Interview with Ina Ganguli

Interviewed by Polly Sonifer July 21, 1997

, roject (Phase 2) **PS:** This is Polly Sonifer interviewing Ina Ganguli on July 21, 1997. Hi, Ina.

IG: Hi.

PS: How are you today?

IG: Fine.

PS: Good. Thanks for taking the time to sit down with me. First of all, can you tell me a little bit about yourself, where and when you were born and the general information about what your family was like at the time you were born?

IG: I was born in 1979 in St. Paul, Minnesota, and I have two older brothers. My parents have both lived here for a while. My dad came here, I think, in like 1964, and so both my brothers were born here also. What else do you want?

PS: Your parents' names. Your brothers' names.

IG: My parents are Aparna and Mukul Ganguli, and my brothers are Suman and Suvranu Ganguli. My parents always say that when they were raising my oldest brother, they were kind of experimenting with him. They had to get the know the ways of raising a child here with him. So things have gotten a little bit easier when it came around to me. Like one instance with that is like with my name. Suman and Suvranu, they're kind of more difficult names to pronounce, especially Suvranu, and they said that with me they wanted to get a real simple name. So they chose Ina, and it's a little bit different. It's not even Indian. I think it's Russian or something. But that's one way that you can tell that they've been kind of adjusting to things here.

PS: What kind of work do your parents do?

IG: My dad, he's a research scientist and he's working with nutrition now. So he has his Ph.D. in nutrition and veterinary medicine. My mom is a math teacher, and she teaches at a university. She also has her Ph.D. in math education.

PS: And your brothers, they're older than you?

IG: Yes. They're both older than me. Actually, my brother who's two years older than

me, he's going to be going to the same college as I am next year. So that will be something new. But he's doing chemical engineering and he wants to go to medical school, hopefully, next year. My oldest brother is in graduate school at Cornell University and he's doing math. So kind of a carryover, I guess, from my mother.

PS: So you are the only girl.

IG: Yes.

PS: What was that like?

IG: I always wanted a sister, and now that I think back on it, I guess I was kind of lucky. I like having older brothers. They're kind of protective. But when I was growing up, my brother who's two years older than me, he teased me a lot and we used to fight a lot and stuff, but I didn't really know any different because I hadn't had a sister before. I always wanted a sister to do stuff with, but I had a lot of friends and stuff, so it didn't really matter. But, yes, there was a lot of conflict with me and my brother. My oldest brother, he was really nice to me. He's more quiet than my other brother. He, I guess, is more protective of me than my other brother.

PS: You said you know your dad came over in 1969?

IG: I'm not real sure about the exact date. I think '64, maybe.

PS: Do you know much about their background in India?

IG: Yes. Like family?

PS: Yes.

IG: Yes. My parents both came from big families. They're the oldest out of their brothers and sisters, and they each had four siblings. My dad came over here, when he wasn't married, to get an education. They both had their undergraduate degrees, I think, over in India. But he came over here and then went back to India. My parents had an arranged marriage, so they got married, and then he came back over here. My mom lived with my dad's family while he was over here, and then she came over here then afterwards. She had her master's degree from India, too, and she came over here. After she had all three of us, she got her Ph.D.

PS: Did she stay home with you when you were little babies?

IG: Yes, she did when we were really little. When we were a little older, she would go to school. I think when Suvranu was a little bit older, she started to go to school, I think. But

I remember when I was going to Montessori, I was something like three, four years old, she was going to the U[niversity of Minnesota] at that time. So me and my brother Suvranu would go to the Montessori at the U, and my dad would go to the U, and then pick us up after the day was over.

Then she got her Ph.D. in 1986. I remember that very well, because it was kind of a hectic time. She was doing it in our basement and everything was real tense and she was always busy. But, yes, that was nice when she got her Ph.D.--we went to the ceremony and stuff. I remember that.

PS: Pretty neat.

IG: Yes.

PS: Have you visited India with your parents?

IG: Yes, I went once when I was four years old. I don't really remember that much from that. But, yes, I went in kindergarten, and then I went again when I was eight years old and I was in the fourth grade. So it's been almost ten years, I think, since I went. I was actually supposed to go this summer, this week, actually. I was supposed to go again, but because of my knee I'm not going. But, yes, so we're planning to go again next summer. I don't remember that much from the trips, but I remember like my relatives a lot and stuff from that, because all my relatives pretty much are there. So the only memories I have of them are my trips there.

PS: Tell me about your early childhood years. What language did your parents speak at home with you?

IG: With me, they always spoke Bengali to me, and they say now that they wonder how I picked up English because English was my first language. So they're not really sure. But our neighbors at our old house, they were really good friends of ours, so we spent a lot of time with them. So that's probably one way that I did that. But they always say that my oldest brother, Suman, he learned Bengali first, and when he went to kindergarten he didn't know any English. They said it was really hard for him because he had an accent and he felt kind of out of place because he didn't understand what people were saying to him. So they said it was good that me and Suvranu learned English first, but they're not really sure how that happened. I think probably from Suman, too, we picked up English from him a lot.

PS: So when you and your brother spoke to each other, you spoke in English?

IG: Yes.

PS: Did you speak back to your parents in Bengali?

IG: I can't really remember. Now we definitely don't, but I don't think so. I think we pretty much spoke English. It was more like kind of a mixture. We'd speak like speak Bengali mixed within the English.

PS: So would you say that you're fluent in Bengali?

IG: I think I was. I don't think I am now at all. I'm sure if I go to India and come back, I will be again. I just need to kind of pick it up again. I used to go to SILC [School of Indian Language and Culture], the Indian school. I went there for like six or seven years, and during that time I was a little bit more fluent in it than I am now. I don't use it very often now, just tidbits around the house I do sometimes. I can understand it really well, because it's all my parents speak to me.

PS: That's still how they speak to you, in Bengali?

IG: Yes, yes, they speak to me in Bengali.

PS: When you were a really small child, who did your family socialize with?

IG: Mostly with other Bengalis. When I was little, I always had my Bengali friends and then my school friends. I used to have two birthday parties; one was the Bengali one and one was the school friend one. But, yes, every Friday and Saturday night we'd always go to a party at someone's house or a lot of people would come to our house. But it was mostly Bengali people. Then, like I said, our neighbors were really good friends of ours, and they still are now. We visit them. They live in Texas now. They were Americans. So it depended. Definitely mostly Indian people, but they had American friends, too.

PS: Did any extended family members ever live in your household with you? Did your grandparents or aunts and uncles ever come for a long visit?

IG: Yes, I think my mom's sisters each came for, I think, a long time. I don't remember very well. I think one of my aunts came for like a month or two months, but I don't remember. Yes, my grandparents each came for a while. I don't really remember the time period, whatever. But, yes, that's another way, too, that I got to know them, because when we were in India we can't spend that much time with each relative. So when they came here, we got to know them a little bit better.

PS: What ways did you see your family keeping its ties and connections to India as a homeland?

IG: I think one way was just socializing with other Bengalis here and then with Indians

in general. My mom got extra involved in SILC, and I think that was one way just to keep us knowledgeable about things and to get involved with the Indian community. I think with the India Association and stuff like that, they were always pretty active. And then just, you know, keeping ties with our relatives by visiting and writing letters and stuff like that.

PS: Did you ever call on the phone very much or did they not have phones?

IG: Yes. I don't think they had phones until more recently. Yes, I think one of my aunts had a phone, and I think we might have called her a few times. There were more letters and stuff, because the connections weren't very good then with the phones and stuff. So, yes, I don't think we used it very often.

PS: When you think back about your real young childhood years before you went to school and so on, are there any values that stand out that your family stressed to you? Any things that were important?

IG: I think definitely like schoolwork. Ever since I was really little, they always stressed like doing really well in school and taking it seriously, and my mom would always sit down with me when I was really young, and read to me. So I think I learned to read at a pretty young age just because they kind of stressed that. Other values, I mean, just with family I'd say that maybe more so than other kids when I was little I really felt that my family was very important. Rather than go play, I liked to spend time with my family maybe sometimes more often. But, yes, those are maybe two that stick out in my mind. I'm not sure, you know.

PS: Did you have a sense of how your family communicated those values to you? How did they let you know that those things were important?

IG: I think just the way they acted. I kind of picked up on that. The schoolwork, I guess, my parents would always talk to my oldest brother, maybe, about school, and when they would talk to him about school, I would kind of pick up on that from that. But they weren't really demanding or anything about school. I don't think I really would try to do my best necessarily for them, but it made me feel good when they were happy about what I was doing in school.

PS: When you started school, where was your family living at the time when you started school?

IG: We were living in St. Paul, in Lauderdale, so I went to Brimhall Elementary School.

PS: Brimhall?

IG: Brimhall. It was a smaller school and there weren't very many Indians or anything. There was one that we knew, were friends with or something. It was pretty close to our house.

PS: What was grade school like for you?

IG: I was only at that school for four years, because we moved after third grade. But it was nice because Suvranu, my brother, was going to school at the same time, too. So I kind of liked that, you know, I had someone else there. It was good. I remember I had a lot of friends. I did pretty well. Again, I was like in the high potential group or something, and I think I really enjoyed that. I took advanced math things. I did math by myself and stuff like that. But those are kind of things I remember from when I was little. But, yes, I really liked it a lot and I liked my teachers.

I know one thing that maybe tied in my Indian roots is I was taking Indian dance at the time, and for show and tell, I think in first grade or something, I did one of my Indian dances. That was like a big deal, because I wore like my costume and everything, and my mom came in and I did that. After that it was kind of funny because one of my best friends was from Iran. In fact, after I did that, she did an Iranian dance a different day. So I started kind of a little chain. So people would start dancing and do that for show and tell. So it was kind of neat, I thought.

PS: Do you ever remember being teased about being Indian or picked on in any way?

IG: No, I don't think so, nothing that comes out in my mind or anything. One thing, too, at Brimhall, is a lot of the kids who went there, their parents worked at the U., and so it was actually kind of diverse. There were some Iranian people and some Chinese and stuff. So there were a lot of different kind of people at that school. I think that had something to do with it.

When I moved over here, when I went to Island Lake School, it was maybe less diverse. But at that time I was in fourth grade, and I don't remember anything that would stand out in my either from that.

PS: So you never felt any discrimination from other kids or even curious questions that left you uncomfortable?

IG: No, not that I can remember. At the time, I think, when I was really little and that would have been significant, yes, there were so many different people around that no one, I don't think, paid that much attention to what the color of your skin was or anything like that.

PS: Was language any problem for you when you entered school?

IG: No, it wasn't.

PS: Did friends ever come over to your house?

IG: Yes, they did.

PS: And how did that work?

IG: I think it was fine. I don't remember. I think maybe now I'm more embarrassed, maybe, about stuff like that than I think I was then. I was kind of proud of it. Just like with the dance, too. I like to show it off kind of that I was different. I think we even had like one of my birthday parties I had, I tried to mix the Indian and the school friend one a little bit, like I had the school friend one and then the Indian one that night, and so it was kind of a layover. So I think I kind of liked that, having my friends see that I was different.

PS: Did that work the time you did that, when you tried mixing those?

IG: Yes, it did. But I could see that, of course, my Indian friends aren't going to be friends with my school friends. It didn't work how I wanted it to.

PS: So your hope was that they would all just come all together so you didn't have to have two sets?

IG: Yes, kind of, I guess, yes. But it didn't really work like that.

PS: Who was it that got the feeling that they didn't want to be friends with the other group?

IG: I don't think it was that they didn't want to, but I don't think it was because they were Indian or not, just because if you don't know someone, the first time it's not going to work out right away.

Another thing I think that I did when I was elementary school was the salwar kurta, the Indian dress. I think I wore it to school a couple of times. Now I think back and I think I was pretty brave to have done that. I don't know if I'd do that now. But, yes, I liked to kind of show off. I thought it was neat.

PS: And you never got any negative feedback from anybody?

IG: No, I don't think so, not that I remember. Maybe people probably questioned me on it.

PS: But you were still proud of it?

IG: Yes.

PS: Your closest friends when you were in elementary school, who were they? White kids or Iranian kids?

IG: Yes. My best friend was an Iranian girl, I think in first and second grade or something. Then I had one of my best friends, too, was just American. I don't what her background was specifically. But, yes, my good friends, yes, I had a couple of good friends, I think one girl was Taiwanese and then I can't really remember. But, yes, it was kind of a mix, I guess.

PS: Did you ever find any advantages that you gained from being Indian in school?

IG: I don't know if there are any directly from being Indian. Just like with values, maybe, or just with like the schoolwork, my reading and stuff, you know, I was a little bit ahead of other kids. I don't know if there's anything, advantages directly from being Indian.

PS: Were there any advantages socially or disadvantages socially?

IG: Like with how I socialized with other kids?

PS: Yes.

IG: No, I mean, it could be, I guess, maybe that I did have the two sets of friends, like it might have been a little weird maybe that I--I don't know if my American friends felt like I had this other kind of world that they weren't really allowed into or something like that. And that could be one thing. But I guess I would say it would be an advantage, because I was able to have more than what other kids did because I had the two.

PS: Your family's religious background is what?

IG: Hindu.

PS: How did you feel that you got those values communicated to you, and in what form did those come?

IG: My parents never really exposed us that much to Hinduism. When I went back to India when I was eight, we went for my brother's poita. It's a ceremony, a Hindu ceremony. It's like a sacred thread ceremony. It's like a big deal. It's like a week or something. It's pretty intense, and all the relatives come over and it's a really big deal. I

was kind of left out of that because it's only for boys. I was young at the time, so I didn't understand that much about it. I guess that was like the first time when I'd really been exposed to it.

Actually, when I was four and we went the first time, we went during Durga puja. That's one of the most important religious holidays, I think, for Hinduism, in Bengal at least, I think.

PS: Can you say more about what that's about?

IG: That's a big deal, too. It's a few days and there's a lot of ceremonies. There are these big goddesses, the Durgas. It's like a big kind of statute kind of thing. It's made of like foam and stuff. There's a priest and he does a lot of ceremonies in front of it. I think the whole thing took place at one of my dad's uncles' houses. But it was going on throughout the whole city or whatever. There's a lot of eating and dancing.

One night we went out, we went out at night in this little van, and we went through the city and we went and saw all the different Durgas. There's like all different kinds. We stayed out the whole night and just saw all these. Some were made out of marble and just different styles and stuff. Then we got home the next morning, and I thought that was pretty exciting that we stayed out the whole night doing that.

On the last day of the puja, you take the Durga and they submerse it into the Ganges River. So that was neat, into the Ganges and take it into the river. It was pretty exciting. But I was kind of young, so everything was a lot to take in.

One part of the ceremony--I don't know what day it's on--but they sacrifice these little goats and they give it to the Durga. I remember I was pretty shocked about that, because my dad's cousin was doing it. He'd chop off the head and take it and then put it in front of the Durga--I remember I was so shocked because all these little goats were in back of the house, and I wanted to ask my mom if we could take one home, and I felt so bad for them. But I guess I didn't really understand. I guess they don't do that anymore. They don't sacrifice the goats. Things are changing. That was, yes, when I was four we went through all of that. I guess I didn't really understand the meaning necessarily of what was going on. But, you know, just more of the traditional Hinduism ceremonies, whatever.

I remember when I went back when I was eight was the poita then, and that was the big deal then. So both times when I went there, there was a reason for us to go, like a big festival or something. So for the poita it was kind of a--I, again, don't really understand most of it. But my brothers, they had to shave their heads one day and they were just wearing like these cloths, like big cloths around them. For three days they had to stay shut up in a room and only their mother could go in and see them, and the priest was in there with them. So it was really different for me to take that in. But everyone else is

having fun and stuff.

PS: At this point, do you understand what all that ceremony was about, like what was only the mother allowed in, what was the priest talking about?

IG: I don't really understand why, but I've never really questioned it. I guess I could go back and see what all that stuff is.

PS: If you wanted to ask, do you have the sense that it would be okay to ask?

IG: Oh, definitely. I remember my parents trying to explain stuff to me. But at that time, I mean, they were kind of concentrating on my brothers. So I was really kind of out of it. I had a cousin, she's my age, actually, by a couple of weeks or something, so we're always together when I'm India. So she kind of would fill me in on what was going on, yes.

PS: And did she speak to you in Bengali?

IG: Yes, she did.

PS: And you always understood enough?

IG: Yes. See, because when I'd go to India, it would take a little while for me to get back into it, but I'd be comfortable with it after a while. So I'm sure my pronunciation probably wasn't very good, but, yes.

PS: You got along just fine?

IG: Yes.

PS: So when you think about yourself now as a spiritual being in terms of your religion, if somebody says, "What religion are you?" how do you respond to that?

IG: I say that I'm Hindu, because my mom always says that it's not necessarily about following rules. I believe in the basic principles. I went to Hindu camp, to the Hindu Mandir camp here. They have a youth camp. I went for two years, and each night there were two hours of religion class. So I picked up a lot of stuff there and just like some basic things. But there is stuff, too, that I would hear that I didn't agree with. So I've had some discussions with my mom about if I don't believe in this then am I not a Hindu. And she said that it's not really all of that, but it's kind of the way of life, I guess. I've been kind of confused, I guess, about my religion.

My parents aren't very strictly religious. They're more kind of--I don't know exactly how

to say it. We observe the things, but we don't go just by the rules, I guess.

PS: Not a strict adherence.

IG: Yes. We always eat beef here. So I kind of wonder, you know, how can everyone be Hindu if they're eating beef. So I think there's different degrees of what you're going to do. I've tried to. We have some books on Hinduism that I've tried to read, and I know certain things about it, but there's a lot more that I want to know, but right now in my life, I guess, I am not really looking into that. But maybe I want to sometime in the future.

PS: When you were growing up, did you have very many friends that were Hindu? I would imagine your white friends were not Hindu. That was obvious. But your Bengali friends were primarily Hindu?

IG: Yes. They were all. So, yes, we did a lot of stuff at the Hindu Mandir and stuff. And that was another way that we were connected with the Indian community was with the Hindu Mandir and stuff. Yes, one thing with my school friends is they would all go to church on Sunday, so that was another thing where I felt kind of like I wasn't in the flow of things. So when we started to go to SILC, that kind of took the place of that, because that was on Sunday. So rather than tell people, I used to say, "Oh, I have to go to Sunday school." So they would kind of take that in. That was kind of my compensation for that, I guess.

PS: Did any of your white friends ever say, "What is your religion?"

IG: Yes, they did, and I'd tell them, and they didn't really understand or anything. But, yes, then there would be some books in the library that were about Hinduism, and they'd say, "Oh, you know, they feel that cows are holy." So then there would be some discussions on that, and I wouldn't really know what to say.

PS: So it was kind of awkward for you when you didn't understand it?

IG: Yes, a little bit, but I didn't really understand either, I guess, so we were kind of in the same boat. It wasn't ever really like a problem or anything.

PS: Did any of your friends ever say to you, "How come you eat hamburger if you're Hindu?"

IG: Yes, I think so, and people still do today, some adults do, and I don't know really what to tell them. I just say that it's not a strict rule and things are different here than they are in India.

PS: Tell me a bit about what it was like moving into junior high and high school for you.

Was that distinctly different? What school did you go to?

IG: I moved here in fourth grade, so when I went to junior high, we were like the first class going into the sixth grade. They didn't have sixth grade before. So that was kind of different. Junior high was pretty normal. It was the first time--well, when I went here to this elementary school, it was the first time Suvranu didn't go to school with me. So that was kind of different, that we were going to different schools, but I got through that. Then when I went to high school, he was going to be a senior then, so I kind of liked that. I don't know if he did very much. Yes, but junior high was pretty uneventful and normal, I guess.

PS: Did you move with the same group of friends forward?

IG: Not really. I changed friends from elementary to junior high, just because we had a lot of different elementary schools coming in together. So, yes, I saw a lot of the same friends but made a lot of new friends.

PS: So tell me about what it was like going to high school.

IG: It was kind of nice because my brother was there. He was going to be a senior and I was a freshman. Since some other middle schools were coming in, I made a lot of new friends, and I was adding on to a core group, I guess. But you know how you change friends a lot of times and stuff like that. I enjoyed it. I think my freshman year was my favorite year, because I had a lot of fun and didn't have to worry about it. School wasn't very hard. So I got to enjoy it. Everything was really new and different with supporting the sports teams and getting involved in a lot of different activities was really nice.

PS: What activities were you involved in?

IG: I played soccer and I was on the Student Council, which was really neat, because we had the election in our eighth grade year for the ninth grade representatives. I knew that one of my brother's really good friends was going to be the co-president the next year, so I was really excited that I was going to get to be a part of that. So that was my main activity that I liked the most was probably Student Council, and I was really involved with that. But I was also in peer helpers, and I was on the math team, and I did track and field. I'm sure there's a few others that I'm missing. But, yes, freshman year was pretty much that.

Then as I got through high school, I kept with most of those. For soccer I was excited because I made the varsity team my sophomore year, which was exciting. A bunch of sophomores did, but it was new, because sophomores don't usually make it. I think like six of us did because there was a lot of openings. That was really fun. And Student Council I made it on again. I made it all four years, actually. I was co-president this last

year. So that was really exciting for me to have that position.

I tried speed skating my sophomore year. I wanted to try something new, so I did that and that was really fun. In my junior year I lettered in that, so I thought that was a pretty big achievement for me to pick something up like that. Sports, to run track, I hurdled, and that was a big deal because I'm so short. So it was kind of people would say, "You're a hurdler? I'm surprised because you're so short."

PS: How tall are you?

IG: I'm 4'11" and a quarter. So that was kind of a challenge. My first year I was actually very bad in it. I started my sophomore year hurdling and I was average. I didn't really stand out or anything. And then in my junior year, I worked on four-stepping. It's kind of just like getting a certain number of steps in between each hurdle. So I got a lot faster and I was running varsity then my junior year. So that was a big accomplishment. But that was the only time when I really like practiced something a lot and I was able to see results. So that was neat.

Other activities, I got involved in the school newspaper in my sophomore year, and it was kind of a tradition because my oldest brother was editor-in-chief of the paper and Suvranu was editorials editor. So I thought it was kind of I was obligated to join. So, yes, I started that. And then I was an editor in my junior year and this last year I was editor-in-chief then. So it was kind of nice for me to take on my brother's role, I guess. So that was neat.

So this last year, my senior year, was pretty busy, because I had some big positions that I had to kind of deal with and a lot of responsibilities. But now that I look back on it, it was pretty busy, but I think I took things a lot more seriously than I had to. Other than that, I played soccer again this year, but I got hurt so that kind of ruined my season. I quit speed skating, because I decided I couldn't do everything.

PS: You just ran out of hours?

IG: Yes. Yes, I decided it wasn't worth it to keep going with that.

PS: Did you have a job while you were in high school?

IG: Not during the school year, because I talked to my parents and we decided it probably wasn't worth it to have activities and schoolwork and then a job. So I did during the summers. I worked after my sophomore year in the summer, and since then I've worked at the university in the soil science lab. Both my brothers actually worked at different labs, but it was the same program. It's a USDA-sponsored program for undergraduates and undergraduate research, I guess, high school research, actually.

PS: And what did you actually do, take soil samples?

IG: Yes, and I did like pH reading and other stuff, a lot of different stuff. I worked in actually two different labs. So this last lab I worked in is soil science. So I do soil samples, but before that I worked in an agronomy lab. So I did a lot with like making solutions and stuff like that.

PS: Do you like that kind of work?

IG: I do, but actually I think that had partly to do with my decision to not go into science, really. I decided I didn't want to work in the lab for the rest of my life. So I decided to go into social sciences. I'm going to get a math major with a social science major. I'm in a program that mixes the two of them. So that should be neat, but it's a little different than I had been doing.

PS: And did you get hooked up to this work program at the university through either of your parents?

IG: Yes, through my dad. He found it and got Suman involved in that. So then we all kind of--

PS: So you kind of always were following in your brothers' footsteps.

IG: Yes.

PS: Did that make life pretty easy?

IG: I think it has been easy for me. I can see where it would be hard, because maybe if I couldn't live up to what they were achieving, I think that would be really hard if like Suman and Suvranu were always better than me. But I think it's been good, because I've been able to build on what they've achieved and be my own person, but still have goals that they kind of have set for me, I think. I've liked it, I think, following in their footsteps a lot.

PS: Do you think it's made your life easier?

IG: Yes, I think, because it's given me some direction, because a lot of times I try to do everything. But it helps with math team, for example. My brothers decided to do it. But I didn't have time to do mock trial or something like that, but I didn't do it because they didn't do it, I guess. It's just it didn't come into my mind to do it because they didn't, yes. So I think it's definitely made it easier because I didn't try to do too much.

PS: Did you date when you were in high school?

IG: Not really. I mean, I had friends who were guys, you know, but high school wasn't really like dating. People had girlfriends or boyfriends. There is a small population, I think, who dated, actually, and there's a lot of us who kind of, you know, we're just friends, I guess.

PS: So you didn't have any special friend that was a boy?

IG: Not special, no.

PS: No romantic connections?

IG: No, not really. I mean, you know, once in a while there's kind of, I guess. Well, it was just like dances or something. That was kind of something that, you know, regular high school thing where maybe you'd go to a dance with somebody you might have a romantic whatever, but that didn't really happen, I guess. I was too busy with other things, I think.

PS: So did you go to dances?

IG: Yes. I did mostly my senior year, though. I didn't go before that.

PS: Were your parents okay with you going to dances?

IG: I think so. I think that they liked that I didn't until my senior year, because, again, both my brothers didn't go to dance until their senior year. They always said that, "Oh, well, Suman and Suvranu didn't go until their senior year." So, you know, if I'd bring that up maybe before, but it just worked out that I didn't go until my senior year. So it was kind of strange, I guess, how that's happened.

PS: Sounds like whatever was set out for you to do you just did it.

IG: Yes.

PS: You never went through any phase where you were rebellious and angry and, "You can't do this to me and I'll choose my own life, and get off my case"? You never had that?

IG: No. It wasn't really--I guess it was my choice. I mean, my parents weren't like, "You have to do it like this." But just the choices that I made just happened to kind of follow what had been going on. I'm sure my parents wouldn't have had a problem with it if I went to a dance in my sophomore year, but I never really wanted to, and it just never came about.

PS: So you've just finished high school this spring.

IG: Yes.

PS: So right now when you think about getting mated someday, is that something that you have in your mind that someday you'll be married?

IG: Yes.

PS: And when you think about that, how do you imagine that that would happen? Your parents had an arranged marriage. Do you think that that would happen for you that way?

IG: No, I'm guessing probably it won't. Actually, my mom and I have kind of a joke that if I'm not married by the time I'm thirty or something, then I'll ask them to find me someone to marry. But I think now that I'm going to college I'm looking to maybe meet someone and see what happens. But I've never thought that I'd get an arranged marriage, just because even in India now things are kind of changing. You know, a lot of my aunts and uncles didn't have arranged marriages. So I think it would be a little strange for me to have one, and I don't think I'd want one of those.

PS: What would give you pause about it? What would concern you about having an arranged marriage?

IG: I guess the chances that you're going to be compatible with someone that someone arranges for you to marry, I think, are so slim that you might as well find someone that you're going to like. I guess I just don't think that you're going to necessarily know. By dating someone, you're going to have more of an opportunity to know if you're going to be compatible with than if you just meet them for a few times and then get married. I don't know. I know it just seems really weird, I guess, and I wonder how--you know, it seems to work very nicely for my parents. I guess it's more of a mind-set that they always had that, you know, it has to work, so they made the best of it. But I think growing up here, you know that you have an opportunity to find someone that you want to marry.

PS: Do your parents support that, you doing it differently?

IG: Oh, yes, definitely. My mom always says, "Whatever you want to do." She says that she's there if I want to get an arranged marriage. But my parents both say that they realize that it's natural now that we're not going to have them.

PS: When you think about who you might be interested in meeting--and I'm assuming you're going to fall in love. That's your vision is to fall in love with somebody?

IG: Yes.

PS: That when you think about falling in love with somebody, do you get any idea about what kind of person you'd like to fall in love with? Would you like to fall in love with another person like yourself who is the offspring of immigrants from India, or would you like to fall in love with a white person, or do you have any ideas at all about that?

IG: I guess I haven't really thought that far. I haven't really been exposed to a lot of different kinds of people yet. That's why I'm hoping that when I go to college, I'll get to meet a lot of different kinds of people and see from there. But I guess I don't really have a preference either way now. You know, whatever happens will happen. I've seen Symanhis girlfriend is the daughter of an immigrant. So I thought that was kind of strange. She's Indian but she's not Bengali, of course, and that's a little different, too.

I guess I don't really care. I can't see myself marrying someone who is directly from India, because that would be a little strange. I don't think we would be able to relate to each other. But it would be nice if it was someone who is a son of an immigrant, because then I guess we'd probably be able to relate a little better. But I can't rule out that I'm not going to marry just someone who's not even an Indian. So just whatever, I guess, will happen, I think.

PS: Are there any people that you would just right off the bat know you wouldn't be interested in, like somebody who is Japanese descent or somebody who was black or somebody who was Korean or somebody who came from a really poverty-stricken family?

IG: No, I don't think so. I'm pretty open, I think. But just what I said, I don't think someone like directly from maybe Japan or from India, you know, someone I think who has lived here maybe. Well, I guess I'd have to see. I don't know. I can't really rule out anything.

PS: So you're pretty broad-minded.

IG: Yes.

PS: Open to anybody.

IG: Yes.

PS: Are there any particular qualities that you would look for in terms of their religious orientation or their education level or anything?

IG: Well, religious orientation would probably be pretty hard for me to say that now

since I'm not real religious, I guess. So I wouldn't really care, but I know a lot of people have ideas about what their spouse--you know, what their religious background is going to be. So I don't have any. But that wouldn't be something that I would be worried about. Those other questions with religious or--

PS: Educational level.

IG: I'm hoping that I'll meet someone who maybe I study with or maybe I meet, in that kind of a setting. So, yes, I'm hoping that it will be someone who's pretty well educated.

PS: So that would be an important value for you?

IG: Yes, I think so.

PS: Bright and well educated?

IG: Yes, I think so.

ur far **PS:** Makes sense. Are there any thoughts about how your family communicated to you what's important in choosing a mate? Sounds like they sort of left it up to you.

IG: Yes. It hasn't really been a topic of discussion very often, yes. I guess I kind of maybe picked up on things, maybe, that my mom has commented on people like, you know, "He's such a good person," or something. You know, if she's commented on someone maybe in our community or something or--I guess, you know, it hasn't really come up. But I know who my mom would approve of, maybe, and I know that my parents both said that it doesn't really matter if they approve of the person I choose, but I kind of know what that is, I guess.

PS: So what kind of qualities do they say, "Oh, he's really--" what?

IG: Most of them are smart, obviously. And sometimes good-looking, I guess, and who's kind and family oriented, things like that, I think.

PS: Are there any kinds of the School of Indian Language and Culture that you've met that you think are prospectives?

IG: No. Well, I haven't gotten there in four years or five years, and I don't really remember meeting that many. I guess I haven't really thought of people here like that yet, Indians here. I've always kind of said that Indian guys that I've met here I think of more like brothers or cousins than I do of, you know, people to date, I guess. So that's why I'm hoping when I go to college to maybe meet other people, you know.

PS: Yes, that will be a big change for you. Let's talk a bit about your experiences in traveling in India, when your family went to India. How did you learn about India before you went? While you were there, what mechanisms were there to help you learn how to cope culturally and language-wise?

IG: Well, language-wise, I guess, my parents. We had been going to SILC, I think, before we went. So that prepared us a little bit to kind of brush up on reading.

PS: And you write Bengali?

IG: I can't anymore. I used to be able to, but I can write my name or--

PS: But you can read it?

IG: I think now I probably--I could at one time, but I could maybe very slowly, but not very well. I think if I studied for a while, and I probably will before I go back again. I probably can't right now. I think SILC probably helped me.

I remember I had no idea what to expect, and I asked my parents a lot of questions. Yes, I asked them a lot of questions, I think, now that I think about it. It was a long time ago, so I can't remember what I was thinking before I went. But, yes, it was very shocking, I think, when I went there. But being so young, I was open to--I wasn't very set in how I was living that I couldn't change. When we were getting ready to go home, I was happy to, you know, thinking to a carpeted house and washing my hair and nice bathrooms and things like that.

PS: Those were things that weren't there in India?

IG: Yes. That I was wishing for at home. And one thing, too, is when we went there, my cousins, and they would bring their friends to see us, and other kids would be in awe of us that we were from America and would ask us all kinds of questions.

PS: Like what?

IG: Just about like the carpeting and just what--I can't remember now. But they were all just very nice to us because we were from America, and that was just kind of a big thing. I don't remember specific things.

PS: So you were special?

IG: Yes, exactly.

PS: What kinds of things were shocking to you? Was there anything about the food or

the climate or how people interacted?

IG: Well, one thing, it's not like that anymore, I hear now, but there was like open sewer systems and so you could see the sewage along the streets. That was pretty shocking. And just the smell that was always there, you know, was strange. Just the whole--like when you're walking down the street, just the general like a dirtiness that's not here. I was really shocked about that, I remember, and I felt really kind of gross about everything. So that was one thing. And the bugs I remember. These are things that when I was four years old that kind of were important to me that were shocking. So, the bugs. I don't remember what else. But the milk I remember tasted really gross and I refused to drink it. That was one thing, too, that bothered me. I remember before we went, we had to get a lot of shots, and I didn't enjoy that very much. So it was kind of a big deal.

PS: When you were eight, you were at the ceremony for your brothers?

IG: Yes.

PS: Were there things about the way interacted socially, like how closely they stood to each other when they talked, or how they dressed, or anything like that that seemed odd to you or struck you as unusual?

IG: Not really. I think when I was eight I was kind of prepared for things, because I'd remember stuff, maybe not very clearly, but I remembered stuff from the last time I was that. So I don't think things were as shocking when I was eight. I think everything seemed smaller and like a little dirtier than I remembered them as, but when I went back when I was eight, in my dad's parents' house, they made a little Western toilet for us that they didn't have before. So that was kind of a special thing. When we were on our way there, my mom said, "Oh, you know, they're going to have this toilet there. So things will be nicer." So I was all excited. And we went there and it was this little toilet in this little kind of closet almost. But, you know, they were pretty proud.

PS: Surprised or disappointed?

IG: Disappointed, yes. But, you know, it was better than the alternative, I guess.

PS: What did the rest of the family there use?

IG: It was like the Eastern kind of--blocks and the hole. I don't know how to describe it, to be honest. It was pretty gross, I remember. Because when I was four, my kindergarten teacher told me to draw pictures. I could show them to the class when I came back, I think. I remember drawing the toilet, and that was a big deal, and I don't know, drawing these two little blocks that you'd stand on. We were always scared of falling in and things like that. That was a big thing is the bathroom to adjust to. Then also when I was eight

they had put in showers, which was a new thing, too, because before we just had to splash water all over ourselves. So they had showers when I was eight, too. So that was kind of a new thing. And those were nice, I think, I remember.

PS: When you went back and saw family members, I assume they were cousins and aunts and uncles and grandparents and all these people around. How did it feel to be back there? You were special because you came from America. Did it feel like you belonged there, or was there any part of you that says, "Is this really my family, and do I like it here?"

IG: I think everyone was so excited to see us that it kind of made you feel like you belonged there. We saw so many relatives in such a short period of time that it was pretty overwhelming. But, no, everyone was just really happy to see us and treated us so nicely that I never felt really out of place.

I remember one thing that was kind of awkward was I didn't really know how to act. You're supposed to give pranam to like older people, where you touch their feet and then touch your head or something. I never really knew what to do. But my mom would tell me to do it when we'd see people, and I'd be really confused, I remember.

PS: So what was it you were supposed to do?

IG: I still don't even know very well now. But when an older person that you respect, like your grandparents or something, when you come to meet them, you touch their feet and then you touch your head. I don't know exactly what it symbolizes. It's called pranam. I think we didn't do it a lot of times when we were supposed to just because we didn't know, and people understood there that we didn't know a lot of the ways. But another way I felt a little awkward, I think.

PS: So there was sometimes some awkwardness about not knowing how you were suppose to act?

IG: Yes. Exactly. I also felt really awkward about speaking, especially when we first would get there, because I knew that my pronunciation was really bad, so I'd be really embarrassed to speak, but slowly that would go away. But that was one thing, too.

PS: And how long did you stay each time you were there?

IG: I think we stayed, when I was eight, for two months, I think, approximately. Then I think for about the same time each time when we went. So it was for a long time.

PS: So you really settled in after two months?

IG: Yes.

PS: And where did you primarily stay and where did you sleep at night when you were there?

IG: We would stay with my dad's family, his parents and his brother, their house.

PS: Is that traditional, that you would stay with them rather than your mother's family?

IG: I think so. It's just been always kind of how it was that we'd stay with them. So I think, yes, because I was saying when my mom got married and my dad came over there, she even stayed with them rather than her own family when she was there. I don't know. It was kind of that she belongs to their family now, I think.

PS: Did you see any Indian movies?

IG: Yes. I never liked them at all. I still don't, actually. I remember seeing some sometimes, and they just kind of--I don't know what it was about them, but I really dislike them. One night, actually, my brothers and some of my older cousins and I think some of my aunts and uncles went to go see a movie in a theater, and I really wanted to go with them, even though I didn't like to watch the movies. But my aunt, she always used to scare me for some reason, I think, and she was telling me that I would get kidnapped if I went and all this stuff like that.

PS: Why would she do that?

IG: I don't know. She used to scare us about things, because she was really protective of us. She used to like tell us not to wear gold earrings because she said people would cut off our ears when we would be walking in the streets, things like that. She didn't want us to touch the refrigerator for some reason, because their refrigerator was kind of an off-limits place. We had brought some chocolates from America and so we had put them in there. So me and my cousin were going to go take some. Then my cousin was like, "Oh, no. Wait. My mom says not to touch it or else we might get electrocuted." I was really surprised. I thought, "Oh, we can touch it all the time at home." So I don't know if that was her trying to scare us or something with the electricity. I don't know.

PS: Keep you out of the food.

IG: Yes, I think that's what it was. Certain things I could see that my cousin didn't really know.

PS: She believed everything?

IG: Yes. But the movies, though, I didn't really understand them. I don't know. The actresses always seemed really overacting.

PS: Do you watch Indian movies here?

IG: No.

PS: Does your family?

IG: Yes. My parents like once in a while, not very often at all. But they'll bring in some from the Indian store. I don't know. It's just something about it. I don't even want to be around or watching them. I don't know why. I really don't enjoy them. They kind of scare me, some of them. I think I had kind of a bad experience. We went somewhere here, to some theater, and we watched one when I was really little, and it was about a boy who was running away from home, and he ran away from home for like many years or something. It was really sad. And I think that kind of soured me to them, because I remember it was really traumatic for me to watch that movie. I think that may be it.

PS: Some of these questions are about things you haven't done yet. You're going to go off to college. Where are you going?

IG: Northwestern University.

PS: In Chicago?

IG: Yes, in Chicago.

PS: And your brother is already there?

IG: Yes, he's going to be a senior there next year.

PS: And what is he doing that you'll have to do just like him?

IG: Well, actually, I think now I'm ready to kind of go on my own. I think things actually that I follow, I think I follow Suman, my oldest brother, maybe more so than I do Suvranu. But it's kind of strange, because Suvranu has always been the one that I've gone to school with for a short amount of time. But it just happened that I chose to go to the same place he did. It wasn't really one of my first choices to go to school. I didn't know I was going to go there. But Suvranu actually told me about this program that I'm going to do. So when I heard about it, I really decided I wanted to go there. So it was kind of unexpected that we were going to both go there. But it's because of him that I am going there, because he told me about this program.

But we're living on like opposite ends of campus. He's on the north and I'm on the south. So I don't think that we're going to see each other that much, but we're going to have a car, I think, and he'll have it. So we'll probably see each other that way, to share the car. But he's doing chemical engineering, and I'm going to hopefully do political science and math. They're kind of two different areas. But I've been asking him a lot of questions.

PS: So what does your brother do?

IG: He usually chooses like one or two activities and he does really well with them. For some reason, I like to get involved in a lot, and maybe in some I'm pretty mediocre at, but I like to be involved in a lot of things. So I'm trying to tell myself when I go to college I should just focus on a few. So maybe I'll be different that way. But he's given me a lot of advice and direction and things like that for next year. So it's been a good resource that he goes there.

PS: Do you have a career goal in mind with your political science and math major?

IG: Well, there's a lot of opportunities with investment firms and stuff like that to get jobs like that. But I'd like to go to graduate school and then eventually maybe teach at a university, or else I'd like to maybe get involved with like a government job like Secretary of State or something. I know that's pretty high up. I'd like to get involved maybe with the government. I don't know if I'd run for an elected position necessarily, you know. It could be kind of exciting, but I don't know if I'm cut out for that. So I'd like to maybe become a political analyst or something. I don't know. A lot of opportunities, but I don't know yet what I want to do exactly.

PS: And right now you're not feeling any huge pressure to decide that?

IG: No. I think it was hard enough for me to decide on what exactly I want to do. But, yes, this program helped me out, because it kind of focuses me on what I want to do.

PS: When you think about your own future, again there are probably some values that you got communicated to you really strongly when you were a child. Which of those values do you feel like you really own now inside of you and which would you want to make sure that your children got?

IG: I guess valuing education, for sure, to always work hard on my studies, because that's the most important thing, I guess, of all. That's one thing I always try to do my best at what I'm doing. But I don't know, that always works out. And then I think, again, my family. I really enjoy being with my family and I really care about them and what they're doing. So I think those two things I remember from my childhood. I think I kept those a lot, and I think I would definitely want to instill those in my children.

PS: These are kind of all future-tense questions. When you think about your future, maybe five years from now or ten years from now, and maybe those are two separate questions for you, when you think about your future, where do you see yourself being personally? What kind of work do you see yourself doing? Where do you see yourself being socially, like where might you live, what kind of lifestyle might you have, what kind of friends might you have?

IG: I think that in five years I see myself probably still going to school, maybe graduate school and probably not married yet and still kind of doing what I'm doing now, I guess. But in ten years I'd like to be married and maybe have a child, and I'd like to be working at one of the things I said before. I'm not sure yet exactly what, but I'd like to have a job by then. It's a path that I know I'm going to go on.

As friends, I'd like to definitely keep my ties to like my Bengali friends that I have been friends with ever since I've been a baby. I know they're my closest friends, that they really know me and I can be very open with them. So I'd like to definitely be friends with them still. And some of my closer friends now who are American, I'd like to be friends with them still. A few of them are going to school with me next year, so I'm sure we'll still be friends.

I'd like to still be very close to my family. I'm sure that my brothers will be out maybe in different parts of the country. I'm not sure. But maybe married. And my parents, I don't know what their plans are. They sometimes say they want to go back to India or move down south or something. I'd like to still be in close contact with them, but I'm not sure how possible that will be.

I always say now that I'd like to live in the Midwest still, but I'm not sure. I guess it depends on where my career and my marriage takes me. But I just seem to open to that, too.

PS: But you definitely have a vision of kind of a settled home life, you and your partner and a kid?

IG: Yes.

PS: Do you imagine yourself having more than one child?

IG: Yes, I think so.

PS: What would be ideal, in your mind?

IG: I guess, well, three. Kind of ironic, I guess. Yes, two or three. I think not more than that.

PS: Have you ever considered living in India?

IG: No, I don't think so, just because I have only been there twice, and I was so young when I went that I haven't really given much thought to that. I can't really see what situation would take me there unless--I don't really know. I mean, I could see maybe if my parents moved there, I could see myself visiting there a lot. But I really don't see myself ever moving there.

PS: You said your family is thinking of going next summer, and you would have gone this summer except for your knee surgery here. What do you think you'll look for the next time you go? It's been a long time since you've been there. What things do you think you'll be paying attention to or seeking out or looking for on the next visit?

IG: I think definitely my relatives. My brothers went actually last year, and they said that everyone was asking about me and that they seem like they want to see me more than they wanted to see them, and they were joking about it. But it kind of made me feel guilty that I haven't gone and so on. Also, I don't know how long it will be after this next trip when I'll go again. So I want to definitely go again, because I don't know how long it will be. And it's been so long that I think it's really important to see all my relatives.

PS: Would you go with your parents or by yourself?

IG: Hopefully with my parents, because when I was going to go this year, my mom wasn't going to go with me. Actually I was going to go with my neighbors. They are our really good friends. For their graduation present they were going to take me. But actually I didn't feel comfortable, because the awkwardness I was talking about when I didn't really know what to do when I see my relatives. I think it would really help if I had my mom there, because she can understand maybe what I'm feeling and she knows that I don't really know what's going on. So I would definitely want her to go, I think, and it would be nice if my dad could go, too. He's going this fall, I think.

PS: Have your parents gone back several times without you?

IG: Yes, my mom went twice and I think my dad went twice, too. My mom's dad died and my dad's mom died, so they both went to see them when they were sick. That was kind of hard, too, when they died, because I hadn't seen them very often. I knew them, but I didn't really, so it was kind of a hard thing to deal with when they died, because I didn't really know how to grieve. So that was kind of hard, too.

PS: So if you went again, when you go next summer, you really want to have one of your parents with you?

IG: Yes.

PS: Preferably your mom?

IG: Yes.

PS: And why would your mom be better at that?

IG: Well, one thing I kind of joke, too, is when my dad goes back, he's gets right back into like the groove. Like he forgets that he has a family and stuff like that. When he's back home, he plays cards and he's really a loud person. So I don't think he'd be as receptive to what I'm feeling and stuff like that. But my mom, I think, would maybe--and probably, too, because we'd stay with my dad's family, so she's kind of an outsider there, too. I think she's not going to be like my dad is.

PS: She'd have more time to work with you.

IG: Yes.

PS: Are there any aspects of being the first generation born in the United States of Indian heritage which you find difficult in any way? And the other side of that, are there any things that you find are real advantages?

IG: I think it's difficult, because I feel like a lot of times we're--I know we nag our parents a lot of times about things, because they're learning a lot of things new, especially with the language and stuff, we try and help them get rid of their accents and stuff like that. I know it won't happen. But that's one thing. We feel like we're the experts a lot of times on American culture, and so we have to teach our parents about it. That's strange, because my parents, my dad has been here for like thirty years, you know, longer than I've been here, whatever. So he should be the one who's telling me things. But it works out, I think, where I always feel like I have to kind of watch over my parents to make sure that they're not embarrassing themselves or things like that, when they know how to handle themselves, I'm sure. But I guess we feel kind of obligated to do that.

This is kind of a cliché, but you get the best of both worlds. We know a lot about the Indian culture, but then the American culture, you know, we grew up here and stuff. So we can take the best of both.

PS: What things would you say are the best of the Indian culture and the American culture? When you think about which ones you really like and keep, which aspects are the best?

IG: I think maybe just like the values that I was talking about, like the family and just

education and things like that maybe from the Indian standpoint.

PS: So you don't see American culture valuing education?

IG: Well, I do. I do. But I mean I think that it's not maybe one of the top things, I think. And then just little things like food and the arts and things like that I've been exposed to because I'm Indian that I think can help me in other ways here, too.

PS: So those are the Indian values?

IG: Yes. And then from the Americans, I guess I feel maybe more American than I really do Indian just because I grew up here. So it's kind of hard to pick out what is exactly American and what's Indian, like openness to new ideas and diversity and things like that.

PS: So you don't see that quite as strongly in the Indian values?

IG: Maybe not. When we usually learn about India in school, I remember a teacher told us that India is one of the most diverse countries or something, and I kind of found that hard to believe. I think here there's a lot more diversity that I've seen in different ways of thinking and stuff like that. Just, I guess, technology, things like that. I think here we're a lot more advanced in that sense than India is.

PS: Technology in terms of household commodities? Because certainly India is computer-literate.

IG: Yes. Oh, yes.

PS: They're a leader in that respect.

IG: Yes, definitely. Yes, my mom and I always have that argument. When I say that, she's like, "Oh, no. India is--," you know. Yes, just like TV and stuff like that. I think if I was living in India or if I had lived here and then I'd go back to live in India, I think I wouldn't be as comfortable. I feel privileged that I'm living here. And even though my cousin in India probably doesn't feel like that, I feel like I have a privilege to live here.

PS: So you've had some real advantages. You've got carpet on your floor and a nice shower and a regular toilet.

IG: Yes, and there's like opportunities to travel more. My cousins haven't left India at all, and I've been able to travel to India and Europe. You know, it's things like that, that they haven't gotten a chance to do.

PS: And most of your family, other than your parents, everybody else in your family is

still living in India?

IG: Yes. My mom, her sister and her family live in England, and one of my dad's brothers and his family lives in London. Actually, my dad's brother's wife is British, so that was kind of a different thing, too, that, you know, when we were talking about who I would marry. She's not Indian. I think that was kind of an example to where my family has been pretty open about. I always knew that they would accept whoever I chose to marry.

PS: Are there any other things that you would like to talk about for this oral history that I haven't asked you about, things that you think would important for future generations to know?

IG: One of my mom's nieces from India came here, and she was commenting on Suvranu. She had seen him at Northwestern and she was saying that he doesn't seem confused like a lot of first-generation, or whatever, second-generation Indian kids are. That kind of struck me as, you know, that's their impression of us, that we're confused a lot of times. I think a lot of us are confused, just like I'm confused about religion and things like that. But out of that confusion, I do think we do know who we are. It's just that we're a little bit more complicated than other people might be.

PS: "Other people" meaning?

IG: Like people who don't have kind of two worlds to deal with. But I think that each world kind of gives us something that makes us who we are.

PS: So are you glad you are who you are?

IG: Yes. Oh, definitely, yes. I wouldn't change anything.

PS: You led right naturally into the last question, which is when somebody says to describe yourself, who are you, how do you respond to that question? So who are you, Ina?

IG: Well, I guess I would have to say somewhere in between like an Indian and American person. I don't know. A lot of times where you're from has a lot to do with who you are. So, yes, I don't know what more to say about it.

PS: Other qualities about yourself that don't have to do with your ethnicity that you would describe yourself as?

IG: Yes. As I said before, I'm very family oriented, and I care a lot about succeeding, but that's not the most important thing, I don't think, to me. And education is very important.

But, yes, that's a tough one.

India Association of Minnesota Historical Society (Minnesota Historical Society) **PS:** So are there any other things that you'd like to say by way of closing? I've kind of