

Traveling in Arizona and New Mexico with a Mexican-American

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In August 1990, I decided to go on a trip to Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah. I love traveling alone because I can do anything that I want to. In spite of my desire to travel alone, I decided to take Maria, a Mexican American with me. Maria, a cleaning lady for private homes, had been very kind to me for many years and I wanted to return her kindness.

I used the American Automobile Association's (Triple A) guide books and made reservations for motels in the Motel 6 chain. They accepted only cash or credit cards. As I didn't have any credit cards, I had to check in before 6:00 P.M.; otherwise, they would cancel my reservations.

Maria put a lot of her luggage in the car trunk and she was going to bring a huge jar of water. I refused to put the jar in my car. I told her that my car didn't need any water.

When I drove onto a freeway or transferred from one freeway to another, I became very tense. I asked Maria not to talk to me when I changed from the Harbor Freeway to the Artesia Freeway. She said, "Ya, ya, ya." While I was driving on the San Bernardino Freeway, I had to drive very carefully so as not to miss the sign for Freeway 10 which would lead me to Tucson without changing any more.

I was driving in a desert area but it was still dark and I couldn't see anything. The traffic was very light and I could drive at 112 to 120 km per hour; however, the speed limit was 65 miles (104 km) per hour. Blythe is located beside the Colorado River and it is just before the border between California and Arizona. As soon as I had passed the narrow Colorado River, I asked Maria not to tell an inspector that we were carrying fruit. There are checkpoints at the border between California and Arizona and we have to report if we are carrying fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, or meat. After I had passed the checkpoint, I felt very relaxed and I could enjoy looking at the scenery. The wide freeway stretched into the horizon in the desert which was dotted with dark brown bushes and light yellow-green bushes. From time to time, light purple hills stretched along the desert. As I drove deep into Arizona, I could see the saguaro cacti sometimes.

Every time I went to the restroom, Maria stayed in the car so that I didn't have to pay so much attention to my purse. I put the car key in my purse and left it on my seat and got out of the car. As soon as I had locked the door, I found Maria was outside the car. Maria had locked her door, too. I kept an extra key in a magnet box under the car but I couldn't find it. The magnet was not strong enough to stay under the car. I was very glad that I was a member of the Triple A. As soon as I called them, they would come and

unlock the door. All I had to do was call them but I needed 20 cents to use a public telephone. All my money was in my purse in the car. I asked a stranger to lend me 20 cents. He understood my trouble but he refused my request. Maria told me that Triple A would not help me because I didn't have my Triple A member's card with me. Her words made me panic. The driver's seat window was left open around 2.5 cm. I tried to push down the window but it would not move. I remembered that many people used a wire hanger to unlock car doors. I asked some people if they had a wire hanger but nobody had one. Maria brought a man who had a wire whose end was bent like a hook. Maria and the man were talking in Spanish. The man put the wire in from the top of the window and tried to reach the lock. He tried several times but he couldn't unlock the door. I tried it but it was very hard to reach the lock. After several attempts, the wire touched the lock. I pulled the wire but the wire was not strong enough to unlock it. Maria told something to the man in Spanish. The man tried to reach my purse with the wire. I understood immediately what he was going to do. I hooked my purse with the wire and pulled the purse slowly into the top of the window. When the purse reached the top of the window, I grabbed a part of the purse. I was very thankful to the man whom Maria had brought. I tried to give him \$20 but he refused to accept it.

As the traffic was very heavy in Phoenix, I became very nervous when I drove through the city. I drove very carefully so as not to miss the sign which said Interstate Highway 10 and Tucson. After I passed Phoenix, I saw a sign which said "Don't pick up hitchhikers." For a while I couldn't understand why there was such a sign. I continued to drive and saw a nice large building which was surrounded by a fence in the far distance. It must be a prison. Finally, I understood the meaning of the sign. While I was driving near Tucson, I found that exit ramp signs were shown by numbers.

The Arizona State Museum was on the University of Arizona campus. There was a huge rock in front of the entrance. The information about the rock said, "A natural metallic form of copper from Ray, Arizona. Weight about 2,000 pounds." Many native American products such as pottery, rugs, and arrowheads were displayed. There was a video room where they showed how the native Americans made pottery and storyteller dolls and showed how they wove the rugs.

Saguaro National Monument was smaller than I had expected, but there were Japanese pamphlets in the visitor center. There were many saguaro cacti which were about 5m high and 30cm in diameter around me. Sometimes I saw birds on the cacti.

Mr. Bernhardt, with whom I lived, had asked me to go to a cemetery in Tombstone and find his grandmother's grave. She had died 100 years ago and was buried in Tombstone. The scenery on the way to Tombstone was beautiful. The sky was blue with white clouds and the plain was covered with greenery. I could see yuccas and trees which had many of what looked like bean shells on the plain. Every time I stopped the car and took pictures of the plain, white clouds in the sky, 'bean shell' trees, and rocky hills, Maria said, "Ya, ya, ya. There is nothing here." I drove into Tombstone and saw old western-style stores in the town. The stores were made of wood and were built beside the sidewalk which was one or two steps higher than the road. Many gift shops sold such native American products as pottery, rugs, jewelry, and Kachina dolls. I was interested in a piece of pottery which had a small, three millimeter-wide hole on the top. I couldn't guess the purpose

of the pottery until a saleslady told me that the pot was for storing seeds. It was light orange and there were geometrical patterns painted on it in black and white. The price was \$78. It was a very low price compared to the pottery in other places like the Grand Canyon National Park, Canyon de Chelly, and Yellowstone National Park. In these areas, similar pottery was around \$300. According to the lady, the pottery surface wasn't smooth so that was why it was very low-priced.

In front of the cemetery, there was a large steel sign which said, "Tombstone." We spent an hour trying to find the Bernhardt tombstone but we couldn't find it. I thought that the tombstone must have disappeared because it was erected 100 years ago and nobody would visit the Bernhardts' grave. Mr. Bernhardt was the end of the Bernhardt family tree in the U.S.A.

I left Tucson at 5:00 A.M. and headed for Albuquerque. I decided to drive on U.S. Federal 666 instead of Freeway 10 and Freeway 25. When I had driven on U.S. Federal Highway 666 from Gallop, New Mexico to Mesa Verde, Colorado in 1988, I was deeply impressed by the scenery along it. It was around 928 km between Tucson and Albuquerque. As the traffic was very light in Arizona and New Mexico, I might be able to drive at least 104 km per hour. It would take eight hours or at the most ten hours from Tucson to Albuquerque. I expected that I would arrive at Albuquerque at 3:00 P.M. or at the latest 5:00 P.M.

Highway 666 had only two lanes. The milk chocolate-colored highway stretched into the mountains on the horizon. Along the highway was a desert area and I could see some bushes and yuccas, but no traffic. When I left Tucson, I didn't read the elevation on Highway 666. I had to drive up hills and mountains and had to drive on a very curvy highway. Even though I pushed the accelerator very hard, my maximum speed was 48 km per hour. I drove past a very light khaki-colored hill which was a copper strip mine. Some parts of the hill were light gray and its top was flat. As the surface of the hill was scraped off, it looked as if it were a step pyramid. I could see many other hills below me from the top of the hill. The hill ridges overlapped each other. The ridge which was the closest to me had a brown surface with some green parts, the ridge which was at the middle distance from me looked purple and the furthest ridge looked pale blue-gray. After I drove down the hill, I started driving on a flat area which was covered with brown-green grass. Sometimes there were dark green bushes on the brown-green plain. The milk chocolate-colored highway stretched into the horizon. As there was no traffic, I could park in the middle of the road and take a picture of the road. Maria said again, "Ya, ya, ya. There is nothing." I drove in the plain for a while and then I started driving in a forest. As I had driven in a desert area for many hours, I felt so peaceful while I was driving through the tall green forest. I arrived at Alpine at 1:30 P.M. It had taken eight hours and 30 minutes to drive only 438.4 km. I was far behind my schedule.

The scenery from Alpine was wonderful. The milk chocolate-colored highway stretched into the horizon and the horizon touched the blue sky with some white clouds. I wanted to take pictures of the beautiful scenery in Alpine but I didn't have time to stop the car. I only thought about how to quickly reach Freeway 40 and the U.S. Interstate Highway. Even though I wanted to drive fast, I couldn't do it because I often had to climb hills. When I reached Freeway 40, I felt relaxed.

When I arrived in Gallup, it was already 5:00 P.M. I didn't want to get off the freeway but I got off to make a telephone call to the Motel 6 in Albuquerque. I asked a lady clerk to save my reservation for that night. I told the lady that I would arrive at 7:00 P.M. because I was in Gallup. The lady promised to save my reservation. While I was driving, my car often shook. It was an unusual movement. The speed was 128 km per hour. Finally, I saw many buildings in the distance. It must be Albuquerque. When I reached the outskirts of Albuquerque, it was completely dark. I had to find an exit sign which said, "167." I saw a sign for 153. A little before Freeway 40 overlapped with Freeway 25, the traffic became very heavy. I had to drive carefully but not slow down and not miss the sign for exit 167. When I saw the sign for exit 160, I was glad but I felt that there was a long distance between 160 and 167. As soon as I saw a sign for 167, I got off the freeway immediately and started looking for the Motel 6. When I was driving through a parking lot in front of a motel, all four red warning lamps in my car flashed. These lamps flashed if the car were empty of gas, empty of oil, a door were ajar, or a seat belt unfastened. I had never had a single warning lamp on. I turned off the engine immediately. My car was in the middle of the driveway in front of the motel. As I had to park the car in the parking lot, I turned the key in the ignition switch but it didn't work.

I decided to find the Motel 6 on foot and asked Maria to stay in the car. Maria said angrily, "That's why I asked you to carry a lot of water." My watch showed that it was 7:00P.M. At the front desk, I told the lady clerk that I had a reservation for two nights. She said, "No vacancy." I told her that I had called the motel to make sure of my reservation. The lady said again, "No vacancy." While I was walking to my car, I thought that I was lucky because my car had stopped in front of a motel. I entered the motel where my car was but its office was dark and nobody was there. I had to walk up to another motel but there was no vacancy there either. It was completely dark, my car was broken down, and we had no motel to stay in. I felt uncomfortable. I walked around 100m more and entered the Travelodge. They had a room for that night. A young man from the Triple A came with a tow truck and took my car to a garage.

When I arrived in Albuquerque, New Mexico, I thought that it was 7:00 P.M. but it was 8:00 P.M. actually. Both Arizona and New Mexico belong to the same mountain time zone; however, in Arizona they didn't use Daylight Saving Time so it was 7:00P.M. but in New Mexico, they did use Daylight Saving Time so the time in New Mexico was one hour earlier than in Arizona.

As there was no public transportation on Sunday, we went to the Old Town and the New Mexico Museum of Natural History by taxi. I expected that the taxi fare would be around \$50 but it was only \$16.45 to the museum. The origins and geological history of the earth were exhibited in the museum: for example, they displayed several large mineral rocks like copper ore, iron ore, crystal, etc. They also exhibited dinosaur models. They showed a science film about how a seed grew to a sunflower.

Next, we visited the Old Town which had kept its 18th century appearance. Some native Americans wore tribal costumes and on the sidewalk they sold Indian jewelry such as turquoise earrings, rings, and necklaces. Indian jewelry, pottery, and rugs were sold in the gift stores but most of the items were junk products which were made in Taiwan instead of made by Native Americans.

One of the gift stores was selling around twenty storyteller dolls. The storyteller dolls were claydolls made by Pueblo Indians. The dolls showed that Pueblo Indians passed on their stories from generation to generation. The figures were from 10 cm to 30 cm high. Many dolls carried one or more small dolls or babies on them and their mouths were always open. Their prices were from \$100 to \$2,000 depending on the size of the dolls and number of the babies on their figures.

The Indian Pueblo Culture Center was owned by native Americans. A lot of Indian crafts like pottery, rugs, and jewelry were exhibited in the Center. The Indian crafts were good quality and expensive. I asked an Indian lady who was wearing a dress if they used these beautiful and expensive pots, baskets, and rugs for their daily lives. She replied that they did use these crafts daily. I told her that the pottery looked very weak to use for daily life. She said, "No, my mother still uses the pottery which she was given for her wedding." The lady looked around 25 years old so that her mother's pottery must have been used for at least 26 years. There was a special corner where they showed about the old life-style of the native American. For example, they displayed old tools such as a stone corn mill and a large piece of old pottery.

As soon as we had returned to the motel, I asked Maria to pick a lot of ice up at the motel office. We had a lot of apples, oranges, peaches, and cantaloupes in a cooler so that we had to put a lot of ice in it. Maria returned with a small amount of ice. I told Maria that we needed a lot of ice; otherwise, all the fresh fruit would be spoiled. Maria told me that the motel manager had watched what she was doing and had told her not to take more than one scoop of ice. I felt strange about what she said so I went to the office to pick up ice. I told the motel manager that I wanted to get ice and asked him how many scoops I could get. He replied that I could take as much ice as I wanted. I picked up at least six scoops of ice. He asked me if that Mexican was my friend. As soon as I said, "Yes," he asked me again where I had met her and why I was with her. I told him that we had met in the Los Angeles area and that she had been very kind to me so I brought her on my trip. After he had listened to my answer, he showed a puzzled face for a few minutes and kept quiet. I felt deeply sorry for Maria who was discriminated against even though she was a guest of the motel. I also understood clearly that this often happens to Hispanics and other minorities.

I had to visit the garage where my car was. The motel manager and the man whom I had met the previous day were worried about me. The motel manager said to the man, "She is a foreigner." After the manager found out that I was going to the garage on foot, he asked the man to drive me there. When I got out of the car, I had to think about how I could examine my car myself before a mechanic touched it. When a man from the garage appeared in front of me, I told him that I had to pick up my very important personal things from my car. I asked him if I could pick them up. Luckily, I had my key in my hand and I showed it to him. The man told me to go behind the office. The parking lot and the area behind the building were surrounded by a barbed wire fence. As the gate was slightly open, I got inside the fence. As soon as I tried to open the car door, I heard dogs barking loudly behind me. Two huge black Doberman pinschers without leashes showed their sharp teeth and they looked as if they would attack me. I screamed at the dogs several times. A very fat lady appeared from the building and told me, "You shouldn't be here." I told her that I had to pick up my personal belongings from my car and that this was my car. I opened the door

and got in the car immediately. I put the car key into the ignition switch and turned the key clockwise and the engine came on. I drove the car toward the mechanic and told him that my car didn't have any trouble now. I asked him how much I owed him. He told me, "Good-bye" and waved his hand at me.

We were heading for Santa Fe. The road stretched into the horizon and the horizon touched the blue sky. Very thin white clouds which looked as if they had been swept by a broom were in the blue sky. It was rare to see cars around there. The land was covered with yellow-green grass. Sometimes I could see dark green bushes on the light khaki land. I drove over hills once in a while. Most of the time, Maria was sleeping. Every time I stopped the car and took pictures, Maria woke up and said, "Ya, ya, ya. There is nothing."

As soon as I entered Santa Fe, I headed for the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture and the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indians. Sometimes, I saw signs for the museums so I followed them and I reached the Old Santa Fe Trail. At the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, they exhibited a lot of Indian pottery, baskets, rugs, and jewelry. They also exhibited contemporary crafts such as rugs and paintings. The Indian pottery was displayed according to its place of production, such as Santa Clara, Santa Ana, Zuni, Acoma, San Juan, San Ildefonso, Santo Domingo, and Zia. The pottery's shapes and patterns were different according to its place of production.

At the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indians were exhibited American Indian arts and crafts such as sandpaintings, pottery, baskets, and jewelry. They showed VCR tapes about how to make jewelry. I was satisfied at having seen all the Indian art and crafts at the museums in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Tucson. While I was driving to the plaza from the museum, I saw some adobe houses. Adobe is clay whose color looked like a mix of reddish brown and orange. The adobe houses looked very simple and beautiful. These adobe houses were built as residences and looked like new. There were many adobe buildings in the plaza. The stores whose structures were adobe had sidewalks which had roofs. Many native Americans in American Indian costumes displayed and sold their Indian jewelry such as rings, necklaces, and bracelets on the sidewalk.

There was an old church at the end of the main street in the plaza. The church was the Mission of San Miguel of Santa Fe. The mission was made of adobe and it matched the other adobe buildings in the plaza.

In spite of going to Colorado and Utah, I decided to return to California. I easily got onto Freeway 25 southbound and I transferred to Freeway 40 westbound. After I had passed through Albuquerque, I started driving across a plain. The milk chocolate-colored freeway stretched in front of me and it disappeared into the horizon which touched the blue sky. I could see only yellow-green plain, chocolate-colored freeway, the blue sky, some gray clouds, and a few cars around me. Even though I had driven on Freeway 40 eastbound several days ago, the scenery looked different. As I had had to drive very fast from Gallup to Albuquerque the previous day, I hadn't been able to look at the scenery. My mind was occupied with how to reach the motel in Albuquerque in a hurry at that time. This time, every time I saw the beautiful scenery of the plain, the blue sky, and the rocky hill, I stopped the car and took pictures. Every time I stopped the car, Maria opened her eyes and said, "Ya, ya, ya. There is nothing."

Two hours after I had left Albuquerque, I saw a sign for Acoma. According to the tour book from Triple A, Acoma is called "The Sky City" and it was built on a huge rock which was called a mesa. Native Americans still live there. I had a great curiosity about the Sky City so I left Freeway 40 and drove onto Indian Road 38. I saw yellow ochre mesas whose tops were flat on the brown-green field. The plain looked very poor because some parts of the plain were just yellow ochre dirt. It looked like nobody lived there. I saw a steel windmill in the distance. I thought that someone must generate electricity using the windmill. I woke Maria up and pointed out the windmill. I told Maria, "Look at the windmill. Someone is generating electricity." Maria said, "Ya, ya, ya. Kyoko, you don't know anything. That is for water." Maria looked at me as if I were a stupid girl.

There were several mesas around me. The walls of the mesas were steep cliffs which looked impossible to climb. I saw several houses on the top of one of the mesas. The houses were the same yellow ochre color as the mesa. At the visitor center, I was told that I could not go to the Sky City by myself and all visitors had to join a tour. The tour was \$10.00. I had to pay \$10.00 more to take my camera with me. I was warned not to take any pictures of the cemetery, the church, or the people who lived there. Around seven tourists and I got on a van with a tour guide. Maria refused to go with me. The guide was a young native American lady who wore a neat dress that was not an Indian costume. She looked around 23 years old and she talked like a well-educated lady. The lady told the tourists not to leave the group and not to walk in the city alone.

The van climbed the road, which was around 3m wide and reached the top of the mesa. There were several cube-shaped mud houses which were the same yellow ochre as the land. All the houses had four 90-degree corners and flat roofs. The walls were covered with mud. Some houses' walls had smooth surfaces and some houses' walls had rough surfaces as if they were stacked together with mud by hand at random. A few houses were built of stones and bricks. They had piled up flat stones around one meter high then piled up sun-dried bricks on top. Many small pieces of straw were mixed in the mud of the bricks which were not baked. I couldn't see any mortar between the stones and bricks.

I had learned about sun-dried bricks with straw when I watched TV programs or read books about such ancient civilizations as the Egyptian and the Mesopotamian Civilizations. Several thousand years ago they used the sun-dried bricks but now it is the 20th century, and yet in the U.S.A., whose civilization must be the most modern in the world, some people still use mud houses and sun-dried brick houses. I didn't expect that any people lived in Acoma, but they did. Although there were several thousand years time difference between ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia and modern Acoma, the only difference was that the houses in Acoma had glass windows.

The tour guide took the tourists to a church which was built with mud. It was around three stories high with smooth walls. I couldn't understand why there was a Christian church in Acoma. The people in Acoma seemed to live in their old tribal ways: for example, they still live on the top of the mesa without water and electricity. There was no greenery around them except only one tree. There was no field for corn or vegetables. The mesa was surrounded by a wilderness. Why did they accept Christianity instead of their own religion?

Each house had its own ladder which was made of wood. They used two tree trunks and put branches between the trunks as the steps. All the ladders were leaned against their houses to reach the second floor.

I saw many dome-shaped mud buildings which were one meter high and 2m in diameter around the houses. They looked like igloos which were built of blocks of packed snow in Alaska. I had seen hogans which were built of mud and wood in Arizona and New Mexico so that I believed that the dome-shaped building in Acoma must be another type of hogan.

Some native Americans were selling pottery and fried bread. A young man was selling his pottery. Some of his large pots cost \$300 to \$400 and were beautiful but nobody bought the pottery. An old man was selling small pots. One piece was \$30. The pot was 8 cm high and its diameter was around 10 cm. It was white and its pattern was painted with black paint. The pattern had many straight lines. I asked the old man if he had made the pot. He answered me, "Yes." I wondered why his pottery was much cheaper than the pottery which was made by the young man; however, the old man's pottery was much smaller than that of the young man's. The young man's pottery was thick and looked handmade and artistic. On the other hand, the old man's pottery was very thin. There was a possibility that the old man bought the already-made pottery from somewhere and he only painted it. The young man's pottery was wonderful but I was not rich enough to buy it so I bought the old man's pottery. I saw several mesas on the brown-green plain from the Sky City.

The tour guide told us to walk down the cliff to the visitor center instead of riding in the van. There was a steep, narrow path on the cliff. There were five or six small houses which were the same size as telephone booths on the cliff. One of the tourists told me that they were toilets.

I drove on the plain for a while and drove up to one of the mesas. From the top of the mesa, I looked back at Acoma. I saw the brown-green plain and mesas on the plain. There were some dark green bushes on the plain. As soon as I got off Interstate Highway 40, I drove on a reddish brown road. On both sides of the road were plains and the road disappeared into the horizon. We headed for the Meteor Crater. As soon as I stepped on to the top of the cliff, I was surprised at the huge crater. The inside of the crater had a vertical cliff and the bottom of the crater was flat. The crater's color was a mixture of gray and yellow ochre. It was very different from the reddish brown earth which was around the Meteor Crater. There was a path to the bottom but we were not permitted to go down. There were no trees or grass in the crater. Maria was very upset by the view of the Meteor Crater. As soon as she looked at it, she said, "Ya, ya, ya. Only a big hole. There is nothing here. Only a big hole. Ya, ya, ya. They charged \$ 5.00 to see a big hole." Maria looked at me as if she were disgusted with me.

I returned to Interstate Highway 40 and drove onto the chocolate-colored highway. I headed for Sedona to meet Bill and Gwen who were Mrs. Bernhardt's brother and sister-in-law. Mr. and Mrs. Bernhardt had taken me to Sedona in February 1982 and in December 1982. I had been fascinated with the beautiful rock shapes in Sedona. As soon as I started driving on State Highway 179, I remembered the color of the rocky hills around Sedona. The rocks had been a pale brown mixed with magenta and lilac. A familiar-shaped huge rock, Cathedral Rock stood in a bush area

and it showed most of its shape against the blue sky. I had seen it several times in 1982 but it looked different from that time because I was looking at it from behind. Then a bell-shaped rock appeared in front of me. I realized that I was close to Bill and Gwen's home. All I had to do was find a sign for a chapel. There was a huge chapel next to their home. After I passed the bell-shaped rock, I saw the chapel on a huge rock in the distance. The chapel had a slim trapezoid shape and a huge cross attached to the front of the building. There was Bill and Gwen's house on the terrace of the huge rock. The house was a wooden one-story house and its color matched the rocks both under and around the house. Both the house and rocks had almost the same reddish brown color. The wooden entrance door had been designed by Bill and it was carved by Bill himself. The door consisted of many brick-size rectangular wood pieces and the individual pieces were carved to look like a human face which had small eyes, a big mouth, and a big nose. There were several big windows in the house and I could enjoy looking at the beautiful scenery through the windows. Their house was introduced in the magazine "Twenty One" as Best Seat in the House in the July/August 1988 issue.

After we came home to California, Maria told me that the scenes in Arizona and New Mexico were as the same as Chihuahua, Mexico where she grew up. She also told me that the dome-shaped mud buildings in Acoma were ovens and her family used that type of oven. Moreover, people used a windmill to draw water up from a well in Chihuahua. That was why she was not interested in any sights in Arizona and New Mexico.

When some of my Caucasian American friends looked at my pictures of a road without a single car, only sky and plains, they asked me, "Why did you take these pictures? Nothing is there." They laughed at me as if I were a peculiar person. Even Bill who was a professional film maker and had shot several educational films asked me, "Why did you take these pictures?" Then Gwen smiled at me.

I'd better say more about Maria. Some Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans with whom I associated in the U.S.A. always asked me to return their kindness: for example, when someone drove me somewhere, I gave the driver money or I bought gasoline. They said, "This is the American way of life. We are fifty-fifty. You live in the U.S.A., you should follow American rules. You never get something for nothing." On the other hand, when Mr. Bernhardt decided to sell his home, I asked Maria to clean the house so that the realtors could have an open house. When she cleaned the house the first time, I put a fifty-dollar bill in an envelope and tried to give it to her. She refused to accept the money saying "Kyoko, you are my friend. I don't need the money." She cleaned the Bernhardts' house three times but she didn't accept any payment. Maria earned so little money and struggled to live in the U.S.A. but she helped me without taking anything.