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MR. HIROWO 'HARRY' AOKI

April 22, 1972

Interview With Mr. Hirowo Aoki; Born 1921 - Japan; Cumberland, British Columbia; Japanese School Principal's Son; Public School And Japanese School; Vancouver - 1934; The First White Friend.

Interviewed by: Maya Koizumi

Oral History Project, Vancouver. Cultural Communities Series.

Interview no. 77, Tape no. 1 of 2, Tracks 1 & 2, Speed 3 3/4

Vancouver, Oral History Project, 1972

Interview no. 77, Tape no. 1 of 2, Track 1

(short conversation in Japanese)...

Miss Koizumi: Your name please...?

Mr. Aoki: Aoki.... ..Harry Aoki..

Miss Koizumi: And...when were you born..?

Mr. Aoki: Born...19...21..

Miss Koizumi: Were you born in Vancouver..?

Mr. Aoki: In Cumberland...Vancouver Island..

Miss Koizumi: And..what was your father's work..?

Mr. Aoki: He was ...a school principal...Japanese language school..

Miss Koizumi: Were there many Japanese in Cumberland at that time..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..there were quite a few people from...Kimamato... Hiroshima..king...working in the coal mines in the...because of the large number ...in several hundreds...the Japanese government asked my father to begin the school there..

Miss Koizumi: Oh...it was the school that your father started..?

Mr. Aoki: That's right..yes...yeah...

Miss Koizumi: And...did you have brothers and sisters..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes...I have...two sisters...and three brothers...

Miss Koizumi: Why di..do...What is your first memory? (both chuckle) ...do you remember the scenery..or..how the houses were and..what.. how...did the town look and things like that..in Cumberland..?

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes...My first memory..is...not of Cumberland..but .. I was in California..on the San Francisco ferry...I remember the fog horn sounding...and...that frightened me and I started to cry... and...a white...lady spoke to me which scared me more...

(both chuckle)...so this is my first memory...so I had a...
a traumatic experience...

Miss Koizumi: Oh...Well...what were you doing in California at this time?

Mr. Aoki: Well..we were...going to live there...

Miss Koizumi: ..oh...

Mr. Aoki: ...because...after making the school here my father was supposed to do some work in the United States..But about that time ..immigration of Japanese...was curtailed..and..he could not live there...so we came back..

Miss Koizumi: Oh...So you went down there for a while..or what..?

Mr. Aoki: No...we weren't there too long..though..

Miss Koizumi: So you came back to Canada you say..?

Mr. Aoki: That's right..yes..

Miss Koizumi: And then..your mother ?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..she is also a graduate from normal school too...

Miss Koizumi: And...how was your childhood..?

Mr. Aoki: Well childhood was...we had a very good one...We were in small community ...with a large number of...Japanese concentrated in one area..So our social life was very full...there was..ther e were enough of us ya see...And as a matter of fact...We..our language was Japanese...Of course our parents spoke no English..or hardly any...And since we had a Japanese school where the language curriculum was exactly the same as the one in Japan...Our Japanese was quite proficient...and we had no trouble communicating with each other... This is right through...this applied right through to high school.. and to us at that time...English was a second language..and I recall having difficu lty..even at say...grade six and seven..speaking to

....

Miss Koizumi: You went to public school at the same time you went to Japanese school...?

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes...we went to public...public school first and after that...every day...we went to Japanese school for a couple of hours...and this was...and since this was concentrated on a language ..we spent just as much as...as much time on the Japanese language as on the English..and since we used Japanese more...But it has had quite a bit of...quite an effect on our English...And I think you will find in cert ain age groups especially people coming from Cumberland their pronounciation of Japanese I think is...very good considering that we are not living in Japan...And also I think you will notice our...little bit...our strange English...It is not as fluent because we think...I understand there is such a thing as a language code...which children crack at about...ages...oh.. four..five...And although we..managed to..crack through the Japanese code...language code....we did not do it with English.... Now..maybe I'm wrong...but...I'm...I..I..could recognize Cumberland English...anytime...And even with peo...some people who have been... well schooled...

Miss Koizumi: When you went into grade one in public school..

Mr. Aoki: ...yes...

Miss Koizumi: ..was it the first time that you encountered English..?

Mr. Aoki: ..No...My father set up a kindergarten...especially to prepare us in English and we went to this for a couple of years..

But...I'm afraid we didn't pick up very much...because..although we.. we had... teachers come in..we used English just for..

say and hour an a half or two hours between...in the kindergarteen ...hours...and none of that...as soon as we got outside it was Japanese again...

Miss Koizumi: Was it hard for you...in grade one...to...to study in school?

Mr. Aoki: Well I didn't notice it particularly..because the school system set up a special class..

Miss Koizumi: Oh...is that so...

Mr. Aoki: ...just for us...And this continued during in grade one and grade two...and after that it was more of an integration...But.. the communication was the thing...And..generally...since language is fairly easy at that level...we had very little trouble..in the school...although I...I've noticed this..in the later grades... composition was always a difficult subject..for... ... but...things like mathematics...art...English grammar was no problem as a matter of fact...I think as a group we were rather good...good with it...at it..that's just on...just in school...in our speech we still scrambled things...But/ ya know when it when it came to getting grades in it...we did very well ...composition was usually very poor... because the thinking process in English was not fluid ...

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh...How..how many percentage of Japanese... children were in school...?

Mr. Aoki: ...ohh...

Miss Koizumi: ...I mean more or less...if you're in grade three.. then...

Mr. Aoki: Well...grade one was a hundred percent..

Miss Koizumi: ...oh...well..because that's a special class..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes...(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..and I'm..I don't see how the teacher managed...but..she did..she was a very understanding person ...Around grade 2 this thinned out quite a bit...I would say..half and half...About grade 3...Well we...we just took our proportion according the the general population..and...but then..At the time that I was going to school there...since we had a large..population of Japanese..I would say..maybe...one quarter to one third were Japanese all the way through....

Miss Koizumi: So...after you..start going to public school...then you would come back home...and then go went to Japanese school...?

Mr. Aoki: ...Right...

Miss Koizumi: Well..what time did you start...it was...after supper?

Mr. Aoki: Well the...no..the...younger ones..up to I think it was ...grade six....went directly after school....this is the regular public school...And since the school was only about....oh..maybe a five minute walk away...School was out around ...three..by about four..we were in the other school...

Miss Koizumi: Then how many hours did you study...in the..ah..I mean grade.....?"

Mr. Aoki: It was an hour and a half...two hours and we had too...which was much more difficult than in the public school..

Miss Koizumi: ...uh-huh..What kind of subjects did you learn in the Japanese school...?

Mr. Aoki: Oh we learned the reading...and writing...things like... calligraphy...Japanese history..Japanese geography...We also had ...my mother...taught music...

Miss Koizumi: ..oh..

Mr. Aoki: As a matter of fact...we learned how to read music in the Japanese school...you know...She played the piano..she usto play..soprano...We..we learned all the..most popular Japanese so..children's songs... ..And also we...we had some calisthenics ...we also had a subjectwhich I think is very significantly Japanese.... shoshin.....

Miss Koizumi: ..oh..

Mr. Aoki: And this went on..all..the shoshin went on...went on all the way through...ah...So we had a...fairly thorough grounding I think..In Japan where they studied mathematics and things like this...Well we didn't spend any time on ..on it..because we were getting it anyway... But ya know....we...some of us memorized, ya know...things like the.....and..some of us even managed to memorize the..all the emporers... I think...nine...I wasn't too enthusiastic ya know..it was too difficult...and didn't mean that much ya know..

Miss Koizumi: So that...in the school..like you had pictures of the emperors..... ....?

Mr. Aoki: (laughing)..There was...we had and all this..oh yes..

Miss Koizumi: So you celebrated all the Japanese national holidays..?

Mr. Aoki: Not all..but..some ofthem yes...

Miss Koizumi: Oh...

Mr. Aoki: At new years we had our ....

Miss Koizumi: So that in public school you learned about things England and.... and in Japanese school you learned about...Japanese ....

Mr. Aoki: Yes..yes..

Miss Koizumi: Was there any contradicting...throughts coming in.. into your head...?

Mr. Aoki: Well..contradictory..political thoughts of course.. because at that time..you must remember Japan was pretty active on the Asiatic mainland..ya know..they were taking chunks out of China...which was all...I remember was all justified...and we used to read things like ya know..and things like..what you call things like ....and..as a matter of fact... instead of playing cowboys and indians we were ... (Mr. Aoki chuckles)...So... we were..I think...typically Japanese kids...As a matter of fact ...when...we visisted Japan... playing with the local kids..we were right in there...we knew exactly what to do ...same games..same songs..

Miss Koizumi: ....oh...

Mr. Aoki: Course there was...ya know...we didn't understand everything that was going on...but..as kids are fairly simple..we had no trouble...relating...as a matter of fact...we related more to Japanese anyways...Because there was...all the way through..this is a two way thing...one is by natural choice..and the other one was.. there was...an active discrimination there...ya know..these things called race rumbles...I started to have them when I was in Grade One.. as soon as I stepped out of my front yard..to go to school..This was ..took the form of fistfights...rockfights..In the winterthere always was..you keep us in and we had our own...organize..organized way of..even a fighting with snowballs..or..having hidden caches of snowballs frozen or with rocks in them..ya know..and we would.. suck in..... ub in what was called the enemy..Which was..made up of ..ya know..the local white kids...And at the time...because..Japan

and China were rive....eh... ...well we were fighting them as a group...and...I'm afraid that this is the way that we grew up... in a very racsist place...I remember..like..one..one of the things I had to do was go to the post office every day...and...not..it wasn't a common occurance...but I used to get jumped once in a while by a gang..and..all my brothers went through this...these were kids you know...and fortunately they were kids...therefore no..none of us were killed...but...oh some of this went on up as far as high school ..there's..there was some blood..

Miss Koizumi: Oh..in high school...

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes..so..in..some..Well it wasn't always like this.. but just the same...there were enough incidents that when..when we saw we were very wary..So..in effect...sometimes we fought to go to school..and fought to go home from it...and..There were...it was a very hostile time too..And..I imagine..this being a coal-mining town...the people were very rough..and..I think usually the labouring classes...for all the experience that they have..in being downtrodden..could be most vicious ..because they don't think they just go by emotion...If somebody says..'Those Japs are taking our jobs..'..that's a hundred per cent feeling with them...And since they don't intellectualize..they won't talk about it...they'll come over and hit you...So we grew up in a ghetto..half of our choosing half as protection..I don't know which is which..I think one caused the other...ya know...there's sorta..one worked on the other...But otherwise we just..we just took this as...just a..just normal society ...And..basically I don't think it has..really changed you know.. even now...Course I don't have to fight when I go out in the front

yard...but...For all the talk..about...understanding..I'm afraid maybe...there is something that we were talking about... Just think now...maybe we've been talking about assimilation... also..discrimination...also...discrimination...assimilation and integration...But..you assimilate into something...You integrate to a lesser degree..into a larger society..And..as far as assimilation is concerned..this has to be a two way process..where a samaller group may assimilate into something...But the larger group has to allow a passage into it..and this is not happening..not really... not where it counts..Because ~~they~~ you assimilate only those qualities which are of the majority..in other words..in this case..Anglo-Canadian...call it that...if you have those qualities..you'llaccept that part of it...The other part..is..the Japanese part is rejected.. So...but even then..since...assimilation..complete assimilation means..accepting all of you...ah..it's..it's never going to be a hundred percent...because..I do not think there's...in the near future..the majority would...accept our...the colour of our skin.. our physical appearance...Because the thing is...it's always on their terms..and dialogue even breaks down...Where...I think maybe this is a different...different make-up...I don't know...I don't ~~t~~pretend to understand it completely...but..since...it seems to me that..traditionally..the western..people..or the western culture..is something which is..taken out of the west..and <u>imposed</u>...And it has been imposed all over the world..And..The Eastern people are not...are quite opposite to this...they're not too inclined to impose their culture on anybody..but they've already absorbed whatever comes in..Well.. look at Japan right now they..they have..accepted...the industrialization to such an extent that they have the number one pollution

problem in the world..They were very successful (both chuckle)..in a way...and also..they lost something...It is just starting to become apparent now...I'm sorry I got off the subject...(both laugh)

Miss Koizumi: No...so...the only contact you had with the white people..were the kids in the school...?

Mr. Aoki: Right...

Miss Koizumi: And...that..you never became friends with them ...you always...had the your Japanese group and the white group..?

Mr. Aoki: Ahh...now I had..I had one friend...

Miss Koizumi: ...uh-huh...

Mr. Aoki: ...who was..a very close friend...when I was about ten years old...And..he was the exception...As a matter of fact..he had a rather rough time from his friends...

Miss Koizumi: How did you become friends with him...?

Mr. Aoki: Oh because..walking to school..I walked by him..and we werein the same class..and...Well kids at..ages nine and ten..there is nothing really wrong with them..you know..They get all this stuff from their parents...and...His parents were very nice...In fact.. As a matter of fact...the..this was the first... house that I had bin..asked into...for a glass of milk and cookies..And at that time..this was exceptional...Because I don't know of any other...people who..in our community who had the same kind of experience...at least I've never heard them talk about it...

Miss Koizumi: And he came to visit you too..?

Mr. Aoki: No..he didn't come to visit us..(Mr. Aoki laughs)..although we weren't that far away...Just that..we were..chums at school... No..we actually didn't do very much..you know..there wasn't time for one thing..because there was recess..before school..after school

I just had a short time to...before I went at..my Ja...gone to the Japanese school you see...But at least...like on..passing through ..like on a Saturday or Sunday...if I was..If I was going by..I could drop in...Come to think of it...I don't know if I ever asked him to come over..for one thing...because..that was unheard of.. (Mr. Aoki chuckles)...

Miss Koizumi: ..Oh...So what did you think of the white people's house..and..food and things....?

Mr. Aoki: Well..I..We lived in a very Japanese manner..and..You must understand that..most of the people..being labourers ..in a.. ina coal mine...Were not...financially very well off...so it was.. quite a primitive way of living...You know the houses..were not real houses...But..some of the people..... lived in where real houses ah..not all of them..Because there was a whole row of houses... for..houses for..miners..there..there were quite a few Italian..

Miss Koizumi: Oh yeah...

Mr. Aoki: And they were in no great shape either...These were put up by the company..and looked like there's /certainly looked alike..but they were small..They had sort of a ghetto thing going too...Although I didn't think of it..as such...I still remember it was like that... There were..I think about two thousand Chinese people then..they were all in Chinatown...where it seemed that they used to have a fire practically every day in the summertime...at /used least, that's what we to say, you know..(Mr. Aoki laughs)..the fire engine was active all the time...

Miss Koizumi:

Mr. Aoki: I don't know...(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..

Miss Koizumi: So your..your Japanese community didn't have anything

to do with the Chinese community..?

Mr. Aoki: WEll..very little...I understand that there was a... Chinese...restaurant..chop suey house..And maybe we'd go once every two years...I remember going..but we didn't go very often..actually there was...I would say..practically no contact ..between their community and ours...except that...they usto have a...peddler.. bringing vegetables..and..maybe some barbecued meat..and this sort of thing...he usto come every Saturday..and we'd buy things from him..that was the only contact...

Miss Koizumi: So that maybe that in later grades, and I'd think that you'd learn history or geography or something..in public school.. did you sometimes...get in con..contact with.../like, ...things about Japan.. or things about Asia...or things like this...what...?

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes..why ..if you ever..come across those old text books ...and I imagine some of them..aren't very much better...I remember one with a...very...dark-looking Japanese girl..she was carrying a baby on her back...very short...and I dont think it said much.. probably said something like...I don't recall because there's so little there...I don't think it was of any significance..except that people went around in rickshaws..and lived in paper houses.. and that I think was about the extent of it..

Miss Koizumi: Did you think of something about..when..what did your teacher...?

Mr. Aoki: Well..this is about what we expected...I dont think anybody said anything about it..ya know..Just that we knew...that there was a lot more to it than that..and...About that time you see..we... you know how kids are interested in soldiers..and we knew that Japanese had warships..and..you know..they were..flying their air-planes..and had beaten the ...the Baltic... ...Russian

.....(Mr. Aoki chuckles)...you know..

...things like this...So..we knew there wasn't paper houses and.. ..But as far as the housing was concerned..that's where it was..and..

Miss Koizumi: Like the white teacher didn't give the opportunity..or.. ...they don't..about... ...?

Mr. Aoki: No..for one thing..teachers at that time..at that time.. were probably a lot less sophisticated than the ones now...But I must say the ones now don't impress me a great deal anyways...But.. I don't think they had the...even the curiosity...Outside of the curiosity...there was..in the form of curio...I don't think they took the Japanese seriously .. I...I..think we were sort of a lesser breed...and..Well we used to ..we had our opinion about them..you know..

Miss Koizumi: What did you used to say about that?

Mr. Aoki: Well..the one thing we always usto say...was they were

.....

Miss Koizumi:

Mr. Aoki: I'm sorry.. ..yes...This is one of the things that we noticed...playing games and this sort of thing.. and...You see...you must realize..that these kids..that we were dealing with..were also..children of immigrants too..And these immigrants were working in the coal mines under the same lousy conditions...in about as...uneducated as you can get them... and they were very coarse..in..I think..the Japanese..still had.. maybe an edge on them in this respect...because..of the..traditional things like courtesy...which...any Japanese is brought up with..No matter how lean their living conditions are..And this is why we noticed...what we'd call a lack of...basic..finesse...Ah..This..this was my first impression...

Miss Koizumi: So you kind of despised them...

Mr. Aoki: Yes..we did..

Miss Koizumi: in a way..you didn't try to be assimilated in.....?

Mr. Aoki: No..no...The thing is that..the only ones that we came in contact ...housing we came in contact with...were..the miners...you know..and their families..And..of course the..the people in the different strata of society..would have nothing to do with us...the..the more educated ones...or the ones wealthier ones ...the ones with culture..had nothing to do with us...I mean..our contact was just on a..rubbing shoulders on the way through..only.. But that was all..I would say totally no contact..although...I must say that...in Cumberland at the time..they had a very good educator called Mr. Apps...And he was..very understanding sort of man..as a matter of fact..My father realized that our speech was bad ..so he..had a..a course..or a series..where each person had to get up and give a talk..and ..Mr. Apps was kind enough to come over to do the criticizing..So..but then that wasn't quite enough of course...ya know...So..somebody says...'Okay..in 2 months..you're going to have to talk for 5 minutes...in English..'....(both chuckle)... Japanese there was no problem..but to do it in English was a...a..practically an..insurmountable project ...ya know..it's..it's a big thing..and it was very difficult...

Miss Koizumi: So that in your talking you...you spoke Japanese all the time...?

Mr. Aoki: Yes ...I would say..ninety percent..

Miss Koizumi: When did you start..speaking English..at..school...?

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Mr. Aoki: ....quite a few...well my father came over to start a Japanese school here...you see...There was another one..was asked to come over...And this was...closer to Hastings Park...There was the large one...on Alexander Street..but this was a...district they..that they usto call 'heaps'...And..there were..there was quite a concentration of Japanese there..since this was quite a ways from ...in distance..from downtown...And they started the school with maybe...oh..two hundred-fifty children...

Miss Koizumi: ..oh..

Mr. Aoki: ...but the other one had about a thousand or more. ..

Miss Koizumi: Oh..I see...So the other one you had... teachers.. ....

Mr. Aoki: The..the..no..no...Not in Cumberland...I mean the..

Miss Koizumi: Oh yeah..

Mr. Aoki: ..the one on Alexander Street..

Miss Koizumi: ..Oh..I see..

Mr. Aoki: ..was the largest...There was..Mr. Suttles school..

Miss Koizumi: But..two hundred a'fifty..is quite a lot...

Mr. Aoki: It's quite a number..

Miss Koizumi: And in the school is it still following the same thing...like Japanese ....?

Mr. Aoki: No..no..Well..the course was the same..And..it must have been fairly adequate..because friends of mine went..from high school into the university in Japan..wrote their examinations in Japanese and they got right in...in the ...And...

...others...They managed that...because at that time...you see.. there were certain things closed to Japanese at..at U.B.C.... you could not become a teacher..you could not become a lawyer... you could not become a pharmacist...They allowed...well there was no...I don't think there was a medical school there..but there were Japanese doctors..but there were...so many...oh..engineer.. there was no Japanese engineers...

Miss Koizumi: ..really?...

Mr. Aoki: So..what they did was...go to school in Japan...Japanese university..And..... there were..we did have..our proportion of university graduates working in sawmills..because there just no jobs...for them you see..For commerce..there's..quite a few had commerce degrees...But..no white firm would hire them..As a matter of fact..it's a very strange thing..just a few years ago...another friend of mine..went back university..came out with a commerce degree...he's Japanese...bilingual...And..before his year was finished ...this is his final year..He was among the top students...Everyone in his class had a job...And this fellow...finished in the top five I believe...didn't have any offers...He wrote fifty letters and he had two replies...

Miss Koizumi: ...uh-huh..

Mr. Aoki: And..most of the firms he wrote to..were dealing with Japan...so...

Miss Koizumi: ..oh..I guess there's still ....then...

Mr. Aoki: ..think about that one for a while..and this exists right now...today...So..this is why...I don't have..don't hold outvery many great hopes for this this thing / called.... assimilation...It's not your ability..it's not the character of the man...You see..the thing And well.. that means so much to the western people is..material things...

,...this commerce and business..When they don't even...accept.. Japanese..Canadians to work with them...I mean their work is just as good as for ...So you hit them where they're greedy.. and even they..will..discriminate..Since they're..where else..How else do you get to them..not through their conscience...Because.. this has been proved...that although they admit to some of the wrongs that's been done during the war...They will admit it..but they will..they will not do anything about it..they won't rectify anything..

(tape interrupts)..

Miss Koizumi: So..when you came to Vancouver..you were in Grade Six..?

Mr. Aoki: ..yes..

Miss Koizumi: Then...how many years did you go to..You went to public school until high school..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..finished high school...About that time..my older brother was going to university...so I was helping him..and just when it came time for me to go..well the war had started..

Miss Koizumi: Yes..And...then..did you go to a Japanese school all the way..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..I went to Japanese school everyday...starting from grade one..

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh...

Mr. Aoki: ..so I went to Japanese school for 12 years..

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh..And before the war...you s..spoke Japanese at home all the time...even when you were in high school..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..even now..at home..right now it's mostly Japanese..

Miss Koizumi: ..yeah..You have..how many older brothers and sisters

..you have..?

Mr. Aoki: I have..one..older brother..

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh...

Mr. Aoki: ..and...two younger ones...And two sisters..

Miss Koizumi: oh..two sisters...Two brothers and two sisters.. and...below you..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..

Miss Koizumi: And..they all speak Japanese do they..at home..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes...although the youngersister..being brought up in different place...well she grew up in Alberta...Was exposed to.. much more English than we were..so ..She speaks English better than any of us..and consequently she speaks less Japanese too..

Miss Koizumi: ..How..when you were in high school..then you learned in English already..?

Mr. Aoki: (laughs)..huh...It's questionable..because..you see.. until grade six...I was in a..practically a Japanese ghetto...And.. of course..all the Easties spoke Japanese...we all went to Japanese school...we played with Japanese children..And..since we grew up to speaking Japanese..for instance..when we started going to..public school..by grade one..we had a great deal of difficulty understanding what the teacher was saying..And..because of this.. my father instituted a Japanese kindergarten...to which we went.. for a year..But..although it may have helped some..at grade one.. we..well..the..the school had to...put us in a special class.. of..Japanese..and some Chinese children..And..the teacher knew what the problem was..So..we never did...break the..I think they call it the language code..which each language is supposed to have..And.. because it was much too late..because..it wasn't until around grade

seven...that I was exposed to a mixed...white and Japanese society.. By that time...our..our grammatical thinking was in Japanese... and..although I believe we broke through that code...because we grew up with it...and this is supposed to happen around the ages four..five..We never did have that opportunity in English..and.. Therefore..even now ...I find that my English is backwards sometimes.. And I realize after I have..I've said something..that I have said it in Japanese...only using English words..And..so..I no..noticed this...especially..when I see the young people now..who that don't speak any Japanese.... and..For instance..the current crowd at U.B.C. ..speak such good English...compared to the..people of my own age who went to U.B.C....Because Most of them spoke some Japanese ...the current crowd speak no Japanese at all..therefore they're English is very fluent....And..our age group never did attain that...Although some are very good at it...grammatically...still it wasn't..or isn't a natural language...

Miss Koizumi: Back in high school...the subjects...Did you find some subjects are difficult..or..some are easy..?

Mr. Aoki: Well..are you speaking about language..for instance..?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah..language..or science..or.. ....

Mr. Aoki: Yes..well..you know the..as a whole..the Japanese did very well in the sciences..and the mathematics..and..But when it came to English...although they did very well at grammar...their composition was poor..(Mr. Aoki chuckles)...Because grammar is.. like a science...That was alright..But when it came to..the actual composition...and..especially...oral work is ...always was poor..And..

I think....I would say most of them did have trouble...with... with English...

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh... Well did...Were there many Japanese students..in..in your high school...?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..this was Britannia High School..and..which is..and ..I understand..right now..about 80 or 90 percent Chinese...As a matter of fact..at Britannia High School..they are teaching Chinese..Mandarin..it's available..

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh..

Mr. Aoki: ...ummmm..

Miss Koizumi: That's no..now..?

Mr. Aoki: Right now..But..this was..wheremost of the..most of the ...Japanese from Powell Street...went to that...this was their high school..And although I didn't live on Powell Street..I was close to Hastings Park ..we..still went to the same school..And..the same applied to the Chinese..I think Britannia High School...always has been the most..always had the highest percentage of Orientals.. and therefore...actually..their academic standing was supposed to have been pretty high..Although all the groups had trouble with English..

Miss Koizumi: ..yes...

Mr. Aoki: ..but the other subjects..there was no trouble..

Miss Koizumi: So all the teachers ..werewhite people..?

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes..of course..Because at that time no Japanese was allowed to teach..and..There was only one..Japanese...well this was Japanese-Canadian..teacher..A..Miss Kyodo ..and she taught in Steveston..which was..90% Japanese..

Miss Koizumi:...uh-huh..

Mr. Aoki: But even..just a few years ago..that was here within the past ten years...When my sister came from Alberta...to..Vancouver.. there were very few...if any Japanese in the high schools..We didn't know whether she'd be able to get inthe...get to teach in the high school.. Because..the Vancouver School Board always did have a anti-Oriental policy..And..I'm not sure it's all gone yet..because some of those that old people are still alive...still on the Board..and..So..although there is a change...and although I know that there are some high school teachers in Vancouver..there's still very few..And I wouldn't be surprised if by district ...or if...by..just by..local..certain localities..They might have some trouble getting a job.

Miss Koizumi: Did..What kind of attitude did the teachers..take..to Oriental students..?

Mr. Aoki: Well.it was mixed..Britannia had very good teachers..and.. From what I understand...they were more..more / the thinking type who would volunteer to teach in a place like that...it's..it's like right now ....I believe that some of the best teachers in Vancouver are at Strathcona School..which is considered to be a slum school... but this is the..where there is a big Chinese community..And..in the same way...we had some very good teachers who were aware of what was going on..And..as a whole...I must say the teachers there were very good..

Miss Koizumi: ..oh...And how many students in one class..?

Mr. Aoki: At that time...? Oh I would say about..thirty..at the most..But we were not..not a majority by any means..For instance in my class..I would say there were no more than about four or five of us...And as I say..right now..the Chinese...students..run about 80 percent...

Miss Koizumi: And..there are lots of Chinese students at that time...?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..There running about the same ratio I think..

Miss Koizumi: So..like you..when they teach histories or geography or things like that..It's..saying..I mean..like ...you didn't learn anything about Japan or...?

Mr. Aoki: Oh the same old junk ya know...I remember the history books...Japan..there was a picture of a and a farm girl with a...practically a black face with a baby on her back.. At that time we didn't have brains enough to protest...(Mr. Aoki chuckling)..we didn't say very much..and we didn't expect very much either...

Miss Koiz: ..u-huh..Did you have some kind of juvenile delinquent.... ..in your school..at that time..?

Mr. Aoki: No..very little..because...At that time..we were brought up in a very...Japanese..environment..very Japanese home..The ..still hel..had control..And..if you understand that the East Asians....are more.... Japanese than the people in Japan... even at the same age group now...because they sort of stood still.. at the..say the..late Meije era...all the ideals and the..whatever of that period...and they hadn't..they hadn't learned anything new ...even to...to this day..We were brought up under an extremely Japanese..oh..ethical...background..And..therefore..of course the family was very strong...and under pretty rigid control too..And.. the parents authority was never questioned...And..there's almost nil juvenile deliquency...And..compared to now...where the have..because of age..relinquished their control..And..we have a group of young people today of high school age..of..say corresponding say r

to..the same age group that we were in...who are having trouble with pot and everything else..Also..this is just a..I don't know just how to draw a conclusion from it...but..There seems to be a relationship between the amount of..the Japanese language that these children know..and..or the lack of it..And the amount of.. juvenile delinquency..I believe that..something has been lost.. here..

Miss Koizumi: Like...high school boys..there are special things that high school boys do...like drinking..or smoking in the bathroom and things like that..that..Didn't you go through that kind of thing..?

Mr. Aoki: Well I..I did secretly..but very little. but..of course at that time...these were hard times..and..very few could afford anything like that..like...liquor..or smokes.....no..nobody had cars..No parents had cars...But also..you must remember that this is a time of...quite active racial discrimination...You know..like.. if you..we went to a movie...we were..there was a place where we sat..we..we didn't realize this..but..we never got to sit in the best seat..for instance..you're always shoved on the side...The ushers made sure of that..There were certain restaurants...which were practically hostile...and this just passed the last little while you know..Certain barber shops wouldn't cut your hair...And so we lived a very secluded life...we just kept away from it...I mean.. there was no point in trying to mix with them..Even their churches ..this..there's an Anglican church...close to the Hastings Park.. I think it's called All Saints Church..and it's the first place I was kicked out of was a church...

Miss Koizumi: Why..were you kicked out..?

Mr. Aoki: Because we were Japanese..

Miss Koizumi: Were you Christians..?

Mr. Aoki: (chuckles)..Yes...I was as Christian as a...as they say a grade eight boy could be...You know..I mean this is something I..we went to churches...my folks sent us to various churches just to find out what it was like..And..this church was..very close to our place.. so we went...we thought.ya know..this is a neighbourhood church.. but no..it was a racial church...and..we were asked not to come... They say.."There's one..there's a Jap church on Powell Street..you better go there.."(Mr. Aoki: chuckles)..so that's..that's church to me ..and..it doesn't mean very much...

Miss Koizumi: ..um..uh-huh..Did you..you remember..did you get very' upset when you..experienced that kind of thing?

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes..It's very upsetting..But..at that time...it just ..wasn't a..anything new ya see..Of course we were upset because this is supposed to be church..Ya know this wasn't a theatre..or a.. or any-anything else..this is supposed to be churches...where the good people..were supposed to be...And..if the best of them like this...why..all it did was just confirm ...that.. have very low...well what shall I say...have a very low..quotient..of... nasakai..... ...

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh...

Mr. Aoki: ..This is what...one of the things I've been thinking about lately..That is..in a way...looking at.. attitude..how they could rationalize and do...some of the most terrible things ...I think they're...Maybe this is the..big difference between.. Eastern and Western people..the degree of they have ..or haven't got...And this is why communications so dif..difficult

sometimes...

Miss Koizumi: ..huh..

Mr. Aoki: but here...course it's very hard to get proof of this.. because they refute so quickly..But when you look at the ease... with which they pass off..or..they shrug off..what they have done on this continent..Like..the attitude to the Negro slaves, for instance 'I didn't do it..I'm not responsible..' ...they killed off a whole nation of Indian people here..Whole nations.. And there's not a of guilt in them..ya know..Some of them are conscious.. But whether they have enough...human feeling..or..real feeling for this...I don't know...And..this is even with..some of my good friends ..who..on a person to person..are very good people..When it comes to a real feeling for people and living things...I dont know ..how much they have...And certainly..in lots a' ways they don't understand me either..because..I think that...with us it's ..a natural thing..and...It seems There just to be this thing missing...For instance I read a publication just lately..and this is by..who I thought were very enlightened..enlightened people...was a group ya see..and...with a philosophy very much like...sort of like Zen...and which I thought ..really something new..for...western people..But..I..and in principle..it sounds all right..And what they say..sounds very good..But reading their publications...I came across one thing where they' were talking about the Vietnamese War..and there's a phrase that.. really..made quite an impact on me..And this is about..one which that said..something about..'As if..the fate of sub..of a sub-human species were important...' You know...You think about that..this..'sub-human' species...this of course is the Vietnamese people..as if it was important ...this..and this is in connection with a protest ya see...

that..what they were saying is was that...it's not..worthwhile..these hippies...demonstrating against the war...As if..the fate of sub-human species were important...And..this coming from a people who...as a...fundamental...what is a fundamtental premise..that.. all living things are...sacred...The words sound good...it sounded as if they read...Buddhism...Zen...Confucioun..Confucious....and came up with something very nice...then..they based something on this .....But...the..the natural thinking..leads them to say things like this...and it's..I think it's frightening...And..therefore..it's not a matter of ..pointing out facts...everybody knows what's going on in Vietnam..and the whole thing I always think ...well how is it that...everyone knows about it..and everyone knows that it's wrong..yet..they what's can just keep on doing it...This is because..the majority of don't feel enough...that they would make any step..or change anything...anything to do..anything..that will affect their status to stop a thing like this..Because it means nothing to them that..a 'sub-human species' is..getting..being..done away with.. Ummm..I don't know..I don't know what the answer is..but I don feel this is one of the difficulties...the difficulties in communication..

Miss Koizumi: Do you think..we can convince them..?

Mr. Aoki: I don;t think so..Because as for facts...they have it.. they see these things on T.V...Also had a...an experience...some experiences like this..one was..on seeing this movie...'Little Big Man'..this was..the one with Chief Dan George..This is about Custer who is a legendary hero in American history..but this one just goes right to work...and..proves that this man was half-demented..and that the cruelties that were inflicted..especially the massacre of women and children..And I was discussing this with the person that I saw

it with later..and..the person made the remark that..."Oh the Indians were...must shoulder half the blame also..."...But..ya know even this half..after seeing a thing like this..just floors me.. because...certainly there..there must have been some blame too..But one half..never...I mean..here is..here are..the case where..at the time...North America was discovered..as they call..is another thing (Mr. Aoki chuckles)..which is like an insult to me..they discovered the Orient too remember...And...Marco Polo discovered China... and China had. ...so much civilization when it was discovered..But to the Western mind..it seems...that..they have quite a difficulty in trying to..in to even evaluate themselves..because..to them.. anything that is not western...is second rate or sub-human..and that nothing is to be taken seriously..This...like..I'll get back to the Indians...but I think it's very important...because this..to be realistic...to evaluate our situation here...realistically..although so many people..so many of us seem to think that wwe are making it in the society...I still know that we are tolerated..For instance.. the..the way that they justify taking over Indian land...is what they call.. ..something like...a divine manifestation.. You know..that the western people have this ...manifest to...take over and show the savages how to live...and..Here's a discussion I just had..just..just a couple of days ago..with some..very..so called religious people..I was pointing out..something which I think may be significant..Is where...the..eastern religions..see..recognize.. Christ..and its absolve..is absolved into it...And I know this is true with ...most of the eastern religions when they come across this.. they will accept it...But I have yet to hear a Christian accept any part of Buddha...Now..why is this..because..when it comes to rationalizing..which the west is very good at...they..they could rationalize

all sorts of things to their advantage..But they are incapable of a rational acceptance of a good idea..from the east..And.. and it's not lack of knowledge...they know..what's wrong ..or what's right...But..this is the..lack of something inside..inside which just doesn't allow it..And therefore you come out with.. statements..even in this late date..as..from a group which.. which is supposed to reveal all life...saying if God is everywhere ..and really working at it....and really convinced ya know...This is the ..the tragic part..I would classify these as good people.. good in intent..But within them is built this...this feeling of having a divine manifest of superiority..I guess..Because...what else would allow them to..call..a people..which..according to their origianal premises..part of the universe..part of brotherhood...and come out and say... "Sub-human species.."...(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..therefore they don't count..and..

Miss Koizumi: ..yeah..

Mr. Aoki: This is why...talk about discrimination..about the best that we could do...is..put ourselves in such a position-.that..the the min..the minimum number would be able to get at us...When..before we moved here..we lived next to a couple of very wealthy Chinese people...I'm not speaking now to the old man..he's retired..very successful..man...Ya know..house with a swimming pool and this sort of thing ...And he said.."Well..have to do what the Jewish people did.." Which is..they got into Commerce..And..although the people hate them ..they can't hurt them very much here...because..because their wealth allows them a certain..insulation..against the general populace..And..this old Chinese gentleman was saying the same thing..."This is what I have done.."...And..he said.."I am considered to be a very wealthy

man..and I am..And..certainly..there are certain ways in which they can get at me...but never economically.." ..

Miss Koizumi:..uh-juh..

Mr. Aoki: ..because..he could out-buy practically anybody he meets in Vancouver ....the most of them...So the rabble can't get at him..this is what he was getting at...And maybe..this is about as much as wwe can expect...Now..however...with the..thinking of the younger people this may change...I doubt it.. But really.. and I'm very cynical about this.. Because after all...these are just..intellectual excercises...I mean these are kids in school..kids in university..And that while ..they are in..still going to school...it's very easy to be democratic..it's..once they come out..and they have..they have.. certain responsiblities..to bring up families..competition..which affects their finances...I don't doubt that most of them will sit right back...and be just like their parents...

Miss Koizumi: But...you think there'll be some kind of field..in.. field..in which there'll be less discrimination than the other kind of fields.....say something..you're a musician ..how about ...the arts field...?

Mr. Aoki: Well..let me talk about the musician's field..You see.. dealing with...I am a concert musician..as compared with say..the club type musician..Now...no...I know that there is..some discrimination against myself..See...we run into a funny thing here..Wher.e ...you see...Japanese as yet..have no image...For instance..if I were a Black musician...

Miss Koizumi:...uh-huh...

Mr. Aoki: ...I dare say I would be twice as busy as I am now...

End of Track II....Tape I....Interview 77

MR. HIROWO 'HARRY' AOKI

May 9, 1972

Interview With Mr. Hirowo Aoki; Born 1921 - Japan; Canadian; Evacuated To The Interior And Later To Alberta; His Experiences Of Discrimination In The Normal Life; Mechanic; Concert Musician.

Oral History Project, Vancouver. Cultural Communities Series.

Interview no. 77, Tape no. 2 of 2, Tracks 1 & 2, Speed 3 3/4

Vancouver, Oral History Project, 1972

Interview 77, Tape no. 2 of 2, Track 1

Mr. Aoki: So...in the concert field there's little...but very little discrimination...because we're dealing with quite alert.. thinking people...But...if I were to go into say the ..'pop' field or the 'night-club' field..It would be very..very difficult..

Miss Koizumi: ...uh-huh...

Mr. Aoki: ..But I don't know if this is racial discrimination because They certainly use the negro performers..

Miss Koizumi: ..yeah..

Mr. Aoki: ..ya know...and since I do some of my work with the.. negro performer...I do get into some of these places...But..it would be very...As a matter of fact..there have been places where the patrons objected..but..of course...people who frequent night-clubs are usually slobs anyways...But this is still a good indication ya know...you get a pretty good idea of what the general public is like..because you're talking about say...75 or 80 percent of the people...And..perhaps..the other thing is that...maybe we just..the negros have that image...they are supposed to have rhythm and..they don't mind them entertaining them ya know...but they still have to go in the back way..But..we can't even go in the back way..(Mr. Aoki chuckles)...s'all a..

Miss Koizumi: There are not many Japanese musicians in Canada yet..?

Mr. Aoki: No...full time musicians..outside of maybe some..there are some young people in...rock..But in the concert field I believe I am the only one...

Miss Koizumi: ..oh..

Mr. Aoki: Or..anybody working steadily say..with C.B.C...there's this man Watanabe in Toronto he's a trombonist..and he's...a... very active there...as a...just straight musician...Not the musicians themselves....the musicians will accept you...And...C.B.C. of course is a very swinging..enlightened group anyway...So...if anyone...as long as a person has ability..the C.B.C. will use you..Although.. once you get into the...let's say a pop type program...I think they would rather not have a Japanese around... But this is only a conjecture..because I have..because I have even done some of these shows. But..but in these cases...the producers...were..personal friends...(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh...

Mr. Aoki: ...and by...with an unknown one...you are quite a question mark and they would rather work with a sure thing which would be a white or black musician..

Miss Koizumi: Like..only you were in high school then...did you think of your future.....What...you were going to do..?

Mr. Aoki: I thought about ...I wondered about it..but not very seriously..because you see..at that time...(tape inte rrupts..) ...see there were...at tha so many things closed to for instance had friends who went to university in engineering..for 3 years..and they went to Japan to get their degrees..because there are no degrees awarded...there's no pharmacists...even education.. there are noteachers....They weren't allowed ya see....And..there were quite a few commerce graduates..but nobody would hire them.. So..what happened was...that...we had people come out with university degrees...and they were working in pulp mills...sawmills...

Miss Koizumi: ..huh...

Mr. Aoki: And...so as far as we were concerned we were slated to be labourers...there's nothing really open unless your father was..very success..successful ..in which case you could put..say a commerce degree to work...But...And even as labourers...there were no good jobs...I remember working at Woodfibre...which is..a pulp mill..and..

Miss Koizumi: You worked there...?

Mr. Aoki: Yes...and...we had the worst jobs of course...We were... I was on what they call a 'bull-gang'...which is all the dirty work ya know...digging holes and this sort of thing...and...There were quite a few Hawgene there too..ya know..university kids...

Miss Koizumi: ..yeah..

Mr. Aoki: Well..there's people of our...same age..group..Well they..

Miss Koizumi: Well..how old were you...?

Mr. Aoki: I was about...19 I guess..it was just before the war... And...we got...47 cents an hour..and they got 60 cents..And..the reason they gave that was that we could live more cheaply..Well..

Miss Koizumi: How come ....

Mr. Aoki: ...of course it's obvious...we had to live more cheaply..

Miss Koizumi: ...Yeah...But how did Japanese live cheaper than the other people...Like what kind of things did they say..?

Mr. Aoki: Well...I don't know...if..I don...I think this is a myth I don't think the Japanese ever lived more cheaply the ....Especially if...if you watch...say the diet..you take the average diet of the New Hawgene ....now...way back...I know that things were pretty tough...But..even now I'm well maybe..I've been spoiled...I like to eat...(both chuckle)..

Miss Koizumi: Maybe...yes..

Mr. Aoki: And..I think we live fairly well...but even now..I look at the....some of...sort of diet that some people live on..you know ...I think it's..as far as..food is concerned..they live..oh..put it this way ..they spend less than the average ... And I think..this is one of the things that..surprised..a grocery store owner...whose.. ..on the Prairies...We had quite a talk about this... he said.."YOu people spend a lot on food .." ...I says.."Well we have to...because we work harder..." (Mr. Aoki chuckles)...but..ya know he said..."Not kidding..the standard of what you..what you buy..must be a lot higher...."....So it wasn't food ...Certainly when it came to accommodations..Japanese usto live in houses...no paint...furniture ...hand-made...I remember...when I was in school..kids..people usto talk about refrigerators and washing machines...I had never seen one...And..people ~~usto~~ talk about sofas.. I didn't know what a sofa was...(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..Ah...And...I think it's sort of pathetic...but even now you see some...an offshoot of this..and...I don't mean to make fun of any people at all... But the result of living like this..ya see..Being brought up..under conditions...suchas I've described..has some rather...pathetic and sort of comical results...but I've been in Japanese houses... where...where they have sofas and things...but its all covered.. wall-to-wall rugs..with a plastic sheet on top of it...Now...you see the thing is...these people have worked so hard...and this was the dream ya know...And..unfortunately...they can't assimilate this..they don't know that a rug is to be used ..or...(Mr. Aoki chuckles).. And...in a way..I think it's comical...and in a way I think it's tragic...But this goes a way back...There's a...this double standard of wages for instance..You know...the...I've heard people talk of

canneries...where...Japanese women..girls worked in them...And.. they're very.....they have manual dexterity.....And I think this has to do with packing these.... ..... or something like this where...by piece work...Since they were..about twice as fast as the ..they were earning a way back...something amount which .. amounted to four or five dollars a day...Which was..very good..ya know..for anybody..So right away..the cannery..the canneries... lowered the rate that they paid them...So these people worked harder ...they still made four dollars a day...and...this happened all the way..along the line...And...just that...Japanese...are always... and Chinese ....were always on the bottom of the economic scale...

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh..

Mr. Aoki: And..the Chinese caught up around 20 years ago..I think we as a group are just...catching up now..And therefore you get these funny things...I think this also explains ...why...how people are.. I'm afraid.....are very hung up on material things right now...

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh..

Mr. aoki: Because...it's because they have to do with so little... I was out on the Prairies just a little while ago...and I saw... in Saskatchewan...a similar... shack that we us to live in.. in Albert..in Alberta...

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh..

Mr. Aoki: ..it's abandoned...And..I remember what we had there.. and it was nothing....and..we lived on practically nothing too... And so...although I seem to be picking..at the Japanese..for being materialistic...it's...not...not in a derogatory way..... I'm just trying to explain why they..are like this...And...trace

everything right back to discrimination...

Miss Koizumi: ...yeah...Did you...like you're a musician now... being..When you were in school...did you..do some music..?

Mr. Aoki: Well it's funny..I learned my music in Japanese school.. my mother taught...taught music...She taught us how to read music.. Well we had music in school..but not very much...There's no emphasis on the arts...in Canadian schools.But..in the Japanese school.. we got..it... this is why I learned how to read music...But most of my training has been private...but..

Miss Koizumi: By your mother ...?

Mr. Aoki: Well my mother started it...but later..I went to private teachers..and...I had to take a couple of courses at the University of Chicago...this was on composition...orchestration...But..all the all the coaching has been private..because..with...studying the bass I went to Doc Hamilton who is...who was..teaching at U.B.C..but..I didn't go to U.B.C....I went to him personally...and..I play a classical harmonica..and there's no place where you can learn it...So I studied with string teachers and...rhythms teachers...so most of my training is...came from private teachers...but I have...I've had some of the best..so I'm very fortunate in that regard..

Miss Koizumi: So you never thought of becoming a musician...before the war...?

Mr. Aoki: Oh no...I thought it was just something...you play around with you know...And of course...anything..inclination that way was discouraged...because it's..not so practical..But it just turned out that...maybe I happened to be doing the right thing at the right time ...at the right place..And..I'm very busy..now..This is all I do... You know I'm...I work...3½ to four months of the year..And..well this

looks after my living..more than adequately.. As for doing more in this line of work...you can't do too much...It's not like...cutting logs...or..piling lumber...or...running an ordinary business... You saturate yourself...and you are no good...your..your product suffers..because...a person gets stale..And..you need lots of time during the rest of the year...to...get your...get your own mind.. and emotions squared away...because you have to be fresh all the time...because this..this is what the end-product is..

Miss Koizumi: How about your experience due to the war..?

Mr. Aoki: Well..ah..

Miss Koizumi: Were you in when the war came..?

Mr. Aoki: No..I was in Vancouver...I was working in a sawmill..And.. I was on night-shift...And..I worked until..... a curfew was put into effect...And...I usto..get down there...because it was still light...coming home a bunch of usto surround me and walk me home..But the police caught on to that..and...I couldn't go any more and then I went to work for a..a Japanese old sawmill..this was on day shift and during this time the...owner was..shipped out..I was 19..and you know I managed that place...for a couple of months..

Miss Koizumi: ..oh..

Mr. aoki: And..so..during the evacuation...Instead of...going with the family to Alberta...I hated the idea...I saw so many friends off...ya know they...They were put on these trains...and there were R.C.M.P..and..they were being shipped out...And I..I didn't like the idea of this..so I..So I said...the least I'll do is..go myself...(Mr. Aoki chuckles)...so..I went to a different place... which was...on Shus hwap lake...close to Salmon Arm..

Miss Koizumi: ..yeah...

Mr. Aoki: I went there..on my own...ya know...I bought my own ticket..and that...So I was not kicked out...I left..(Mr. Aoki laughs)...not that it means anything and so I went into ...I was with this company...and then I went...the...which went bankrupt..

Miss Koizumi: Was this a sawmill..on Shushwap Lake...?

Mr. Aoki: It was a Sawmill..on Shushwap Lake...See these were coast operators ..ya know... We..we were usto the coast...Vancouver..the operations on the West Coast...which is quite different from the..little small trees in the Interior..and..which have to be handled in a different ways...And so all these big ideas didn't work..because there's not eno ugh material to handle...and...The whole thing was geared wrong you see...If you see...ya know..the timber here runs....you knowfive feet..ten foot.butts...this sort of thing ...and in the Interior.. 2 feet is a big tree..So this is...after handing big timber..you end up handing toothpicks...and to handle toothpicks is a different technique...(both chuckle)..And..so..and we didn't last very longy.. but I..I worked around there..As a matter of fact..we had some.. pretty comical things happen...for instance..where we went..there were no...there had been no Japanese at all..Because this is..around that Okanagan Lake..and Shus hwap Lake area...there's very anti-Japanese...very Anglo you see...

Miss Koizumi: What is it?

Miss Koizumi: ..yes..

Mr. Aoki: ..anglo-scottish...And there's no Japanese...was..encouraged...Although there were a few people around...but anyways..I remember this...after I got to know the people aroun...around Shushwap Lake I said..."You'll be very surprised...to see the way you dress...and the way you talk..."

Because..they'd been reading propaganda..we thought we..we wore green clothes..we were about 4 feet high...and we had glasses and buck teeth...and extremely yellow skin...(Miss Koizumi chuckles).. No..they actually..thought this...And as a matter of fact...was.. where we were...we were situated in a place...on a...on Blind Bay it was a small settlement that wa..that was the sawmill..then there were a few more houses on the other side...ya know...people..ya know.. So we locked in between... and some people..And..I remember this old man..he was an old army officer...of..from the Danby first world war... ..he was very disturbed and very frightened..and..So I remember our ..the owner of the Mill talking to him.. he said .."Don't worry..what we're doing here.." he said.."We're cutting virgin spruce...and they're shipping it to the...European factories to build mosquito bombers...and so we're very patriotic.." (both chuckle)...And...and..actually the people there...were really..well...'country hicks'...ya know..very simple people..so they believe everything they read...and this is war time ya know..

Miss Koizumi: ..yeah...

Mr. Aoki: ...and...Oh I had some interesting things happen..for instance...There still was a travel restriction of twenty miles ya see...

Miss Koizumi: Twenty miles?

Mr. Aoki: Twenty miles..and to go anywhere's outside of this..you had to have a police permit...And once I got a toothache..and..So.. I couldn't stand it...so I went to Salmon Arm..which is about 22 miles ...And the police picked me up..they put me in jail...held me all day..then they let me out...But I never did get to the dentist...So next day..I

I...ya know...I weren't...I picked...I got on the bus again..I went to Kamloops..70 miles away..And..I went to the dentist...and...and the nurse was very abrupt with me...And..so I started to raise a commotion..and..the doctor came out...and I said.."Look..I got a tooth-ache...I went to Salmon Arm to a dentist..the police picked me up and put me in jail...and I'm just about dying...will youdoc..do some-thing for me..?" So he..took me right away..And..I still remember this incident..very well..

Miss Koizumi: The doctor was okay with you..?

Mr. Aoki: Oh sure..he didn't even charge me ya know...

Miss Koizumi: Really..?

Mr. Aoki: A very understanding..ya know...He was just shaking his head ya know...But..this sort of thing was just taken for granted.. ya know...

Miss Koizumi: They..so you wasn't..you weren't very upset when you were put in jail..?

Mr. Aoki: Well I was...(both chuckle)..angry enough to blow the place up...I had nothing to do with it..And...you see..being completely outnumbered...and I remember going into...into a restaurant...I would ..ya know...I wouldn't be served..this is right in Salmon Arm..ya see..But..and...there were lots of places...hotels around Kamloops where you couldn't get a room...and...Of course remember that it's quite recently that wwe could get into the Hotel Vancouver....

Miss Koizumi: ..yeah..?...

Mr.Aoki: ...So..it's not..it's nothing new...but just that..ya know ...once they put you in jail...they close that door...then it really sinks in how helpless you are...no use going to the police...they're the only protection...Cause we were the same as the Indians..you see..

had no rights..no vote...No property...it was all..confiscated.. So the only appeal was ....to the law..you can't appeal to the people..the people would rather tear you up...tear you apart..And.. no appeal..and this is when I felt the...utter helplessness..of the minority..ya know...Because you have to remember..we were..only one out of one thousand...here...And we're ..entirely powerless.. And..even now...in the...so any..any sort of..political action..anything ..they just ignored..And..it's only sensible for them to do so.. it's more conveniently to ignore..ignore us..Because there isn't enough of us ...to make any difference to anybody...

Miss Koizumi: Were there any Japanese around Salmon Arm..at that time?

Mr. Aoki: Well..there were..a couple of people...I think..Mr. Iwata was there..ah..he evacuated..but..always has been fairly wealthy.. ya know..somehow he got there...And...there was another man..called Nakamae ? who owned a couple of sawmills..

Miss. Koizumi: These people were there before the war?

Mr. Aoki: Ummm...it's...I believe they got out in time..ya see.. before..they froze everything..

Miss Koizumi: ..ohh...

Mr. Aoki: ...So..some people saw this right away...and they moved ...in..before they froze all the assets..so..They had things to work with...Whereas most of us...we had everything frozen..here..And so..we /see the people who was evacuated...were allowed only sixty pounds.. ..a person..ya know...

Miss Koizumi: What happened to the savings and things that they had in the family..?

Mr. Aoki: Well..savings..and bank accounts were frozen..

Miss Koizumi: They

Mr. Aoki: Well some of them couldn't..Besides..very few people had savings anyway..didn't amount to much...A lot there were of people had..money in the..Japanese banks..... had a bank..and that was..ya frozen Frozen So things were pretty..pretty hectic ya know...no...See..another thing is..There's there's no..nobody you could appeal to...who..who you gonna appeal to..the church..? The churches are people who kick you out...Government..? No..they're the guys that..created this ..situation...Police? Heck no...That was it..

Miss Koizumi: How about Japanese by...themselves...like..?

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes...for..

Miss Koizumi: ...You had Japanese...?

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes..yeah..This..there was quite a bit done..bythe Japanese...and..for instance..there's a man who I respect very much...and...but he..mostly it's the Japanese Society look an.. look on as a..the Devil himself...But..he was the only person with really ..of any consequence...to we..do something...and..His name is Mr. Foley...who was head of...a gambling club called "The Show".. Morley ? ya know the "Show" club on Powell Street...and they had...Its like a gang set up..ya know..like they... Yakuza ? set-up..ya see.. But..when I always didn't like him..as aperson..ya know...I..I..Course we were kids..we didn't have anything to do with him..But...he.. organized..the relief ..for people..like for instance..epeople who came out of Ocean Falls..had..nothing with them..But..some of these places..the men were taken away first..and the women left..were left with the kids..and they came out..they were..absolutely helpless.. condition..And..Mr. Morley ..one means or another..got..money out of the people who had it...(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..And this is where he..'s..maligned so much...you see..And..this..was..this was

put to work...And..helping..these people..And a lot of the people..
..thought..said..that he was..this was a gangstering method...
Well..maybe the method..is used by gangsters..but..I still believe
to this day...this is the only way..that some of these families
..survived..ya know..And..but the thing is...tha..that most people
don't realize..it..Apparently he was quite a wealthy man...But the
first money that went was his own...And..to this day I still believe
he was the..only...large figure in the whole society...because...
all the rest of the...there was a thing called the..,there was a
Japanese Association...that was supposed to be looking after the
welfare of Japanese...And they just folded right up...And People were
strutting along...were very..very complacent to the Japanese...
they didn't help at all...And..this was a strong man...that could
get a strong organization behind him...and he made it work...
I do know some people to whom..he went...And it was just a..practical-
ly an ultimatum...kick in or else..ya know... like I
was speaking to one of the people who..was..he approached twice..
and..he said.."Ya know..we were very angry..but...when we come to think of
it.. Mr. Mowbray gave everything he had...and then he came after
us..and we actually had it..so..why not?"..But it wasn't a great
deal..because there are very few Japanese who had anything..it was
just starting to make it you know...So this...wartime experience
..eh there'..there's so many things about that...And I'm sure you
...you talked to so many people about this...all sorts..of details..

Miss Koizumi: And how many years you..were you in..Salmon Arm?

Mr. Aoki: Well I was in that district..for about...2½ years..Then
I went to Lethbridge...because...The family...was on sugar beets..
and..they needed me to help ya know..

Miss Koizumi: ..oh..Your brother was..with your parents then?

Mr. Aoki: Yes that's right...My brothers were there...But..ya know ..my parents are..had no...experience at all in this sort of thing ...well neither had I..but I think at least I was able-bodied...as a matter of fact..one of the...the place where they were...in..The ownere. ..insisted that I come...He wanted..ya know..somebody who...who could run machinery...and this sort of thing...And..so I went to Alberta...which I hated..

Miss Koizumi: Why?

Mr. Aoki: Oh..it's flat..and it's..ah...I'm afraid I have this.. built-in prejudice that..loggers have of...anybody on the farm..is the only worst thing I could think of...to call a person as a farmer.. (Mr. Aoki chuckles)...and here I was on a farm..And..

Miss Koizumi:What kind of a work did you do..?

Mr. Aoki: Well this was...I worked sugar-beets..And then I went to work on a...for a wheat farmer..running the..ya know..the machines ...swathers...and combines...In the winter..we usto go and work in logging camps..in the Rocky Mountains..And..

Miss Koizumi: In the winter-time..? There was lots of snow in the winter.. ?

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes...

Miss Koizumi: And you work on..

Mr. Aoki: That's t when they log in some of these places ..ya know.. And..that's where we..most of us went...But there's nothing else..

Miss Koizumi: Was it..a farming job hard..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..this is a..you see...before we came...they usto be called...well..the way they ..they usto call it 'bohunk labour'..the people that did this..were..Hungarians...and..But by the time we went there...the Hungarians were starting to own the farms...

so we worked for them...you see..But understand right now...the Japanese own the farms..and..that..those..these years..they have automated ..or they are using Indians...But it's really hard work..ya know.. I don't say hard in the same way as logging..but..the hours were long ...you know...we usto be out there..seven in the morning...'til it got dark...I remember..being out there...aft..working in the moonlight...Because it's seasonal..and we have to...beat..beat the weather...because...in harvest...once the snows....Boy...you really slow right down you know....This is why we had to work...to keep our head..keep ahead of the weather...And...

Miss Koizumi: So all your family..was it..with...you..?

Mr. Aoki: Well the whole family had to go..The kids had to come out of school..you know...Everybody had to work...

Miss Koizumi: And that..your younger brothers and sisters went to school..there...in winter..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes...yeah..They went to school..But during harvest..ya know..they had to help..Of..but the youngest ones.. didn't ..but.. Then my mother was out there..my father out there..everybody... And..This is where...we had to..had the Growers Association to get a livable..amount of returns for what we did...Because they were.. see..they..they had this feeling against..well..these are Japs.. they..they can live on nothing..and they will live in anything.. so...the first place that the family went to...was a chicken coop.. ya know...they say..well Japanese can live in filth ya know..They had some...funny ideas..But later on they found out that..that the Japanese...turned out to be better educated..than...and..It surprises ..it still surprises me how many..people got through university.. coming out of these beet fields ya know...They all headed for universities...and..by the time they came back...they all had...

ya know..university degrees. And..they scattered all over..Some of them didn't make it..but...a lot of them did..Til right now I think the fact that the Japanese have the highest percentage of university graduates in any ethnic group in Canada...And it..it all came out of conditions like this...But..

Miss Koizumi; Did your brother go to university..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..

Mss Koizumi: When...?

Mr. Aoki: He had graduate at U.B.C...

Miss Koizumi: Oh...before the war..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..he had a degree in commerce..and..He was with the Japanese co-op...He worked in the Woodfibre..pulp mill..Well we had and after that there was nothing all sorts of people with degrees..working with us here...nothing else to go to He went to....oh...He and I were working in a logging camp..and we said.."You know this is a crumby place to be ..."..And we thought that it would be a..about this time they were shor..short of school teachers...We thought it would be a..real slack to be a teacher...So we tossed..said okay...the guy that losses..has to stay here..and the other one goes to..get teacher's training..And he won the toss...so he went...(Mr. Aoki laughs)... So...and by God he's a...a professor at the University of Alberta..

Miss Koizumi: Wow...

Mr. Aoki: ...in education..

Miss Koizumi: ..wow..

Mr. Aoki;...Well...looking back ...personally I'm gll glad..I didn't get into it..Because I think I'm doing something a little more interesting...for my..for myself...And..

Miss Koizumi:= Were there lots of Japanese living..in the place

that you were living...in Alberta..?

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes..there were about four..three or four thousand ..

Miss Koizumi: Oh..So..did you have a group or..some organization ..or something like that..?

Mr. Aoki: Oh yes...as a matter of fact..my father was very.. instrumental in forming the first one..And at that time..there ..it was illegal who had more than six Japanese males gather at one time..So what they usto do..was..gather..outside in the middle of a field..By so an' so's..somebody's haystack..This is where they had their first meetings..And before they..how they knew what was going on..The whole..four thousand..were in ...an association..

And..I remember my father saying that ..the first meetings he walked twenty miles at night..for these meetings..

Miss Koizumi: ..oh..

Mr. Aoki: Theywalked back ya know..Then they stay over at somebody's place ya see..Because..they have to travel at night..

Miss Koizumi: Oh.

Mr. Aoki: They couldn't be all seen travelling by bus to one place ...Of course the Prairies..they are very scattered ya know..Farms are very large..and..So it's not like getting to here in the city.. And your neighbours are two miles apart..

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh..

Mr. Aoki; But..that's how they did it..and..So that..when the next year came around..when they start to negotiate for prices..for their neighbour..They made some..the Japanese made certain demands

which..the owners tried to ignore..Then they found out that..the whole thing was organized..and after that..things improved..But ya know..they never really did catch up..People worked really worked ya know..and..because..They had things like this..before most of the young girls went house working we had gone there..the Japanese went..The Government had made an agreement..with..the local people of Lethbridge..that no Japanese could live there..And..of course..nobody was told this..So..the Japanese could not live in Lethbridge..But say a housegirl..a poor girl could live in somebody's house and work for them..as a domestic..And..were..crazy things like this..When my brother went to Calgary to go to normal school..They had a thing there too.. where no Japanese males could live in the city..So he had to..find a place..it was a dairy farm..outside Calgary ..where a Japanese family..lived..worked..So he stayed with them..and he rod the milk truck into..town everyday to go to college..Ah..Edmonton had much the same thing..So..when you spend your whole life..living these things ..ya know..It's not just reading about it..but we had to go through it..You come out with a very realistic view of..what life is like here..Ya know..And..I know it surprises a lot of people..Young people come from Japan..they don't quite believe it..And..actually it was pretty bad..Some people were relatively..unaffected..But..always was..you tried to be serious about this type of thing and I remember times when I was so angry..that I thought I..I would literally go crazy..Ya know..it was easy to do...

Miss Koizumi: Well..you said that..the..when the war was over that you still stayed in Alberta for a while..and that you fought..you got that voting thing..

Mr. AokI: Yes..

Miss Koizumi: Right..so..

Mr. Aoki: You see..there was a choice of staying there..which we didn't want to do..Then there was the choice of going to Ontario.. which I didn't think much of..And there was the choice of coming back here..And..maybe it's stubborness..that..we wanted to come back here..But of course we couldn't come back here..even after the war..And..Cause you must remember..these are the people that kicked us out..for their own..perverted reasons..And..the war was just an excuse..And they made one...

End...track 1, tape 2, interview 77

Interview 77, Tape 2 of 2, Track 2

Miss Koizumi: Yeah..so..after the war..you..you decided..who in your family wanted to come back to B.C..?

Mr. Aoki: Well..by this time..my brother was..a vice-principal of a high-school..

Miss Koizumi: ..oh..In..Lethbridge..? (phone rings in background)

Third Party: ..hello..

Mr. Aoki; Yeah..and..

Miss Koizumi: Was it a public school..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..it was a high school..and..

THird Party: ...Daddy..

Mr. Aoki: ONe other sister..was a teacher..And..my younest sister.. was going to..university..And there were..at least they were not beet farmers any more..They were getting into the professions.. And..in time..we were able to move into Lethbridge..which is.. a..not bad place ya know..It was a very nice town..And..so..the family more or less centered around Lethbridge..But I..I always.. did hate the Prairies..And I couldn't stand it..So I came out to B.C...

Miss Koizumi: Oh..when was this..?

Mr. Aoki: Ya know this was about 19...50..I came out..Then I went up to..around Prince George area..my idea was to start a..start my own sawmill..But by that time ..it was a little too late for.. it..And..so I wrote to some people..and..I was managing a camp.. And..but..I wasn't too happy doing what I was doing..ya know this.. Get into what they call this...'free enterprise'..which is based on...competition..And sort of..there's too much of this..exploitation ..

of people..And..there was one incident which was..too much for me to stomach...So I left them..and I went to work for B.C. Hydro.. And..I got into... ...Soon after I got in...they..they were looking for..ways..to improve operations ya know...and how they.. Especially in the construction..And they decided that they needed somebody to do..efficiency studies..And so they tested all sorts of young people..and..Anyways..they chose me to do it.. So..I was with Hydro...fer...about 9..10 years..And..my..the reason that I chose them was that...I wanted a..to make a good salary..and I wanted to move in...either Victoria or Vancouver..I'm a city boy...(Mr. Aoki chuckles)...and..So.. it went the way I planned.. and I ended up in Vancouver...and...But by this time...I was doing other special projects...in the city..But..as soon as I got into Vancouver..The reason I wanted Van..Vancouver...was because I want to go into music ya see..And..sure enough..as soon as I got in..I became active in...in Vancouver...The first thing I got..were.. recording tapes..because they..don't care who you are...nobody sees you..And..then I started to play some of the clubs...and about this time I was working with this negro musicians ya see ..And..we became pretty proficient at it..And..this concert..group..of overture concerts..heard us..and they asked us if we would tour for them...And we started to tour ..it gotso that...one year..I took years of leaves absence from Hydro.. and I was only there..five months..And..also..see this music business ...you..you start at the bottom..But..there's a..fee system..that.. if you are in demand..you see..The It builds very high..quickly.. So within about..about two years after I started touring..I found out that ...I could earn much more..in three months..than I could

staying in Hydro..And..which was a ..very painless way to leave.. Of course..all this came twenty years late for me...So I'm right in it now..that I'm really enjoying it..

Miss Koizumi: ..huh..

Mr. Aoki: Umm....So..and right now..it's very interesting..because Japan is very fashionable..and they..I include... a couple of Japanese things..that I do..at these concerts..which...And..the.. a predominantly audience enjoy very much..And..so I think it's sort of come around full circle..

Miss Koizumi: ..huh..

Mr. Aoki: But. ..as for...my attitude to HG as a whole. there are..There always were. ..some sympathetic ones ya know..

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh..

Mr. aokI: These are.. more intellectual types..rather religious.. I write that church off completely..And this..in this line of work..you do come in contact with these people..which this.. These are the only..these are the only..people that will come anyways...And..one of the..disappointments to me...is..are these people from Japan who come here now..and some of them..are good musicians...They..they know less about Japanese music than I do.. and I was so hopeful of learning from them...So the only person who..could help me...ironically enough was a HG ..Doctor Wiesgarber.....And..who I think is in Kyoto right now..but as soon as he comes in..we're going to start working together..And..ironicall enough...the best singer of Japanese songs I know..is a HG. ...who is Heather Pinch in ..She has a tremendous ..pronounciation of Japanese.. Much better...

Miss Koizumi: Did she ever to Japan..?

Mr. aoki: No..taught her myself..(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..

Miss Koizumi: ..oh..did you..?

Mr. Aoki: Well..but ..no..She...she did..Wiesgarber's 'Kyoto Landscapes.."...Wiesgarber is about the only westerner..who has to teach ..And he...as a matter of fact.. this present trip to Japan was..on the request from..some.. at ...To perform there...He has also performed with the..the Imperial Court Orchestra... ...And he knows more Japanese music than anybody I've..I've known.. And he"s..probably more Japanese...than if..most Japanese..

Miss Koizumi: ..uh-huh..

Mr. Aoki: Because..he has really gone into..to..ya know he reads much better than I...He's a composer..

Miss Koizumi: Do you speak Japanese with him..?

Mr. Aoki: Yes..Well he comes here quite often..as a matter of fact ..just before he left..he spent quite a time..with..quite a bit of time with my father...Because he was doing some translation of some documents..from the period..And..he ran into.. at that time they used..quite a bit of... ..

Miss Koizumi: ..oh?..

Mr. Aoki: ..And he..the translation was very difficult...was a.. And..so he went to some of the local businessmen..but they..they couldn't quite handle it..Because it takes a scholar of the old school..so that he searched around...And he..I told him about my father...because my father is very well versed in this..So..he came over ~~wrote~~ quite a bit..and between them they got this thing...

Miss Koizumi: Oh..I see..

Mr. Aoki: Well..my father translated it in..into

..first into..straight into Japanese of that period...And then..into the modern Japanese..which ...Made it understandable..It was quite a..it's form..very formal..for Japanese...and very interesting...

Miss Koizumi: Oh..sure..Yeah...It must be very interesting...

....

Mr. Aoki: Very few...even J..Japanese in Japan..outside of scholars. would know what..what was in this thing..And..

Miss KoizumI: It must be quite difficult to understand it..without a knowledge of...

Mr. Aoki: Yes..and..

Miss Koizumi: Japanese..

Mr. Aoki: ..well the thing is..it wasn't just the words...a.. the pe rson had to know history at the time...And..So we'd see quite a bit of Professor Wiesgarber here...And..this is the..the disappointing thing to me...that I thought I'd get a modern version of my father...with whom I could associate..but everyone is trying to be..so American..Which is..which is okay..ya know because they do very well..some of them..especially musicians...But..I think its a pity that..while the western people are so interested in Japanese music...The Japanese people are trying to forget it as quickly as they could...I know....I..I'm doing a series of concerts starting this fall..this will be mostly the United States...And they're interested in me...but they have requested no Japanese'

...And..which to me..is only proper...and to me a tremendous advantage...Because..I'm one of the very few people... who are qualified to do it..just because of my race...And..whereas if the..these modern musicians coming from Japan now...knew something about it..they would have lots to do...And I've spoken to them

about it ya know...And say.."Look..why don't you pull out your Japanese things..?"...It just turns out that they don't know it ..because they've been encouraged to Americanize themselves... Which leads to...a problem right away..because...I don't care what anybody says...we have got..racial..characteristics ya know..And.. we are suited to this..

Miss Koizumi: uh...huh

Mr. Aoki: ..But..unfortunately..Right now it's not so..And..here I think...I'd..I must say I admire the Chinese young people for this...because there's quite a number of young Chinese musicians here..who are very good in...old Chinese music..Which is proper.. As a matter of fact...I..I raised for a concert at the Art Gallery.. which is Chinese...who..these young people from Hong Kong..And.. they wanted the same from the young Japanese..I had to tell them there was no one..who's really qualified to do it..And the only man I can suggest is a ...So..we arranged that Professor Wiesgarber..to...ya know..this is what he did..Although I was away..I didn't see it...But..the thing is..if ..there were people here..qualified..they would be..in music..instead of washing dishes...which is what they are doing right now...This..unless they are exceptional..Exceptionally good...because..I'm talking about the concert field right now...Why bother taking on some body of a different colour..to play Mendelhsohn...and..Beethoven..And..I think..the thing is that..the top-notchers are here...not the real top-notchers...but these..people pretty good..But if they were making it.... .....in Japan...they..they wouldn't immigrate to another country...immigrate to another country...So their calibre isn't good enough to..for them to make it in western music..

But..if they had this Japanese thing...there would be things to do..But they don't have it..So..a relatively..uninformed person like myself..who is in this just by sheer luck..or..by being lucky ..(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..if nothing else..is doing it...And I know very little...But at least I'm Japanese ya know...And people will take it seriously..But there's a tremendous interest in it...But.. this is why I'm trying to.. till ..our association...JCC..IN THE young people..Especially now that...the government has come out with a policy...of the small key..ethnic..And..they've ..the makeup of Canada.....they've recognized this..And look...If you look at this..look how..how unbalanced we are..You see..we get young people..who are aware now.that they are Japanese...and very serious ..this is a bunch of U.B.C...students..And not one of them speak Japanese..So..I feel sorry for them..But..with them..forget it.. Outside of that...besides that..they were brought up in a very.. non..non-cultural background... Because of war..and..because of their parents being immigrants and this sort of thing...ya know.. Immig rants..as compared to people who immigrate..with a skill.. They really came as ...we used to call them ...ya know..and..fishermen..And they were making it here weren't there so they...some how they made it here..So..of course they're first thing is to make a living..which they found very difficult..So.. here we have a..group of ...even if we have a group of...a non group of university graduates...They are very..uncultured..ya know ..in a pure sense..Wiesgarber has talked about this...A pity..very sensitive people..they don't know <u>any</u> music..ya know...

<u>Miss Koizumi</u>: ...huh..

Mr. Aoki: And..so...They know what they are missing but there's nothing you can do about it..because once you've passed a certain age..you can't even pronounce the language any more..And..besides.. I understand that a lot of..take Japanese at U.B.C...flunk out.. they can't keep it up..so we get a whole bunch from Japan..who think ...I..I feel most sorry for them...They think that..they have some ..delusions about this place...because they see..that the entrance of Ja...of Japan...the entrance of America on Japan..And since they're a majority..they can get in on everything...because there's nobody else there...So..they think they think they're going to have..more of the real thing..the society just shuts them off so quickly...that they can't get in..And..so...and at the same time...because they're so intent on being what they think is American..they've thrown away anthing a Japanese that's of any value..So they land here..with all the..with no assets..The only thing...like for instance that fits in the Arts..that people see Japanese..they're very interested in Japanese Art...They now find that the Japanese from Japan know very little about...They're educated people..they don't...So ..as far as this field is concerned...they're..it's closed to them..Then all of a sudden the..the Government here declares...a policy of..a multi-ethnic society.. and they have nothing to offer..They have the language..outside of that...not very much of it...is sig..signifcance...I can't say.. "Okay..here is a young immigrant from Japan..now he will play the No way..he's liable to play the violin and play Beethoven..And..And if he was extra good...Fine..but he isn't,....

..ya know..(Miss Koizumi chuckles)...He's good..but nothing exceptional..Because..people like Akiyama and are exceptional..but they don't comeas immigrants either..they come as conductors...It's quite different..They haven't really..left Japan for Canada..they're world wide..(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..So. it's not the same thing..And even their atttitude..they've thrown away so much..and this is the day of...well thinking of people like M ..K in Japan ....So I gather..over there they don't know what's happening either...But..when you tour round ya know...I've been doing this for four years now..And..I've just ..several hundred concerts...and several hundred..places..I could see that...on the stage..I do..mostly western music..But the thing they valued most..And the thing that gives me an advantage of anybody else..is my Japanese -ness music...because...and even if my language.... isn't what it should be in Japanese..I am probably more Japanese I think than..the...Well..I'm more aware of what it.. the meaningfulness of being Japanese that people..from Japan..I..feel this..Because..I've been told this...by so many of my friends..who have immigrated here...and they're quite surprised to see my attitude...which is practically inflexible..that...we are what we are...and we could never be a ..This is..this is about all I'm saying..So..right now is..very interesting..as far as the Neisai..... is concerned...The future of the Neisai..I think time has just passed them by.. rather disap- they never did give up ironic ..which was to make a lot of money and go to Japan..go back to Japan..so..They didn't make it.. were half hung up on this...they switched course in the middle ..some of them found they were gonna be like .but

we know very well about them..they never made that either..So here's the who all of a sudden they realize that they have to be Japanese...then..but they have nothing Japanese in them...because the Neisai..made darn sure..(Mr. Aoki chuckles).. that they didn't speak any Japanese...and they didn...and..since there's such a paucity of..culture in the home...They missed out on that..completely..so the only other thing left...are..the people who came from Japan...who have thrown away their Japanese..was to be..become...I firmly believe that 90% of them here..if they had a chanee...would have rather..gone into the United States..to become an American..And..the way I sit right now that's the last thing I would want to be...because the..the...moral..ethical..you name it...Everything distasteful is centered in the United States... And this is what the Japanese are trying to be...If they had tried to be like an English Gentleman..I would even respect them a little more...But their value is all glass ...steel..and..surface flash.. I met a group of...Japanese rock musicians last summer..avery distasteful experience to me..ya know..?

Miss Koizumi: How old were they...ya know..most of them..? Twenty?

Mr. Aoki: Oh..they must have been...Oh...in their twenties..Some of them were pretty fair...some of them are supposed to be stars ..ubut..but wh..from where I sit...they're no star material.. Because..you see..this is rock now...and I'm..we're..too much with negroe..American negroe..jazz men..And these..you see's..a...the funniest thing..I have a funny feeling..because...you see rock is a funny thing..(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..Basically..if you break it down ...rock is...a lower class..English..this is Liverpool..imitation ya know of a southern Negroe..Yousee..So..this copying by Japanese..talks.. trying to...Even the way they sing ya know...is the imitation of..

the English...imitation of..the..the southern negro...A slur.. and this f sounds funny to me (Miss Koizumi chuckles)...And..besides they haven't got the face for it...ahh...(Miss Koizumi chuckles).. instrumentally they were pretty good..but..not..it's a..what the black people call the 'soul' thing ya know...which is what they're trying to get...And..so this is what they are mixed ..mixed up in..and I wasn't impressed at all...Ah..but..so they make it in Japan...Fine..that's...But..when they come over here nobody pays very much attention...they went back...Besides..once..you..Once you've been close to the real thing..which is the..the negro jazz men...It's so phony...It's..well put it this way..it's incongruous...it's like a..a big woman with a kimono...They never look right...I've seen opera ya know..Madame Butterfly...and they look...they look like..practically animals.. they're so big...and..and...This is what it is...Anyways..and this is when I found out..the..settup of Japanese rock groups..which is very close to the...the ..organization here..which is..they say gangster..mafia...controlled business...Ya know..?...And over there...I understand this is controlled by..the gambling crowd too...the whole business...Then..so I could understand..for one thing they were very..I thought they were very..what's the word.. 'coarse'...low...low grade people...and their actions certainly proved it..And..They are very arrogant...without the abilities.. And..then I found out...one...as a matter of fact...A group of ..immigrants... young immigrants here...explained this to methat...this is controlled... Osaka-based ya see ...And..you're dealing with the wrong people..that's what they to

wrong people..that's what they told me....(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..

Miss Koizumi: Oh..I see..

Mr. Aoki: I was helping them..

Miss Koizumi: Oh..

Mr. Aoki: Through J.C.C.A...And..on the most...ungrateful..See.. I thought I was dealing with Japanese...they were Japanese...And it wasn't that at all...Yeah ..these were..what's the word... no..?

Miss Koizumi:

Mr. Aoki: And..I couldn't understand it...ya know..these are Japanese ya know...And..the..the..not like any..any of the immigrants..people who come here...who are very nice people..This was a different breed...I'd never come across...Especially..not the musicians themselves..but the people running it...And this is when I found out..this is racket controlled..the same as..the movie.. business too...And..so it ties in with the settup that they have in the United States..the entertainment business...is..largely controlled by gangsters...So...so much for your Japanese pop.. business...It's not very impressive...And..and even then it was a funny thing...I wasn't too interested in it...because I heard their tapes...and I thought..well this...certainly it's alright ...but nothing worth going to...ya know..I wouldn't pay money to go see them..But there was a group which had in it...and I said...Well this is coming soon..and..so I oonvinced our association..the J.C.C..that...Okay..let's..bring it in... it will be interesting But it turned out..they didn't..they didn't even come.. they..We weren't told that they weren't coming ya see..And..so.. to make the long story short....I...I talked to my musician friends

and the people who were knowledgeable in this ya know...the critics ...and I said...'Look..here's a very interesting group coming... among them is this one ....and so theywere very interested...So when they actually came..and landed at the airport...I said...Okay who is this Mr. So and so...with this group ...He's not here...But the rest of it just as good...I said...Well..so who pays plays So I had to phone all these people..and say..'Look..they're not coming..(Mr. Aoki chuckles)..and they're here...but they're not...not what I told you..so so don't bother..' There again they missed the boat ya know...Because..the only thing which would have justified... going to hear them was.. ..and since they didn't come they had.. really nothing to...recommend themselves..outside of the novelty of seeing..a bunch of performing like...An English immitation of negro..which is what it was...And..it was too bad.. 'Cause..if they ever want to make it..I still maintain...they have to be able to produce...their own goods ya know...An immitation twice removed is not..is not effective outside of a..a novelty..

Miss Koizumi: Did you...your friends..the second generation people ..do they share the same kind of opinion..with you...Like of a.. when they have children..?

Mr. Aoki: Oh...some..very few really...

Miss Koizumi: ...oh..

Mr. Aoki: Because...You see...a lot of them are...material oriented ya know...And..I never was satisfied with that...because..probably it was the way I was brought up...ya know...I always believed this ...Con..it was written by...Confuscious...'A man with no art is a barbarian..'...And...I admire...for instance the Japanese..school

system..where the emphasis is on..is on music ya know...Where.. in the arts...they turn out a more rounded person..And this is why I like...I like some of the immigrants coming over..there's a friend who is a carpenter..who has the best collection of Vivaldi..I've ever seen in my life ...He's a carpenter ya see...And this comes out of a...Some kind of...educational philosophy which says.. which civilizes a man...But..when I talk about this to a friends of mine...I just draw a blank because...they don't know ..even know what I'm talking about..Because it..this is a complete lack you see...It's like a person who's colour-blind say to..a colour...red...You see everything but red...but if you talk about shades of red he can't see it...'cause he hasn't got it..And this is the cultural gap in the...the cultural...deprivation that I talk about...And...for which there may be a reason..but..it's not a...But this colours..the values of a man too..Because once you start talking culture..then..you get right to the....the...right to the depth..of the maka-up of the man...because...The culture reflects ...the waste too ya know...Like...Japanese music for instance...the music...reflects Japan....the Japanese people...And..the European mind isn't quite geared to that..They find it...boring ...see...Whereas the Japanese...because he is more...I would say...something like more...aesthetic...more.. spiritually oriented...could stand large doses of this....You play music to negro jazzmen...They'd go crazy after about five minutes...Although they're good musicians...because they haven't got that ...feeling ya see...So..it's a..Japanese feeling..and.. therefore...and this...This is something which evolved naturally in Japan over hundreds of years...and this is typically Japanese..

So..when you get a people who don't..who are not culturally oriented..They can't...They miss...a development...of a certain part of them..which is Japanese...And therefore... when I ~~to~~ talk about things like this with my...peers and my friends... This is one subject... I don't touch on..

Miss Koizumi: Are they very sensitive. ?

Mr. Aoki: No...because they don't even know...well they miss it ya see...They've never had any...They've never had any..There's a...very prominent...B.C. architect...who is very interested ~~in~~ Japanese things...But one of the things...criticisms..or just a remark...which I thought was very...very significant..by an colleague...Was..'ya know So..and..so is a very fine man...very fine..technician...Too bad..he doesn't understand music at all..And he was meaning music in general..let alone Japanese music...which is a little more harder to understand ya know...Its very aesthetic...and it takes the Japanese sensitivity to understand this..So...I think it..comes right back to..a..sort of pet theory...You take culture away from a man..you get a cripple ...a sort of a...cripple...Who...who has a blind spot...and I'm afraid this is where the N ....is..

Miss Koizumi: So this is...the kind of result of..that..that.. Japanese ripped off..by the..

Mr. Aoki: Yes..

Miss Koizumi: ..white people so much..?

Mr. Aoki: ..right..And this is one of the results...And this is one of the things I'm raising hell about with...Whereever I can.. Saying..'Look...you didn..you didn't just take our homes..forget it ya know.. that's things you can buy it..But there's a big..

real chunk of us ...that you..cut off.!.And the something funny...because..if you know them...S had very musical.. All you had to do...was..look at the Japanese chorus here...Which by the way...is coming around very nicely..But the make-up is...90%..young immigrants comes to Japan.. For one thing...because of the..lack of music in the home... S is definitely...not interested in music at all.. Well..you go ..the..a symphony concert...look at the number of Chinese..and then look at the number of Japanese..tell ya right away...All..all I have to do is walk into a home and look at the records...Japanese are great at following fads..so you would find ...people whose name are well-known...Gordon Lightfoot..this sort of thing....But talk about the real artists..no..that you have to look for yourself...You don't find them...Or look for...real ..what I call real music..which could be pure jazz ya see..

Miss Koizumi: ...uh-huh..

Mr. Aoki: ...if it's North American..or..pure classical...Forget it..it's not there...Whereas..if you walk into one of these apartments..of some of the young people from Japan..you'll find all sorts of interesting things...So it's not the race...it's not that we haven't got bad hearing...we haven't got bad ears.. It's just that...this..part missing..completely...And..this..ya see..in turn ...colours...because there's..this..there's no aesthetic...call it beauty...or spiritual thing if you want..Because it's missing..they're always looking for something...Therefore.. there's terrific indulgence in things like..like bowling..ya know.. Practically an over-indulgence..in sports...You can go golfing...

and there's a funny thing about golfing ya know...All the.. most of these..these..peo..most of these people claim that there ...there's no discrimination...They're making it with their friends....And why in hell do they have to have a Japanese bowling league...Why do they have to go bowling with a bunch of ...because won't bowl with them... won't...golf with them..that's why...And so...this is a tragedy ya know...whereas if they had.. a..through some means...They'd..maybe through reading of Japanese material..which they can't do...because their Japanese isn't good enough.. In forget it...They've..they can only read a 's translation...which is..as you know.. is impossible..You can't translate a language..So they miss altogether..even if they're educated...So...but still there's something missing ya know...And they feel it..they don't know what it is...So..it turns to very materialistic things..You go..you go to a gathering of Japanese..and talk about...say current events.. or the arts..You dont get very much reaction...You start talking about money..they light up..Because this is the only thing that they can work at...and this is where the interest is...And..and this is so typically un-Japanese...and...this is part of..the.. This is the damage ya know...it...The damage was to the whole man...not just property...which is what they still yell about... even the Japanese..Whereas...I think they are in a way...the mob psychology...They have a peak part missing..almost as if they had ..one arm missing or one leg...in ..in their makeup...there is something definitely missing..And..which is a result...of..the hard times here...because you have to remember that...the thing was not to...Like..it was very easy for me to say this is missing..

but at the time...it was just...enough to get...just to make a living...was all...As a matter of fact..a lot of that was sub-standard..

Miss Koizumi: ..huh..

Mr. Aoki: And..you can look at some of the old report cards..And you see...ya know..the..the health inspection...in the schools.. 'Malnutrition..' written right on there..You see..that's meat.. ...So...in a way...I've been very harsh..by speaking like this.. it was a very unpopular thing to say..but..What I'm getting at is ...this is the result of...a sub-..of a..sub-human..living standard ..which was..imposed on us...and..So you know we are victims of.. of a pretty.. quite terrible...manner of...

End of Track II, Tape 2, Interview 77.

End of Interview 77.