MAYA LIN: 

dying and the acknowledgement of the death is so much a part of the living. It's a ritual. And there are big rituals around it.

rarefied world, where what mattered was what you thought. It's academia. It's what you're thinking. And your gender didn't

you've actually inserted an object. You've dropped a physical thing into the earth. All I wanted to do was cut the earth and

black ditch of shame and sorrow." If that's what I read, I wouldn't want it either. I could understand. I could understand

think it was all — if I was a Vietnam veteran and someone said, you're getting a ditch, a black ditch. I think the quote was "a

BILL MOYERS:

They read into it. The other thing they read into is that it's a V for victory. And I kept going, well, if you tried to do that, as

scar.

BILL MOYERS:

BILL MOYERS:

Meanwhile, my brother and I go into my dad's ceramic studio every day after school, throwing clay at the clock to cover it

English professor, Asian lit professor. And I think that was what we assumed — we're going to study, study, study.

good in math. I happen to know you were first in your class. You could have become anything. You chose to be an artist.

MAYA LIN:

that was what was really important. You had to had to pursue something that you really had a passion for, that you really,

at this work and going, it is so Taoist. Talking to me, am I going, I don't know anything about that. But of course, it's all

nature.

fortress against nature. If you look at, say, a Japanese house, if you walk through the house, you are being given absolute

connection, so you're not treating the building as it's own castle. Think about Western European tradition. It's almost the

got this Eastern aesthetic, but it looks like it's coming more out of Japan.

MAYA LIN:

MAYA LIN:

BILL MOYERS:

existed, you just know what's in front of you. And so I think it's a bit of both, where I think they were definitely wanting us

ties into an inherent love for the natural environment. I will go to sites that are just so beautiful beyond compare and I

very early age I understood what it means to have a species go extinct. And I think I was horrified that one species could do

bit of a student. I never become an expert. And you can tell, the minute I'm done with the project, I forget, almost

to what was going on behind the building. So I started talking to the scientists, talking to the professors. They started giving

And I actually think, from a child's point of view, you're not focusing on the daily news the same way. I was

Absolutely. I would say you'd get a sense. I would say I would feel in my fingertips sometimes. I just have a

Feeling bad, like what is wrong with you? You're Chinese American. And I remember just politely declining

Hanging out with a group of Chinese Americans. And I knew that this was bad. But at the same time —

You mean feeling bad.

How so?

You want your two children to know all the way back to Shanghai?
again — and I had not known anyone who had died. I just had a feeling that it’s got to be the most painful experience that you will ever go through. But what you have is the memory. And you have to accept it. And then you have to turnaround walk back into the light. But if you don’t accept it, you’ll never get over it.

BILL MOYERS: Maya Lin, thank you very much.

MAYA LIN: Oh, you’re welcome.

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