Yoshiko Yokochi Samuel Oral History Interview, Mar. 5, 2014

Nancy Smith

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Yoshiko Samuel  
First Interview  
5 March 2014, recorded at the Wasch Center

Smith: Before we got the tape recorder running, we started talking about your family and early life in Japan. You described your mother and how she influenced your later decision to go to the United States. She herself made a trip to America, and on her return she told you and your seven siblings that any Japanese person who wanted to understand the future should get to know the United States.

Could you pick up your story there?

Samuel: My mother made that visit in 1958. I came in 1960, and fortunately I met someone from Michigan State University and he and his wife encouraged me to come to Michigan State, and helped me get a one-year scholarship for graduate study in education there. So I came. And that’s where my life changed.

I studied early childhood education, and my visa could be extended for 18 months if I went into practical experience in my field, so I went into teaching and I went down from Michigan to Ohio, to an experimental elementary school affiliated with the Education Department of Antioch College.

I taught little children, and there I met my husband, who was teaching Biology at Antioch College.

Smith: What was his first name?

Samuel: Edmund.

Smith: You met him, and then--you stayed!

Samuel: Right, because he sort of represented to me a way of thinking that was totally new to me. I was very much a traditionalist in Japan. I was sort of taught how to think, and how to look at things, and I was confined to within that mode of thinking. His way of thinking was totally different, and the fundamental things was--he was always
disagreeing with me! I learned the importance of disagreeing with each other. That is, challenging each other’s thinking and views and so forth. It was a whole process of making a discovery.

In Japan, it was more important to agree with one another, and create a sense a harmony. And then, later on, we could begin to disagree with one another, very politely and so forth. And, with my husband, I just began to believe that what I thought was important, and could be helpful to somebody else— if I expressed it, rather than just going along with whatever other people think.

He became my unofficial mentor, and that led us to a marriage that happened in 1963.

Smith: How old were you when you were married?

Samuel: I was 25.

Smith: You worked together at Antioch, and then I read in your resume that in 1979 you earned an MA and PhD at Indiana.

Samuel: Right. By 1981, I had received the degrees. Meanwhile, I had two daughters, so I was staying home taking care of my children. It was a challenge, because they thought they were different from their friends. They wanted blue eyes, like Wendy’s or Daddy. And yellow hair, they said. It was a challenge for me to explain to them who we were and that it was perfectly all right for us not to be like Wendy and others like her.

While I was taking care of my children, I was called by someone at Earlham College in Indiana, saying: “Our language teachers from Japan, young ladies from Japan, must return home now!” And that “now” was two weeks before that academic year was to be over. And he said, “Can you come in and teach Japanese language?” And I said, “No, I don’t know how to teach it. I’ve never been trained.” And he said: “Well, you’re coming anyway.”

So I went and sure enough, I didn’t know how to teach. But I finished those two weeks somehow, and I found it interesting, so when we had a chance to go back to Japan for one year, to Waseda University, I took one year of training in language
pedagogy and linguistics. And that’s how I began to teach Japanese language at Antioch College when we came back. That was back in 1972, until 1974.

Then students began to say, “Can you teach us Japanese literature?” That was a very natural development from the language learning, and I said, “Yes, but I can’t right now, because I’m not trained.” So I decided to go back to graduate school at Indiana University, Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures. I did another Masters and PhD in Japanese Literature.

From there, I came to Wesleyan, in 1979. I was still trying to finish my dissertation then.

Smith: How did you hear about Wesleyan? Did you know someone at Indiana who spoke about it?

Samuel: No, I was beginning to subscribe to journals like the Journal of Asian Studies, the Publication of the Modern Language Association, and there were those “Position Open” sections in them. There was an announcement from Wesleyan, and my advisor said that Wesleyan was an excellent school. After Antioch College, I really believed in the value of the small, liberal arts college, and so I applied. I applied to other small liberal arts colleges too, but I had an interview with Tony Chambers and Krishna Winston at an MLA conference, and then I came for an on-campus interview in February, 1973.

Middletown was in deep snow. I arrived at night. I checked into the Guest House on campus and there was a note on the dresser saying: If you walk out to Washington Street and turn left, there’s a little eating place and maybe you can get your supper.

It was after eight o’clock, and I thought, “No, I’m not going out in the dark and snow and the cold.” I was just going to skip my dinner.

But soon after that, the Asian-American student group called me and said: “We are coming to pick you up and you are going to have dinner with us.” I was so impressed! And we had a nice dinner.

I think they called themselves WAIG, W-A-I-G: Wesleyan-Asian Interest Group. In a way, they were interviewing me over the dinner, and we talked about all sorts of Asian-American issues and Wesleyan and so forth. I felt very comfortable with them;
they were very supportive of me, and very much interested in what I was doing, what I would be teaching, and so forth.

That was one reason. Another reason was that, after I had several interviews, I sat on the front steps of Fisk, looking through the Wesleyan catalogue. And I thought: “Oh my goodness--those courses! They are so broad and so exciting,” and I said: “I want to come to this place to teach.”

So I flew back feeling that I wouldn’t have a chance; I had made so many mistakes. So I was overjoyed when Tony Chambers called me and said that Wesleyan was offering me a position. I accepted it.

That meant that I had to leave my husband at Antioch. And my daughters decided to stay with him. It was in a way convenient for me because I was still writing my dissertation, and we decided that we would commute back and forth. That’s what we did during the first year--two years, maybe. Then my husband left Antioch and came to join me, because he found a position at Southern Connecticut State.

Smith: Good for him, to follow your career.

Samuel: I could not have done it without his support. He was very good.

Smith: Now, we’ve got you up to Wesleyan. Once you got here, did you find it as enticing and as intriguing as you hoped it would be?

Samuel: Yes, I found students exciting. They were free thinkers. Sometimes they could be very presumptuous too, but still they were very open-minded and challenging. Those were good things, happy things. And I became very close to the Asian-American student group.

There were certain things that were not so good. During the interview and the campus visit, everybody said Wesleyan was a very liberal school, and I expected the same sort of liberalness, progressive thinking, as at Antioch. But I didn’t find that.

So that was one thing I had to adjust to. No Asian student, definitely nobody outside of the Asian group, talked about things like Independent Taiwan, or redress for wartime relocation of Japanese-Americans, and so forth. Which were just constantly discussed at Antioch.
Another thing was: I walked into my classroom the first day of teaching, and the first thing I saw was a drawing of a face on the chalk board. That face had obvious so-called Asian characteristics, slanted eyes and buck teeth, and it shocked me. I wasn’t sure if somebody just purposely, intentionally, made that drawing because he or she knew that I would be coming in to teach. To intimidate me? To antagonize me? I wasn’t sure.

But anyway, I taught, and it kept disturbing me. I asked other people around me about it, and they said: “Oh, it’s not about you, it’s a familiar face around the campus. It is Boon Tan.”

Smith: Oh, yes. I remember that story.

Samuel: And I began to run into Boon Tan all over campus. The Argus even had a Boon Tan face drawing contest. And one year in the “Funny” issue of the Argus, they had a lengthy article about Boon Tan, and that was my limit. I couldn’t take it any more; I wrote a long letter to the editor of the Argus, saying: “This is nothing funny. It is really racism, and Wesleyan should have no place for racism on its campus.”

They published it, and the editor of the Argus came to my office and asked me, "What was wrong with that article?" I tried to explain and I became very emotional, but I did my best. He said: “Well, Boon Tan is a mystery character. He was supposed to come here; his luggage arrived, but he never did. And that’s why Boon Tan became a very special image on campus.

I said: “You know, there is nothing mysterious about that. A lot of things can happen at the airport. I personally ran into a grandmother and mother and a little child trying to come to this country from Asia. The mother and child had valid passports. The grandmother had just renewed her passport, but brought an expired one by mistake, so she was not allowed to come! She was left behind at the airport. That’s a tragic thing. Something like that is a very heartbreaking experience, and that’s probably what happened to Boon Tan.” I explained that as much as I could.

And after that some Asian American students came to my office and said: You know, in the Argus office they still have Boon Tan faces pasted on the wall. At last they began to disappear on campus, and I never saw them again.
There were so few faculty members of color here on campus. We had only a handful of African-American people; there were Asian nationals like me teaching in World Music and Asian Languages and Literatures, but not anywhere else. So I thought, this is one way I can help and bring more diversity.

I’m still trying.

Smith: I think now Wesleyan prides itself on having a very mixed and varied student body.

Samuel: Yes. I think we have a lot more diversity and things have improved. But we still can improve ourselves a lot more.

Smith: I believe the Freeman Scholarships were a big pull.

Samuel: In terms of students, yes, the Freeman Scholarships helped a lot. But among faculty, and for people of color, the number is very limited. And I know only one or two in the administration. Maybe or one or two librarians, and staff. We still have a long way to go.

Smith: What were your favorite courses to teach at Wesleyan? I spoke with John Albert [former employee at the CFA who took several GLSP courses with Mrs. Samuel] who related how much he learned about Oe Kenzaburo from you.

Samuel: Kenzaburo Oe was my dissertation topic. He became a Nobel Prize Laureate in 1994; I brought him to Wesleyan in 1989, and he gave a very nice talk. He’s a very interesting person, he’s only three years older than I am, so he experienced the War as a child. The way I read his fiction is that he writes mostly to warn against totalitarianism, authoritarianism--especially in Japan--and the need to put humanism in their place.

He wrote a lot about Hiroshima. He was known as an Existentialist writer, and his works always dealt with social issues.

I don’t mean that fiction must deal with social issues, but I like the ones that do.

My special area of Japanese literature was post-war Japanese literature, and that’s where I concentrated my teaching. We used to teach courses called survey
courses, so I taught early modern Japanese literature, post-war literature--those were survey courses--but I did teach courses that included pre-modern courses like Women Writers of Japan, which began in the 10th century, and up to now; minority writers of Japan, and also women writers of Japan.

Those are the things I felt very strongly about, and I also thought that I needed to talk about the war. Because young people don’t know the war, and in order to move ourselves toward more peaceful conflict resolution, we need to talk about those awful destructive inhuman resolutions that we utilized in the past.

And also, I felt that we couldn’t really begin to talk about Post-War Japanese Literature without talking about US-Japan relations. I put that as a focus of my Post-War Survey course; I talked a lot about Hiroshima, Nagasaki.

And I’m still talking about it.

Smith: Good. People tend to think it’s in the past, it happened a long time ago and has no reference to today. I think it does.

Samuel: That’s true, young people in Japan today have no sense of crisis!

And now our Prime Minister is trying to change our post-war Constitution in a way so that Japan can militarize again. Young people are sort of indifferent. It’s a frightening thing. He says, as some politicians have said all the way along after the war, that our Constitution was written by Americans, and it’s a shame. We should change it to our own Constitution. That’s their excuse. But that Constitution worked just fine during the last 65 years! We don’t need to change it. It gave equal rights to women, and it made the Emperor the symbol of Japan and its people--not a political figure, not a Supreme Commander of the Japanese military, and that has worked just fine too. I’m all against changing it.

Smith: So you think the young people are indifferent to the idea of re-militarizing Japan?

Samuel: Like the majority of the Japanese. There are some young people who are concerned, and I think altogether something like 70 percent of the whole population is against the revision of the Constitution. But still, I talked to them and they have no sense of crisis, and that worries me.
Smith: At the moment, I think when most Americans think of Japan, we remember the tsunami of two years ago. We all saw terrible news reels of houses, cars, people simply being torn away, in that nightmarish way. And then the nuclear power plant explosion.

Samuel: I didn’t know that there were 53 nuclear plants in Japan. And then I found that a lot of Japanese people didn’t know, either. The plants were just built without any public knowledge. And also, I found out that the text books for compulsory education, which is first grade to the end of junior high school, textbooks are controlled by the government. The government must approve textbooks. Those textbooks recently had stories about how safe the nuclear energy was, and that this was a peaceful use of nuclear energy, and Japan’s future would be bright and wonderful because of this nuclear energy.

And after the accident, they scratched all that out.

I met a Wesleyan student from Japan who told me, “That’s how we were taught.” He said I know that textbook, and that’s what we were made to believe. But now he is planning to write a senior thesis on nuclear energy and politics.

Asian Languages and Literature has a temporary faculty member who is teaching a course titled the Legacy of World War II in Post-War Japan. He invited me to talk about my personal experiences before and during World War II, and after that I brought in another Japanese woman who experienced the atomic bomb in Nagasaki, and she talked about it. And students were just wonderful; they were very, very open.

Two students came in; one of them is going to do a senior thesis on post-war Japan and prostitution in that period, and the other one is gathering personal testimonies from Japan and Korea--she is from Korea--and childhood memories about World War II. I am very pleased that those people are interested in that part of history, and in trying to put it together for others to share.

I talked about the dangers of thought-controlling, which was the thing in Japan, like the Cultural Revolution in China and the Fascism in Nazi Germany. Our thoughts were just totally controlled. We were told what kind of things to do and not to do, and it was all for the sake of upholding the honor of the Emperor, and of his country; we were all his children and we really just became nonentities. We couldn’t develop our own thinking; we had to follow; and we just became the Emperor’s “trees and rocks,” as
Oe Kenzaburo would say.

It’s wonderful to still have those opportunities to work with students.

Smith: What is your sense of Japanese college students today? In Japan, not necessarily the ones you are working with here. How have things evolved in Japan?

Samuel: I think there are lots of individual differences, but one generalization that is made is that Japanese college kids don’t study hard. And it is because they study awfully hard for entrance exams into elementary school, junior high, high school, and college. It’s called “examination hell.” I went through that. My teachers would say: If you sleep four hours a night, maybe you can get into a university of your choice. But if you slept for five hours, you are not going to make it. Everything was geared to getting into good schools so we could get good jobs when we graduated. So, when we got into universities, we had no immediate goal.

Smith: You’ve made the big goal already.

Samuel: Yes, we made it, so we stop working hard. But then, this is just a generalization. There are University students who study very hard and do very creative work and especially--this is a stereo-typing in this country--in physics and science. And we have had several Nobel Prize Laureates in those fields lately, right? In medicine, we are making good progress, too.

I can’t really say. Japanese students come here and say, “My gosh, this University makes us work so hard! We can relax only on weekends. In Japan, we just get together and have fun all the time.” They take side work, called arubaito, and they spend more time doing arubaito, and at the end of four years they find that they can’t graduate because they had spent too much more time working than studying.

Smith: Was that to make money, or to.....?

Samuel: To make money. In Japan, we are very money centered, in good ways and in very disturbing ways. We had a Freeman Scholar from Japan; he would study hard here, finish a semester, go straight back to Japan and get into the University of Tokyo
classes for the last two weeks of the semester, and take their exams, and still pass. He had been accepted by the University of Tokyo before coming to Wesleyan. I think he started there, for two weeks then came here, then two weeks before they finished their semester, he would go back and finish that course. He graduated with bachelor’s degrees from both Wesleyan and the University of Tokyo.

Smith: Do you approve? Would you want to hire that young man?

Samuel: No. And Mr. Freeman heard about it, and put a stop to it.

Smith: Part of me thinks it is amazing.

Samuel: He was a bright kid, very international, very practical, no culture shock, he could just shift back and forth.

Smith: But he was playing the system. He was doing something simply because the opportunity was there.

Samuel: Yes. I said to him: How could you do that? And he said: Well, Professors don’t know if you are missing from your class, and some kids sit way in the back and just sleep. And so long as you just take final exams, which you can do by borrowing notebooks from other students who had attended the course, you can pass. Then you are OK. You can move on.

Smith: I understand why Buck Freeman disapproved. I'm sure he said, “The program is here to help you, but not to help you make a game of the system.”

Still, the ingenuity impresses me, which probably makes me pretty shallow.

Samuel: We were all amazed. How could he do that? But--he did.

Smith: But he did because he could. I think that is fascinating.

I meant to ask you before about one of your earlier academic projects: You translated a collection of personal narratives by Japanese war brides.
Samuel: Oh yes. It was never published, but I was very much interested in Japanese women living in this country. Before I came to this country, the so-called war brides, Japanese women who married American soldiers, were looked down on.

There was a stereotype that they were prostitutes. Which wasn’t true at all. Not all of them.

When my mother came back from the United States, just before I was leaving for the first time, she said, “You will meet some Japanese women who are called War Brides, and you are not to look down on them. They are survivors. They have lived hard lives, most of them, but they have made it, and you have a lot to learn from them.”

So I said OK, and the first person I met when I landed in California, in fact, was one of those so-called War Brides, and she was a perfectly good person, and so was her husband, and from then on I heard many very tragic stories about these women.

Then I came across a Japanese photographer, who came to this country and collected personal narratives from these women and put together a beautiful book. I asked him if I could translate that book, and he said, ask the women. I wrote to every one of them, most of them said yes, some said absolutely no.

I translated it; and I just gave that book to a student who is writing about Japanese post-war prostitution, and I said: “Not all of them prostitutes, some of them make it clear that they were not, but some of them said, ‘Yes, I am embarrassed but I had to do it to support my family.’”

A lot of women who refused to give me permission either had worked as prostitutes and were too ashamed of it, but some came to say OK. Others said: “I don’t want to have any association with those bad women. Don’t put my narrative in the same book.” I just gave my student that book to read, and possibly translate some of the narratives.

This was post-war prostitution, which was sanctioned--created actually--by the Japanese government. To protect good women of Japan, they advertised that they were looking for women between 18 to 25 or something like that, and said: “We will give you jobs, we will give you clothing, meals, housing, and it is a good job.” On the first day something like 4,000 women applied. They were totally misled. The men who put this together called it a “Recreation and Amusement Program for American Soldiers,” and
they set up centers. It was actually prostitution; and as soon as venereal disease began to spread, the U.S. Military put a stop to it.

Then the women had nowhere to go, so they spilled onto the streets. Then we had this stereotyping view of women who were fraternizing with American G.I.s as Bad Women. Fraternization was, I think, prohibited by the U.S. Military, too. And there was racial discrimination there as well. The Japanese women who associated with African American soldiers were never allowed to associate with White soldiers. It was totally segregated.

I was very much interested in women whose lives were changed because of the war, and the post-war U.S.-Japan relations.

Smith: Did that ever get into the curriculum? Did you discuss it in your classes? Was it part of the history?

Samuel: I talked about it in my Literature courses. I consider personal narratives a form of Literature.

Smith: I wondered if you were ever asked to talk to a Women’s Studies group? It seems to me to fit into both categories.

Samuel: No, I wasn’t asked. It might have been my own problem. I sort of alienated myself from Women’s Studies groups here. I never went to their meetings. When I first arrived here, there was something called Wesleyan Women Faculty groups, that had get-togethers. I went once and I felt like I was from Mars. So I sort of shied away from it.

I know they were doing very good things, but that was one area where I saw very little diversity. In general at Wesleyan, it was one of those things that I tried to overcome but was never good at. On many occasions, and at many meetings, I was the only Asian at all the faculty meetings for the longest time. I was the only Asian face at Commencement, at committee meetings, and so forth. I didn’t quite like it, it made me feel very insecure and alienated.

A lot of people tried to help me, but I just never became good at being the only Asian.
There have been a lot of racial things, even now on campus and in Middletown in general. I went to a doctor’s office recently, and the receptionist asked, “Do you still work at Wesleyan?” I said no, I have retired. She said, “You must have been a custodian there.” When I said “What??” in a really astonished way, she said, “You know what custodian means, people who clean up.” I asked her, “What makes you think that?” and she said, “There are a lot of Asians working as custodians at Wesleyan.” That’s racial profiling.

Smith: I’m so sorry that people’s stupidity can upset you.

Samuel: Yes, that’s it. It is ignorance and stupidity. They need a lot of people helping them so they can gain some understanding and knowledge.

Smith: When I was at Wesleyan, there was a fair amount of racial unrest on campus, but it was mainly concerning African-Americans. It was unfortunate because it was violent and unpredictable, not merely intellectual and argumentative. It passed, and my sense is that so far as African-Americans are concerned, Wesleyan is on a fairly even keel at the moment.

Samuel: These things happen less and less often now, but still they do happen.

Smith: I’d like to go back to the course or courses you taught for the GLSP.

Samuel: We talked about a series of things that Oe Kenzaburo introduced me to, led me to study. We talked about existentialism and Magical Realism and so forth.

Smith: We’ve covered a lot of territory, but is there anything else you want to talk about? Curriculum? Ways in which you would like the curriculum to go? Anything we missed? Before we began, you said you specifically wanted to talk about racial awareness and discrimination, and I know we’ve at least touched on that.

Samuel: I still believe in Wesleyan. I think the curriculum is so broadening and that’s what a Liberal Arts education does. I think it is wonderful.
I don’t know what to think about the merger proposal, I think it has been approved: the merger between Asian Languages and Literatures and the East Asian Studies Program. It will become one. There will be no more Asian Languages and Literatures.

But, in actuality those Asian Languages and Literatures courses will go on in Fisk Hall, so in terms of curriculum and course offerings, there is little change.

But--I just love this Wasch Center for Retired Faculty!

I think this is such a good place. Wonderful idea. You know Wesleyan is a strange place where you don’t get to know other faculty members or administrators, especially recently, unless those colleagues are in your own building. And I found that everybody felt that way.

I don’t know if it is because of the layout of the buildings on campus, but here at the Wasch Center we get to know the people we didn’t know before. And we exchange a lot of ideas. It just is good to chat and find out what each one of us is doing. The Lecture Series is wonderful.

Smith: Have you lectured here?

Samuel: I have lectures here about Japanese poetry. I hope this place will continue to function as it has done, and even possibly expand.

We also hear from people who are outside the faculty but who have a lot to share with us and teach us. That’s wonderful: music, poetry, it is great.

Smith: I think you’ve partially answered my next question, which is: How do you feel about the Wesleyan of today?

Samuel: One change that I see is that in the olden days, in the ‘80s and so forth, if I had some concerns or something that I had to work out for my department, I could just go to North College and talk to Nat Green, the dean, and Edgar Beckham, even Colin Campbell. We had this direct communication, and I had a feeling that North College had a very good idea of what was going on outside. I’m not sure if I can say the same thing about today.
It’s just that there are so many deans you have to go through. Something called the Cabinet, the President’s Cabinet? I really don’t feel that I know President Roth that well, and I don’t know any of the deans too well. Vice President for Academic Affairs, everything just comes down from above, no longer communicating at the same level. Perhaps this is because I am now outside of everyday Wesleyan life. That’s one thing I think about once in a while. But I don’t really worry about it every day.

Smith: You’ve been retired for eight years, yes?

Samuel: Yes. In terms of students, the student population has gotten larger. I’m not quite sure what it is doing. Asian Languages and Literatures courses are always rather small because it is a special interest area. That’s fine. I hope the administration will recognize that, and wouldn’t expect it to develop HUGE lecture courses and so on.

Smith: Last fall you came to speak to the Middletown Literary Club. It’s a town-gown organization that has nothing to do officially with Wesleyan, yet at least half the membership is in some way connected with Wesleyan. You gave a talk that blew me away. You spoke about haiku and tanka, and much, much more, and I believe the poetry you read were your own translations.

Samuel: Yes, and I’m still trying to find a publisher. In the publishing world, I think poetry, especially in translation, is only 0.3 percent of total volume covered. It’s something like 33 percent murder mysteries. But I’m still trying...and still working against the Death Penalty.

In regard to that, we are getting a head start in many areas. In Connecticut, we have abolished the death penalty, and a couple of other states have followed since then.

Smith: I didn’t know that was an interest of yours.

Samuel: I decided to translate that collection of Tanka by Shima Akito because he was an executed murderer. His poems, those Tankas, really convinced me that the death penalty made no sense. Very early on in his incarceration, he said he wanted to give his
eyes to somebody after his death. After that, he expressed a wish to give his organs: He wanted to make numerous anatomical donations.

I couldn’t include this in my talk, but he put himself out for adoption. First, because he worried about his family, who would suffer the stigma of having an executed criminal in the family. And second, he was afraid that nobody would want any part of his body if they find out it had belonged to a criminal. So he put himself out for adoption. A single woman came forward and said: Yes, you can be my son. That’s what happened. She was there at his execution. She took his ashes home and buried him, and she was the one who helped him convert to Christianity.

She lives in that town in Miagi Prefecture that was the hardest hit by the earthquake and tsunami.

I wrote to her and said I hoped she was safe, because she was then something like 100 years old. She wrote yes, fortunately my house has survived. And my elder sister (!) and I are now offering our house as a house of prayer. And so she asked me to “please hurry up with the translation because Satoru is waiting.” Satoru is the poet’s real name.

So I have to find a publisher. But the very fact that he wanted to do something for other people by giving parts of his body, that’s a very strong sign of ability to re-enter outside society and be rehabilitated and to function. So: I just don’t think that there was any point in executing him, and I began to wonder how many condemned prisoners may be like him.

I wrote to some Japanese people for permission for quotations I might use.. One of them was the grandson of the head of the prison where Akito was incarcerated. He told me that his grandfather was against capital punishment, and that he wrote a loving book about each prisoner under his care who as waiting for execution. It was through Akito I met those wonderful people in Japan. I just have to get that published.

I was very happy to have the opportunity to share those poems.

Smith: Have you had enough for one day?

Samuel: Indeed.

(Interview concluded.)