

Martha Longenecker
October 1, 2012
interviewed by Susan Resnik
for San Diego State University
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SUSAN RESNIK: Today is Monday, October 1, 2012. This is Susan Resnik. I'm here in the lovely home of Professor Martha Longenecker. We're about to begin recording her oral history for the oral history project housed in Special Collections and University Archives at San Diego State University. This project is funded by a John and Jane Adams Mini-Grant for the Humanities. In recognition of her contribution to transcultural artistic understanding, in 2003 Professor Longenecker was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun by the Emperor of Japan. When she was awarded the eleventh woman's Living Legacy Award, Daring To Be Different, Professor Longenecker's career in art was described as a "many-faceted design related to being an artist, craftsman, educator, and founder-director of Mingei International Museum, located in Balboa Park, San Diego."

In 1955, Martha Longenecker was sought out by San Diego State University as a well-known potter, to develop the ceramics program within the art department. In addition to teaching pottery, she taught the history of ceramics, design, and art education, which included the supervision of student teachers in the San Diego schools. She initiated and designed many exhibitions in the university art gallery. Rather than continuing my description, I would like Professor Longenecker to share her feelings and thoughts and speak in her own words.

Good morning, Professor Longenecker.

~00:01:55

MARTHA LONGENECKER: Good morning, Susan.

SR: Please share your early years, and what you feel was significant to you about your early years, in terms of how things developed later.

ML: The longer I live, the more I seem to remember and relate things of my current life to my early life. It's quite fascinating to see the connection between all things. First of all, I was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, but brought to California with my brother and sister, father and mother, when I was only nine months of age. So I don't remember much about that. I do remember a little thing. I can remember being put in a shed. I guess there was an earthquake or a tornado or something. I remember opening something up and going down. I remember that. And I remember on the way out to California, on the train, I just remember being in a bunk or something and I was looking out the window, and suddenly another train went in the opposite [direction] with just a *swish!* I remember that just impressed me so. As I've matured in life and thought about it, I thought how significant that was. I was going west, and another train going east was coming. And as my life developed into a tremendous awareness of the East as well as the West, you see, it flashed back to me.

I also was fortunate to come from a very fine family, an extraordinary father and mother, interesting brother and sister. Everything affects us—everything. First of all, I was born a Quaker, Philadelphia Quaker. This was on my father's side, and his mother's mother's mother—three mothers—was Betsy Ross. And so I came from a family where there'd been this tactile thing of

working with real materials, transforming materials into something else, you see. Direct descendant, Mother's mother's mother. Also, my father and two others of his brothers [unclear] all became Philadelphia lawyers, all born back there, right in New Jersey and ten miles from Philadelphia. But my father left the law profession after some years, because you had to lie, you couldn't always tell the truth, and my father was a *strong* Quaker and a Mason, and he had to be true. He was interested in the life of the matter, what is truth, what is truth. And that's very much like the teachings of the twentieth-century world teacher, J.Krishnamurti. It's a perception of the truth in that all truth is self-evident. So many things that happened.

He somehow had come out to Little Rock, Arkansas, for some reason. When he got back on the train, or was getting back, he discovered he had left his keys. And so he had to not go on that train, and go back and whomever he was visiting—I don't know the details—had a party or something, and he met my mother! So his losing the keys, or his forgetting, meant he met my mother. And my mother was French. There were so many French people that came over and settled Louisiana and all of that area. And her name was Elizabeth Love—family name Audigier, A-U-D-I-G-I-E-R, French name—whereas my father was Welsh. And they had my brother, nine years older than I, [who has had] a very interesting life. We won't go into that now. And then my sister was three years older than I. She was born with absolute pitch and was very serious in the field of music—really planned to be a concert pianist and practiced for hours a day, and loved it and all. But then in college she fell in love and got married and had five children.

So she never became the concert pianist. But anyway, she was a very interesting person, but very different than I. I think partly because I *love* music. I think music affects me as much as any of the arts. But she was so skilled in it. She was three years older and playing all these recitals, doing things. So for me to get up there and plunk the keys.... I remember being in a little recital once, that I had to learn, but it wasn't my media. But I was a child that very much liked to look and feel and touch and so forth. I could go on for hours about all of that. [~00:08:17]

I mention it because I ended up becoming a potter and a teacher, and was so blessed to have fantastic teachers throughout my life, ever-evolving. It never stops. One little incident I often tell is that it was a premonition of my being a potter because when I was maybe three or something, in a little preschool, I noticed that there had been some talcum powder or something on the wash basin, and it had kind of gotten wet, and I put my finger in it and it felt *wonderful*. Well, that powder is clay, you see, and so it was classic, and oh boy, I took *more* of the powder and I made a little ball of clay and I was *thrilled* at this thing I'd discovered. And my mother came in, and fortunately she wasn't the kind that would scream at you or anything. She just let me know that I was not to play with her powder and so forth. What was so important to me, was as a child to realize how we as children think. I thought, "Well, I won't do that again, but boy I'm sure glad I did it! This was fun, this was important." And I remember lots of things in my childhood. I remember learning to buckle my shoe. I did it all alone. I was in a closet. I'd watched them, and I had this thing, and I stuck it

through the little hole and grabbed the button and pulled it back. And being so thrilled, all these things you learn.

~00:10:18

SR: Tactile. That's interesting.

ML: And one of the main things I remember—again, before kindergarten—at Christmas or sometime, my parents gave us dolls, and my sister was given a large, gorgeous doll. But I was three years younger, so they just gave me a little doll, but it opened and closed its eyes! Well, when they handed that [to me], I just was so excited! It opens and closes its eyes! My sister right away said *she* wanted it. You know [how children are]. And so Mother said, “Well Honey, Louise’s doll is so much better, why don’t you trade her?” And I said, “It doesn’t open and close its eyes.” And no matter what they said, it doesn’t open—. That was significant. *Seeing*, you see.

SR: Yes.

ML: The whole thing is direct seeing. And then I could tell you other weird things, because I’m a teacher and I often tell people this story, because I think so often teachers really hurt students. In my case, it didn’t hurt me, but in preschool I was used to drawing. My parents gave me Crayolas and so forth. And I went to some little preschool, and I think I only went one day, and the teacher suddenly was passing out cards with cutouts in them. I was looking at them, like, “What’s that for?,” because I’d never seen it. Well, they were stencils, and evidently a lot of children used stencils, but I had never seen one before. So I was kind of watching them like this, and this teacher came over and thought I just didn’t know what to

do, or didn't have the intelligence to figure it out. And she actually said—maybe she thought children don't listen—"Oh, these dumb kids!" I was so stunned.

~00:12:34

SR: That's memorable. You remember it to this day.

ML: Oh, I remember it. But it didn't make me feel dumb, it made me feel like what's wrong with *her*?

SR: But that shows so much about *you*.

ML: Yeah. But later, you see, when I was studying and a teacher, [I realized] how damaging, how damaging. Because if a child hadn't come from a family where it gave them confidence, they could have just distorted the whole thing.

SR: Absolutely.

ML: And in fact, I also, even later, oh gosh, as late as university level, there was one teacher, some teacher in drawing, she wasn't great, she didn't know enough, and I drew a figure of a man or something. I gave heavy legs. It was design, it wasn't to be representational like a photograph. I drew this figure. It was good. And she said, "Why do you make their legs so fat?" And I thought, "[unclear]. This is a design!" So even though I got a teaching credential and all, I was always very wary of teachers, and teaching people to *be* teachers. It always was a benefit, because I could tell them all these experiences.

SR: It means a lot to me, because I've been an educator in public health. I feel the same. I mean, I know.

ML: I think it's fortunate that those things happened to me.

SR: But as you said, though, you had the background and the inner strength.

ML: I did.

SR: You had the resiliency.

~00:14:33

ML: I did. I came from a family that cared for us. And as I said, my sister playing the piano; my mother played the piano and the organ, always teaching us.

SR: Marvelous.

ML: But going on, creeping up in my early childhood, finally we moved. When we came out here, my father had retired. He had left the law field because of that, and he developed an automobile engineering school in Oklahoma City, where I was born. I was born in Oklahoma City. My mother had been born in Little Rock, but I was born in Oklahoma City. The automobile was just being born at that time, and how he knew all about it, I don't know, but he did. His father was also an inventor of really many big things. So evidently he had it all figured out, and he understood how automobiles work. Very successful automobile engineering school [unclear] little Model T's in the very beginning. I was just a little infant. I was only nine months of age when he left there and came out here. But he came out, he bought property, built a two-story house that had solar heat.

SR: Amazing.

ML: He knew all those things, you see. It *was* amazing. It was a beautiful house. Then he had a lot of turkeys—they sold some. And we had chickens, and we had dogs, and we had cats, and we had things like a big lawn. And instead of sprinklers, my father had created a very nice curb all the way around, which was maybe a foot high, and he would flood it. And then you'd turn it off and you

didn't water again for a long time, but it went in there. But to us, it was a huge swimming pool, because we were little kids. Oh God, we had so much fun in this pool.

But then the big Depression years were starting then, because I was born in 1920. But anyway, we moved to Monterey Park. When we first came to California, we went to Covina, and then we moved a little north up to Monterey Park and had a different home and so forth. So now I went to *real* kindergarten. In contrast to my little one day of preschool, I had a *fabulous* teacher. This kindergarten teacher was unbelievable. She taught us perspective. You know how as children we're just drawing.

~00:18:00

SR: Yeah. In *kindergarten*!

ML: In kindergarten. She showed us, looking down a railroad track, or looking down a fence, "See how it looks smaller in the distance? So if you're doing a drawing, if you want to make it look like you've got spaces, do that." We all loved it. And then she made us aware of *three* dimensions. She had us bring in little butter cartons to school, with this little empty [unclear]. Our butter cartons today are *exactly* the way they were in kindergarten. They hold four cubes, you see. And we would put a little rod through, and put four little wheels on it, you see: two rods and little paper wheels. And then the front we cut down so it would look like the radiator, and put a little strip of paper. We cut windows in it. We were making kind of milk trucks. Oh, we just *loved* this! We made these little trucks. And so there was kind of a round table where we kindergarteners would be sitting

around, and one morning we were all sitting there eager, and she came out with paper and scissors, and she put the tray of scissors in the middle of the table, and we all grabbed—we were kindergarteners, *yow*, we'd grab our scissors. And there weren't quite enough of them for everybody, and so she looked around, and she said, "Oh!" and she turned and got.... "And now," she said, "for all those children who didn't grab, I have *new* scissors." And I remember thinking to myself, "Boy, she sure understands us!" I could see that. I thought I liked that. (laughs) She had our number.

Oh, there's so many things. They had a conical shaped thing. Maybe it was six feet, or five feet—it wasn't very big—but it was conical. And the point was, if you could get up on top of that little pyramid—they'd spin it around—you could sit there. But if you were out at the edge, it would throw you off. What a principle! We had that in *kindergarten*.

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SR: Unusual.

ML: She was enabling, in every way. We had our sand piles and.... Anyway, I loved it, I was so happy in kindergarten. So then my older sister, three years older, was telling me—she was kind of made for trouble at different times—told me that Miss Mickey in the first grade was really bad, and all the kids thought she was terrible. I was so afraid of Miss Mickey my first day when I left kindergarten. And Miss Mickey said something that I took wrong. I was used to hearing the phrase, "You're going to be a good girl," or something like that. There was some phrase, and you would raise your hand. But she hadn't said that. I don't know

what she said. I thought she said how many are going to be good, and I raised my hand with a smile. She came over and shook me and said, “Smart aleck! Little smart aleck!” And I realized that I didn’t understand what she.... She evidently asked it in reverse or something, how many *aren’t* going to do—which is not a way of thinking.... I’m used to a positive family. And I was so *shocked!* And I realized that I had misinterpreted what she’d said. But I didn’t have the capacity to explain.

~00:22:11

SR: And shaking you certainly wasn’t called for.

ML: First grade, just sick. So fortunately the recess bell rang right away, and I darted out that door and ran home—it was about five blocks—and just said, “I am *not* going back!” My mother tried to get it out of me. I couldn’t explain it, it was just too shocking.

SR: It *is* shocking.

ML: And I absolutely would not—. So Mother walked me back to the principal’s office. And again, I was just head down, wouldn’t do it. And fortunately, this principal said, “How would you like to go back to kindergarten for another semester?” And I said, “I would *love* it!” So I had the great advantage of another semester with this brilliant teacher!

SR: How great! That’s a great story.

ML: I really think that is probably responsible for my creativity and confidence and everything, you see.

SR: That’s just marvelous.

ML: You know what that principal did? She skipped me over Miss Mickey.

~00:23:25

SR: So *she* must have had some insight.

ML: Well, she had some insight too. She knew I was intelligent, and I think lots of people complained about Miss Mickey, but nobody that had misinterpreted her, raising my hand like, “Here I am!” Can you imagine the kind of psychology that woman had?

SR: Terrible.

ML: To do that!

SR: Terrible.

ML: Anyway, so I skipped right over. Well, my first day in the first grade was a little puzzling to me because there were letters and numbers and things on the blackboard. But I was so fascinated with the room and the little desks—these beautiful little wooden desks, a little ink well, and there was a place you put your papers and book. They were little. You’d sit here on a little bench. I was so thrilled, I went back in the corner and was just thinking, “Boy, first grade is [unclear].” Then suddenly the door opened. Class, we’d gotten there. One more little girl came in, and she was a *darling* little girl with brown hair—I was a towhead brown—with little curls. And the teacher said, “Oh, Gretchen, we don’t have enough desks for you.” And why she looked at me, I don’t know. She looked back at me, “Martha, will you share your desk with Gretchen?” I remember my emotion. I thought, “Darn it! I haven’t had this little thing fifteen

minutes and I have to share it!” But I knew I had to, so I moved over. Gretchen sat next to me. Well fortunately again, the bell rang. I loved these recesses!

~00:25:18

SR: I remember that.

ML: Then I was flabbergasted because they all ran out and they made a big circle in the yard, and I walked on out like, “What are they doing?” Because I hadn’t had 1-A. And so Gretchen was in the middle, and said, (sings) “The farmer takes a wife,” or whatever, and then she said, “Martha!” And I could see I was to run to the center and stand next [to her]. I adored her! (laughs) I felt I was *in*.

SR: That’s right, in the center.

ML: She brought me in, and she had accepted me. We were lifelong friends to her death—very, very close friends. And furthermore, her sister, who was three years older, was one who was always drawing and painting, and we were always saying, “Connie is doing another masterpiece.” We were very serious about art, right back in the very beginning we were serious about art. We went on to the second grade and third grade and all the way through—Connie always three years ahead, doing magnificently.

Well, we also had, when we were a little older, maybe in the fourth, fifth, or sixth grade, we had some kind of gypsy people that moved in for a while in a rental house next to my home. They wore long dresses, kind of came from the Middle East or something. They could have been Palestinian people or something, I don’t know. All I know is that we loved them, and they loved us children. So there were the three of us that were always over at their house. And

they decided they wanted to teach us how to make marionettes. And we did this back at my home, and we made the most *marvelous* marionettes. We started with clay. Connie, of course, was very experienced in clay. She was doing heads and things at that time, and this was Plasticine® clay. I never had worked with that before. But we made little Plasticine® puppet heads, with all the features. And then we cast a mold over it. It had to be in two pieces, so you take it apart and take the clay out. And then you use it with papier-mâché. Anyway, you make the heads, and you paint it, and you put a string down here, and you put hair on it, and do the necks and the arms and everything. And the three of us, here we were in elementary school, produced a marionette play called “Snow White and the Seven Dwarves.” My father built the stage, the whole staging, so the audience would just hear and see the puppets, down at the city center, little Monterey Park. And because there were only three of us, and there were seven dwarves, and then there was the mean queen and Snow White, we ended up putting all the dwarves, except one, on one [controller]. So when one would kick, they’d all kick. And then the other one was the spokesman for the dwarves. And then Snow White was a beautiful creature, and the queen was a wicked old queen. We had more fun with these wonderful women, producing this whole play.

~00:28:57

SR: About how old were you then?

ML: We were just in elementary school. We weren’t in seventh or eighth grade yet, because then you’d be getting aware of boys and different....

SR: Right.

ML: But anyway, I could go on and on about all those rich experiences we had. And on top of that, because the Depression had come in and all, my mother, who had the qualifications to be a teacher, started to teach with the L.A. County Schools, which was right next to the territory where we lived, Alhambra—went to Alhambra High. She was a principal as well as a teacher. There was one period of time—wintertime or something—and I got a cold, and I think it was the third grade, and she kind of wanted to keep her eye on me, so she took me to her school for that year. And there I met a little red-headed girl named Betty Young, and we bonded. Here I'm a little towhead, and she was the other. And she was always reading, reading, reading; whereas I was always making things and so forth.

And then also I have to tell you about my first boyfriend.

~00:30:26

SR: Absolutely!

ML: There was this wonderful little boy named Robert Carr, very good-looking, dressed well, et cetera, nice family, and all the girls liked him. Well, we had jack-in-the-box [toys¹] in those days, and he had a jack-in-the-box, and he found a ring in it, and he gave it to me. Wow! That was everything. Betty [unclear]. We were still friends, but that was it. And I have to tell you how we spent our time. His house was just a couple of houses from Betty's, and we were back and forth all over the place. Our mothers were there making Red Cross buns and so forth. And at Bobby's house, he and I would lie on his bed in order to look at the ceiling. There were those ceilings where they were all scrambled, you know. And both of us had the ability to see everything in it. And I'd say, "I see a rabbit,

¹ Or is she thinking of Cracker Jack, the popcorn treat that comes with a surprise in every box? (Tr.)

right up there.” He’d stare until he saw it. And then he’d find another thing, until he saw it. His mother used to look at us and shake her head. We were so innocent. No awareness of sex. Nothing like that. Pure as could be. But we liked each other, and we enjoyed doing this. [~00:31:56]

Well, Betty and I went on to Alhambra High School later when we finished our elementary [school]. I went back to my other elementary to finish, and then went on to high school. But we didn’t know whatever happened to Bobby. Through all the years we used to say, “I wonder whatever happened to little Bobby Carr.” “Don’t know.” But just before I moved to come to San Diego, which is way up in 1955, my neighbor was out watering her yard, and I was watering mine, and she also had been a student at Claremont Graduate University, right there in Claremont, and she said, “Oh, I have a visitor here, a weaver. His name is Robert Carr.” And I said, “Bobby Carr?!” And he screamed, “Martha!” We both went running down to the end of the fence to see each other. We were just amazed! And guess what? Bobby, maybe because of the war or something, had gotten behind in his going through [school], and he had gone on to.... He’d even gone to Claremont Graduate School. But you see, I entered Claremont Graduate University in 1940. And of course then the war had broken out, and things got all shifted around. So he knew about me. He had heard about me, but had never done anything. But I didn’t know about him. We saw each other then, but then we moved to San Diego, and again, whatever happened to Bobby Carr? And every time Betty and I would meet, we always would say.... She’s still living, we’re still very good friends.

SR: Oh, how wonderful!

~00:33:57

ML: So then what happened was—this is years later now when I’ve created the museum and all—and Judy Monk [phonetic], the woman responsible for the whole idea of the museum—had been with her husband, Walter Monk—you know, the oceanographer, the great person—to the Whaling Bar at Havalencia [phonetic], and they’d met Bob Carr and Jack Lenor Larsen. Jack Lenor Larsen’s a very famous weaver.

SR: I know that name.

ML: And Bob had become a weaver too. And so he worked with Jack Lenor Larsen and handled all of his shows for him. I knew Jack, I had met Jack Lenor Larsen, even stayed at his home many times in East Hampton. But I had never mentioned Bobby Carr. He didn’t mention Bobby Carr’s name. And yet we’re all in each other’s lives. You see?

~00:35:02

SR: I do. I understand.

ML: All in each other’s [lives] but don’t even know it. Until that night at the Whaling Bar, Walter Monk and Judy were there, and somehow the museum’s name came up or something, and Judy said, “Did you ever hear of Martha Longenecker?” Bob said, “Sure! She was my first girlfriend.” It was so cute. Well they were all so excited. Jack Lenor Larsen was excited, because *he* didn’t know it. So later Jack, as I say, had an apartment in New York, so I saw Jack a lot. But he called me once and said, “They’re giving a special breakfast party out at Palm Springs

on Sunday, et cetera, in relation to a show at the museum,” because I had done a show of Jack’s textiles at Mingei [Mansion?]. “Bobby Carr will be there,” he said, “so I’m inviting you.” And so I went, and we had a wonderful opening.

~00:36:06

SR: How nice.

ML: And that relationship continued. He’s still living.

SR: How wonderful!

ML: It is wonderful. I’ll be seeing him in a couple of weeks.

SR: Oh! Your first boyfriend!

ML: But all these things, such huge rich lives. I could go on about all of that.

SR: It’s wonderful. Just the sense of how you knew so early on that this was important.

ML: Yes. We marvel at that. Bobby and I talk. How did two little kids know? We both had that ability to see. And then I go on in pottery and he goes on in weaving.

SR: Yeah. That’s beautiful.

ML: And he has a wife and he has children, all grown. It’s fantastic.

SR: You talk about the teachers and all the different experiences you had.

ML: That’s just the crest of it. Let me tell you more. I told you about Connie, the older sister of my best friend.

SR: Right.

ML: Connie went on to school and evolved and was a great artist. She became—I didn’t know that, so I’ll hold off and tell you about that [later]. Anyway, I hadn’t

seen Connie for years. And then Gretchen died young. I don't know what happened. Before she died, though, she was a docent or running the Greene and Greene place up in Pasadena, that beautiful place.

~00:37:40

SR: I do know, yes.

ML: She again had children and a wonderful husband. We all shared our families together. But then, after I started the museum—I'll have to tell you all about that later—we started this new little museum. In fact, when it was being planned, there were people that thought we would never make it. One of the husbands of another friend said, "Don't you know, you have to have docents? What are you going to do about docents?" I said, "I don't even know what a docent *is*." "And you'll fall flat on your face in three months. You don't know anything about running a museum." True.

SR: It didn't matter.

ML: Yeah. But anyway, I'll go back to all of that later. But the amazing thing that happened, is after we've opened the museum, things are going beautifully, I get a phone call, and she said, "This is Connie ... Connie Seva [phonetic]. I haven't seen you for years and years and years." And she said she had been the head of the docents of L.A. County Art Museum and also taught most of the docents in *all* the museums in L.A., because she was *so* good. Her husband had been superintendent of the county schools of L.A., and he had retired and they had moved to Del Mar. The Los Angeles County Art Museum knew me, and I had lent them things, and they had lent us things, and so forth. And so they decided,

as a going-away present, to give Connie a membership in Mingei International.

And so she came over to see what this thing was all about and learned that I had founded it. She was so excited she called me and told me. And she said, "I'll build your docent program."

~00:39:56

SR: So there you were!

ML: So she took it over and we had the most marvelous [one?], and we still have very strong.... So that's how it began.

SR: So she just came. It was meant to be.

ML: It was meant to be. But you asked me in the beginning to talk about youth. It's so important, because it's all part of one thing.

SR: Totally. I know that.

ML: It's just amazing.

SR: That's marvelous.

ML: And then I want to tell you that Connie died just last year ... or was it early, early *this* year? I guess it was early, early, because three years ago I decided to have a reunion of all of our first docents. Oh, they're a beautiful group, fantastic wonderful people. And we naturally had Connie here. I have a lot of pictures of all of them, a wonderful group of women. So we then had another one this year, but for the first time Connie wasn't here, she had died. She made two years of it. But she was three years older than I, as I say, and her husband had just passed on, so it was all a timely thing. All these women were in this room, all of these three different times we had a reunion.

SR: That's beautiful.

~00:41:31

ML: It's just marvelous.

SR: That's really interesting. Can you tell us more about as you go on in life, about the different teachers?

ML: Yes. I guess that's what life is, we're continually learning directly from observing nature, and from others, through others. I had this happy beginning with kindergarten, and I had a *wonderful* teacher, and I liked math. I liked literature. I was a good student and went on to Alhambra High. Then from there directly right on to Pasadena Junior College, lived within twenty minutes of both of them. Interestingly enough, at high school, for the first time there would be schedules for us, and we worked with counselors to make this up. Then when I went to the room where I was supposed to be for class the first of the semester, it was a leather class, not drawing and painting, and I had all my life been drawing and painting. If I didn't get a pencil box for Christmas, it was chaos, they'd have to go get it.

So I right away said to the teacher there'd been an error in the records because I'm supposed to be in drawing and painting and not in leather. And she was very lovely and she said, "Well, we'll fix it, but for now, just sit down, because I'm going to give the introduction to the class." So I sat down, and I listened to her, and it was *so* fantastic, outlining all about leather and bookbinding and wallets and purses, and the difference between cowhide and calf and steer. It was so interesting. I said, "Well, I think I'd like to stay!" (laughs) And so I did,

and did very well in it, and in fact at the end of the semester, it was summertime, I received a scholarship to a Russian leather studio. It was called Berlen's [phonetic]. And these were Russian people who were whole families of leatherworkers, father and sons and daughters. All of what I learned was so terrific, and I just so enjoyed those Russians. They liked me, I was a young girl, and I learned so many principles of craftsmanship. It would take a lot of time to explain it all. And [I] did bookbinding and making wallets and so forth. And then I liked the class so much I took a second semester and won *another* scholarship. So in all I had two summers of working with these Russians. And I'm sure that also altered my whole character, to be able to be working with Europeans like that.

And then I told you how in elementary school we worked with these—maybe they were Palestinians, maybe they were gypsies, I don't know—but it was a different culture. And I think I also said that we had a [grove?], and all of that. So I was world oriented right from the very beginning. In fact, my father used to say when I was digging [caves?], "Just keep digging," and he'd show me the globe, "you'll get to China." Much, much later when I was grown and the neighborhood had changed and I'd been through college and everything, once I was coming back to Claremont from Los Angeles, I decided to take a side trip and go back to our old neighborhood. I was shocked. Guess what? It was all Chinese! And I said, "Oh my God, they came up!" (laughter)

SR: That's very funny!

ML: It really was amazing. Then I went on, in two years, right on to junior college. We had a *very* fine art department. A man named Archie Wiedemeyer [phonetic] was the chairman of the department. And he was so fine that after he left there he went to art center school and developed the wonderful art center school for industrial design. It's still there in the hills above Pasadena. At last now I was able to take my painting and drawing class again, and I had a very beautiful teacher, relatively young. She actually took us out on weekends on trips, and we'd get up at four and five. We'd get up so that we'd see the sun come up and do paintings. We did so much. Just a dedicated teacher. She was extremely significant in my life because I didn't know it, but unbeknownst to me, she had heard me say that my parents wanted me to major in education, something practical, "You should plan to be a teacher." And I didn't want to give up a *minute* from an art class. And we weren't arguing about it, but the subject had come up, and evidently had been mentioned to her. Well she called my mother, took her out for lunch, and told her to "leave Martha alone, she knows what she's doing." That's what she told me.

~00:47:31

SR: How special.

ML: And they left me alone. I went ahead and majored in art.

SR: That was important.

ML: And then I minored in English lit and enjoyed English literature. But I felt a responsibility to them, because naturally they wanted me to be independent, particularly having just gone through the big Depression. So in my first semester

at Claremont Graduate University, I also got a teaching credential. But I'll back up just a little bit, because the same wonderful teacher at Pasadena Junior College took our class out to Scripps College to see a painting exhibition by Millard Sheets [phonetic]. Now Millard was not there that day, but the moment I saw that exhibition, instantly I said, "This is a man I must study with. This is it." And didn't do anything about it, but I'd made up my mind, it was very clear. So after graduating from UCLA, I drove out to Claremont Graduate University and signed up, because that's an association of colleges, and Scripps is part of the Claremont Colleges. If you want to study with [unclear], you take your classes over at the Scripps campus, you see. But if you're getting a teaching credential, you take it at the main center of the college—just a block or two apart, it's a whole complex.

What was so interesting is that after I graduated from UCLA, I drove out there right away, I wanted to look it over and get signed up. After doing that at the headquarters, I walked over to the campus, and Millard just happened to be there, coming out of a class or something, so I introduced myself simply by saying, "I've just graduated from UCLA and I'm coming to study with you," and so forth. And when I came back a couple of months later—this is the kind of man Millard was—he just saw me in the hall, "Hello, Martha." No, you don't have to repeat your name or anything. And from that time on, I was locked under his wing—very much so.

~00:49:59

SR: Nice.

ML: But going back to UCLA, after junior college, UCLA was a leading institution in art, and has very, very *fine* teachers, many different kinds, including even advertising design and all. I liked that too. I liked a lot of things.

But the life-changing course that I took was during my senior year. It was a pottery class. We were required to have versatility, if you majored [in art]. I had remembered this incident in my childhood with Mother's powder and clay, and I somehow instinctively knew that it was to be important to me, I don't know why. I caught myself saying it, and I said, "Why do I know that?" My brother was nine years older, and he was driving, and I'm in the car with him, and I said, "I'm going to take pottery next semester, and it's going to be very important to me." Why do I say that?! But it was. And then of course the first day of class was this magnificent teacher, Laura Andresen. She would have been the magnum cum laude graduate of everyplace, first UCLA, and had learned her pottery from a Mrs. Newcomb [phonetic], who taught at UCLA before. Then she had gone on to Columbia to get her master's. And then Mrs. Newcomb was killed, and they asked Laura to come back from Columbia and take over the pottery department. What had happened was Mrs. Newcomb had heated some wax in the pottery room, not realizing that wax volatilizes, so it was all through the air. If there's one spark anywhere, it's a flash fire.

~00:52:10

SR: (gasps) Oh, how terrible!

ML: So she actually was killed in the lab. That was before *my* time, but that's why Laura, as a young, fresh, wonderful person, was back there. She was so

extraordinary that of course I loved the class. And then I was graduating and she said to me that she had a very virile germ, and I had caught it—which is true, from her, my love of pottery.

~00:52:48

SR: Uh-huh, it was infectious.

ML: And she was also very international. You see, she was showing us wonderful old things from Palestine and pre-Colombian, and Japanese and Chinese. It's the world again. It wasn't just, "This is what you do with this clay," and that. It was this *art* of pottery-making of the world.

But here I am, a dedicated painter, going on to work with Millard—which I did—but I thought, "Well, I'd better continue taking a pottery class." So I took it with William Manker [phonetic]. But before I left, graduation, Laura gave me a book called *Pottery in Japan*, and it told about this Englishman, Bernard Leach, going to Japan to teach etching, and how then he had discovered pottery through a *raku* party, and then became such an integral part of the whole mingei movement, Dr. Yanagi.

So at Scripps with Millard, I now had taken—I was in my second year of getting my MFA. It's a degree higher than a master's. It's a doctor's equivalent. Suddenly, December, Pearl Harbor happened. I remember hearing about it. I was in the pottery room, and I was so shocked [unclear] worrying and so forth. We were all terribly upset, and we all had to have blackout curtains on our house and so forth. I was going with a young man who was building superintendent for McIsi and Minky [phonetic]. They were building a big plant out there, just

getting ready for all the wars and all. At that time, I had completed, of course, my teaching credential in my first semester there. It was easy for me to do that. And I had chosen to do my student teaching back at Pasadena Junior College, from which I had graduated. So I had this marvelous [unclear], Archie Wiedemeyer, and I had a very good craft teacher that I was working under—unlike UCLA and most campuses, we went and stayed there for months as a student teacher. And then we'd go to campus on Saturdays to have our formal class and discuss our teaching and so forth.

At the end of that first semester, when I had the degree, routinely high schools and junior colleges were sending interviewers to Claremont Graduate School to hire young teachers, you see. And so I just went along with them, I was interviewed. Then I was walking *back* from the graduate school office of education to campus, and I ran into Millard. He was so friendly and said, "What are you up to, what are you doing?" I said, "Oh, I just interviewed for a teaching job for next semester." He looked stunned and he grabbed me by the shoulder and looked in my eyes and shook his head and said, "You're not going anywhere. You are staying right here and continuing for your MFA." No discussion at all. And I didn't even let out a peep. Just like, "Yes, Millard." He went on.

I turned around and went back to the graduate school office and said, "Do you have any scholarships?" They said no, but they had loans. And I said, "I'll take it." Because I was thinking of my parents. They put me through UCLA, they put me through the beginning of the second year of graduate school. And now that I have a teaching credential, if I don't get out and earn some money....

Because we'd been through the Depression and all of that, and Mother had gone back to teaching and was a principal and so forth. So this way it just solved it. I was able to phone and say, "I'm continuing for my MFA, but you don't have to worry about me for the rest of my life. I'm independent now. I've gotten a loan, and I think I have five years to pay it back." It was so generous. So that was great.

But now they're working away, and this whole thing with Pearl Harbor, and the war was getting so hot. I was going with Johnny, this man I told you about, and we decided to get married—two people in love, thinking they're going to be separated with war, the whole romantic thing. [~00:58:30] Again, Millard passed me in the hall, kind of "what's up now?" expecting me just to tell about my classes, and I said, "I'm getting married." He was so shocked! He stood there like, "What do I say?" He said, "Is he a good guy?" I said, "Of course." "Well, where are you going to live?" I said, "I don't know." Simple question, rent a house. "Well, come to our guest house. You can come at least [unclear]." I said okay. He wanted to have time to handle this thing, you see. (laughter) And so sure enough we were married on campus and we went and lived in the guest house. But right away, so much was happening with the war. Millard was now going to leave for India. He was working for *Life* magazine on a big commission to draw and paint the scenes of the war, the effect upon the population—not the bombings, but the life, the daily life. And Mary was going to be alone and had four children, all of whom I knew well, because I'd been living there. And my husband Johnny decided he'd go up to Lockheed and work because maybe he

would be exempted. And so we moved up to L.A., but then he wasn't exempted. So that spring he was drafted for the Seabees. And of course Millard and Mary said, "Come back! Come back!" Our total salary each month, for nearly three years, was \$78 a month. That was military salary. And so our rent was \$15 a month. And you plan everything out and you do it somehow. [~01:00:25] In the meantime I had a baby in that first year, and then I started right away making pottery. I had never stopped. I was making pottery at the university, and then when we stayed in the guest house, Millard enclosed the carport and created a pottery out of it. And his wife, Mary's, mother gave me her old kiln. So they set me up. So during the war I was living there and making pottery while my husband was overseas, and I started selling at the Dalzell [phonetic] Hatfield Galleries of the Ambassador Hotel Los Angeles. They also were in New York. They were top-notch dealers. And the only other people they sold were Glenn Lukins [phonetic], who was an early professor at USC who did kind of heavy earthenware pieces. He was very handsome, and a very important figure. And then the Natzlers [phonetic] came over. They were Jewish, they were escaping. I think they came from Austria. Immediately they were selling the Natzlers and me and Lukins. Later they took on one other person. I can't think of her name right now. So I was busy, busy, busy making my little pots and selling them.

One of the things that happened along the way, which was interesting, is that one day when I went in, Dal Hatfield whispered in my ear, "Would you like to see some Japanese pots?" "Yes!" He had ordered this show and planned it before Pearl Harbor. But the shipping was there, and it still came over. He

couldn't show it now—people would.... But he knew I loved it. There was one I loved very much—I can show you—and he said, “I'll trade you three of yours for one Kanjiro Kawai. As I will tell you later, he was one of the three founding members of the mingei movement.

So now, with the war over, and having jumped on a lot of things, with the war having ended in '45, I learned about what was happening in Japan. I told you—maybe I didn't tell you—that when I graduated from UCLA, Laura Andresen said I'd caught this viral thing from her, and she gave me the book of *Pottery in Japan*. And that told about Bernard Leach going over there. I think I mentioned it to you.

~01:03:29

SR: You mentioned him, yeah.

ML: And teaching and so forth. Well now I received word that Bernard Leach, with Dr. Yanagi, the founder of the mingei movement, and Shoji Hamada [phonetic] of the great Ming Treasury Japan, were going to be giving a seminar the week following Christmas in 1952 at Chouinard Art Institute. What's so significant again was the importance of my parents in my life, because I casually mentioned it to Mother, and she said, “Well you're going, aren't you?” I said, “Of course not.” My son was four, and I was taking care of him. And furthermore, it costs \$35! My God, having lived all these years on \$78, you aren't giving up \$35!

SR: That's a lot, yeah.

ML: And Mother very quickly said, “I'll give you the \$35 for a Christmas present, and I'll take care of Daniel. Go.”

SR: Oh how wonderful!

ML: And it was just kind of a command. She was living in the Los Angeles area, so Daniel and I went up there, and I was just away from him during the day, you see. That was a totally life-changing week for me, because Dr. Yanagi, who had coined this word, “*mingei*,” had been a very rare Asian person. He came from one of the finest families and went to the top school, the Piers [phonetic] School. As instructors they had *amazing* people like you’ve heard of Suzuki. That was one of his everyday teachers, Suzuki, [Lazer?] Suzuki. And then a great scientist from Germany, and great people of literature. His passion was Walt Whitman and William Blake. He was fascinated with them. He came from, of course Buddhism, and was fascinated with the Tibetan mysticism. Then this young Bernard Leach had come over with an etching class to teach Japanese etching. He had been in Japan when he was just a child. He was a son of missionaries, so he knew baby, childhood Japanese, and they all just got a big kick out of it, because he talked to them. But yet here he was this great author and educated man. He went to the Piers School to teach them about etching, and Dr. Yanagi and he were closer in age, and they bonded. And of course Bernard Leach was a man who, I think he belonged to the Bahá’í faith. But these were all people interested in the ultimate truth of the universe. [~01:06:55] And so what was so charming, that most people don’t know, is that he attended what’s called a *raku* party, and that is a name that was given to a process centuries ago—I really don’t recall whether it was seventeenth or eighteenth century—but it’s where a potter, a person, has made little cups, let’s say, small cups, that are small enough to be picked up with

tongs and put right directly into a kiln with a flame. Some potter, some person, has to first form the moist clay and dry it and bisque fire it to drive out the chemical water. And then, of course, you apply a glaze to it. A glaze is something that melts like glass. You have a *raku* party, you invite your guests to take this little cup that's been bisque fired and has a [unclear], and now take metallic oxides—you know, your basic ones—cobalt, copper, iron, manganese, you see—and they decorate with their Japanese [dresses?], they decorate it.

[~01:08:28] And then with tongs, these cool pieces are taken, the lid is taken off the kiln or opened up, and they're put inside. You usually can only fire one or very few at a time. In a few minutes, the glaze will melt. You look through peepholes, and when it's melted just right, you stop feeding the fire, you no longer put the wood chips in, let it die down, and you open the kiln, and then you take the red-hot [unclear] out and put it on something that won't burn—metal, concrete—and it will cool and you will see the glass and the color. But you also can bring it out, instead of just letting it cool clean, you can put it in a metal container with natural leaves, or anything that will burn, and put the lid on. This whole thing gets into flame, and when the flames die down, you can take the lid off, and again with your tongs you reach in and pull the piece out and you can let it just cool. If you just can't wait, you immerse it in a bucket of water. Well, what's happened is that this material has turned to glass, coating on the clay, and all the natural inorganic metallic oxides in the leaves and all, have colored it. But you see, not the way you—just the way nature does it.

~01:10:20

SR: From the leaves, yeah. That's wonderful.

ML: And they're so incredibly beautiful. Well, Leach was just blown away. He wanted to know how to *do* that. He didn't speak English [i.e., Japanese?] well enough to study with the great Kenzan. There's a whole line of Kenzans. They're *very*, very famous potters, where the party was. So another man that I came to know *very* well, a Dr. Horiuchi [phonetic] from Kyoto, had studied dentistry in Chicago, and he could fake English well. He was at the party. He took it upon himself to find somebody else to go with Leach to learn pottery. And he arranged to take ... I'm trying to think of the name now. Sorry, I can't think of the name right now. I'll come back to it. So that man accompanied Leach to Kenzan's, and [he was] so successful in helping Leach that he too became a very famous potter, one of the most famous in Japan.

But also then, at the same time this organization was being born—and I have to backtrack for that—Dr. Yanagi had this fantastic education, and he was invited to go to Harvard to teach for a year. And while he was there, he observed how there'd been such a break in the creation of beautiful things with the Industrial Revolution coming in. He attributed it to the fact that human beings are born as individuals, indivisible body, mind, and spirit. When they play the piano or they create things, it's the whole being in the process. There is the intellectual part of needing to know what you're doing so you don't burn the house down. There is the physical part of muscular development to throw on the wheel or to do whatever you want, or to play the violin. But the other part, that thing that is the spiritual dimension, the infinite is there. And your knowledge and your skill

makes you a suitable instrument through which creativity flows. We're all part of *the* creation, and so this creative energy flows *through* us, providing we're free of conditioning. Number one, you start with humility. You can't make beautiful things unless you're humble, that you realize that that secret sea animal makes gorgeous shell. Spider makes.... Everything in the natural order is beautiful. But if you're off to this false thing that is little ol' brilliant me with a little higher IQ [unclear], you're off track, and it won't *be* beautiful, what you make. You don't have to *try* to make it beautiful if you just have that normal natural state of mind. [~01:14:25]

Well, when he first observed in the United States the decline of quality of beautiful things, and he saw that it was due to the Industrial Revolution, he was terribly concerned because it hadn't hit Japan yet. And yet Japan is only an archipelago of islands, which added up is a little bigger than California. And so their 5,000- and 10,000-year-old traditions of pottery-making and lacquering and weaving in bamboo, and on and on and on, could be wiped out within several years if it hit, unless something was done about it. He first contemplated why is it [unclear] until he deeply, thoroughly understood. Then he attracted a group of young people around him. They all called themselves disciples of Dr. Yanagi. They said he lit their lamps. They all were chosen to be Living Treasures of Japan, all of them. But one of them, Kanjiro Kawai of Kyoto, wouldn't accept it. He was such a purist, such humility, he would take no kind of title. Shoji Hamada, a wonderful potter, became not only a Living Treasure of Japan, but he also, while I was there—later I'll talk about that—was chosen to have the

Emperor's Gold Medal, which is the highest medal the government can give. So you had the Kyoto potter, Kanjiro Kawai; Mashiko potter—that's up north of Tokyo—Shoji Hamada; and Yanagi, who were the three that founded the first mingei-khan. "Kahn" means "museum." They founded, built a beautiful building, founded this very beautiful museum in Tokyo. They also were saving so many things because the Industrial Revolution had started, and there were people who were having a rough time. But then of course the war broke out, a horrible war. They had to bury all their things and so forth. After the war, they said they had to get back to work again on this, and Yanagi decided to go around the world with Hamada—Kawai Kanjiro wasn't the type to travel, he was a poet, wonderful man. His home is in New Zealand now—to go around the world, to talk to young people, to explain the importance of being an individual. They attended a huge conference in England that was going on at that time regarding crafts. There was a big arts-and-crafts movement [unclear]. So much history is wound up in all this.

But finally their last stop before going back to Tokyo was Los Angeles, and that's where I heard about it. And I simply went to it and just was stunned. My eyes were just opened and it kind of turned everything upside down. You know, in Japanese everything *is* upside down. If we go down the right side of the stairs, and up the left; they go down the left and up the right. If we kick our wheel from east to west, the other way. Instead of "upside down," they said "downside up." Oh, it's flip-flopped, absolutely amazing.

~01:18:36

SR: I didn't know that.

ML: Yeah. So it was the same.... In Western education I've been through excellent schools, junior college, UCLA. The thing they stressed in the teaching was really the knowledge and the technique. Nobody ever talked about creative power from God. It just wasn't done. And of course I was very much interested in this subject from the standpoint of I'd gone to church and knowing some *very* fine people. And so that really opened my eyes when I saw that this week-long thing was going to be all about this one thing. One of my *very* close friends, very important to me in my life, was a man who was the priest of St. Paul's Cathedral, downtown Los Angeles. And he became Bishop Loy [phonetic], bishop of the Episcopal Church of California. But this is before he moved to that position. At lunchtime, I was so excited I dashed off to tell him I was taking this seminar and what these people were saying. He was very calm and understanding and said, "Yes, they're speaking of the religion that transcends all religions—truth." And how the mind works and everything. I understood too then what Eric Loy had told me once before, because I had known him over many years. I used to even be in a private Tsonga [phonetic] group, a few people who studied with him, studying Christianity and world religions. (pause) I'm sorry, I got interrupted by a noise. (tape turned off and on) [~01:20:41] It was very reassuring to me to be able to speak to Bishop Loy about my introduction to these great men of Japan and England with Bernard Leach, and to learn how we all were seeking the truth together. In going back to the class each day, I once asked Dr. Yanagi—we were seeing hundreds and hundreds of slides of these art objects, things made for use,

because in civilization we do need bowls to drink out of, and [unclear], or we need a jar rather than burying it in the ground. We need stools, we need chairs, we need beds, we need fabrics. There are so many things that are essential to our modern civilized life, and that these pieces, when they're made, in transforming natural materials, and the whole being is making them, are incredibly beautiful. To think that the things that we collect as antiques because that is so. So I said, "Why do I love these things so much? I can't get enough of it." Dr. Yanagi said, "It is because that is your natural home." And in later years when I came to study in Japan, Mr. Hamada repeated, and so beautiful—we were opening a kiln and he was getting out pieces, we were alone, and I was commenting on some piece, and he said, "Yes, I like to work from the state of mind that is not yet born."

SR: That's beautiful.

ML: Very beautiful. But anyway, the week's thing was ending, but I had told them about my having a Kawai piece, in exchange for some of mine, and they wanted to come to my home and see my workshop and see it. So on the weekend, the three of them were supposed to go to Scripps College, just for a short little demonstration and talk. We lived in Claremont, so they had me come and pick them up first in the morning, and they came over to the house. It was all just magic. First of all, I had a wonderful cat, and this cat strolled up the front walk ahead of them at just the right time, and they all just melted, they loved cats. So many wonderful people love the animals of our world, you know. And then when I just opened the door for people to go in, the moment it was half open, they all immediately saw, at the same instant, that Kawai pot across the room, and in

unison—they didn't plan this—"Kawai!" they all went just together. It was so exciting. And then they liked my pottery, they asked for a piece to take home for their museum. And most of all, I can't tell you how urgent it was, they wanted me to come to Japan right away. They saw I was ready for all of that. See, nobody had to teach me pottery—I know how to make pots and all—but it's the understanding of this whole movement, *mingei*. "Min" means "all people," and G-E-I means "art." And it's referring to the innate creativity that's there in all of us. We choose different media and all, but it's the same principle of having the necessary knowledge and skill, but that's only to make you an instrument. The other has to be an emptiness of yourself, and humility, and inspiration, through *seeing* beautiful things. Like you can't understand beautiful music if you don't *listen* to it. You can't understand if you're reading about it at the same time. You can't appreciate good food if you're talking about it. And you have to immerse yourself into it. And because they still had in Japan a wonderful spirit where the pottery's not made by one person: Hamada's the head, the designer, makes pieces [unclear], but they make lots of pottery for everyone. Even the people who [farm?] part-time, the men and women, they come in to help when they're loading the kilns, or when you're mixing glazes. There's so many things, there's so much *work* to pottery. So they come in as a group, and they love it. Hamada never ever signed any piece. He didn't consider it just his. And even the workers, if they wanted to keep something, they were welcome to it. They didn't take advantage of it, because they all made it together, you see. And Hamada was truly so far advanced that when you look at a piece, it was like something that just blossomed

in the garden, had something fresh. As I go back—and I go back frequently to Japan—sometimes you run into a pot that was made a long time ago—it just looks so fresh, like a flower. It's just absolutely amazing. [~01:26:51]

So anyway, I was thrilled that they wanted me, but again, my son was only four then, and I just couldn't go. But a rather distant relative of Dr. Yanagi, a woman my age, came over with them and was staying on at Occidental College to get her master's in French poetry. During MacArthur's occupation of Japan she was an interpreter for them with English and French. She lived with the Runyans. He was the editor of the *Pasadena Star News*. I saw her a lot, and then she came and stayed with us a lot. When I taught—I haven't talked about Idyllwild yet—later she stayed with us up there. In other words, I was learning about Japan all the time. She was teaching me all the time, about customs and so forth. [~01:27:58]

Anyway, within three months after the seminar was over, they'd gone back to Japan, I got a call from USC, University of Southern California. They had just recently established the Idyllwild School of Music and Arts up at Idyllwild. I don't know, maybe it had been open a year or two, I don't know, but it was just getting going. And they didn't have money to pay professors, yet they wanted the best. And they had fantastic people. Merce Cunningham [phonetic] was one, and Mary Ann Miranda [phonetic] and so forth. And they said if I would come and teach the pottery, they'd give me a small salary, a little bit, but they'd pay me in property. And so I taught for them and owned a gorgeous big double-view property up there at Idyllwild. I went back and taught three summers

for them. I was still in the rest of the year at home, making pottery, and with my son and husband and so forth. But my husband was a general building contractor after he came back from the war, so he ended up staying up at Idyllwild sometimes nearly most of the year, would come back and forth. In my first year in San Diego later, he helped build the place. All of this comes into my life later on again. That's why I'm telling you this. Because now, after teaching there *two* summers, in the spring, before the next summer, I got a call from San Diego State. I'd never heard of San Diego State or anything. [~01:30:05] But I was well-known for my pottery then, because I'd been selling with Pat Fields [phonetic] and teaching up there and all. Their first words were, "We're simply calling to see if you would be interested in coming to San Diego State and developing a ceramics program." And I have to tell you, it didn't take a half a second! There was no time involved. I instantly knew that, oh my heavens, this is how I'm supposed to get to Japan! It wasn't a long think, it was just (*click!*). And so I said yes, I was interested. And they said, "We'll be sending up Dean George Sorenson [phonetic]. He and his wife will come up Saturday morning." And I said, "Well, come for breakfast," and they did. They were delighted with my studio, delighted with my pottery, [husband?], everything, and wanted to know if I could right away, that next week, come down and set up an exhibit in the gallery, of my paintings and drawings and pottery, and any other things I had from my university portfolio—you know, make a portfolio. So I did. And then all the art faculty came to look at my little show, headed by the great Everett G. Jackson [phonetic], who was head of the art department, and had been for many, many years. It's all

kind of unbelievable, actually unbelievable. But they loved it all, and so much so that they wanted me to.... The dean of the school walked me over to the president's office, the dean's office, signed me up right then, that day. (laughs)

And so just all of a sudden my life is just changed. We were able to move, because my husband rather liked the fact of going to San Diego, because he was a building contractor, and Claremont was a small place. [~01:32:21] And my mother loved our home. We had a *very* beautiful home that we had built. He had built it of redwood, with oak trees. It was like my home now, with all the art and everything in it. So Mother decided to move out from Los Angeles and take over our house, which made it simple—never had to move out even. And then furthermore, coming to San Diego, Johnny would be up at Idyllwild a lot of the time during the school year, and we rented an architectural home at Mission Beach. It was just a short block to the water, and it came with a rowboat. Every afternoon when we'd come home, my son and I would go all over the bay. Everything was just so marvelous, and this great Everett G. Jackson, head of the art department. And I do want to spend special sessions with you talking about that man. And I did tell you that there is this video on him that was made back before he retired. [~01:33:44]

The first year was extremely busy for me, challenging for me, because I hadn't been teaching—just the summer session—and then suddenly when you're confronted with a ceramic room that has no wheels in it, no cupboards, just sacks of clay and ingredients.... Nobody had ever really taken it and organized it. So I got busy and designed a potter's wheel, and got in touch with a woodworking

place in San Diego and had all the wheels built for us, and also got *very* friendly with the carpentry shop at the university. They were all great. They built cabinets, and we turned it into a beautiful ceramics studio. Well, there'd only been one little class in ceramics, but now it was filled immediately. Very soon I had three classes of pottery. But in the meantime, we as university teachers usually always taught one design class, because they liked the students to have very experienced people, rather than just a young one. But also, I came at a certain time when they needed somebody to teach the art education. [~01:35:22] And of course I'd had all this at Claremont Graduate School, top-ranking thing. But this was secondary education, and they were all having student teaching through the semester, so my first semester I didn't know San Diego, I certainly had to learn it because I was out at all the schools. But you see, I got such a thorough grasp of everything. And then of course the history of ceramics was so important to me. But gradually I dropped away from things and did more of the pottery.

The big thing was that—jumping over many things—at the end of my sixth year of teaching, the faculty bulletin came out and said all people who have taught for six years or more are eligible to apply for a sabbatical. In the meantime, I'd been corresponding with Japan and meeting and learning a lot. I very naively said to my colleagues at lunch, “Goody goody, I’ve taught for six years and I’m going to apply for a sabbatical.” And they all kind of sneered at me, just like “how naïve can you be?!” I mean, that was the attitude. “Don’t you realize you have to be here for many years? It’s so competitive. All of these

people on campus are after sabbaticals.” And it was just like they punched a balloon. “Ohhhh!” I felt terrible! But I just accepted it kind of. [~01:37:12]

A whole month went by. Another bulletin came out and said, “Last day to apply.” And something beyond me spoke to me and said, “What’s the matter with you? You came here because you knew that was the way to go to Japan, and now you’re not applying! You’re paying attention to what other people think rather than what you want to do?!”

~01:37:35

SR: Good!

ML: It was just like, “What’s the matter with you?!” So I phoned the president’s office. I’ve always believed in going to the top authority in everything I did.

SR: Who was the president then?

ML: Love. And I didn’t speak with him, just the secretary was there at that time, and I told her, “This afternoon, it’s the last day. I haven’t done it because I [unclear].” I’ll never forget how lovely she was. Without insulting the other faculty by saying they don’t know what they’re talking about, she said, “Well, they may be right, but if you will apply now, and if you didn’t get it now, you’ll get credit for getting it next year.” I said, “Thank you *very* much, I’ll do it right away. I have a free period.” I went back without any concern, because I thought it was a throw-away. And I knew *exactly* what I wanted to do, I’d been invited to come over there. And so I wrote it out, didn’t even keep a copy of it, handed it to the lovely secretary, and that was it—and came back and taught my class. Several months later the dean, the same man who came up with his wife and hired me in the first

place, phoned me and said, "*Sayonara*." You've never known anybody as surprised as I was.

SR: How wonderful!

ML: And then I said, "How can this be?" He said, "Well, you were the first one on the waiting list." I said, "Oh, do I have to wait?" He said, "No." I said, "Did somebody drop out?" "No," he said, "we sent our list to Sacramento. They make the final decisions, and you were the first one on the waiting list. We had all these others. And *their* office decided to give you one too." I guess somebody read it and they liked it. But do you know who was really influential at San Diego State and who got me on that? Dr. Adams. Adams was on that committee, you see, that sent through.... See, I'm very young on campus, and so they would have taken people that had been there longer, but he evidently liked mine and made me first on the waiting list, and then somehow they gave it. But when you told me that Dr. Adams and his wife are funding this, I just got goose bumps all over me.

~01:40:11

SR: See, it's come around.

ML: The thing is, we never know all the people that are in our lives.

SR: That is right.

ML: And increasingly I know that we don't work alone, we don't do anything alone.

SR: I know.

ML: It's because other people are all in the right place at the right time.

SR: Absolutely.

ML: It's so exciting.

SR: It is.

ML: Then, of course, I wrote to Dr. Yanagi immediately, and I could show you his letter he sent back immediately. He'd had a stroke and was having to use pencil or something, instead of his brush, and he was thrilled I was coming at last. "But," he said, "please come right away, don't wait for next year, come *this* year," and all that we would do, and Leach was coming over that year in '61 rather than '62, and he was bringing over a medieval pottery show. He even wanted me to bring over an American Indian show. And sadly I had to write and say it just didn't work that way with the university system, that I had to wait for the next year. And he had said he and Hamada would show me the best way of studying the Japanese art of pottery-making. And then he died. I guess he knew [unclear]. I just got a brief note from Hamada Sensei. I didn't keep it, I didn't know at the time, and it just was a very brief note to contact him at a certain time after I got there, and he would show me everything. [~01:41:54]

Well, I had been advised by them not to come across the Pacific—it's too much of a culture shock, you don't understand what the world's like. And I was so grateful, because I'd taken all this graduate work in art history, you study everything, art in England and Holland and France and Greece and Rome and Turkey and everything, and it was so wonderful, for several months, going back through Europe and all of these places. I did it on a shoestring. They had a little book out at that time, *Europe on Five Dollars a Day*.

SR: Oh, I remember that, yeah.

ML: It works! You walk up three flights, but you have your wonderful croissant.

Then when you're in England, they give you this great English breakfast.

Anyway, it's a *big*, big story, all the places I went, and all the people I met, and how these people weave back into your life later on. And immediately I went to the home of my Japanese friend for the first night, slept on the floor. We talked all night, and her mother was amazed to hear us—lovely Japanese lady.

And then I was to call Mr. Hamada in a few days or something.

[~01:43:34] It was a certain date he said to call him. And we went to a special Japanese restaurant in Tokyo my third night there. And while we were having dinner, Mr. Hamada and his close friend who owned the restaurant came in. They were just getting back from Okinawa. I would have loved to go Okinawa and used the Okinawan coral to decorate the pots and all. So he just gave a big smile and chuckled from the other side of the room. After he finished eating, and we had then, we went over and he welcomed me, and then he started dictating to Suni, my friend, all the places I was to go and do and so forth in Japan, always adding, "Show her all the beautiful things of the country." Everything's nature, you know. And so then at the end he said, "And how would you like to begin by coming and making pottery at my pottery?" And I was *so* thrilled because I didn't know I'd be able to do that. I thought I may be observing or something. And I said, "Oh, I didn't bring any work clothes!" Typical woman, right? (laughter) And he laughed and he said, "Japanese clothes." And then I again, the Western way is you bring your own tools and your own books. And I said, "And I don't have any tools with me." "Japanese tools." But said with such charm and

humor, you know. And so then I said what was a popular saying at the time—did you ever hear it? When somebody asks you to bring things and you said, “Should I bring this...” And you say, “Just bring my head”?

SR: Yeah.

ML: So I said that “just bring my [head],” and he *roared* with laughter and said, “No! leave that behind.”

~01:45:33

SR: Oh, that’s funny!

ML: That was the whole key to it. You’re not in a place where you’re thinking, you’re in a place where you’re observing, you have perception. And he taught me so much just in that moment.

SR: But you were so able to receive it.

ML: I was ready. That’s what they knew, from the seminar, you see, and coming to my home. So then another charming part of it was, he said, “Okay, I’ll tell you how to come to my place. You can take the train. From Tokyo you take it up, and then you transfer” at a particular station “to another smaller line, and that will take you right to the train station in Mashiko [phonetic]. Right there is a taxi stand. Just tell them to take you to Hamada’s. Everybody knows where I live.” Of course he’s the most famous man there. So I did, went without any problem. Of course all the way you’re fascinated, seeing the farms and houses. It used to be *so* beautiful there. And so then Hamada’s there, and a *marvelous* house. I could go on and on about it. These old farmhouses that they moved there, fixed up and all—a whole compound. So then he said he had to leave to go to a nearby

village to pick up a big piece of a tree, a big plank. They were going to be making a large table out of it. And he'd be back in an hour or two or something. And so he took me into the side of the gatehouse, a special room, which had his *best* pottery in it. There's a big building right next to kilns. A small kiln holds 4,000 pots; a big kiln, 8,000. So you see their pottery-making there is totally unlike the little 20 cubic-foot kilns we work with here. So they have this storage house: when they unload, they put things in there, sort them. But then the ones that are extra special, they take over to one side of the gatehouse. It's a beautiful thing. You enter the room on the side. But then if they're *really* special—I learned this later—then they go in the other side. And so he took me into the best room, and I just melted. Oh my God, you're looking at these *wonderful* things. And I said, "Mr. Hamada, you may leave me here, all the months. I'll just be happy here." Anyway, he said while he was gone he wanted me to pick out a few pieces I liked the most. I was like a child in a candy shop! And I picked out five pieces. And when he got back, he was in a big hurry to see what I picked out. "Let's see! Let's see!" And he was visibly surprised. I didn't know he would be, but he was. He looked at me and he gave me the greatest compliment of my life, he said, "You have a very quiet eye." And he was so happy, and he kept them aside to show his friends what I liked, what I picked out.

~01:49:18

SR: Oh, how interesting, "a quiet eye."

ML: Because they can learn so much about you by that, you see. There's so many details of it. Number one, he said that he was one wheel short for his workmen.

He himself worked at night usually. I would go and watch him. But he couldn't give me a wheel all day each day. But he said I can be there and watch, and I can fire things in his kiln, but he wanted to ask Mr. [Tatsuzo] Shimaoka, who lived next door to him, and was his last mature student, the greatest student of Hamada, who had his own home, married Mrs. Hamada's cousin, and he had an extra wheel. So we walked over there, and with all formality, and they talked in Japanese, bowing, he asked if I could use a wheel there, and then go back and forth. The answer was yes. Interestingly enough, in those two or three days before I met Mr. Hamada, and I was in Tokyo, whenever I went to Takumi [phonetic] and other shops that sold the pottery, it was always Shimaoka pieces I was drawn to. My friend said, "You like Shimaoka's pottery." So it turned out to be *that* person, and he was the one who was just a year older than I, and had been shocked with the war. He said it was just so horrible to learn that little teeny Japan, the size of [California], bombing the United States?! But anyway, we became *very*, *very* good friends. [~01:51:19]

The next year, after I came back from a very rich year of going all over the islands and sleeping in everybody's *ofera* [phonetic], and attending memorial services for Dr. Yanagi, and *so* much rich experience.... (long pause) It was time for that memorial service, and it was to be held at Mount Koriasan [phonetic]. This is a great Buddhist shrine, that for all time had been closed to women, until just recently. It was a *Shin-Gong* [phonetic] sect of Buddhism to which Dr. Yanagi belonged. Mr. Hamada invited me to be there, because all the members of the Mingei Association, from all the islands, would be there, because

it would have been exactly a year since Dr. Yanagi had died. I went off.... I stayed longer at Mr. Hamada's though, because he kept talking about this other kiln he was going to be firing, and it was after my scheduled time to go off to Kiljo [phonetic]. Finally I said, "You keep talking about that kiln and the firing, and I won't be here," and I was bothered by that. And he had arranged for me to meet this other very famous potter. And when I said I really would rather see the kiln, he was very pleased, because this other man was so famous. Most people would clamor to meet him—I wasn't interested. But then he said but now after I go to all of these places, I should meet all of them at the Osaka train station in order to go on a *small* train up the mountain to this Shingon Buddhist temple. Again, part of the humor of being in Japan, because I said, "Well, you just told me to go to the station and meet you, but how will I know the people?" He laughed—oh Lord he laughed! He said, "Oh, you won't know us. We'll know *you*." [~01:54:40]

Then also, a thing that had happened was one of the big railroad men had come visiting. So many people were coming to see Mr. Hamada all the time. He heard that this American woman was over there making pottery there, and that I was going to be going all over Japan to all these places he was sending me. And so he told Mr. Shimaoka he was worried about me, and that if I would just give him my itinerary he would get all the tickets. And I said to Mr. Shimaoka, "I don't know where I'm going, or when, because this is all without a schedule." And Shimaoka Sensei said, "Go ask Mr. Hamada to tell you and write it out, and then we'll give it to the railroad man and he'll take care of everything." So I

never wanted to bother Mr. Hamada, who was *so* busy. He was running a museum—after Dr. Yanagi died, he took over that—and he had his own pottery and his own life—busy, busy man. He did most of his working at night after dinner. (recording paused) Because Mr. Hamada was so busy, I didn't like to bother him with anything like tickets for me, but one day we were sitting together at the open hearth, and I took out a tablet and said, "Mr. So-and-So of the railroads wants to buy the tickets for me, if I knew my schedule. And Mr. Shimaoka said that I should ask you about this." And he looked at me and he said, "Oh, Mr. So-and-So of the [railroad]. A very fine man, but he's not at all like you and I." And I said, "Thank you," and closed the book. Never mentioned it again. We communicated that way all the time.

So then, at the end of this three-day conference at Kuriasan [phonetic], where the Shingon sect was, Mount Kuriasan, all these hundreds of people who belonged to the Mingei Association were crowding around me, *all* wanting me to come and see them. They knew I'd be traveling. And so one of the intelligent ones, [unclear], "Look here, we have to organize this." They were chattering away, and he said, "Let me explain. She will go to So-and-So first. Then when she's leaving, that day or night or whatever, you call So-and-So"—they wrote it down—"who's number two"—he mapped it out—"who's number three." And I was passed around like an infant. But as they were all gathering around me, solving this problem of how the American was to get around, Mr. Hamada walked by. He just stood there roaring with laughter, "You see? It's all taken care of," if you don't take it in your own hand. He *constantly* was teaching me like that.

SR: That's interesting. Just let it happen.

~01:58:37

ML: Yes. (recording turned off and on) Since being invited to come to Japan way back in 1952, now ten years later, I learned *so* much, and was able to take back that experience to the university. And immediately the next year Shoji Hamada, one of the founders of the mingei movement, came over and lectured at our university. And also, Tatsuzo Shimaoka, who was a Living Treasure of Japan, noted for his particular type of pottery and inlay design, a person who was just a year older than I, and with whom I'd become close friends—came and taught a summer session in pottery, which was *extremely* successful with the students. And then still later, in another year, Keisuke Serizawa, the great Living Treasure of Japan, an older man, came over with his family, taught summer session. And they brought with them so many other people of Japan. I think the value of this kind of sabbatical leave program for young professors is beyond all measure. And the implications of all that is *still* affecting the world. [~02:00:46]

I was so fortunate to have another leave to go in '68, which again was full of remarkable events. And then because of the metaphysical discussions that we had together, the students and I, they talked to me about their unfolding lives, and on one occasion I had three different young men students from three different classes tell me of the significance of a religious studies course they were taking with Dr. Allan Anderson. Allan Anderson taught basic religions of the world. He'd teach a course on the I Ching and the tarot cards and a very great man, one of the great men of our world. And because these three students had introduced

him to me through his name, within a short period of time I was reminded of what my mother had taught me when I was very young, and yet I had never had the occasion to act on her advice. She had said, “Honey, if ever in your life something comes in the threes, look into it.” So I quickly looked up the class schedule for Dr. Allan Anderson and saw when he had a class and I didn’t. And in my free period I went over and waited outside his door and informed him of what had happened, and he said, “Come join us.” It meant so much to me, it was like his lecture was planned for me. Every student in the room felt his lecture was planned for [him or her]. That’s the kind of great professor that he was. So for ever after, I was not only in *that* class, but I was in a private little group class. And I was also very concerned that more people in our world should be hearing Dr. Allan Anderson. [~02:03:21]

Now many things happened in my life. I went back to Japan and Korea another year. I, in 1970, took twelve students from San Diego State for six weeks in Japan to learn all about mingei and the potteries, and also a week in Korea. So it was a time of great maturing and understanding what was happening in the universe. But also at that same time, I was introduced to the teachings of J. Krishnamurti, from India, considered to be a world teacher of the twentieth century. And when I first heard him up at Ojai, I was stunned by the fact that his message was the same as Dr. Yanagi’s. And there was one Japanese person in the audience. I went over to him and said, “Isn’t this man saying the same thing as Dr. Yanagi of Japan?” She knew of Dr. Yanagi of Japan, and she said, “Oh yes, absolutely, but Dr. Yanagi says it better.” Of course she spoke Japanese. So then,

again, I have had friends there with the Krishnamurti Foundation in Ojai, and they wanted me to come to Switzerland in the summer of 1968, to hear Krishnamurti at Saanen, Switzerland. He talked there nearly every year. And even though I decided I would *not* go—my son was in special school at the time—I would not go and couldn't afford it, my best friend, a very wonderful woman, kept calling me every half hour on a Saturday until I relented and just threw some things in a bag, called Air France, charged my ticket, went up to L.A., flew over the pole, saw the aurora borealis, landed in France, and then took another plane over to Switzerland. Happy as a lark. The people at the airport commented, "Most of the travelers are so depressed and heavy, and you're so happy!" (laughter)

[~02:05:53]

I rented a car in Switzerland, drove up through the Alps to get up to Saanen, and there are all my friends sitting out there having coffee. And I had this *marvelous* week in Saanen, listening to J. Krishnamurti. Now this man, all his adult life has been traveling the world, not teaching any particular separate thing, but just the truth, and that it sets you free. I'm a professor, I'm always thinking of the students, it's just in me. So the next-to-the-last day, I heard the announcement that Krishnamurti would be coming back to the United States the following year, and he's usually in New York and different places. So I went to Allan Nordi [phonetic], who was on the board, and was kind of coordinating things there, and said, "Could he come and talk to the students at San Diego State?" And they said, "Well, we'll ask him." The next day, the last day, he talked, he said, "Krishnamurti said yes. But he said to tell you not just because

you *think* so.” Good. I understood that perfectly. I had no question, I was just pleased he’d be coming. And what that meant was, “Who are you, inviting me? You’d better send me an official letter.” This is just in my own mind, not [unclear]. “Handle this thing right. Go to your executive and send me a formal letter. What will be the compensation, and [unclear],” whole thing. So I came back and did it very thoroughly, but I also went to Allan Anderson immediately, and he was so cute, because he said—you know, this is a big thing, [having J. Krishnamurti on campus]—he said, “Don’t get anybody’s noses out of joint now.” [unclear, laughing] from the university. And so I went through all the proper procedures, Religious Studies and on up. And it ended up then I was to write the letter to the foundation, formally inviting and saying there’d be a \$1,000 honorarium, and this would be an available time, and all about it. So I did, I wrote it, but then I was leaving now for this other sabbatical leave. I’d been in Switzerland in the summer. I came home, flew to Machu Picchu.

~02:08:35

SR: Peru?

ML: Yes, I went to a World Crafts Council meeting in Peru, at Lima, and then up to Machu Picchu. I was one of the first members, first or second member of the World Crafts Council, which had been established in New York in ’64. So I needed to do that. Then right after I got back home, after two weeks, it was time for me to leave for Japan. But I had handled all my Krishnamurti things and sent the letters out. I didn’t get back until the end of February, because I not only

spent time in Japan, but I spent ten weeks in India before coming home—all to do with the arts of India.

So the moment I got back, I rushed to the president's office and said, "What did we hear from Krishnamurti?" and they said, "We've never gotten an answer to the letter. You know, we set aside money for this, and we can't just keep holding it." I said, "*Hold* it. I will find out." I didn't have to make any effort, everything opened up to me. I got a phone call immediately from Beatrice Wood in Ojai. She was a great potter who lived to be a hundred and five, and had moved to Ojai originally because during the war years Krishnamurti lived in Ojai. So she was calling to say she was having this special dinner party with all these people there and wanted me to come. And I said, "Of course." I didn't mind hopping in the car then, and drove up there that night. I had to get back to school the next day, but again, you don't think of that when you're young.

Lovely dinner party, and then I went to bed, and I woke up in the middle of the night with, "What does the name Lillyfeld [phonetic] mean to you? You met a couple named Lillyfeld." "Oh my goodness, she's the secretary to the Krishnamurti Foundation of America." And I didn't put—. So I stopped at a gas station, headed back to San Diego, and phoned the Krishnamurti Foundation. I said, "I just figured out who you were." She laughed and said Tao, her husband and she, the exact same thing happened. They both woke up in the night, "Martha Longenecker, what's the significance? Oh, she signed that letter from San Diego State!, wanting Krishnamurti to come." And I said, "Well how about it?" And he said, "We haven't gotten here yet. He comes at the end of February." It wasn't

quite the end. “We can’t go ahead and do anything. He may have *said* he would come, but everything would have to be worked out. I think it’s impossible anyway.” I said, “Why?” “Well, he doesn’t have a place to stay.” I said, “Oh, there are all these people with mansions and [unclear].” “He won’t go stay with anybody. He’s adamant about it.” I said, “Well, they’re wonderful, Charles and [Cabarni?].” “He doesn’t go to anything commercial. He’s not that kind of person.” So I said, “Well, that kind of leaves an empty house, doesn’t it? I have a house, and I can move out. My son is at school, and so you can be assured that you have an empty house for him.” She said, “Well, we’ll wait and see what he says when he gets here.” But they were very doubtful, because remember, this man is really in demand. This is a great world teacher.

~02:12:02

SR: Right.

ML: So sure enough, I get a call from Mary Zimbalist [phonetic], after they arrived back in the United States. As life would have it, I had met Mary Zimbalist before she ever knew Krishnamurti. I’d gone to the same party with her, and we both wore the same knit suit. I bought mine at Magnin’s La Jolla, and she bought hers at Magnin’s Beverly Hills.

SR: Funny!

ML: So we bonded right then. We had different scarves. And we had stayed in touch a little bit. She had, for about twenty years, devoted her life to helping Krishnamurti in his work, and was traveling with him. So there she was on the phone. She knew me, she said, “Well, Krishnamurti said that [I] should come

down and look over [your] house. I'll want to see where the trash is put out, I want to see every detail. And we have to drive over to the campus, we have to see where people enter the auditorium, where they leave. He's thorough." "We'll do that," I said. "Fine." Fortunately they didn't say he would arrive in the next day—maybe in two days. I cleaned house like mad.

She came, we did the whole trek, and then I said to her as we were coming back, "Are you interested in any videotaping or documenting of his talk, if he's going to? I've just done a series of fifteen 50-minute tapes on pottery-making"—KPBS was new at that time—"we have that equipment." And she said to me, "Well, as a matter of fact, there's a mass marketing genius from Chicago, a real entrepreneur, that's after us to document Krishnamurti with really good videos." So far they'd only had little tapes. And she said, "His name is Sidney Martin Roth." Isn't that interesting? And I thought at the time, what a nice name. So we left it at that, but sure enough, I got a call back, Krishna-gee [phonetic] was coming, he was going to come to talk to the students at San Diego State—big stuff. Oh, I designed brochures and everything, sent all over campus. And Allan Anderson came, of course, was in the audience. I was sitting up front because I was coordinating everything, and sat next to [Mr. Ra?]. He was a much older gentleman, seventeen years older than I. And so it was just a lovely meeting. It went gorgeously. However, Allan Anderson makes it clear later in his things that at that time he didn't really quite grasp what Krishnamurti was totally about, just at that one session there. Later then, it was totally different.

So another year went by, and I heard that Krishnamurti would be talking up at Santa Monica. That would have been in 1970. But I decided not to go because I'd had a little cold or something, and decided maybe it's better not to drive up. The only time I've ever had a nightmare in my life was Friday night or early Saturday morning, I woke up with a complete realization or understanding that it was later in time. This was all over, he'd come and he'd given the talk, and I hadn't been there, and it was like you had burnt down the world. I mean, it was something you couldn't make up. It was very bad, and for a moment I just felt, "Oh my!" And then suddenly I kind of saw the clock and I thought, "What time? Well, this is Saturday, this is Saturday. What time is it? Well, he's to be talking at ten. I think it's eight now. If I just could get there fast enough." So I called my close friend. She wasn't there, but her daughter, Tona, was there, Tona Lusig [phonetic], and she had started the year before I had, with her parents, to hear Krishnamurti. And she had studied classes with Allan Anderson, so she was [unclear]. And I said, "Do you want to go up and hear Krishnamurti?" She said yes. I said, "Get here *immediately*." She lived about five minutes away. I didn't even fully dress. I just grabbed a jacket of a suit and some trousers, no shirt or anything, jewelry. And in the car and off we went. Got there perfect timing, walked down the aisle, sat down, and he walked out on the stage. It was a wonderful talk. [~02:17:21]

So now we were walking out to go to our car, and behind me came a very beautiful, deep man's voice, which simply said, "Well, hello there." And I turned and said, "Oh, Mr. Ra," [unclear], I just formally had met him the year before,

and introduced Tona, and we were commenting how wonderful the talk was. And I said, “I feel so much better after hearing the talk, and I almost didn’t come.” And Martin said, “Yes, right action brings its own energy.” And I went, “This man knows what he’s talking about.” He invited us for lunch, but we declined, we were eager to get home. So he just casually said, “Well, you’re coming next week?” I said, “I never thought about it. I guess he *is* here two weeks. I’m invited to a wedding reception. Maybe.” And he said, “Well, if you come, you’re invited out for dinner.” I did go to the wedding reception, it was very important, but that’s a whole ’nother long story. I attended the talks, and from then on we were a pair, we had so much in common. The thing is, he immediately was telling me how we *must* get Krishnamurti documented with fine quality video tapes and all the latest thing, because he could die and this great man wouldn’t be documented. [~02:19:05]

And furthermore, my husband was a personal friend of the great psychiatrist Alfred Adler. And when he first came from Austria, my husband, on his own pro bono work, [unclear]ing some of these things, published the first *Journal of Individual Psychology* in English for Adler. I still have the whole copy. I’ve given a lot to the Adlerian Society. All Adler’s life, Martin was there, helping document; very, very active in all this. When Adler died, there was only five minutes of film on him, which he thought was a crime. So when he had gone to Gustav [phonetic] the year before I, in ’67, he felt like I did, “This man’s got to be heard.” And that’s when he went to them to get permission and all. And then I come in the next year, bring Krishnamurti over here. He comes down, sees it, and

then of course the moment Martin had learned that he wants to document, and their schedule, the foundation already scheduled an interview with a Tibetan limphay [phonetic] and a Jesuit priest, I said, “The man he’s *got* to talk to is Dr. Allan Anderson,” because I’d been *dying* to get Allan Anderson publicized all these years. So it just came together, and Martin was the kind of man who was very quick, *very* quick. He immediately called Paul Steen [phonetic], and switched it from Berkeley to KPBS. And so then it was wonderful, having them meet at my home, because Krishnamurti had to just meet him anyway, before the talk. So I definitely moved out of my house. Again, the world took care of it. I went to a luncheon, one of close friends, and at the luncheon Dorothy Stewart said, “Worly [phonetic] and I are going away for a week or so”—at *exactly* that time—“and we’d like to find somebody to house sit.” I said, “Well, I will.” And she said, “Well, you’ve got [a house].” I said, “No but I need it.” And so then I called the Krishnamurti Foundation and informed them that I had a place to stay. And they said, “Well, can we stay there too?” So we stayed at this other wonderful house not far from mine. And Mary Zimbalist and Krishnamurti stayed at my house. Then when Allan Anderson came over to meet him, Krishnamurti was sitting on the davenport and I was here, and then the doorbell rang and I got up to open the door. I didn’t know that Krishnamurti had followed me, he was very quiet. When I opened the door like this, Krishnamurti said, (blurts out) “What is truth?!” just like that, to Allan. Allan Anderson kind of jerked and said, “It’s what is the case,” like that. Neither man said another word. They walked in the living room, and then like a play, my black cat named Tibbitt

[phonetic], came strolling through the room. These two men swooned over that black cat. And so Krishna-gee said, “Get us a string.” Those two men were playing with this cat before they ever had any dialog. They sat down on the davenport and planned for the next day.

Now the thing that was so strange is that between that time and [the time] they put together a book—I didn’t know they were putting together a book and everything—there was a place in there where Allan said he didn’t know how he met Krishnamurti. It’s in that book. Whoever was putting it together unfortunately should have tried to contact people.

~02:23:03

SR: And learned, yeah.

ML: And so there it is. But the moment *I* see Allan again, and mention it, he recalls the whole thing, and he’s even repeated it at his party again, how Krishnamurti was just so quick, and how they played with the cat. It all came back, you see.

SR: Special.

ML: It is *so* special. But then, the next thing that happened was because the talk between, the dialog of Allan Anderson and Krishnamurti was excellent. My husband quickly saw that, within the first few lines. He came over and said, “This is an opportunity to cover *all* the work. This is the right man.” So he had decided right then. So we asked Krishnamurti after the whole series was over [unclear], if he would like.... He liked the idea of doing that with Allan Anderson. And then it was turned over to the foundation office in Ojai to handle it. But the answer came back Allan Anderson couldn’t do it or something. And it was kind of left

like that, because we weren't interfering. But then my husband and I, I was on another special leave studying the pottery of Spain and Portugal and all over. I even had special leaves to go to Sweden. I was all over.

So we went out to Bachwood [phonetic], which is the Krishnamurti Center in Southwestern England. And we'd hardly been in the house a few minutes, but the subject came up about—my husband was now looking for somebody else. And Huxley had been an intimate friend of Krishnamurti's, and they'd had many dialogs together, but never something to cover the whole teachings. But he was dead now. They couldn't seem to find anyone. And all of a sudden Krishnamurti turned to me—I was standing—and he turned to me like that and said, "*Why* didn't Allan Anderson accept?" Just looked at me like that. That meant, "find out," to me. I don't know. But then afterwards, leaving, Martin took it up. And then he uncovered the reasons, including the fact that he's teaching full-time, got all these students. Now, are you going to suddenly enter into a series of eighteen or twenty hours with a world teacher?, to be prepared for that?, have the time for that?!

So not many years went by, but a few. I'd have to measure it. And then it all came together. So now for the third time I moved out of my house. First it was for the first lecture; then the second one was to have the dialogs with these three men a week; and then now back for two weeks. And that was fine, easy to do. When it was all over, Krishnamurti was so sure about it, he came over to me—I was standing by the door—saying, "It's all there. All the teachings are there."

~02:26:48

SR: Oh that's wonderful.

ML: It was marvelous. And of course I had much more experiences with other things with Krishnamurti, but my years of studying with Dr. Anderson let me know how fine he was, and what a great teacher, and his whole life was teaching, helping people go through a transformation. And Krishnamurti said his only wish, only thing, was to set men absolutely free of their conditioning so they'd have the direct perception that all of truth is self-evident. More and more people are learning about him, of course. I think it'll take time for people to know Allan's book's out there, but it's very beautiful, very beautiful writing.

~02:27:55

SR: Well, so much of this, I'm so glad you shared this, and I'm sure—it's such an important part of San Diego State's life and history.

ML: It was *all* San Diego State, you see, because the teaching of Krishnamurti and Dr. Yanagi is the same. It's the same. Krishnamurti's talking about all the world and all things, and Dr. Yanagi is also applying it to the whole world, but he's talking about the fact that we're part of a creation, and we're all energy, everything is energy. And that creative energy flows through us as a good instrument. If we've learned the necessary things, developed [unclear] school to be a pianist or a potter or whatever, and we're free of reaction, we're free of conditioning, because then this creativity [of school?] is through. We've always heard of that. We've heard of great musicians who can just quietly think and the music comes to them. And you know when somebody becomes *really* good at

painting—most people are mediocre, but somebody *really* good—and like Picasso, as a child these things were great, then they became staid and tight and lacked energy because he was studying so, intellect and all. Then he broke loose of it, and then everything flowered again. And Krishnamurti says that beauty is simply the flowering of goodness.

SR: How wonderful.

ML: And by that, we don't mean people walking around being goody-goody, but things being in order, people caring. You see the connection?

SR: Uh-huh.

~02:30:00

ML: So I'm so thrilled that Dr. Allan Anderson is still living, and I'm thrilled that that book is there. I'm also feeling, though, that those tapes, those eighteen hours of dialog, should be broadcast. I was thinking maybe of calling KPBS and saying, "Do you realize what you have here?! This is all produced *here*. Maybe it could be put on late at night." Charlie Rose is one of my favorite programs.

SR: Me too.

ML: I stay up to watch him.

SR: Me too.

ML: And sometimes you have to stay up for these rare things. Krishnamurti could come on at some hour. Now, it will take time for people to know about it, but it's so fine. But what happened to me was, as I said, in '52 I met these people. Then ten years later I had the sabbatical, '62, went around the world. I was back again later in the rest of the world, going around the world the other way in '68. But

right after I'd gone to Vastaad [phonetic] to learn more about Krishnamurti and invited him to come to the university, then I come back in the beginning of '69 and we consummate that. He comes over.

And then, because I've met my husband, so much is going on. My husband sees all I've done. [unclear] "and you bring John Burton, a *very* famous important man from England, and you bring Hamada and Sirasowa [phonetic] and Shimaoka, all this thing." And he said, "You ought to be a nonprofit." And I said, "Well, what's that?" I knew nothing about it. He said, "Well, you're doing all this out of your pocket. If you had a nonprofit, people who were interested in what you're doing could contribute to it." I said, "Well that sounds like a great idea." He said, "I'll pay for it." And I went off to a good lawyer, and the lawyer was great. He said, "Martha, if you hire me, I'm the head man, it'd cost you money. But I'll give you the youngest lawyer we've got, and I'll be looking over his shoulder." So Bill Beamer, who's now senior, marvelous man in San Diego, was the young man who incorporated us, and that was way back in 1974. And here I am, busy, I have a son, my son was handicapped so I was very busy with him. He lived at home with me, and [unclear] at other times.

So now I've been nonprofit since '74, the end of '74. Suddenly it's January 1976 and I said, "Oh! the significance of '76. This is a propitious time. I've got to do something right away." So that's when I started trying to—how do you write this thing, simple little thing, and say that if you're interested you can join for fifteen dollars. I was invited to talk to the Wednesday Club, so I went down and gave a lecture to the Wednesday Club on it. One wonderful person,

Bob Wallace, the art historian in the art department, and his wife Ginger Wallace was there. She [unclear] up and said, “What’s it cost to join?” and I said, “Fifteen dollars.” She said, “Here!” So she was our first member. But we got about 200 members right away, all wonderful people. [~02:34:11]

But this letter was very good, because I was having a hard time trying to say it all in a few paragraphs. But I had met Frances Lloyd Wright, Frank Lloyd Wright’s daughter-in-law. I’d known her for a few years. And she was a ghost writer. She wrote the book for her husband called *My Father on Earth: Frank Lloyd Wright*. So she had a little manual typewriter, and we just spent hours and hours discussing that little letter, until we got it right. I took it to the office at San Diego State and had them duplicate it, and mailed it out. But I’m trying to make the point that it all happened at San Diego State. I had met the man in ’52, and they wanted me to come right away, but until they sought me out and gave me this job, started me out, it couldn’t have happened. The whole thing just unfolded.

~02:35:26

SR: That’s such a special part of San Diego State University.

ML: It is. And it’s not over, it’s not over.

SR: No! Not at all.

ML: Here’s Dr. Anderson still living and doing these books, but also there were so many other people. We had a great Dr. Love, and so many people, including, of course, Dr. Webb [phonetic] and all, after I was there. And to see KPBS develop.... And Paul Marshall, who is high-level KPBS, doing documentaries

and all, a real artist in writing and producing films, he did *all* of our videos for us.

After a few years being a museum—I didn't tell you about that.

SR: Not yet.

ML: What happened was, we were a museum without walls. We were all San Diego State. And so San Diego Museum of Art wanted us to do a big Mingei of Japan show, so we did. It was a *gorgeous* show, and it broke all their museum records for all time. I think they had 4,000 members in one day, rushing in to see it. So then Ernie Hahn [phonetic] heard about it. See, this was all over the place, "Mingei of Japan Exhibition, Mingei International," and what was happening at San Diego State with all these people coming. So Judy Monk, the wife of Walter Monk, was one of our members. I'd known Judy and Walter, one of our little members. And she phoned me on a Saturday morning and said, "Ernie Hahn's planning a big university town center," and she was on the planning committee. She's an architect, after all. She had infantile paralysis and was in an iron lung, just when she was finishing her architectural degree. She nevertheless married Walter, had four children, raised them, but was in a wheelchair the whole time. The most vivacious, lovely....

~02:37:49

SR: Must be amazing.

ML: Oh yes, a wonderful, brilliant woman, just as he is so special. So she called me on a Saturday morning, all excited, and she said, "Ernie Hahn's going to do this center up here, and I told him I thought he ought to have Mingei International do a museum there. He's been wanting something special." And I was shocked. I

said this so many times, I knew her well enough, I said, “Judy, you’re nuts! I know nothing about having a museum. I am a full-time mother, I’m a full-time teacher, I’m a potter. I did not take business education. I know nothing about running museums, and I don’t *care* about running a museum. You know, it’s just not for me.” I was adamant. It was just as though I’d said nothing. “No, [unclear].” She knew the kind of things I had in my home, and what I had done in the department. I did shows out at San Diego State, you see. Wouldn’t pay any attention to me and sent the head of the committee over the next night, and he was just as nutty. He looked around like, “Oh, wow!” So I had to be polite, because they were offering a holding on the space that was valued as \$1.6 million at that time. If anybody else were renting it from them, it would cost that much. So I had to go to the meeting to thank them and decline—so I thought. [~02:39:32]

And Ernie Hahn’s oldest son was there. He was kind of running the whole development, the building of it. And they very happily said that they would give our new organization, our Mingei International, 501(c)(3), four thousand square feet of space for five years. We would actually design this thing and build it out and so forth. I felt so relieved, I thanked them *so* much, because it was a *very* generous offer, unbeknownst to the business world. “But,” I said, “there’s no way I can make a museum out of 4,000 square feet. That’s just a nice-size house. You have to have bathrooms and libraries and offices and stores, and it just wouldn’t work. And also, you couldn’t establish something in five years and have the thing up. So thanks very much, but I’m not the right person. And I have just my good friend [unclear] and a colleague at the [unclear]. There are just three of us there

running this new nonprofit.” And they didn’t know how to do these things anyway, and I was ready to walk out. They were so determined they wanted this museum. They were all just so alive. What flashed through my mind was my study with Dr. Allan Anderson, because we all learned, all the students, that it’s so much harder to accept something than to give it. When you can give something, your ego is up. When you’re accepting something, that’s much harder. And furthermore, I didn’t have any assurance I could do it. I had no....

“I can’t do this!” You see? In other words, I’m going by my own conditioning, my own experience. I’m saying we can’t do it, you see. But when I saw the reaction, they wanted it so [unclear]. And I saw the tarot card extended, “grace of God and [unclear].” And I’m saying, “No.” I thought very quickly and I said, “I have no idea that we can do this, but we’ll see what San Diego wants.” Those were my exact words. “I will try, but can’t promise you.” They said, “But *we* have to *know* by the end of the year,” which was only about seven months. “We have to be *sure*. You have to have the money, you have to have the plan. You have to have the union contracts.” This is seven months! You see why it seemed impossible? But I had no choice, because again, I’m putting it forth to “What does God want? What does San Diego want?” And my friends said to me, “How can you be so relaxed when you’ve got to get all that money?” I said, “Because I don’t have to. I’m just seeing what’s meant to be.” And that’s when another friend said, “Don’t you know, even if you opened it you’d fall flat on your face?” And then I mentioned earlier that the moment we opened it, then the sister of my

childhood friend from the first grade came forth, the top person for docents.

Everything just kept opening, opening, opening. [~02:43:24]

And so then, because I didn't know anything about a museum, I got in touch with the American Association of Museums in Washington, D.C., and followed it to the letter. Everything we did was right on the nose. So by the time we were eight or ten or whatever it was, we passed immediately, we were accredited. And the other museums in town mostly were not, they had to get busy with it. I still continued teaching another ten years at San Diego State. After all, we didn't have any money, we started with \$500. But my teaching was usually two or three days a week. I was a full professor, and it was only one big gallery, you see, and we were all volunteers. The spirit was wonderful. When you have hundreds of people who care for what you're doing, there's a great advantage over the money [unclear], great advantage, you see.

~02:44:38

SR: I do.

ML: And people learned about us and donated. This one woman—I don't know if I mentioned her. Did I mention Margaret Cargill [phonetic]?

SR: You told me about her, but....

ML: But I don't think we did it on the tape.

SR: Right.

ML: I don't know how old we were. Maybe we were fifteen or something, well along. A lawyer called me and told me he had a client that had a small amount, would give regularly, and would grow. She wanted to give to an institution like ours

where it would make a difference. She knew we published books. We published books from the first show. My husband endowed that. He was handling somebody's estate, so we put \$50,000 in, and then more from his own, building a revolving publication fund so we could always sell and do another one. And so now this woman was going to give us so much a year, and I suggested videotapes, because my husband was doing videotapes then on Krishnamurti and Allan Anderson and all. She liked the idea. We have some *wonderful* documentaries. And we have wonderful documentaries of Casey Sirasowa [phonetic], Living Treasure of Japan, and Hamada, and all these people. But I'm still there at San Diego State. I'm still a professor for the first ten years. And I went on what's called early retirement. That means you don't get your same retirement pay if you do that. But it means that you can teach one semester a year. Up to that time you either taught two semesters or none at all. And I figured I could handle that, the one semester a year, having classes two days a week. I can run that for half a year. And it worked out very well. But then when, I think 1990 came, or whenever it was, that's when I quit. I remember I was so very happy about quitting. I loved my work at the university, but it was time. Other faculty members were boo-hoo-hooing, "Oh [she's] leaving!" I'm saying, "Oh gosh no, I'm delighted to be going on." There were just endless stories of connections with the great Everett G. Jackson and all the other faculty members had so much to do with it. [~02:47:33]

I must include still another terrific person we had come. In the mid-sixties, a man from India told me that the abbot of the Kumon Monastery on the

border of China, who was the Dalai Lama's eldest brother, and the brother who had actually brought him up in his early years, was here now, he'd come. I can tell you a story later. And he was on a schedule, giving some lectures, going across the continent, back to Indiana where [unclear] new Tibetan center, and he needed a ride. He, like Krishnamurti and these others, they don't go on anything commercial. And so would my husband and I go up to [unclear], pick him up, and take him to San Fernando for him to give a lecture, take him home and all? And again, we were young enough, we didn't mind, and so we did. I met his wife and two little children, and we went to San Fernando, and we saw the homemade movie that he had of the escape of the Dalai Lama, giving the whole story, the gospel of truth, of everything that had happened. It was just fantastic. Of course we know the whole story, how the Dalai Lama is picked and so forth. He himself is a very special person [to be of it?]. And when the Dalai Lama got a little bit older, then he came to his center to be observed and raised. And then the Chinese were causing so much trouble. Because they're full of love, they thought, "We can negotiate with the Chinese, we can work something out." They tried and tried, and then he explained to us how finally the Chinese were offering him a position as grand as the Dalai Lama's, if he would help them get rid of the Dalai Lama. These people, these Tibetans, are very brilliant and evolved, and they don't let you know by their facial expression or anything. He was able not to reveal anything, because if he had, it was all over, you see. So after meeting with them, he took the [ax?] or whatever it is, and went to Lhasa. And he told his brother there was *no* mediating with the Chinese, they were *definitely* going to kill

him, and they were going to come to Lhasa and do that. Dalai Lama *still* wouldn't move. He was much younger, and didn't want to leave his people. But they prepared how to disguise him, so when the attack came on Lhasa, he was like an awful peasant, except with a whole gang of peasants. They went down the back way to Dharamsala, India. They photographed that whole thing, they showed it. [phone rings, recording paused, ~02:51:08] Seeing this homemade film was so clarifying to what was happening in the world.

In order that he could come to San Diego State, I said, "Can't you come talk to our students?" That's always [what I was doing?] with the students. He said he was all booked up, every weekend, across the country, all booked. He said, "The only time I have free is just the middle of the week." And I said, "Well, would you come then, if I could do something?" And he said, "Yes." So I came back, was teaching my pottery class, and the first time Dr. Theobald [phonetic], from the literature department, a very great professor, had ever dropped in, informally, in my pottery class. I knew him. He showed up at the door. I looked at him and thought, "Oh my God, you've been sent." I said, "Come into my office for a minute." And real fast I [unclear], "He said he could come in the middle of the week, but we'd have to have the auditorium, and we'd have to have an honorarium, and I would need to call him." His words to me were this simple, "You've given me the ball on earth, and I'm running with it." He walked right out. He was back within an hour, everything done, auditorium, [unclear], "Phone him." So then my Indian friend, who was living in this apartment [unclear], the one who had told me to give him a ride, said he would

move out. But they had these two little children and they needed cribs, so I called Abbey Rath [phonetic], got two little cribs, bought them both swim trunks, because it was right down on the sand at La Jolla. Anyway, I told him it was all set. We went and got them, and of course I knew nothing about Tibetan food, but I knew they liked lamb, so I cooked leg of lamb, and made tea, and had salt they could pour on it. And we had food anyway. We had a wonderful time.

~02:58:36

SR: How marvelous.

ML: These people are so natural and beautiful. He said to me, "Do you realize that you have 10 percent of the entire Tibetan population in your home? There are only forty Tibetans in the United States at this time." This was in the mid-sixties. "Only forty Tibetans, and we're four of them." I have pictures of them too, I took at the time. It was really wonderful. And then later years, I had a big Tibetan show. They contacted me, Don Sala [phonetic], saying they had these monks who did the sand paintings. We had opened our museum now, you see, and they knew about that, so we arranged to bring them over. I think we were the first ones in the United States to do a Tibetan sand painting. After we had done it, then it went to San Francisco, Chicago, New York, and other things. But they were with us a whole month, four Tibetan monks. We built a six-foot-square table in our museum, and one monk was on the east side. We had a big altar and we had beautiful things from Tibet. Every morning they'd come and chant and do their prayers, and then they'd do all this thing. Then after a month, it was time for the sand to go back to the sea. See, this is a prayer, the whole thing. So they sweep it

up, all the colored sands, and put it together. We checked with Sam Hinton, who was on our board. He was head of the Scripps Aquarium. And Roger Revelle [phonetic] came. Everybody came, all the officials, down to the shore. And these monks walked out and spread this. Roger Revelle said to us that that is one of the deepest parts of the ocean, right there by that pier. Did you know that?

SR: No, I didn't.

ML: That's why they have a big thing that goes way down. It just so happens that that area here in La Jolla is one of the deepest parts of the ocean. And that sand, spread there, would go the currents all over the world. And you see, Judy Monk and Walter Monk, they got it started, you see.

~02:56:00

SR: Yes, I do.

ML: All of this. She insisted we have the museum. All this stuff just weaves back. It's just unbelievable how it all goes together.

SR: It's beautiful. I mean, oh!

ML: And it's not over.

SR: No! It goes on.

ML: It keeps going on and on.

SR: It goes on.

ML: As we look back over the birth and development of Mingei International, it's clear that it was a living legacy of Dr. Yanagi, which corresponded with the truth of all great teachings, including that of J. Krishnamurti. And all these people that came *to* the university *through* the fact that I'd been given the sabbatical to travel the

world and to learn from these people. But so far I've only touched the surface with the beginning of the museum, and there's so much more to tell you about David Reinhardt, the great architect who helped design the museum. He'd been a design associate of Louis Kahn for the Salk. Wonderful people like Genon Hardy [phonetic], Audrey Geisel [phonetic], JoAnn and Frank Warren, dozens and dozens of people who came forth with extraordinary help—not only to establish and build the first museum at University Town Center, but to create the *big* museum, the 55,000 square foot, or about that, at Balboa Park. I think this next year will be the thirty-fifth anniversary of the museum. All of the history of the museum, all the witnessing of it, just bears more and more evidence of something that was truly a gift of God, I would say, something that's meant to be. It didn't come out of thought, it came more out of discovery and a recognition of the innate powerful creativity with which each of us is born. I hope to have the pleasure in the future of going on with the history of Mingei International.

I'm very much concerned with this living legacy in my lifetime, and in the process of creating a who's who in the life of Martha Longenecker and the Mingei Legacy, beginning with Dr. Yanagi. And it's just been a pleasure to let you know, if you didn't already know, about the great San Diego State. And all the way, if you don't have a good man at the top, you don't have a good man at the bottom. We had great people, starting with Dr. Love and Dr. Weber [phonetic]. I don't know the new man yet, but he sounds like he's very fine. So hopefully there'll be a chance to tell you more in the future.

SR: Well, there will, and I want to thank you for your graciousness and generosity in sharing all of this, and also treating me to a delightful lunch. And what a beautiful home, and it's just been a gift to spend this day with you, and we shall plan a future session. Thank you.

ML: Thank you!

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Martha Longenecker
November 12, 2012
interviewed by Susan Resnik
for San Diego State University
01:03:12 hrs:min:sec of recording

SUSAN RESNIK: Today is Monday, November 12, 2012. This is Susan Resnik, once again at the lovely La Jolla home of Professor Martha Longenecker. We are continuing to record her oral history for the San Diego State University Oral History Project sponsored by a John and Jane Adams Mini-Grant for the Humanities. Professor Longenecker, you suggested that we continue our conversation by discussing some of the individuals who played such a salient role in your life in the university and the whole mingei legacy. We just saw the documentary which was made on November 12, 1988, about Everett Gee Jackson, and it was wonderful for me to see it because it placed him and you within the context of the faculty, and it reflected the warmth and generosity of his spirit and the camaraderie was evident. So tell me about what it was like when you came to San Diego State University to join the art department, and Everett Jackson's role, and his relationship to you from the beginning.

[~00:01:27]

MARTHA LONGENECKER: Thank you for asking me to speak on a time that was a pivotal point in my life. I had been invited to come to the campus and join the faculty, and I met the chairman of the art department, Everett Gee Jackson. In fact, I met the whole department, I gave an exhibition of my work and so forth. I found that Everett Gee Jackson was in my mind possibly one of the five most important people on earth. I know that sounds extraordinary, but it really was

extraordinary, because he was a man of such dimension and comprehension that he was utterly simple and charming, and yet unpredictable in the sense that he wasn't conditioned so that every remark that came out of him was kind of a truism. With such a man, Everett Gee Jackson, one could never *think* of having a different chairman, because of his magnitude. And that video that we just looked at needs to be seen by all people. So what was it, why did I feel this way? In the beginning, you don't look for a reason why, you just enjoy being with them, and the challenge of being a new teacher and having my classes and so forth.

I remember one of the first remarks that came from his friend, Lowell Hauser [phonetic]—Lowell was the person who taught etching and all the different printing media, and had been such a close friend to Everett that he even went on Everett and Eileen's honeymoon with them, but he was not present when the faculty came together with Everett to view the exhibition that I'd put on for them, so that they could decide whether they wanted to hire me. The division chairman, George Sorensen had brought me to that point. And so now I was meeting the chairman and the whole faculty. But Lowell Hauser was not there. The next day, or after they hired me, and I met Lowell, he said to me, "They hid me." (laughter)

So you see, I entered a new world with these delightful people and profound people. It's hard to put in words, but I, to this day, feel that strongly about Everett Gee Jackson. And he's somebody that I would like the world to be more aware of. So perhaps that video will be shown by KPBS. He wrote many

beautiful books and illustrated them. Now that the university is doing the archives on history, I would be delighted if he was included.

SR: Well I hope so, and I certainly feel enriched by watching that video. I was struck by his humility and also by his marvelous sense of humor.

ML: Unsurpassed. Better than any TV show comedian.

[~00:05:52]

SR: Absolutely. Dry. He had that style like the talk show hosts do—a wonderful sense of humor. And then when they brought his wife into the conversation, that was interesting. Tell me about that.

ML: Well, Eileen was the social editor for the Copley newspapers, and she was an extraordinary woman, very beautiful, and handled this being a social editor so smoothly. She would go to London for the royal weddings and so forth, handle everything in San Diego, and never had to take a note. She could remember everything and go home and write a marvelous article. And furthermore, because she was social editor for many years.... Do you recall how long she was? Over thirty years, I think.

SR: Over thirty years, yeah [yes].

ML: She would know that this new bride was the granddaughter of So-and-So in history, and whom she was marrying, et cetera, et cetera. Every detail. And again, such a remarkable balance with him that all people could see they were the ideal married couple. They had an extraordinary daughter who's still living. So see how enriching that was to me as a young person.

And also, Dr. Love, who was the president of the university, was on stage when we faculty members were introduced. I don't recall how many of us there were that year, but he gave a talk saying that none of us had been hired because we were great teachers, et cetera, but we were hired because we had the potential of *becoming* a great teacher. He was right! Because being with this extraordinary faculty that I was joining—others were marvelous too—in that institution, then you really like them, you really learn, and you become a good teacher. You can't be a good teacher without actually *doing* it.

[~00:08:06]

SR: Right. And it's interesting, speaking of the influence or the importance of that context, and your colleagues as well.

ML: Absolutely. And then of course with the development of the university, KPBS just started after I was there. I was one of the first ones to take advantage of it. They did a video of me called "A View of an Artist," that won the national award. Later I tried to find it. Nobody seemed to know where it is. We weren't that way organized. And I did a series of fifteen-minute videotapes on pottery making, which was broadcast for years. And I was watching other faculty, all doing this contributing. We didn't have any editing equipment in those days, though, and everything I did was totally unedited, so you see it and you wish, "Well, I wish I could cut that," and so forth. But that tied-into my life later then, when I was interested in documenting Dr. Allan Anderson and so forth, and Krishna Murti. Now I'm feeling, "Let's go back and document Everett Gee Jackson." But I really joined a great faculty and it was a rich period of my life.

SR: When you were involved with KPBS, were there any of the people there that you want to think about? I know you mentioned to me the other day—I hope I have the names right—a Paul Marshall.

[~00:09:46]

ML: Well, Paul Marshall was excellent at developing programs of tremendous depth and esthetic sense and all. He later left KPBS and started his own business. And interestingly enough, after I started the museum in 1978, Mingei International Museum, I immediately went to Paul, and he started documenting our exhibitions. So we have many *wonderful* documentations of that.

SR: That's marvelous! And then there was another, a Dr. Webb?

ML: Dr. Weber you're thinking about? He was the president of the university.

SR: He came later.

ML: Yes, he came later. It was Dr. Love, and then....

SR: Then Brage Golding, and then Thomas Day, and then Stephen Weber, right.

ML: And Brage Golding was a very strong president. I very quickly learned, in joining the faculty, that you had a good president if the people doing the janitorial work or doing all the other things were happy. Unless the man at the top is really good, then you don't have happy people. I particularly benefitted from that because when I got to campus, and I was to develop the ceramics program, they'd only had one little ceramics class. It was taught by Yosuro Oko [phonetic], a very fine interior designer and artist, and she had taken some pottery earlier, but she wasn't a specialist in pottery. But because she was so fine in her design, her pots were still good.

But I needed a good studio for the students to work in. We didn't have any wheels! Back in the supply room for all the glaze materials, everything was still in sacks on the floor. We had one kiln. And so, boy, I needed to get busy! And so I did, I designed all the kick wheels and contracted them out and had them built. I got acquainted with the carpentry shop first of all. I went down, we became real buddies, and they came and they built cabinets and bins and everything. They were pleased to do it. But that's where I got to know all levels of the campus, you see.

[~00:12:46]

SR: That's wonderful! It's very interesting, because as you well know, Brage Golding, in his oral history, similarly got to know people like you're talking about, because he was so involved in *all* levels and all aspects.

ML: That's it. That's it. People are amazed to see this beautiful lamp. "How'd you do it?" "Why," I said, "I went to the carpentry shop." I wasn't blocked. Everybody was helpful in developing that. So my first semester there, I only had one pottery class because it hadn't been developed. So I not only taught that, but other media that I've mentioned before: basic design. I think every one of us, as an art faculty member, taught a basic design class. Everett felt that was important, that we stay in touch that way, and that the beginners in the art department should have the best professors for their initial design. But I also taught a general craft class for all the teachers. I had many different classes. And I said to Everett, "What a wonderful schedule!" And he looked at me and he said, "Martha, in your entire history you will never have such a bad schedule as you have. Everybody gave

you all the courses they didn't want." (laughs) One of them was a course for business people and all, and it was called "Line, Color, and Display, as Relating to the Commercial World," and all. But I did enjoy all of it.

But let me take a detour for a moment and speak now of a student in one of these, because it was not only the faculty, it was the people that came. And the students were of all ages. And of course I was closer to their age. I was about thirty, I think, or thirty-two. So I had this basic craft class for all the elementary school teachers the first semester. Oh, we did wood block printing, and some weaving and pottery, and things that they might use in their elementary school. I had an excellent student, an "A" student who was always smiling and taking everything in, who was about my age.

At the very end of the semester when she would no longer be my student—Christmas had come and a new—she came to me and said she would like to invite me to a luncheon. My internal reaction was, I don't need a luncheon right now. I'm kind of exhausted at the end of a semester. But I had to be polite, and the next day she brought a list of all the people to be at her luncheon. They were all the leaders of San Diego—women. Turned out—I didn't know it—but my student for that first semester was Lucy Rawlins [phonetic] who was the social editor for La Jolla. And her personal friends were like the wife of the person who was leading the Copley organization, and another great doctor that later became my doctor, Jane Paul, and....

At this initial luncheon, which I went to, I commented to somebody when I first got there, "It looks like they've been combing their hair all morning, putting

on ...” because they were classy ladies, you know. Here I am, a little pottery teacher! This was also a life-changing point for me, because I was sitting there trying to do everything proper. And then it was time for lunch.

They got up, and there was this kind of buffet, so I got behind somebody and just was following, and the lady in front of me was saying that she had graduated from Marlboro [phonetic]. Well, that meant something to me. I said, “Well, my best friend actually graduated from there.” And she said, “Who was she?” kind of like.... And I said, “Emily Symington.” She screamed, “Emily Symington?!” at the top of her voice. “She was *my* best friend!” That was the most amazing....

[~00:17:18]

SR: That’s a wonderful story.

ML: Well later in the morning, sure enough, Emily Symington—I’ll have to tell you how I met her later—*had* been her best friend, and she became *extremely* important in my life. Well, at that luncheon I had to laugh to myself because I was sitting there and everybody was looking me over. And I caught Althea’s [phonetic] eyes going from my tip toe to the top of my head, evaluating me. (laughs) As a result of this [unclear ~00:17:51] they voted unanimously to take me in—I didn’t know I was being taken in!—to be a part of their group. And they called themselves The Sewing Club.

SR: Oh, you told me about that. Right.

ML: It was so funny, because I was using my hands every day, and I was not interested in coming and mending or doing anything. But it was kind of charming. All of

them were women and they'd have to have a dress shortened or something, and we all knew each other, so they would bring whatever it was, and somebody would stand on a table and somebody would fix their hem. At the same time they were very social leaders. So you knew these people as human beings.

SR: What fun. That's great.

[~00:18:36]

ML: It was just really marvelous

SR: That's just great. And that was through your student. It was a good thing you went to that luncheon.

ML: Oh absolutely. It was so funny when the art office said, "Somebody called about your sewing club. What's that?!" (laughter) I had to laugh—didn't sew at all. But anyway, that had a big impact, because this Althea Lusik [phonetic] then was so curious about it all, she had said at this luncheon in front of everybody, "What do you do?" I said, "You know, Althea, you'd just love it." Well, she ended up coming and signing up for the class. So now we had Lucy there.... I got to know these women very well, and they all have been life-long friends, all the way through.

SR: How lovely.

ML: So you see later, when I started the museum, I already had all the connections. It wasn't something I went out and tried to get, it was just plunked.

SR: They were there, uh-huh [yes].

ML: So when we first came to San Diego, we rented a little beach house on Mission Bay because my son was four and I was able to take him out in little rowboats

after school and all of that. But Yosuro Oko [phonetic], the wife of the great architect Lloyd Oko—and I mean the great [architect], one of the leading ones in our country—had said to me that they had their house for rent, and perhaps if I was coming to be on faculty the next fall that I would like to rent it.

She took me out to see it. It was *the* prize architectural home featured in *Architectural Digest*. When I'd seen it, it was a dream home. It's a rammed earth home, eighteen-foot glass [windows] in the wall, and it had a pottery studio, because she had been teaching the pottery class. Her husband was an architect, so he had the architectural offices. My husband was a general building contractor, so it all fit. But I said, "We can't move into it yet because I'm still teaching at Idlewild this summer, and my husband is also helping to build the Idlewild School as a contractor." And so she had to rent it to somebody else. But the interesting thing is that after a year of teaching she came to me and said it didn't work out with the other people, the house is empty again, now would we rent it?—for practically nothing—because she knew that we would make it look so good, and that later they would want to sell it. Well, we really made it look good with all the American Indian rugs and all the pottery.

[00:21:27]

SR: Oh, how lovely.

ML: And we had friends that had weddings there and everything. All my friends in La Jolla would come over for a beautiful party.

SR: Oh, it sounds wonderful.

ML: And all this was just kind of unbelievable, the kind of life we came into with the university.

SR: But also, you're so open and social, and all of this. You mentioned to me also that you've been involved in swimming and sports. Tell me about that.

ML: All my life. My brother was nine years older, as I mentioned, and he was a tennis champion, his room was full of cups and all. Naturally I learned to play tennis and how to be a champion. And of course we learned to swim when we were little, and body surf. And later when I was at the university, when I was still young enough, I used to go out in the harbor and with the motorboats and the surfboard, you get on shore and get your feet on the board, and then the thing takes off and we'd go around. So there were all of these things. I was close enough to the age of my students to share a lot of that with them.

None of these relations were just a little glib and stop—most of them were always lifetime. So many people I've known, they do die younger—unusual to live over ninety. I found that so important later, when I was starting the museum. Most people couldn't understand how this museum grew so fast. But there was this whole network. One of the most important things I've learned in my life is that we never work alone. We never work alone.

[~00:23:23]

SR: That is so true.

ML: We're one little cell in God's creation. And I've come to study with ministers and bishops and Dr. Yanagi in Japan, and Krishna Murti and the Dali Lama and everybody, how God is love, and how we're all interconnected. The only action

we can take is our own, to affect the whole, like a little stone in the pool. We don't bring any of this on through our wishing or planning. It has nothing to do with that. It's almost the dropping of agenda in your life, and being open, making sure that each action is true. And then it's amazing to see the whole thing develop.

SR: That's beautiful. Among all of these people that were at the university, you also talked about Sidney Gulick. Tell me more about your relationship with him.

ML: Well Sidney Gulick was the dean of faculty while I was there. I think he was the first one that Everett had me meet after they had decided they wanted me to join the faculty. That was right next to the president and so forth. I came to know Sidney Gulick *very* personally and intimately because his wife, Eve, was a weaver, and we both belonged to the Allied Craftsmen of San Diego. This was a group that had been started some years before I came to San Diego, but I was invited to join them. My husband was a building contractor, and he had a new architectural home designed for him—I think it was by Lloyd Oko—and so my husband built that. We came to know them *very* well.

Then much later, after the museum was started, and in the eighties, we did a show on Eve's weavings. It was a wonderful show, and at her death she left much of her collection to the museum, so we still have this. Their extraordinary son was [unclear, 00:25:53] Eve also, had been very close to the museum.

I find that therefore so much of the museum was rooted in the university, those roots continue to grow and flower, et cetera, all the way up through Dr. Weber and his wonderful wife, who was president of San Diego State

University when I was just leaving my directorship. I directed it for thirty years, and was leaving that. There's so much that interweaves. It's really just like watching a plant grow.

SR: After establishing the Mingei International Museum, you had the opportunity to do something regarding faculty. And it's so clear that you delight in the work of others as well as in your own work. And I'd like you to describe some of that.

[~00:27:28]

ML: Thank you, I do think that's kind of the heart of it all, because we are all a part of this total creation, and it's that creative energy that is pure joy. One of the exhibitions was on the work of my first pottery teacher, Laura Andresen. She was in her latter years at the time. I think we had four hundred pots, *wonderful* pieces, most of which belong to the museum now. When she died, she willed me a couple of wheels, potter's wheels, and gave other pieces to the collection. And we did a book on her—beautiful, beautiful book, which again brought in another person I haven't mentioned, Bradley Smith, the great author who wrote, *The Art of China*, *The Art of Japan*, *The Art of Spain*, the art of everything around the world.

I had met him simply because he was sitting in our library. Our library was part of our office of our first little museum, and I came in and this man was sitting there reading some books. When he came, he introduced himself, "I'm Bradley Smith." I knew who *he* was, a famous author. And he said, "I have been to all the libraries in San Diego, trying to find information. Where do I find it? I find it in *your* little library!" Well then we got started talking about the

publications we were doing, and he volunteered to oversee the photography for Laura Andresen's show that we were planning. And I say oversee it because he had a young Scandinavian apprentice that had come over—beautiful girl—and he wanted her to photograph it, but he would be there supervising it. So we not only did a beautiful exhibition on Laura, but a *wonderful* publication, all because of Bradley Smith now coming into it. Well, of course every one of these relations always grew into something more. So Bradley was very prominent in the work of the museum for ever after that.

Now another exhibition that we did recognizing faculty members was the enamels of JoAnn Tanzer. I think I have spoken to you about her before. But she was not well in her latter years. It just seemed so important to me that she had really a big show. Her husband has survived her, and her collection of work came to the museum later too. It wasn't a requirement, but it just did. So many people don't know of all these *wonderful* artist-craftsmen that have come before, because generally the best of them aren't known to the public, because they're in the work because of the joy of the work and unless they *have* to be making money out of it, they don't like to be in the commercial world. I was the same, I didn't like to sell a pot. I did, during the war years and we had to live on so little. Then it was Sue Dowser Hatfield [phonetic] Galleries and it was a little bit impersonal, but I just can't stand [unclear ~00:31:20] sell a pot, anything like that. So, so many of these people, JoAnn and all, were the same, and I felt a need for people to see their work.

That's why later then, when we had our new museum, and just the year when I was leaving, we had a chance to do a big exhibition on John Dirks, who was our sculpture teacher, and woodworking, that Everett talked so much about in the video they did on him. My nickname for John was Dirkerangelo. That made him so happy. I think he died the next year. So it was wonderful to do that.

SR: That's great. You've also mentioned Arlene Fisch.

ML: Oh yes! Arlene still living, and she's an internationally-known jeweler, teaching jewelry there. She came in, really, just before Everett Jackson left the chairmanship of the department. Her life has been totally focused on her work. She has never married, so she puts all the energy into that. And she, unlike most of us, has really focused her energy on doing shows and being publicized and all, because that's been her whole life. And so you'll see a representative.... And that was great, but I love the fact that there are these other people who are *so* extraordinary the world doesn't know yet. That's why I feel so strongly about doing another exhibition on the paintings and all of Everett Jackson someday.

[~00:33:14]

SR: That would be marvelous. Just getting a taste of him through this video has made me curious to see more.

ML: Yes. Were there some other particular people you wanted me to speak on in the life of the university? The life of the university consists of so many thousands and thousands of people, all important, and I'll feel terrible because I'm sure in the next moment, the next day, I couldn't begin to tell you all about them.

SR: Was there anything else you wanted to say about John Adams?

ML: He was somebody that I admired tremendously. At faculty meetings he would usually say things. He was an English professor, perfect English. He was the kind who wouldn't be with people right before he was to give a speech. He had to be alone. He would come out totally focused, like a poet. I believe he was chairman or an important person on the committee that assigned sabbatical leaves. I always had the feeling that somehow he liked what I wrote, because I was the first person on the waiting list, even though I was the newest faculty. I wasn't justified, but he put me on that waiting list, and then by the grace of God, Sacramento added me to that.

But this feeling of wanting people to see, wanting to share the seeing, is at the heart of my life, and it's the reason why I enjoy the work of the museum so much, because I know for sure that you can't understand art by just reading about it. Like you can't just read about music. You can't read about good wine or good food without eating and tasting it. And so much of our art education has been to read about it and tell you, and people get conditioned minds of why Picasso's important, or Moreau, without ever really *looking* at these things. So I felt that the art objects themselves speak to the people. They are the message of the museum.

So the most important thing with a museum or any exhibition is that these objects are properly related, just as Everett Jackson in his recording talked about that all art is a matter of line, form, and color, and space. Everything is, in life. Therefore, most of my energy went to seeing relationship, and putting it there, and building the wonderful plastic cases. We became Realout [phonetic] Plastics'

number one customer. So good a customer were we that whenever I'd call, putting up a show, "We need another little case," I could call in to Elliott, who always gave us priority, all these cases and so forth.

It's also what I feel so much now since I left directing the museum. I had heart surgery the first year. That's the reason I left at that point, so I couldn't get back to it right away. But what I *did* get back to was continuing a project that I had started some years before I left, and that was a new and special website, separate from the one we had developed for general announcements and so forth. And that was called "See Mingei." That's all it is on the thing. So in that year after I had retired and all, I finished putting together excellent photographs....

"See Mingei" is a website that will enable people to look at 5,000 images of a lot of the people from all areas of the world. It's divided into the basic organic materials of the earth, which are all the woods and the fibers and the natural coral and so forth; and the inorganic materials of the world, which are the stones and the metals and the clays. The organic materials are those that can be consumed by water, and the inorganics are the ones that cannot be consumed by water. And I've been fascinated to the inorganic materials, because in working with them you're participating in the transformation of these materials. And as we go on in life and go ever deeper, we find that everything is in transformation. Just take water, for instance. Water can be wet rain, or something we're drinking, or it could be mist, or steam, or it's ice. It's up in the clouds above us, it's in the rivers below us, it's in the oceans. It's always moving, constantly. The ocean currents go deep and for some way through the earth. Fresh water comes from the

springs at the tops of the mountains and goes down rivers and streams and goes back into these oceans of saltwater, and it just goes on and on and on.

[00:40:12] So with pottery making, you're taking the clay that's given to us from the earth, and yet no man knows how it comes to be. No man can make clay. He may make plastics, but human beings have not been able to make a material that is soft and pliable and dries hard and then can be fired to be permanently hard, and can be glazed and can last forever. We've got so many Neolithic clay.... We've got so many beautiful pots 4,000 B.C., even with glaze on them, and all your wonderful Egyptian things. That's all within the art of pottery making.

And it's fascinating to teach it, because when you're teaching pottery making, you're not just teaching pottery making—you're teaching about truths of the universe, deep within it. It reminds me of my graduate school education teacher, who said to me when I said I was going to teach art, "You're not teaching art," he kept saying. "Oh yes I am." "No, you're teaching people." And I've come to realize that: you teach people *through* the art.

And so therefore a website that enables people to actually look and see the objects, the objects teach them. And so going back to pottery making again, we know now that clay is being made every second in this earth, because it's simply the transformation of stone into a plastic material through gentle water running over it—just water running over granite ultimately will make clay. How do we know? We don't know how it's done or how long it takes, but new clays that are being formed will be less plastic, and often they're used for bricks or chimney

linings. But old, old clays that have been in our earth, they not only form in one area, but they're carried down streams for ever and ever. They get more and more plastic. As they go along, they pick up metallic oxides from the earth.

There's very little pure white clay, because there's very little pure white stone. Most stones are already composed of differing amounts of irons and coppers and cobalt, magnesium, all of the basic elements of the earth. And no two clays are alike, just like no two people are alike, no snowflakes are alike. Everything's always different. So as a potter, you chose the kind of clays you want to work with or you mix different clay bodies, and you know through firing them and through coating them with a glass-like coating—glaze—you can see what colors or what oxides are in it. You're constantly learning from it. But it's a process of taking this natural clay and through your hands giving it form.

And this was all begun in Neolithic times when people needed a cup rather than just their hand to drink out of. They needed a bowl, they needed a plate, they needed a covered jar. Every single form that we know as a container in pottery today was invented, was created rather, in Neolithic times, 3,000 B.C. And it all came with the beginning of civilization when man decided they didn't have to be like the total animal kingdom, just out gathering nuts and food and other things, or hunting or fishing, but they could farm. Agriculture was the beginning of civilization. We should bring back our focus on that, how important that is, because it's the one ingredient we all have to have every day, several times, to give us the energy. We're all energy in the world, and a human being's basic physical energy comes from that food.

So as a potter now, you take this clay, you see what you can do with it. You could make a mold, you could cast it, you could hand build it, you could learn to throw it on a wheel. There's so many ways of forming it. All these things have existed through the ages. There's unlimited resources and really information, facts about [how] this and that is done, and how to make colors. There's no absence of it, it's all there, if somebody wants to read and read and read. But the actual bringing it together, forming it all, can be done very simply without hardly any knowledge. Much of your American Indian pottery, your pre-Columbian pottery, was just taken by these wonderful beings and shaped into being a bowl, a dough bowl or storage unit. And just by their instinct and their sensitivity and their eyes and their feel....

Nothing was ever produced prior to the industrial-mechanical age. Everything was always beautiful. So the early pottery then was usually *not* glazed, just clay formed, dried in the sun to get rid of physical water, fired in a kiln, some kind of a container that would help conserve the heat of the fire under it, until it got up to red heat, which is kind of minimum to make a porous clay. Most Mexican pottery, American Indian pottery, pre-Columbian pottery, is all earthenware. It's hard, if you put it in water it won't dissolve, but it's porous. But then it was discovered long ago in China that if something was in the kiln for a long time and forgotten, and it overfired, it went to white heat, then the clay itself began to melt. And if you fired it too much, it would be totally stone again, back down. But by firing certain clays that you knew were capable of going to white heat without dissolving, you developed stoneware pieces like the crocks of

seventeenth-century England and these beer steins of Germany. These were stoneware clays. And many of those then were glazed by salt. Isn't this ridiculous?! But salt is simply sodium chloride. So when salt was thrown into the kiln at the point where the clay was beginning to vitrify on the surface, but not flung—toss salt in—well, salt separates into sodium, which joins the silica of the clay surface, giving you a sodium-silicate glaze, and the chlorine just goes off as a gas. This is just one simple thing of one little aspect of pottery.

And then there are other white clays, very rare, which go up to only become hard at white heat, and those, if a clear glaze is put on them, something that vitrifies and is free of metallic oxide, then you have your white porcelains. Often if they're thin, you can slightly see through them. So you can see that human beings were just finding clay, can learn all this. And the Egyptians used to take the clays and *their* glazes, surprisingly enough, were made of borax, just like the borax you might have in your medicine cabinet, or your soda. Those make glasses.

[~00:48:19] When I was a child, plumbers put together iron pipes with actually a glaze. They would take soda, natural materials, and then put it on the pipe, heat it, and so forth. But from very simple basic pottery making all over the world in Neolithic time. It goes back 10,000 years B.C. in Japan, some of the oldest jomon [phonetic] pots. Things in China, the Middle East, it's all there. And then it keeps evolving, the civilizations of what they do and so forth. Now in today's world we have knowledge and information on every single kind of thing that could ever be done, but it all comes back to the fact that we're working *with*

the fire and with these elements. And after we do what we can in shaping it and all, we yield it over to the fire. In Japan you go through a Shinto ceremony of tossing the salt in all directions (claps hands together several times) bowing to it, yielding it to God. And that's the essence all over the world, because the atmosphere of that kiln can make such a difference. For instance, if you put iron on a piece with a lot of iron and dark clay, it's going to be a brown. But if you put some iron over a white clay, it's going to be kind of a yellow tone. And if you put copper in with a lead-based glaze—lead—lead is yellow when melted alone. So you put a touch of copper with it, which is capable of getting turquoise, you get green. All your certain areas of culture, in China, use that green. You don't have to read about it if you know the chemistry. You can say, "Oh, that's iron," or "this is cobalt, this is manganese," et cetera, et cetera. So it's like the basic notes and basic things of foods—no two ever alike, though. All the pots you make, your thousands of pots, and no two are alike. It's looking at the seashells. All these things, they connect you to the natural world, you see.

All of this has to do when you work with natural materials, it's the development of your perception. Perception means that you free your mind of preconditioned ideas or what you've read, to directly see *what is*, what is the case, what is the truth. And that goes back to the whole reason why Dr. Yanagi, Sōetsu [phonetic] Yanagi of Japan, what he taught at Harvard and discovered how the Industrial Revolution had fragmented people and things were no longer beautiful, deeply thought and came out with the explanation. He gathered disciples around him, people to learn from him, so that they would understand

that people are created—they're not made, they're created, and they have innate creativity running through them, which is used in all aspects of life, which can flow endlessly, as long as the human being's mind is not colored by ideas and reactions and opinions. The state of meditation is seeing through all of that. And as we look at history and pre-industrialized times, we saw people were that way.

So now in our modern life, when there's *so* much information and technology, it's quite a challenge for us to get a good education and not kill or cut back on the flow of our innate creativity. In order to try to get this over to people, which Dr. Yanagi felt was so essential, he coined this word *mingei*—*min*, “all people”—*gei*, “art”—and taught that these great works of art were born, and they were not made, because they came from individuals who were not fragmented body, mind, spirit. And he made the prediction that unless in civilization we the people continue to make, create, let be born through us, to create—that's what's creativity—objects that express a *whole* being—he said the word “wholly” refers to that—our *whole* unfragmented body, mind, and spirit—unless we continue to make it, create it, use it, there would become complete breakdown of civilization. Your civilization's been fragmented, it's gone. I think we're witnessing that.

I also personally have so much faith that we're not going to lose it all. But what's essential in these times is to awaken people. I think people in all fields, like Jonas Salk said to me once that he and I were pulling on the same line. Basically in our work we were observing, we were perceiving, and seeing the relationship and coming to understand. So that's the way it is in art, and it's never-ending, and it's so exciting, whether you're in the visual arts or tactile

pottery, or whether you're a musician or a dancer. Merce Cunningham was one of my closest, most-beloved friends, and he said I was a dancer at heart because I could see how he felt. He introduced me to, gave me the book *Zen and the Art of Archery*.

So with all of this that we've been talking about, the wonderful atmosphere and facility that San Diego State has been and continues to be, and the way the people in it—Everett Gee Jackson, the great presidents including Dr. Webber at the end and all—they've all [taught] people, bringing people, awakening people. Even though we say they're a professor of geography or this, we're really, it's all one.

And so when I went on to create the museum, it was not my intention, as you know, at all—I've made that very clear—but when I could see that it was of the world and they were coming after me, they wanted that, they needed it, I simply went ahead with it, and as I explained to you, it just unfolded in the most miraculous ways. And it's not ended, life keeps opening up more and more.

And the reason I started this website that I mentioned, "See Mingei," was to make sure that this basic teaching, helping people to realize their innate creativity, would go out through the new medium all over the world without any money being involved. I see that money is the root of all evil, and that often it blocks people from hearing the best music, tasting the best food, seeing the best art, and that's why we all need access to it.

And at the opening of the website "See Mingei," which I launched January 1, 2008, I wrote a little poem-like thing that says "dedicated to all who

are a part of the creative circle of life.” Number one, all those beings that take the natural materials of our earth and participate in transforming them into essentially useful objects for our daily life, which have a timeless unsurpassed beauty. And then two, it’s dedicated to all those people who preserve these objects, recognize what they are, nurture it, take care of it, see that they’re seen by others, whatever way—whether they wear them, exhibit them, letting all people do just like we want all people to see the best dance, the best music, the best theater, et cetera. And then if people have cared for it, they must pass it on. They collect it, they pass it on to the next, so that all of these people forevermore are being awakened to their own innate creativity to express. This is the creative cycle. It goes back, perception. And I feel it’s happening in the world very much. And I think there’s a craving expressed in the world for the beauty of all these aspects, not only nature looking at the sun and the moon and the waves and the trees and all the animals—it’s just so terrific.

And through the media, KPBS particularly coming to San Diego State, and seeing the leopards and the birds, the eagles, and the whole natural world, but also the creativity of mankind.

And Krishna Murti, the great world teacher of the twentieth century that transcends all separate religions, speaks of this. And he says that beauty, whatever beauty, is simply the flowing of goodness. What is goodness? Order is everything in its right place. It’s order. Earlier we heard the great Everett Gee Jackson, chairman of the art department, San Diego State, during my early years there, say that all art is really a matter of the organization of line, form, and color,

space. If we talk to a dancer, they would say, well, it's a matter of *movement* and time and space. A musician would talk about the tone and the note. But it's all a work of art, in *any* medium, whether it's dance or music and visual. It's something so beautifully integrated, organized—not by you and me, but just together—that you can't add, or you can't take one thing away from it without breaking the wholeness of it, like an egg.

So this is all very important things that we need to know in our world today. And we have to come back to realizing that we can have no civilization without adequate farms and raising food, because civilization began with that, and we must exchange the food, and we must recognize that money systems were just manmade things, many of which are very corrupt. But we all have the basic things within us to see truth and to bring it about, as long as we realize that we're *not* separate, and anything we do affects others, and everything they do affects us. And that's love, realizing that God is love. When we really see that, the whole world comes together, and I think the millennium will be—this is my own feeling.

I don't know what more to say, except that in my own life, in looking *back* at it, I can now see how important my kindergarten teacher was. (chuckles) What would I be without that? Down the tubes, I guess. And so many things, and how the woman who became my best friend and was a co-founder of Mingei International with me. Here had been the best friend of my *other* best friend years ago. And how my little third-grade boyfriend ended up being in the same field, and we came to know each other in recent years. And constant things that we had no idea.... I learned much later that when Ian Paige [phonetic] designed the new

Mijo [phonetic] Museum in Japan, the most beautiful museum in the world—I admired him, I saw the video on the production and all—I much later realized that I had met most of his family, but I hadn't realized they were the Paige family, because it was marriages or different names. And all these things go to work.

I haven't talked in the series about my *formal* things with religion, but I did mention I was born of a Quaker family, and I also [unclear] got to Israel in 1943, and I went wading in the River Jordan to connect to water again. And I had the good fortune of just going to simple churches, and for a while in high school being a part of a Presbyterian [church], because all the kids joined to it. They had a teenage special group, which helped me get through life. Then later I met the man who was a general minister in Claremont, the graduate school. I and my friends all went to his simple little church, and his good wife. That's where I was introduced to Kierkegaard and C.S. Lewis and all the profound teachers.

And by good fortune, again, I met in graduate school a person that I was destined to marry, but was a mystery to me. And I bring it up now at the end of the talk because it comes back to this mysterious thing, How is it done? We're almost like something that's being moved around.

On this particular day, I was starting across the campus of Scripps College, and I was a hundred or two hundred feet away from a person about my age, a girl, coming. It was a diagonal path across the Scripps Gardens, and I just was [struck]. I looked and I said, "There she is!" just like somebody I'd lost. If you've ever lost a ring or something, and you discover it under the rug—it was exactly that [feeling], "There she is!" I couldn't even see what she looked like.

She came closer and we got acquainted. We ended up being the *deepest* of friends. I knew her until her death. Unfortunately for me, most people I've known have passed on, because they don't live after ninety. But it was through Emily—Emily Symington was an excellent painter. My home is filled with her paintings. She had also studied with Millard Chase [phonetic], and she came from a rather wealthy family, so she didn't have to exhibit or sell, so she isn't known to the world. But I think she's unsurpassed as a watercolorist of the twentieth century.

But another very important thing: somehow she had been brought into my life. She was a personal friend of an Episcopal priest, Eric Bloy [phonetic] and his wife. And my husband and I, with her and two other couples, would go to his home at the top of Altadena where he had a private observatory of the heavens. And we were in a little group he called the tsonga [phonetic], and he taught us about the religion that transcends all religions, all the principles of it. He became the bishop of California, the Episcopal bishop of California.

So all these years now, as I'm there in the graduate school completing my MFA degree, there's a strong link with this great man. And in fact, when I had my MFA graduate show and so forth, he came to campus to see my show. When the bishop arrived, all the dignitaries thought he'd come for something else. They rushed to him and said, "Oh, you've come for the concert!" He said, "No, I've come to see Martha's graduation."

But what a gift to both my husband and me, for years to be in personal contact. The first thing I did when I met Dr. Yanagi and had that seminar with

him, the week-long seminar that I described to you earlier in my talk—when lunch hour came, I dashed over to Saint Paul’s Cathedral where he was, to tell him about these men and what they were saying, and the teachings of Yanagi about us being whole and nonbroken . He was very calm and just said, “Yes, they’re simply talking about the truth, the religion that transcends all of our religions.” He wasn’t getting in an argument about whether you were Tibetan or Buddhist or Christian, and yet he believed in Christ—of course. But it just brings it all together.

So that prepared me for Dr. Anderson, that I’ve told you about, coming to campus and learning about him, auditing his classes, and knowing the whole world would hear him, and then fortuitously meeting my husband, fortuitously through Krishna Murti, who came to our campus. We were able to document him, San Diego State, KPBS, has all of those films on the teachings of Krishna Murti and Allan Anderson. It just goes on and on.

And so I feel that my work with so many years now, at least eight years of the “See Mingei,” getting it out there, but not being in a position, since I retired from the management of the museum and all, to further it. I’m delighted it’s there, but I am hoping to find a way of doing more *with* it, because it means that all those artist-craftsmen throughout the world who are unknown can suddenly see their work shown and appreciated, and others who have given those works to the museum can be inspired. I see it as a way of reaching the world, making everyone know that *they* are part of this innate creativity, and bringing about the change.

Looking back over the *whole* thing of the life of the teachers, the friends, the colleagues, and now in my life particularly association with the whole Shumei [phonetic] organization, international organization coming out of Japan, and their beautiful Mijo [phonetic] Museum, they have already brought heaven to earth over there with their museums and their Mijo Museum Institute of the Arts—largely designed by Ian Paige.

Also, there's a big world movement of pure natural agriculture going on, led by their group, the same group that's with beauty. I just want to mention these, so if people *aren't* aware of all the magnificent marvelous things that are coming into this world, transforming this world.... And there's never been a time in civilization that there hasn't been challenge, challenge, challenge. "Life is a process of overcoming challenges," my late husband said. And it's because we're coming to something much higher, that transcends all the limitation of our knowledge and intellect, coming back to see the spiritual power *far* overcomes physical power.

I have to mention before I leave, the great works of Dr. Motoyama [phonetic], a Shinto priest in Japan, now, I think, about ninety. He has *many* Ph.D. degrees. He's written *many* marvelous books. He has an institute of human research in Encinitas, a big, big center, besides his shrine, in Tokyo. And he keeps spreading that word. It's so inspiring.

So ultimately I feel *so* grateful and give thanks to God that my life is so rich in relationship. And whenever anyone has said to me as the museum grew so beautifully, "Oh, you did it all on your own." I said, "Absolutely the opposite!"

Never on my own, not an hour on my own. It was always everyone. And those we know and those we *don't* know, those that have come before us.” All we can be, which I needed to be in my life, being a mother and teacher, museum director, was holding to the center, being the hub of an infinite number of spokes, that unless you stay centered on what's true, you can't hold it together. And that's the way you teach pottery making at the wheel—you teach the student how to center, not only the clay, but center their life on what is true.

SR: Well, this has been the most extraordinary wonderful experience, having you share your life, your experiences, your insights, and what a joy this has been for me to listen and to share this, as we shall with this, for San Diego State University. I want to thank you so much. And again, this is just a great gift that you are giving.

ML: Thank you. I would like to add, as we know, with the transmission of energy, you have to have the receiving mechanism as well as the sender, or the energy doesn't go through. You [unclear] that other side, pulling it all in. Thank you.

SR: Well thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]