that he is Sam's namesake.

Josie has always been busy, curious, and a worker bee. She started walking at seven months and has never slowed down since then. She likes learning and is challenged by school. Josie is a good worker, and she's independent in the way that her mother was. She's a good student and I think her strong suit is her writing ability. When she writes there is a flow and an ease to it, and she has a voice that is all her own. It's very creative and unique.

Josie started doing hula in kindergarten, followed by Maki and me. So for about five years we had hula in common which I loved—the relationship, not so much the hula. But, then, our beloved teacher died and Josie went on to liking basketball and was no longer interested in hula. As I watch her grow, I often become a bit nostalgic because she is the youngest grandchild and growing too quickly.

When I think of my grandchildren collectively, it reminds me of the tides coming in and of myself riding the outgoing tide. I remind myself that as I become less important in my grandmother role, I need to create new relationships and new interests because my family has always been central to my life and to my identity.

Selvidge: One of the questions that I wanted to go back to kind of ties together some of the things that we have been talking about. So your granddaughter is in high school now?

Daijogo: Yes, she'll be a sophomore.

Selvidge: We talked a lot about your experience in college and being a woman and certain limited expectations, even from your girlfriends as well. And I wonder how much you think that's changed for your granddaughter?

Daijogo: Hugely. It had already changed for my daughters in their generation because that was the time when things opened up. They could go into anything they wanted—medicine, law, all the things that historically had a ceiling. I'm very excited for Grace because she has this talent, and to see where she's going to take it because we don't know. I know she could run a kindergarten classroom because she's helped me put mine together for a couple years; and she came in every day for the last two years in the morning to work with me. When she was in the eighth grade she did that. But I'm hoping that she'll do something where she'll be able to use her special gifts and be really happy and accomplish something that's satisfying for her. I think that's what we all want for our children, to do what they want, and I'm very excited for Grace and Josie. The boys, Sam and Ben, they'll just do what boys do and what has always been open to them. I'd love it if the girls can be bold and can be themselves and don't have to look up to men as mentors or as models, and know that there are women who can be powerful. Also I want them to be able to be balanced. I know somebody, a woman my age, who said to her daughter, "Put down your phone and talk to your children." I think that today because you can be connected anywhere, I kind of worry about that, but I also know that people your age are resilient and strong, and if you're in good health you can do it, and I celebrate that. Good for you.

Selvidge: All right. I think we should go back to Aikido because we talked about a lot of things, and we haven't really finished up about that.

Daijogo: Well, I think Aikido is lumped together at this stage in my life as part of the practice which informs my life on a day to day basis. Because it's a non-competitive martial art, it allows you to be reflective because it is not a competition where you have to beat somebody in order to achieve rank, it's not about winning. I'm not really into politics or competitions—if I go watch Little League games, I'm always worried about the team that's losing, like, what about them? What about the greater good?

But I found a system in Aikido that works for my life and application. All martial arts have the sense of a center of being which is located just below your belly button. It is a place that really has the capability, if you access it, of being the command center and the decision making center for your life if you're introduced to it. So it's a center, a place of stability and of "okayness", of feeling good, of relaxation and of power. But the power is manifest as natural confidence instead of a need to dominate the other, or to dominate parts of yourself, like "my mind rules." That is not part of the system.

Another principle is gravity, or ground. It's your relationship to gravity, like how you intelligently move your body from one place to another in tune with the gravitational force of the earth. When you pull back or push forward, you're out of balance. If you're going this way [gestures], you're out of balance in another way. So if you can align yourself that's important. I do Tai Chi now also, and when I'm aligned I can make those spins. You spin on your foot, and you kick and do different little tricks. If you are cognizant and aware of the pull of that gravity, you spin on an axis instead of parts of you going and parts of you staying. So it's like a beautiful dancer; the dancers that can do that, they're in line, they're tuned up with, they're aligned with the force of gravity.

Another principle is the extension of energy. I did this with the men in blue, as they call themselves, the men in blue at San Quentin. And it's being able to extend your arm in a fully relaxed position with no locking of your joints, and if somebody presses down here [points], you're able to extend your arm, and keep it extended, with no muscle force. You're extending it, and I translate that to your will, your intentionality, and it can be unbendable. For the children we call this "the unbendable arm." They have little arms like this [gestures]. It's so interesting because you can teach them within one session how to do that, whereas with an adult, there's a lot of breaking or bending because the mind is interfering. But if you tell a kid extend, they go, "Okay." And they do it, and so it's fascinating as a teacher.

That's three principles. Okay, the fourth principle is probably the genius of Aikido, and it is "the blend". Because if you have two opposing forces, it's a clash. I have kids and I had the prisoners do that [gestures], clap your hands together really, really hard, and someone will always say, "Ow," because if you're really doing it with a lot of intention, it stings. So the kids do it, and then they all go, "Ow," so we talk about that being the sound of a clash. This is the sound of a blend [demonstrates]—it's two energies that come together, and they're doing different things, but they're not clashing. So all of Aikido, when you do any part of your practice, is about taking a strike and blending with it, taking a grab and blending with it instead of resisting it. So there's a lot of grace in it, and you observe it in nature a lot. When the wind blows and the tree bends, it's not breaking because it's bending, and the same with water flowing. If the water flows and there's a rock, it can divide and flow around it. It doesn't sit there and fight with the rock. It's a lot of this motion, this spiral.

When birds fly they're not really going so much up and down, but they're doing kind of a figure eight, very quickly, and they're blending with it, the energy. They're cutting through air with this motion [demonstrates] instead of trying to do that. So it's very fascinating to me, and it's very subtle. So imagine doing that in your daily life if you're in conflict with somebody.

Okay, so there's one more principle, the fifth one, which is relaxation. But I have just remembered a good story to tell you about blending. During the holidays I was parked at Safeway—and there was Christmas music on the radio—a good reason not to drive—and I turned around and I saw this car go by me. Or I thought I did. I drive a big car, and so I back up and crunch, I crunch this car that didn't go by me. It almost went by me, but then it had to stop. It was totally my fault, totally my fault, and so we parked the cars, jumped out, and this woman is out of her car, and she's yelling at me. That's what she was doing, and she was saying, "Didn't you see me? Didn't you see me?" And I said, "I saw you pass, but I didn't know you stopped," something like that. And she kept saying, "Didn't you see me or hear me, I was honking my horn, I was honking really, really hard, I was practically—" She was going on, and I don't know why, but I was very calm. I said, "I'm so sorry, it was all my fault, and I just didn't see you or hear you," and I said, "I'm going to go in my car, and I'm going to get my wallet, and we'll exchange our information—do the insurance thing." So I get my wallet, and I get pencils and stuff, and she's sitting in her car, and she's looking up trying to get her stuff out, and she's saying, "Didn't you hear me? Didn't you hear me?" And I said, "No, I didn't hear you."

And you know what happened? I realized it was Christmas time, and the trumpets were playing. I had on a classical music station, and it was some jubilant Christmas music, and it had loud trumpets playing. And it probably blended with the sound of the horn, and I did not hear the horn because part of me was listening to that music, and I didn't hear the dissonant sound. That's what I think happened, and again I said, "I'm so sorry, and here, let me hold the umbrella over your head" —because it was raining— "while you write your information down," and we exchanged things. By then she started to calm down, and we exchanged names, and she looked up afterwards, and I said, "Well, thank you so much, and I'm sorry we met in these circumstances," or something. She said, "You are a kind and gracious lady," and I went, "Oh, thanks."

I thought that was a good outcome for having smashed her car or dented her car, so that's an example, I think, of how it worked for me at that moment. For some reason I didn't have the reaction that when somebody's screaming at you, you come back with, "Well, tough," instead of "I'm sorry." None of that anger arose at that moment, and I wish it were like that all the time because my life would be much more pleasant. I saw her on the street by Peet's one day, and I was talking, and she waved, and then she walked on. Then the strangest thing is I bumped into her, not literally this time, in the Safeway

parking lot again. She said, “I want you to see my car, I just got it out of the shop,” and I said, “Did it take that long?” She said, “No, no, it didn’t take that long, I just didn’t have time during the holidays to deal with it, and so I put it off.” It was a Lexus and the whole side was new. She said, “Look! You know it was just a dent, only one dent, but they had to replace the whole side because that’s the way cars are made now. It looks better than it ever did.” Then we left, but I think it showed me the possibility of what it could be like if we don’t erupt and we have that distance to take in somebody else’s displeasure or anger. I thought, “Oh, my God, this is really a great thing.” And now I have this new friend who waves at me if I see her at Peet’s. I wish these outcomes could happen more in the world.

Selvidge: Do you see those kinds of examples in your kindergarten, in your classroom?

Daijogo: Yes, I do.

Selvidge: Tell me about that.

Daijogo: Well, I think I might have told you this story, but there was this boy that I had with a really nasty temper, and he was going to bite somebody. Actually, a year later he got suspended for a day as a first grader when he really did bite somebody, and the other kid had to go to the Emergency Room to get a shot. Anyway, I saw him running across the playground, and he was furious. I just said to him—our paths crossed like this [gestures]—and I said, “Center yourself.” That’s all I said very softly, and he stopped running. He didn’t look at me. He just went past me. He stopped running, and I could see that he was doing that, and he didn’t bite anybody. But he was in that snit of a place where he could have. He was mad at somebody.

Sometimes two kids get in a fight over a toy, you know, the kind of thing that happens in kindergarten. And I say the obvious, “You both want that toy, what can you do about it instead of fight?” So one child says to the other, “I wanted it to roll up on this ramp” that he had made, and this other kid said, “Oh, I’ll help you make the ramp higher.” So they cooperated and worked it out. But it is giving them that chance and just reminding them that this is what they were doing. If I’m reading a story to them, I’ll have them do this [clap] when they hear a clash or they sense an impending clash or conflict. Then at resolution they do this with their hands if it’s going to get resolved [gestures] and so they start to pick up in literature when this is happening, which is pretty simple in kindergarten kind of books.

But it’s really just teaching them to be tuned. We give beads, like a bead for your breath work, a bead if you have shown that you know what your center is and you can demonstrate it in x amount of places. One little girl said, “Oh,” when she saw another child get a bead that she didn’t have—she had trouble in that area. She started to cry. I had witnessed it, and I knew why she was crying, and I said, “You are feeling really bad because you didn’t get that bead

that so and so got, and what you're feeling inside yourself is called jealousy. When you're jealous, it's upsetting, so you're crying because you're upset, because you're wishing that she didn't get it or that you got one, too." And I said, "Another thing that you can do is you could go and talk to her about it and ask her how did she manage to get that bead, and maybe she could give you some advice?" So she went over and talked to the child. I don't know what they were doing; by that time I had turned away to put out another fire. I think about two days later—when someone else got a bead—that same little girl went up and said, "Congratulations." So she had shifted something in herself, made a blend that worked for her and was able to do this socially smart thing.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: And get out of that place of being stuck, when lots of times they were getting stuck in a clash. Or, there are kids, can you believe it, that don't want to do what you ask them to do in kindergarten?

Selvidge: Amazing!

Daijogo: Isn't that? It's like, well, "You are going to finish that job." There are the little stubborn ones, and sometimes you can say something where you just name it for them. I say, "Your energy is stuck, and that's how you're choosing to control your energy right now." And then, "So is this fun? Is it fun to be stuck and not get to go out to recess?" or whatever the consequence might be. Just having that kind of language helps them. It's different than my saying, "Do it because I told you to, and I'm the teacher." Sometimes I get down to that, but if there's a way that they can use a skill, a life skill, in order to get themselves over it, it's much more pleasant for them, and it is much more interesting for me.

When you make a mistake, you spill the crayons, or you spill your milk, for instance, or some minor mistake, and you start berating yourself like, "Oh, how did that happen," or "Oh, darn it," you're being hostile to yourself for making a mistake. Somewhere along the line I learned you could also say, "Oh, we were learning to juggle balls," and every time you miss the ball, and you couldn't do it, you said, "Oh, fun," instead of doing that internal beating up.

So in my classroom we often do that. You'll hear kids spilling the crayons or spilling the basket of stuff and they go, "Oh, what fun." Then usually somebody will say, "Oh, I'll help you pick it up," or something. So it's a lighter way of dealing with a mistake, in a day-to-day context instead of thrashing yourself or thrashing the other, to find a way to work it so that it's more pleasant, and it's a blend. It's more beneficial to both of you, and you can win over yourself. And in the case of the children playing together, it's win-win instead of my saying, "You must share, and then you take a turn and

you take a turn.” Sometimes if you leave more space, something kind of magical happens, and I like that.

Selvidge: Guess what I’m going to tell you?

Daijogo: We’re out of tape?

Selvidge: Yes.

Interview 6: August 19, 2011

Selvidge: Okay, so it's August 19, and we're on Tape 10.

We have talked about the very beginnings of your Aikido practice and how you came to be almost obsessed—

Daijogo: I would say obsessed.

Selvidge: Obsessed? Is there another word? Okay, obsessed. Then we talked about a later moment in terms of your practice where you brought it into your teaching and into your classroom and really shared it with many, many children.

Daijogo: Yes, and now prisoners at San Quentin.

Selvidge: From MCDS to San Quentin, a short geographical distance.

Daijogo: I know.

Selvidge: You can really see San Quentin from the campus, right?

Daijogo: Absolutely. From many vantage points, so there it is. It's really, really humbling to be in there.

Selvidge: Actually, this is off the subject of Aikido but this is a question that occurred to me that I wanted to ask you. I wonder how you felt about moving from the school for children who were disturbed to MCDS in terms of moving to a very privileged community at MCDS?

Daijogo: Well, it seemed like a really good idea at first because there was a full-time job, and I could have it, and I wanted a job. After probably a week or ten days I came home, and I was talking to Sam. I said, "I don't know what I'm doing there." I said, "These children have been everywhere. They know everything. They've been read to. They already have aspirations at age five and six. They're competent, they're happy." I worked with the opposite population before, and I said, "I don't know what I'm doing there." I went on like this for a couple months like really thinking, "What am I doing? How am I helping these children?" Finally Sam said, "Janet, those kids can't help it if they're rich. Why don't you go and have fun?" I went, "Okay," but that was a shift that I had to make. I was like, "Okay, this is a place you could have fun. You could fly in teaching, and you can have whatever you want." It's like, "Can you stop feeling guilty and worrying that you're not the right teacher for these very privileged, bright and smart children? You could just give it up because it's that business of what's happening right now. What's happening? This is what's happening. This is what you've been given. Do something instead of sitting there doubting it and worrying about it." That became much easier to

articulate once I started doing Aikido and I found out I could place things energetically instead of rationally.

Selvidge: In terms of you having something to offer the kids, or in terms of understanding the situation?

Daijogo: Both. It's like if you are in the present moment there's a reason that you are there with what you're there with, and there is energy. My job is to get with what's in front of me, get with the energy that's there, and not be sitting there worrying about it. It's like, "All right, why are we here? Where is the authentic connection?" So Sam was really intuitive, and he could just get to the point, and then it just sort of changed for me. From that moment I just went, "Oh, okay." It was somebody giving you a different perspective like getting out of your own mind into the turn that happens, the "Aha, okay, let's go there."

But it was hard. Almost as hard, but not quite, as starting that other job working with the emotionally disturbed children. Then it was work, and you knew it was work, and it was difficult. But with MCDS, all of a sudden, it was, "All right, let's run and skip and jump and play and see what that's like." For me it was a shift that was essential for me to make if I was going to accomplish anything there. So I made that shift, that turn, instead of always doubting what to do and thinking that these kids didn't need anything. Even if they have way more experience in some ways than I ever did.

Selvidge: I don't actually know where your kids went to school? We have to talk about that.

Daijogo: They went right here to public schools, they went to Old Mill. Both of them did; and after that they went to middle school in Mill Valley, and then they went to Tam High. That's where their dad went. Sam went to Tam High from Belvedere. Two of my grandchildren, Tane's kids, Grace and Ben, go to my school, to Marin Country Day. Maki's kids, Sam and Josie, go to where Maki went to school—which is Old Mill. It's a big construction mess right now.

Selvidge: The school?

Daijogo: Yes, just as you drive out; you might see it. School starts for them soon, but they're not starting until September 1 because of the construction they're doing.

Selvidge: It's quite a good school, isn't it?

Daijogo: Yes, as public schools go, it is. It's just not like Marin Country Day, or where you went to school; it's not that. It doesn't have as many resources, and it doesn't have teachers that are down to the last person dedicated to it because

at these private schools the expectation is you put out the best that you can do because they give you the best. Probably where you went to school, too?

- Selvidge: Yes.
- Daijogo: So the teachers are turned on. They're there because they want to do it.
- Selvidge: And they're also supported in a different way?
- Daijogo: Oh, my God, yes. It's embarrassing. I was given an award in 1990; it was the Milken Educators Award. I think the year I went they chose twelve educators from California, and all different states were participating in the program. What made me think of that?
- Selvidge: The support system?
- Daijogo: Yes, the support system. So when I met the other teachers who were getting awards, most of them were from public schools. There were very few of us from private schools. There was only one private school teacher from California; that would be me. This group has grown quite a bit; then there were probably four or five hundred people. Now there are thousands. I remember they split us at one point into groups. So I was with other kindergarten teachers, and they were saying where they came from. I said to myself, "Oh, my God," because there were two teachers from the south side of Chicago, and they were buying the crayons— because I think they had a hundred dollars or something to spend on supplies—
- Selvidge: For the whole year?
- Daijogo: For the whole year. At that time I had \$1,500 to spend for half the amount of children. I found myself not saying very much because I felt it was so unfair, what I have as a teacher and the support I was given. I could go to any workshop I wanted. I've never been turned down. MCDS will fly you across the country and pay your room and board and pay the workshop fees.
- Selvidge: For professional development?
- Daijogo: Yes. I told you once they even sent us to Italy for a workshop, and four of us went.

But at the Milliken gathering, we private school teachers weren't on the same planet educationally as most of the teachers there. So I just found myself listening and being really humbled and thinking, "Here are these women who are giving their all." Well, there were a couple men, but not in kindergarten. You know, they were just as turned on as I was, but with none of the resources I had, working with a poor and urban population. I had worked with kids like that when I started out, where they're hungry because they haven't had

breakfast. They come in clothes that are too big, or too small, simply because that's what they had.

So, it's an eye-opener; and from that experience and my own experience you just know that you are at the other end of the spectrum. And it's really the way that all children should be educated; every child is worth it, you know? And so many kids are not given that. I think there are always a few stars, kids who have the kind of drive or the good luck to make things work for themselves; but I think, many, many more are lost to themselves and to the rest of us who'll never know them. I think San Quentin is full of those people who just didn't understand the system, couldn't buy into it, and weren't part of it and were alienated. So, of course, you get full of anger, and you have low self-esteem, and you act out in any way that makes it possible for you to survive. So there we are.

Selvidge: Well, let's go to a really different question that we talked about before we started this tape, because we're picking up threads. We mentioned the idea of home ownership because that's one of many themes we have focused on in some of our interviewing. Especially since you've had a number of family generations in this area, and your husband's family that's from Marin County?

Daijogo: I think it's an interesting question because of course in the very beginning of the family, as immigrants, they were not allowed to own land. So they went through their lives leasing and renting; and there was the feeling I think of transience, that everything was in transition. I remember my aunt, the youngest of my mother's sisters saying, "Well, I think Papa owned that land." But I don't think he could have because this would have been in the early 1920s when they were farming this particular land in Sacramento.

Selvidge: But wasn't it your father who was a citizen who was able to own land?

Daijogo: Yes, but this was their parents' generation, my grandparents.

Selvidge: Oh, I see.

Daijogo: So following that line, when my mother married my dad, they moved to Pescadero, and that's when my dad leased land. He leased land so that other Japanese farmers could farm it because they couldn't even lease the land. So they did that. Then came the war, and then we lived on government property through the camps. Then we went to Oklahoma, and we rented a house, and my mother took in boarders to make the rent payment which was \$40 a month.

Selvidge: In Oklahoma?

Daijogo: Yes. I don't know why I remember that, but I must have overheard it with my little child ears. Then my dad worked for the Army, and so that was the

government again, taking care of us, providing our housing. Then when my parents came back from Japan, they finally bought a small house in South San Francisco. They were already in their late fifties or maybe sixties. That was their first house. But what struck me about your question was when Sam and I got married, after a couple years we decided we should build a house, or we should buy a house. So we looked around in Mill Valley, and the houses that we could afford were like tear-downs.

So we decided we would build a house. We borrowed money. We borrowed \$2,000 from each parent, so we had \$4,000. Then we bought this property for \$11,000 up on the hill, and then we worked for a couple more years so that we could actually start to build.

Selvidge: So you lived in a rental property for a little while?

Daijogo: Yes, we did, in Strawberry, for like two years; then we decided we could start building. We found this person who turned out to be a good friend, to bid on doing the building. We had paid \$11,000 for the lot and this house was going to be built for \$32,000, and we went, “Wow.” We went down to the Wells Fargo and got a loan for \$25,000, or maybe more, but it was for twenty-five years. I said, “You mean we are going to owe money for twenty-five years? Oh, dear, we’ll be working forever.” Because it’s different when you’re thirty and you think something is twenty-five years down the line.

Of course, it turns out to be the best thing we could have done, because we built the house for essentially \$42,000. But what was really fascinating about this house is that everyone worked on it. My parents would come and work on the weekends. We did some of the work ourselves. We stained the beams—it was a redwood and glass thing—and we were into it. My parents came, and they would help do things. The property was on a steep slope, and my parents helped plan how to bring plants in and try to plant there. And Sam’s parents would come—his stepdad was a gardener—and they would bring plants, and they would try to make things grow on this slope. So it was like a family project.

Sam and I were glad to be doing it, but it was kind of what young people did then: you either bought a house or you built a house. But I realize it had much more charge for my parents and Sam’s parents than it did for us. After we built the house my mother made every relative within a reachable distance come through this house—for two reasons. One, it wasn’t just a little house, or a tract house or something. It was not a huge house; it was 2,000 square feet at that point, but it was a unique house. It was different; it was architect-designed. It was different in that it had flair to it, it had peaked roofs—

Selvidge: That meant something different?

- Daijogo: Yes, to them. One day I heard her saying, “Well, yes it is just a wonderful house, isn’t it? Just the kind of house an artist would be living in.” So it was beyond just a shelter. It was something that was more the American dream, that you could dream of a house, and you could build it. So it meant something huge to them, that, “Look, these children have arrived.” Something that they would never have had, or believed could be happening, given where they came from; and how it seemed natural to us. But to them, it was like a little miracle, like, “Wow, look at this.” There’s a famous Kabuki actor who said, “When you have finished, and you have become the teacher, the sign of a great teacher is that students stand on your shoulders; the next generation stands on your shoulders.” It takes off from where you left off, and it was that feeling.
- Selvidge: That you were doing that?
- Daijogo: Yes, for them they had the satisfaction that their children were doing what they had dreamed might happen. But the dream had come true in other words. So it was very humbling to be asked that question actually. And I would think, “God, she’s making all these people come.” Like, “You have to come to Mill Valley, and I want to show you this place.” We’d have to make a time when we would be home, and I think every relative in the California area had to come to Mill Valley and see this unusual home.
- Selvidge: What did your relatives think, do you remember?
- Daijogo: Oh, I think they thought it was a really unusual house, and that it was a nice house. My mom was proud, and they thought it was wonderful, too. That’s a good story. And that’s the house Sam died in, and the house that Maki owns now. It enabled me to be here in this condo by myself. And wherever I go next, that house enabled me to do what I might want to do in the next chapter.
- Selvidge: So it’s something that gave you a lot of long-term financial independence and stability and security?
- Daijogo: Yes, and that’s what is part of the American dream. But when the black soldiers came back from the war, they didn’t have the same rights even though they fought in the same war. They couldn’t get loans for housing, and that is so messed up, totally messed up. If that had happened fairly for everyone, we probably would be in a much better place today. There wouldn’t be such a divide between the “haves” and the “have-nots”. When equality doesn’t apply to everybody, that’s when we have this mess. I think simple home ownership would have taken care of a lot—
- Selvidge: But for you, you built a house. Did you know other people among your peers and friends who did not?

Daijogo: Everybody, everybody did. Most of the people that Sam grew up with, who we were young friends with, had long traditions over generations of home ownership. They were all white. They owned places in Belvedere and Tiburon and fantastic places for their generation. But what we didn't appreciate is that we got to do this in our generation. Sam's parents never did own a home. They rented this little place that you would label now as a shack, right on this incredible property in Belvedere, on Corinthian Island overlooking the yacht club with this fantastic view of Alcatraz and the whole bay. But it was a shack.

Selvidge: Did they continue living there?

Daijogo: No, when their health started to decline and they were in their late seventies they moved to a retirement home, a little high-rise place in San Jose, which was close to Sam's sister's house. Sam's mom died first, and then Sam's stepfather died a few years later. They died without ever owning a home. They also didn't have the privilege of an education, which my parents did. So again, that's a division that happened.

Selvidge: That was pretty different then—between the two sets of parents?

Daijogo: Yes. One thing that we knew was that we were going to college. As I have said, we didn't know that there was a choice. You just went, and that was the way. Education was the way out of your troubles. Sam didn't go to college; he went to art school. But he had a major talent. He had a talent, which was his art, and he would have been a terrible student. I remember saying, "Please don't show our children your report card. You have to burn this."

Selvidge: Tell me, then, about how things were different in the next generation in terms of home ownership for your kids. Because you've mentioned some things: your daughter lives in your house, but you owned the house before. It's not the same kind of dream that your parents had for you, but some of the same expectations for your kids maybe we can't take for granted the same way that your parents did?

Daijogo: No, because we've had this economic change, this downturn. That's true. But they grew up in the eighties and they were part of that. They went to college in the eighties, and so everything was a bubble. They were close in age, but they both did what you're doing now: they traveled, they did their out-of-the-country stuff, did their wider view of the world and all that. Then they both came back and married. Tane got married first and Maki married a little later, but there was never any doubt that they wouldn't. And they started out like, "Well, now we're going to get a little house, and then we'll get a bigger house if we have to, once we have children."

That's what Tane did. Tane and Rob bought a house on Green Street in the city, a cute little condo which was probably about as big as this place, maybe

a little bit bigger. It had two bedrooms, I think, and then they had their first child; Gracie was born there. Soon afterwards they started looking in Mill Valley because they didn't want their kids to go to the public schools in San Francisco, which made sense to me. So they started looking, and they ended up buying a house a mile down the road from here. That's where they still live, with their two children, Gracie and Ben.

Then Maki did basically the same thing. After she and David were married they worked; and then they bought a little house in San Francisco in the avenues on 42nd Avenue, because David loves the city. He was never going to leave the city even though she worked in Marin then, and he worked in Berkeley. So they lived in the city.

Selvidge: In the Sunset, or Richmond?

Daijogo: Richmond, and it was foggy.

Selvidge: And far from both of their workplaces?

Daijogo: Yes. They had the one baby, Sam and then the second baby, Josie. By the time they had Josie, they needed to find a bigger place because the one-bedroom was really small, and it didn't have any closet space. I don't know when those houses were built—

Selvidge: When people didn't have a lot of clothes?

Daijogo: Yes, that's right. Good point. So then we made this deal where they bought my house for the price of this condominium. Now for my next chapter, if I go, or when I go into a retirement community—because I'm going to do it—Maki started the idea of keeping this place; keeping it for me, renting it out, but they would manage it. They would have a little consortium of children and son-in-laws to manage it. Then eventually they would have this; they would still have this property in the family. So I think there's a fairly strong sense of, "If you can own it, it's better to own it", unless you're real gypsies at heart and maybe don't want that kind of stability. I think it's pretty natural for most people your age to want that for your children, and to want them to go to a neighborhood school. But there are a few outliers.

Selvidge: But it's getting harder to do all those things, I think, to be able to provide all those things, to get access to good schools, to own houses?

Daijogo: Yes, because it's outrageous, it's so expensive now. How many people make \$100,000 a year to start? Just a few lawyers, and people in medicine maybe. Even in medicine I think it's not necessarily so easy, depending on what you want to do.

I think it's not so bad for us to give up some of the running around after wealth and trying instead to make things better and better and better. But I'm old-fashioned; it's like, "Okay, some simplicity here wouldn't be bad." All the mobile phones and all that are symbols to me of how your lives go faster and faster.

Selvidge: So when you say you're old-fashioned, is that what you mean?

Daijogo: Yes, I still take satisfaction in understanding how a garment is put together and knowing how to do that. We were in Hula class yesterday, and we have these new Hula dresses we're going to have to wear for our next performance. They don't fit very well because we all ordered them sight unseen. A lot of people have to take their dress to a seamstress because they don't sew, or know how to let out a seam. For me, there are many other things I can't do, like how do you change that light bulb in the kitchen; it does not unscrew; how does it come out? Things have really gotten much more complicated.

Also, because I'm still in the workforce, I watch your generation and my children's generation, and there is no distancing from work because the phones are right there, and all the e-mail. I have been in the car with my daughter, the lawyer—when she has been talking to a client as she's driving through the city about whatever they need to talk about, and it's focused serious stuff.

Selvidge: So that's really different for you?

Daijogo: Oh, my God, yes. Because if you sent a letter somewhere it took three or four days or a week for that person to get the letter, so you had this time in between. I think I've said this before—I was a better teacher before I had a computer in my classroom. Because whatever I did, whenever I was in motion, I was doing things for the children. Now I'm answering e-mails. I'm answering e-mails to parents, and it's a different way of being. But it isn't direct. It isn't directly with the children.

Selvidge: But at the same time—to play the devil's advocate a little bit—wouldn't the parents say, "Because I can e-mail Janet I feel so much more a part of the classroom and in touch with what my kids are doing?"

Daijogo: It could be. I don't know. I think some do that, and some just burden themselves with worry. They burden you with worries that, perhaps if they could sit with it for a while, might dissipate. It might not be so important. But it's like I give voice to my worry right now, this instant. There are legitimate things, but a lot of this is done on the phone, too. And that takes a little bit more time than to send an email. If you're going to call somebody, you need to have your ideas a little formed. I don't know, I just see your lives being complicated, and the multi-tasking is way beyond anything that I could ever

have imagined. I know, I see everybody doing it, and you're doing fine. But for me I sense there is a lot more stress from it all.

Selvidge: Let me ask you another question about your professional life at school that occurred to me a couple of minutes ago. You were talking before about other kindergarten teachers who were mostly women, but do I remember that one of your support teachers is a man?

Daijogo: Oh yes he's a man, and also my two colleagues at Marin Country Day are men, the other two kindergarten teachers. There's only one female kindergarten teacher, and that's me.

Selvidge: And that is unusual?

Daijogo: That is very unusual, but they are unusual men.

Selvidge: Tell me a little about what that's like for you—?

Daijogo: It's very interesting to work with them, to be outnumbered in a sense, because these two men have worked together in the second grade, so they have a history. And then they both came down at different times to kindergarten, one about ten years ago, maybe twelve. Then the other, he just said, "This is my seventh year in kindergarten," which I can't believe. But what's really different is the sense of humor and the way that they play with each other. It's much more playfully combative, like the male kind of putdowns and a little sparring that goes on.

One day we were all sitting there, and we had our little ukuleles and we were going to sing a song. Doug's the musician of the group. He's playing this long intro, and Richard is sitting next to him and says out of the side of his mouth, "Dude, it's just an introduction. Cut it." I just laughed out loud because it's not the way that women talk to each other, I don't think. Maybe the younger women do, I don't know.

Selvidge: They certainly wouldn't say that to you, right?

Daijogo: No, no, they wouldn't. So in that way it's very humorous, the way they're so funny with each other, putting each other down, or they joke more. As a woman, with our more complicated brains, we would have to look at it from four different angles and think, "Now which one of these should I be tracking here?" But actually, it's fun working with men because they're just, I don't know, to the point. They don't mess around so much with how you're going to feel about it. It's just like, "Well, let's do it this way." Sometimes I say, "This is kindergarten; this is not the way we do it. This is not second grade," or something like that. They go, "Oh, okay" and that's the end of it. It's not like we're going to discuss this for a half hour now, and I'm going to present all

my rationales. It's just, "Oh, you're the experienced person in kindergarten. Okay." I don't know, it just surprises me.

Selvidge: You must have mostly worked with women before—?

Daijogo: Yes, yes. Mostly in elementary school it's a room full of women, but we have more men now.

Selvidge: Do you think MCDS is reaching out trying to balance the male and female teachers, or it just worked out that way?

Daijogo: I think it just happened that way. We have a second-grade teacher who is a man, two first grade teachers, a third grade teacher, a fourth grade teacher, and then all the fifth grade teachers are women. So—our percentage of men is bigger than what it used to be.

Selvidge: Do you see anything interesting in terms of that distinction, especially in the young teachers, because you see a lot of young teachers, right? The support teachers must change pretty often?

Daijogo: Yes, I see more men coming in, and I'm not sure I know why. You probably have more insight into that. But I think one reason might be that's there's not as much emphasis on needing to be really wealthy—at least in this group of people. It's not like the eighties, nineties kind of thing where there was this idea that to be rich is really good. And to be rich enough is really good, but there are people who are willing to go for something inside of them instead of what they think is going to be successful, that success is defined differently for them. And I think that's good. A lot of young men who were support teachers last year would have gotten credentials by now and hopefully they have moved on to jobs. I don't actually know if they all got jobs because even in teaching it's hard to get a job now. What will you do? Are you going to go into academia? Be an academic?

Selvidge: Hopefully, that's the idea, but we'll see. I'm trying not to think about it right now! But that's my career plan for the moment.

So let's move back to Aikido. We always think we're going to talk about Aikido, and we end up talking about other things.

Daijogo: It's hard in a way to talk about Aikido—not hard, but it's so pervasive in my psyche that sometimes I'm not even sure how to articulate it.

Selvidge: It's hard to isolate it as something independent of other things in your life, right? Because the truth is we've actually talked about it a lot, but not in isolation.

Daijogo: Right, that's right because it permeates whatever I'm thinking about. My friend who asked me to go to San Quentin and teach, said, "When you do Aikido your passion is so evident." That's probably true because when I'm just thinking about it, the energy of it moves through me, and it's what makes me effective as a teacher. Because it nurtures you, it's not just what goes out of you, but it's where you went first in order to have access to it, to that kind of energetic system.

So I use it as a metaphor in my life with just the simplest things. Like, how relaxed am I when I'm drinking this tea? Or how relaxed am I or how am I communicating with you, with Sarah? Those things are unconscious in a way. This morning I was unlocking my door, and it was a little stuck. I said to myself, "Okay, you've got to relax, feel where the key is going," and then instead of struggling, there is a way to do this that can be easy. So you wash dishes, and you can either be fighting it, or you can wash the dishes. It's very Buddhist in that way, but to me it's mostly, "Am I doing Aikido with it—or not?" When I come into conflict it's right in my mind: how am I going to do this in the Aikido way? We say to the children, "Walk in an Aikido way," and we have amended that to, "Walk in an ET way." That's a specific instruction that they respond to because they've been introduced to that idea. Your back is straight, your heart is open, you're not rushing; and that's hard to model. It's hard to model not rushing.

Selvidge: Yes, so then a question about that. It's interesting to hear you talk about these cues that you give the students and things that you say. I remember in some of the previous examples that you've given of other people using these techniques outside of the practice of Aikido, there was the example of a pediatrician using these same kinds of words with kids in the office?

Daijogo: Yes.

Selvidge: But one thing I want you to talk about is how the actual practice, physical practice, of Aikido is important to doing those things?

Daijogo: It was to me. I'm not sure—I know that it isn't to everybody. But for me it was a conduit, it was the lesson, it was the way that I learned, and I needed to learn. But I think that pediatrician, in the example I gave you, intuitively knew something inside of her where she could calm that child. She may have used the words that I had used, that she learned from me. But to know your center, she intuitively knew where it was; so I think we get our instruction in different ways.

The physical practice was really important to me and really fueled what we called an obsession, but we could call it a passion; it sounds nicer, less compulsive. But it's a little of both. I needed it because I couldn't get there without getting stuff out of the way. One was my fear and my doubt, and I needed to stand there on the mat and receive, to be the recipient of a thousand

strikes and a thousand blows in order to learn how to get off of a line, in order to learn to be calm, in order to see a strike as just something coming down, not like, “Oh, my God.” I used to say to myself, “I got hit, I’m going to get hit, I’ll be destroyed, I can’t do this, I can’t move, I’m immobilized,” because I had that pattern of not being able to move. I think that I was still like my little five-year-old self when the military police banged on the door—who couldn’t stop shaking, who was scared to death. I had that in my body. It took me so long to learn to get off the line; and how simple is that? If you tell kids, “Get off the line,” about five times, they just do it. But for me it was like, “What was wrong with me?” What was wrong with me was that when I saw that energetic aggression coming toward me I had nothing. I didn’t know what to do. I had no skill to work with it because my fear obstructed whatever natural skill I had. Because we all have that natural skill. Aikido is beautiful because it can expose you to the most natural; it can allow you to be the most natural and have a response that’s just right if you move out of the way, meaning your ego. So—for me—I still had to get a lot of stuff.

The other thing I had to get out of the way was, “I’m a girl, I don’t do this. I make cookies for other people, so don’t hit me.” All that was in there, or “I’m a girl, if this happens, I run away or I get somebody else to go in there and fight for me,” or whatever. So there were gender things that were in there. I’m small, also, and that was another part. It’s like, “But I’m so little and you’re so big, and stop hurting my wrist,” because you have to work with all kinds of people, and with some people there’s a lot of aggression in their grab. There are other people who will grab you and it’s just like butter. You could feel their energy; but there are some that’ll just try to stop your pulse from working. Not very many, but there is that kind of anger that we work with; and where there’s fear, there is anger, so it was the cheapest form of therapy there ever was. People go to therapy to learn about that, and I got it for \$45 a month, all the training you wanted. So the physical part was essential for me. I don’t know, it enhanced the presence that I already have, that any of us have. It’s like, “Okay, you deserve to be here.”

When I took my black belt test—it was about the scariest thing I ever did—probably like your orals. But all these people are there to judge you, and you’re on the mat by yourself with your partner. You’re demonstrating what you’ve learned. George Leonard would say, “You have to own the mat.” Own the mat? For me that was like, “What?” But if you were George Leonard—he had spent a lifetime training for that—that was in his psyche.

When Sam first met George, he saw him walking at a party, and he turned to me immediately and said, “Who’s that arrogant bastard?” And this was Sam—who was not normally like that at all. There was something about the two of them that took a long time to work out. But George’s statement, “You have to own the mat,” was one of the things that really struck me. And another thing was what Richard Heckler said, who I considered to be one of my main teachers. Richard said to me, “You have to be more carnivorous.” But I’m a

vegetarian. The part that I think you're trying to equalize is the feminine and the masculine. I had to access that part, and I had to learn what it was, and then it was okay. It was like, "It's okay for me to win." It's like, "I'm going to stand here, and I'm going to feel good." That was work for me. It was like, "What right do I have, who do I think I am, will I be arrogant then if I'm like that?" And it turns out that no, it's none of those things. It has to do much more with a natural confidence that emerges, a natural grace that emerges when you're not working so hard. So it was important for me to do it. I think artists, many artists come from a different place. I think they can access it in a different kind of way. But for some of us we have to get on the mat and beat ourselves up to do it. It was hard.

Selvidge: So it was very important for you then, the physical part, the learning with your body?

Daijogo: It was really important, yes. I don't think I could have done it otherwise because then it's just a concept or a thought. Another thing George said about the physical practice, "It cuts through the bullshit." If you're trying to take somebody down in a technique, and the end result is that they should be pinned to the mat, you have to really do it. And you can't actually give that signal to your opponent, your partner. Sometimes you think you're cutting energy into the person, and it's stopping right here [gestures]; so if they go down then, it means they're tanking, they're just pretending that you're doing something right when you're not, because there's no energy flow.

But when you're doing it right, there's an energy that flows through your arm that they can feel. That's what you pray for, a partner that's good so that they'll be responsive. Then you'll know if you're doing something right or not. It's not like an intellectual decision you've made with each other, "I'll go down if you go down." It's something that is more truthful than that. This has wide application in life.

It's like okay, what's the truth of this? What's the truth of riding with your friend with Alzheimer's, being a passenger in the car and all of a sudden feeling, "This doesn't feel great to me." And saying to your friend of many years, "I'm not comfortable driving with you anymore," knowing that this is a very threatening, awful thing. I mean it's something we don't think about, giving up your driving, but it's a big part of your independence and your identity. So it's like Aikido keeps you honest if you're trying to do the practice.

Selvidge: Yes. There's no cheating, right?

Daijogo: There's no cheating. You're trying because that's where the real beauty in a relationship lies. It's just like that truth, that edge. Children know that up to a point. Then they get to be sophisticated and jaded. But it's like your little baby; they know. They know when you are not on here [gestures]; they know.

I think some people are lucky. They're born with a sense of who they are, meaning the best person, the good person that they are. They are able to follow that path. I think Bob Haas is one of them, reading his journals that he wrote when he was twenty-two or three, you can just see the sense of purpose he already had because he was able to access that central part of himself.

Sam had it. He understood his own power. He understood who he was, and he was okay with that. I would say I was quite neurotic about that, as many of us are. It's like allowing other people to define who you are, trying to read the environment, which was important for me to be able to do. I needed the physical practice to say, "I am centered now. I am not centered now," and to be able to make that discrimination for myself, because it wasn't something I was aware that I had a right to or that I had access to. So I think my thing with little kids is that you are this wonderful person with all this power; and my job is to make sure that we're clearing the way so that you always have access to it or that you understand what you're doing with your energy instead of being blown; that you direct the energy instead of being blown away by it, which I think people often are. They have all this power, and it's just like, "Hello, what did you do?" You carry a gun in your car, okay, and you're a major athlete that makes two million dollars a year or something?

I saw that guy come up to bat, and you would give anything to have that kind of center or to have that kind of power. But not knowing what to do with it is just as sad as not being able to access it, I think. So I think that Aikido was a major blessing in my life and my major teacher, the art itself even more than the people who taught it to me. Where it's taken me, not in the world but inside of myself, has been really important.

But, oh, a long time ago—I guess I was doing Aikido then—I thought, "Here's the way that I need to live my life," and that is to ask two questions. One is how are you a blessing in my life, meaning the person or the situation, and how am I a blessing in that life, in your life, or in that situation? If I could do that, I think I would be feeling pretty peaceful, which is the whole point of Aikido. It's a blending art. So, it's good, huh?

Selvidge: Yes, sounds good.

Daijogo: So it's good to have a practice, and I'm mostly happy that I have one because it brings you the joy and the richness of life. I was walking with my little granddaughter yesterday, Josie—she's nine. We were going to get my car on Wednesday. We had to walk a mile down the road, and she started talking about what she worries about. And she does worry about a lot of things—really a lot of things. I thought, "Well, somewhere along the line I'm going to have to say, 'You know, I'm your grandma, and I probably know more about worry than anybody in your family,' and ask her if she wants to know what I know about it." Because there's no shoving it on her, I know. I just want her

to know that I have learned how to deal with this, in a limited way, but a good start.

I'm not, I think, in this stage of my life anymore, but Sam once said to me, "The trouble with you is you don't know what you know." And I think at this stage in my life I now know what I know, and I know what I don't know.

Selvidge: Yes.

Daijogo: So you've got to take responsibility for that, and to bring that to her as a possibility. So now we're waiting for the right moment. Okay, good? We're done?

Selvidge: Yes, we're done.

Daijogo: Good luck.

[End of Interview]