

Mill Valley Oral History Program
*A collaboration between the Mill Valley
Historical Society and the Mill Valley
Public Library*

JANET DAIJOGO

**An Oral History Interview
Conducted by Mari Allen in 2015**

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In this oral history, beloved kindergarten teacher and proud aikido black belt Janet Daijogo recounts a happy life despite a traumatic childhood experience of being among the 120,000 Japanese Americans interred by the federal government during World War II. Born in San Francisco in 1937 to second-generation Japanese American parents, Janet grew up on a farm in Pescadero until the age of five, when her family was detained and relocated to an internment camp in Topaz, Utah, where they were held for three years. After the war Janet's father got a job as a Navy translator and the family moved to Tokyo where she lived throughout her high school years before returning to California. As a student at the University of California, Berkeley, Janet met her future husband, Sam, a former Tamalpais High School student and Japanese American who had also been interred. Janet recounts moving to Mill Valley in the mid-1960s with her husband and newborn daughter (followed later by a second daughter) and making a home in this "village at the bottom of a mountain" despite an early experience of housing discrimination. She recounts her long and ongoing career as a kindergarten teacher at Marin Country Day School, her aikido and Zen meditation practices, her children's exploration and embrace of their Japanese cultural roots, and the changes Mill Valley has undergone over the past 50 years.

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Oral History of Janet Daijogo
August 14th, 2015

Editor's note: This transcript has been reviewed by Janet Daijogo, who made minor corrections.

0:00:01 Mari Allen: Today is Friday, August 14th at 12:35 p.m. It's August 14, 2015, and I am Mari Allen, a volunteer with the Mill Valley Public Library for its Oral History Project. I am here interviewing Janet Muneno Daijogo. Spelled D-A-I-J-O-G-O. Her maiden name is spelled M-U-N-E-N-O. We are here to talk about her life in Mill Valley and previous to that. So, Janet if you wouldn't mind introducing yourself, state your name and your birthdate and place, please.

0:00:50 Janet Daijogo: I'm Janet Daijogo, and I was born on March 21, 1937. So currently I'm 78 years old, and I live in Mill Valley.

0:01:05 Mari Allen: Where were you born?

0:01:07 Janet Daijogo: I was born in San Francisco.

0:01:10 Mari Allen: In what hospital?

0:01:11 Janet Daijogo: In the Saint Francis Hospital, which I don't know if it's still there. Is it?

0:01:18 Mari Allen: That, I don't know.

0:01:18 Janet Daijogo: I was born there but from birth to five years old, I lived in Pescadero, California.

0:01:30 Mari Allen: Where is Pescadero?

0:01:31 Janet Daijogo: It's down the coast, by — it's just down the coast. [laughs]

0:01:40 Mari Allen: Oh, okay. Like near Mendocino?

0:01:43 Janet Daijogo: No, south of San Francisco.

0:01:45 Mari Allen: Oh, okay. And tell me —

0:01:47 Janet Daijogo: South of Daly City.

0:01:48 Mari Allen: What were your parents' names?

0:01:51 Janet Daijogo: My dad was Saiki Muneno — S-A-I-K-I — and my mother was Mutsu Muneno.

0:02:00 Mari Allen: And were they first-generation Japanese?

0:02:01 Janet Daijogo: They were second generation.

0:02:02 Mari Allen: Okay, so they were Nisei.

0:02:03 Janet Daijogo: They were Nisei. My father was born in Hawaii. My mother was born in Sacramento.

0:02:08 Mari Allen: Okay. And do you know where — what part of Japan their family came from?

0:02:12 Janet Daijogo: Yes. Both I believe were — I know for sure, my mother's family — oh, both of them are from Southern Japan. My mother's family was in a rural area by Hiroshima. My father was — let's see, his family lived off the Inland Sea, on an island in the Inland Sea. And that's all I know.

0:02:46 Mari Allen: Do you know what year they arrived in Hawaii?

0:02:51 Janet Daijogo: The grandparents? No.

0:02:54 Mari Allen: Okay. And when did your parents meet?

0:03:00 Janet Daijogo: They met in probably the '30s, around the late 1930s — well, yes, because I was born in '37. So they must have met in mid-30s, when they were mid-30s. My father was eight years older than my mother.

0:03:21 Mari Allen: And when did they come to California then, if they were from Hawaii?

0:03:25 Janet Daijogo: My father came from Hawaii when he was 19. He went to Berkeley. He came to school. And my mother came to school from Sacramento.

0:03:36 Mari Allen: Oh, okay. So she wasn't from Hawaii, then?

0:03:38 Janet Daijogo: No, no she was from Sacramento.

0:03:41 Mari Allen: Okay. And what was their occupation?

0:03:43 Janet Daijogo: They were farmers. They farmed mainly sugar peas, off of Pescadero. And they didn't even need to water, she said, because it was so moist. Isn't that interesting now? In the middle of a drought?

0:04:03 Mari Allen: Oh it is. It is amazing to think about.

0:04:06 Janet Daijogo: She said it was the fog itself, and the natural water was enough.

0:04:12 Mari Allen: Now, did your parents speak Japanese?

0:04:14 Janet Daijogo: Yes. They both spoke Japanese.

0:04:16 Mari Allen: Did they speak Japanese to you?

0:04:19 Janet Daijogo: No.

0:04:19 Mari Allen: Okay, so they only spoke English to you.

0:04:21 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, mainly English. I think they might have spoken a little bit. I think they spoke Japanese to each other once in a while because I can understand a little bit, but basically, I'm not bilingual.

0:04:39 Mari Allen: Okay. And you're considered a Sansei, is that correct?

0:04:41 Janet Daijogo: I am.

0:04:41 Mari Allen: A third-generation Japanese. Okay, so from zero to five you lived where? In Pescadero?

0:04:48 Janet Daijogo: In Pescadero. Then from about five to eight we're just — I was trying to figure that out. Well, I always think of it as the three years, about five to eight, I lived in Topaz, Utah, in an internment camp. Except now you're supposed to say a prison, incarceration. And then from eight to third grade, fourth grade, I lived in — no, third grade Oklahoma, in Stillwater, Oklahoma, where my father taught Japanese to the Navy. Then we moved to the projects in Richmond. He got a job in Japan as a translator for the Navy.

0:05:42 Mari Allen: For the U.S. Navy?

0:05:43 Janet Daijogo: Yeah. Or I guess it was — it might have been the Army.¹ And then after we stayed a few months until the housing was completed for dependents, so we went over there. From the fourth grade to high school, through high school, I lived on an army base in Tokyo — not in Tokyo, but on the outskirts.

0:06:14 Mari Allen: What army base were you living on?

0:06:17 Janet Daijogo: It was called Grant Heights.

0:06:20 Mari Allen: Is it still there?

¹ After the interview, Janet confirmed her father worked as a translator for the Navy.

0:06:21 Janet Daijogo: No, no. Because after the peace treaty was signed, they began closing some bases. They started to close down, pull back and return things to the Japanese. And so, I have no idea what it is now. It was a lot of land. So, I'm sure it's really built up, because it was very different. It was like putting this slice of America in a Japanese environment, surrounded by Japanese.

0:06:54 Mari Allen: Now, we're going to talk just a little bit about your recollections of your early childhood. So, from zero to five you were living on a farm in Pescadero. And then at age five, you and your family were forced to leave?

0:07:07 Janet Daijogo: Yes.

0:07:07 Mari Allen: What are your recollections of that time? So, that was 1942?

0:07:13 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, '42. Well, I think that up to five, you don't have so many memories, but I just remember — I mean, mainly what I remember is stories that I was told about being in the cabbage fields, and being left there by accident one day. And, I guess to keep me occupied, they would give me nails and a hammer, and I would pound the nails into the cabbage. [laughs]

0:07:46 Mari Allen: Into the cabbage.

0:07:49 Janet Daijogo: I don't know. But I think that would be a good toy. I think my parents worked really hard on the farm. And my father, because he was a citizen, he leased land to other Japanese farmers who were not citizens, so that they could farm and have a living. Then, when the war came, and Pearl Harbor came, to my five-year-old mind it was very traumatic being that scared. That's when I learned about how fearful you can be. And I think there's certain aspects of my life that are issues, like if somebody knocks on the door, I always have a startle reflex, and I'm nervous to open a door, at my age. So, although I've opened many, many doors and nothing's happened — but I think when you're traumatized as a child, that that is — it stays with you.

0:09:07: When they came to search the house — and I would have been five then, 'cause that was early on — my mother said that when the military police left (the young men who were searching), she said I stopped talking, and I couldn't stop shaking for two and a half hours. And you know that if you are a parent, you know that's pretty severe trauma. I was a sensitive little girl, and so I just reacted that way. So, I think as we went into all that it was a tumultuous time for the family and that culture, all those people. And then when we went into camp, I think life became normal, in a way. [chuckle] I started the first grade there.

0:10:03 Mari Allen: Do you recollect going to camp? Do you recollect going to —

0:10:05 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, I do.

0:10:06 Mari Allen: You do?

0:10:07 Janet Daijogo: A little bit, yeah. I remember that we were taken on, probably by bus, but we were on a train. We got on a train to the desert.

0:10:18 Mari Allen: So, I'd read that you had first been at Tanforan, what was Tanforan race track at the time, which is now Tanforan Mall, next to San Francisco Airport.

0:10:27 Janet Daijogo: Yes, it is. That's true.

0:10:30 Mari Allen: I know that there's a big statue at the mall, in remembrance. I brought my children there.

0:10:37 Janet Daijogo: You did? I've never done that.

0:10:38 Mari Allen: Yes. To show them — it would be very interesting I think for your grandchildren to see. There's a big statue that commemorates the fact that that was the first, they called it a "Relocation Center," for Japanese Americans at the time, at the race track.

0:10:56 Janet Daijogo: So, if you go to the mall, it's there?

0:10:58 Mari Allen: It's in the center of the mall.

0:11:00 Janet Daijogo: Okay.

0:11:00 Mari Allen: Yeah.

0:11:00 Janet Daijogo: I'm going to tell my daughter that and then we will make a little field trip.

0:11:05 Mari Allen: So, do you remember being at the race track at all?

0:11:11 Janet Daijogo: I remember it was surrounded by barbed wire, and that it was very scary, and frightening for me. And I remember thinking that if I went the other way — that if I looked out of the barbed wire, I could see dead people, which was not true, but it was my imagination. I also remember they were — I think they refrigerated food by packing it in dry ice, and then they would throw the dry ice out on the race track or somewhere and there'd be like puddles, there'd be mist, you know? So it was very spooky. And then I remember they told us we were in a barracks, and they told us that we should, my parents should, stuff these mattresses with hay from the — wherever they had it, probably in the stalls. And not to pack them full, because they compress and we would — it would be uncomfortable. So they did, and my mom said all night long the first night, one of us would roll off the mattress.

0:12:37 Mari Allen: You say "one of you" — you had a sibling?

0:12:39 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, I had. At that point, I had a younger brother, two years younger, and a younger sister two years younger than he, and then my other brother was born in Topaz. So, I also remember my sister becoming very — the food was not very good, nor was it very clean, apparently. And a lot of people got trench mouth, which is like a little disease. I think it's like —

0:13:15 Mari Allen: It may be a bacterial disease of some sort.

0:13:16 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, and they treated it with a purple medicine called gentian violet, and they coat your mouth. My sister had it so severely, she was a toddler then, and just had learned to walk. She was so sick that she couldn't walk anymore. She forgot how to walk. And then, when she recovered, she learned again.

0:13:42 Mari Allen: Wow.

0:13:43 Janet Daijogo: I know.

0:13:44 Mari Allen: So, after Tanforan, being in the racetrack, you were then transferred. How long were you at Tanforan, do you know?

0:13:51 Janet Daijogo: I think it was just a few weeks.

0:13:52 Mari Allen: Okay, and then you were transferred by train to Topaz, Utah?

0:13:55 Janet Daijogo: Yes, right. So we went by train and at one point — I just remember it was hot. And at one point, my mother — it stopped and they said we could get off and stretch our legs. And my mother pulled down the curtains to the windows and wouldn't let us off. I asked her many years later, why she didn't let us off? And she said because there were military police with guns and they were pointing them at the prisoners. She didn't want us to see that. So, she kept us in the train even though it was so hot. That's one memory I have of the train ride. Then when we got there, we were assigned to barracks. And it had a pot-belly stove for heat. I don't know how big the room was, but I would say it was probably about the size of this room. Five of us were in there with cots, lined up against that wall.

0:15:11 Mari Allen: So, about 10, maybe 20 feet by —

0:15:14 Janet Daijogo: Yeah.

0:15:16 Mari Allen: How long would you say this room is? 60 feet?

0:15:18 Janet Daijogo: Oh, I don't think it's even —

0:15:21 Mari Allen: Not even that far? No.

0:15:22 Janet Daijogo: No, I would say it was maybe 30.

0:15:25 Mari Allen: 30.

0:15:26 Janet Daijogo: Anyway, you could probably, if we wanted to, we could look that up. But I just remember the cots were in a row there. And I asked my mother, [chuckle] I said, “Well, if you could only take two suitcases of stuff,” I said, “where did you get the sheets?” And she said, “Janet, we didn’t have sheets and pillowcases, we just had army blankets, which were very scratchy, on mattresses and pillows.” And I think, maybe later on they got some, ’cause I don’t remember afterwards, but certainly there weren’t any when we got there, just those striped mattresses, mattress ticking, and there were blankets, those brown army blankets.

0:16:19 Mari Allen: And what else do you remember about camp? I mean, being a child is very — you’re very different —

0:16:23 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, it’s very different. And I remember going to the mess hall and eating, and getting food with everybody in a line on metal trays. And my brother, who was quite mischievous —

0:16:41 Mari Allen: And what was his name? What is his name?

0:16:42 Janet Daijogo: Hito.

0:16:43 Mari Allen: Hito?

0:16:43 Janet Daijogo: Yeah. He had a piece of tsukemono, a cabbage thing.

0:16:50 Mari Allen: Tsukemono is a pickled vegetable in Japanese.

0:16:51 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, right. He pulled it out, and it happened to be a long piece and he was — [chuckle]

0:17:00 Janet Daijogo: Showing everybody.

0:17:01 Mari Allen: So they were serving you Japanese food in camp?

0:17:03 Janet Daijogo: Some. And they also did things like one time we had to practically quit eating because, for 30 days, according to my mom, they just served the inside of animals, like liver and kidneys and stuff, and that’s not something Japanese eat. So I don’t know what we ate then. Rice, I guess. But they did have rice. I don’t remember, I mean, people cook. People who were cooks in their outside life helped out and they cooked. So I’m sure they did their best, but I don’t — it was the middle of the desert.

0:17:43 Mari Allen: So what did you do as a child for entertainment and activities?

0:17:47 Janet Daijogo: Well, let's see. We ran around, outside. I remember my brother and the little boys played marbles all the time. They took the cots — we had metal — not spring — they were like things like that —

0:18:07 Mari Allen: Was it metal? Like a Y-shaped metal piece?

0:18:08 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, exactly. So we learned to make sling-shots out of them, take one piece and make a sling-shot. So that was especially for the boys, and the girls got jacks, and I remember playing jacks in the laundry room. The central bathroom and laundry room have very smooth floors, cement floors where it was cool, so we did that. [chuckle] And I learned to jump rope there, I remember.

0:18:44 Mari Allen: And what about school? Do you remember starting school?

0:18:45 Janet Daijogo: Yes, yes. When I was probably — it would be six — I started the first grade, because they didn't have kindergarten. We walked to another block, and my teacher was — she probably was fairly young then. She was —

0:19:14 Mari Allen: Was she Japanese American as well?

0:19:17 Janet Daijogo: No, she was not. She was a Friend, she was — what Friends? Not the —

0:19:32 Mari Allen: Like a volunteer association?

0:19:38 Janet Daijogo: No, but it's a religious group, the Friends.

0:19:41 Mari Allen: Oh, like a community church, or a Mormon group?

0:19:45 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, but it wasn't Mormon. They have schools. Chelsea Clinton went to one, but —

0:19:52 Mari Allen: Oh, Quaker.

0:19:52 Janet Daijogo: Quaker, that's it. Sorry, I could not think of it. She was a Quaker, and she volunteered to come into camp and be with us and teach us. She taught us great songs and taught me to read. I remember her name was Miss Light, and I corresponded with her into college.

0:20:19 Mari Allen: Wow. So, she had a great impact on you?

0:20:23 Janet Daijogo: Yes, she did. I think she was kind and gentle, and had her heart in the right place. When I was in Berkeley, I think she, for a while, was in Albany, but I never connected with her except by letter. And soon after that, she moved to South Carolina or North Carolina, into a retirement community. So, I wrote her. We wrote, and

then she had a stroke and she wrote with her left hand, all wavery. Then she must have passed away somewhere by the time I finished college. So, yeah.

0:21:10 Mari Allen: So you left camp at age eight, around age eight? What do you remember about leaving? Was there an announcement of some sort?

0:21:21 Janet Daijogo: No, not really. I hardly have any — by then, my father was teaching in Oklahoma.

0:21:27 Mari Allen: So he had left the camp?

0:21:31 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, he had left camp. He had a job in Oklahoma teaching Japanese to the Navy. And then we met him in Stillwater. So I'm not sure —oh yeah, we were in Richmond, California by then. So from Stillwater, we went to Richmond, then he went overseas, and then we followed him afterwards.

0:21:57 Mari Allen: So, how was it being a Sansei, third-generation Japanese going to Japan? Had you visited before?

0:22:06 Janet Daijogo: No. Let's see, I would be in the fourth grade. I finished the fourth grade there, and then — yeah, the rest of the time, I was in Grant Heights. And I think by that, as somebody told me years later, "You were over colonized." [chuckle]

0:22:31: That I totally identified with my Army brat friends, and was pretty much just accepted by them. I just remember, I mean, I couldn't speak Japanese.

0:22:49 Mari Allen: Do you have a Japanese name?

0:22:51 Janet Daijogo: I do, Mutsumi.

0:22:53 Mari Allen: Mutsumi?

0:22:53 Janet Daijogo: My first name is Mutsumi. And I used it for a while when I did Aikido, but it's too much trouble to spell Mutsumi and Daijogo. [laughter]

0:23:05 Mari Allen: So, on the base, you were there from fourth grade through high school. So, did you leave the base at all to explore Japan?

0:23:13 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, we traveled quite a bit. Not a lot, but we went to Hiroshima.

0:23:17 Mari Allen: And so what was post-war Japan like?

0:23:22 Janet Daijogo: I remember the main station in Tokyo was still a shell. It had been bombed, and the great dome was still open. And so it was in the process of rebuilding, but it was torn, war torn. My mother had a brother, her oldest brother, they

had left in Japan with his grandparents. And by then he, as an adult, lived in Tokyo. He had a wife and a son who was, Satoshi was probably, I think maybe he was college age, or in college, I'm not sure. And we would bring food to them.

0:24:13 Mari Allen: From the base.

0:24:13 Janet Daijogo: From the base, which I think was illegal, but that's alright. So we brought them things like, I remember sugar, and I don't know what else they brought. And they sometimes, later, they could come to our house on the army base, and I remember distinctly, Satoshi, who was a young teenager, young man, we had a birthday cake or something, and they were just awful cakes with a lot of frosting that my mother probably had — that was bought in the commissary, and he just about ate all the frosting. [laughter]

0:24:58: Because he hadn't had sugar for years. So we very much identified with the population of Japan as the defeated nation, and we were American, and we were not part of that. So, I think in our minds, we were, and we were for real, separated. We didn't really have anything, we knew nothing of the culture, practically, except we ate Japanese food as well as American food. And our folks — and we look like this, we look Japanese — and our folks spoke Japanese. So that's what I remember. Our army base experience was probably like living in a village in the U.S., where everything was American and all the kids were Army brats, mainly. There was one African American boy that we all loved. He was a couple of years older, maybe two or three years older. He became the student body president. He was very popular. And there was maybe one other family, the Aokis, who were Japanese American. They had two or — Lowell and Janice — so at least two children, but there were maybe another family beside them later. But we were, again, not — there weren't a lot of us. It's my karma. [laughter]

0:26:51 Mari Allen: So did you apply to college from Japan then? So what was the name of your high school that you graduated from?

0:26:58 Janet Daijogo: Narimasu, N-A-R-I-M-A-S-U, High School. Narimasu High School.

0:27:05 Mari Allen: What year did you graduate?

0:27:06 Janet Daijogo: American high school, maybe it was. I graduated in '55.

0:27:11 Mari Allen: Have you gone back to Japan since that time?

0:27:13 Janet Daijogo: I have, yeah, my husband and I went back in '62, '63 for a year, just to have an adventure before we settled down. It was very interesting, 'cause it was like stepping into another planet from the Japan that I left, which was already being reconstructed and all, but it was, it was an amazing transformation.

0:27:48 Mari Allen: Where did you meet your husband?

0:27:50 Janet Daijogo: Here.

0:27:51 Mari Allen: Here in the United States?

0:27:51 Janet Daijogo: Yeah.

0:27:52 Mari Allen: So you went to Cal Berkeley from the army base in Japan, and how was your experience at Berkeley?

0:28:03 Janet Daijogo: It was hard. For me, the work was hard. I can't say that the army schools really prepared us for very much, and suddenly there was this whole — I mean, it was, the academic standards were amplified for me. And luckily I made it through, but it was, the first year was hard. What was also hard was I didn't really fit in anywhere as a Japanese American young woman. I didn't really fit in with the — my mother said I would now go to Berkeley and be with my people. Well, my people didn't really —

0:28:50 Mari Allen: They weren't there yet.

0:28:52 Janet Daijogo: They, no. And so I tried to make friends and it was civil, but I never made a friend. I never made a true friend at Berkeley that I — I don't have any contact with any of them, anybody from Berkeley. But what happened when I was a sophomore is I met Sam, my husband, and —

0:29:20 Mari Allen: Is he also Japanese American?

0:29:22 Janet Daijogo: Japanese American, yeah.

0:29:23 Mari Allen: What generation is he?

0:29:26 Janet Daijogo: Sansei.

0:29:26 Mari Allen: As well? Okay.

0:29:27 Janet Daijogo: Yeah. And he lived in Marin. And we met through another boyfriend that I had had in Japan, and this boy's name was Fred, and he played football with Sam at Tam High.

0:29:44 Mari Allen: Oh.

0:29:45 Janet Daijogo: Isn't that a weird thing? [chuckle]

0:29:46 Mari Allen: Yeah, Sam should be here for this interview, too.

0:29:48 Janet Daijogo: I know, he should. He's the one, you want him. Because he

was the one.

0:29:54 Mari Allen: Well, maybe he can be the next interview. [laughter]

0:29:57 Janet Daijogo: Except he's very dead. I know, it's very sad.

0:29:58 Mari Allen: Oh, I'm so sorry.

0:30:00 Janet Daijogo: I know, it's very sad.

0:30:02 Mari Allen: So you have to speak on his behalf then, as well.

0:30:04 Janet Daijogo: I will, I'll try to remember. I mean, I do remember some things he said. So he and Fred played football together, and I started seeing Fred again, and then Fred went to Korea because he joined the Army. Sam and I met at a dance, and so he took me home, and then it was a regular little romance that started out.

0:30:30 Mari Allen: And did he have a Japanese name also?

0:30:33 Janet Daijogo: His name wasn't really Sam, it was Masami.

0:30:36 Mari Allen: Oh, he shortened it.

0:30:39 Janet Daijogo: He took the, "Sam," out of the middle of his name. His relatives and his mother called him Masami; they didn't call him Sam. But all his friends did. And all his friends were from Belvedere and Tiburon, so they were all Caucasian. So he grew up with these rich kids.

0:31:03 Mari Allen: How did he end up in Marin? How did his family come here?

0:31:06 Janet Daijogo: Because his family — after the war, everybody dispersed, and they went to try to get jobs and things. His father found work as a gardener. I don't know where else, but he ended up on Corinthian Island. So of course Sam's mom was with him, and so he gardened, and sometimes he tended bar for the person whose house — they lived in a small cottage on Corinthian Island.

0:31:47 Mari Allen: Where had they been interned?

0:31:52 Janet Daijogo: I think they were in Tule Lake, which was north, because his father, step-father, this was his step-father, his real father committed suicide before going into camp, because he was an alcoholic and he knew he wouldn't be able to have any liquor. So he hung himself.

0:32:20 Mari Allen: Oh!

0:32:20 Janet Daijogo: I know. So I found this out later. But anyway, his mom

remarried, actually they didn't remarry in camp, but they lived together. So he was sometimes tending bar, but mainly he was a gardener, and when Sam was in high school, they married because they were common law. But they were together for a long time and they were always fighting. [laughter]

0:33:09 Janet Daijogo: But she was a real protector for Sam. She gave him everything that she could.

0:33:20 Mari Allen: Do you recollect what he had to say about being at Tam High?

0:33:25 Janet Daijogo: He had a good time. [chuckle] I think he was the only Japanese boy, or Japanese American. He said there was in the beginning, and there was one exchange student from Japan, and everybody liked him. But then he wasn't an American. But because he was on Belvedere Island, there was not a huge — and Corinthian Island — there wasn't a huge population of boys or kids. It was small then. He said you could go down to Tiburon Boulevard and there might be a car between Mill Valley and here. They used to go to the theater in Mill Valley. They would hitch rides, hope that somebody would come along. And every car that came along knew them, and they knew them, they knew each other. So they would get these rides into Mill Valley, the big town.

0:34:31 Mari Allen: So you met as sophomores in college?

0:34:34 Janet Daijogo: I did. He was in art school. He didn't go to college, he went to art school, and the Academy of Advertising Art. And yeah, we met then.

0:34:45 Mari Allen: When did you marry?

0:34:47 Janet Daijogo: Five years later.

0:34:48 Mari Allen: What year was that in? 1960 —

0:34:52 Janet Daijogo: Let's see, I finished in '59, so we must have married in — that would have been '61, '62, somewhere in there. I'm sorry. I'm very bad at dates, and I didn't look it up, of course.

0:35:09 Mari Allen: That's okay. And so did he speak Japanese? Did his mom speak with him?

0:35:17 Janet Daijogo: That's an interesting question. Yes. She spoke broken Japanese, well, broken English I should say. And they spoke a dialect of Japanese from Hiroshima, because she was from Hiroshima, so it was Hiroshima-ben. And I think his father was, his step-father maybe was in that. So what he learned was a Japanese that had not changed, the language had not changed for 50 or 60 years. And plus that it was rural country Japanese, and so it was funny Japanese, apparently. [chuckle]

0:36:06 Mari Allen: So when you went back in 1962, was he your — he was speaking

his —

0:36:11 Janet Daijogo: Well kind of. He was speaking his Japanese. I mean, he could get around a lot better than I could, but he found a job, part-time job. We both found part-time jobs in Japan. He as an illustrator. He worked for a very prestigious company called Light Publicity three days a week, and they would take him to parties and have him speak Japanese, and then they would just howl with laughter. [laughter]

0:36:42 Janet Daijogo: Apparently. [laughter] And when my daughters, both Tane and Maki — Tane actually majored in Japanese when she went to Cal. And my friend, Yukiko Haydock said, spoke when she was so excited that Tane was speaking Japanese, and she went and talked to her in the kitchen in Japanese and she said, “Oh,” she said, “her Japanese is beautiful. You must never let her listen to her father speak Japanese.” [laughter] “And she should —”

0:37:16 Mari Allen: Oh, that’s funny.

0:37:18 Janet Daijogo: It was very funny.

0:37:19 Mari Allen: So after your time in Japan, you came back to the States, and where did you live then?

0:37:24 Janet Daijogo: Okay, so we were back to the States, and I lived in Berkeley, met Sam. When we married, we —let’s see, we married — I was teaching in south San Francisco, he had a job in San Diego. We married —

0:37:41 Mari Allen: So you were an education major then in Berkeley?

0:37:44 Janet Daijogo: Yeah.

0:37:44 Mari Allen: Okay. And so what were you — ?

0:37:45 Janet Daijogo: But you didn’t major in education then. I majored in child development, and minored in history. Then you took some education courses, which you’re totally unprepared to teach. But that’s alright. [laughter] You learned on the job.

0:38:00 Mari Allen: Yes.

0:38:01 Janet Daijogo: So then we went to San Diego. So that would have been ’62. We married in ’62 or ’61, maybe. And so then we decided that before we settle down, we would go to Japan, because he was working for General Dynamics Astronautics, and it was going down the tubes. I was working in an underprivileged area. It was hard in San Diego, and so we decided to have a little adventure. So we saved just enough money, we figured we could stay for maybe four to six months. So we just packed up a bunch of things and caught a boat. And then we both, once we got there, we traveled a little bit, and then we found part-time jobs, which enabled us to stay for a year. And after a year,

we were really ready to come home, because we'd sort of not started our life here. But it was a really good thing to do. I mean, it was, it's good to have your adventure. So we never felt, I think the rest of our lives, we never felt like we needed to travel, because it's like we did it all in one place.

0:39:25 Mari Allen: And when you returned, where did you return to?

0:39:29 Janet Daijogo: Well, we returned to San Diego, and he had a job waiting. A friend, Tom Suzuki, hired him and so that made — we were gonna go to New York, because that's what people did in the art world, but he had a job, so we went there. And after I was pregnant, I was teaching in Chula Vista, and one day he came home and he said, "I just quit my job." And I said, "Oh, really?" [laughs] "Why would you do that?" And his friend Tom Suzuki was embroiled in a political thing at this place, and so he got fired. So Sam got up from the drawing board and said, "I quit." And he left, with Sam, with Tom. That was it. Because he just thought it was unjust and there was no reason because Tom was a brilliant book designer. So that was it. So then he didn't have a job. And I was pregnant but I finished my contract in June, and in April, Sam — I remember he went to San Francisco to try to find a job, because we decided, "Well, we'll go back to the city." And luckily he found a job. So as soon as I finished my job in June, we got a U-Haul truck and moved up to Mill Valley.

0:41:24 Mari Allen: Oh, not to San Francisco? You moved right to Mill Valley.

0:41:27 Janet Daijogo: No. We looked in San Francisco, but I don't know, we just — I think because his parents were there, and still in Belvedere, and that was what he knew. And I loved Mill Valley, 'cause I had come to Mill Valley when I was a freshman at Berkeley, 'cause I was seeing this Fred Bremmerman, and he took me to Mill Valley from Berkeley just to say, "This is where I went to high school, and this is where I lived with these folks." And I said, "Oh gosh, it's so —" I remember it was in Cascade Canyon.

0:42:07 Mari Allen: Right near where we are right now, at the library.

0:42:08 Janet Daijogo: Yeah. Yeah. Oh no, it was in Blithedale Canyon maybe.

0:42:12 Mari Allen: Okay.

0:42:13 Janet Daijogo: But it was one of these canyons, and I said, "I wanna live in Mill Valley. It's beautiful here in East —" And this boy said, "Okay, we'll do that." [chuckle]

0:42:24 Janet Daijogo: I did it, but not with him. [laughs]

0:42:27 Mari Allen: Wow, so what year was it when you moved then to Strawberry?

0:42:31 Janet Daijogo: Okay, so it would've been '63 — '64 was in San Diego, so

around '64. June of '64, '65, somewhere there.

0:42:41 Mari Allen: Where was your daughter born?

0:42:45 Janet Daijogo: She was born in San Diego.

0:42:46 Mari Allen: Oh, okay.

0:42:50 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, she was born in San Diego, but she was like three months old when we —

0:42:55 Mari Allen: When you moved. And what is her name?

0:42:56 Janet Daijogo: Tane, and she lives in Mill Valley too.

0:42:58 Mari Allen: And what is her full name?

0:43:00 Janet Daijogo: Tane Daijogo Lightner.

0:43:04 Mari Allen: Okay, and it's T-A-N-A?

0:43:06 Janet Daijogo: T-A-N-E.

0:43:07 Mari Allen: T-A-N-E, Tane.

0:43:08 Janet Daijogo: Tane, seed. Like a seed.

0:43:09 Mari Allen: Like a seed, in Japanese, yes?

0:43:10 Janet Daijogo: Right, and so she didn't change her name to Lightner, so she's not Lightner, she's Tane Daijogo, but she married Robert Lightner.

0:43:19 Mari Allen: Do they have children?

0:43:20 Janet Daijogo: Yes. So they have two children. One is Grace Daijogo and Ben Masami Daijogo. Grace is at Cal now, and Ben is at Tam High.

0:43:35 Mari Allen: Okay. So they stayed in Mill Valley as well.

0:43:37 Janet Daijogo: So they stayed in Mill Valley. I mean, it is unbelievable that they were able to do that. And my other daughter is too. Well as you know —

0:43:45 Mari Allen: Tell me how much younger is your next daughter.

0:43:48 Janet Daijogo: One year. They're only a year apart.

0:43:49 Mari Allen: Okay. So tell me your other daughter's full name.

0:43:51 Janet Daijogo: So that's Maki Daijogo. M-A-K-I. And then she married David Spiegelman, who grew up in Mill Valley, I think. Pretty much. And they have two children. Sam Daijogo Spiegelman and Josie Daijogo Spiegelman.

0:44:12 Mari Allen: And how old are they right now?

0:44:13 Janet Daijogo: Sam is 16 and Josie's 13.

0:44:16 Mari Allen: And you said Sam is a junior at Tam and Josie is —

0:44:20 Janet Daijogo: Mill Valley Middle School, eighth grade.

0:44:23 Mari Allen: Okay. So what was it like when you first got settled in Strawberry and in Mill Valley? Describe Mill Valley at that time.

0:44:32 Janet Daijogo: Well, we were in Strawberry in apartments for over a year — yeah, about or almost two, maybe a year and a half. The apartments are right behind the shopping center, the Strawberry Shopping Center, 'cause you could look down off the balcony and see the shopping center. And it was just like it — I mean that part, it looks like — it doesn't look so very different, but it's just fancier, it's been remodeled and so everything has been upgraded and made to look more modern. But it was also a place where we didn't even think that we couldn't afford it. Everybody could afford it. I mean, if you have jobs. So it was for ordinary people, and I'm thinking the term for "ordinary people" has changed.

0:45:35 Mari Allen: Since that time.

0:45:36 Janet Daijogo: Yes, it —

0:45:37 Mari Allen: Where did your daughters go to pre-school and elementary school?

0:45:42 Janet Daijogo: They both went to Beverly Bastian's nursery schools, which were Tamalpais Nursery School, Strawberry Nursery School, Hawthorne in Belvedere — no, Belvedere Nursery School, Hawthorne was up on the hill. She also had one in Sausalito at Saint Andrew's Church. So there were I think five nursery schools, and so my kids went to a combination of those. Maki mainly went to Tam, Tamalpais. Tane went to Strawberry and Hawthorne, I think. I can't remember who went to what. And Maki went to — she started out because Sam's parents would babysit them, and she was at Belvedere Nursery School at a time where Belvedere was changing too. There were apartments that were being built, whereas before they looked like they were single-floor things, and then they got these larger apartments.

0:46:58 Mari Allen: So when you moved, where was your husband working, and

where were you working?

0:47:02 Janet Daijogo: He was working for 40 Gold Street, at Max Landphere Associates, which was a studio with different kinds of artists. He was mainly an illustrator and —

0:47:18 Mari Allen: Of what type of — were they books or magazines, or what did he do?

0:47:22 Janet Daijogo: Mainly point of purchase stuff, which is advertising art. And I was a mom for two years, and losing my mind. [chuckle] Some of us are not meant to stay home. I just wasn't a good mommy. [laughs] It wasn't enough for me to be a mommy.

0:47:47: So, I started working for Beverly Bastian, who started a fringe school of children who were nursery school dropouts. It was a school for disturbed children and children that couldn't make it in nursery school, which I think was brilliant of her to do. And it was small, it was in the Strawberry — that church, the Presbyterian Church. And I think there were, let's see, Vicky, and — there were two or three of us, two teachers, and I think I was the third one to join, because those children were getting older and they needed to learn to read, and they needed to hire somebody who could do that. So they hired me because I had a credential. So as the children got to be five and six, I was at the other end. That was my job, was to try to help them with the academic part that they were gonna need, when we hoped they would transition someday back into regular school. So I got a very unique training, and I worked for them for 18 years.

0:49:16 Mari Allen: Wow.

0:49:17 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, until I couldn't do it anymore, and the school started to lose its funding, 'cause it was a non-profit. It was also moving in a direction that didn't fit our original plan. But it was a really great vision that this woman had, and we tried to carry it out. We only had maybe four or five children, each with an aide.

0:49:51 Mari Allen: Wow.

0:49:52 Janet Daijogo: Because these children were — they just could get out of control so easily.

0:49:57 Mari Allen: So now you're a kindergarten teacher?

0:50:00 Janet Daijogo: Yeah.

0:50:00 Mari Allen: And a renowned kindergarten teacher, by the way, at Marin Country Day School.

0:50:02 Janet Daijogo: Really? [laughs]

0:50:03 Mari Allen: That's what I've heard. Word on the street is that you are just a tremendous kindergarten teacher. When did you transition to Marin Country Day School, after working in the type of school you were?

0:50:14 Janet Daijogo: Well, okay, so by then my kids were in high school. They started high school and I thought it would be a better idea for me to get a job where the salary didn't go down every year. And so, I looked in the *Chronicle* wanted ads, and they needed three teachers at Marin Country Day: kindergarten, second, and fifth. So I had an interview and the headmaster said, "Which grade would you like to teach if you get this job?" and I said, "Oh, I'll take kindergarten."

0:50:48 Mari Allen: So what year was that?

0:50:50 Janet Daijogo: I don't know. Let's see. It was a long time ago. It was 30 — this would be my 32nd year. So I finished 31 years there. So you do the math.

0:51:00 Mari Allen: At Marin Country Day?

0:51:00 Janet Daijogo: Yeah.

0:51:01 Mari Allen: That is absolutely amazing. That's why you're renowned.

0:51:05 Janet Daijogo: Well, because I've been around. I endure. I know that my training that I had in this therapeutic school shaped the kind of teaching that I did. Whereas, I love content and stuff, I don't really care what it is. The content for me is only the bridge to the child. And so if you can move the heart of a child, they can learn anything, is my simple philosophy. But, no, I've been very lucky to have a job that was so stimulating. And Marin Country Day is a great place to work because after Sam — when I first started working there, I said, "Sam, these children don't need me. They have done everything, they've been everywhere, they have everything, I don't think this is where I'm supposed to be." And he finally looked at me and he said, "You know," he said, "Janet, those kids can't help it if they're rich. Why don't you just go and have fun? A new concept." And I think those are wise words because they also need good teaching, and people who will care about them, teachers who care.

0:52:47: So I've stayed, but what you have at Marin Country Day, or any school, independent school like it, is a lot of — well, you can have everything as far as curriculum goodies go, but you can also have as much professional development as you want. And I think that's extraordinary. There's not ever been a workshop or anything that I've wanted to do that has been denied. Basically, they don't do that. They even sent us, about 10 years ago, to Italy, our whole team, my whole kindergarten team.

0:53:30 Mari Allen: Where did you get to go?

0:53:31 Janet Daijogo: Reggio Emilia.

0:53:32 Mari Allen: I was going to ask you.

0:53:33 Janet Daijogo: Yeah.

0:53:34 Mari Allen: That can't be in my — I'm saying I'm jealous, but that doesn't need to be recorded. But that's incredible.

0:53:40 Janet Daijogo: Yes, it is incredible. It's fun. And my colleagues, I love my colleagues, the two men I teach with. My friend once said to me, "You don't retire because you love the people you work with," and that is so true.

0:54:00 Mari Allen: That's wonderful.

0:54:00 Janet Daijogo: It is. I'm so lucky.

0:54:02 Mari Allen: Well, even though you said you didn't want to be a stay-at-home mommy, you are a mother to two daughters, and they seem to have embraced their Japanese heritage in some way. How did that happen with them?

0:54:18 Janet Daijogo: I think they both had exposure, they had time with my mother and father, and —

0:54:26 Mari Allen: So they were still very involved with your children?

0:54:28 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, they were pretty involved. And Sam's stepfather and mother took care of them when I worked part time at those nurseries, or at the Marin Child Development Center is what it was called. So, they were exposed to that, but not a whole lot more. But they both studied Japanese at college, so it was something they wanted to know more about. Maki, I think, took two years of Japanese. Tane majored in it, and then Maki went off onto her — but they both did their junior year abroad in Japan.

0:55:12 Mari Allen: Where did they study in Japan?

0:55:14 Janet Daijogo: The ICU, which is the International — did you go there?

0:55:17 Mari Allen: I went there, too! Yes!

0:55:18 Janet Daijogo: Oh, my gosh! As a junior?

0:55:20 Mari Allen: Yes.

0:55:21 Janet Daijogo: Okay. Where did you — ?

0:55:22 Mari Allen: So, another time we're gonna have to talk about that place. Yes, I did.

0:55:24 Janet Daijogo: Yes, they did. So, that program was still going then. They both did their junior year abroad, and so they both spent a year there. Tane, then came back, graduated, and went into JET². She and Rob actually met in Tokyo, even though they both went to Berkeley, in the JET training.

0:55:52 Mari Allen: And the JET program is a Japanese English Teachers program.

0:55:57 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, where they —

0:55:58 Mari Allen: Sponsored by the Japanese government.

0:56:00 Janet Daijogo: Right, right. Whatever they learned was pretty — they were immersed in that culture. Well, sort of immersed, semi-immersed. And then Tane after she finished JET, came back. Oh, and then she went back — no, no, she did JET, and then she found a — what is the commitment for JET? Is it a year?

0:56:29 Mari Allen: I believe it's one or two years, I can't recall.

0:56:30 Janet Daijogo: Is it two? I think it's one. Anyway, she found a job at Levi's in Japan, and so she and Rob stayed there. Rob had another job. They stayed in Japan for — between JET and their own jobs, they were there for three years. They're both fluent in Japanese, and they both read, write and speak it, so it's just part of who they are.

0:57:04 Mari Allen: And then, what about your other daughter?

0:57:05 Janet Daijogo: And then Maki did the junior year abroad, came back and graduated. Then she went to JET also. And she was in Yokohama for a year, and then she came back. Oh, then she went to law school. So then now, that's the way it went.

0:57:28 Mari Allen: And have they taught their children Japanese?

0:57:29 Janet Daijogo: No, because Maki doesn't speak it. I asked them why they didn't speak Japanese to their children, Tane and Rob, and they said, "Because we're not native speakers."

0:57:43 Mari Allen: That is exactly what my husband and I have said.

0:57:46 Janet Daijogo: Really?

0:57:47 Mari Allen: Exactly. Yes. We can talk off — offline —

0:57:50 Janet Daijogo: Off the record —

² The Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, a Japanese government initiative that brings English-speaking college graduates to Japan, primarily as assistant language teachers in Japanese schools.

0:57:51 Mari Allen: Off the record about that. So tell me about your husband and you once your kids were in high school, and you're back at work. Where was your husband working at that time?

0:58:03 Janet Daijogo: Oh, by the time, I think, Tane was maybe in the second or third grade, he started to freelance. Max Landphere retired, and so the studio closed down. And he decided he could make it freelancing. He freelanced from then on. So he was able to — he worked out of home, he had a little studio underneath the garage that he outfitted. He was able to pick up the kids from school and bring them home, and feed them snack, so I think it was a lovely time. I know he just loved that time with them. So they were very close to their dad. Tane ran track, and Maki ran a little track, also. He would be down there at Tam High with the track mommies. [laughs] On, was it Tuesday or Thursday afternoons?

0:59:07 Mari Allen: Which was very unusual for the time to have a dad at home.

0:59:11 Janet Daijogo: Yes, and he was the only one in the track mommies that was a male. Yeah.

0:59:18 Mari Allen: And did either you or your husband ever feel living in Mill Valley, because there were probably not very many Asian people living here, did you ever sense any type of prejudice, or encounter anything?

0:59:31 Janet Daijogo: I think there probably were. The encounter was definitely when we were going to look for a rental. We went to this place that's still here on Miller Avenue, an apartment on the right-hand side. It's Innsbrook, or something like that.

0:59:50 Mari Allen: That's still here.

0:59:50 Janet Daijogo: And we went there because they had a "For Rent" sign. This is before eBay, or whatever.

0:59:56 Mari Allen: Craigslist, or any of those.

0:59:57 Janet Daijogo: Craigslist, any of those. They said it was rented, and we had the definite and distinct impression that it hadn't been, and that we were being racially profiled. Because a couple days later, we went by and it was still for rent. But we didn't go back there. So we ended up in Strawberry. That would have been the one time that was blatant. And when we bought the property that we built the house on, on Tamalpais, I remember —

1:00:37 Mari Allen: So is that where you lived most of the time?

1:00:39 Janet Daijogo: Yeah.

1:00:40 Mari Allen: What was the address on Tamalpais?

1:00:41 Janet Daijogo: 269.

1:00:42 Mari Allen: Tamalpais?

1:00:43 Janet Daijogo: Uh-huh.

1:00:43 Mari Allen: Okay.

1:00:45 Janet Daijogo: We ended up building a house, because we'd looked for houses, but we didn't see anything we liked for the price that we could arrange. [chuckle] So we bought that. I was thinking about it this morning, it was in the *Chronicle* want ad for \$13,000 for the lot, and we bought it for 11.5. Can you — ? It's just a joke.

1:01:11 Mari Allen: You can't even imagine now — where that lot would have — how many extra zeros added on to it.

1:01:17 Janet Daijogo: I know, it's just so incredible. So we decided, and I think it was the absolute right thing to do, to build this house, 'cause we could build it for what they were offering. One of the — the wall was caved this way.

1:01:36 Mari Allen: Oh, all curved?

1:01:37 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, it was curved. There was something really wrong with it. So yeah, so we built the house. But I think because both Sam and I had the unusual experience of having lived among Caucasian people mainly, that we didn't have a problem. I mean we were confident in work, and in ourselves. Neither of us were in a Japanese American community, so we had a comfort zone that was different, and it was actually for me, more than for Sam. I was not as comfortable in the Japanese American milieu as I was in a regular, what I think of was normal for me. It's an odd thing. But I didn't understand — maybe I told you this story on the phone, but Tane, when she was, I think seven, got a bit part in John Korty's — she said one line, for which she got paid \$500 in a film that he made, called "Farewell to Manzanar."

1:03:04 Mari Allen: Oh, yes. And I know the book well.

1:03:05 Janet Daijogo: Yeah, right. Jean Houston. Okay, what was I starting to talk about?

1:03:13 Mari Allen: About her at age seven.

1:03:15 Janet Daijogo: At age seven. So had this little bit part, but there was something that I forgot, and it'll come back to me. Anyway, she was in this movie, and the rest of us got to be extras.

1:03:36 Mari Allen: Now have your daughters ever said in retrospect, because there

probably were not very many Asian children in their classes at Old Mill, or MVMS — Mill Valley Middle School — or at Tam High. Did they ever feel anything, any prejudice or did they notice anything?

1:03:55 Janet Daijogo: If they did, they never said it to us. I don't think that they did. I think it would have just manifested itself in the mean things middle school girls do to each other anyway, whether it depended on it. But I don't think they ever felt — you'd have to ask them.

1:04:15 Mari Allen: Now when you came in here you told me that you had done Zazen. So that leads me to believe that you have come to identify with some Japanese culture recently?

1:04:27 Janet Daijogo: Well actually, you know, the Zen community in America, or at least in the Bay Area, is very strong, and it's not affiliated with Japanese Americans. It's mainly white people who are sitting Zazen, and the Abbott and all those people who lead the Green Gulch are mainly Caucasian. And what happened that I think got me interested in Zazen, or any sort of mediation, was the experience I had in Mill Valley doing Aikido. There was a very strong Aikido center, Aikido of Tamalpais, which is right down — what street is that? It's downtown. It used to be a car dealer, apparently ages ago, and the top floor was a Dojo, so Sam and I trained there for years. And now that Dojo has moved to Corte Madera or Larkspur, I think. Anyway, I became interested in the mind-body-spirit thing through Aikido, and then I started meditating because I was so scared of Aikido, that I was trying to calm my mind.

1:06:02: So I started sitting on my own, and so once in a while I go to this — there is, at O'Hanlon Center, there's a class that meets, and so I go to that in the summertime, if I can. Then sometimes I do a half-day sitting with them, but I like the teacher. The main teacher there is Ed Sattizahn, who's right now the abiding Abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center. And so, like Sunday, he has to do a lecture at Green Gulch. So I just like his humility and his sweetness. But it wasn't because of the Japanese thing.

1:06:53 Mari Allen: That's interesting. That's interesting.

1:06:55 Janet Daijogo: It's not my karma. [laughter] I know it's very odd the way that — and I think there are other people like us that are not — I don't know, we just missed the Japanese boat.

1:07:10 Mari Allen: I find it fascinating to hear your story. If you were looking at Mill Valley today, you've referred to it quite a few times in our chat, about how you've seen this area change, what are the most profound changes do you think?

1:07:31 Janet Daijogo: Well, I think it's probably what everybody says, it's the influx of a lot of money that was not, did not define Mill Valley in the beginning.

1:07:44 Mari Allen: How would you have defined it when you moved here?

1:07:47 Janet Daijogo: It was a place, a sweet village for normal people. [laughter] Where we didn't think of ourselves — if you lived or you love Mill Valley, it is a special place. I mean, geographically, and it is special to be a little village at the bottom of a mountain. A little town at the bottom of a mountain. It's picturesque. It's different than other places. And there were a lot of artists and artsy types, including us in those days. I don't think we felt important or special. We just were lucky that we landed here and that we could be here, but we'd never thought, "Oh, I can't afford Mill Valley," or, "I can't live here because these people are not like me." Everywhere you went in Mill Valley, because the population must have been smaller then, there were people you knew. I mean, if I went to the Mill Valley Market, you have to kind of think about it because you were gonna see people and it would take you longer to get out than you thought. [laughs] So don't be in a hurry.

1:09:10: But I think mainly it is how fancy it's become. Like downtown Mill Valley, by 7 o'clock, it was dead. No, there was nobody. There were no coffee shops, or I guess maybe there was a bar or two, but there weren't the amount of restaurants that there are now. There was a dime store, there were two dime stores when I got here, and two pharmacies. And now, there are like — I don't know how many furniture stores we have, and boutiques.

1:10:11 Mari Allen: Women's clothing.

1:10:12 Janet Daijogo: Women's clothing. I mean it feels to me like it's becoming Sausalito, that feeling that you can't really get anything you need, like a spool of thread, or a button or something.

1:10:27 Mari Allen: Yes, I was trying to figure out where I could buy stationery today.

1:10:30 Janet Daijogo: Oh, that's another thing I was gonna — I asked my friend, "Where do you buy your paper to put in your printer?" Because I used to go to the office supply place.

1:10:40 Mari Allen: Yeah, Mill Valley Services. Ideal Stationers has closed.

1:10:44 Janet Daijogo: Both of them. And luckily, I don't usually need paper, because I'm still working and I do a lot of my — most of my printing at school, but I just happened to run out at home. So my friend brought me some. Because they use a lot of it, 'cause they have a business, a small business. She uses the fax, and she uses her computer a lot more than I do. So she helped me, and she just — something was wrong with it, so she brought me some paper.

1:11:24 Mari Allen: That's wonderful. [laughter]

1:11:27 Mari Allen: But many of the interviews that I've done, people have mentioned that previously there was a hardware store.

1:11:33 Janet Daijogo: Yes. There were two hardware stores.

1:11:35 Mari Allen: The general store, and pharmacies, and Strawbridge's was the stationery store.

1:11:39 Janet Daijogo: That's right.

1:11:40 Mari Allen: And there —

1:11:41 Janet Daijogo: And there was a bookstore beside the — I mean, before the Depot.

1:11:44 Mari Allen: Beside the Depot.

1:11:47 Janet Daijogo: It was an honest-to-God bookstore where you can order a book and get a book. Thank gosh for this library.

1:11:56 Mari Allen: And tell me, if it's not too difficult, tell me about your husband. You said he passed away.

1:12:01 Janet Daijogo: He did in 2000. Just before 2000, so in 1999, '98. Late in '98 he was diagnosed with advanced bladder cancer. And so it was a really horrible year, and he died on Halloween Day, 1999. So he did not make it to 2000. It was difficult, and it was so sad, as you can imagine.

1:12:36 Mari Allen: Yes, I can imagine.

1:12:37 Janet Daijogo: Yeah. It was sad for my children. He only got to meet two of his grandchildren, Gracie, and Sam was 10 months old when Sam — so Sam has no memory of him, and Gracie really doesn't. She was three when he died, and she can't really remember, she said, anything about him. Although he took care of her every Friday, for all her three years.

1:13:08 Mari Allen: Then Sam, your grandson Sam, carries his name.

1:13:11 Janet Daijogo: Yup, he does. And Ben carries his name also, because his name is Benjamin Masami Daijogo Lightner, come to think of it.

1:13:23 Mari Allen: So did the other grandchildren have Japanese names?

1:13:28 Janet Daijogo: No. Except for Daijogo, 'cause that's their middle name for all of them. I don't know what they do with the next generation. [laughter]

1:13:38 Mari Allen: So, very last question, because we're almost to 90 minutes. If you could name one thing that you're most proud of in your life, what would you say that

might be?

1:13:56 Janet Daijogo: Can I name two things?

1:13:57 Mari Allen: Oh, of course you can.

1:13:58 Janet Daijogo: One is that I earned a black belt in Aikido, and the next is my teaching career. I think I've been lucky and blessed.

1:14:11 Mari Allen: I'm sure many, many of your students — I mean this is so many decades of students that you have inspired — would probably say so, too. Because what I've heard is just accolades about you, and that's —

1:14:27 Janet Daijogo: I have good press? [chuckle]

1:14:28 Mari Allen: Yes, you have wonderful press. But I just, on behalf of the Mill Valley Public Library, and the Mill Valley Historical Society, I would love to thank you for the opportunity to interview you, and the time that you've spent talking about your life, and what Mill Valley was like, because it has certainly changed since you arrived.

1:14:47 Janet Daijogo: It has. It has.

1:14:49 Mari Allen: So, is there anything else that you would like to say?

1:14:51 Janet Daijogo: No, except thank you for taking the time, and I hope you get some other people. [chuckle]

1:14:55 Mari Allen: Oh, yes, we've had lots, so thank you very much. I'm going to press this off now.