

2-22-2013

Interview with Nirmala Sathaye 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 Nirmala Sathaye About Her Ethnic Background (FA 601)" (2013). *FA Oral Histories*. Paper 60.
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fa_oral_hist/60

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.

Adler: This is Betsy Adler and it is April 19, 1995. I'm interviewing Nirmala Sathaye for EthniCity. Okay. If you would state your name and address.

Sathaye: My name is Nirmala Sathaye.

Adler: Okay. And your address.

Sathaye: 621 Witchata [?] Drive, Kentucky, Lexington.

Adler: Okay, and your age.

Sathaye: 70, running 70.

Adler: [laughing] Running 70. And when is your birthday?

Sathaye: 20, October, 1925.

Adler: Okay. And where are you from originally?

Sathaye: I am from India. My hometown is Puna [?], it is nearly a hundred miles from Bombay.

Adler: And can you describe what it's like in Puna, in your hometown.

Sathaye: Ah, it's a really big city. Nowadays you can say that Bombay and Puna are like twin cities, like Minneapolis, like St. Paul and Minneapolis. And from olden times it is known as a seat of learning. It is the college center of Mara [?].

Adler: And were you born there, too?

Sathaye: Yeah, I was born there. I worked there and after retirement only I have come to this country.

Adler: Okay. What did... what was it like growing up? What did your parents do?

Sathaye: My father was a contractor. At first my mother was just a housewife. But my father passed away when I was just ten years old. Then she started going to school. She was, she was a graduate which is in our country known as bachelor of art. She took four years of college education after her school graduation and she was a teacher, high school teacher.

Adler: A high school teacher?

Sathaye: Yes.

Adler: What did she teach?

Sathaye: Ah, she was teaching math, maraci. Maraci [?] is our original language.

Adler: That and math.

Sathaye: She was teaching math.

Adler: Okay. And what was it like growing up in Puna?

Sathaye: It was really pretty good. At that time Puna was really not over-populated at all. And we had giant [?, joint] family. I lived with my cousins and others. Everybody has to work and help each other. It was a nice plus to stay. But my country it got to be hard [or hot] country. Puna, they got rid of, it was a no-fan city, even in summer the temperature would go beyond 90, 95. It was a nice place.

Adler: Was there always a nice breeze?

Sathaye: Yes, we had lots of flowers and green trees all over the yard, flowers and everything. And people, even now people are very friendly.

Adler: Did you all, you and all your cousins and extended family, do you all live in the same house, or...?

Sathaye: Yeah, yeah. On my mother's side there were five brothers and five sisters. And in summer all the kids were together. It was a lot of fun. And my grandma would teach us something to do with hands. She would not allow us to go in the sun and play when it was hot. But she would teach us something. She would tell us stories and we enjoyed it.

Adler: Do you remember any of them, any of the stories she told you?

Sathaye: Yeah, I remember.

Adler: Could you tell me one?

Sathaye: Okay. She used to tell us a story and that was about the rulers in _____ . In Puna there is a temple of Lord Rum and in the first month of our calendar for nine days there is a festival going on in memory Lord Rum. At that time someone a known person he would come, sing the songs and tell the story of Rum for nine days at night. Naturally, just as the adults were interested in the story the kids were interested, too. But the fellow who used to come over there, he didn't like kids. He was an unmarried man. He never liked the kids and at one time he told the owner of the temple not to allow kids, so that the kids wouldn't come and trouble him. What happened, people were going and the kids were not allowed. Kids were really unhappy. A famous man named as the _____ [Nanna Fernis, counter 70] ah, he was in a way the secretary of the rulers, what, I can say, a minister to the rulers. He heard about that but he couldn't do anything because the storyteller was a very famous fellow and he didn't want to insult him. One day at night when the old people were going to the temple these kids followed them and they saw a very old man. That, in

Maraci we call it _____ [Azuba, ?] grandpa. “Why is it _____ [?] doesn’t allow us? We would like to.” He said, “All right, be quite. And just do what I tell you to do. Come tomorrow night and I will show you the way.” The next day all of the kids they came _____ [can’t understand words here, counter 84], and they did what they... grandpa. As soon as he came he said, “Don’t make any noise. Just follow me.”

There is a small hill near Puna which is known as _____ [?, Paherti, counter 87] and at that time some construction work was going on near Paherti. There is a big lake where the construction was going on. So, so many heaps of stone and gravels and everything was there. This old fellow took all the kids over there and told them, “All right, one by one throw all the gravels in the lake. Don’t touch the stones.” The kids did that. It was fun for them. And next day in the town, everybody was talking, “Where are those gravels? How is it that somebody took away and they haven’t touched the stones?” People sat there talking and asking everybody but nobody knew. And this old man, he didn’t say anything. For a day or two the rulers tried to find out who took away all the gravel. And at last there was an announcement that if anybody knows and tells the ruler, he will get a very good price. This old man went to the ruler and told Nanna Fernis, “Nanna do you know who took away those gravels?” He said, “I’m not able to trace it even. Do you know?” “I may, but the price should go to the proper persons. And instead of giving some money, the price will be told by those who took away.” He said, “All right, I promise that.”

And then he told this story to Nanna Fernis and he was so surprised to know all these things that the next day there was a proclamation that the kids should be allowed because that was the prize kids wanted. And then the storyteller realized that if you want to build something without gravel you can not do anything.

I remember that story so much. She used to teach us some old _____ sand [?, unsure] stories and make us do something with our hands. So, we enjoyed all that.

Adler: That’s a good story, I like it.

Sathaye: Thank you. [laughing]

Adler: How do you spell the name of the ruler?

Sathaye: N A N A, Nana, that is his taken name, Nana. And, Phadanvis, P H A D A N V I S, Phadanvis. He was in a way minister to the ruler.

Adler: Minister.

Sathaye: Yeah, minister to the ruler. And the rulers were peshavas.

Adler: How do you spell that?

Sathaye: P E S H A V A S.

Adler: And the grandpa?

Sathaye: Agoba is a name. Grandpa Agoba.

Adler: Axoba, b. A Z O B...

Sathaye: Agoba. That is in Maraci, you see.

Adler: Okay.

Sathaye: Now, grandma is Agi.

Adler: Okay. Agi, A G...

Sathaye: A G I.

Adler: A G I.

Sathaye: You see, but here you call everybody by name but in my country the kids are not allowed to call elderly persons by name. Either they would say Taka, Taka means uncle. Nama is also, you translate it as uncle. But Nama means maternal uncle. Taka is fraternal uncle.

Moshi is the sister of mother. _____ [?, counter 144] is the sister of the father. So, everybody has some different name. I bet they would call _____ [?, counter 145]

Adler: How would they address somebody who is not a relative?

Sathaye: They would call them either _____ [?, Tai, Mai] if it is a lady. It means elderly sister. Or they would call Dada [?] that means elder brother. Dada or Na or Pa, that is the word for elder brother. Certain, but the kids are not allowed to call by name. [sound of phone ringing] Excuse me.

Adler: So, where did you go to school?

Sathaye: In Puna, at first I was in a municipal school. It was a mixed school [or a big school] and there elementary school is up to fourth standard. After that for the middle school and high school I had went to a girl's school named Huwi Paga.

Adler: How do you spell that?

Sathaye: H U W I P A G A, Huwi Paga. Now, it was really the place where the rulers used to keep the horses. That place was donated to the school and then the place was turned as a high school. But the name was there.

Adler: The name was still there. [laughter]

Sathaye: Even now it is there. [laughter] It was the first female school started by the government in Puna. And you will wonder the thing we hated most was that we had to learn everything through the English medium, even our classical language because the rulers were British. Each and every paper, western paper was in English and only our regional language, or my mother tongue was learned in _____ [?, counter 189]. Otherwise all the subjects were in English and we hated that most.

Adler: Is it still like that?

Sathaye: No, not that way now. After independence the regional languages are the medium of instruction. But at that time the British were ruling. When my mother was in that school they had only the English ladies as the principals. No Indian lady was allowed to be a principal. When I was there at least I had an Indian principal.

Adler: Uh-huh, ridiculous, isn't it?

Sathaye: Yeah, we hated it most.

Adler: I can imagine. Did you speak English at home?

Sathaye: No.

Adler: So, did you have to learn English in school?

Sathaye: Yes, we had to and while in school we were not allowed to talk in _____ [Maraci, ?]. Then we started fighting with our teachers and we said, "Why not in recess?"

Adler: Or in free time.

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: So, did they let you?

Sathaye: Yeah, they liked it, they liked it very much. And I'm proud to say that though in school I involved myself in some of the independence movements. And as a kid I couldn't do much, just to take messages from one place to another; give some correspondence, trivial things. But at that time we are feeling very proud and responsible persons.

Adler: Yeah, somebody had to do it, too.

Sathaye: Yeah. So... You can imagine that the kids of ten and twelve years old, at the most part, what can they do? But we used to sing songs which would promote our feelings for independence and all that.

Adler: Do you remember any of them?

Sathaye: Not much, no. I've forgotten many things nowadays.

Adler: We all do. [laughing] So, how did you meet your husband?

Sathaye: In those times it was the arranged marriage, you have no choice. That was the routine thing. And, generally, ... [sound of doorbell ringing] Excuse me. [sound of tape being turned back on] I'm not that much talented.

Adler: Well, enough.

Sathaye: Usually, when I sit in the house, my son and daughter-in-law they leave at about seven thirty. From seven thirty to five, five thirty, I'm alone. If I do not do anything at all and then I get, and everyday going, "Oh, I'm tired. Oh, I'm tired." Then I'd be bored. I'm beginning to really feel sorry that I mean I'm very greedy. How could I make them stay here. I don't want it.

Adler: So, how did you, how did you end up coming to Lexington?

Sathaye: I, you see, my son is here from 1969.

Adler: What is his name?

Sathaye: His name is _____ [?] He was a student at Purdue. He did his study over there in math. Here in Kentucky he is a professor in mathematics. My daughter-in-law, she's M.S. in Bangalore [?] and now a senior programmer in Kentucky Computer Center.

So, they didn't want me to stay alone over there. So far as I was working, they didn't say anything. But after my retirement they didn't want me to be there. And I couldn't ask them to come over there because my grandson was here in high school. He was born here. And when people tried to come over here for higher education I couldn't say that they should come and stay for me only. I decided that there should be some compromising.

Adler: So, do you miss your home in India?

Sathaye: Definitely, definitely. I have many friends over there. My sister is there.

Adler: Do you get to go back?

Sathaye: Yeah. Only this year I have been there in July, from July till November I was there. Generally, after two or three years we go and visit our friends.

Adler: Does it change a lot in that time? Are there a lot of differences?

Sathaye: Yeah. One thing is that it is over populated now. It was not so much populated. You see that in 1947 when India became independent, the population of India was nearly 35 plus and now it is 85. Refugees from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Tibet, even from Ceylon. All of them

are coming to India and staying there. Some of them are staying legally and illegally. You know that your country, too has such problems. That is one thing. And a natural growth in population. I may be wrong, I think that because of modern advances in medical science the people are living longer and there is not that much infants death. So, on both sides the population is growing. Because at first, I used to hear that the normal age of a person was fifty years. After forty everybody was thinking that you are going to die very soon and all that. No more like that. I think that that has also added to the population. I may be wrong.

Adler: Well, that's true because if you're living longer then there's more people.

Sathaye: Here at least people retire after sixty-five. In my country they have federal rule that after fifty-eight you must retire. No extension is given to you.

Adler: And what, what did you do?

Sathaye: I was a principal of a high school, girl's high school.

Adler: And did you teach as well?

Sathaye: Yeah, I used to teach. I was teaching English and math. And when I was a teacher I used to teach history, civics, economics and English, math.

Adler: That's a lot.

Sathaye: You see that in India you have to teach at least thirty-five periods and each period forty-five minutes for the week.

Adler: That doesn't leave you a lot of free time or planning time or anything like that.

Sathaye: No, no, no, no, no, and the classes are too big nowadays. You cannot imagine the classes in India. Now there are more than sixty students in each class because there are not as many schools at they ought to have. And they had mass education, provide education for everybody. Very increasing students, student population as compared to teacher population is too high. And in big cities like Puna and Bombay, we have to run the schools in shifts. My school was running in two shifts. Fortunately, I tried to have the third shift at night because it was a girl's school. [Must mean that she had no night school] But the school will start at seven from seven till twelve and from twelve-fifteen to five forty-five.

Adler: No, break at all. And the same teachers had to be there the whole time?

Sathaye: No, the two shifts of teachers were different but the principal was the same.

[laughter] No choice for the principals.

Adler: The same when you started in the evening.

Sathaye: My school had no evening, it is called night school. Not only, it is for the working people and it starts about seven, seven thirty or sometimes at eight o'clock. And it goes up to eleven. It's like a factory.

Adler: Golly.

Sathaye: But load of work is tremendous. You can not do justice to each and every student when there are so many students in the class.

Adler: We complain about the size of classes here.

Sathaye: But we can not complain because we know that government has some difficulties, they can not afford to pay teachers. They can not have so many buildings for the schools. Equipment must be there, everything. It's a monetary problem. But we can not say that the young ones shouldn't get any education. Unless they get education they can not go ahead. And in our age, again it's a compromise. [laughing]

Adler: Well, what did you... how long have you been in Lexington? Your son came in 1959...

Sathaye: I came here...

Adler: He came to Purdue in '69?

Sathaye: Yeah. '69, at from, I think that from '73 or '74 from '74 he is here in the city at first as an assistant teacher, professor and now he's a faculty member.

Adler: And then when did you come?

Sathaye: I came over here in '85 but I used to go back and come...

Adler: So, you had been here before you moved?

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: Before you moved here you visited.

Sathaye: In '85, I had come as a visitor and then after two or three years I took green card. When they definitely told me not to stay, I had no choice. [laughing]

Adler: What did you think of Lexington?

Sathaye: It's a good place to stay. If it would have been like New York or Washington D.C. I would have hated it because a person like me I like the common parties and friendly neighbors because I think that neighbors are your closest relations. And that is what I like about Lexington. At first we were on Cecil Way [?] But I knew nearly everybody. Here also the neighbors are real good.

Adler: Now, do you have grandchildren?

Sathaye: Yeah, one grandson. He's now twenty-one years old from Chicago University. He has majored in math and another major in South Asiatic Languages and Cultures. He studied Sanskrit which is our classical language and Hindi, our national language and one of the state languages, Kamil [?]. Because already he knows our regional language, Maraci [?].

Adler: What does he want to do?

Sathaye: Next year he's going for his doctorate in Sanskrit at Berkley.

Adler: Oh, wonderful, good for him. And does he want to teach?

Sathaye: This year he will not teach. They have given him a fellowship and free tuition. His dad is a mathematician. He's good at mathematics but he says that he likes Sanskrit more than math. And we have given him choice.

Adler: How did he learn, how did he start learning the languages?

Sathaye: You see that in the house we speak only Maraci. When he was a kid his parents used to say that while we are in the house we don't know English. Even though he would ask a question in English they would pretend, "No, no, we don't understand what you say." That is one thing. And then he was in fifth grade, he was with me in Puna and he joined a school over there. His dad was there as a visitor in the university. So, he had come with his dad. And we taught them the letters and everything and the principal in the school was my friend. I told him, "we don't mind even if he fails" because to his age he was one year ahead already. Said, "we don't mind".

Adler: The experience is what was worth it. Did he like it?

Sathaye: Yeah, he liked it. Only thing that he would come home and he would say, "I don't understand what the teacher told us. So, translate everything in English." We had that trouble, we don't mind for that. But slowly he learned especially when he was talking with his friends. He learned more. And even now he likes to be in Puna. Whenever he is there he talks only our language. The funny thing was that when in July we were there, he was jogging, somebody mistook him as American and came after him and asked, "Do you like to be here? How do like Puna?" And he answered him in Maraci. [laughter] He said "Why I'm an Indian." He was surprised, he looked back, "Really." [laughing] "Yes, I am Indian."

Adler: Well, what aspect of your Indian culture, obviously the language is very important.

Sathaye: Yeah, language is very important. And...

Adler: And your family. What other things are important?

Sathaye: The family ties are really very important. And you see, because of economy problem things are definitely changing. But otherwise, if there is any calamity in the family everybody tries to help each other. Family is the most important thing for the Indian people.

Adler: Now, does your sister have family in India or here or both?

Sathaye: Yeah, no, she has her family in India only. And I can say that I have no brothers so my mother was with me. My sister, she was working in a factory, she had to leave the house before seven and would come home late. So, I raised her two kids from the age of two.

Adler: In addition to teaching and being a principal.

Sathaye: Yeah. And my nephew is electrical engineer. He's in construction work as an electrical engineer. My niece she has done her Ph.D. in _____ [?, counter 483]. But we help each other a lot. And not that we used to help each other but I remember, I can not say that it was an institution but I remember that some students used to live with us. They were from villages and from poor families. But I remember my father giving them education and they graduated from colleges. And when they were in Puna they used to come and stay with us and treated us like our sisters.

Adler: Like family.

Sathaye: Yeah, like family. And they were... cared for us like family members they used to live with us. That was a very good tradition. Nowadays, in Puna, I can proudly say that some families give economic help for a month and there are three hostels. One is for the ladies and two for the boys who come to Puna for education but are not able to afford it and stay in Puna. So, these people every month they are giving something and they was they are running these hostels. And they ask these boys to help themselves. That means... they have a cook, but they have to help the cook clean the pots and pans and be self-independent. If they are medical students, they should look after the other kids if they are sick or something like that. If you are interested in games, you should teach games to others. So, that way they should help each other and try to do all the things in the hostel.

Adler: Are these college age or high school age?

Sathaye: After graduation, high school graduation.

Adler: Okay.

Sathaye: They can not afford the whole education for them so if after high school graduation if they want to go for colleges we are supporting these three hostels. And in every hostel there are nearly three hundred to four hundred students.

Adler: That's big.

Sathaye: That's big.

Adler: It's like a whole school in itself almost.

Sathaye: Yeah, and you have to depend on the parents. You see, even though you have no kids, they support them. And they ride them to their places and ask them what are their difficulties; if they want anything; if they want any guidance in education and everything. They help them that way. And it's a real good institution.

Adler: It is. So, what kind of besides education, what kinds of foods do you eat?

Sathaye: You see that in olden times there were many vegetarian people. Nowadays it has changed a lot. I was grown up in a family where we never used eggs even. Forget about meat and fish. It was strictly vegetarian food. But that percentage has gone down a lot. There are many non-veg people. Generally, Indian people cook their food every day. Let's say, you go to the bakery and get bread, Indian ladies would prefer to have fresh bread.

Adler: So, was that a change for you coming here?

Sathaye: A lot of change. The food is quite different over here. You see that we miss spice, if we go out we miss spices. Indian food is really spicy.

Adler: Uh-hmm, and why is that?

Sathaye: I don't know. I can't say. But that is the usual practice. Might be that there are many spices in India.

Adler: And you use them.

Sathaye: We use them. And it also differs from state to state. You see, if you go to the south they will use more coconut, mangos but there will be no brown sugar in their recipe. If you go to the north they will eat more sugar and we're halfway in between. In some recipes we use a little bit of brown sugar. But Indian ladies grind their spices every day and do all that.

[laughing]

Adler: Where do you get groceries here?

Sathaye: In food coop or that Vietnamese person, oriental food stores.

Adler: Which one?

Sathaye: On Southland.

Adler: On Southland or Good Foods Coop. Is that what you said?

Sathaye: We find some spices over there. And sometimes in summer we grow our vegetables. [laughing]

Adler: I was wondering if you have your own garden and grow things that you can't get.

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: What kinds of things do you grow in your garden?

Sathaye: Mostly, the green vegetables are here. You see the things are quite different. We call it _____ [says a list of words here, sounds like Meti, mari, sakara... counter 622]

like that. There are, in India there are lots and lots of variety of green vegetables. At least three or four times in a week the India ladies will cook green vegetables.

[end of side one, tape a]

[side two, tape a]

Adler: What would be in the salad? What would you have?

Sathaye: Generally, some raw vegetables like egg plant, cucumber or your gourd like that, or radishes, carrots, onions, so many things go in salads. But the way of making salads is a little bit different. You add dressing. Our dressing is different that way.

Adler: How is it that is different?

Sathaye: You see that generally what we do is either we heat oil or pure butter, add mustard seeds, cumin seeds, _____ [?], and turmeric. And add that to salads and sometimes ladies add coconut, peanuts, yogurt. So, it depends on what kind of salad you are making.

Adler: That is different.

Sathaye: Yeah, that is different. And just as you use parsley, we use fresh coriander, green coriander. That is very common. Then the rice must be there. Then beans we have to cook every day. Either we would make curry from it, just like gravy, vegetables, cooked vegetables and the bread. Bread is generally made fresh.

Adler: So, you have bread and rice.

Sathaye: Yeah, our bread is called chappati. It is made from wheat. And if it is made from millets it is called _____ [?, hakari, counter 29] and in hakai there is no oil, no salt, nothing. Just add water and make a dough and bake it on a frying pan.

Adler: Do you make your own bread?

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: What did you do with this cooking every day when everybody is working? Did you have to come home and cook everything too then?

Sathaye: It's not so hard. Might be we are used to that.

Adler: Must be.

Sathaye: Because India food is real costly in India. And what happens is that generally the girls help the mother. They help a lot. Nowadays, there are machines but in olden times when I grew up there were no machines. We have to do everything by hand.

Adler: So, you ground you on wheat.

Sathaye: There are flour mills so we need not grind. But every week we have to take the grains to the flour mill and get it grind. That way it is fresh flour. Only recently you can buy them but generally people prefer to have fresh flour.

Adler: Oh, I think it would be much better, yeah.

Sathaye: And the things we do as _____ [?] they are common over there. Every day the milkman would come and deliver fresh milk. Sometimes there are hoppers who sell vegetables. You can get fresh vegetables if you are not able to go to the market. Now there are fresh vegetables [?] but I remember that in summer my mother would dig a hole in the floor, a big hole and would put an earthen fort and would put all the vegetables inside and would cover it.

Adler: To keep it cool.

Sathaye: That way the vegetables would be fresh. Even now in remote villages you cannot buy everyday. There is a vegetable day and on that vegetable day only once in a week you can buy all those things. In remote villages.

Adler: Goodness. Tell me about your painting. How did you learn how to paint?

Sathaye: Ah, that's a story. [laughing]

Adler: I'd like to hear it. [laughter]

Sathaye: When I came over here in one Christmas my grandson, he was in high school at that time. I believe in seventh or eighth standard. He gave me a present. And I asked him, “What’s this?” He said, “It’s a kit.” “Why are you giving me this kit?” He said, “It’s a challenge for you.” [laughing] It was a painting kit, acrylic painting kit. [laughter] Until then I had never painted. So, I said, “All right, now that you have bought it, let me try.” At first I was really frustrated but this lady, Mrs. Bhabakar, you have seen her picture now.

Adler: Uh-hmm, now how do you spell her name?

Sathaye: B H A B A K A R, and her first name is Suhasimi, S U H A S I M I, Suhasimi. She’s the wife of Professor Bhabakar, in university. And she is a real good painter. I just talked to her, “Look at this kit, he has given me a kit and I am not able to do. He has wasted money and all that.” She said, “No, no, no, come to me. I shall show you.” And that way, it started. I used to go to her place once in week for some few months. And then I got some books from the library here and everything and that way I started painting.

Adler: So, what are your favorite things to paint? What do you like to paint best?

Sathaye: You see, I said I can paint just birds, flowers are some things. I’m not able to do portrait. I haven’t done anything else yet.

Adler: Do you do landscapes and things like that?

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: Do you do things in your mind from India?

Sathaye: No, I just take pictures.

Adler: Of what you see.

Sathaye: Yeah. I have done some from India.

Adler: Do you have them still?

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: I would like to see them.

Sathaye: Okay. I shall get them.

Adler: Okay. [pause] She is getting her paintings so we can look at them. The dolls are in a glass enclosed cabinet with a mirror backing them and there is a window there. So, they are on display. They have saris from various areas of India on them. And we’ll look at them individually. [pause] I see that you’ve also made some of the silk flowers. [no answer, pause] There is an Indian batik on the wall in black and white and orange of a dancer. There’s a few

Pueblo sand paintings on the wall. Posters of India around. Didn't mean to make so much trouble for you.

Sathaye: No, no. You see that this is a picture from a village. It is the entrance to a house from _____ the name of the village is Delvanna [?]. My niece used to go over there for fieldwork and she sent me this picture. I just painted from it. The other one... [someone comes in says something in the background] one of her friends took it away. And here in New Jersey there was a hostel going on from India and from bamboo they had created such big temples and everything.

Adler: For heaven's sake.

Sathaye: And I took a picture.

Adler: And that was in New Jersey.

Sathaye: New Jersey. But they had made a replica of the temples over there. I can show you. This is from _____.

Adler: Ohh, and this is from a picture that you had. What's the name of that?

Sathaye: It's the temple of sugar.

Adler: Are those roses in front?

Sathaye: Yeah. This is our hall of learning. [?] I tried it but I'm not so good at it. This is the south end of India.

Adler: Uhhh, very dry.

Sathaye: Yeah. It's near the Indian Ocean.

Adler: What's the name of it?

Sathaye: It is called the _____ Temple. [?, counter 139] You may have heard from Chicago there was an Indian saint who came over here for an all religion conference a hundred years back.

Adler: It doesn't ring a bell.

Sathaye: He had so many American disciples but he had been here a hundred years back. Still there is an _____ in Chicago. It is a place where his memory has been... This is from _____ [San Gothum ?] in the bird park.

Adler: What kind of birds are they? You read them on the back.

Sathaye: Let me see. Red tailed laughing thrush. _____ Park, Singapore. I got them from him.

Adler: He took a picture for you.

Sathaye: This is from Phoenix. There is the Cactus Museum. It is from the Cactus Museum.

Adler: Have you ever done a show, an exhibition of your work?

Sathaye: No, no, no. And here is another picture. This is at Christmas. The _____ and the _____ have dirt [?] that they put in the house. [?, unsure of this sentence] It is really called festival of the lights. And I got a postcard from there so I painted the picture.

Adler: Who painted the picture above the mantle? Did you do that?

Sathaye: That is... [can not understand sentence] She is a very good painter.

Adler: Now, how did she learn to paint?

Sathaye: I don't know because she is painting ever since she came over. And I think that she came over here _____ [?] I don't know. I saw here and she was painting this.

Adler: She's been painting since 1971.

Sathaye: She has some one man show or some like that.

Adler: Some what?

Sathaye: One man show.

Adler: Oh, she has had.

Sathaye: She has done that. I can not do that.

Adler: Oh, pretty soon you'll be able to, you'll have enough...

Sathaye: This is just my passing time.

Adler: What else to you do to pass time?

Sathaye: I do crochet, tatting,...

Adler: Oh, did you make this?

Sathaye: Yes. Quilting.

Adler: How did you learn how to do all these things? How did you learn how to crochet?

Sathaye: That has been taught by my mother and grandmother.

Adler: And tatting?

Sathaye: You see that my grandmother and even mother, in every summer they made us learn something new. And that way we learned a lot.

Adler: So, you learned crocheting and tatting from them.

Sathaye: Yeah, embroidery, crochet, tatting, and you see, I remember we had two big coconut trees. My grandmother would make a pile of the leaves and in summer she would make us, “come here” take the thread from that leaves, weave it and do something. [laughing]

Adler: What would you do with them? Make mats.

Sathaye: She used to teach us to make brooms, brushes.

Adler: From coconut?

Sathaye: From coconut palms. And then she would, in India you see on western side there is a lot of rain. To protect the walls from the rain they would take the whole coconut leaf and that way they would just hang it over and protect the walls.

Adler: Uhhh.

Sathaye: She used to teach us so many things.

Adler: What else would she teach you?

Sathaye: She would teach us how to sew our own clothes.

Adler: Now, did the boys learn all of this, too?

Sathaye: She would ask boys and she would say, “you must learn to cook. It is not that only ladies should cook. If there are no ladies, I don’t want you to die because you have nothing to eat.” [laughter] “You must cook you own food.”

Adler: Good for her.

Sathaye: Yeah, she had no schooling but she was very learned. I’m proud of my grandmother and mother. At least my mother was a learned lady. She was also a teacher. But my grandmother had no schooling at all. But she was real good.

Adler: She knew a lot.

Sathaye: Lot. I remember that I used to tease her. I would say, “R A T” instead of saying rat I would say dog and would tell her the meaning different. Like cat. In Maraci we call it manza [?]. She would say, “Don’t fool me, I know that rat, R A T.” [laughing] “Cat is C A T. Dog is D O G and God is G O D. [laughter] Don’t fool me.” Because then we would learn by hearing when she said those things.

Adler: Did she teach you music? Did you learn music or dance or anything like that?

Sathaye: No. You see, we were so poor that we were not able to go to classes. Whatever we can learn at home she would allow us to learn.

Adler: So, music or dance would have had to be in classes.

Sathaye: In class and that she couldn't afford.

Adler: So, do you know how... what other kinds of things did you learn growing up? Do you know how to do, uhmm, mehendi, the hand painting?

Sathaye: I haven't learned it. I can do it but I can't, I haven't taken any training. Now, there are classes.

Adler: Are there?

Sathaye: Yeah. But I learned, with my mother and my grandmother I learned to, you see, all the jewelry has been made by me.

Adler: So, she taught you how to make jewelry?

Sathaye: Yeah, when I was a kid, she used to teach me, "Do like this and it will be like that." She would not allow us to go and buy the garlands from the flower shop. She would say, "Grow your own plants, have flowers, make garlands, and dress you hair." [laughing]

Adler: So, you know how to do that?

Sathaye: Yeah, I know that. That way she taught us the little things.

Adler: What about puppets? Did you ever make puppets?

Sathaye: I haven't done that.

Adler: Did she teach you...?

Sathaye: I know a lot about gardening.

Adler: Do you?

Sathaye: Yeah, see, she used to grow all the vegetables in the house, the fruit, vegetables. We had a big house. And she said "that I'm not going to pay for any vegetables". So, in summer she would make us dig the land, plant the trees, take care of them and do everything.

Adler: Did you have a lot of land where you could have a garden? Or was this in the city or did you live in the country?

Sathaye: In the city, in the city but house was big and just as you have backyard, we had a backyard. And there she would make us do all the work. Grow your own vegetables. "You want these bananas. Plant banana trees. Guavas? Have a guava tree." Like that she made us work. But in a way she was _____ [can not understand what is said, counter 267] At that time when the girls were not allowed to go out and do this or that, ah, she allowed me to learn riding on the bicycle. She allowed me to go for swimming. She allowed me to go and play

with the boys. When there was complete segregation in the society, she allowed me all these things.

Adler: That was very unusual.

Sathaye: Yeah, it was unusual. And as yet, because of that I had many cousins that I used to play with them like cricket and ball. We call it... there is a stick and a small piece of wood, just hit it and throw it like that.

Adler: What's that called?

Sathaye: V I T T I, dandu, D A N D U.

Adler: Is that two words?

Sathaye: Yeah. Vitti, it is a small piece of wood and it has ten [tin?] ends and dandu that means a bigger one, stick with which we used to hit that small piece.

Adler: Now, what did you just see how far you could hit it or..?

Sathaye: Yeah, how far we could hit it and then...

Adler: Have to run some place or...?

Sathaye: Yeah, then we would say "fifteen dandu". That means if you go on counting it is at that distance and then who scores and all that because we would be make a small whole in the land...

Adler: Where it went.

Sathaye: And then put that vitti on it and then with the bamboo we would just throw it away. If you catch we are lost. If you are not able to catch then you have to throw at us. Then we would hit it with the dandu. And for three times, three times your were given to hit that piece. And then say "Fifteen dandu" "twenty-five dandu" [laughing] and in between how much you scored. That was the game it was fun. So, I do not like to play cards.

Adler: That sitting still is not active enough.

Sathaye: [laughing] Sitting still. Would you like to have a cup of coffee?

Adler: Are you going to have some?

Sathaye: Why not?

Adler: Okay, sure. Do you garden here?

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: Do you? What do you raise in your garden here?

Sathaye: Indian vegetables.

Adler: Where do you get... do you bring the seeds from India?

Sathaye: Ah, sometimes I get over here, sometimes I get it from India.

Adler: What kind of seeds do you have?

Sathaye: These are the kinds. [walks away from microphone, can not hear very well] Here you can see that I am growing tomatoes. I just take the tomato and get the seeds. I like to start from the seeds.

Adler: Uh-huh, are you pretty good at that?

Sathaye: I can not say that. [laughter] That's hard for me to tell.

Adler: I've been trying to start seeds and some of them have come up and some of them haven't.

Sathaye: Well, mine have started already. They are... well here...

Adler: Do you have your garden out in the backyard? Is that where you have it?

Sathaye: I'm just now we have dug the plot but I haven't started, I have started having some seeds growing here in there.

Adler: In the house?

Sathaye: Yeah, some are in the basement, some are in the yard [?].

Adler: A grow light. Do you have them under a light so that they will grow?

Sathaye: Yeah, you see that I have that over there, some green peas, radishes.

Adler: Oh, I see. Do you do flowers, too?

Sathaye: Yeah, you see that four years back we just purchased this house [not sure if this is what is said or not, counter 340]. My daughter-in-law has put some tulips [?] outside. Here we have only ivy and we want to remove it.

Adler: Yeah.

Sathaye: I start this from a leaf, see.

Adler: That's beautiful.

Sathaye: And just now I am trying to have _____ [violets, ?] I don't know if any will come out or not. But I have started it.

Adler: What kind?

Sathaye: Violets, African violets. [voices too low to hear now, they have left the room and are talking] This is also leftover.

Adler: Good heavens.

Sathaye: Actually, I like to _____ [?, counter 365] instead of just playing cards and chit-chatting. This is all a gift of my grandmother and mother.

Adler: Who taught you all that, yeah.

Sathaye: I'm proud of them. I'm really proud of them.

Adler: And did they teach you how to make doll clothes?

Sathaye: No, no. You see what happened here in the _____ [?] museum they had some Indian exhibition.

Adler: Right.

Sathaye: For two months and so many things were going on. And one day I was called. I said rather of thinking of fancy dress competition, with a half an hour how can people appreciate your dress and your ornaments and everything. Then they said what can you suggest. I said, "Why don't you make dolls and we'll put them so people can see and enjoy." And when I came home my son said, "Why don't you make dolls. When you suggest, you must do this." And it took nearly four or five months for me to do those dolls. He just got me barbie dolls and then I have to choose the cloth, have the _____, make the saris and blouses. I shall show you. And then all that jewelry. It was a _____ [laughs and can not hear words.]

Adler: How many did you make?

Sathaye: Here there are nine or ten, I think so. But I have given five or six to other people because many young girls come over here. Even the _____ ones, they say, "Can you give us one?" And in the museums so many ask me, "Are you not going to sell?" My grandson told, "No, they are not for selling. It's my treasure." [laughing] And then I used to tell him, if you marry an American lady can she appreciate? He said, "Why not?" [laughter] That's the funny part. That's the fun.

Adler: They are beautiful. And did you, you made all the jewelry that's on them and everything?

Sathaye: Yes, everything. The jewelry took real long time. Because you see that I had to go and find out these things from here and there. I don't know what I can get over here. I can find it out in India a little bit easier for me. But here it was real difficult for me.

Adler: So, where did you end up getting your supplies?

Sathaye: Only _____ [?]421] every weekend I used to go with my son and daughter-in-law and find out something.

Adler: At yard sales and things?

Sathaye: No, no, we just visited the shops. Because in yard sales you may not find the proper whatever. I didn't go for the yard sales. And I had a definite thing in mind that I want this.

Adler: Did you know how many you were going to make when you started?

Sathaye: Not at all. Would you like to have sugar?

Adler: Please.

Sathaye: Help yourself with sugar. That would be much better. [dishes rattling]

Adler: Now, how do you make... is this Indian style coffee?

Sathaye: No, this is American style coffee.

Adler: American style, [laughing] oh, this is fine. This will be more than enough.

Sathaye: No, I had really planned to take half a cup. That is fine.

Adler: That's fine.

Sathaye: That's fine.

Adler: Do you want the spoon?

Sathaye: No, I'm not taking sugar. After coming over here I have learned not to have sugar.

Adler: Good for you. I need to learn not to have sugar. [pause while they tend to their coffee]

What can you tell me about the dolls?

Sathaye: You see that I made it for a festival, just as they would dress for festival. Indian ladies like flowers and they wear garlands and dress their hair. So, I made these flowers from ribbons.

Adler: Oh, wow, are they hard to make?

Sathaye: Not much.

Adler: They look like it. [laughing]

Sathaye: Small roses. And I took the cloth and added border to that, you see, I have just sewed it, not glued it. And then I made the bloused like real blouses.

Adler: Oh, wow, you sure did. How did you get the blouses to fit so nicely?

Sathaye: I make my own blouses.

Adler: Do you?

Sathaye: Yeah. And you see, I made all this jewelry. They had no hair. So, I had to add some hair.

Adler: They didn't have hair?

Sathaye: Very short hair. You see, Indian style hair, if you want to have this much the hair must be at least this much long.

Adler: Wow.

Sathaye: You can not do without that.

Adler: So, what would that be about three feet worth of hair on a normal person.

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: To have it down the back like that.

Sathaye: And then I did some hair and did all that and then I pierced their ears, nose, anything that doing there in the nose.

Adler: I was looking at that before. How did you ever do that? What a steady hand you have. And pierced the ears. Did you use, did you use like a ...?

Sathaye: I used the craft wire and some tools. Surely because without tools I can not do that.

Adler: I was going to say.

Sathaye: That is real hard to do that.

Adler: What did you use, what tools did you use?

Sathaye: Some pins and something like needles for piercing. And then the jewelry, I had to glue certain things.

Adler: And I see they have traditional shoes. [laughing]

Sathaye: Because you see, let me show that, too. At first I was thinking that but I couldn't find the proper doll and when I found a proper doll. Look at this lady. My son made her shoes.

Adler: Oh, isn't that nice. She has leather sandals.

Sathaye: Leather sandals. And because we have these, _____ [?] because I can not give name to that. But the style of wearing this sari is quite different. And one of my friends helped me to do that.

Adler: Okay, this green sari, where would this be from?

Sathaye: From Marashta, my state.

Adler: From your state.

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: Okay.

Sathaye: You see that they wear, especially the bride. I had in mind the Indian bride.

Adler: Would these all be brides?

Sathaye: Yeah. But I did not get the silk cloth. I just, I like this cotton cloth and so I took that cotton cloth. Otherwise normally they are silk saris, very beautiful silk saris. And this is the thing. It is called mangal sutra. It just tells you have _____ [?, sounds like “rings” or “arranged” or “agreed”] for the marriage. This is mangal sutra.

Adler: How do you spell that?

Sathaye: M A N G A L S U T R A.

Adler: And it's a kind of a necklace?

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: But it's all got...

Sathaye: With black beads.

Adler: Black beads.

Sathaye: Black beads are important and you see the in between, these two things, they are called gods and goddess. It is the garden of gods and goddess. You are united as god and goddess.

Adler: So, then do you wear this.

Sathaye: Everyday.

Adler: Everyday for the rest of your life.

Sathaye: Till the death you have to wear it. If the husband passes then she will not wear it.

Adler: I see.

Sathaye: I think that your coffee is cold. Shall I just heat it up?

Adler: No, no, no, it's fine. Now where is the one, this one from, the orange one?

Sathaye: This is from south, south, Madras really. You see that they have lots of diamonds on that side. I couldn't find diamonds so I used pearls. [?] Look at her hairstyle.

Adler: So, you made with flowers in her hair and then, what is this called with the beads down the back like that?

Sathaye: That is called...

Adler: Is there a name for it?

Sathaye: Yeah. In English it is a braid, braided hair. In Maraci it is called a _____ [?, a full man's flowers, gold ma ful] and gold that is this part, the golden part.

Adler: The gold part.

Sathaye: And these are the flowers braided in the hair.

Adler: Oh, okay. Now what other differences are there between these?

Sathaye: They are wearing the saris quite different. Both the saris are _____ saris but the way she wears and this lady wears is quite different.

Adler: She has it, the green one is loose and...

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: ... also down here, isn't it.

Sathaye: It's quite different. These two are different styles.

Adler: How did the different styles develop? Do you know?

Sathaye: No, I don't know. You see, what I had to do was alter this cloth. Then I added these three pieces to the cloth.

Adler: The purple one.

Sathaye: And then I made that _____ [?, palu], palu is this part.

Adler: Okay, the border.

Sathaye: Not this, lines which go like this.

Adler: The long way of the gown.

Sathaye: That is called palu. This is the border.

Adler: Okay, the short way is the border.

Sathaye: Short is the border and this is the palu which is second on this upper border. So, I made this all by joining all that. It took a long time. And what happened I had to remember, I had to think what I had to do.

Adler: Did you have pictures or books or anything like that or did you do them all from what you knew and what you remembered?

Sathaye: Yeah, from what I remembered. And here, you see, I also make different styles of earrings because her earrings are different from this lady's.

Adler: Yeah.

Sathaye: Even...

[end of tape one]

[side one, tape two]

Adler: Okay, double “m”.

Sathaye: Double “M”, that is god and goddess. They are, no _____ [?] is the same but they are presenting it a little bit different.

Adler: And then they wear the beads in their hair like that, too.

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: Would those be diamonds.

Sathaye: Yeah, in my _____ the wear it but I didn't put it on that. See, because they can't pay me to do all this. [laughter] This lady from _____ [?, Gugiran]

Adler: The one in the dark pink.

Sathaye: Dark pink and you can see that her earrings are different, her diamonds are different and...

Adler: And she has the sari over her head.

Sathaye: Sari over head and it is worn in a different way. And they generally embroider or have something like this on their saris. So, I made it like that.

Adler: And what is this on her wrist?

Sathaye: Nothing, that is fun. That is my daughter-in-law. She wants to make fun of my dolls. Here also, you see, you will find it everywhere.

Adler: [laughing] Oh, it's not suppose to be there, huh?

Sathaye: This is not a sari really, it's a skirt.

Adler: Oh, okay and where is this one from.

Sathaye: This is from _____ [?] You see she has a very, very big skirt. And I embroider everything because they do a lot of embroidery.

Adler: And did you do all the tatting around the border?

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: Oh, my goodness.

Sathaye: Yeah, all these things take time.

Adler: I would say.

Sathaye: And the only thing is that this is her upper cloth.

Adler: So, is it much shorter?

Sathaye: It is much shorter, very short. And that is her hairstyle. So, everybody has different hairstyle and everything. This lady she has...

Adler: Uh-hmm, and did you do all the hairstyles, too?

Sathaye: Hairstyles and these things, flowers.

Adler: Oh, my goodness. [pause]

Sathaye: Please, forgive me because [laughter, can not hear words] This is from Pagal [?], northern India. This dress has become very common nowadays in India.

Adler: And she, what are these pantaloons, is that what that is called?

Sathaye: These are pants.

Adler: And you've embroidered the cuff. Oh, goodness.

Sathaye: Yeah. And this is called Kuta [?] and just some matching embroidery and earrings.

Adler: So, this, is this... she barely doesn't even have a sari really. It's more like a shawl worn from front to back, backwards.

Sathaye: Yeah, it's like a shawl. And this is from Banglor.

Adler: Oh, how pretty.

Sathaye: You see, she's also wearing the different type of sari. See, these...

Adler: A skirt.

Sathaye: Not a skirt but it is worn like a skirt. It is a sari.

Adler: Oh, really.

Sathaye: Yeah, it is a sari but it is worn like a skirt. And she goes like this and every Banglorian lady likes to have skin. [laughing]

Adler: So, the _____ [?] are on her shoulders. [laughter]

Sathaye: On her shoulders. And she would probably have her _____ [?, peas] and all that. And generally they have off-white saris with red borders. Another thing is they will have this red thing.

Adler: What is...

Sathaye: In their hair. It is called dukumkun.

Adler: D U...

Sathaye: K U M K U N.

Adler: D U K U M K U N.

Sathaye: K U N, dukumkun, they will not have this part. You see, that everybody has this. These _____ [?, Pagavi, counter 64] ladies they do not have.

Adler: She doesn't. Now, she does.

Sathaye: And these _____ ladies, sometimes she likes it. But she should have this. It's called _____ [sandura ?, counter 57]

Adler: And what it is made of?

Sathaye: It is a powder.

Adler: Like henna.

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: And it's just over the part.

Sathaye: Over the divider line of the hair.

Adler: What does it mean?

Sathaye: It's means that she is a married lady. That is a sign of a married lady because the things you wear...

Adler: Okay.

Sathaye: That way... a little bit different everywhere.

Adler: And does everybody in the whole country know these differences?

Sathaye: I can not say because usually if you don't travel and mix with the people. Nowadays traveling is easier but in olden times it was not. So, people did not know the difference. Nowadays they can at least come together and see each other and all that. But in olden times there was no way of transport. **Adler:** Yeah.

Sathaye: This is from Gashmi.

Adler: Well, that's real different. It's sort of like this one.

Sathaye: Yeah, it's like this. In northern India they wear like this.

Adler: Now does this need to be long sleeved? Is that always long sleeved?

Sathaye: Generally, generally.

Adler: But the cashmere one isn't.

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: Now, she's got a ...

Sathaye: I have just made changes, a little bit because I wanted to show her bangles. Her bangles are quite different from others and look at her earrings. They are quite different, too.

Adler: How did you ever make those?

Sathaye: Well, I told you that I took long time. [laughter] And really this is a Moslem bride. Here there is made in _____. She gave her wedding picture to me.

Adler: Uh-huh, so that you would know how to do it.

Sathaye: Yeah, and from that I made this and then she came over here and see, I had put this... This is their sign of married lady.

Adler: Is it a hair pin?

Sathaye: Like hair pin.

Adler: Like a hair pin.

Sathaye: And their dress is quite different, you see,...

Adler: Oh, it's pants.

Sathaye: Pants, look at the pants.

Adler: But it looks like a skirt and then there's a long tunic.

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: And then a shawl over the head.

Sathaye: Yeah. That is different, too.

Adler: Oh, these are just beautiful.

Sathaye: This has been purchased by my daughter-in-law. She is from Asom.

Adler: So, this is one you didn't make.

Sathaye: No, I didn't make that one.

Adler: She's spinning.

Sathaye: Yeah. This is from one of the states named Kurga.

Adler: Kurga.

Sathaye: This is my son.

Adler: I'm just admiring the dolls. I'm Betsy Adler. Tell me about her.

Sathaye: They are wearing the saris different.

Adler: She's got it real high in front.

Sathaye: Yeah, high in front.

Adler: And her hair is different.

Sathaye: Generally, they work in their farms and therefore they like to have like this. This is the usual Indian dress not from any particular state. All our Indian nowadays ladies wear like this.

Adler: Is this, why is that?

Sathaye: This has become a traditional dress nowadays.

Adler: Uh-huh, but why?

Sathaye: You see, you will not find...

Adler: You don't have the differences that they used to have except for weddings.

Sathaye: Yeah, except for weddings. But they are even, now you see that the modern girls do not know how to wear these two types of saris. They are difficult to wear. Even my daughter-in-law, she doesn't wear this type of sari. If she wants to wear it she will come to me and say, "All right, fix my sari."

Adler: [laughter] I suppose if you don't fix it right then it falls down and then you are in trouble, huh? [laughter]

Sathaye: But I wanted to show the traditional.

Adler: Right. Is this easier.

Sathaye: It is very easy, very easy.

Adler: It's much easier to put on than the other style.

Sathaye: Within a couple of minutes you can fix that style.

Adler: Is that part of the reason, you think, that it's so popular?

Sathaye: You see, this dress and this sari have become very popular because of convenience.

Adler: The pants and the tunic.

Sathaye: Yeah, the pants. You see that now when the ladies are going and moving very fast or if they are moving on some vehicle, this dress they find convenient.

Adler: Right, I can see.

Sathaye: But it covers the whole body. Generally, the Indian lady like to cover their body.

Adler: Is that a religious reason or...?

Sathaye: No, _____ [?] reason. [can not understand first four or so words of this sentence, counter 115] _____ ladies would go in very few clothes. Ladies wouldn't do like that.

Adler: Is that changing?

Sathaye: A little bit, not much. And if there is some function or something or even if they have to go to the office or schools, they will wear this type of sari. If they would like to wear the sari, they would use this type of sari or that type of dress. So, this has become very common nowadays. But the young ladies like to wear saris at different times.

Adler: Now, where would this one have originally been from to wear this style?

Sathaye: You see this is a piece from daughter-in-law's sari. [laughter]

Adler: Well done, does she miss it?

Sathaye: It was an old sari. She didn't miss it.

Adler: Where would the style have been from originally? To wear it this way.

Sathaye: I can not say.

Adler: Is it a whole new style or like a combination of styles or...?

Sathaye: In northern India they used to wear that type of sari.

Adler: That style, uh-hmm.

Sathaye: Only these two types of sari are from western, sorry, southern Indian. Otherwise in northern India they used to wear like this sari or that type of dress. It depends upon the way that in Kashmir they would wear this type of dress in the spring.

Adler: Wear that.

Sathaye: Otherwise they...

Adler: It would be cold in winter. [laughter]

Sathaye: It's cold. It is real cold. It is at the foot of the Himalayas and naturally they would cover their hair and everything. They have to. And so I put a scarf on her head just to show that she would cover it.

Adler: Now is that enough to have a scarf back that far or would she have to have it...

Sathaye: No, no, she can have it in front.

Adler: Just to have it, that's the idea.

Sathaye: Yeah. I put it just to give the idea, that's all.

Adler: Yeah, right.

Sathaye: And usually in all of India, olden times, when they were with in-laws, we have to cover our heads like this. And then borders before them [?]. That was the tradition. Even _____ [?, counter 142] we have to put our ...

Adler: It was like you were serving them.

Sathaye: Yeah, that's it. And then go like this. That was the usual practice. But it is changing.

Adler: People don't do that so much.

Sathaye: You see that they're with the husband or when there are so many foreigners and people go out over here and there in the world, they change. That's how many changes are coming in the new generation. You see that I was not even allowed to call my mother-in-law and father-in-law by the names. I would have to address them as _____ persons. Here I don't know what the words are but in Maraci _____ somebody who is really elderly and respected. Never call them by the names especially with the in-laws. So all that is changing.

Adler: So, when you get married you go and live with your in-laws with your husband's family?

Sathaye: Yeah. That was a giant family, normally fifteen or sixteen people in the house.

Adler: Did everybody get along?

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: Always?

Sathaye: And you see the household work was shared by all.

Adler: Did people have assigned...?

Sathaye: I had a sister-in-law who was older than me. If she would cook the food in the morning, I would cook in the evening. Then she would get rest.

Adler: What if somebody didn't hold up their end of it?

Sathaye: No, they had to obey the elderly.

Adler: What would happen if you didn't? Nobody thought about it even.

Sathaye: You had no choice to say no. If you had no time, you can mix and give it. [?] If my sister-in-law, she had no time to cook in the morning, she would say to me, then I would cook and she would _____ [?, counter 173]. That is the usual way. And if she would cook I would have to be in the house and do other things. That way it was quite different. And if I would punish my son, I would punish all the kids in the house. I had that right. We wouldn't say who is wrong and who is right. [laughter]

Adler: Everybody gets it.

Sathaye: Everybody gets a piece, they had no choice. And if my sister-in-law were to punish, I shouldn't mind it. I should say, "she is right." That was the rule of the house.

Adler: It makes a lot of sense. It really does.

Sathaye: And even in joined families I remember that everybody had to share their food and household duties. And spend the money for it all.

Adler: Was there one person who was in charge?

Sathaye: No, generally the eldest one.

Adler: The eldest wife, woman, or the eldest man.

Sathaye: Man, both of them. They would share it in between. But if you had some special things like medicines or clothes or if you had special gift or something like that, then you have to take care of that. But you shouldn't make any difference between the kids. What you get for one should go for all.

Adler: Good or bad, huh? [laughing]

Sathaye: Yeah, you see, that _____ [?] if there we purchase saris, every lady would have the sari of them same, I can not say price, price-wise it was the same.

Adler: Everything equal so nobody could be jealous or say anybody got something better.

Sathaye: Yeah. I don't mean to say that there was no difference. There were after all we are a society and in every society there are good and bad points. It was there. But so far as it was well conducted it was good. And especially those who were unable to support, they had children in the house. Suppose somebody has lost his parents, the kids are cared for by the joint family.

Adler: So, everybody was looked after.

Sathaye: Yeah, you see, that my maternal uncle, though he was not married, he took care of us. And I have two cousins, they lost their mother, so, these two cousins and we two sisters we lived together and still we feel that we are brothers and sisters. That feeling doesn't go. That way it is still good. But you know, if the trouble starts...

Adler: With one, people have trouble.

Sathaye: Yeah, but what happens is that when there are single parent families, it's a lot harder.

Adler: Yeah. There's more people to help take care of the kids.

Sathaye: [coughs] And divorce wasn't allowed. The ladies wouldn't get remarried. So, if there are elderly person, at least they would keep a check.

Adler: Did arranged marriages pretty much always work our successfully? I mean everybody that I've talked to that has one...

Sathaye: No, I can not say that. Sometimes it was a mess.

Adler: What could they do then? Could they do anything? Or are you just stuck there?

Sathaye: You see that Indian people think that marriage is a thing that is once in a life. So, either they get separated and live their own life or they would pull on for the kids. Many times it happens that for the kids they pull on. But it has its ill effects on the kids. I do not say that every time it works out very well. Many a times it works out very well but sometimes you may not know.

Adler: Because most of the people that I've talked to here that have had arranged marriages have felt that it's a very successful system.

Sathaye: Yes, it is a successful system because what happens is that the parents take care. And normally they make so many inquiries about the other party and see if it is suitable or not. But it may happen that people may not give you the real take [?]. Sometimes it is a failure. I can not say that it is one hundred percent true.

Adler: Right, right.

Sathaye: But mostly it is successful. And they have taught that way that whatever the differences you should come over. From the childhood the parents would stress, now that you are married you should get interested. You should take your own responsibilities. You have to take care of your kids. But if for instance our parents, even your five fingers are not the same. That is what we were told. "Look at your fingers. Are they the same? So, forget about that." They are different.

Adler: Let me take a couple of pictures of the dolls or with you with them. Oh, oh, oh, yes, yes, yes. But what I'd like to do because you are in front of the window and if I try to take a picture, I'm just going to get the window. So, if we can turn around and you can be on that side and I'll be on that side.

Sathaye: Oh, okay, okay.

Adler: So, we're not shooting into the light like that.

Sathaye: So, which ones do you want? Otherwise, I shall keep the other ones...

Adler: Well, I was going to just leave them out on the table so I can get a picture of all of them because it's black and white. And then maybe when I get some of the, when I get my colored film, I'll give you a call and maybe I can come back and take some of them colored. Uupp! She lost her doo-dad there.

Sathaye: That's okay. I told her that it is not the same. I shall keep this because it is not made by me. I just showed it to you, that's all.

Adler: Let's see, where would you like to be? In the picture, you have to be in the picture. Actually, you can just stay right there.

Sathaye: Okay. Is it okay now. Everybody in picture?

Adler: We can move them around for another one.

Sathaye: Shall I take this over here?

Adler: Oh, okay. Let me have one with you in it, too.

Sathaye: [laughing] Let me put this aside.

Adler: I took a bunch of pictures one day and they told me that they were a little bit out of focus. I have to be more careful about my focusing.

Sathaye: Okay.

Adler: Okay, smile. [pause]

Sathaye: I have the picture somewhere. I don't remember. Because one day my son took the picture, they are looking in the mirror. [laughter] He put every doll... [laughing]

Adler: Oh, that's great. Okay. That'll be, that ought to do it. Can I help you put them back?

Sathaye: No, I can put them back. That's okay.

Adler: Now, is this, when you learned to do the painting, to get back to that for a minute. Is that an Indian style of painting? That's what it looks like to me almost with this attention you have to detail and things like that. Is that what Mrs. Bhabakar, did she teach you that?

Sathaye: And you know, I like to do, I like to do very tiny, tiny _____ [can't understand word because of laughter]

Adler: Well, I can see that from the jewelry. [laughing] Did she teach you...?

Sathaye: Very delicate.

Adler: Did she teach you this style or did you just come up with it?

Sathaye: No, no, no, she just showed me the way and I started my own.

Adler: And you consciously did that though.

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: Is there a reason, is that because that's the way Indian style paintings are or...?

Sathaye: I don't know because really I haven't studied anything about Indian painting. I do not know the basics of drawing. Because I have no time to study all these things. When I was in school we had very little education about all of these things.

Adler: I didn't get the backs of these ladies. I'll get the backs of their heads, they are so pretty.

Sathaye: Okay.

Adler: You didn't have time then to do all that.

Sathaye: Yeah, and when I came over here really my son was saying that you should join _____ [?, counter 329] because in India I had done some work on it. I said, "Forget about it. I don't want to adopt _____ [?]."

Adler: So, what was he going to... in our history or something.

Sathaye: I was, really I did my masters in politics and economics.

Adler: It's those early days of carrying messages. [laughing]

Sathaye: Then I did my masters in education and after that I was doing some work in sociology but I gave it up. I didn't find time to do all of those things.

Adler: So, if you'd gone back to school here what would you go back in?

Sathaye: No, I wouldn't go at all. What I want to do, I will do. [laughter]

Adler: You've earned it now.

Sathaye: I've got so many things in mind and I didn't find time at that time because of the school work and everything and I had to look after three kids and my old mother and all that. So, I didn't find time for all those things. So, I said, "Let me be myself now." I don't want...

Adler: Do all the things that you couldn't do all those years.

Sathaye: Yeah.

Adler: Well, you certainly are keeping busy.

Sathaye: And I enjoy doing this.

Adler: I see that you were making iris. Was that from Friendship group?

Adler: Kumi.

Sathaye: Yeah, she's an artist to do those things.

Adler: She's very clever.

Sathaye: She is very clever and she also likes to do so many things.

Adler: Yeah.

Sathaye: Really smart. And generally I just pick something new, everything, I like it. That way I enjoy my time, too. And I have joined that club because I can see so many people from different countries and their culture. You can learn from it, everybody. Everybody has something good in it. Not that I can say that my country alone is good and all that. I'm not that type of person.

Adler: Now, here's a doll you didn't take out. Where is she from? Is she Chinese?

Sathaye: When I had been to Hong Kong, I purchased two dolls. I have a granddaughter in Puna. My niece has a daughter and she's my only granddaughter. So, I bought this one doll for her and I thought why should I only buy one for my granddaughter.

Adler: One for you, too.

Sathaye: No, no, for my grandson because [laughter] nobody is going to give him a doll. That way I can give him the doll.

Adler: Although he now has a whole collection of them.

Sathaye: That's no problem.

Adler: You need to make some grooms for them.

Sathaye: Yeah, I was thinking that way but I couldn't find the dolls, proper dolls because Barbie dolls can not be turned into men.

Adler: Yeah.

Sathaye: That way I was also trying to find some kids. I couldn't find them. And while I was in India this time, this summer I was so sick that I couldn't...

Adler: Oh, dear.

Sathaye: ... out and find other things. Otherwise I was thinking that I should buy something more. And now there is no place for them.

Adler: You'd have to get a whole other cabinet for them. [laughter]

Sathaye: That's not good, you see.

Adler: Well, thank you very much for sharing all of these. [tape goes off]

[end of interview]

Folklife Archives Project 601 - EthniCity: Contemporary Ethnicity in the Inner Bluegrass
Interview with Nirmala Sathaye (B2,F31-32; B1,F7)