

2-22-2013

Interview with Veena Bonsal About Her Ethnic Background (FA 601)

Manuscripts & Folklife Archives
Western Kentucky University, mssfa@wku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fa_oral_hist



Part of the [Ethnic Studies Commons](#), and the [Folklore Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Folklife Archives, Manuscripts &, "Interview with Veena Bonsal About Her Ethnic Background (FA 601)" (2013). *FA Oral Histories*. Paper 58.
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fa_oral_hist/58

This Transcription is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in FA Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.

Folklife Archives Project 601 – EthniCity: Contemporary Ethnicity in the Inner Bluegrass
Interview with Veena Bonsal (B3,F11-12; B1,F5)

Adler: Okay.

Bonsal: My name is Veena Bonsal and my birthday is 22nd of November, 1957.

Adler: Okay. And your address?

Bonsal: My address is 1353 _____ [?] Lexington and 40517 is the zip number. And I'm a housewife.

Adler: Okay, great. And you have a young daughter.

Bonsal: Yeah, my husband, actually I am the second wife of my husband. And my husband and first wife had one daughter and one son. They both are attending UK.

Adler: Oh, good. And then do you have a baby?

Bonsal: No.

Adler: Oh, oh, oh, the older daughter is home from school.

Bonsal: No, she's, just she finished pre-med and she's going in UK this coming August for medical _____[?]. And my son, he's already in second, second year of medical.

Adler: And what does your husband do?

Bonsal: My husband, he's working in _____ [?] Company. He's a mechanical engineer.

Adler: Okay. And what's his first name?

Bonsal: _____ [?, Shashi or Tashi] Bonsal.

Adler: [pronounces name] Okay. And where were you born?

Bonsal: Actually, I was born in India at the name of Harnere.

Adler: How do you spell that?

Bonsal: H A R N E R E.

Adler: H A R... where is that?

Bonsal: It is near Dahli [?].

Adler: And what was it like? Did you have brothers and sisters?

Bonsal: No, I'm the only daughter. My mother died, I'm very small. I was six years old. And my mother died in first pregnancy [?] and my father died in car accident.

Adler: Who raised you then?

Bonsal: My mother's sister, my auntie. And then my whole life I'm in _____ [?, hostel], twelve years I'm in hostel.

Adler: Did you have cousins that you lived with growing up?

Bonsal: Yeah. I had, my auntie has five daughters and one son.

Adler: Were they, some of them your age?

Bonsal: I'm the older one, everyone is all younger.

Adler: Did you have to help take of them?

Bonsal: Uhhh, sometimes. [laughter]

Adler: Did you play games with them and things like that?

Bonsal: Yeah, so many times.

Adler: What kinds of games?

Bonsal: Plus on vacation I would always come to my auntie's, see. And I'd stay there and vacation. Then she only did everything for me. Now she's sending me clothes from India and everything, she's great.

Adler: That's nice.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Your family must be very close.

Bonsal: Yeah. That is true.

Adler: That's good, that's good. Well, what was it like growing up in India? What was, where did you go to school when you were little?

Bonsal: In Banglor before I was studying in Mascar, a satellite station in India from fifth summer [?] I studied there. After that I went to Banglor because one of my mother's _____ [?], he went there. I also went there with him. Then he put in the hostel and I was in hostel.

Adler: What is, what is a hostel? Can you describe that for me?

Bonsal: All girls are staying there from different places, name of Joti Nevas School.

Adler: How do you spell that?

Bonsal: Joti, J O T I, Joti, Nevas, N E V A S.

Adler: And that was the name of the school?

Bonsal: Yeah, I stayed in, before that it was a school and then it became college. Yeah. I finished my study there.

Adler: So, you went there through college?

Bonsal: Yeah, graduation.

Adler: What did you major in?

Bonsal: Just political science and art.

Adler: What did you do after that?

Bonsal: After that I got a love marriage. [laughing]

Adler: You didn't have an arranged marriage?

Bonsal: Basically, in our house we had arranged marriage only. But to come across, I saw that guy and I like it and I did marry. And my married life is seven years. And I got one miscarriage in that, one boy baby. After '85, my husband died in heart attack.

Adler: Oh, dear. You've had a hard life.

Bonsal: Yeah. Then after that I got a job in Dehli and my in-laws were there, but I'm not staying with my in-laws. I'm staying alone there. And...

Adler: Is that unusual?

Bonsal: Yeah, it's unusual.

Adler: Were you, did, were you, were you very brave or did they talk about you and how bad you were or anything?

Bonsal: Yeah, they are talking so many things but I didn't care of that because I had to stand myself. And I'm working there _____ [?, J. O. D. Showroom] like a designer and salesperson. Then I did job there in five years and two years I did job in pharmacist, like pharmacist in my father's friend and he was, teach me everything because at that time I don't know anything in how to do bank work and paper work. And he teach me everything and he's a very nice guy. Still he's writing me letters and everything.

Adler: Well, that was nice.

Bonsal: Yeah. Then after, he only in paper he saw a marriage proposal, then I got married to this guy. [laughter] _____ [?, sounds like "ten"] years.

Adler: Had you met him before?

Bonsal: Yeah, in '91, he came there with children and I saw him there. Just I saw, I didn't talk or anything like that. After that he began to write that he like me because, they need some _____ [?] girl, age of thirty-five. Now, I'm thirty-eight. Then I got married after five months. I came here after married.

Adler: Well, golly, that was fast.

Bonsal: Yeah. [laughter]

Adler: So, how long did you know him before you got married?

Bonsal: Nothing, I didn't know anything about him.

Adler: But, was it sort of arranged though, your uncle approved.

Bonsal: Yeah, this marriage was arranged marriage.

Adler: Was it, is he somebody your family knew before or they knew his family?

Bonsal: No, no, nobody. Because the paper came in and my father's brother saw that and that's it. And he told ...

Adler: So, he checked him out?

Bonsal: Yeah, he met his family. His family was staying in India in Shirna [?] and he's stationed.

Adler: And then you came to Lexington?

Bonsal: Yeah, I came Lexington on July 28.

Adler: Of 1980?

Bonsal: 1992.

Adler: '92.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Oh, golly, everything moved very fast, didn't it. It must have seemed like it. So, what did you think about Lexington? Had you husband prepared you for what you might find here or anything?

Bonsal: No, nothing. But, it's nice place, actually, Lexington. But sometimes I'm feeling very depression and loneliness here because nobody have time to talk. Everybody is busy. India life is very different and here life is very different.

Adler: What's it like there that it's different here?

Bonsal: Say in India so many people are coming in home because in one, vegetable lady is coming and she'll talk sometime for ten minutes, twenty minutes. [laughing] Here you have to go and buy vegetables from Kroger or wherever. In India so many things are very easy because, when I was India I not do any work in India because I had full-time servant there. But here, it's very hard to do everything here and I'm doing job also there and it was indeed easy life there. I know here I'm not washing clothes with hand. I'm not doing anything because everything, vacuum and everything is easy life, but sometimes I feel very lonely inside. I miss my family, friends.

Adler: Uh-hmm. Have you been back at all to see your family?

Bonsal: Yeah, I went two times India. [laughter] I came here after five months I went to India.

Adler: Oh, dear.

Bonsal: After that I came back and then again I went after one year I went over. And this year, we'll see what will happen. [laughing]

Adler: Yeah, does your husband go back with you or do you go just to see your family?

Bonsal: No, he's not going because my husband he's already twenty-seven years he's stayed here. In Lexington itself, now, it's twenty-five years already. In this house, seventeen years, I think. [laughing] I don't think he has any attraction in India because his children are here. They are studying here. And his job and everything is here.

Adler: And are the children, do they speak any of the India languages or are they interested in it?

Bonsal: Yeah, both children are talking Hindi, very good Hindi. My daughter is talking very good but my son is a little bit more Americanized. [laughing]

Adler: Yeah, yeah, are they interested at all in their Indian heritage?

Bonsal: Not much, not much. Both are Americans.

Adler: Of course, they were already older and fairly well developed in terms of their interests and things like that by the time that you even met them, I guess.

Bonsal: Yeah, because at that time that I got married my daughter, she was seventeen years old. Son, he's twenty years.

Adler: Did they accept you okay?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Had they been prepared?

Bonsal: I hope so. [laughter]

Adler: Why, you don't have to answer this, it might be too personal but I'm curious why your husband advertised in India for an Indian woman instead of finding somebody here.

Bonsal: Here.

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: You know, basically an India guy what they born in India; they're always thinking that they like India women more because they talk in own language. That is the main problem the language. Because here so many Indian ladies that are here _____ and South

Indian and so many but they are talking in own language. They comfort in own language, that's why, that is the main reason, not other reason. I hope so.

Adler: So, he's been here that many years but he still really most comfortable speaking Hindi?

Bonsal: Yeah. Speaking well Hindi because I and my husband always talk in Hindi. And I want to talk to the children always in Hindi. They are speaking to me in English.

Adler: Ahh, but they understand you.

Bonsal: Yeah, they understand everything.

Adler: That's good, that's good.

Bonsal: They understand each and everything.

Adler: So, what have you been, have you traveled since you've been here?

Bonsal: Yeah, I went to Washington, D. C. once and I went to California because one of my sister-in-laws, she's staying in Phoenix, Arizona. I went there, also. I'm thinking that sometime I'll go to Europe.

Adler: Well, that would be fun. [laughter]

Bonsal: Yeah. That's true.

Adler: What did you think about Lexington when you first came?

Bonsal: You know, I like this place.

Adler: Had you been to the United States before?

Bonsal: No.

Adler: What did you think?

Bonsal: In my family nobody had been in the Unites States. Not even any foreign country, no one had. I'm the only daughter in my house.

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: I came here.

Adler: Did you fly here from India?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Or did you drive from New York?

Bonsal: No, no, I fly from India in Dayti. I came to Frankfurt and then to Cincinnati and then my husband came to Cincinnati and he picked me up.

Adler: So, you came by yourself then. He was already back here.

Bonsal: Yeah, I came alone.

Adler: Oh, golly.

Bonsal: Always I'm going alone to India.

Adler: Oh, yeah.

Bonsal: Now, I'm used to it. [laughter]

Adler: Goodness.

Bonsal: But it's hard actually staying in India because India, India, everybody bothers about single women. Because whenever I go out or take my cousin somewhere, otherwise my neighbor, his son, he's taking me out or they are calling me DV, like elder sister, like that. And "DV, I'll take you anywhere you want to go". But here, you have to go alone.

Adler: Does that seem strange to you?

Bonsal: No, because I'm working there and seven years I'm staying alone. It's not strange for me.

Adler: Uh-hmm. Is that happening more and more in India? Are women being more independent?

Bonsal: Yeah, nowadays, yeah because so many... but before in our, in Indian culture nobody thinking anymore like that. But now it's gone. But sometime husband's giving problem, sometimes woman is giving problems. I think mix and match is not correct.

Adler: So, there are more divorces.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Are there fewer and fewer arranged marriages or are people still...?

Bonsal: Most probably, yeah, seventy-five percent are free marriage marriages. [I think this is what is said] Now, marriages are doing very hardly... but now everywhere is going to do the same maybe as what people are doing here and there are the same thing. The same dresses, they are wearing skirt and this before they not they are not wearing that. Now, it's very common. Public life where style is different in India from here, otherwise it's the same.

Adler: Partly the lack of servants and things like that.

Bonsal: Oh, yeah, it's a little bit like, some thing is very good, and some things here are good.

Adler: What is good here?

Bonsal: People are going anywhere for paperwork and I, whatever I like if I go in bank, my work is doing life differently. In India I'll go and stand in line, there are so many hassles

there. And in tickets, I also you call and reserve the ticket and everything. In India you can't do that.

Adler: The bureaucracy in India or?

Bonsal: In India, yeah, I think so. In India I think, population is more and people are not working properly. The pay is less and working hours is more.

Adler: So, when you were, did you grow up speaking English as well? Did you speak that in school?

Bonsal: No.

Adler: When did you learn English?

Bonsal: In school only because in our house they were speaking Hindi. Still they speak Hindi. In our house everybody speaks Hindi, nobody speaks English.

Adler: This is delicious. What's it called?

Bonsal: It's _____ tea. It's strong tea.

Adler: You bring it with you?

Bonsal: No, it's here in so many Indian grocery stores. I like _____[?]. It's pretty expensive but it's worth it.

Adler: Is it as fresh if you get it here?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: It keeps pretty well.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Is there an Indian grocery store in Lexington?

Bonsal: No, we are going always to Cincinnati.

Adler: That's what a lot of people have said that they go to Cincinnati. Is there a big Indian community in Louisville, too, do you know?

Bonsal: Yeah, there also. [can't understand next sentence]... because they made some temple over there. It's a big temple, I think you mentioned Dayton there is a temple there.

Adler: Yes.

Bonsal: It's a very good temple. Yes. I saw in Dayton but I've never been to Louisville. [?] People say that in Louisville, also, there is a temple there.

Adler: What about, is there anything in Cincinnati?

Bonsal: Cincinnati, they are making one temple, a big temple there. They are working on that.

Adler: Is there a chance that there would ever be one in Lexington? Or aren't there enough people yet?

Bonsal: I don't think so. Something in Lexington, maybe few Indian families are here, maybe a hundred. [Can't understand first part of sentence] ... are different and the Hindi speaking are different. I don't think you have enough in Lexington.

Adler: Do people worship together at all here, the Indians?

Bonsal: Yeah, we are doing that. Every month on Sunday we are doing that.

Adler: Once a month.

Bonsal: Are you interested in coming there?

Adler: Yes.

Bonsal: Okay, I'll call you next time.

Adler: Okay, what is it called?

Bonsal: Buja.

Adler: Buga, B U G A, J A. Buja, what does that mean?

Bonsal: Worship.

Adler: [laughing] Oh, okay. Where do you meet when you get together where do you meet?

Bonsal: Anybody's house. In February the buja is in my house. This, I think our _____ [?] there in Winchester town or something.

Adler: In where?

Bonsal: Winchester.

Adler: In Winchester.

Bonsal: Yeah. I don't know proper address but I know that I'll call you and tell you.

Adler: Okay.

Bonsal: And you could come there.

Adler: Are you sure, would that be okay?

Bonsal: Yeah, no problem.

Adler: And what, what is it? How many families get together?

Bonsal: It depends, there is no counting, it is open house buja. Anybody can come there.

Adler: And what happens?

Bonsal: They are doing Pagen [?]

Adler: Pagen?

Bonsal: They are singing songs, _____[?,guard] songs and doing that. Maybe ten or fifteen songs, they are doing a one and a half hour buja. After that we take tea, coffee, and snacks, something that we like.

Adler: So, it's partly social, too, for people to be able to get together.

Bonsal: Yeah. Every month we are doing that.

Adler: And are there other activities like that, that are maybe not religious? I know there's the BYAX group and they get together.

Bonsal: That is on the third, are you coming?

Adler: No, not this year.

Bonsal: And you know that _____ club they have in Indian [?].

Adler: No, I don't know much about it.

Bonsal: They are doing a separate buja, too. They have different, our religion is different and their religion is different. They also do a monthly buja like that. But they all, Saidai is coming. We are not going there.

Adler: Uh-huh, now what is that called?

Bonsal: Saidai.

Adler: How do you spell that?

Bonsal: S A I D A I.

Adler: And what, that means when they get, they're putting the cloth on the head.

Bonsal: Yeah. They never cut their hair, men.

Adler: So, it's all wrapped up in the cloth to hold it. And how many... is that a name of a religion or is that the name of the ceremony?

Bonsal: It's their religion. I think you know Jean _____.

Adler: I know the name.

Bonsal: She's an American lady and she got married to a Saidai family. The son got married, last year they got married, and everyone came from India [?].

Adler: Uhhh, I read about that in the paper.

Bonsal: Yeah, they are Saidai.

Adler: Now, where?

Bonsal: You can talk to her. Now, she is in England.

Adler: For the summer.

Bonsal: Yeah, sometimes she is going for business or something like that.

Adler: Okay, I'll give her a call. Uhhh, ...

Bonsal: She is a very nice lady, very nice. She has two sons, Paul and Shawn. Shawn got married last year.

Shawn is the younger one but Paul is the older one. But the younger one got married.

Adler: Oh. [laughter] These things happen. [laughing]

Bonsal: Yeah. But she is very nice lady. So many Indians here who got married to Americans.

Adler: Are they, how did they meet them?

Bonsal: They meet, they were working together or studying together.

Adler: Like women who might have come over for school or men come over for school. Is it mostly Indian men marrying American women?

Bonsal: Yeah. Indian ladies also get married to American guys.

[counter 252]

Adler: So, when you first came here you were newly married, so, you knew that you had to adjust, not only to a new husband but and a whole new family with children already there but also to a whole new country and language and things like that. Did you have a lot of problems with it?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: What kinds of problems were they?

Bonsal: The main problem I have actually is eating habit because in India vegetables taste very different and here vegetables are very different and I have that problem. I lose my weight, [laughing] fifteen pounds, I lose.

Adler: Fifteen pounds! Have you been able to gain it back?

Bonsal: Yeah. [laughing]

Adler: Getting used to American food.

Bonsal: [laughing] But now it's okay. Because these people are eating very spicy food but Americans are eating very [sound of microphone scraping on table or something, Adler says, "Move that closer to you. My voice carries so loud, I don't need..."]

Adler: So, you are used to eating very spicy foods?

Bonsal: Yeah, I like spicy foods.

Adler: Are you a vegetarian?

Bonsal: No, I'm both, vegetables and non-vegetables because in our family nobody lived in _____ [?, counter 274] actually I was in hostel where _____ [?]. But in India, so many people are not eating beef and pork only good meat they are eating. [?] But here you can get good meat properly.

Adler: Now what is good meat? What does that mean?

Bonsal: Goat meat.

Adler: Oh, goat. Oh, a lot of people eat goat meat.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: But they won't eat beef or pork?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: And why is that?

Bonsal: I don't know why because in our cows they are doing _____ [? "two jobs", counter 277], that's why we are not eating cow.

Adler: What about pork?

Bonsal: And don't know why pork, I don't know, because they are very dirty, pigs, the hygiene, that's why.

Adler: So, is the style of food where you're from, are you from the northern part?

Bonsal: Yeah, I'm the northern part.

Adler: So, you have more breads than rice and stuff like that.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: I'm learning slowly. [laughing]

Bonsal: Yeah, we are making mostly chappati with wheat flour, yeah we are making We are eating less rice. We are eating more bread.

Adler: And do you do that here?

Bonsal: Yeah, do we?

Adler: Do you make your own chappati?

Bonsal: Yeah, at lunch, at dinner, I'm making daily.

Adler: Are you?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Oh, golly.

Bonsal: I'm used to doing that. Most time I'm making daily. Sometimes I... I like Chinese food here. I enjoy that.

Adler: What other kinds of food?

Bonsal: Uhhh, Mexican, yeah, sometimes. And American food also I like but it's very bland actually. But it's okay, once in a while. We can't eat daily but we like it.

Adler: So, do you eat mostly Indian food?

Bonsal: Yeah, the evening I make Indian food like dahl something and everything, vegetable.

Adler: Do you have problems finding ingredients?

Bonsal: Yeah, some vegetables I brought from India and all the spices I brought from India [laughing] but here I get everything.

Adler: And what do you do about different kinds of vegetables and thing like that? Or you able to substitute things?

Bonsal: Yeah, I buy some because cauliflower and cabbage in India also we get these things. I get some here also. But carrot is, you get India carrot is different from here, here carrots are different and taste also a little bit different. But we are making _____ sauce, we are making at home now. Before I don't know anything. I came here and learn everything. [laughing]

Adler: You learned here how to cook?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Oh, did you?

Bonsal: Yeah. [laughing]

Adler: How did you learn?

Bonsal: Just friends house and they are making something good and then I ask her to give me the recipe and everything.

Adler: So, you, did you ever have to cook in India or did you...?

Bonsal: Very less, very less because I was in hostel after that...

Adler: So, you didn't have to do any cooking there.

Bonsal: Yeah, most probably in our household mother-in-law was cooking and doing all the work. We are not used to cooking.

Adler: How do women learn how to cook then? Do they get lessons or something before...?

Bonsal: _____ [counter 312, can't understand first sentence] Yeah, they are giving lessons for that. Because in my, in my house I saw because when my younger sister is getting married then my auntie she is teaching her daily cooking. Evening food she's making daily, whatever it is, sometimes _____ [?], sometimes, [laughing] she tells you, you have to cook these things. And she is preparing her. After she got married the _____ didn't like that. But the mother has to train the daughter.

Adler: But you didn't have to, you didn't have that happen to you because you were gone.

Bonsal: Yeah, because I was not at home actually. I was in hostel. And I learned with my mother-in-law. She teach me everything.

Adler: Now, where does she live?

Bonsal: In Dehli, she is in Dehli.

Adler: So, did she teach you before you got married?

Bonsal: No, after marriage before marriage we had not been to husband's house. In our custom we are not going. After marriage only we have to go and talk with them and you know, whatever. Because in India no dating system exists there. [sound of phone ringing]

Adler: So, you learned after you were married to cook from your mother-in-law in Dehli.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: And then you came here.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Could you cook well enough by the time you...

Bonsal: No, after my husband died I stayed alone seven years and then by that time

Adler: Oh, this is your first mother-in-law.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Oh, okay.

Bonsal: Now, I don't have mother-in-law.

Adler: Oh, okay, I wasn't sure which one you were referring to. Anyway. Okay. So, your first mother-in-law did teach you how to cook.

Bonsal: She only teach me.

Adler: But then you didn't have to cook for seven years.

Bonsal: Oh, yeah, I cooked for myself. Sometime I eat fast food, also, in India. Now, there are so many things to make easy.

Adler: And then you got married again but you already knew how to cook.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Or had you forgotten everything?

Bonsal: Yeah, no, actually certain [or "soy"] dishes I fixed here only because I don't know before. I learned from here because some of the ladies are making. My husband makes very good _____ [sounds like "resgula"].

Adler: What?

Bonsal: Resgula, with milk they are making that dish. I think you came in the Friendship function, the international food function. There on the India table on white bowls there.

Adler: Yes.

Bonsal: That, my husband made that.

Adler: And that's resgula, R E S G U L A.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: So, he's a cook, too.

Bonsal: Yeah, he's cooking everything. Chicken he's cooking very well.

Adler: Indian style?

Bonsal: Indian style. Yeah, so many things he is making because after his wife died he was living here two years and he was cooking for the children. [

Adler: So, he had to take care of everybody at that point.

Bonsal: Yeah. Sometimes I'm not feeling well, he's cooking and doing things.

Adler: That's good, that's good. There are so many men that can't even open a can. [laughter]

Bonsal: In that way he's a very helping nature.

Adler: What aspects of your heritage, of your Indian culture are important to you that you try to maintain here?

Bonsal: I don't think now anything is there. My children already, they are all brought up in American ways. My values are very different.

Adler: From theirs.

Bonsal: Yeah. Because I was born in India and thirty-five years I was in India and my values are extraordinarily different. My values are totally Indian. And still I don't like my daughters and my sons do dating and whatever. In India they don't do that. But still I have to manage it here. [?] Because here life is totally different.

Adler: So, that's a big adjustment for you.

Bonsal: Yeah. It's very big.

Adler: To get used to the idea that that's something that...

Bonsal: Yeah, uh-huh. And so many things in India girls quality of school is different, boys quality of school is different. [?] We are never talk to each other. But here it hardly matters. But so many things that we have to adjust to.

Adler: Tell me about the, uhm, the outfit that you are wearing. It's real pretty.

Bonsal: Yeah, this is salwar.

Adler: Salwar.

Bonsal: Yeah, we call it salwar, like now we are sitting here, like this.

Adler: A pant suit.

Bonsal: Yeah and this is kuitha.

Adler: Okay, how do you spell that? Salwar.

Bonsal: S A L W A R.

Adler: Okay, the pants.

Bonsal: Yeah, the salwar and this is kuitha.

Adler: K...

Bonsal: K U I T H A, something like that. Yeah, kuitha.

Adler: Is that handmade?

Bonsal: Yes, this embroidery is handmade, homemade. And people are wearing saris, six yard saris.

Adler: What do you normally wear here?

Bonsal: I wear this dress most probably sometimes I wear pants and a dress also.

Adler: Do you feel comfortable in American clothes?

Bonsal: Yeah. I do...

[end of side one, tape a]]

[side two, tape a]

[audio starts at counter 132]

Adler: Uhhh, I wanted to ask you, do you get your clothes here or from Indian?

Bonsal: No, from India whenever I go India.

Adler: You do a lot of shopping when you go and bring back things.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: What kind of things do you bring back, clothes and spices?

Bonsal: Shoes.

Adler: Shoes?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: What kind?

Bonsal: The kind you can't get here, chapels [?] sandals, here.

Adler: Are they different?

Bonsal: Yeah, different.

Adler: Sizes?

Bonsal: Different sizes because in sari we are mostly wearing chapels with heel. That's the difference. I can show you if you would like to know.

Adler: And you can't get those here or something that would be suitable?

Bonsal: Yeah, I can do that because you can get here things. In Chicago if you go you can find so many India shops are there. Things are pretty expensive there. In India it is cheap.

Adler: So, do you go and buy boxes of things and then send them back or how do you do that? Or do you have to carry them all back with you?

Bonsal: Yeah. You want to see my ...

Adler: Oh, you have a box of them. [laughter, sound of footsteps walking away] Oh, my goodness. [laughter, long pause with faint voices in the background] Oh, golly, it's a beautiful collection. Do you wear everything that you have one time or another? Or...?

Bonsal: I don't think I wear... I've got so many things, so many clothes I have.

Adler: Some of them seem dressy too that you would need at special occasions only.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: They are not the kind of thing you would work in the garden in or something like that.

Bonsal: No. Not like that.

Adler: They're beautiful. For the break in the tape just so people transcribing the tape know. We just visited the closet [laughter] which is just spectacular. [laughter] Oh, that's, that's So, people bring you things and send you things and you get them when you go home.

Bonsal: Sometimes when people are coming here then my brother asks if you will take this to my sister in the United States. He can do that.

Adler: Are they warm enough to wear in the winter?

Bonsal: No. We have to wear sweater and coat or whatever, shawl. In India climate is different.

Adler: Yeah, over here it gets so cold and wet.

Bonsal: And in winter we have to wear them in India also.

Adler: So what would you wear in India?

Bonsal: Same, this clothes.

Adler: What would you wear over it?

Bonsal: Oh, that sweater, sweater and shawl like that. Same but it's not that cold out.

Adler: Not like here.

Bonsal: Yeah, here is more cold. Last year was too much. At time I'm going to India in January it's too much. I thought maybe my flight would be canceled.

Adler: But you made it.

Bonsal: Yeah. [laughter] I went for February. [can not understand next sentence, something about a wedding and the 22nd and 24th]

Adler: After that.

Bonsal: Yeah, after that.

Adler: Oh, golly. Well, tell me about Mehendi and how you learned how to do that.

Bonsal: Mehendi, basically we are making, putting in hand with a stick also. You know the mendhi, henna.

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: We put little water in that.

Adler: You get it as a powder.

Bonsal: Yeah. Then we put that, I'm using my hair also, because I'm not using any dye. I have a little bit gray hair here.

Adler: So, you used the henna on it.

Bonsal: Yeah, because I came here and my hair is falling too much here.

Adler: Here, the diet?

Bonsal: I don't know. Maybe because in water too much chlorine there, that's why I ...
Because I had very good hair.

Adler: It's beautiful.

Bonsal: Now, it's nothing. This I'll put sometime, mendi, I'll put at night and I'll sleep.
Morning I'll get up and take a shower.

Adler: Do you wear something over it at night so it doesn't come off?

Bonsal: A shower cap, uh-huh, shower cap.

Adler: Just wear it on your head.

Bonsal: And those garbage bags I'll put in my floor.

Adler: [laughter] That might not be very comfortable.

Bonsal: The garbage bag here is big, big, not that comfortable for me. [laughter]

Adler: A garbage bag and a shower cap. I can remember when I was, when I was, I used to have
hair down to my waist. When I was in college the style was to have really long, straight, real
straight hair, long. And you used to roll it on rollers that were this big, you know, the size of big
orange juice cartons. You'd go around with these things. Your head would be like that, you
know, with these rollers. They'd be huge with these rollers and you'd sleep on all that.
Sometimes we do things, when you look back on them, you say, "Why did we do that?"

[laughter] So, sleeping in a shower cap and a garbage bag isn't nearly as painful as the rollers.

Bonsal: I'll give you one phone number. She's very nice hindi [?]. She can tell you how
to put that.

Adler: Okay. Jay [?] mentioned her.

Bonsal: Because if you see that then you can understand what does that mean. Because
she knows how to make the cones and then put mendi inside and then pour it like this and then
she is making designs on her hand. But her hand should be very _____ [?, counter
217] or something like that. But she's doing very well.

Adler: Uh-hmm. And how did you learn how to do it?

Bonsal: Because I, I learned my beautician [?] course in India and they have to learn,
teach them that. I learned from them a little bit, not much. Then I'm used to doing there but
after that I left the job because it's a standing job for the day. I'm tired there because I'm doing

back _____ and threading and so many things, facial. Manicure, pedicure, I know each and every thing.

Adler: And do they do the Mehendi in beauty parlors then? That's if you wanted to have it done that's where you would go?

Bonsal: Yeah, in India they are doing it in beauty parlors. Whenever in our religious festivities that lady is to fast for a full day. It is called Karwarcha.

Adler: How do you spell that? I'm sorry, I keep asking you how to spell these things. [laughter]

Bonsal: Karwarcha, K A R W A R C H A , something like that. We are not eating anything in full day.

Adler: This is the woman who is going to be doing the mehendi?

Bonsal: That, yeah. In October that function is coming. I'll call you and you come and watch that function.

Adler: Oh, where they are going to do it?

Bonsal: Yeah, in my house only.

Adler: Oh, great.

Bonsal: We are doing buja for husband for long life. [laughing]

Adler: Okay. So, you're going to be doing...

Bonsal: Doing this thing and fully dressed, well-dressed, like bridal dressing in that, heavy sari. Everybody wearing sari on that day. That I'll call you. That I think that is in October.

Adler: What is, what is the occasion for it?

Bonsal: That is for husband only who is keeping the fast, the whole day we are not eating anything, not even a single cup of tea or water. And evening we get together and do buja and then eat meat. We do buja for husband. That is no _____ [?, counter 245] buja, only husband buja.

Adler: Is it a traditional holiday?

Bonsal: Yeah, yeah.

Adler: Or can you do it any time of year that you want?

Bonsal: No, no. It is a traditional before one function that is coming in India Tiballi [?]. I think you know that.

Adler: Right.

Bonsal: Before that this function is coming always, every year in October or November.

Yeah, the buja in my house and I'll call you.

Adler: Oh, that would be wonderful.

Bonsal: But you give me your phone number. I don't have your phone number.

Adler: I will. I will. I'll do that for sure. I will do that. Don't let me forget. [laughter]

Bonsal: That's a good buja actually. Maybe ten, fifteen ladies are coming here.

Adler: And all the husbands?

Bonsal: No, husband are not there.

Adler: Oh, you do it in honor of the husband but they don't come.

Bonsal: Before we are doing our ladies' buja and then after we are opening the _____
[?, fast] then we do husband buja. We are going, everybody is going his house, then we saw a moon and then we meet. The custom is like that.

Adler: So, all the women get, let me get... I'm not sure I'm understanding. All the women get together and fast.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: And do mehendi and are all dressed up.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: And do buja for their husbands.

Bonsal: Yeah, for long life.

Adler: For long life for their husband and then but it's just women. It's not the husbands who, the husbands are not involved.

Bonsal: Yeah. When we are doing buja [sounds like "puja" now] at that time the husband is not there.

Adler: Okay. It's in their honor but they're not there.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Then you break the fast and eat. Are the husbands at that?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: They're at that.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: And then everybody goes to their own homes and then they do pu... then the husbands...

Bonsal: No, that before that, before eating we do bujas for husband.

Adler: With them there?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Okay, so, you do puja just women in honor of the husband. Then you do puja with the husband's there also in the husband's honor and then you eat.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: And then where does the moon fit in?

Bonsal: Yeah, we have to see moon first and then we eat.

Adler: Oh, okay. So, it has to be dark and you have to do it and that makes sure that it's the right season.

Bonsal: That fast should be 10:00, 11:00 on that day.

Adler: That's a long day, yeah. What time do you start, start getting together?

Bonsal: Ah, evening time, it's like four or five.

Adler: So, people who work would be able to go to work and then come.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: But they still have to fast all day.

Bonsal: Yeah. Uhmm, I think, before moon rises we start puja. But it's good to _____ [?]. In India it's very good but here we are doing it not quite properly because all ladies are coming and sitting. And we tell some story in that, one story also there.

Adler: What is the story?

Bonsal: That is a big story. One lady is coming, she is telling me, telling everybody that story. That you come and then you...

Adler: Okay. Is she somebody from Lexington or is she...?

Bonsal: Yeah, in Lexington only. Some, any older lady because she knows about that story and then she will tell of it.

Adler: Uh-huh, and then and this is done every year so everybody would learn the story eventually.

Bonsal: Yeah, we taking one plate, big plate and we put like we are in India, light candle and with food and everything and we circle that plate. Everybody's plate is going like this and we are singing a song. It's very good. If you watch it, you will like it.

Adler: It sounds wonderful. Okay. So, you learned the mehendi as part of your beauty school.

Bonsal: Yeah, yeah.

Adler: Training. Did you do it a lot to people?

Bonsal: Yeah. So many people. I'm making with stick, also. She's doing with cone but I'm making with stick also. It's coming very pretty well. But nowadays, here, no, feeling cold also in hand, maybe. Mendhi is very cold actually.

Adler: Is it?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Because it has to dry.

Bonsal: Yeah, it's very cold. The hand will become very cold after that.

Adler: Is it something the henna does to your hand to make it cold or is it having that paste?

Bonsal: Yeah. Hand will become like red after that. That day you come we will show you everything. Many ladies are doing that.

Adler: Okay. But, you do it, do you still do it, sometimes?

Bonsal: No.

Adler: Not at all?

Bonsal: Basically, newly married ladies are doing that. When in our custom a newly married _____ [?, counter 307] in hand and leg, also.

Adler: Right, I've seen pictures of the hands and ...

Bonsal: The legs.

Adler: Ankles and feet.

Bonsal: Yeah, still...

Adler: From about just below the calf all the way down.

Bonsal: Especially when, in India when temple is there, so many ladies are there. They are putting very well and very fast. If you go any time to India go and see the _____ [?] temple. Maybe the ladies are there doing that.

Adler: And do you have to be licensed in India to do it or can anybody do it to the public or themselves?

Bonsal: No, anybody can do that.

Adler: Does it cost a lot?

Bonsal: Yeah, ten, twenty _____ [?]. It's not even twenty-five cents. [laughter] Well, that's good. something is going on in India all the time.

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: Time passes, so many things are there. But it's not necessary to take lessons in mendhi. But here in everything we should have lessons. [laughing]

Adler: Here you should?

Bonsal: Have license then only you start and you work and you teach...

Adler: To do...

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Oh, you mean if you want to do it as a job you would need to have.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Is there anything that would control something like that?

Bonsal: Nothing but the people all think like that because some people skin is very delicate and if anything happen to that.

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: That's why.

Adler: Is there a market here for it?

Bonsal: I don't think so.

Adler: I'm thinking, say, if you hitched up with a cosmetologist or a beauty parlor or something like that where they would advertise the services, would people ...

Bonsal: I don't think they are interested.

Adler: ... other people use it.

Bonsal: Because in mendi if you put mehendi in two or three hours it is gone. Because at least you have to put in two or three hours on each hand. And you stop all the work and you have to supply something [?].

Adler: Can you do it before you go to bed and leave it on or will it all come off?

Bonsal: Yeah, some time, I'm doing.

Adler: Wrap your hand in garbage bags. [laughing]

Bonsal: Yeah, we can do that also. Yeah, we can do that also.

Adler: If you sweat a lot if it is real hot, does it run? Or is it too thick to run?

Bonsal: Uhhh, not really. It's not that thick actually, it's like paste, a type of paste.

Adler: And then how long does it last once it's set, the colors?

Bonsal: A week, one week.

Adler: How long does it take to decorate?

Bonsal: Hour, an hour, two hours. It depends how much what designs you are putting on hands.

Adler: Are there names for the different designs?

Bonsal: No, no names. One book is coming on that. The numbers are there. [?] You can see that book if you like any design you can tell with design to put on the hand and which one to put... Yeah. There's one big book is coming from that.

Adler: Is it already published or is it?

Bonsal: It's already published. Do you need that?

Adler: Do you have a copy?

Bonsal: I don't have that but I can get you that.

Adler: That would be real interesting.

Bonsal: Yeah, I'll get you that.

Adler: Okay. And then, so, so, a person who does the mehendi would have the book if they are really doing it professionally for the people.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: It's like having a book of hairstyles or something so people could come in and say, "I want this one." And then they would be able to look at it and duplicate it.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: That's pretty good because those are fairly elaborate.

Bonsal: Yeah, because this side design is different and this side is designed different. That's right.

Adler: And then the feet and ankles.

Bonsal: Yeah, that is different design. They are making... [walks away from microphone saying something that can not be understood]

Adler: She went to get some books. She'll be back in a minute. [pause] I should, well, while she is gone I will describe the closet. It's a huge walk-in closet filled with the tunics and pants in a variety of colors. Some of them very dressy and elaborate. And she said they average between seventy and a hundred dollars each for each one. She gets them in India when she goes or people who live there send them or bring them back for her. And she also has, she has a collection of the pants and tunics and she also has a large sari collection which I believe is boxed up. So, she has saris as well.

Bonsal: This book is from India.

Adler: Oh! Look at those designs. Yeah, I've just seen pictures of just designs. But these are actual animals and people and things on them. And can you do this sort of thing?

Bonsal: Yeah, before I could.

Adler: When you were in practice you could do it?

Bonsal: You need more practice to make these designs.

Adler: These are gorgeous. And what does this say?

Bonsal: This is writing is how they put and what they have to make with the mendi and with that.

Adler: No, I was wondering if it told how to do it or if it is just sort of a history of it. Is this by one particular person?

Bonsal: No, no. It is designs, if you like this you can... in India with have students do different hands. If you like this design then we'll do this design. If you like this design then we'll do this design. This lizard and goddess there.

Adler: Oh, that's spectacular.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: That really is, golly. And can anybody, is there somebody in Lexington who can do them like that?

Bonsal: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Adler: Really.

Bonsal: That Swati [?] I told you, she is... I'll give you the number.

Adler: Now, does she... tell me about her. Does she live...?

Bonsal: She can tell everything.

Adler: Does she live in Lexington?

Bonsal: Yes, she lives in Lexington.

Adler: Is she a student?

Bonsal: Student, yeah.

Adler: Is she going to be staying in Lexington?

Bonsal: I hope so. If her husband gets a job here. And this design also coming with the...
[?]

Adler: Oh, yeah, those are gorgeous. I bet dry cleaners love this. Do these things all have to be... do all of yours, do you wash them? Do you just throw them in the washing machine or...?

Bonsal: No.

Adler: Everything goes to the cleaners.

Bonsal: That spoil them. Some I wash in hand only. I soak for little time then I wash it. Sometimes when I'm going to India I take all the stuff and I wash it there and bring it back.

Adler: You take them to India to wash them?

Bonsal: Sometimes, yeah.

Adler: [laughing] Do you dry clean them, too?

Bonsal: Yeah, I dry clean them.

Adler: Why would you take them to India to wash them?

Bonsal: Because sometimes here, once I go for dry cleaning and my sari was spoiled.

Adler: Did it shrink or...?

Bonsal: I don't know what happened because fully _____ [?] came out.

Adler: Ah, it's not sturdy enough to take it.

Bonsal: I think so. [can't understand next sentence, counter 425] In sari we have too much problem here.

Adler: I wonder about that.

Bonsal: Nobody is making dry clean sari here because they don't know how to fold that. [?, not sure]

Adler: Somebody could really start a good business if they could clean saris, clothes. What do the men wear here? I noticed that most of the women tend to wear the saris and the ...

Bonsal: In India actually ladies are wearing only saris. Nowadays, this is in fashion now, in the style now wearing this clothes.

Adler: Now, I remember in the style show in Friendship they said something about this style that the pants and the tunic is more northern.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Uh-huh, because it's becoming more pan-India and spreading. It's comfortable.

Bonsal: On job, on job-site. People are wearing these dresses. But in northern and southern, they all wear sari, most of them. In Bengalos [?] most wear saris.

Adler: So, what do people here do if they have saris that need to be cleaned?

Bonsal: Basically, here no _____ dirt and everything. There's no need to clean sari. We are wearing just for hour or half an hour.

Adler: Just something dressy or the kind that looks like there's so much just thrown along because of the material [?, unsure of this sentence]

Bonsal: That's true. Hi, _____ [?]

Adler: Hello.

Bonsal: She is my daughter.

Adler: How do you do? Betsy Adler.

Bonsal: Are you going somewhere?

Daughter: Yeah, I'm going to drop my car off to get the air conditioner fixed.

Bonsal: Okay. [sound of door closing]

Adler: Yeah, there's all these kinds of problems that you don't think about, you know, like I can think about well, food, obviously you can't get the same kinds of vegetables here that you can in India and things like that. Then you think about, well, the things that you wear everyday. Cause a lot of the Indian women that I see are wearing saris

Bonsal: I think you saw... you saw that program in India, in Friendship?

Adler: The fashion show?

Bonsal: No, no. After that we played that...

Adler: The _____ [?, counter 462] No, I wasn't there that day. I missed that. She was going to give me a copy of the script though.

Bonsal: I have got it if you want. You take it and the next time when you get time you can give me.

Adler: Oh, that would be great. That would be wonderful.

Bonsal: I have that.

Adler: She said it went over very well.

Bonsal: Yeah, yesterday, she called me and she was going there to Delhi. Her daughter is staying there in Delhi, she is going there. I think she is not here now.

Adler: Yeah, yeah, she called me because I had a message in for her to call me. Yeah, she's busy traveling now.

Bonsal: Yeah, she's traveling so much. She is not staying in one place. [laughter]

Adler: Hard to pin her down. [laughing] Let me see if I have... Are there any other things? If you, would you be able to do this like for a demonstration for Americans?

Bonsal: Yeah, I can do it.

Adler: Could you do that?

Bonsal: Yeah, I could.

Adler: Because we're planning a festival for July 1st at the public library and if you could demonstrate doing that that would be wonderful.

Bonsal: Yeah, sure.

Adler: That would be wonderful even though you don't feel that you are as good as you should be.

Bonsal: Yeah, I can do it.

Adler: But I don't think people are going to notice because they are going to be so impressed with what you can do.

Bonsal: Yeah, I can do that, no problem.

Adler: Oh, great, okay.

Bonsal: I can do that. That much I know. But like professional woman, then I don't know it now.

Adler: No, I mean just to demonstrate it.

Bonsal: Yeah, that I know that. That much I can do.

Adler: Okay.

Bonsal: No problem.

Adler: Would you need to have people come and... how would...?

Bonsal: I'll bring mehendi and the cone and everything and anybody that is interested to come and I'll do that. But they're own risk because sometime maybe something happen in hand or something. Because we are used to doing that.

Adler: Yeah and some people might have a reaction to the henna or something.

Bonsal: Yeah, yeah, because we are not putting, this is pure henna and just water in that, nothing else.

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: That's it, we are putting water and just henna.

Adler: Well, we'll figure out some kind of disclaimer that doesn't make any of us responsible if anything happens. It's up to them if that is their choice to have it done.

Bonsal: But most probably nothing will happen in that because I do all dry leaves, nothing else. There's no chemical or nothing that's in that. But sometimes you will get reaction in that also. Because like me I'm getting a reaction in hot water. I can't take a hot water bath.

Adler: Really?

Bonsal: Really, yeah. I get in my body rashes red, red, red. I take always cold water bath.

Adler: Oh, brrrr! [laughter] Go jump in the river or something.

Bonsal: Yeah, because in India only in November, December and January, three months it's cold. We take just a little bit warm water but here I'm taking cold water ones.

Adler: Because it is so warm. Yeah.

Bonsal: And I'm used to doing that because fresh water is coming from tap, it is very warm. And I'm used to doing that and still I'm taking cold water bath. My husband is always wondering, "Why are you taking cold water bath?" And night also, daily I'm taking bath, night and morning.

Adler: Bath or shower?

Bonsal: Shower.

Adler: Shower? I thought you were taking bath.

Bonsal: No. I like that most probably I'm taking half an hour, I'll take bath, shower. It's no problem for me.

Adler: Well, it's just what you are used to. Because I like a shower to steam up the whole bathroom.

Bonsal: Yeah, my husband and my daughter and my son, also

Adler: Till my skin is bright red.

Bonsal: My son, also, my daughter and my husband they are always taking all hot water when I'm cold bath. Steam in bath.

Adler: They probably like having you around. You're easy on the water bill. [laughter]

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Don't have to pay for all that heated water. [laughter]

Bonsal: Most I don't like, but food I like very hot, spicy and very hot. I never take cold food. I don't like that.

Adler: You don't. Is there anybody in Lexington that has a reputation for being a really good cook? Or is everybody pretty much...?

Bonsal: Indian?

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: Everybody is good cook here, in Indian. Indian ladies most are, yeah. If we are, we have any get together then I'll call you because we are most probably doing that ladies' lunch. Then I will call you because nowadays no, everybody is busy and at their job. The last one at my house I made all south Indian dishes. I made _____ [lists a few things that she made, counter 546]. And everybody is a good cook in Indian food, basically.

Adler: Is Indian food hard to cook?

Bonsal: Yeah, it's hard and it is very messy and everything. You have to clean everything. [laughing]

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: It's too much work, it's too much work.

Adler: But people still do it.

Bonsal: Yeah, no choice because we are used doing that. We can't, if we can't get this Indian food then we feel something is missing in our body. It's like that. But still I'm missing so many things because you can't get here and vegetables and so many things. Yeah, I think, one vegetable is coming, that is very bitter that vegetable. But people are eating that vegetable. It's very bitter. But we put some spices and things like that and then it becomes nice. But here, I think nobody knows that name.

Adler: Are there things that you could grow here if you had your own garden?

Bonsal: I put garden back side.

Adler: Did you?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: And what are you growing in it?

Bonsal: Tomato and squash, Indian squash.

Adler: Indian, and what does Indian squash look like?

Bonsal: It's like green, it's long.

Adler: Long and skinny.

Bonsal: We are calling in Hindi as loki.

Adler: L O K I?

Bonsal: I don't know.

Adler: Is it like zucchini?

Bonsal: It's like zucchini. I think you have seen that somewhere. But we can't get it in Kroger, Winn Dixie, anywhere. We get only in Indian grocery store or the vegetable garden outside, only three months only. After that we can't get that.

Adler: Because of the winter?

Bonsal: Because of summer, that vegetable coming in summer. Loki and cucumber and tomato and okra. In India we are telling bendi in okra.

Adler: You do what?

Bonsal: Bendi.

Adler: Bendi.

Bonsal: Yeah, bendi is okra. We are calling bendi.

Adler: This is Bendi?

Bonsal: That is bendi.

Adler: But it's also okra?

Bonsal: Bendhi.

Adler: Is there a difference in spelling?

Bonsal: Yeah. This is B I N D I, bendi. That is bindhi.

Adler: P?

Bonsal: B I N D H I. [laughter]

Adler: Oh, so much danger in a little bit of knowledge. [laughter]

Bonsal: But Hindi is a very, very _____ [?]. I'm thinking about starting to teach Hindi in Friendship.

Adler: Oh, that would be great.

Bonsal: Yeah, I'm thinking that I will. Next year I'll take some classes.

Adler: Are there schools for kids where they can learn it or is everybody teaching it to them at home?

Bonsal: I don't think... yeah.

Adler: Because there are so many different dialects and languages.

Bonsal: Yeah, that's right. Because you can do pronunciation right. We have to pronounce it first in English and then in Hindi, it is very difficult. Because a child you teach they are taught very easy. But after some time no, it's very difficult to teach them.

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: Because now, if you say anything, you also have problem to speak that pronunciation in Hindi. But we speak very well because in childhood we are speaking same language.

Adler: Right. It took me awhile to learn that 'th' is not pronounced with a 'th' [like in "the"] but at a 't' [as in "tuh"].

Bonsal: That's right. I came here, I, here Mrs. Maloney was staying here, she told me "Your pronunciation is very different". My accent is not American. Mine is totally British because in India they speak like British in English.

Adler: Right.

[end of side two, tape a]

[side one, tape b]

Adler: So, now, so, your accent started out as British because they speak British English in India.

Bonsal: Yeah, that's right.

Adler: And then it became more Americanized?

Bonsal: More Americanized.

Adler: And now you are talking with a Kentucky twang.

Bonsal: Yeah, both children are talking mostly in English only. They never talk in Hindi. I'm talking in Hindi, they are giving me a reply in English only.

Adler: What would they do if you said you can only talk in Hindi to me?

Bonsal: Yeah. [laughing]

Adler: Would they quit talking to you? I can see advantages to that. [laughing]

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: If my kids would quit talking sometimes it would be wonderful. [laughter]

Bonsal: How old are your kids?

Adler: One is fifteen and one is twelve. The twelve year old is the same age as Carter. [?]

Bonsal: Yeah, they can learn to speak in Hindi.

Adler: He learned some, Carter was teaching him some, not Hindi, I can't remember what, it is one where they are from.

Bonsal: Who's taking?

Adler: Carter _____ [?]

Bonsal: Camal [?]

Adler: Camal. But he always says, "But you don't say that right. It's _____."

Bonsal: I can speak Camal very well.

Adler: Can you?

Bonsal: Yeah, because I was in Banglor because their, basically in India actually, if you are in south side, you have to have talk in second language as

_____ [names three language, ?] or whatever it is. If you are in the north side you have to have talk in _____ [?] you have to have take one lesson for _____ [bajavi ?]. That is our main problem in India. That's why you have to learn these languages. But here it is not like that.

Adler: No, it's not. How many languages do you speak?

Bonsal: I speak a little bit _____ [Tashmial, ?] because my first husband he was _____ [Tashmial ?]. I speak tashmial. And Camal I learned in Banglor and _____ [Kanii, ?] I know a little bit. And one of my friends, she's _____ [chuchapi, ?] I learned from chuchapi, also. And I can understand very well the chuchapi. And Camal [Tamal ?], tamal I'll speak always very well. I speak always with _____ [two people]. I'll speak in Tamal only and then they are very happy.

Adler: How many Tamal speakers are there in Lexington? Are there very many?

Bonsal: So many people are here.

Adler: Are there?

Bonsal: Yeah. Maybe it's twenty-five, thirty families are here. Yeah. But every south Indian are not south Indian. Some people are talking Tamal, some people are taking Tamal and some people are talking Kania. It's not one language. It's all different languages. Some people know tamal, they can't understand kania. They can't understand _____ or _____ [Talbu and Mayalum ?]. There in south there are the four languages, [names all four]. Then nobody can speak each others language.

Adler: So, does everybody also learn Hindi?

Bonsal: Sometimes, see...

Adler: Or do they speak in English?

Bonsal: See, like _____ [Ramasabi [?], he stay in Bombay. That's why he knows Hindi. But everybody can't speak Hindi. So, many south Indians are here. I think you heard that name Dr. _____ [?, Uji].

Adler: Right.

Bonsal: He don't know Hindi but his wife, she talk very good Hindi. But he doesn't.

Adler: He's from a different part?

Bonsal: I think so, yeah, but his wife, _____, she speak very good Hindi. Some people, they stay in north side, like Delhi and Bombay and Calcutta and they speak good Hindi. But some people in, totally in the south, then they don't know Hindi. They speak only English and their mother tongue.

Adler: It's something that always... it impresses me every time I interview somebody how multi-lingual everybody else is compared to me in particular and to most Americans who just really grew up speaking pretty much only English.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: It's kind of appalling to me, really.

Bonsal: Yeah, in India so many people are talking so many languages because different parts of ... and Hindi also, we are speaking different Hindi. If you go in _____ side it is _____ [Upi, ?] only, the Upi side of India and that is a different Hindi. They speak Hindi but with a different style of Hindi. It is so many things we are talking... Here, see, one Mrs. _____ and myself and _____ we are four families and we are four talking very different Hindi. We are same place in India but we are talking very different Hindi because pronunciation is different. Because my brother when my things are a little bit in Moslem, Moslems Hindi is different. They talk very clear and everything in English in Utu [?]. But we are talking Hindi, Hindi is a very different language. It's a little bit sanscript and everything a mixture in that, like that. But in India so many languages are there.

Adler: So, does everybody, when you speak the language do you also read it?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: That's part of it as well, speaking and reading.

Bonsal: Yeah. Because if I read Hindi book and so many words I can't understand so many things. I had to see a dictionary.

Adler: So, when you read this magazine you have to do it with a dictionary.

Bonsal: Yeah, so many words I can't understand in that.

Adler: Because it's a different dialect in Hindi.

Bonsal: Yeah, uh-huh. Then I ask my husband what this is and my husband say, "I don't know." [laughter] Because in India I, most probably some schools, they are teaching Hindi _____ standard and some schools teaching Hindi _____ - standard. My husband where he did only he did the standard after that full English course.

Adler: Plus, he's been here for so long. Does Hindi change like other languages do?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Do you feel like when you go back sometimes even though you are speaking the same language but there are new words?

Bonsal: That is a good question. When I went India, I'll go back to India, I'll most probably I'm talking English only because I get habit from here. When I do the foreign hello, and a la who's speaking and something like that. But India nobody can do like that. They are speaking always Hindi. I'm always doing this, too.

Adler: But when you go back are there new words that are constantly developing in Hindi that you don't know?

Bonsal: Yeah, we have [laughing], yeah, we have to think about that that we have to speak in Indian because everybody does not know English. In our family, see, my older, like my grandmother they don't know how to speak English. They don't know even one word in English. They talk in Hindi and we have to talk in Hindi. Sometime we are talking and one word will come in English and we have to think about that what we are talking about. And my grandfather and grandmother, they don't know English. They have, besides both children are born in India, they are talking in Hindi only because those people they don't know English.

Last year my daughter went to India and went alone.

Adler: And did she do okay? Did she speak Hindi or English?

Bonsal: Yeah, she speak Hindi.

Adler: Even though she won't answer you here. [laughter] She can do it.

Bonsal: Yeah, she can speak Hindi very well. Sometimes she is in the mood, she'll speak Hindi otherwise English only.

Adler: Where, I was thinking about all of this again, where, were you married in India?

Bonsal: Yeah, I married in India.

Adler: Uh-huh, and did the kids come over for it?

Bonsal: No, kids not come there. Both are studying at that time. I got married in February.

Adler: So, they were right in the middle of a semester.

Bonsal: Yeah, so, that's why. Both of them in college.

Adler: So, had you met them at all?

Bonsal: No, I came here then I met. Before I saw him but I didn't talk to him. Because in our custom it is different. Arranged marriage is very different. We can't see each other. We can't talk.

Adler: But you can see pictures.

Bonsal: :Yeah, we can see pictures.

Adler: Now, if you decide in an arranged marriage like you had, if you decide when you actually meet the person that you really aren't compatible can you sort of say "No, I'm not going to do this"?

Bonsal: Yeah, nowadays, nowadays, parents are asking for daughter and son but before nobody's asking anything.

Adler: You had no choice at all.

Bonsal: Yeah. If my father, if my mother liked boy then they would do it. And marriage is done in the state.

Adler: And didn't matter to you at all.

Bonsal: They call everybody. After that it's my life. I'm happy or I'm not happy.

[laughter]

Adler: Well, it seems like most of the people that I've talked to have been happy. It's worked out for them.

Bonsal: Yeah, most probably, because in India we have to do what, actually in India what our husband says, we are doing that. I don't, we don't have any choices. That's why ladies are happy in our houses in India.

Adler: Because that's what you are raised to believe is that you can't...

Bonsal: Because in childhood we saw our mother, then after that any elder sister got married, she's also doing the same thing like my mother did. And that's why, we don't have any choice.

Adler: Is that changing?

Bonsal: No, a little bit.

Adler: Are women starting to rebel against that?

Bonsal: Yeah, now, a little bit of women are becoming dominate and doing whatever they want. [laughter]

Adler: Well, you did.

Bonsal: Yeah, that's true.

Adler: Uhhh, I think that's it. Are there any other things that you would want to talk about, about your heritage or things that you know about or things that are different between here and there?

Bonsal: Not really, actually. Now everything is going well. I hope in the future also. [laughing]

Adler: I'm sure it will.

Bonsal: Only thing is, loneliness is too much here. There's nothing else. Because my husband is going at six thirty in the morning and he's coming home at five o'clock.

Adler: Yeah, and the kids have their own lives even if they're here.

Bonsal: That's true.

Adler: So, what you have Friendship but that's over now. That must have been a big help though.

Bonsal: That's true. And so many friends I met and I will call and talk to them. We'll get together. Last week we went what _____ Gardens all the Friendship group, we went there. [laughing] All the ladies, we had lunch there. We get together, nice fun. Two o'clock we came back.

Adler: The whole day.

Bonsal: Morning, eleven thirty we went and came two o'clock. I think that guy doesn't want us to come back [unsure of this ?].

Adler: Staying there all that time.

Bonsal: Yeah, twelve ladies are there.

Adler: Do you think about getting a job here or anything?

Bonsal: Not really. I'm not interested. Because if I go for a job, house, I'm neglecting because so many things. I mean our cooking, it's too much.

Adler: Uhhh, it takes a long time. When do you have to start a meal? How long ahead?

Bonsal: At least I want one, one and a half hours. So, one tiny lunch or dinner or whatever it is. Besides that washing clothes and ironing everything, too much work. I'm not doing anything else, stay at home.

Adler: What do you do?

Bonsal: Sometimes knitting sweaters.

Adler: Oh, you knit?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: How did you learn?

Bonsal: In schools in India. Yeah, they are teaching that there, sweaters, teaching also this...

Adler: Embroidery?

Bonsal: Yeah. They are teaching.

Adler: So, you can do all that?

Bonsal: But I'm not that good with thread work. I like knitting most. I'm doing that.

Adler: So, what kind of sweaters are you knitting?

Bonsal: Can I show you?

Adler: I'd love to. I knit when I have time which isn't very often right now. [sound of someone walking away] She's going to get her knitting to show me what kind of sweater she's making. And I'm sitting here drinking this delicious tea from India. The house is modern, I guess you call it tri-level where you come in the door and you can go up into the house or down, downstairs. And then the bedroom is downstairs and there is a living room or a rec room down here and things displayed on the mantle from India and from Kentucky. The bedroom is down here with the closet where her clothes.

Ah, what color would you say this is, magenta?

Bonsal: Magenta, yeah.

Adler: And then it is all gold and green.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Oh, it's gorgeous. It's pretty. Now, have you cleaned this at all?

Bonsal: No. Because I think I wear this just two times.

Adler: Really for a special event. What does the back look like?

Bonsal: The back is plain. It is wool.

Adler: That's beautiful. It's very heavy, too.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Because of all the embroidery. Now, is that, would this be made on a machine?

Bonsal: Yeah, uh-hmm.

Adler: Oh, it's so pretty. Do you want some help folding it?

Bonsal: No.

Adler: You've got it down to a science folding it by yourself.

Bonsal: Yeah, I'm used to it.

Adler: Now, do you have to take, take them out and refold them sometimes to get rid of the creases and things, change them around?

Bonsal: Yeah. So, it doesn't become marked.

Adler: Do most people fold them for storage or do you hang them or what?

Bonsal: I'll hang it. With this type of sari you have to hang them. Otherwise they will spoil. _____ [says a sentence too quiet to be heard]

Adler: Oh, they're beautiful. What are you doing with them all?

Bonsal: I'm selling this.

Adler: Are you?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Where do you sell them?

Bonsal: Some ladies are buying them.

Adler: Do you do it through a store or something or do people know that you knit and ...?

Bonsal: Some people know that.

Adler: Uh-hmm, what is this stitch called?

Bonsal: I don't know.

Adler: Do you have a pattern?

Bonsal: I remember that from India.

Adler: Oh, really.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: It's a really pretty stitch. Maybe sometime you could teach that to me.

Bonsal: Yeah, sure.

Adler: This is pretty. You do a beautiful job.

Bonsal: Yeah, I'm sitting at home alone.

Adler: Do you watch TV or something while you do them?

Bonsal: Yeah, I watch home movies [?].

Adler: Oh, do you? Do you get homesick then?

Bonsal: Yeah. [laughter]

Adler: Which way do you wear this one then? You could wear it either way, couldn't you?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: You put them together so nicely.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: I just throw mine together. I get so tired of just knitting. I want them done. Just throw them together. That's a heavy one, too.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: So, you, you sell these to different people. Do you advertise that you do knitting and take orders so you know sizes and things?

Bonsal: Yeah, so many people know about that. Some people have like eight children they can buy [?, unsure of this sentence]. Otherwise they give orders to me and I make that.

Adler: Do they bring you the yarn that they want you to use?

Bonsal: Sometime I'll buy yarn.

Adler: Where do you get it?

Bonsal: Anywhere, WalMart, K-Mart, everywhere.

Adler: Uhhh, this is pretty.

Bonsal: It is my hobby, actually. I like to knit. I feel relaxed.

Adler: Yeah. I haven't knit in so long. I really like this pattern. It is beautiful.

Bonsal: Yeah. The sweater I sell for forty dollars. And people love to buy it.

Adler: Oh, I imagine because you can't buy one like this.

Bonsal: No.

Adler: That's a good price.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: You did the neck.. you're good. They're real nice.

Bonsal: Yeah, if anyone asks you can tell them my name and my address. You can do that. Most probably I'm doing for children only not big sweaters.

Adler: Because you can get them done faster. [laughing]

Bonsal: Yeah. Within a week I am finished one sweater. I making big sweater also, like I knit for my daughter but not often I make that big sweaters. I make one for my husband, also.

Adler: Did you?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: I started one, a real complicated one for my husband one time and it, I had to put it down for something, I can't remember what it was and I haven't picked it up... it was years ago and I haven't picked it up since. And I know it won't even fit him now anyway. It was so hard. It was one of those fisherman knit patterns. And it wasn't really from a knitting book it was from a, from a book about historical fisherman knit sweaters, you know. Oh, this is great. And it drove me crazy doing it. I got part of it done. If I finish it I think I'm going to keep it for myself. [laughing] It probably won't fit him anymore.

Bonsal: Yeah, that _____ wife also told me that she'd like to learn but she never done it. She don't have time, actually.

Adler: Yeah, she's working.

Bonsal: [coughs] She's working with husband. Yeah.

Adler: This is beautiful.

Bonsal: This is my, whenever I feel bored I take this knitting out. I'm watching Hindu movie and doing this sweater.

Adler: Where do you get the movies from? Are they your own collection?

Bonsal: Yeah, I have my own collection, also, and I get from Cincinnati. I get all the movies from there. There is a friend here, an Indian employer...

Adler: They rent them?

Bonsal: Uh-huh, she taking dollar for one movie.

Adler: I'll bet they're not sub-titled though, are they? Are they sub-titled in English at all? Or all they all..?

Bonsal: No, they're in English only.

Adler: Oh, they're in English.

Bonsal: They never give in Hindi.

Adler: Oh, so, I would be able to understand them?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Oh, okay, what are some good ones?

Bonsal: Oh, I'll have to watch that to see what is a good one to see. [laughter] [can't understand next sentence.] I think you, I think that *1942 A Love Story* is a good movie.

Adler: 1942.

Bonsal: A Love Story. It is like British style movie.

Adler: And it's called *Love Story*?

Bonsal: Yeah, *1942, A Love Story*.

Adler: *1942, A Love Story* is the whole title.

Bonsal: Yeah, yeah, it's a good movie, yeah. Because in that movie some English also there in India so there you can understand.

Adler: Okay. I'll have to look for that one. When you were growing up did you learn music and dance and things like that?

Bonsal: Yeah, I have vocal actually that it started... In India it's something that we have to learn.

Adler: Dance?

Bonsal: Not dance actually, for singing. I have a vocal. I didn't learn an instrument. I like the knitting and mehendi.

Adler: More hands work and to go along with mehendi. What other things do you do?

Bonsal: In craft?

Adler: Uh-huh.

Bonsal: We are making flower also with that crepe paper, crepe paper flower we are putting in that like roses or something. We learned that also in India.

Adler: Do you do that? What's that called?

Bonsal: Crepe paper flowers.

Adler: Oh, [laughing].

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: A very technical name.

Bonsal: Yeah, but in India only that. I think that crepe paper is something that decoration people.

Adler: You don't remember how to do them anymore or do you?

Bonsal: Yeah, I remember that.

Adler: Could you teach that?

Bonsal: Yeah, I can do that.

Adler: And what, they would be used for festivals and things like that.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Instead of real flowers.

Bonsal: Yeah. Like the silk flowers and But they are done in that paper.

Adler: And then do they run them all together or tie them together or something?

Bonsal: Yeah, they tie them together with thin wire.

Adler: Could you show me how to do that sometime?

Bonsal: Yeah, sure, yeah. It's very easy to make actually.

Adler: Well, maybe sometime what we could do if you don't mind is get together again and I can bring the camera, uhmm, and maybe you could do that and I could take some pictures of you doing that and maybe you could do like a sample of the mehendi so that I could get some pictures of it .

Bonsal: Yeah, sure.

Adler: Would that be okay?

Bonsal: Yeah, we can do that.

Adler: Okay. Maybe you could even give me a cooking lesson.

Bonsal: Yeah, sure. What do you want to learn?

Adler: Oh, I'll leave that up to you. I love India food. My husband does, too. The kids are... sometime, they're funny. I don't know. Sometime they'll eat everything and sometimes they'll...

Bonsal: Where do you eat Indian food, any restaurants?

Adler: No.

Bonsal: Are you cooking at home?

Adler: No. I mean, when we have it, we like it but we haven't eaten out in a long time.

Bonsal In Cincinnati the Umber [?] restaurant is very nice.

Adler: Where?

Bonsal: In Cincinnati near ...

Adler: Is it right downtown?

Bonsal: Yeah, near university, Cincinnati University.

Adler: What's it called?

Bonsal: Umber.

Adler: Umber.

Bonsal: Umber Restaurant.

Adler: I've been to a restaurant.

Bonsal: Tandor?

Adler: Yeah, that must have been it. It's right downtown near the hotels and stuff.

Bonsal: Yeah, Tandor. I don't like that food.

Adler: It's a different part of India?

Bonsal: The Indian food I'm not going in restaurant because daily I'm cooking Indian food and I'm tired of that.

Adler: Right. If you eat it's something different.

Bonsal: Yeah, something different, Chinese and Mexican and Italian something like that. My children like Olive Garden. They like that food.

Adler: Is that kind of bland for you?

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: Italian might be a little bit bland for you.

Bonsal: For me it is bland but I manage. [laughter]

Adler: Yeah, you don't have to cook it. It's part of the enjoyment of it right there.

Bonsal: In India a woman is not _____ [?] to cook. They all basically have to cook because in our house we are cooking three times a day, morning breakfast. We have to make chappati with oil, they come fried. [?] And then afternoon lunch and then dinner. And then four o'clock for tea and then we have to make a snack for that also. And in India they are cook too much. But we came here and eating habits have become less strenuous. When I am going there I become fat [laughter] because four times a day I am eating there.

Adler: Breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: But you're working hard in between, too.

Bonsal: Nothing I'm working anything because all the work is done by servant only. Washing clothes and doing ironing and washing vegetables.

Adler: Yeah, so, what would you do all day?

Bonsal: Nothing besides going to shop.

Adler: To shops.

Bonsal: Shopping, going to shopping because again you have to come back here and buy this all junk. Whenever I'll go to India maybe five, ten pounds of it.

Adler: And then you come back here and lose it all again.

Bonsal: Yeah, that's true.

Adler: I don't think of Indian food as being particularly fattening.

Bonsal: Yeah, because you are using oil too much in that. Because oil, everything is fried, no. Because our oil is different. Our fat food is different. We are using real oil. [?, unsure of what is said here]

Adler: Is it olive oil? What kind of oil is it?

Bonsal: Corn oil.

Adler: Corn oil. What would traditionally been used?

Bonsal: In India?

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: In India we are using peanut oil because we are getting that, corn oil we are not getting there.

Adler: Yeah, I would think it would have a different taste then if you are cooking in corn oil or peanut oil.

Bonsal: Yeah, a little bit different. Now, I got used to that. Before I came here everything tasted..

Adler: Everything would taste wrong.

Bonsal: Yeah, but now I'm used to it. Now, it's nothing different.

Adler: Corn oil is better for you, isn't it?

Bonsal: Yeah, I think so. Because now I'm going to India I eat their food, it is more tasty and more good than what I eat here. Because they do it a little different. We see we have a

cooking problem in India because now you can _____ [?, counter 335] nine and a half hours.

Adler: It takes a while to get adjusted.

Bonsal: Yeah, because of going time I'm too much excited because I'm meeting family and everybody and after two days I feel like. Everybody is sleeping and I got up. I need to do something. Eleven, twelve o'clock everybody sleeping and I got up. [laughter] I slept four o'clock in evening then I got up eleven o'clock and the rest of the people are ready to sleep.

Adler: Oh, golly, and you're up and ready to go. [laughter]

Bonsal: Then I'm reading book and watching TV. No other work to do at night. Then, when we came here, sleeping here it will take a week.

Adler: To get adjusted.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: When you go how long do you stay?

Bonsal: Three or four months.

Adler: A long time.

Bonsal: Yeah. It is boring here, nobody here to talk like in India.

Adler: Do you think you'll get used to it?

Bonsal: I hope so.

Adler: Not necessarily get used to be boring but figure out how to fill that time.

Bonsal: Yeah, I'm thinking to start sometime of doing babysitting also to fill the time up. Because with children the time passes.

Adler: Fast sometimes.

Bonsal: Yeah. But I enjoy little babies. I like babies. I'm thinking _____ [?].

Adler: Yeah, that's right. Do you think about volunteering or anything like that?

Bonsal: I'm thinking maybe something like that. I'm interested in doing some computer. I'm thinking I'd like to learn computer.

Adler: You could go to the computer school or something like that.

Bonsal: Swimming also, so many things.

Adler: What?

Bonsal: Swimming.

Adler: Do you know how to swim?

Bonsal: No.

Adler: I used to teach swimming. There's lots of things, there's lots to be done. The city offers a lot of things in the summer, too. All kinds of classes and stuff like that.

Bonsal: Yeah, one day I'm planning to talk to Ruth but Ruth was not there in Friendship.

Adler: Which one is she?

Bonsal: She is the _____ one. She is director and something in Friendship.

Adler: Okay.

Bonsal: She is always with Ann Block. Her name is Ruth White [?]. She told me that you can, of classes that were going on here and I did not have time to take them.

Adler: At the church you mean?

Bonsal: That international classes, take some English classes. I'm thinking maybe of doing that.

Adler: Oh. Well, your English is very good.

Bonsal: I told _____ that, she told me, "When are you coming?" I told her whenever you get time to call me. But she didn't call me. [laughing]

Adler: Oh, maybe they haven't started yet.

Bonsal: Yeah, I think so. And I called her but no answer. She was out. I think she's working somewhere. I don't know about her. There are so many in Friendship and they are working also.

Adler: How do they get... do they take the morning off or do they work different times?

Bonsal: Yeah, they are doing something. But they are all good, all ladies are good there.

Adler: They seem very nice, everybody. That's a good program. It's too bad it can't go in the summer.

Bonsal: Yeah. [laughing]

Adler: Because it drops everybody in the way.

Bonsal: Because children are at home.

Adler: That's right. They'd have to have daycare for older kids then, too.

Bonsal: But it's a good program for when we are doing something.

Adler: What class did you take?

Bonsal: Actually I took before I came here then I took English composition from them because my accent is very different. After that I started that flower making classes.

Adler: With Kumi.

Bonsal: Yeah. After that I started crochet with Virginia.

Adler: Did you like it? Did you learn that in school?

Bonsal: No, it's very boring.

Adler: Was it?

Bonsal: Yeah, that crochet, it's very boring. Then I told Virginia that...

Adler: Do you think that's more boring than knitting?

Bonsal: Knitting, yeah, I like knitting. I think because I know how very well.

Adler: You were doing real basic crocheting instead of something that would be more challenging.

Bonsal: Because my hand is going very fast with this. In crochet I have to think and then... I told her I would finish this and then I'm finished with crochet. [?, unsure of this sentence] But she is nice working with.

Adler: Well, I found a lot of the knitting patterns that I had. You were supposed to finish them with crocheting one way or the other, too. I never learned how to do it. You can inspire me to get back to knitting. [laughing]

Bonsal: Yeah, so many of my friends in Friendship knit also, teaching ... Then everybody becomes teacher there [laughter]

Adler: Yeah, that's right and nobody to do anything. [laughter] I had a friend, my mother didn't knit but I had a friend when I was in high school who taught me how to knit. And the first thing I knit was a sweater and it took me a week but it was on needles that were about size ten or something like that, huge, huge needles. And it was this big heavy yarn. I don't know if they even make it anymore but it gets fat and then real skinny and then fat and skinny. And it was so fast and so easy that I was just hooked completely. I thought hey, this is great! [laughing] But then I got to doing other things and haven't gotten back to it, yet. Now, some of the sweaters that I made are needing repair. They are so old. Redo, the neck has started to rip and stuff. I need to start mending them and replacing them.

Bonsal: But here mostly, women are doing so many things here. They like knitting also, and crochet also, and flower making and that. So many things they are doing and they are very intelligent. I saw in Friendship also, everybody doing something.

Adler: There's a lot going on. The Fayette County schools have classes, too. Do you drive?

Bonsal: Yeah, I drive.

Adler: So, you can get places on you own. The Fayette County school system has adult education classes. Do you, have you seen that catalog?

Bonsal: No.

Adler: There's a bunch of craft things in there that they do. I have a friend who teaches smocking. Things like that; they do quilting and basket making and then there's dance classes and aerobics. You know, cooking classes. I had a friend who taught Chinese cooking class.

Bonsal: A cooking class is too...

Adler: You don't want cooking.

Bonsal: Indian cooking is very messy, very messy. You have to put so many spices in that and _____ [?]. It is very messy. Teaching is a problem. I can make and if anybody wants to eat, no problem. But to teach it...

Adler: Having to tell somebody how to do it, too.

Bonsal: It's difficult.

Adler: It's a whole different thing. Maybe you could, you're such a good knitter, maybe you could teach knitting at one of the yarn shops or something.

Bonsal: That's okay.

Adler: No, I'm just trying to think of things that you might do. I think you've got your hands pretty full.

Bonsal: Yeah. Last month I made one sweater. I think you know _____ [?], daughter, she's five years old. I made one cardigan for her, white. It turned out very well. She was very happy.

Adler: Yeah, they're beautiful.

Bonsal: At that time when we were all doing that Indian program, that was so hectic. And Lashmi [?] we made left, right, everybody do it. She is very strict teacher. But we did a good job, that's the main thing.

Adler: Did you have to memorize you lines and everything?

Bonsal: Uh-huh, yeah.

Adler: Oh, golly. Did you rehearse a lot for it?

Bonsal: Yeah, I spent maybe fifteen days. And we did some dances for that. [?, unsure] But it was a good program, really. It's just thirty-six minutes or something but it was good. Everybody likes that.

Adler: I can't remember where I was if I had another interview scheduled or if I was out of town that day. Oh, I was out of town. I had to be out of town that day. I was really sorry that I missed it.

Bonsal: Yeah, but it was very good. I call, _____ also came down. _____ [name of someone, counter 488] I think she told you?

Adler: No, I don't remember that she did.

Bonsal: She also came. She also like that program. Everybody did very good job. They bring India how the day is starting. We did that. The morning, the water boy coming, the servants are coming, milkman is coming to give you, vegetable lady, everybody is...

Adler: Everybody is up and bustling around.

Bonsal: Yeah. It was good. And next we are thinking of doing how we are doing arranged marriage. We are thinking to do that.

Adler: That would be real interesting.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: That's something that fascinates kids, too. They're real interested because they are always interested in weddings anyway.

Bonsal: Because in America nobody does arranged marriage.

Adler: That's right.

Bonsal: Only India, Indian people are doing that. We give that one program for that. I only give this idea for it, I don't know if she will do it.

Adler: So, she's going to do that.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: She did mention something to me about that, that she was going to...

Bonsal: [can not understand two or three sentences, counter 507 - 511] But I think she is good. She can think about everything and she can do that. That way she is nice but she is very strict.

Adler: Well, I guess you have to be.

Bonsal: She is very strict.

Adler: If you are going to have something turn out with a bunch of people all who know their own minds, you have to be... everybody has their own idea about how things should go.

Bonsal: Yeah.

Adler: We asked, I don't know if we finished, we started on your garden and what you were growing.

Bonsal: In the garden.

Adler: Yeah.

Bonsal: Just tomato, okra, cucumber and green chiles, got pepper.

Adler: What kind? Are they an Indian kind?

Bonsal: Yeah, it's very hot. I like that.

Adler: What are they called?

Bonsal: Green chili.

Adler: There's not a name for it.

Bonsal: No.

Adler: Did you bring the seeds from India or did you get them...?

Bonsal: No, I got them here.

Adler: You mean from the India store?

Bonsal: No, no, in Kroger only.

Adler: Oh. But are they an Indian hot pepper or just a hot pepper?

Bonsal: Just hot pepper. And loki, that I brought from India. And another one, what they call? Bell pepper. That I brought. Everything is growing well. The rabbits out there, they are eating all. [laughing] So many rabbits out there. They also want something to eat.

Adler: That's right. They're getting all... We had a groundhog in our garden last year and it ate the tops off of everything. We finally were able to trap it.

Bonsal: Last summer I put the beans, fresh beans so many and then the all rabbits came in.

Adler: Have you tried spreading dried blood around it. You can get it at the garden store.

Bonsal: No.

Adler: Dried blood, it comes in a bag and they say they don't like that. And it's not going, it's organic, it's not going to hurt anything. That might help. Or try and fence it..

Folklife Archives Project 601 – EthniCity: Contemporary Ethnicity in the Inner Bluegrass

Interview with Veena Bonsal (B3,F11-12; B1,F5)

Bonsal: No, whatever you put up, they come, from small hole they come inside and eat all tomatoes. From _____ [?] on the inside nothing is there. [laughing]

Adler: They eat up the inside, oh, no!

Bonsal: I see three or four rabbits out there.

Adler: You'll have to grow a section for them and say this is our food over here. [laughter]

Bonsal: But they never eat the leaves. Hot.

Adler: Hot.

Bonsal: Yeah. Tomato they eat, and benji and eggplant I put also. Indian eggplant.

Adler: Benji that's the Indian name.

Bonsal: Yeah, Indian name, small one, that I put.

Adler: That sounds like a good size garden.

Bonsal: Yeah, it's a big one, like this.

Adler: I hope it works out well. Rabbits and all. [laughter] Do you eat rabbit?

Bonsal: Yeah, some people are eating rabbit, no?

Adler: Yeah. They're cute though, too. Well, that's all I have for now unless there is anything else that you.

Bonsal: Yeah, you can call me and ask me, no problem.

Adler: Okay.

[end of interview]