

Visiting Quebec, Boston, Yosemite, San Francisco, Phoenix, and the Grand Canyon

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In April 1980, I started living in Palos Verdes Estates, California, with Mr. and Mrs. Bernhardt who were in their 70s at that time. They often told me what kind of clothes and shoes I should wear and what length of pants was appropriate and bought me many clothes, shoes, and underwear but these were their favorite things and mine were different. I didn't appreciate their generous gift to me. Their attention bothered me a lot and I wanted to be free from them.

In June and July 1982, I visited Toronto, Quebec, Boston, San Francisco, Yosemite, Phoenix, and the Grand Canyon by myself. I could do anything with my own decision during the trip.

I flew to Quebec City from Toronto. From the airplane I couldn't see any tall buildings in Quebec except a gothic stone building with two steeples in a lot of greenery. The front desk clerk at the Quality Inn explained to me how to get to the Old City by bus. He also told me to be sure to get off at the Chateau Frontenac. As soon as I got off the bus, I couldn't believe my eyes. There was a huge and elegant castle in front of me. The castle was a building around twenty stories high. Its roof was copper that had turned green and its walls were red-brown. Why was there a castle in Canada? A bus passenger said, "That is the Chateau Frontenac. It's a hotel."

When I started walking from the bus stop toward the Old City, I saw a stone arch gate and a stone wall which was attached to the gate. They were around 10 meters high. There was a cylinder-shaped stone building between the gate and the wall, and the building had a green roof. I remembered that during the medieval period in Europe, people built a wall around a village and they used to live inside the wall. This wall in Quebec might have had the same purpose as in Europe, because many French immigrated to Quebec; therefore, they built the village like in France. Most people in Quebec use French language and many of them could understand and speak both French and English.

I really enjoyed walking around the Old City. I felt as if I were in paintings by Maurice Utrillo. On the street in the Old City, many artists displayed their paintings and tried to sell them. One of the painters permitted me to take photos of his paintings out of focus. There were also some souvenir shops. They sold paintings, accessories, and clay dolls. I was really interested in the simply designed clay dolls and decided to buy a doll at the last place I visited on my trip. It was sad that I couldn't find anything closely similar to

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these clay dolls at any other places during my trip.

The second day in Quebec, I took a Gray Line tour and went to the island of Orleans which was in the St. Lawrence River across from Quebec City. The island and the city were connected by a bridge. According to the tour guide, the early settlers' descendants still lived in old stone houses on the island as farmers.

I walked around the Old City again and I looked at the Chateau Frontenac Hotel. It stood as if it were the most beautiful thing in the city and was admired by all the citizens and many tourists in Quebec. I had a great desire to look at the inside of the hotel. Before I entered the hotel, I was concerned about my appearance. That was because I was wearing a cotton shirt, a pair of corduroy pants, and a pair of Van blue canvas shoes. I felt miserable about my appearance but I forced myself in. The inside of the hotel was not as gorgeous as I had expected. It was gloomy and the inside was nothing but an all-wooden structure. I wanted to exchange American dollars for Canadian dollars at the currency exchange counter but they refused to do so because I wasn't a guest at the hotel.

I returned to the bus stop where I had got off that morning. While I was waiting for the bus, I saw a small red and white envelope on the road that was eight or ten steps away from me. It was very familiar to me because one of the department stores in Los Angeles used the same envelope. I used the same envelope to keep my airplane tickets in. I thought that an American who lived in the Los Angeles area must have come there and dropped it. I said to myself, "What a stupid American that is!" I stared at the envelope for a while and then picked it up. I opened it and found a book of airplane tickets with my name on it. I was very lucky to pick my own envelope up.

Then I flew to Boston. I had a reservation at the Travel Lodge on Beacon Street. As the Travel Lodge didn't have any airport pick up service, I went there by subway. The subway was pretty crowded and I had a hard time to reach the hotel with a large and heavy suitcase.

The first day in Boston, I used a sightseeing bus and visited historical places. Before that, I was not familiar with such sites as the USS Constitution, Trinity Church, Quincy Market, Faneuil Hall, and the Christian Science Church. I really enjoyed looking at the old historical buildings. If I had known American history well, I would have enjoyed visiting these historical places more.

The second day, I took another sightseeing bus driven by a lady to Plymouth. I saw the Mayflower, Plymouth Rock, statues of native Americans, and a couple of small wooden replicas of the Pilgrims' houses. The Mayflower was smaller than I expected and I couldn't imagine that she carried 102 people and crossed the Atlantic Ocean. I was slightly disappointed because the Mayflower was not the original one. I was curious about many people who were standing around a small concrete building. They were looking at a rock on which "1620" was carved. I realized that the rock was a kind of memorial for the Pilgrims, who had arrived in Plymouth in 1620.

The third day, I walked around Boston. There was a red line on the street which was

called the Freedom Trail. I could visit many historical places and buildings by walking along the trail: for example, the State House, King's Chapel, a statue of Benjamin Franklin, the Boston Massacre site, and Paul Revere's house. The streets along the Freedom Trail were paved with stones which reminded me that the city was very old. I visited the Museum of Fine Arts. I could see many kinds of art from all over the world: for example, many statues from Egypt and Greece and many paintings from France and Italy. This museum is the only place where Japanese can see a large collection of Ukiyoe, Japanese woodblock prints of common life in the Edo period (between 1603 and 1867). Unfortunately, when I visited the museum, the Japanese Art section was closed.

Going on the trip was expensive. I couldn't afford to go on a trip often, or stay in a luxurious hotel, or eat expensive food, but I had to spend a certain minimal amount on airfare and hotels. That is because good transportation and safe hotels would protect me from danger, especially since I traveled alone. There was only one way to save money during trips. That was meals. I avoided eating at restaurants three times a day. I ate breakfast and dinner in the hotel room. I had to eat lunch at restaurants because I was in the middle of sightseeing.

In Boston, there was a small market near the hotel. The market sold ready-to-eat food: various kinds of sandwiches, green salad, tuna salad, potato salad, meat loaf, roast beef, roast chicken, and Jell-O. I found smoked salmon which looked like it was tender and juicy. I had never seen smoked salmon that looked so tender and juicy in my life. The price of a pound of salmon was ten dollars. It was more expensive than I expected. In the corner of the glass showcase, I found five or six half-cup transparent plastic containers which were filled with small pieces of smoked salmon. One container was one dollar. I bought one of them. In my hotel room, I put the small pieces of smoked salmon in a green salad. The salmon was delicious; however, the pieces of salmon had many bones. The next day, I went to the store again. I had decided what I should buy even before I entered the store. I walked toward the glass showcase immediately but I couldn't see any plastic containers of smoked salmon. I searched the store but I couldn't find any smoked salmon in a container. Finally, I asked, "Excuse me, do you have any smoked salmon?" The salesclerk who was around 18 years old pointed out the smoked salmon in the glass showcase and asked me how much I needed. I replied to him, "Not that salmon. I want to buy the smoked salmon in a plastic container." The salesclerk's face turned puzzled. He was thinking about the salmon for one or two minutes and started looking for it in the store. I pointed out the glass showcase and showed him where I had found the smoked salmon in the containers the previous day. He smiled immediately and said, "Oh, cat food." I couldn't say anything for a couple of minutes. I only said, "I don't need it." Later I thought that cats in Boston were treated very well because their food, smoked salmon, was extremely delicious.

I flew from Boston to San Francisco. I stayed a night in a hotel in San Francisco and the next morning I took a bus and went to Yosemite National Park. Yosemite was Mr. and Mrs.

Bernhardt's favorite park and they visited it often. They also had a black and white photograph of Yosemite in their family room. The picture had been taken by Ansel Adams, who was very famous for taking pictures of Yosemite Valley.

The bus to Yosemite drove through the California countryside covered in dried grass which had turned yellow. The bus drove through a flat yellow area for a while, then it started driving along the Merced River in a valley where there were densely wooded areas. When the bus entered a tunnel, the bus driver said, "Welcome to Yosemite National Park." From the end of the tunnel, I saw a spectacular scene. There was a very high cliff on the left side. The huge, steep granite cliff, El Capitan, stretched vertically into the sky. On the right, there was a rocky cliff, Cathedral Rocks, which had three triangular peaks. A waterfall which is called Bridalveil was in the middle of the cliff. A huge granodiorite dome called Half Dome was in the center. Half Dome looked like an upside-down salad bowl and the bowl had been cut into half. The surface of the cut partly faced me and formed a flat cliff into the sky. El Capitan, Half Dome, Cathedral Rocks, and the other cliffs looked as if they were painted in purple, gray, light brown and dark brown. I saw a thick green carpet of trees in the valley floor. The scenery in Yosemite Valley was created by a glacier.

I stayed in a cabin in Camp Curry. There was no bathroom in my cabin so that I had to use a public toilet and a shower. In the public shower, many people made a line and were waiting for their turn. Everybody carried a washcloth, a bath towel, and a small bar of soap. We could borrow all the bathroom materials from Camp Curry. I had to wait about 30 minutes to get into a shower booth. There was no radio or TV set in the cabin.

The next day, I was awakened by someone's noise outside my cabin. It was bright sunshine and the sky was clear blue. I saw the cliff stretching high up in the sky. I felt as if the high cliff were going to lean toward me. The cliff was named Glacier Point. I walked around the cabin when, suddenly, a huge dome, Half Dome, appeared off in the distance in front of me. I could see its outline clearly, and it was even more beautiful than when looking at it from the tunnel. The one side of Half Dome which faced me had a vertical cliff. The cliff was pale gray, purple, blue, and very light yellow. As El Capitan caught the morning sunlight, the cliff shone light yellow and pale blue-gray.

There were several tours in Yosemite which I joined. The tour vehicle didn't have any roof so that I could see the scenery well. On my first tour, the tour guide described El Capitan, Half Dome, Yosemite Falls, Cathedral Rocks, and Bridalveil Fall. The vehicle took me in front of the tunnel from where I had seen Yosemite Valley the previous day. The view was the same as on the previous day but the color was different. Individual cliffs had been shining in the morning sunlight and some cliffs turned dark in the shadows. The valley, which was covered with trees, was still dark green. When I was looking at the entire Yosemite Valley, with El Capitan, Half Dome, Cathedral Rocks, Bridalveil Fall, and a thick green tree carpet, I felt very peaceful. I saw at least 10 bluejays in front of the tunnel. The bluejays had special feathers which looked as if they had a feather crown on

their heads. The next stop was Bridalveil Fall which looked exactly like a veil for a bride and it was made of a very thin lace of water. As the fall didn't have a large amount of water, it looked very weak and as if it might disappear soon. The shape of the fall was constantly being changed by the wind.

The second tour was a bus tour that took me to Glacier Point, Mariposa Grove, and the Hotel Wawona. The bus drove me through fir woods and up to the high mountain. Some trees were burning in the woods. I saw fires in some places and blue-gray smoke came out of the woods. The fires were about 50 cm high. According to the guide, the fire was under control. He also added that if fires were naturally caused, they didn't put out the fire.

From the top of Glacier Point, I saw the entire Yosemite Valley. I could see all the way to the bottom of the valley and it looked so deep that I felt as if I were looking from an airplane. I could observe the roads, meadows, trees, rivers, bridges, and falls. A familiar huge rock was sticking out from the top of Glacier Point. I remembered that I had seen that rock in a picture where two or three people were standing on it and one lady on the rock wore an old-fashioned long dress and carried a parasol. The picture was very old but the rock was still there.

From the top of Glacier Point, I saw Half Dome as a different shape because I was standing almost beside it and at almost the same altitude. There was no green on the surface of it. It showed a flat surface which looked like someone had ground its surface smooth. After we had stayed at the top of Glacier Point for a while, the bus drove us to Mariposa Grove where there were many gigantic sequoia trees. Each tree had a diameter of 3 meters at least. The trees grew high up in the sky and their branches prevented the sunlight from reaching the ground. Some sequoia trees had a hole in them. I went into one of the holes and estimated the area inside the tree. Inside of the hole was almost 15 square meters which was wide enough to live in.

After we toured Mariposa Grove, we had a chance to visit the Hotel Wawona. The white hotel stood out vividly in a meadow which was surrounded by woods. The meadow was two or three acres wide. The hotel was a white wooden two-storied building and its roof was shingled. Many poles outside supported the roof and the porch.

My third tour was for two-hour horseback riding. As the horse was well trained, I didn't have any trouble riding it. From the horse trail, I didn't see any of my familiar scenery, like Half Dome or El Capitan. The horse tour took me to unfamiliar areas where there were no tourists.

I had taken horseback riding lessons for a year in Japan. I enjoyed the lessons very much but I stopped taking them for financial reasons. I had to pay one third of my salary a month even though I could only ride four times a month. To make matters worse, I could ride a horse only for 20 minutes a lesson.

Around 6:00 P.M., it turned dark in Yosemite Valley. Only Half Dome continued to receive the sunlight. It was shining brightly in yellow, pink, and gold.

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I really enjoyed staying in Yosemite. Staying in Yosemite for three days was not enough for me. I wanted especially to see the scenery in the winter season. As it turned out, I returned to Yosemite three times after my first visit. Every time I think about Yosemite, I remember the splendid natural beauty. There are mountains, cliffs, greenery, falls, rivers, and blue sky. Everything is kept clean. My best remembrance about Yosemite is that both Mr. and Mrs. Bernhardt loved Yosemite the best of all of the parks.

I went to San Francisco from Yosemite by bus. I visited Mary Tsugi Rubin in Novato near San Francisco. She was Japanese and after she married an American, she changed her name and nationality. Her husband used to work for The Stars and Stripes which publishes a military newspaper. She has been living in the U.S.A. for at least 20 years. She always told me that she avoided associating with Japanese people. In particular, she never associated with Japanese ladies who had married American soldiers. She said, "No one respects these women whose husbands are soldiers. High ranking American soldiers who had graduated from military academies would not marry these Japanese women. I never associate with Japanese or Hispanics. I make friends only with Caucasians and Europeans." I wondered why Mary chose to associate with me. After I arrived in the U.S.A., I had a great curiosity about people, especially about their racial background. This was because I am from Japan where I could see only people who have similar features - black hair, dark skin, dark eyes, etc. On the contrary in the U.S.A., I could see many races such as Caucasians, African Americans, dark or light brown-skinned people. They also have many colors of hair such as black, brown, red, or blond. I was really interested in knowing where they came from or where their ancestors came from. Mary said, "Americans don't care about their races. They talk about and listen to only happy things." However, every time I met her, she told me she would divorce her husband or that she would die from cancer. At a restaurant in Napa Valley which was famous for wine, the waitress was beautiful and very attractive. I wondered where she came from or where her ancestors came from but I didn't mention this to Mary. Strangely enough, Mary said, "Can you guess where she came from?" She also said, "Why don't you ask her?" I thought that Mary made contradictory statements. I asked the waitress, "Where are you from?" The waitress replied, "I'm from Mexico. Many people ask me the same question that you did." What she told me indicated that many Americans were interested in races.

When I used the word "Jew," Mary got upset and told me that the word "Jew" insulted Jewish people. She told me, "You should use the word 'Jewish' instead of 'Jew'." Her husband is a Jew. I could not understand why I had to use the word "Jewish" instead of "Jew." I used the word "Jew" to mean a person whose race was Jewish not a person whose religion was Judaism. After I returned to Palos Verdes or to Japan, I heard the word "Jew" and "Jews" many times on the American TV news.

In the airplane to Phoenix, a cabin attendant called my name. She asked me if I were a vegetarian. I wondered why she asked me about that so I asked her why she wanted to

know if I were a vegetarian or not. In reply, she asked me if I needed vegetarian food. I was curious about the vegetarian food so I told her that I was a vegetarian. I was excited about the vegetarian food. No sooner had I looked in the basket than I was disappointed with it. There were an apple, a small amount of green salad, a small bottle of red wine, and some crackers in the basket. When I was in Japan, I had heard about vegetarians in the U.S.A. The word "vegetarian" sounded fresh to me. I expected that only people who had some special religion ate vegetarian food and that vegetarian food must be very different from regular food. Apples, green salad, and crackers were not special food. Anyway, it satisfied my curiosity to know what the vegetarian food was.

I saw some tall buildings, many houses, and two hills from the airplane. The city was Phoenix and it looked as if it were covered with a thin brown dust curtain. I had a reservation at a motel in the suburbs of Phoenix. There was a straight road beside the motel. When I looked at the road and traced the road, my eyes reached the tallest building in the city. It looked as if it weren't far from the motel to downtown.

The second day in Phoenix, I was going to do some sightseeing. I thought that there must be tour buses from downtown. I found a bus stop across from the motel easily. There was no bus timetable on the bus stop. I waited for a bus for about fifteen minutes. A man around 30 years old came to me and told me that there was no bus service on Sundays. I wondered what I should do. Anyway, I stopped a taxi and went downtown. As the taxi driver suggested to me to go to the Scottsdale Shopping Center, I asked him to take me there. It looked almost the same as the Del Amo Shopping Center in Torrance, California, which is near Palos Verdes, except that the gift stores in Scottsdale sold native American products like Kachina dolls, rugs, pottery, and jewelry. At the Hilton Hotel downtown, I enjoyed looking at native American products like pottery, rings, necklaces, pins, rugs, and sandpaintings. There was a tall building downtown which I had seen from my motel so it seemed that my motel was not far from downtown. I thought that it would take 15 minutes on foot. All I had to do was walk up this road and so I started walking. After 15 minutes, I still couldn't reach my motel. I looked back behind me and saw the tall building just behind me. I walked 15 minutes more but the building was still large. I didn't have any idea when I could reach the motel. On the one hand, I started thinking about catching a taxi. On the other hand, I thought that I had walked for 30 minutes. If I went to the motel by taxi, my effort to get to the motel on foot would turn out to be in vain. There was a possibility that the motel might be only two or three blocks away. I walked at least one hour and finally I reached my motel.

The next day it was 50°C in Phoenix. I felt as if I were in an oven; however, the air was very dry. I went to the Heard Museum where I saw many native American products like rugs, pottery, baskets, rings, necklaces, shoes, weapons, etc. They were designed simply but they were very attractive. Especially, I was interested in rugs and pottery.

I left Phoenix at 3:30 P.M. and flew to the Grand Canyon. Before the airplane landed at the airport, I saw a narrow brown valley between pinewoods. The valley was the

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Grand Canyon. The Grand Canyon wasn't as huge as I expected as I looked down at it from the airplane. I rode on a bus to go to the Grand Canyon Village. I had to pay \$10 as the national park entrance fee. I felt the bus moved very slowly because I had been dreaming of visiting the Grand Canyon for 20 years. Finally, the Grand Canyon was around the corner but the bus wouldn't move fast enough.

When I was an elementary school pupil, I watched a TV program which showed the Grand Canyon and described a mule trip, which took the tourists to the bottom of the canyon. When I had watched the program, I had a great desire to go to the Grand Canyon and to ride on a mule. Three months before I started traveling, I made a reservation to join the mule trip.

A lady at the information desk gave me some advice for my mule trip: for example, "Don't forget to bring a hat and a camera. Don't bring any extra things." She gave me a plastic bag, which was 40 cm x 30 cm, and told me to keep my personal belongings in the plastic bag. From on the edge of the canyon, I could see the canyon clearly under the blue sky. The canyon was several colors like red, brown, purple, yellow, light brown, dark green, and black. The color was changed by the sunlight and the area of the canyon. The canyon was in many layers and I could see the layers clearly. When I looked into the canyon, I could see a brown river in the bottom. I also could see that I was on the edge of a high cliff.

I had to go to a corral for the mule trip by 8:00 A.M. When I arrived at the corral at 7:00 A.M., nobody was there. I wondered if it was the correct corral because the circle, which was surrounded by a fence, was too small and there were no droppings. Around 10 minutes before 8:00 A.M., two men came with two horses. Then some mules came. There were eight members on the mule trip. The guide put my plastic bag, where I had put my purse and an alarm clock, in a saddlebag. I carried only my camera. All the mules had been trained very well so that I could control the mul, whose name was Pesky, easily. When the mule was walking on the flat area, I expected that the trip must be wonderful. As soon as the mule started walking down the trail, which reached to the bottom of the canyon, I was very scared. The width of the trail was only one meter. Pesky walked on the edge of the trail which was close to the canyon. He also walked so that at least one leg was in the air of the valley. Especially, when Pesky walked around the corners of the trail, his entire head and neck were outside of the trail. I pulled the reins and signaled the mule to walk on the center of the trail. I had to think for a while whether I should stop taking part in the mule trip and go back to my motel or I should continue with the trip. The mule might step off the trail and Pesky and I might fall into the deep canyon. I didn't want to die but I wanted to go to the bottom of the canyon so I decided to stay on the trip. I couldn't see any view from the back of the mule. I only looked at the mule's back and its head and held the reins tightly. I didn't have any idea how long it would take to the bottom of the canyon. A lady behind me told me that it would take eight hours to reach the Phantom Ranch, which was in the bottom of the canyon, and the man in front of me said

that we would reach the bottom before dark. All the mules raised sandy dust and the mule in front of me urinated and pooped sometimes. The sandy dust and bad smell came directly to my face. It was very dry and hot. To avoid the smell and sand, I tied a towel around my face. After three hours had passed, the mule started walking on a flat area and I had got used to riding on the mule. I enjoyed seeing the scenery from the mule. Sometimes, I took pictures from the mule but I couldn't focus on the views well because the mule moved constantly.

My bottom was getting sore. It was very hard to sit on the mule but I had to continue to sit on it. Around noon, we stopped riding. There were three or four public toilets. I walked around the toilet booths and looked for a sign for a ladies' toilet but there was no difference between women's and men's. I realized that I had lost a layer of skin on my bottom by riding the mule.

It was extremely hot and humid in the valley. Sometimes we met some hikers on the trail. When our mules passed them, the hikers leaned back or spread-eagled against the cliff to avoid touching the mules. Around 3:00 P.M., we arrived at the bottom of the canyon. The narrow brown Colorado River was running in front of me. I couldn't believe that the Grand Canyon was made by the river and that it is still washing out the canyon. We walked along the river for a while and then we had to cross a bridge in a line. One of the mules refused to cross the bridge and the guide pulled the reins very hard and forced the mule to cross. Finally, we arrived at the Phantom Ranch. There were several wooden houses in the ranch. In the room, there were two double bunks and a bathroom. As there was no shower or bathtub in the bathroom, I had to use a shower outside. The bottom of the canyon was very hot and humid and the air didn't move. There was some greenery like grass and bushes in the bottom of the canyon. The view from bottom to the top of the canyon was not so beautiful as compared with the view from the top of the canyon to the bottom.

I enjoyed the steak dinner at the dining room in the ranch. The meal was included in the mule trip fare. The guide told us that we should be at the corral at 7:00 A.M. the next morning. If a person didn't show up at 7:00 A.M., the party would leave him or her in the bottom of the canyon and he or she would have to walk up to the top of the canyon.

Even though an air conditioner was running, my room was very hot. To make matters worse, the air conditioner made noise. I couldn't fall asleep because it was very hot and noisy. When I turned off the air conditioner, the temperature in the room became very high and I had even more trouble falling asleep. If I missed the party, I might have to walk to the top of the canyon. I couldn't walk for three days to reach the top of the canyon; moreover, I didn't have any food for climbing up the canyon.

I was awakened by someone's voice. It had turned bright outside. It was 7:00 A.M. already. I hadn't been able to hear the bell of the alarm clock. Without washing my face and brushing my teeth, I rushed into the corral. I didn't see anybody at the corral. "They left me alone. What should I do?" At that time, the guide appeared with his horse. I was

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very glad that they did not leave me.

To get to the top of the canyon, we used a different trail from the previous day. Climbing the cliff on the mule was much easier than going down the cliff. My bottom was still sore but I had to accept it. I tried to press my weight on the stirrups rather than putting my weight on my bottom. I had a lot of opportunities to look at the canyon views. The canyon changed its color according to the sunlight: for example, weak purple to bright purple, dark gray to blue-gray, dark brown to yellow-brown, etc. It took around five hours to reach the top of the canyon.

As soon as I finished the mule trip, I joined a scenic airplane tour. A small airplane flew over the canyon. I could see the individual cliffs, deep cut valleys, layers on the cliffs, and the Colorado River in the deep valley clearly. It looked like the Grand Canyon consisted of many varieties of rocks. The colors and shapes of cliffs were very different from each other. I flew from the Grand Canyon to Las Vegas. I saw a huge lake or a river from the airplane. Later I found out it was Lake Mead, which was a man-made lake. I changed planes at Las Vegas and went to L.A.X. (Los Angeles International Airport).

After I returned to Palos Verdes, every time I tried to sit on a chair, I remembered the mule trip because my bottom was sore for ten days.

While I was living with Mr. and Mrs. Bernhardt, their attention to my clothes, food, and action bothered me very much. It was really painful that I didn't recognize Mr. and Mrs. Bernhardt's love toward me for so many years.