

Transcript for Oral History Interview

Conducted for University of Maryland Course HIST 428M - Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Anne S. Rush

Interviewer's name: Harrison Lee

Interviewee's name or pseudonym: Ok-hi Lee

Interviewee's Country of Origin: Korea

Interviewee's Current Residence: State College, Pennsylvania, Centre County, U.S.A.

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Place of Interview: State College, Pennsylvania, Centre County, U.S.A.

[Interviewer's note: This transcript was authored as closely to the original recording as possible. Some words or phrases will appear grammatically incorrect. Mid-sentence interjections or notes are in parentheses.]

Harrison: Hello. My name is Harrison Lee. Uh, today is October 24th, 2015. We are here in State College, Pennsylvania, with Ok-hi Lee, who is my grandmother. Uh, during this interview I will be referring to her as halmonee, which is Korean for grandmother. Hi halmonee, how are you?

Ok-hi: Fine, thank you.

Harrison: Great. Um, so, the first thing I want you to tell me about, uh, i- is a little bit about yourself. Tell me about your background.

Ok-hi: *[glances down at prepared biography]* I was born and raised in Seoul, Korea, capital city of South Korea, and I was 5th of 6th children. I and my three brothers and two sisters had a happy childhood- hood, despite my growing up during the occupation of Korea by Japan.

Harrison: Okay. Um, can you tell me a little bit about your early life in Korea? What was it like?

Ok-hi: It was- uh, it was v- as I said I *[glances back down at biography]*, my brothers and sisters all had a happy childhood uh, during the occupation of Korea by Japan of course, so. It was...happy childhood I had.

Harrison: Do you have any specific memories, um, things that stood out to you during that time?

Ok-hi: *[short pause]* Not really. I cannot r- pinpoint which one. I had a very happy childhood.

Harrison: Okay, um, can you describe any sort of routines that you kinda went through, like, you know, what did you- what did you, go to school or, **[Ok-hi: Yeah.]** uh-

Ok-hi: I did go to school, it's Korean. It's, uh, co-ed school that my class, uh, class was separated by boy's class or boys- so boys and girls are separated....class, yeah.

Harrison: Okay. And, uh, where did your parents work?

Ok-hi: Where did they work? [**Harrison:** Mhmm.] Oh, uh, actually, my father owned, so, uh, mining, uh, company, but my mother was a housewife. [**Harrison:** Mhmm.]

Harrison: And, uh, did your siblings do any work at all or, uh, they went- they went to school mostly? Or...

Ok-hi: Oh, mostly school, yeah.

Harrison: Okay. Um, and then how important was family to your daily routines? Uh, say in comparison to when you came to the U.S.?

Ok-hi: Oh, is very important. You know, very tight relationship- ship among families, yeah.

Harrison: And did you stay in contact with them when you came to the U.S.?

Ok-hi: Yes, of course I stayed in contact with my family.

Harrison: Mhmm...um, do you miss anything about living in Korea?

Ok-hi: Course, lot of things I miss. Family for- start with. My father passed away when I was live in Korea, but my mother was still living and then rest of my siblings was still living [**Harrison:** Mhmm.]...except my oldest, oldest sister, uh, who was, during the wa- Korean War, she was killed by the uh, oh, artillery, hit the, uh, her air raid shelter. Destroyed. [**Harrison:** Um-] So I lost elder sister.

Harrison: Mhmm. And, uh, what were some of the cities and places in Korea like?

Ok-hi: What was?

Harrison: What were some of the cities and places you lived like?

Ok-hi: As I said, I just, uh, all my life, ehm, t- t- to the point that I was growing up there, I never gone live else- any other, uh, cities. Korea, Seoul, Korea, is the only place- is the only place I have been, and uh, I never got out of that city. [**Harrison:** Mhmm.] Yeah. [**Harrison:** And, uh-] Except Korean War, yeah.

Harrison: And uh, do you remember anything interesting about Seoul, uh, um, anything that struck you about- struck you about it?

Ok-hi: Seoul, as I said, you know, 'til we fled to, uh, southern most city of Pusan. We lived in our house and, uh...is very peaceful and very- had a little, ehm, backyard with a- we had a little- when I was very young, backyard had a orchard, like, uh, is not for business purposes but we had our fruit trees in the backyard. We were very happy to have those things. So, as I said repeatedly, I was very happy child. Yeah.

Harrison: Mhmm. Um, and do you plan on returning to Korea at any time?

Ok-hi: Did I...plan? [**Harrison:** Do you plan on-] Now? No, at- at this late [*laughs*] age, I don't think I will return to Korea to live. This is my country now. [**Harrison:** Mhmm.] Yeah.

Harrison: And um, when you went back to visit, where did you go?

Ok-hi: Seoul. [**Harrison:** Seoul?] Mhmm. [**Harrison:** Okay.]

Harrison: Um, so tell me- tell us a little bit about, you know, what brought you to the United States.

Ok-hi: After Korean War, yeah, I was carp- college student. And then, uh, after war, all schools were shut down until the government was restored, and then country was rebuilt. So many college students were seeking opportunities to go to abroad to study. So I applied to, uh, as I said, the uh, I had a good fortune to meet Professor Adams, Ms. Adams, who was the director of student teaching at- at the University in Illinois- Evanston, Illinois.

Harrison: And um, what was uh- what were you intending to study?

Ok-hi: Art education. And so I did go with her help, and after almost two years' effort, I was admitted to college as a junior transfer student...studying art education.

Harrison: Mhmm. Um, so, um, in Korea, what university did you attend in the meantime?

Ok-hi: Yeah, Sungkyunkwan University.

Harrison: Okay. [**Ok-hi:** Should I save it?]

Ok-hi: It was my good fortune [*glances at biography*] to meet my professor, uh, Ms. Ag- Ms. Agnes Adams, who was the director of student teaching at the, uh, National College of Education, now, National Louis University at Evanston, Illinois. [**Harrison:** Mhmm.] And after she came to Korea with American education mission to- to build an educational system...new educational system, I should say. So, with her help, I uh, I was admitted National College of Education as junior transfer student [**Harrison:** Mhmm.] uh, studying art education.

Harrison: And what drew you to art education? [**Ok-hi:** Hmm?] What drew you to art education? [*Ok-hi can't quite hear, so repeated with increased emphasis*] What drew you to art education? [**Ok-hi:** What dreams?] What drew you to art education?

Ok-hi: Oh, oh of course, yeah I was very interested in art, of course, but you know, at the- at the time, we need a immediate, uh, effort is try to rebuild Korean, uh, educational system to provide good education for other people so I thought art education will help. With my interests, what I have in mind, will help them- students.

Harrison: And- and when you came to the U.S., when you came to Illinois, did those plans change for you? [**Ok-hi:** What do you mean these plans did change?] Oh, you said that you wanted to, uh, help rebuild the Korean educational system [**Ok-hi:** Uh huh, uh huh.], um, but, uh, since you didn't go back, did your plans change or...

Ok-hi: Yeah, that thing is, I was planning to, uh, go back to Korea after my master's degree, which I did go to Columbia University to finish. Meanwhile, I met my husband who also came to

U.S.- the- [*flips through several pages*] **Harrison:** My harobaji? My grandfather? Mhmm, harobaji, because, uh- **Harrison:** And what was his name? Hasup. He was, uh, son of Korean family that had fled, uh, Japanese occupation of Korea prior to World War II. And he had grown up in Shanghai. Towards end of the war, he was swept up by, uh, Japanese expansion into China and the- uh, sent to training camp for Japanese army. Fortunately, the war ended before he could be sent to fight.

Harrison: Do you know anything about him before?

Ok-hi: Um, before, he did go to school, Korean school in Shanghai, China, but they didn't have, uh, secondary school so he had to go to Chinese secondary school. And then after war, his first, uh, let me see, before sent to, uh- following Japanese, uh, army, uh, let me see...he got a post-war job as a translator for U.S. Army occupation forces in Tokyo. By that time, he learned Korean, Chinese, and Japanese. So he, uh, he did translate for U.S. Army. **Harrison:** Mhmm.]

Harrison: Was he interested in coming to the U.S. or...

Ok-hi: Well, he was- yes, he wanted to come to U.S., that came after he obtained his college degree in Tokyo. He came to U.S. He had, uh- Penn State, he came as a- with a graduate teaching assistantship. After receiving his PhD, he came- eh, he was offered a teaching position in electrical engineering. And where he eventually became a full professor, and then uh, acting head of the electrical engineering department.

Harrison: And how did you meet?

Ok-hi: Oh, through my mutual friends, friend we had. Yeah.

Harrison: And um, did you know him before you came to the U.S.? Had you **Ok-hi:** No.], uh, did not-

Ok-hi: He was- he was growing up in China, Shanghai **Harrison:** Mhmm.], China. I was in Korea. I never been to China, so...that's the first time, in New York, I met him through my mutual friend [*laughs*].

Harrison: And what did you think when you met him? **Ok-hi:** Huh?] What did you think when you met him?

Ok-hi: Of course I was impressed [*both laugh*]!

Harrison: Um, so when did you come to the United States?

Ok-hi: That's- 19- 1957 **Harrison:** 1957.]. January, 1957. **Harrison:** Mmk.]

Harrison: And uh, where did you come to the U.S. through? **Ok-hi:** Where?] Mhmm.

Ok-hi: Evanston, Illinois. **Harrison:** Evanston, Illinois, okay.]

Harrison: And so you came as a student?

Ok-hi: Mhmm. National College of Education at the time, and they eventually changed their name, National Louis University. [**Harrison:** National Louis University.]

Harrison: Okay, um, and from Evanston, where did you end up moving to?

Ok-hi: From Evanston, when I graduated from, uh, Louis University, National College of Education, whatever...I did move to New York, and my sister was over there also. Younger sister. So we did tour bus, attending Columbia University. [**Harrison:** Mhmm.] It was, you know, study, yeah. [**Harrison:** An uh-] At the time, met my husband, and who was teaching at Penn State, so...we- we- I came here enrolled as a graduate student at Penn State, and then we decided to get married, of course, so I met in 195- 1960, I should say. I still continued, you know, my education. [**Harrison:** Mhmm.] But- and then, children came along, so when 2nd- 2nd boy was on the way, was- I- I realized I could not do it now. I had to wait for my study. And so I stayed at home until 3rd son was nine months old. And then, uh, I gone back to study so I finished my degree in 1969. I got, uh, MFA degree from Penn State in studio art.

Harrison: And what was living in New York for- for the time like? [**Ok-hi:** When?] What was it like living in New York?

Ok-hi: Oh, that was a very exciting city, of course. I learned so much, of course. Culture of this country and took, uh- they offered so much cultural, you know, enrichment. So in a- in uh, art, music, and drama. So I was so happy. Every opportunity I could get, I parti- participate, well more than participate, I just, uh, took advantage of being there.

Harrison: And what was the most interesting thing that you encountered in New York?

Ok-hi: Well, most interesting thing was opera, for instance, opera. But being a student, we had a student ticket. But it was way up, second balcony, but you know, the actors size was one of my fingers, that far away [*Harrison laughs*]. But still, music was, you know, very clear. I could hear very well. That was very exciting. And when I was in, uh, Evanston st- studying, of course, art institute offered so much to me. Cultural background too, of course. So from, uh, Chicago to New York, those two cities offered a lot of, you know, interesting artistic event. I was very excited about.

Harrison: What were kind of the, most interesting cultural differences between here, uh, and Korea?

Ok-hi: Mm, for instance, little high school girl, when- back in Korea, of course, we never dreamed of- in my opinion, classes- express- back in Korea, you never dared to say anything against what teacher says, but here, little girls say, "In my opinion, this is not so....", kind of thing. Very free speech. And those things, not only free speech, everyday- what's the right word? Anyways, freedoms they got. It was very, uh, refreshing and shocking, of course. We never spoke against teachers, that's our way of growing up in Asia. But here, you can express whatever you think, uh, yeah, subject, or no, study or whatever.

Harrison: And so, was, uh, society a little bit more rigid back in Korea?

Ok-hi: More...very restricted and then, uh, you cannot easily go against what teacher's telling you.

Harrison: And did that apply to the same way with, um, say, political structure or, uh, family structure? [**Ok-hi:** Family?] Was that the- was that the same case with the teachers the same thing with [**Ok-hi:** Family.]- yeah, right.

Ok-hi:...life, same thing, of course. You never say against your elders. You have to, whether you think it's right or wrong, you have to agree with them, of course. And then later, you may change your mind, but still, that's the way it was with elders. You never express your opinion.

Harrison: In regards to your three sons, uh, did you raise them up kind of under more traditional Korean norms or, sort of, more in the U.S. freer way?

Ok-hi: I see. Well, half and half, probably. You know, they have to learn how to respect elders. That's still same as I- was when I was growing up. Yet, it's a- they can express, or they have some freedom, uh, they can express if they don't agree with them, with, um, elders, they can explain why. But- which, back home, they never had such chance to, uh, say against them.

Harrison: So, tell us a little bit about your three sons.

Ok-hi: Well, three sons, well, they were very, uh, I must say they were all good, the three sons. They, of course, they never against, uh, parents' opinion or whatever, but, uh, they were always- they were known as a very good sons and students. So I don't think I had any particular hardship with- as a parent. If we don't agree each other, then we talk it over and solve it, no problem, yeah.

Harrison: And uh, what are their names?

Ok-hi: Uh, Kyu-Woong, the 1st one, then Kyu-Ho, and Kyu-Tae the 3rd one, youngest one. Though you, our cust- custom is that ge- ger- their generation has to carry one of two, uh, name they have to follow. They're that generation, not only you, but uh, you know, cousins and so forth. So for instance, Kyu is the one that generation has to follow. So Kyu- and uh, choose one other letter, so there's a Kyu-Woong, and 2nd one was also Kyu, Kyu-Ho, and then 3rd one, Kyu-Tae, yeah. But uh, their cousins carry same Kyu.

Harrison: And does, uh, the term- the phrase Kyu, and then the letter- does that hold a specific, significant meaning or...?

Ok-hi: Yes, mm, its significant meaning is actu- is uh, distinguished. That's uh, Kyu, yeah. Kyu means distinguished, yeah.

Harrison: Mhmm, so what- what does Kyu-Woong, Kyu-Ho, and Kyu-Tae mean?

Ok-hi: Well, Kyu-Wo- Woong is actually like a, heroic, so very smart heroic person. Kyu-Ho, uh, same smart, and Ho means more gene- genera-, what's the right word? Uh, courageous and so forth. Like a general in army kind of. Yeah, strong person. And uh, Kyu-Tae, again, uh, it's a very distinguished, and smart, and that's what it is. [**Harrison:** Mhmm.]

Harrison: Okay, um, so, Hasup, when he was living in the U.S., did he have any interesting experiences that he told you about?

Ok-hi: Mm, interesting experiences...well, he told me, uh, when he was growing up back in Shanghai, the episode is, uh, they're all boy-scout members. And so, uh, the, uh, some fellows went to buy, uh, some supplies for camping. And then they ran into roadside vendor who was selling potatoes. And then they were trying to buy some bushels of potatoes, and then this farmer realized these boys are from city. They wouldn't know anything. They must thought he can really make a money out of it, but- but this smart boys took the rotten ones out and then said, "How much is this rotten potatoes will cost us?" "Oh, that's, uh, \$500." For instance, 500 yen, I should say. And then for the other one is that is 400- 400-something yen. Anyway, they took their- this, rotten one if it is this much, we can subtract that one if they're cheaper. They took this, uh, good potatoes [*both laugh*].

Harrison: Um, so you said that you both, uh, came to State College for, uh, Penn State? [**Ok-hi:** Mhmm.] Uh, I heard from my dad that you had, you and Hasup had kind of worked with the Korean students. Is that- is that the case?

Ok-hi: Worked with Korean students? Just, uh, not anything academic thing. It's just uh, like a holidays or picnic once in a while kind of thing, or once in a whi- weekend, sort of thing, sometimes we had a ping-pong table in basement. When every Friday, after school, some of them came over to my house and played, they, ping-pong and they, uh, doubles or uh, singles and what- what so happened is haroboji, my husband, was good player. And at one time, they, uh, had a, some competition between Chinese students and Korean students, competition. Ping-pong competition. And when, uh, haroboji was playing against this Chinese boy, oth- o- other-audience says- said in Chinese, of course, "Hey, this guy's, uh, left side is weak. Why don't you, you know, send balls to left side? Attack le- left side." But, fortunately, ubaji, my husband, knew Chinese, of course, so he defended all new- where the ball's coming, balls, so he won [*laughter*] because he understood what they were, uh, you know, advice was. Anyway, afterwards, this Chinese students found out haroboji was from China [*both laugh*].

Harrison: Did they feel a little bit cheated?

Ok-hi: Well, it's not cheating. No, you know, uh, that's their fault assuming that this guy doesn't understand Chinese. But you never can assume that, or- but uh, ubaji said nothing he heard, so he just defended left side. Yeah, so he won. [*laughs*] Something like that. The language difficult, of course.

Harrison: And what drew the students to you, and uh, haroboji? [**Ok-hi:** What] What drew the students to you and haroboji? [**Ok-hi:** What?] What drew the students to you and haroboji? Um, did you know them from somewhere or...?

Ok-hi: No no, some of them, of course, came from Korea without previous knowledge, no. They- they came here, of course, and then realized we are from same country. And then they pay a visit sometimes, come to our house and so forth. So, that was the, uh, not necessarily same

department, so- but not too many students coming from Korea at the time, so we are very close relationship with the students, yeah.

Harrison: And so, what would you say were some of the, uh, some of the interesting parts of adapting to U.S. life?

Ok-hi: Interesting...I don't- all we realized is State College is, very- uh, peaceful, and then low crime, university town. So we like to- we liked to raise our children, make a home here so our boys were safe from the outside disturbances, so forth. So we loved this place. For instance, when I was studying, uh, in New York or- and then haroboji started in Chi- I mean, Tokyo, so forth, big- oh, even before that, Shanghai, big city always have this crime, not only drugs like these days. But crimes rate is higher there, these big cities, so compared to that- for instance, you never locked your apartment or car door. I was so shocked. We leaved the apartment door open- open means didn't lock, I should say. We did go out, so I asked my, you know, husband, and he says, "It's okay without locking the door." I mean, without lock up this place. Such a difference.

No one came in to rob my apartment, kind of thing. Anyway, such a difference, and where I lived in Riverside drive, apartment, when I was going to school, Columbia, and we had three locks, not only one lock when we go out and so forth. So big city, not only, you know, Korea or Shanghai, even New York, this country, is compared to State College, you have to be really careful. But here was relaxing, with, uh- low crime rate, as I said, and very trustworthy people around you. Most of them, uh, were working for university, so very, very trusted each other and so forth. That's the difference.

Harrison: And when you came to State College, did you find, uh- how big was the Korean community here? Was it-

Ok-hi: Very small. [**Harrison:** Very small?] Mhmm. Some- couple of faculty members, at the time, of course when haroboji was studying, there wasn't any, uh, faculty member Korean. And then, uh, one gentleman came from Germany, so he became- he worked for university research lab. He had a PhD from Germany so, was, he's the one- and then rest of- them, were graduate students from Korea. Haroboji's case, he's from China, of course, but through Japan he was, for a while, studying in Japan, of course. But the, uh, degree from Japanese university for undergraduate degrees, yeah. He came here, as I said, as a graduate assistant. To teach electrical engineering.

Harrison: And after you completed your graduate studies, what did you end up doing? [**Ok-hi:** What did I-] What did you do after your graduate studies?

Ok-hi: Ah, of course, as I said, I had to stay home. Then I did, finally, got my, uh, degree, final degree, but I slowly- slowly started working at the art museum, Palmer Museum of Art, part-time, until my children were old enough to, you know, I can leave them, or they left for- for the home for college and so forth. Then I started part-time working for museum. And after a while- after several years, I became registrar myself. So is the- that- my job, at the Palmer Museum of Art, registrar of exhibitions. That was my job.

Harrison: And so you managed exhibitions or recorded them?

Ok-hi: That too. I did, curated a show- some of them too- and then took care of our permanent collections. Whatever art piece comes in to building or goes out building, we have- they have to go through my office. All the record, has to be kept.

Harrison: Were there any interesting pieces like- things that were incredible that came through, that you remember?

Ok-hi: Well, we had some interesting, episode I had, because, you know, I was registrar and we were organizing show, which means we have to borrow some pieces from other museums like, uh, let's say, Kansas City or, you know, Florida- something like that. And one time, I was the- they didn't want to send this by mail, this piece, so courier had to carry him- herself or himself. So, had one Kansas, and then she, of course- I arranged everything and then bought a ticket, you know, airplane ticket and so forth. This piece, a monstrance [*monstrance: the vessel used in Roman Catholic, Old Catholic and Anglican churches for the more convenient exhibition of some object of piety, such as the consecrated Eucharistic host during Eucharistic adoration or Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament*], which is, uh, very important old one, piece, and they don't wanna send by courier- uh, what I mean is postal service. They have to carry in-person. So I just- her airplane ticket, I sent and then, of course, she ask for another ticket, for this piece we are borrowing, because, she didn't want to put in compartment. She had one passenger seat with, you know, seatbelt on. That was interesting experience.

Harrison: And what was the piece of?

Ok-hi: It's- it's uh, an old piece, monstran- what do you call, it's uh, for, uh, church. [**Harrison:** Oh, the monstrance?] Mhmm, monstrance, yeah [*some quiet mumbling*].

Harrison: Mmk, um, and uh, so, in my research about uh, Koreans coming to the U.S., one thing that I found was interesting was that a lot of them went to the D.C.-Metro area. Have you been there before?

Ok-hi: D.C.? [**Harrison:** Mhmm.] Washington, D.C.? Not before. N- uh, I came to- of course, by plane, I came to Seattle- then from Seattle to Evanston, Illinois, but I hadn't had a chance to see other parts of country yet at the time. So, D.C., way later I did [**Harrison:** Oh yeah, I meant when you went to D.C., um, like when did you go, roughly speaking?]. I don't- I don't quite remember what year.

Harrison: Okay, um, one interesting thing we- it came up in our topics of discussion. We were kind of curious to know about how, um, those who came to the U.S. felt they were perceived differently here than in Korea. Did you experience that?

Ok-hi: Of course. Lot of- lot of things is different. Language, to start with. Language and the food, and custom, everything is different, of course. We heard about it, we learned about it, as much as I could, but uh, still, I had so many things I had to adjust to, yeah.

Harrison: Um, I should phrase this one better. Um, what I meant was, did you feel that Americans, um, understood or perceived you differently than, um, those in Korea, when you

lived there? **[Ok-hi:** Uh, I don't know what the, uh- distinction is.] So you felt, um- you didn't feel like people saw you differently?

Ok-hi: Of course, here, of course. To start with, language difficulties. I thought I knew English pretty well because I tried to prepare, I guess. But still, we- in so many ways- *[Harrison checks recording progress]* is all gone now? Okay, yeah, anyway, uh, slang, slang I couldn't understand. "Blow your head off," I couldn't understand *[laughs]*, all these things, for instance. And then yes and no, that's another confusion I had. And, when- "Don't you have this?" You have to say yes or no, you know. Those- the, uh, negative question with the, uh, negative answer- that was very difficult to get through. Accustomed to, how to answer, that was difficult. And then, we didn't have the sound of "th", for instance "thuh", and "r" and "l" distinction was very difficult. So many things, of course, very difficult to follow. And as I said, the slang is another thing- couldn't follow, so, you know, right away, so it took time to understand.

Harrison: Um, is there any other reason that you settled in State College that, um, you liked this place, or is there something else about it?

Ok-hi: Well, you when, uh, my husband got his degree in electrical engineering, at the time, engineers were very popular, so many industry wanted to have them, scout them, to offer more salary and so forth. But big city, if you go, you get more money but you spend more money. And then he from Shanghai, I from Seoul, Korea, all- both of us was a city person. And then we know how the city life is, of course. This place so peaceful, yet academically, very challenging enough because we have university th- here. So we, uh, thought this was the ideal place to raise children. That's why we stayed- uh, against high, uh, good offer, we just stuck to this- we just stayed in State College, yeah. Because with children's education. **[Harrison:** Mhmm, and the uh, low crime rate.] Mhmm.

Harrison: If you had considered, uh, moving to an urban city, uh, what city would you have moved to?

Ok-hi: Well, it's a tough question because I love New York most, of course, because that- such a rich, cultural things they can offer and- but, uh, it's- it's not good for, good for living there. You know, to vis- visit and take advantage of it, but living is a little difficult, you know. I understand, of course, so- so I just, uh, didn't- here, if we wanna go, we can. It's not impossible to visit there. So, we- it's good thing we- stay here, in a peaceful surroundings and good education they can get. That's why we decided to stay at State College, smaller town. But university town, so...

Harrison: Mhmm. Okay, um, before you came here to the U.S., what were- what was your sort of, perception of it?

Ok-hi: Perception of this country? **[Harrison:** Mhmm.] Yeah, sometimes, very, uh, it's general- no, I didn't think of it but uh, all we picturing is Hollywood, you know *[laughs]*. All we saw is those beautiful ladies, whatever, those- that is America in- such a rich country, that's all we heard about it. Of course, we haven't been here, so we had no idea. But through those, uh...communications, whatever, the media, we- we learned about this country, how rich it is, how, uh, like uh, dream country, kind of thing. Tha- that kind of perception, we had. But as you

know, way people are living is almost the same. At the be- rich country, or poor country, to certain degree, they are same. But certainly, America is one of the comfortable, middle class- lot of people, middle class people, here, which is very comfortable. And financially, and so many ways, this is the best country I thought of, yeah.

Harrison: And uh, was it shocking when you got here, sort of, the differences between how, you know- the limited perception you could have, um, was it shocking when you got here?

Ok-hi: Mm, well, sort of, as I said, world is getting smaller, and then you have all of this communication and reporting available. So I understood most of them before I came here, how is this- still, that's very general- very generous people, here. And then, such an abundance of materials available here. So very, uh, very comfortable, to live. Of course, we heard about it, but uh, I witnessed it when I came here, yeah.

Harrison: So it- it kind of matched some of your expectations? [**Ok-hi:** Mhmm.] Okay, um, and so you came to the U.S. by plane? [**Ok-hi:** Mhmm.] Okay. Let's see....do you have any places in the U.S. you'd like to visit? [**Ok-hi:** To visit?] Mhmm.

Ok-hi: When I retired from university, I did travel all over the world. So, only thing maybe, I was thing was, to go to Saudi Arabia [*laughs*]. Oh, Dubai, for instance. Yeah, rich country, they can have all this- best of, whatever, in the world, so curious about it. Arab people, like their way of thinking, the way they are living, of course, I was curious. But as I said, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Far East, Middle East, I've been there all. After I retired from job, that was my, uh, purpose...see the world. That's what I did.

Harrison: And uh, what states did you travel to here in the U.S.?

Ok-hi: Here in U.S.? Mm. East, West, everywhere, actually, West because Kyu-Woong, my oldest son, was working at Silicon Valley. So, thanks to him, because of, you know, we did go, to see- most of the telephone yards, was Pacific side of ocean. And then, of course, Kyu-Ho, spent so many years in Boston, so I saw that, eh- Atlantic Ocean and all that side. Harvard town, for instance, Boston- Boston has, uh, lot of museums of fine art in Boston. And then uh, lot of cultural things they offer. And of course, uh, they went to Johns Hopkins, of course, so they been to so, Maryland, of course I did go. See, of course, Washington of late, of course I did go to Washington too. And then was- was Florida and southern states, Tennessee, and go see, well- and then of course, Grand Canyon and all that place I have been. Alaska I did see. And uh, as I said, quite a few state I did- travelled and so forth.

Harrison: Do you have any favorite places you've visited? [**Ok-hi:** Favorite place?] Mhmm, here in the U.S. or abroad?

Ok-hi: Mhmm, U.S. of course, Boston I liked. Of course, San Francisco I liked. Chicago, I liked [*both laugh*]. So most of them I liked very much, yeah.

Harrison: And what was most interesting about the places you visited?

Ok-hi: Whatever they offered culturally, I- I was interested in. More than historical facts, but uh, more cultural side of it, I was interested in.

Harrison: And did you have any favorite art museums you visited? [**Ok-hi:** Mm?] Did you have any favorite art museums you visited?

Ok-hi: Of, of course, I- too many of them [*both laugh*]! Metropolitan for one, yeah, at the world class museum. And so, other than that, Freer Gallery and Museum of Modern Art, and then uh, American Art- Whitney Museum of American Art. All these museums in New York, I did so, yeah. I was, for a while, in New York so I had a chance to see all- see most of them.

Harrison: Mhmm. Okay. Um...what struck you as interesting throughout your time here in the U.S.? Anything else besides the culture or the language or...anything that struck you as really interesting? [**Ok-hi:** What's interesting?] Mhmm. Aside from some of the earlier stuff we mentioned, like uh, the freedom, uh to speak or- or, less rigid structure, so to speak?

Ok-hi: Everything I saw was interesting in a way [*laughs*]. Lot of dams, like Hoover dam, and all that amazing things. We had so many wonderful- Colorado River and so forth. Power plants and so forth. So- so many things that I cannot just tell you in one word, but uh, lot of places are very impressive. And uh, gambling [*both laugh*]! I did to go to- what is that gambling place? [**Harrison:** Las Vegas?] Las Vegas, yeah, because Kyu-Woong thought, you know, I should see once at least- in a lifetime, you should see Las Vegas, so- which I did. Was interesting, of course, yeah. So I bought twenty dollar worth of chips and I played it- what do you call that? Slot machine [*laughs*]. Of course I lost everything [*both laugh*]! After that, no thank you, not- not anymore. [**Harrison:** I don't think you're supposed to win at those.] That's right, yeah.

Harrison: Okay, ehm, did you have any other interesting occupations or hobbies?

Ok-hi: Well, I did play tennis a lot. Tennis, for many years. After that I played some golf and so forth. But that was, uh, very- that was, first of all, why tennis, because when children were young I couldn't go out. I mean, no time to do anything else. But after dinner, I needed some exercise, so joined Parks and Recreation Program and then, you know, father could stay with children for a while. For a while or something. That's how I started playing tennis. Physically, mentally, that was it.

Harrison: And uh, you also, I know, do some art pieces so, what- what were you favorite art styles to do?

Ok-hi: First of all, the- my most amazing experience I had was, you know, standing in front of masterpiece work, some piece of art, either U.S. or other countries. That was my most exciting experiences. And doing myself, is of course, I did painting, and uh pottery. Why pottery? Because Korea doesn't offer too much any- culturally speaking to world. Only Korean ceramics, like uh, celadon and then uh, whiteware- that was big contribution to the history of cer- ceramics. Because celadon, they had, uh, of course, celadon glaze, grew- grey- greyish green celadon, uh, glaze, of course, from Tsung Dynasty in China started it. They already had it. But underneath of this, uh, celadon glaze is a translucent, uh, glaze so it's hard to have any design underneath.

So, what Korea did was, when it was a little harder stage, they carved out lines, whatever the design, and then they uh, used not the uh, color like, for instance, copper whatever or oxide and so forth. They uh, oh, what's the right word? They uh- this designed they carved out, when they

were letter-hard stage and uh, filled with different color clay like a white, black with a- black oxides. And then red oxides for red and so forth. So especially on those, uh, cela- celadon where has a decoration a black and white, like a crane, cranes or, cranes, uh, these decoration with the, uh, stylized cloud kind of thing, carved out as I said, and filled with this different colored clay.

And then they scraped off excess thing, uh- excess, oh, clay, and then let it try letter-hard, and then when it's completely dry, they of course, baked what they call bisque-dry. Bisque, uh, bisque, uh, kiln, I should say, they have to cook it there. And then, of course it needs to cool off and they take it out. And then you use glaze. Put on glaze on the piece. And then put it again in a higher temperature, twenty-three thousand degree Fahrenheit, kind of. They have to jack up the heat so that they can fuse this, uh, silicon, which is in the glaze, of course.

Even then, those kind of thing, because of that runny glaze, which you couldn't use any design underneath, now it was underneath, it was a different, uh, color clay was embedded. So it won't move or it won't disappear, or not disturbs. It's uh, like the uh, like that piece. The uh, green- *[gets up to bring over green vase]* How can I explain this *[laughs]*? Anyway, I could have more prepared to talk to you. Anyway, it wa- you don't, uh, lose your design because of the clay, not the color. Not like uh, cobalt blue design, then that will- may disappear, but uh, cobalt blue is not so good idea for decoration, because it's gonna be- glaze is gonna be green color.

Grey-green, anyway, that's what celadon means. Anyway, so, those kind of thing how we started this, anyway *[chuckles]*. So, uh, I was get interested since we have this history of pottery. That's the Korean, unique invention, to uh, carve out and fill with different clay, and then glaze it. That's our own invention, so that's- nobody else did that. We invented that, so credit comes to Korea.

Harrison: Mmk. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us before we finish?

Ok-hi: I cannot think of it now. I didn't prepare *[both laugh]*. **[Harrison:** You did a great job.] Oh, well, no, anyway thanks, but *[laughs again]*.

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