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Connor: We'll go ahead and get started. That sound great.

Crystal: Okay, Sure.

Connor: Perfect. All right. Are you rolling?

Won: Yeah, we're good, we're good.

Connor: Perfect. So hello, this is Pacific Lutheran University interviewing with Crystal here [Understood the Tacoma Buddhist Temple]. Thank you so much for having us. Crystal, would you like to introduce yourself just name and where you're from and just a little back story about how you came to the temple.

Crystal: Sure. So Crystal Inge. I'm actually a resident in Seattle, but I was born and raised in Fife, born in Tacoma officially and I actually was born into the temple. I wasn't just affiliated, you know and chosen it on my own. So I'm like a lot of historical family's here. We were all born into it. So, I'm third generation Japanese and my grandparents immigrated from Japan probably in the early 1900's. My dad was born in 1921 so his parents were a part of the temple before, and so he was born into the temple and like many of us we are from the Puyallup Valley or Fife Valley area... farmers. This Temple was really kind of, probably started not just because of Japanese Community need to have a community but because of our farming family and richness around and we were all we're all neighbors and and friends before the before coming to the temple to.

Connor: Oh that's awesome.

Crystal: So it's kind of one of the same, the farming community and it wasn't just this Temple, is not just a farming Community Temple, but a lot of the Mainstay families were from Puyallup Valley and fife valley Family Farms. So my affiliation goes way back. I can probably remember coming to the temple when I was maybe... seven, four, or Five years old.

Connor: Wow.

Crystal: And my first friend is Merilee Tanbara. You probably, my first official friend and so she's now the Dharma school superintendent so you can see there's a lot of Legacy here. And so there's when you say what stories to share and how do we share that? I mean, there's so many...

Connor: That's awesome.

Crystal: Which is probably why you're writing this.

Connor: Yeah, perfect. Yes, and that's exactly why we're writing this up. So you mentioned that you had your first friend here. Do you have a story about how you guys kindled that friendship here?

Crystal: Yes. Well, we have both had this affinity for loving to, this sounds really superficial, but we love to kind of dress alike. So we would call each other in the morning and say what are you wearing and I am not kidding so back then in the 70s, it was it's actually retro back now these Macro, May kind of vest sweater vest, you know, so we had like this matching blue skirt. We

have the sweater vest. We had a white button-down. We would always like kind of like share what we were wearing.

Connor: That's awesome.

Crystal: Yeah. That was our kind of own little secret kind of thing.

Connor: Great. Perfect.

Crystal: But there was there are many many times we would come to the temple for... back then we would have film night, like movie night and this room actually had this projector like old-fashioned film projector jutting out and they would film like show, samurai movies, you know, like the very I can't remember the director's name, but these in the whole place would be packed so it'd be my grandparent or not my grandparents, but all the nissei, the second generation back then you could smoke inside so it was just you know, and there was like udon and tons of snacks and then Mara and I wouldn't watch it all because it was really scary. Because they are samurai movies. We'll be up here like playing our own little game. And yeah.

Connor: That's very cool.

Crystal: Yeah.

Connor: That's awesome, cool. And you said that the story happens to be when you're in your childhood. Would you say that growing up in the Tacoma, Tacoma Buddhist temple had an influence on how you saw Buddhism in general?

Crystal: I think back then since I was raised in Fife there weren't many minorities, right?

Connor: Mhmm.

Crystal: I probably had one of my best one of my other Japanese friends. He was from a farm right down the street and there's one African-American. I think that was the only, those were the only minorities in our school. So the, the talking about Buddhism, I didn't really feel like I wanted to talk about it because even though all of my friends knew our family and knew the whole Japanese community and farming and Fife and many students were actually workers on my parents farms and other family farms... I wasn't ashamed of it... I just didn't know how to talk about it. And I, everyone knew that I had like my Japanese Community friends and then I had my I go to church on Sundays, but I didn't really talk about oh I go to a Buddhist Church, even though they probably assumed it wasn't to Christian Church.

Connor: Right.

Crystal: You know? I do remember saying the Pledge of Allegiance and not wanting to say the word "God" because I was like this feels really awkward and weird like, but to me now doesn't matter because it doesn't really matter, you know?

Connor: Right

Crystal: But I think when I remember standing in in grade school going, "I don't want to say the word God because I don't believe in God," but, but I never really talked about it because I didn't know how to describe it without sounding too kooky. I mean back then back in the 70s, you were

still assimilating. I think our families were still assimilating into just everyday life even 60s and 70s, even though the war was done in the 40s. So like I'd bring, my mom would make Ongiri's like rice balls for me for lunch and I'd be kind of embarrassed. I'd be like, "Oh my God," you know, can I just get a tuna fish sandwich? Or peanut butter?

Won: I completely understand you on that.

Crystal: But so that, So now my daughter, so I make sushi or something for their lunch their friends are like, "oh my gosh!" So when I comes back to Buddhism, I didn't ever really talk about, "Oh, I'm going to church. I'm going to my Buddhist Church."

Connor: Yeah.

Crystal: It just would make me feel a little like I didn't know how to explain myself. So therefore I just didn't say it, you know?

Connor: Yeah, definitely. Definitely understandable.

Crystal: I think you see the trends and the, the world the trends in how people think about religion. Trends and how people think about technology. Trends and just how we live. So you see how the how the temple has changed and grown and then you can see how people's point of view about Buddhism has changed a ton.

Connor: Mhmm.

Crystal: Right?

Connor: Definitely.

Crystal: So now it's easier to talk about it now is easier for my daughter's to talk about it at school... so.

Connor: And so we've been informed that you're actually a president here at the Tacoma Buddhist Temple. Was that a process that was good for you? How does that process go as becoming a president?

Crystal: So like all communities everyone relies on everyone to kind of just step up whether they, whether they ready for it or not. Right?

Connor: Mhm.

Crystal: So this temple, my dad was a temple president. I mean lots of my aunts and uncles were just involved a lot on the board and I just hadn't been on the board and going that direction just because I want to take care of my daughters, so, so busy. So what, to be honest, how it comes up is you're in a board meeting and they go through nominations. You know, you're on the board. Okay, great. I'm on the board. Now, we have to nominate for president and all the officers. So you plant the seeds right? Just like your lobbying, you know?

Connor: Mhm.

Crystal: So people were lobbying behind. Going, thinking we're going to nominate Crystal. So I'm sitting there going honestly. We're in the in reverend prayer room and they're like... Fred

goes, "I nominate Crystal" and I'm like what for president you've got to be kidding me. There is no way, but you know, I'm sure there's things that you guys have been challenged to in your like thinking there's no way I'm ready for this. I don't you know, and but somebody's got to do it so I stepped up and it was a lot of work, but I think it was worth it because for me it just made me feel like there's yes, if we can make change if we need to do something somebody's got to do it and you just have to spearhead it and then everyone, you know comes along and supports things. So it's really important for people, to I think people with a history of the temple can, you kind of understand how to evolve it realistically with how to bring in all the other people that are supporting and I've been here for Decades and even new people, right? We can't just say this is a place for and talk about the history. We have to actually make it relevant to the people today.

Connor: Yeah. So yeah, so you talked about that intergenerationalism of moving the temple forward but also keeping it part of a tradition and keeping part of the first generation and second generation still involved inside of the temple. Do you recall any story that you've heard that's been passed down through generations something that you've heard from maybe your parents or other members of the temples are older than you?

Crystal: Mmm, so there's there's a lot. I'm sure you've heard of Reverend Pratt's of our Pratt room. So I was able to so when it regards to stories, I think it's just stories of her presence being here. So we all have different remembrances of those small moments of Reverend Pratt. Mine was sitting in the front Pew and she has a flannel board story. That's how she told her story. She's from lent. She's from the UK, right so very English and Professor real but she had cut outs of all of these objects that told a greater story like Siddhartha, Prince Siddhartha being born, you know, the moon and the elephant and you know, princess, princess Maya like having the dream and all that. So she's putting these flannel board things up and it's just very obviously old school, but it allowed it was a great way for kids to pay attention. So I guess old school animation so to speak but so that story being brought down my brother. He took Japanese language class from her and Buddhist classes from her and a lot of the YBA kids did and then so Mare and I and so we're, she had a whole box of all of her scripts and then all of the cutouts and so we were trying to retell that story and figure out how to retell the story of like, okay Reverend Pratt. Oh my God, she was so amazing at these storytelling. How can we use her content to you know, replicate the story time but no one can deliver it like her. I mean there is you know, so that's one of the one of the stories just of somebody really unique and special to this temple. It's pretty breakthrough back then to have a caucasian, a female from Europe be a minister. I mean, I don't even know the whole story of her background but I think it's pretty unique and really amazing.

Connor: Yeah, definitely definitely seems like she has a large impact on this Temple.

Crystal: Yes, yeah.

Connor: From what we've studied in class she has just been so influential especially post-war just gathering this temple back together.

Crystal: Yeah.

Connor: Getting people back into this congregation, but you talked about how this story is important for the temple and how Sunya Pratt story, is important for the temple. Is there any way

for that story that you have your own importance, the other way of saying that is why do you think that story is important to you personally?

Crystal: I think because if I remember that story it's like what actions are what experiences today for kids, what will they remember? What will they think? Oh my God, That was so cool. I mean look at that was like, I mean I'm old so that was like 45, 40 years ago forty five-plus years ago. So it's still like Vivid. So what for kids today will be vivid for them, you know, that's that's really important to do. So what kind of experiences that are relevant for them in their context of the 21st century and technology and challenges in school. And you know, we've got LBGQT like how does that all play into how we create a unique memorable experience as a relates to Buddhism in Tacoma today?

Connor: Right.

Crystal: So that small moment is kind of really important for me. And I think the other small moment for not small but unique to the temple and you guys maybe have experienced it yourself is that food is really important for some reason right? Food is always important but I, you know, chalk it up to be an Asian culture chalk it up to being you know, Japanese and chalk it up. You can't you should never not have good food, right?

Connor: Right.

Crystal: And food becomes kind of this Cultural Center about translating that those Traditions to to the younger generations and and that Everyone likes good food. So that's a unique kind of like through line that I think is is a great vehicle in a way to kind of get kids a part of that. The other differentiation of this Temple is its Japanese Heritage cultural heritage, so that will never go away. I don't think it should ever go away. I think that is really Important and so any of those Japanese cultural Traditions is really kind of it's not just a small thing. I think it should be a really important and front forward face.

Connor: Definitely. Yeah, what are some Japanese Traditions that you've seen carried through the temple through your time here?

Crystal: I mean, obviously it's Japanese and Buddhist but are Obon festivals. Have you been a part of our Obon festivals there in Jan-July or end of the first weekend in August?

Connor: I don't think we have been involved in them, but I think there's been students in the past that have definitely been involved in them.

Crystal: Okay, yes. So the Japanese it's a Dance Festival. It's in remembrance of those that have passed away. So the spirit you got a dance and you bringing the spirits towards you to dance with them and there's a lot better religious background story, I'm high leveling that.

Connor: Yes, it's totally fine.

Crystal: So yeah, so from a cultural standpoint from a Japanese cultural standpoint we're dressed in kimonos, not everyone has to have a kimono. You can have a happi coat on and we fill the en-, the street we close off the street we have outdoor dancing. There's Taiko drumming from our Taiko. And we bring in members from the other Seattle and what White River temples and so were all dancing and is open to the public then we have Japanese food that's being sold

downstairs. We have a beer garden where in the has sake so it's not it's it could seem topical but it's really based on history and Japanese culture of dancing and Japanese dance music. So it's a really involved fundraising event. We've got from like five to nine four hours of just Festival dancing and entertainment and food, and then at the end sensei a has a memorial service down in the and the Garden Park, the Garden area and we have candles in people's names that people have donated money to and then we remember all of the past members and people and just people in general that with candle lit around and chanting. So it's really nice.

Connor: Awesome.

Crystal: Yep.

Connor: Do you have a specific year or a specific time during that event that you remember that just is very impactful for you?

Crystal: I guess maybe twice or maybe three time... I don't know. I mean, I think, we all, because that Obon is to remember those that have passed my parents, you know, the year that they died. I, I know that those years you just kind of go, hmm this is what it's all about. We have to remember everyone and you feel people's spirit. One other year I remember as I was completely pregnant with my twins, but yet when I put on a kimono and I was I was I'm like, oh that's good thing you know, there's no... the kimonos are like they wrap around. So it was large enough to wrap around. Anyway, probably not something you want to publish it.

Connor: It's totally fine. No worries.

Crystal: But yeah, it's it's something that I think I was again born into and I'm a Japanese. I have my Natori which means I have a certification to teach Odori. So Japanese dancing is just been in my blood since I was five years old. So I really enjoy that.

Won: Do you guys teach the dancing here at the temple?

Crystal: Yes. Yes. So we take three days in July and we teach an open it to the public and we teach it downstairs and the Japanese dance dancing and we have about 10, no we have about 16 dances that we go through that we teach and everyone kind of learns it and they're short phrase kind of dances, but again, we bring and welcome the public because we want them to experience. You don't have to be perfect at dancing. You just experienced this notion of Obon, which is obviously a Japanese culture and if you look it up there's it's just amazing the different Obon festivals all across the country here and then in Japan, so that's a very Japanese cultural effort. And I think like I said food so our bazaars are Sukiyaki, there's two other fundraisers are all very food-centric and then the menus are always obviously Japanese food, but Sukiyaki is probably one of our specialties that is unique to Tacoma and unique to I think the Northwest here, so yup.

Connor: That's awesome, very cool. So you discuss a little bit about you growing up and you experiencing dancing as you're growing up. Was that something that was provided by the temple growing up or is that something that you discovered on your own.

Crystal: My mom discovered it. A Japanese... for the lack of better term, there's a term of called War Brides and Mrs. Trotter. She was a war bride that married Mr. Trotter. He was stationed in

Japan and they met then they got married and they came here. Well, she was a instructor or she learned from the top one of the top schools in Japan. And so she actually started teaching, she wanted to start teaching Odori and so she's the temple opened up the stage for her to bring in students and teach and that's how my mom saw that oh, you know, so I started when I was five so that was a long time ago.

Connor: Well, that's and that's been continuing throughout your entire life. You've been kind of following that that dance within the dance tradition within the temple.

Crystal: Yes, and I think we'll so so then we would just go to her house and she had private lessons and she taught many of the many people here, but to this is this is now like the formal Odori which is Japanese dance. I equate it to like the ballet of Japanese dance culture. So she's a part of a specific school in Tokyo and then two of us got our Natori, which means we were certified to dance or to teach which is a really, you know, I guess you call it prestigious thing to get but so we by, by being a part of that Odori kind of group we just kind of are the natural leaders to do Obon to teach, lead the Obon dances here, which is more of culture casual and cultural than the very formal dancing.

Connor: Very nice. Yeah, do you so you end up teaching that every year then?

Crystal: Yes.

Connor: Is it throughout the entire year or is it just a specific seasons in the year?

Crystal: Just the summer, but we usually start training or practicing as teachers like in May, June and then we you know, because you quite easily forget these dances, you know, like we're all we forget and they're like, oh, yeah, that's the move and then yeah, but I think I started teaching or training teaching I think in high school. Yeah, so...

Connor: Is it difficult? Is it difficult to train new people these dances or just something that you really like enjoy and kind of persevere through?

Crystal: I think it's easy to train new people because the folks that come they want to learn you know, so it's not like you're crawling people who you know don't really count that don't know their left from their right foot and you know, things like that. So yeah, it's easy and it's fun to see lots of people just try it and enjoy it too.

Connor: Are there members from the community from outside the Tacoma, Tacoma Buddhist Temple that do come to your classes or is it usually?

Crystal: Yeah, it's actually more people from outside the temple than the temple because a lot of Temple members have to actually help cook or prep food or doing them so they don't get to dance. But a lot of people don't like to do... you have to be a certain type of person that likes to do this kind of dancing and then being out and out on the street and people kind of watching you and you know, so it's not for everyone but once you see it you some people just want to try it. So we do get a lot of people who know it's going to happen and then they come, you know, they're not Buddhist and they're, they're often not from the local area. Like one guy he travels from Shelton and one guy travels from Olympia. I mean, it's...



Connor: Oh wow.

Crystal: Yeah.

Connor: Yeah, that's awesome that you get a lot of people from different area.

Crystal: Yes. Yeah.

Connor: So, um, did your daughter's also grow up doing dancing as well just like you did or did they kind of take a different path?

Crystal: That's a great question they did because just you know, I wanted them to have that experience and of course kind of like that memory of this is something that's really important and an important part of my whole history and backgrounds and they grew up watching me dance, so they started when they were really young, probably in kindergarten if not earlier and so by the time they hit middle school because they were so involved in sports and soccer just kind of takes up everyone's lives and it's the antithesis of Odori. I think it was just it was they just weren't into it. And then I just let them kind of just and my art Odori teacher she was retiring so it was kind of a good time although I could teach them but that would not be really productive because a mom teaching their kids is not it it's not really ideal...

Connor: Right.

Crystal: But I do have a regret in that because I remember when I was in Middle School, I really wanted to quit because my teacher, she was taking care of her son who is really ill so I had to go take lessons in Seattle. So from Fife to Seattle every week, my mom would drive me to like Beacon Hill area. And I was like I'm done with this. I'm over it. I've I have too many things going on in school and she's like nope, nope, nope and I'm really thankful she didn't allow me to quit. Yeah, so but the girls love being a part of the Obon and they're actually helping to teach now like a little bit like how I was in high school. So because they did have that more of that formal training of Odori they were able to kind of like catch on easier and so hopefully I think they'd look forward to kind of being a part of that as the generation times go on.

Connor: That's awesome.

Crystal: Yeah.

Connor: Is there a... kind of switching topics now, is there a story that you've passed down to your daughters about the Tacoma Buddhist temple? Any stories that you feel like are very important that you shared with them.

Crystal: Hmm... Probably not any big ones other than the ones I've kind of like described of Reverend Pratt... I think we've all, we've told them about, because it's been the farmers were so much a part of like the fabric of the temple, like even our fundraisers we would have in the Fall. We would have vegetable stands like everyone would want to come because this is like the true farmers market. The real farmer's, you know. It's like Bobby Ashoka brought his and you know, my my dad would bring lettuce and then Yoshu was bringing the cabbage. I mean everyone is

kind of known for something, it was pretty cool.

Connor: That's awesome.

Crystal: So, I think the story that we've just told them as just and because their grandfather was one of the core Farmers that the farming part and the hard work part is probably a story so there's nothing like an, any deliverable out of like the hard work but farmers just because of who they are and working pretty much 24/7 that kind of is the value of the temple, you know being just hard-working people saving, you know, every dollar donated. I mean, it's pretty amazing. If you look back at the records of how people donated, I mean \$10 back in the early 1900's was a lot of money so you, that kind of story is a value that I think is really important. Yeah.

Connor: That's awesome. So you mentioned kind of that farming idea [built on history of farming, gardeners and other small business start ups] (Added by Crystal Inge, email communication, 05/19/2019) that kind of flows to the temple and that hard work ethic, is that something that you picked up as a kid through being involved in Fife through farming communities, or was it something that you kind of picked up later in life when you look back on those experiences?

Crystal: I think it's something that was instilled in me early on but reflected and realized later.

Connor: Mhm.

Crystal: Right? Because you know, who wants to wake up at seven o'clock in the morning on a Saturday and you go out and cutting lettuce right or staying out until 5:00 in the afternoon and you are weeding rows and rows and acres of lettuce or cutting celery, which is the most arduous and heavy vegetable ever. So those values of doing something and creating something and seeing it come to fruition later, which is you don't get instant gratification out of that right? Because you've got to plant the seeds and you've got to germinate it and then you've got to fertilize it then you have to... so it's kind of a ethos or value that I think that hard-workingness is something that I think many families here have because of just the way we've been grown up, right and even those that were non-working like the Nakiagoras, they had started one of the first and the Akitas, they, one of the first dry cleaning Japanese-American dry cleaners here in Tacoma. I mean that is hard work starting a business after the war hoping people will not discriminate against you and you know, the, that whole having a business like that, that was really unique. So I think perseverance and just that hard work and making something happen, I think is something a part of Tacoma's value... that I think we as Temple members value in other people so that kind of is this underlying sense here.

Connor: Yeah.

Crystal: I mean look it, there's Temple clean up.

Connor: Mhm.

Crystal: Right? Like, like I mean, I think we are changing a bit because there are fewer people that can really help out and clean physically, but that's kind of the way we are, we just clean and do the dirty work and and there's the positive outcome that comes from that is that we all get to respect everything that's here.

Connor: Yeah. Definitely.

Crystal: Yeah.

Connor: So do you have an example of a time inside the temple where you've done the dirty work or done the... not necessarily the glory job inside the temple, but then you saw a great outcome from that.

Crystal: Hm... I think well, we always have like gardening temple cleanup, annual temple clean up in the summer and then in the end right before the end of the year. And so literally I like enjoy, I enjoy being out in the garden.

Connor: Mhm

Crystal: My mom actually was known for cleaning all the toilets, so I kind of started playing like I'm like, okay, I'll just clean all the bathrooms. You know? I know it's a it's, it's a thing, it's really important.

Connor: That's awesome.

Crystal: So yeah, but I always just go directly out to the garden because I like my, my brother and our family, we just, I mean many families here just into the garden cleaning up there's certain way to different things or there's certain way to trim. So I mean again, you don't get instant... you see the beauty of it

Connor: Mhm.

Crystal: But taking care of of plants who who need to gain and growth, so that's I guess that's one one thing. The other, the other funny story though is my dad. It was known as the sanitation crew because he had like all the farmers, We have flatbed trucks, right?

Connor: Mhm.

Crystal: But somehow my dad was rolled in into like being garbage man because he had these, the edges to the his big flatbed truck, so you could just pile in the garbage, garbage bags for like the Sukiyaki and all the fundraisers. So dad was sanitation guy, now since my dad passed away over 20 years ago my brother took over as sanitation guy. So, anyways...

Connor: Yeah.

Crystal: That's kind of a long story to your question on the dirty work.

Connor: Yeah.

Crystal: So...

Connor: That's awesome.

Crystal: That's not me because... You know...

Connor: Right. That's awesome. Yeah... so you've mentioned that like your mom passed down kind of a dancing tradition to you and your father passed down the sanitation job to your brother to your brother. Are there any other examples that you can think of jobs being passed down inside of the temple through generations?

Crystal: Oh, wow... There's, there's so many. I'm not sure... Yeah, I mean there's and it may not be from family to family but cooking rice is like, you know, that's like... the quintessential thing that is the one of the most important things to cooking rice here out in the big burners for these big events. It's its core, right? So to handing down how to cook how to wash. I haven't even been out there. Like I kind of see them but that's the group. There's a group

Connor: Yeah.

Crystal: That's been handed down for generations and the different techniques and different makeshifts kind of things have been all handed down from, from the generations.

Connor: That's fantastic.

Crystal: So there's rice, there's the dashi for the udon, there's the dashi for the somen. There's how to cook the somen noodles. There's how to make the teriyaki sauce for the chicken teriyaki that was started by George and Cora Murakami and my uncle, Uncle John Sasaki and then they got old and they would just kind of hang out in the kitchen and Fred and Les would then start to kind of take over and then Cora they were all like a little fetzing and Uncle John would always just sit on the stool and might they might have a little Rainier beer on the side and then, and then slowly then Fred and Les would take over and now they're fully running the whole chicken teriyaki crew. So...

Connor: That's awesome, there's even like a transition period.

Crystal: Yeah, it was like family, you know, and yeah. Yeah. Yeah, but they had to earn it.

Connor: Right.

Crystal: They had to be around it enough and George would have to, you know, tell them exactly how to marinate the chicken and not too much and anyway, yeah.

Connor: Yeah, definitely, so you talked a little bit about being involved in the garden here. How long has the garden been around for the temple?

Crystal: Ever since I have known the Garden or been born. Yeah.

Connor: Wow.

Crystal: In fact, I think one of the unfortunately, one of the pine trees I think is now died, but so that used to have actually koi fish in it.

Connor: Oh my goodness that's awesome.

Crystal: Yeah. Yeah.

Connor: Yeah. So did you grow up handling the garden and that kind of stuff were you involved in or?

Crystal: No so the other big group of temple members here were also gardeners. So Japanese gardeners. So the Fujitas, my uncle Del, Ichi Nakayama. I mean, there's tons of gardeners here, so that was there was a whole group. It was like, there's like Garden Club and these aren't just gardener, these aren't just like your gardeners. They are like landscapers. So they would you know, mow peoples' lawns and then landscape their gardens and so no... that group took care of the garden. Yeah in a very, I mean it was beautiful, so.

Connor: Yeah, and it still is beautiful.

Crystal: Yes, Yeah.

Connor: Every time I go out there,

Crystal: Yeah.

Connor: it's amazingly beautiful.

Crystal: Yeah.

Connor: Yeah, so is that something that you had to get inducted into just like the Teriyaki inside the kitchen?

Crystal: I kind of just snuck in.

Connor: Okay.

Crystal: My brother and a bunch of other mix, my brother's very into gardening and also

landscaping and pruning and so I kind of just snuck in using my like, “Oh, hi, I'm farming. I'm just going to start cleaning.” And so then I didn't it was yeah. No one told me to leave so I just stayed. I mean I was like picking up the leaves, so no is telling me to leave.

Connor: That's super cool. Yeah, and so has your experience with the garden been? Have you had any stories that come along through time that really stick with you while being involved in the garden or?

Crystal: I am that's just been more recent for me. So nothing long-standing. Yeah. I think the front yard for the sensei's house, Mr. Mizukami used to, they had they had a big I would just say a garden garden warehouse and so see, so it's like all that was also in the Fife valley. So they, they had a warehouse and distributed flowers and and other bulbs and things and so Mr. Mizukami would always take care of the front garden strip for the temple Minister and and plant plant flowers every spring. So he passed away last year, and, so I mean that's kind of another thing that's, and I can't I don't know who's transition that but I know that flowers were planted again, but... so I haven't, mine has just been recent, right?

Connor: Yep. Definitely and so obviously you've enjoyed being involved in the garden or else you wouldn't still be there.

Crystal: Yeah. I think it I think you have to take care of the outside as much as you do on the inside, so... it shows respect. It's also yeah.

Connor: Yeah. Yeah, so you talked a little bit about respect. Is there another story that kind of reflects on the respect that the temple invites something that maybe you have seen within your children here or seen through younger generations that really teaches them about that value of respect.

Crystal: Mmm... I think respect... Wow I mean you could talk about respect in a variety of ways.

Connor: Mhmm.

Crystal: I think...

Connor: yeah that was kind of a really open-ended question.

Crystal: Yeah.

Connor: I'm sorry about that.

Crystal: So you could say... this temple I think is known in the Northwest district, and I don't know how much you guys know about the BCA that a number of temples that are all across the country. But I think our little corner of Tacoma has always been known to be super welcoming and I think that kind of like welcoming is genuine and that just shows respect for anyone that

walks through the door. There's try to not have a judgment like, oh you look like you should rather be with this group of religion, you know? So if you see someone that's of kind of like Jewish Heritage you wouldn't profile them right? Or somebody that's kind of so new that you're like, what are you doing here? So I think respect that that kind of goes to that, we are this welcoming, hopefully feeling this sense of being open and I think in order to be open you have to respect the people no matter if you know them or not, and that kind of just goes to everything around here and respecting the temple minister no matter he's super young, you know?

Connor: Mhm.

Crystal: To Reverend Yukawa who's like the wise sage that we're so fortunate to have him here. So I think that and also respecting the elders like kind of everyone always thinks of no matter if you're a Buddhist or not respect your elders and I think there's a different respect because they're like, you know storytellers. They're not just storytellers are the ones the stories that are made of right?

Connor: Right.

Crystal: Yeah, so it's really important. Yep.

Connor: That's awesome. And so I just lost the question that was in my head. Oh dear... So you talk about the kind of like the stories they originated with elders of the temple. Is there a story that you remember from your parents from their experience of the temple that's been passed down to you or of other elders within the Tacoma Buddhist Temple that you remember any stories that they have passed down through their lives.

Crystal: Hmm... I don't know if... it's hard to like tell, del-delineate their story versus what they did.

Connor: Mhm, yeah.

Crystal: Yeah, I don't know if you can...

Connor: Yeah,

Crystal: If that makes sense?

Connor: Yeah, no, definitely makes sense.

Crystal: Because it's because what they did is really their story.

Connor and Dakota: Mhmm.

Connor: Yeah.

Crystal: That kind of so, it's it's kind of a tricky question.

Connor: Definitely.

Crystal: But I know... I don't know. I mean there's so many experiences from them in the 70s, you know, they were all trying to find their, their sense of community and this community was their social community, it was a religious community, it was just their their community. They weren't a part of PTAs back then, you know, I don't think as much as like, you know at schools and things this is really kind of the core reason for being and so the stories they created their stories. And so again, it's hard for me to say...

Connor: Right.

Crystal: Has a story been passed down? I think then it really after the war, they didn't really talk about internment and the camps and the hardship and they just moved on. So the stories weren't really handed down unless I had to ask and even when then it was like, oh, here's my school book from you know, Minidoka and I'm like, "Oh, okay. Wow, that's kind of wow you were interned." And then I didn't really, I got it, but now you really get it like oh. So when it comes to hear the stories just for me that were handed down was just that hardship of transitioning kind of but they didn't really talk about it. But then they just enjoyed people enjoyed everyone's company. So they would have Shinnenkai, was like a older group or the ABA the, the Adult Buddhist Association. So right now we have the Young Buddhist Association like high schoolers. It was the adult and all I remember is they would have occasionally like dances here and all the moms would dress up in long skirts, or dresses and they would have like a dinner party here and they would have dancing. So it was very I mean for them that was just how they enjoyed being together and having fun right? Not just here's a temple for religious purposes it was really community. So not a story that was handed down it was a story that I just remembered. Yeah, but it's a story that I also you know kind of share and tell the girls at. Now Mike Shiogi and you know Sensei, he's a Mister DJ but Mike Shiogi has his home DJ kind of sound system, so on occasional couple of times we would have like dance parties here, but it was all like, you know 80s dance like Earth Wind & Fire kind of like dance music. So it's it's that stories recreated in our own fun relevant...

Connor: So did those dance party happened downstairs?

Crystal: Yup, yup.

Connor: Oh, that's awesome. Yeah.

Crystal: Yeah, in a much smaller way, we're not dressing up or anything.

Connor: Right.

Crystal: But yeah.



Connor: Right, that's awesome and was, are there multiple generations that get involved in the dance party?

Crystal: Oh, yeah. Yeah. It's so so family-oriented not, it's not just like back then it was like oh, yeah, don't bring your kids. You know?

Connor: Yeah.

Crystal: That's that was the times. I was like, oh, yeah. I'm not, I never had a babysitter in my life. And so I was just like, okay, I'm just going to stay at home. Yeah. Yeah. So but these it's all open to the temple. Yeah.

Connor: That's awesome. Yeah, what was your favorite song that they've played during those DJ sessions?

Crystal: Oh it's always September. I know it's so yeah don't even ask my husband, it was like I have like three favorite songs, and that's that so.

Connor: That's awesome. Yeah, super cool. Well, we are kind of close towards time for temple to begin.

Crystal: Okay.

Connor: About 15 minutes away. Um, so I guess my last question is, is there is if there's one tradition inside of the Tacoma Buddhist temple that you would like to see continuing on for generations to come, what was that tradition be?

Crystal: Oh jeez. Wow.

Connor: Yeah, I'm hitting you with all the tough questions today. I'm sorry.

Crystal: I need another double shot of cup cappuccino here... =One tradition... hmm... I mean, I think... this may sound trite but I do think the Obon tradition because it is both a religious celebration but it is one that is the biggest opportunity to bring in Temple, outside Temple people is really important. It takes a lot of energy, takes a lot of work to put on these Obon festivals. But because the meaning behind it is really important and it is a part of our religion but yet the activity allows people to to kind of participate even if it's a topical way and they don't really get it and understand it but they're able to enjoy and see what the Tacoma Temple is all about. I think that would be one. There's probably many other traditions, but...

Connor: I would imagine that there's a lot of things that definitely should be continued on generationally like you stated so many things that have been continued on generationally with the garden and the dancing inside of the temple and even from who takes a trash out. It's all like generationally passed down.

Crystal: Yeah.

Connor: That's awesome.

Crystal: Yeah. I mean, there's lots of organizations that hopefully will just continue, the Dharma school here is really important because you have to seed the idea and the energy with kids and that breeds them the family's feeling like they still want to continue and they come back many kids will come back from college and I've seen that more and more these days, Like I didn't come back from college until I had kids. So I think that's seeding that the that small moment and why a Dharma School child feels it's really cool to be here will give them that memory imprint to come back. Yeah.

Connor: That's awesome. Yeah any other questions that you guys can think of? Perfect. Awesome. Well Crystal, thank you so much for...

Crystal: Your welcome.

Connor: We really appreciate it and like seeing these generational stories just kind of gives a whole new perspective on the temple for us because we see the temple and its current context and how it is. But there's so many traditions that you've mentioned that go way back and go back to your family and your community of farming and then go forward into how they influence even your daughter's now. Yeah. So thank you so much for sharing those stories.

Crystal: You welcome and and I'm just one point of view.

Connor: Right.

Crystal: So I mean, there's so many...

Connor: Definitely.

Crystal: I mean... other people that have probably better memories and stories so... You know.

Connor: I wouldn't say that they would have better memories or stories, but...

Crystal: I don't know. There are some here where I am like "oh my god Diane I can't believe you remember exactly that thing." But yeah, no, there is probably other people that you, if you know asked, I'm sure they'd also be open to interviewing.

Connor: Yeah, that is something that we wish we could do in this class is we plan for multiple interviews. Unfortunately our class just didn't allow for having more than one interview for the group. Yeah, but we'd love to see different perspectives and different opportunities. So thank you for starting this conversation with us.

Crystal: Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Connor: Hopefully in the future with Erik's classes coming back these conversations will continue to happen.

Crystal: That would be great. Yeah. So you have interviewed who else have you guys interviewed?

Connor: We've interviewed we as a group have interviewed Ted Tamaki.

Crystal: Okay.

Connor: And so that was an interview that may or may not be involved with our discussion.