

SOCIETY MAY HAVE CHANGED, BUT I HAVEN'T

Naoki (85) from Western Tokyo, married, lives with his wife in housing for elderly people with care services ('Sakojū')

TOKYO AND NAGASAKI

It has been almost one year since we moved here from Nagasaki. I'm now 85, and I've spend half of my life in Tokyo and the other half in Nagasaki, where I grew up until I graduated from high school. After graduating from college, I worked at the press club of a government office until the retirement.

NOT THAT SENSITIVE

I don't think my life has changed since before the COVID crisis. Everyone is talking about it, but COVID hasn't affected me, maybe because I'm not that sensitive. I haven't felt any changes since I moved here a year ago. Society may have changed, but I haven't. I still go out. I get up 4 a.m. and take a walk for about 30 minutes every day. I have started wearing a mask, but I myself haven't changed. I do speak with other people when necessary. Well, I'm not sure if I can explain it properly, but I personally think that true independence means never changing my own ways of living and thinking, no matter how this society changes. So, my life has never changed since I was born.

HEALTH IS INDEPENDENCE

I would describe myself as stubborn. I think independence is based on health. You can't be independent if you're not in good health. My idea is that I can stay independent as long as I have confidence in my own health. Being independent means you need to take care of your own life, and you can't do that unless you are in good health, including the way you think. In my opinion, being independent should include using your own brain to find a way to deal with what is going on in society at the moment, with or without COVID. So, naturally, you need to be stubborn in one sense, but you also need flexibility sometimes.

KEEP GOING

I have heard about COVID, but I've never contracted the virus. So, I want to keep going while preventing infection.

Naoki was interviewed in September 2020. His story was shared with us by *International Longevity Center (ILC) Japan* - 国際長寿センター, member of the ILC Global Alliance, an international federation researching and advocating the vitality and the societal and economical position of older people. In the Netherlands, the ILC network is represented by Leyden Academy.