

Johnson, Mrs. Koko

130-1

MRS. TSUNEKO (KOKO) JOHNSON

January 16, 1973

Modern Life in Steveston

Interviewed by: D. Marlatt, R. Weyler
M. Koizumi, L. Manuel

Steveston is a Fishermen's Town. Community spirit of the Japanese is still strong. The town becomes empty in summer and is populated in winter. However, after Koko's father's generation is gone Steveston will no more remain as the Japanese fishermen town.

Oral History Project, Vancouver. Cultural Communties Series.

Interview No. 130, Tape no. 1, Track 1 & 2, Speed 3 3/4.

Vancouver, Oral History Project, 1973.

Mrs. Tsuneko Johnson (koko)
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Interview no. 130, Tape no. 1, Track 1.

Ms. Marlatt: So, you asked me, what this great plan was...for the book...

Mrs. Johnson: yes.

Ms. Marlatt: ...and what we...what we've been doing is, we've been
interviewing people like your father and askin^g them what Steveston
was like..

Mrs. Johnson: uh-huh.

Ms. Marlatt:....before the war.....and we thought...we were going
to get this book out on Steveston with photographs and some bits
from those interviews with different people and then we thought..
we don't have anything on what Steveston's like now or what.....like
third generation people think about Steveston. About what it's like
as a community...in fact, I don't think we even talk to people about
what they thought of it as a community. So we thought well, you'd
be a good person to ask....(laughing)

Miss Koizumi: Koko's been here a long time.....how many years..
(laughing)....fifteen years?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah...I've been living there for a while.

Miss Koizumi: With your parents or...you know?

Mrs. Johnson: What do you mean by community? That's the Japanese
community or...or how is it like to be living.....

Ms. Marlatt: No, we were interested in the Japanese community.
Cause it was like...really, really a pretty good Japanese community,
it seems before the war...when the union was...When the unions first
started it really pulled people together...and did a lot
people and then it seems that everyone has sort of gone off on their
own sort of individual trip and there isn't much community left.
But, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe that's not true.

Mrs. Johnson: No, I think it's wrong because they are definitely a very strong community. Most of the people there are Buddhist and the Buddhist church is almost like a community hall. Our people do gather every Sunday and all the people have their own time. I think there are a lot of....I don't really know what to say, (laughs) how to say.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah...yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: Because I live there but, I'm not really in the Japanese community because I don't belong to Buddhist Church and I don't send my kids to Sunday School, and I don't participate in any of the things they do because I have my own life which is completely different than theirs. But, as far as living there...I really enjoy living there.

Ms. Marlatt: What do you like about it?

Mrs. Johnson: What I like about it?

Ms. Marlatt: yes.

Mrs. Johnson: I think it's the atmosphere, that I like. Well, I go to the supermarket and then I see all the Japanese goods on the market and...which is really nice and I don't have to drive all the way to Vancouver to pick up things. And I go to town and of course I bump into old ladies who are friends of my grandmothers and it's nice to nice to sort of sit down and, you know, have a chat about it.

Ms. Marlatt: Yes...yes.

Mrs. Johnson: And I see kids coming up who are Japanese and they do speak Japanese. I mean you don't get that in a...you know. I think it's had...like steveston ..It's at the end of a road and there's no road coming....no through road coming out. Like in Vancouver you could just pass through and forget about it...but in Steveston you sort of drive in and you're right in Steveston. And it seems to me that everything's there.

Ms. Marlatt: So, like when you meet people who are friends of your grandmothers, like, I guess there's a sense like they've seen you ever since you were a little girl, right?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah..

Ms. Marlatt: They've watched you grow up.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: And now you're starting to watch other people grow up.

Mrs. Johnson: Uh-huh...and another nice thing about it is that... now what was I going to say...about Steveston? I forgot now. (laughs) (Pandemonium as everyone is talking at once.)

Mr. Manuel: Hey, is that thing gonna be picking up?

Miss Koizumi: What?

Mr. Manuel: Like why don't you play that back and listen to that?

Miss Koizumi: No...no way. (laughing)

Mr. Manuel: Yeah, I know.....it's atmosphere and all this but this is what happened to Cheryl, I think.

Mrs. Johnson: Why? It's okay....because you can always cut down what you don't want to hear.

Mr. Manuel: No, but you don't even know if it's coming up.

Mrs. Johnson: Sure, it's coming up.

Mr. Manuel: Can you see a little needle marking in all the time? (laughing)

Mr. Weyler: You gotta have a little more faith in Maya and that thing.

Ms. Marlatt: Look...just...look just trust Maya, she hasn't drunk as much as you have....for one thing. (laughing)

Miss Koizumi: These are my ears..

Mr. Manuel: My ears?

Mrs. Johnson: And you know, you did definitely see the change...

at least I do...

Mr. Manuel: Okay.

Mrs. Johnson: ...I see the changes of the season. Like when the summertime comes and then the springtime comes....whole town gets really busy because the fishermen are getting ready to go out... and people are coming into Steveston to work in the cannery. And in the summertime the people are really busy in the cannery. Fishermen are all out and then you hardly see any fishermen at all. You hardly see any men at all in Steveston....except the women in in the cannery. (Laughing) ...in the white uniforms and then fall comes and the fishermen are beginning to come home bit by bit and it's a nice feeling of having Dad home again. You know?

Mr. Manuel: It's easy when things are nice that way.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah..

Mr. Manuel: When you can see them changing, so often in the city you can't see them changing. And if you don't really look out for it, then you might miss the beginning of spring and all of a sudden it's summertime...kind of, you know.

Mrs. Johnson: And another thing that I like about it....there's a lot of things I like about Steveston, is our fish is right there. You know? Particularly the...my main diet is fish and vegetables.

Miss Koizumi: And the thing is that there's no fish store there.

Mrs. Johnson: No, but then if you know the fishermen you just go down to the dock and buy a fish...You know?

Mr. Manuel: What kind of a fish?

Mrs. Johnson: Any fish.

Mr. Manuel: A salmon?

Mrs. Johnson: Anything you like...they're are red snappers, cod,

ling cod, flounders..

Mr. Manuel: I thought they just sort of had salmon mostly.

Mrs. Johnson: No, there's quite a variety.

Mr. Manuel: They don't have tuna fish, do they? Probably not.

Mrs. Johnson: Personally, I have my own garden and I really like it out there.

Ms. Marlatt: You raise your own vegetables

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. Maya and I have that.

Mr. Manuel: I guess it's pretty good for growing isn't it?

Miss Koizumi: Your mother does too eh?

Mrs. Johnson: Um-hum

Miss Koizumi: Your mother makes a garden ... garden
and yet you say you learned a lot from your grandmother, right?

Mrs. Johnson: I learned lots from my grandmother, yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: About gardening?

Mrs. Johnson: About gardening, yeah. About herbals about home cure, just about everything from, you know, grandmother. And there are a lot of interesting old ladies, still living in Steveston who if I ever get stuck, well, I don't hesitate to go and ask them. And I think the people, the young people sometimes, that they...they're not really proud of their race. You know?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, that's what I heard...from other girls.

Mrs. Johnson: And I really don't like it. I want to teach the young children to...this is your culture and you stick with it...and in anything...I try to push this...with the children.

Ms. Marlatt: It's true, you know....the old...the Japanese women too bad that we couldn't interview an older woman...who..you know who could tell us a little bit about that. But they seem very reti-

cent.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: They don't want to talk onto a tape recorder.

Mrs. Johnson: No, because my grandmother she didn't have her children at home but there are several women....remember the woman we went to . She had her...children at home and she was telling me all about childbirth at her home.

Ms. Marlatt: So, would she be like a midwife?

Mrs. Johnson: She didn't even have a midwife! She just delivered the baby herself.

Ms. Marlatt: Really!!!!

Mrs. Johnson: And told her husband to go an boil water and....

Mr. Manuel: Why do they always boil water?

Mrs. Johnson: Because! You want to get into that??

Ms. Marlatt: You tell him.

Mrs. Johnson: When the baby come out, it's all coated with.....

Mr. Manuel: ..and they wash it off ^{/w} ith that??

Mrs. Johnson: Yes. With hot water...that.

Miss Koizumi: That's how you were born, eh LLoyd?

Mr. Manuel: Is that it?

Ms. Marlatt: Because probably you also have to sterilize the knife, hey, that you cut the umbilical cord with?

Mr. Manuel: Just to wash it off huh...gee...(laughing)

Mrs. Johnson: I really hate to see the farmland go..because when I was a young girl, I used to work in the farm.

Miss Koizumi: Oh, yeah?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, picking strawberries, picking cucumbers, picking beans, putting myself through school. Now, it's all disappearing.

buildings, with big false store fronts and those little houses built
/go out/
on stilts and you past that to a wharf....and there's a....what looks
like a grocery and it was called.....

Mrs. Johnson: It's a Chinese store..

Mrs. Marlatt: Yeah...right...It still has a little card up in the
window.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: Do you know anything about those..like when they...

Mrs. Johnson: No. I remember going into the shops. It was a....
it wasn't very many years ago. It was really a nice feeling..just
going there and all these Chinese people sitting around smoking and..
you know. It was a beautiful feeling.

Miss Koizumi: What kind of shop was it?

Mrs. Johnson: It was just a grocery shop.

Miss Koizumi: Oh yeah? So there were a lot of Chinese people living
in Steveston?

Mrs. Johnson: Um-hum. There were a lot of Chinese people living
and farming in Steveston, before..and all the , what do they call
it? The Chinese people work in the Cannery and their job is usually
to chop the head...off fish as the fish comes up.

Ms. Marlatt: That's the only work they did? just chop the heads off.

Mr. Manuel: (laughing) It'd be a good job.

Mrs. Johnson: They just put the fish in it and then...just chop
(laughing)...the fishes head off.

Miss Koizumi: Are they there now?

Mrs. Johnson: What...the Chinese people?

Miss Koizumi: The Chinese.

Mrs. Johnson: I think so , but they are not living there.

Ms. Marlatt: Well, like those little stores wouldn't have been part of the main town then?

Mrs. Johnson: No, I don't think so...no. Main town..it is the Moncton Street.

Ms. Marlatt: Yes...yes.

Mrs. Johnson: And the oldest building....there's just one building remain...it's across from Royal Bank... .

Mr. Manuel: You better sit over here, Maya.

Mrs. Johnson: That is the oldest building.

Ms. Marlatt: The one where the doctor's office is now?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.....you father told me that used to be the bank, yeah...yeah

Mrs. Johnson: And several years ago...it had a wooden sidewalk.

Ms. Marlatt: Huh!

Miss Koizumi: Yeah?

Mr. Manuel: How many years ago?

Mrs. Johnson: I don't know. I can still remember it.

Mr. Manuel: Like 10 or less?

Mrs. Johnson: Fifteen maybe. Twenty?

Mr. Manuel: Thirty?

Mrs. Johnson: Thirty...(laughing)

Miss Koizumi: Why was that Marshall Art building built?

Mrs. Johnson: Last year.

Miss Koizumi: Only last year.

Mrs. Johnson: Um-hum. It was only just completed.

Miss Koizumi: So why...can they do things before?

Mrs. Johnson: In the community centre.

Miss Koizumi: Oh, I see. The community centre Hall was there?

Mrs. Johnson: Yes..oh yes. The community centre was there. And there are a lot of Japanese marrying Canadian. Japanese men, mostly marrying Canadian girls....and their children are, you know half and half...More every year. I like to see that.

Ms. Marlatt: You like to see that?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: That's nice because we talked to somebody and she didn't like to see that.

Mrs. Johnson: Oh really?

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: Oh, I like to see that. I like to see...that happening, you know, and then this child is actually has the advantage of learning both cultures.

Ms. Marlatt: Uh-huh. Wow...that's just a totally different viewpoint! Right?

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Ms. Marlatt:yeah...because Mayumi said that....she saw it in a very negative way. She was...well like the child doesn't know who he is.....like he's torn between the two cultures..and he doesn't know whether he's Caucasian or Japanese.

Mrs. Johnson: Oh, I don't feel that way at all. I like to see more. Personally, you know, personally, I feel that for somebody like us...if we have to choose somebody, we have more to choose from....from Caucasians. (laughing) Than Orientals.....

Mr. Manuel: More to choose from...

Mrs. Johnson: Sure! I mean you know well, there's only a handful of Japanese men and ...you know..(laughing)

Miss Koizumi: It's more difficult to choose one from Japanese.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. Particularly I think, I was brought up in Japan and the man in Japan is completely different than who was brought up here as sort of...half and half.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah

Mrs. Johnson: And I really don't see it. Even the Japanese who are brought up in Canada as truly, purely Japanese, he doesn't speak Japanese. And he doesn't even know Japanese culture...so what's really the difference?

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah...

Mrs. Johnson: I think it's just the prejudice when you say, you know, I want to marry a Japanese girl...I want to marry a Japanese man.

Ms. Marlatt: That's interesting. How old were you when you left Japan?

Mrs. Johnson: Oh no!!! (laughing) I don't really remember. It's that long ago. Sixteen...seventeen...

Ms. Marlatt: But you lived most of your teen age years there.. (confusion as everyone talks at one time)

Miss Koizumi: Grade 9.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, I was going into ten....

Ms. Marlatt: Fifteen...sixteen....

Mrs. Johnson: It's a long time ago.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah, those are the most important years.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.

Mrs. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: And I remember that of Steveston was really deserted.

Ms. Marlatt: When you came back?

I hate to see these condominiums going up.

Ms. Marlatt: Do most of the people in Steveston feel like that?

Mrs. Johnson: I think so. Steveston used to be....At Steveston we used to have a Post Office and our mail address was just Steveston. And it was so nice because anybody could send the mail and just say "Such-and such", Steveston. And we got it! But now the municipality came in, it's Richmond.

Ms. Marlatt: Oh!

Mrs. Johnson: And it goes in the big Post Office. Therefore you might not receive the mail for three months because they don't know who this person is..in Steveston, you know?

Mr. Manuel: You mean like Joe Blow, Steveston?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, like I receive the mail say, well, from England. Koko lives somewhere in Steveston, off steveston Highway...and I got my mail!!!

Ms. Marlatt: Oh really!!

Mrs. Johnson: (Laughing) Thanks to busybodies working in the Post Office....(laughing)..because they know who you are and what's what.

Mr. Manuel: Did Steveston used to have it's own Post Office?

Mrs. Johnson: We used to have it.

Mr. Manuel: But not now?

Mrs. Johnson: No.

Mr. Manuel: Now it goes to Richmond.

Mrs. Johnson: And things like that and lot of old buildings are being renovated...sort of gradually disappearing and I hate to see that.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah. You know those old buildings down...like just up river from the cannery a little way? They're sort of abandoned

Miss Koizumi: How...how was it like when you came? How did you feel to.....

Mrs. Johnson: I was disappointed because I was brought up in the city..in Japan....noise and neon lights and glitter and all that. And I came to C.N.R. Station and I said, "Oh dear.....what's this?" (laughing) and I said, "Where am I?" And then my father says, "Well, this isn't it. This is a city." And I said, "Oh...if this is a city!" (laughing) I told my sisters to face the wall because a black man was coming.

Ms. Marlatt: Oh really!

Mrs. Johnson: So we both stood there...facing the wall. My father said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, there's a black man coming, so we're facing the wall."

Ms. Marlatt: (laughing) Wow!!!

Mrs. Johnson: And then I was introduced to these Japanese people who were...really straight old fashioned Japanese. They must have lived in an era way, way before my time, obviously. I had long hair and I was told that I had to cut my hair because only Indians wore braids then. A fifteen, sixteen or seventeen year old girl doesn't go around wearing a braid.....and all kinds of strange things. But the whole town was really deserted.

Miss Koizumi:much populated hey?

Mrs. Johnson: I think so.

Ms. Marlatt: That must have been....what..let me see...

Mrs. Johnson: 1953.

Miss Koizumi: '53.

Ms. Marlatt: You came to Canada only two years after I came!!!!

Mrs. Johnson: Oh, really.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah. I came in 1951.

Miss Koizumi: So, a lot of Japanese are back from the evacuation?

Mrs. Johnson: By then? Oh yes. They were all there.

Miss Koizumi: So the people who live in Steveston now, were there already, when you came?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.. all the ladies...most of the people there. But, part of my growing up...I didn't grow up in Steveston, you see after that. I came back to Steveston seven..or nine years ago.. about nine years ago.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mrs. Johnson: Eight? Eight years ago, I came back to Steveston to live. So, I was away from it for a few....It was really good to be away..in order to appreciate what Steveston could offer me.

Ms. Marlatt: I'm confused. When you came back in 1953 you went to Steveston first...

Mrs. Johnson: And we lived there. But I went and lived with a doctors family because I had to learn to speak English....and if I stayed in Steveston I would be constantly speaking Japanese.

Ms. Marlatt: Yes...yes...yes.

Mrs. Johnson: to anybody....even at school, I would speak Japanese. So, I went to live with a doctors family in Vancouver.

Miss Koizumi: Your sister lived with your parents, in Steveston?

Mrs. Johnson: Um-hum. And then after I got married and when my father and mother built the new house, we just rented the old house. And that's when I went back and I was actually a stranger. You know....because apparently I had made such a scandal in Steveston that I was sort of looked upon...looked down..

Ms. Marlatt: Why was there a scandal??

Mrs. Johnson: Well, I did all kinds of things, really...I did.
(laughing)

Miss Koizumi:and you were married to a Japanese man???

Mrs. Johnson: I was engaged to a Japanese man and I didn't marry him. I married a white beast...what they call a 'white beast'. So, the Steveston people sort of dis-own me....and then I did several more things. Like...girls aren't supposed to go to art school... because only crazy people do....and I'd gone through it, you see? And, you know, everything....apparently, I did, wasn't approved by Japanese people.

Ms. Marlatt: How did that make you feel? Did that bother you at all?

Mrs. Johnson: It never bothered me. I might..just felt sorry for my mother and father because they lived there. But there was nothing I could do about it....for...you know. My grandmother was the only one who stood by and said, "Well, you know. You're not the first one...you're not the last one."

Miss Koizumi: Your grandmother is really different, isn't she?
Because she is a pure...a typical Japanesewoman.

Mrs. Johnson: Oh yes.

Miss Koizumi: She is respected by the community....and she had all her friends in Steveston.....

Mrs. Johnson: Um-hum.

Miss Koizumi: ...and she was a Buddhist?

Mrs. Johnson: She was a Buddhist. She was actually everything. I think she didn't want to miss anything. (laughing) She was a Buddhist..

Miss Koizumi: She was the only one that supported you eh?

Mrs. Johnson: Um-hum.....more or less. My father and mother always I think, always thought...well, you know..what would the neighbours think? And I think it's like in other communities...small communities are like that. What would the neighbours think?

Miss Koizumi: That's right..yeah

Mrs. Johnson: That comes first, doesn't it?

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: And then I....well can...I actually married Murray and then I lived in New Westminster and in Vancouver and we eventually went back to Steveston. And then we started getting involved in the Steveston community centre....and it wasn't growing alot and.... children....I don't know. It's just I was...looked down and say, you know, "Who is she? What is she gonna do here now? What is she going to stir up?" And I was ..like I was really being like looked...

Mr. Manuel: Good God....

Mrs. Johnson:even when I walked the street..they would look at me. So I just say, "Hello." You know...."Good morning"
(laughing)

Miss Koizumi: So what did you say then?

Mrs. Johnson: Oh well, what can they say....You know. When somebody says "good morning" you gotta say "good morning." And they would go to church always on Sundays and they would walk by my house and they just gawk at you...you know.

Ms. Marlatt: Oh god...°! That must have been hard to live with/..

Mrs. Johnson: Oh, It didn't bother me because, I don't feel I've done anything to deserve this.

Ms. Marlatt: Well, yeah...yeah right.

Mrs. Johnson: No really. It never bothered me.

Miss Koizumi: So you never thought of leaving Steveston, eh...because of other people...you never thought of leaving.

Mrs. Johnson: Oh no..no no. I don't think I'd like to, you know, leave ...and I was called everything else and a couple of the kids would go by Steveston...my house and they says, "Well, that's where the hippie lives."...(laughing)...and then my son was sort of getting accused because ..you know..Erin is...you know..he's got long hair and all this. But it's really a funny community and it's not all the Japanese people. I have a next door neighbour...is Mrs. Russell...They probably gawked at you too...because when you guys come...and across the street...

Mr. Manuel: I felt someone was gawking at me when I came in...(laughter) ...I felt that..but I didn't look.

Mrs. Johnson: They always think that, you know...what I have. I think I really lead a very untidy lifestyle than anybody else in Steveston. Just because my lawn isn't cut properly and hedge isn't trimmed properly.

Mr. Weyler: Yeah...like your house is...I learnt that when I was driving down Garry Street...Well when you're driving through Steveston you see all these houses...house after house and they're really into it, you know, and they're very manicured....and you drive by Koko's house... (laughter)...and it looks like...you look back in there and you can see this little house back there and you think...'Oh wow!'.you know...(more laughter)...No...You know, it's really nice. 'Course, I can understand why...It would be like if you were living in the suburbs, you know..and you just let weeds and things grow up in your yard. People would say... "When will that guy move out," you know...But..it's really different.

Miss Koizumi: Maybe that's the thing that
(laughter)

Mrs. Johnson: And I think that they...they got to the point that I think

that they really respect me now because...they just casually..to see who ...so, you know..someone will....come up and ask, "Well...are you living with somebody?" It's sort of strange to hear an old lady saying, you know...

Ms. Marlatt: Really??? Wow!!

Mrs. Johnson: ...or somebody casually say..."Is he a boarder?" or "Is he your new boarder?"...(laughing)...and I'm sure, you know, several years ago they were even afraid to talk to me that way.

Ms. Marlatt: What do you say when they say, "Is he your new boarder?"?

Mrs. Johnson: I just said, "Yes," you know. "It's my problem not yours." (laughing)...In a nice way...so they understand and then of course, I got myself involved in teaching children the crafts in Steveston and the parents realized that I am teaching the children at the community centre and I think the children go home and show the things that they make and talk about me and then I think that they have sort of...

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: Do you know these people who have started a new craft store on...?

Mrs. Johnson: No. I don't. I passed by there today and I'm just curious....

Mr. Manuel: What's it called?

Ms. Marlatt: I don't remember.

Mr. Manuel: ...Something Gallery?

Mrs. Johnson: Azala?

Mr. Weyler: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: 'Azala Gallery' or something.

Mr. Manuel: Yeah. That's it. It starts with an 'A'.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. I often thought about starting a business here but

I don't think it would go...(laughter).

Mr. Manuel: No. Maybe a fishing business.

Miss Koizumi: These people are not...that..civilized yet.

Mrs. Johnson: No. It's not that...They have...like you see..like...I don't think they really....Their values are different.

Mr. Manuel: Oh..(chuckling)..you think so?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. It's not that Japanese people...it's not...I think those things have to be exposed. I don't think that if you open a shop like that...how many Japanese people will really go in..? Hardly none. They wouldn't even sort of go in there.

Ms. Marlatt: Well I wonder...you know..I don't think actually, very many people went to see the photographs we took, you know, when they were hanging in the community centre.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah but....

Mrs. Johnson: They were looking...I was there one evening and there were a lot of people looking at it.

Ms. Marlatt: Really?

Mr. Manuel: Yeah. They wouldn't not look at it...if they were there... (chuckling).

Miss Koizumi: What did they think about that....

Mrs. Johnson: I didn't ask them. I just sort of....

Miss Koizumi: Your father didn't look at them...the picture of your...?

Mrs. Johnson: I said to my father, "Did you go and look at it?" and he says, "No..."..he hasn't had the time to go look at it..and I says.."Well you go and look at it." And most likely he will. I think that those pictures should be circulated, you know...should be hung up on the Gallery too, even...In the Art Centre in Richmond. Not just in Steveston because there are a lot of people who are interested in Steveston...

Mr. Manuel: ...who live in Richmond.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah...who are living in Richmond.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: It's too bad that Steveston is...can't remain as the little town it used to be...you know...all these...

Miss Koizumi: How about, like..young people...Are they living there?

Mrs. Johnson: Young people leave Steveston. Most of the young people leave Steveston. When they get married and they have families they return to Richmond.

Miss Koizumi: Oh yeah?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. To...I think it's a nice..place to bring up your children...safe place..and they do, bit by bit, return to Steveston but most of the young people leave Steveston. I don't think the young people want to continue their fathers' job as a fisherman.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: Although, I would like to see me son become a fisherman..take after Grandpa and...(some chuckling).

Miss Koizumi: Do those fishermen...so that most of the children are not fishermen now, eh.

Mrs. Johnson: Oh..some. Some are and some aren't. I don't think...I don't know. A lot of young kids sort of look down on their dad like to say, "Well, you were only a fisherman.."..you know?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: And that's wrong because, after all, you know, they provided the shelter for them, clothed them and they said, "Well," you know, "Dad, you're only a fisherman. I'm going to be a little bit better than you were.."..sort of thing. There are a lot of young kids like that, which I really resent.

Miss Koizumi: How about that guy that you been friends with...You know ..that guy? Wasn't he brought up in Steveston?

Mrs. Johnson: You mean Pat?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. He was brought up in Steveston. Every summer he goes out to sea.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah? His father's a fisherman?

Mrs. Johnson: His father's a fisherman.

Miss Koizumi: You know what he thinks about Steveston?

Mrs. Johnson: I don't know....He doesn't live in Steveston. No..he doesn't live in Steveston.

Miss Koizumi: Didn't he come to Steveston though...everyday?

Mrs. Johnson: Oh..he comes to Steveston everyday. He lives in town.. but he just can't stay away from Steveston so he comes to Steveston every day. Goes to the pool hall and plays pool all day long.

Mr. Manuel: Oh yeah. That's a popular place isn't it...the pool hall.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. And in the wintertime, actually, a man doesn't have much to do so...

Miss Koizumi: What do fishermen do in the wintertime?

Mrs. Johnson: Collect Unemployment and...play a game of whatever...

Miss Koizumi: Cards and things like that...

Ms. Marlatt: We noticed though that...what...in December there was...I don't think there was one...Well there were a couple of young Japanese guys in the beer parlour but there wasn't one..sort of..you know, middle aged or older Japanese man.

Mrs. Johnson: Oh..the Japanese man as a rule..doesn't go to pubs.

Ms. Marlatt: Never??

Mrs. Johnson: No..they don't.

Ms. Marlatt: Oh yeah? Does that mean they don't drink..or do they drink

at home...?

Mrs. Johnson: Oh they drink. Yeah...they drink at home but my father
...I don't think has ever been in a pub.

Ms. Marlatt: Really?? (Miss Koizumi and Ms. Marlatt both talk at once.)

Mrs. Johnson: They never go. Apparently it's a disgrace to be seen in
a pub.

Mr. Manuel: Oooh! (chuckles).

Ms. Marlatt: Well if they want to drink with their friends...they just
go to somebody's house?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. Well when their friends come over they usually
serve...

Mr. Manuel: What do they drink? Do they drink beer?

Mrs. Johnson: Wine or beer or whiskey or...

Miss Koizumi: Your father likes wine.

Mrs. Johnson: My father has...when a friend comes...he only serves them
tea or....They just don't go. Like, I was brought up, you know...Never
drink. Never smoke. And I think my mother sort of brainwashed it, you
know. I was a naughty, naughty girl to drink. Naughty girl to smoke...
(Mrs. Johnson giggles).

Miss Koizumi: So, like women don't drink, eh?

Mrs. Johnson: No. Usually women...No they don't. It's a strange
thing, though, isn't it? I don't know why a Japanese man doesn't go to
pubs.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: There is only one or two Japanese man that do go to pubs
but they were known, you know, as a drinker and if you can't find him
he's always in the pub sort of thing. But as a rule they don't go.

Miss Koizumi: Those fishermen, like your father, they are very big

family men, aren't they?

Mrs. Johnson: I guess most Japanese men are, I think. I don't know why I say Japanese man...(chuckling).

Miss Koizumi:

Mrs. Johnson: When you say 'good family man' what do you mean? They stick around family or...

Miss Koizumi: Yeah...(Mrs. Johnson laughs)...They take care of them. What do you think...like...They take a higher...estimate of the family.

Mrs. Johnson: They have a very strong family tie, you know. Every occasion...like practically every Sunday all the family gets together, which you don't see in Canadian homes, you know. Even after the children grow up and they go away, every week-end, like there's always that family tie. Very very close family tie.

Ms. Marlatt: So do you think that most of the people in...most of the Japanese in Steveston share a very similar morality?

Mrs. Johnson: I think so. Most of the...I can only go...of my father's age because..or friends, you know, the girls that I know around my age. They were sort of brought up the same way as I was. And the people that I talk to...the people that I work with are much much younger children, which is a completely different background...and my cousin, who is another...there's another difference because my aunt has never been to Japan, whereas my mother is from Japan and she is a very old...isn't she...she's a very old Japanese woman. Whereas, some of the girls...some of the childrens' mothers are born in Canada and they know nothing about Japan.

Ms. Marlatt: Well, would those women who were born in Canada..say...share similar values to your mother's.

Mrs. Johnson: No. They don't. And even in my Japanese cooking class

I see a lot of Japanese second generation girls come...and apparently her mother relates a message to my mother saying how grateful they are that they are finally learning to cook proper Japanese food. You know?

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: And those things should be taught at home and I think they just sort of feel that they should have been doing it, you know. And there are a lot of Japanese people living in Steveston who doesn't speak Japanese. And there are a lot of Caucasian people who lives in Steveston send their children to Japanese school.

Mrs. Marlatt: Oh, really???

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: Interesting.

Mrs. Johnson: That's another nice thing about Steveston. And I think in a small community it's quite easy to do that.

Ms. Marlatt: So there is a...like within the community itself there isn't a split, say, between Japanese and Caucasian people.

Mrs. Johnson: No. They're all mixed. And particularly when you go to the community centre, you see this among children. They sort of accepted it, you know...and they...just like any other. Whereas my son is finding a difficulty now up in Invermere where there is hardly any Japanese and he's been teased...

Ms. Marlatt: Oh wow.

Mrs. Johnson: And he's had to go through this hassle now of being half Japanese and it would be so easy for him to come back to Steveston and.. you know, being accepted...but then this is something that he has to work it out himself.

Ms. Marlatt: Well are there any white people of the Buddhist church..

white members of the Buddhist church?

Mrs. Johnson: Oh I think so...Yeah. I don't belong to Buddhist church so I don't know but on several occasions I have been there, a few...

Miss Koizumi: We should go to the Sunday School...

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. You should attend a...

Ms. Marlatt: 'Cause I was thinking that that would be...like...if there weren't very many that would be a sort of a subtle difference..you know..that the whites were all Christians and the...most of the Japanese are Buddhists...

Mrs. Johnson: Well there are a lot of Japanese who are Christians.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah...Yeah that's right.

Miss Koizumi: Are there any difference between Christian Japanese and Buddhist Japanese?

Mrs. Johnson: I think so.

Miss Koizumi: Really?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: Why?

Mrs. Johnson: Well...there are....Here it is again. I can only go by my experience of one or two handful of, you know, Christians...and all the girls...all the children...they think...'Well, I'm Christian,' you know. They don't sort of associate with the Buddhist kids. That does happen.

Miss Koizumi: Do Christians think they are superior or what?

Mrs. Johnson: (Laughs)...I don't know.

Miss Koizumi: I wonder why, you know.

Mr. Weyler: Most people think they're superior to other people.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah. I understand that but...

Ms. Marlatt: But somebody told us that...the Christian churches that were there in Steveston have sort of folded because the Buddhist churches now have so many members...that it's been growing away...the Christian churches have been fading away. Is that true?

Mrs. Johnson: I don't think so.

Mr. Weyler: Yeah. That's what that girl said.

Mrs. Johnson: Maybe she was brought up a Christian and maybe her family went that way but I don't think so. There are some Christians left. The Catholic church moved out of Steveston..but then they are only about a mile down the road. They got a bigger....bigger church.

Miss Koizumi: Oh I see. Do they have Anglicans or United church?

Ms. Marlatt: Do they have United?

Mrs. Johnson: They have United church. It's still existing.

Ms. Marlatt: It's still within Steveston?

Mrs. Johnson: Yes. That's the one...that white church kitty-corner from Super-Valu....and they do have services but most of the Christians ...I think hold services in homes. Mr. and Mrs. Susuki are Christians and they still attend their home services. And like..even the Buddhist church is just a great big community hall....

End of Track I...

Mrs. Johnson
January 16, 1973

Interview no. 130, Tape no. 1, Track 2.

Ms. Marlatt: Does Steveston feel itself more of a close-knit Japanese community lately, than it used to...say a decade ago? But then, I just realized that what you've been saying is that Steveston is really a close-knit community across all racial lines.

Miss Koizumi: That's right. That's what Koko said.

Mrs. Johnson: It is...it has nothing to do with Buddhists and Christians. But then I think the Buddhist people probably have a much more.....Well, the majority of them are Buddhist....and when when they are Buddhist members, you get your 'home news', you get your 'Buddhist', like any other society. It's a very close knit one. That's when the Japanese people sort of sticks together. And in the community..like they have a Japanese school sponsored by a community centre, Japanese school sponsored by Buddhists which is completely different thing.....and they are always competing to say say, you know, which Japanese school is better. Basically they're the same.

Ms. Marlatt: Right.

Miss Koizumi: The Community Centre Japanese School, is it just a recent one? Isn't it?

Mrs. Johnson: It's been operating for a last...maybe two..three years.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah? But the Buddhist School is older, isn't it?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah...Yeah, it's in an older school.

Ms. Marlatt: You know there's this third world movement afoot in California amongst students and there's an Asian Power booklet too, do you think that any of that has affected people in Steveston? I mean, are people becoming more.....Are people becoming prouder

of their Japanese culture? You know their heritage...than they used to be or....?

Mrs. Johnson: I don't think so. I really don't think so. (laughs) I think that some of the old people ..probably they lived in Canada for such a long time that they have forgotten. Most of them have forgotten what it is like....you know? What was their culture like. Only a handfull of people know that and try to maintain that. It's true, they are trying to teach the children through art, like

Kendo is one of the oldest ones. I think that is the only thing that they know but ..anything of art, they don't know. I think it's only the people who were brought up in Japan and come back....the Canadians who are brought up in Japan and had to come back....and really appreciate it. But see, I'm actually so much different than others because I have the advantages and disadvantages because I was brought up in both countries. All my acquaintance, you know, the girls around my age and the men around my age have never been to Japan, could never speak Japanese or never...so they don't really understand. And they will never know the difference. I think it must be really frustrating for their parents. But then when it really comes down to it, it's their parents fault because they didn't teach them.

Miss Koizumi: Why do you think they don't teach them...like a lot of them?

Mrs. Johnson: I think maybe their fathers are out fishing and busy and mothers are working and I guessyou know....

Miss Koizumi: They just didn't think about it..eh?

Mrs. Johnson: Maybe not.

Ms. Marlatt: What do you think they would think about the Asian Power Movement and the Third World Movement and so on?

Mrs. Johnson: I don't think like...I don't think it would affect my father or mother at all because they don't even think about it... and that's how the majority of the working people...and even the kids that go to University they probably won't discuss a problem like that with their parents.

Ms. Marlatt: What do you think of it?

Mrs. Johnson: It doesn't affect me either. I'm sorry...but..(laughs)

Mrs. Marlatt: You don't have to be sorry! (laughs)

Mrs. Johnson: I just say 'sorry' to you because I.....

Miss Koizumi: This generation people say, like when they were in school, they always wanted to be friends with white people and they didn't wanna be friends with Japanese and they always thought that white people were more superior than Japanese and they wanna be like white people. They want to forget that they are Japanese.

Mrs. Johnson: I think it's just one or two persons strongly feels like that, because I have never come across anybody who are ashamed of their Japanese, you know...being Japanese.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah?

Mrs. Johnson: No, I haven't.

Miss Koizumi: Like when you went to high school you saw..

Mrs. Johnson: When I went to high school, maybe there must be about 4 or 5 Japanese in the whole school. This was in Vancouver. I never felt any different.

Miss Koizumi: And other people didn't...they felt in the same way, you think? Did you talk with them about that?

Mrs. Johnson: No! I never talk about things like that because.. you know...it never bothered me. It never occurs to me that it bothers somebody else. I never thought, "oh, I wish I was...." you know, "white." Or I was ashamed of my accent or my being Japanese. But then, I really felt sorry for Indians because a lot of white kids were...point at ndians and they were really mean to them. I really resented, you know, white children for being like that. But, personally I never felt that.

Ms. Marlatt: I wonder if you didn't feel it personally because you grew up in Japan. You know? One girl was telling us that when she went to school, I guess it started in elementary school, she would take Japanese food to school and the white kids would say, "Oh, what's that horrible food? Ooooooh, how can you eat that stuff?" And so, then of course she wouldn't bring it. Like she didn't eat rice, she ate sandwiches.

Mr. Manuel: Rice Sandwiches?

Mrs. Johnson: No, I never felt that way at all! Like, I always said....well what I do is my business and not yours....and that's the way I've always been. I have been that way and it never bothered me. Therefore, I expect other people to be the same. But, you know..

Ms. Marlatt: Highly individualistic.

Mrs. Johnson: I just sort of feel that maybe I'm insensitive about these things, maybe this person you talked to was very, very sensitive about that. Maybe she was being ashamed, you know?

Ms. Marlatt: Maybe.

Miss Koizumi: What do you think about your sister?

Mrs. Johnson: My sister. That's another problem! (chuckles)

Miss Koizumi: Well, your cousin....you know?

Mrs. Johnson: My cousin, would have probably felt that way. But I don't think so either! She doesn't have any Japanese boyfriend. She actually hates Japanese men....without knowing them...she just really hates them. (laughs)

Ms. Marlatt: Hmmm! Is that usual? I mean, do you know other people like that?

Mrs. Johnson: I know there's a lot of...girls that I come to..they don't go out with Japanese men at all. But, then I see a Caucasian girl who never goes out with a Caucasian man...only Japanese men she goes out with.

Ms. Marlatt: Really?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah....in Steveston...She lives in Steveston. She's only 18. Every boyfriend she has...they're all Japanese. She says she has no desire to go out with a white man. So you really can't say from....the other.... But, I've noticed there too lately that all the Japanese guys in Steveston are....I don't know if the father provided them or what, but they do have the best cars. (laughing) You know, 18, 19 year old kid, graduation came, you know...father and mother give them a car...brand new car for graduation present. Things like this, they become much more materialistic. Maybe it's not just in Steveston. Because I live in Steveston I notice it more....Maybe it's like this all over the place.

Miss Koizumi: In Vancouver too, sure.

Mrs. Johnson: I suppose so....and they're losing their values. And after all their father is a fisherman and they resent the fact that their father is a fisherman.

Ms. Marlatt: So this friend of yours who can't stand Japanese men, you don't think that that might be a common pattern?

Mrs. Johnson: I don't think so. I asked her why...

Ms. Marlatt: Yes?

Mrs. Johnson: She cant' really understand why. She ways well, she says they are 'wishy washy'. Maybe..maybe, you know..something there too. Maybe these men feel that they want to be white man.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: Maybe they're not too sure of themselves. Maybe this is what she gets from them.. This 'wishy washy', you know. But definitely, this is my cousin, she will definitely not go out with Japanese men. And then the reason why I don't like M , like Canadian Japanese is because their upbringing is completely different. They are not brought up in the Japanese way. They are not brought up in the Canadian way. It is sort of 'wishy washy'. You know? And it's so much simpler for me to ...just don't understand them! Sometimes they're really backward. Their parents are so super straight and one way...and the other way they.....I can't explain it. What is it, You know? Once in a while I meet a real attractive Japanese man who knows what he is doing and be very proud of what he is..And I don't find this in a Caucasian man.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: You know, because actually they only have.....there again they are white, but then they are....you know, ancestors from Germany, Denmark, all over the place.

Ms. Marlatt: You mean they ah....have less sense of their own culture and less sense of who they are?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. That's interesting.

Mrs. Johnson: I don't know...just being exposed to these pure Japanese from Japan and they are very attractive because, you know, they are very proud of what they are and it show in their personality. They

are so sure of themselves.

Ms. Marlatt: So most M people don't have that sort of confidence eh?

Mrs. Johnson: I don't think. No they don't. My uncle deals with Caucasians all the time....Uncle Mike..

Miss Koizumi: Yeah..

Mrs. Johnson: ...and yet, he's really backward because he was brought up by very strict Japanese parents. Yet he doesn't fully understand the culture, does he? Have you talked to him?

Miss Koizumi: Not really. You mean Japanese culture?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: He's never been in Japan..

Mrs. Johnson: No. My father was brought up in Canada most of his life. But then after the war, he lived in Japan. So he was introduced that way.

Ms. Marlatt: And your mother came from Japan too, hey?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. So my mother is a real old traditional Japanese woman, who is trying to break away. And I hope she doesn't break away, you know. She should stay as what she is. Although sometimes I think, she's just lately trying desperately to get away, I guess. Then she realized that there was no way she could get out of it, so she sticks with it. I really admire her courage.

Ms. Marlatt: Why does she want to get away??

Mrs. Johnson: Because, I think, she perhaps feels that she could communicate with us better. And a lot of things, they frustrate her because she can't speak English properly and you know. She just wants to know what's just happening around her.

Miss Koizumi: She's been living here for a long time, right? She

married like...

Mrs. Johnson: Eighteen years of age.

Miss Koizumi:eighteen or something. And then the first time she went back was after the war....right?

Mrs. Johnson: I think that Steveston is...with more people coming into Richmond, more people coming into the Steveston area everyday to shop and to look around and people are interested and there are a lot of people who have never seen Japanese before. They're exposed to the Japanese Community and they say, "Oh, these people existed! You know? (laughs)...REally! The peoples from Prairie do....this one fellow I was talking to said, "Never seen Japanese before."

Ms. Marlatt: That's really hard to believe, isn't it?

Mrs. Johnson: And this young assistant that came to Steveston, you probably met him? Sven..

Ms. Marlatt: No, I haven't met him but other people have I think.

Mrs. Johnson: Oh! You should really talk to him because he said, he knew these people existed in Steveston but he never knew them until he started working right in Steveston Community Centre and he says, "My God! So many Japanese." You know. He really findshe does find a difference between Japanese children and Caucasian children. He say they are much higher energy level.

Ms. Marlatt: Really?

Mrs. Johnson: They are willing to work, willing to help willing to really make it go.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: Where as the Caucasain children...they just sort of... "OH well, what the Hell?" That sort of attitude. I think in another 10 years or so that the Steveston community will be, probably half

half and half of Eurasians. (laughs)

Ms. Marlatt: Yes, yes, yes.

Mrs. Johnson: with Japanese name..with blue eyes...

Ms. Marlatt: (laughing)....right..

Mrs. Johnson: ...dark brown hair...

Ms. Marlatt: That will feel like a good thing to you?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, I would like to see that ..and still maintain the Japanese culture in a strong way.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah. Steveston must be very unusual..right across the country, you know. I don't know of any other town...

Mrz. Johnson: I think that before the war...part of Vancouver was like that....the old Alexander Street and Powell Street around there. Lots of Japanese rooming houses and around there..first and second avenues...between Main and Cambie....that part was a close community of Japanese people. I think it is easier in Steveston because it is a dead end.

Ms. Marlatt: That's right...

Mr. Manuel: It's definitely a dead end, isn't it.

Mrs. Johnson: Hey?

Mr. Manuel: It's definitely a dead end....(Laughing)..physically.. like you can just turn around.

Mrs. Johnson: You just get to Steveston Pub and that's it!

Mr. Manuel:runs out of pavement.

Ms. Marlatt: Steveston Pub. Who owns most of the businesses in Steveston?

Mrs. Johnson: You mean, how many are Japanese owned?

Ms. Marlatt: Yeh

Mrs. Johnson: There's about maybe...one third. owned by Japanese. All those fishing companies...Maybe half...half of them owned by

apanese. The drug store is owned by Caucasians and groceries...

Ms. Marlatt: The hardware is Caucasian and the bakery is Caucasian

Mrs. Johnson: ...yeah..Danish...

Ms. Marlatt: Right... And the Credit Union has a Caucasian manager so it must be all Caucasian.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, it's all Caucasian...and the grocery stores and anything to do with the fishing industry they are all.... so I think it's probably half and half. But the Super Value is owned by Caucasians but carries Japanese goods. Now it's even extended to Richmond and Brighthouse Super Value carries a large counter full of Japanese goods. Safeway carried it..

Ms. Marlatt: Brighthouse....huh...

Mrs. Johnson:..so actually it's really spreading.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah...yeah..

Mrs. Johnson: Is a fad, I think, Japanese food...

Ms. Marlatt: It's no wonder...it's good food!!!! (laughing)

Mr. Manuel: (groans) Good food?

Ms. Marlatt: Just 'cause you ate too much...

Mr. Manuel: I don't know if I ate too much...I don't think I ate too much, I think I ate just the right amount.....(laughter) I think I ate just the right amount..^{e/}(laughter) Cuz I hat eating too much. (laughter)

Mrs. Johnson: Maybe you sung too much.

Mr. Manuel: Beg parden?

Mrs. Johnson: Maybe you sung too much.

Mr. Manuel: Maybe I sung too much? No, I wouldn't do that.

Mrs. Johnson: This martial art kendo is really spreading. They have lot of Caucasian students in small ones.

Ms. Marlatt: It's really spreading, hey?

Mrs. Johnson: Yes, that was my grandmother's very... she was very faithful in it. Shw was probably the earlier person to start it in Steveston. Yeah...grandmother really promoted that.

Miss Koizumi: So that's why your father goes there....eh?

Mrs. Johnson: Well, because of grandmother, yeah. That again to me is like a big social gathering...it really is.

Miss Koizumi: It is a social gathering. They have a good time.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, they have a good time...um-hum.

Ms. Marlatt: So your grandmother was 10 weeks over in in Japan hey... before she came out here? And then she carried it on out here.

Mrs. Johnson: I think it was introduced to her in Japan and actually you know, when she came out here, there was not much to do for grandma except to go to nam myoho rengo kyo.... and another religious sect called Odaish^{an} Nichirin Shosho and there's a Buddhist Church. So she attended every one of them. (laughs) But, then I think that was the strongest one. She really enjoyed it then. She really believed in curing people that way.

Ms. Marlatt: Is that what it....I didn't know that there was a certain way of curing people that they....

Mrs. Johnson: They do reading and they pray and they chant and they dance and they really believe that it cures people's sickness.

Ms. Marlatt: Gee....just by the dancing and the being together and thinking about that person.

Mrs. Johnson:and then they just touched and grandmother often tells me that I have to believe in it too....faithfully. So what it is....is your mind is curing you...because you believe in it and you strongly feel that...and then eventually.....just...if you just sort

of sit there, Oh, you know...you cure me, and you won't get cured..
(laughs) because your mind isn't in it....and they really believe in
it.

Ms. Marlatt: So is part of each ceremony sort of devoted to that?

Mrs. Johnson: Oh no, no, no. It's not devoted to just the curing.
They have, all these signs that they go through and then dance and..
they never offer flowers at the altar....just greeneries, I think.
And they offer wine. *Nam myoho renge kyo* is called the.....what is it?

Reasons of heaven. That's a literary translation. I think, maybe
in Steveston, I think it is growing in Steveston. I don't know
how many people in Vancouver, but, it's quite big in Vancouver, isn't
it? Among the Japanese people.

Ms. Marlatt: Why do you think it's growing?

Mrs. Johnson: Because I think, a People who comes from Japan have
no where to go, so they hear a word saying, "Oh, go to
on Sunday. You get fed....a free meal." So they go and I guess pretty
soon, they get hooked on it. (laughs)

Ms. Marlatt: Sounds like a drug.

Mrs. Johnson: Don't you think so? You know, nowhere to go so you
just go there on Sunday.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, the people are really nice.....really nice people.

Mrs. Johnson: Are they?

Miss Koizumi: I went there and I was a stranger and I *was at om*
I'm living at om But, it's really nice if you can

Mr. Manuel: Where was this?

Miss Koizumi: And they have good food...really...big meal..

Mrs. Johnson:....and that's all donated by people.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, people just bring their own food. Like your father
brought

Mrs. Johnson: My father is sort of adonates fish every festival.
That's his job.

Miss Koizumi: He barbecues it...the salmon. Really great... huge...
really did

Mrs. Johnson: He gives about 150 pieces.

Mr. Weyler: Does he save them from.....

Mrs. Johnson: Just with this in particular..

Mr. Weyler: He saves them from *om* ?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, from

Ms. Marlatt: How often do they have a festival?

Mrs. Johnson: Every fourth Sunday. Isn't it every fourth Sunday?

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum...Something like that..and they sing songs and
everything. Some of them are really good singers. Koko's father is
a very good singer....(laughing)

Ms. Marlatt: Did your father start going to it at a certain time?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, after my grandmother passed away.

Ms. Marlatt: Is that right? And he went because of her?

Mrs. Johnson: I guess he felt obligated because they had done so much
for her...and perhaps he feels he should continue what grandmother
left. So, he goes. But, my mother, who doesn't like public very much,
she just makes excuses, you know and says no, hse doesn't want to go,
and she doesn't go. She feels that it's a waste of time. (Laughs)
Doesn't she?

Miss Koizumi: You~~r~~ mother is a very domestic person.

Mrs. Johnson: Domestic? I think she just enjoys her solitude so much
that....she has her own belief. I used to go to Anglican Church, too.

Ms. Marlatt: Oh, did you?

Mrs. Johnson: After I come to Canada, I was disappointed in how the

Buddhist Church was. They weren't teaching me anything. It was just a big gathering on Sunday. I just really got to the point where I didn't even want to go to the Buddhist Church, so I went and joined the Anglican Church. And then I was faithfully, you know, studying Bible for such a long, long time and one day I went to Buddhist Church and I walked in and I smelled the incense burning and it was so hard to just.....it was so easy for me to just fold my hands together and pray. And I realized that I am still Buddhist. You know, it doesn't matter how many year that I've been studying Bible. (laughing) When you're born a Buddhist, I think you're just always a Buddhist. And I wonder how many young Buddhists that goes to Buddhist Church feels this way, you know?

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: Do they go there because their parents want them to go.. and they're just learning it? This is another reason I don't want my children to go to Buddhist church. My mother says, "Why don't you send them to Buddhist Church?" You know? I think they reach the age where they want to.....

Ms. Marlatt: They'd choose? Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: And if....I hope, if they decided to go to the Buddhist Church, I want them to go to Anglican, I want them to go to synagogue, I want them to be exposed to all kinds of religion. Because I think basically it just comes from one thing.

Ms. Marlatt: Gee, Koko, I'm sure that not that many people in Steveston, share your liberal view. (laughing)

Mrs. Johnson: I never have to confront with any of them. I think maybe this is why I get along so well with them.

Ms. Marlatt: Even if somebody doesn't approve of your ideas, they won't say it. They won't tell you.

Mrs. Johnson: No. My next door neighbour on one side, I have a Japanese woman and I've been living there for seven years, and just about a month ago she came in, actually came in. She usually brings me a fish, but she usually hands me this piece of fish at the door... and she wouldn't come in. And I said, "Do come in." And she's always interested in what I'm doing but she's always afraid to come in the house. And she finally came in and she looked at the weaving a friend of mine was doing. She was admiring it and asking how it was done, and then she saw the piano. She says, "Oh." and then she starts talking to me...for the first time in 7 years!!! This woman actually stayed for about half an hour just chatting, You know? And why? It's so easy for her to come in to my house and it's so easy for me to go into her house, but there's always that wall there, you know? Maybe I put it there, I don't know.

Miss Koizumi: You've never been in her house?

Mrs. Johnson: Oh yeah, I go there and I stay for tea and things. But she always brings me fish or shrimp or whatever her husband brings home. And another thing the Japanese are very conscious of is their obligations to each other. It's so much! You know, like, if you take a present to somebody else's house, that person from that house must return the present in return. When the child is born to a family you receive a present and then in return I would have to return the present...^{present}thanking for the present I had received.

Miss Koizumi: In Japan....in Japan it's this way.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah and in this way they are still living in old Japan. How many people in Tokyo does that now?

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum. Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: I'm sure they don't.

Miss Koizumi: Neighbours thing..or family thing. Also like, if you go on a trip, people give you some presents and some money or something so just sort of....

Mrs. Johnson: thank you for giving me the present...And if somebody goes in the hospital, you bring a present to the hospital...for being sick. And then when you become well, then there's a little card saying, you know, "Got Well" card on it...and you return the present. It's a vicious circle.

Ms. Marlatt: And so then, does the other person have to return another present for the person who returned a present for thanking him for the present....(laughing)

Mrs. Johnson: It gets to be that way...and I don't do this ritual... and then my mother sort of feels ashamed of me because I don't do this. So that Mrs. ^(her mother) brings me a fish, and it goes all year 'round, you know. Twelve months and at the very end I just sort of thank her at Christmas time and buy her a pot of flowers, a mum or whatever the way I think I like to show my feelings. It got about seven years of convincing my mother this is the way I want it. You know? I don't want to return present each time she gives me present. And when she went to Japan, she said, "Well, what did you give for a present?" I said, "No." But, when she returned, she brought me something. You know? And Mother say, "What did you do!?" And I say, "I just thanked her." And see, then my mother feels really shitty because I didn't carry on this ritual. Well, these rituals, to me doesn't mean a thing. These traditions aren't very important but then they still carry on.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah...yeah...yeah...yeah...right. Do you sort of criticise your mother for carrying on the rituals?

Mrs. Johnson: I do. I really do. But then she said...ends up always saying, well, what do you do? You live in this community, you have to get along with people...otherwise people do talk back on you. So, I think, this is the way my mother feels. If you want to survive in a communtiy, a Japanese community, you must go along with them. Why do I fight? I'm not really fighting, it's just..I'm just stopping it at a certain point.

Ms. Marlatt: And still managing to live quite well.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: But, you think that kind of thing must stop, eh? After your parent's generation ..like your generation...like you and your sister, for example.

Mrs. Johnson: Oh yeah, I think after my mother's generation is gone, I think, those things will be completely wiped out. My sister still follows it. My sister really does.

Miss Koizumi: Oh yeah?

Mrs. Johnson: Um-hum. So maybe perhaps....you know, maybe some of them will carry it on then to the next...

Miss Koizumi: Not many eh?

Mrs. Johnson: No.

Miss Koizumi: Like your cousin won't?

Mrs. Johnson: Oh no. My cousin is completely Westernized. She has no idea of ...like everything, like the cultures like..of how to cook vegetables. Maybe I'm a fanatic, you know about cutting my vegetables. (laughing) But these things are much more important to me than carrying on silly traditions of vicious circle..

Ms. Marlatt: Oh yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: That returning and not returning....And that don't put emphasis on their finer things.

Ms. Marlatt: So you would like to be able to keep the best things, the most useful thing of that culture but you wouldn't be sad to see the rest of it go?

Mrs. Johnson: No. I don't see any point in it. It's just sort of a.....Maybe those times that they did live, you know, that was the thing in Japan, you know. It was a very polite thing to do.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, it has a very important meaning in there..

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah..and I think that still in Japan they do carry it, don't they?

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mrs. Johnson: But then, you've gotta stop it somehow. I mean look at the people in Japan who are complaining because you have to bow down to your executive when you are lower worker. And when you are lower than lower then you have to bow down to somebody above you and present the presents and things....you know? It's almost like I'm giving a present so give me the favour. Somehow along the line I think it lost the meaning. (laughs)....I could see this, exchanging going on in a very close family with very close friendship when they really mean it. I think it's still nice to continue it. But you're doing it because it's the thing to do and even when you don't feel like doing it, you still do it because it's the thing to do.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah...yeah...cause it's affected...

Mrs. Johnson: yeah...that to me is just wasted energy.

Ms. Marlatt: I wonder, I guess it would be almost impossible to decide if you feel some distance from your parents and their values how much that has to do with any of us. I mean would all of us feel estranged in some ways...^{from} our parents and how much ^{kind of a} it would have to do with growing up in that community.

Mrs. Johnson: What was your question? (laughing)

Ms. Marlatt: Okay....Five questions all in one! (laughing) Well, first of all, do you feel close to your parents?

Mrs. Johnson: I do.

Mrs. Marlatt: You do?

Mrs. Johnson: I feel close to my parents.

Ms. Marlatt: Even though you have disagreements on certain values?

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah. I do. Like if anything ever happened I know, you know, ah...that I am there. If anything happens to my mother I know I will take my father in. If anything happens to my father, I will take my mother in.....regardless of what I am doing, where I am doing it....you know where I am living. I do feel very close to my parents....and I would feel very close to my cousins too..particularly this one cousin. There was a.....mind you there's a growing period where I thought, well, you know, I had no use for my parents. Which I thought...and I thought that I was distant...but actually they were there all the time...and it was just me. I was away from them. And all of a sudden I realized they're there all the time and they haven't changed. It's just me that's gone through this....you know know...^{omit}

Ms. Marlatt: When did you find that out?

Mrs. Johnson: When I was in a delivery table with my first son...

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah....wow.....

Mrs. Johnson: Just to think, you know....Mum's going through this for me. I really felt her close....and then I think after that..rapidly just getting closer and closer and closer. That sort of feeling's strange.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah. That's really.....that's really a nice generation feeling.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah...and now I feel that...they're the best friends

I have really. If anything happens I could take the criticism. Before a certain growing stage, I jsut couldn't stand the criticism. My mother would say, "Well, a stranger won't tell you what's wrong with you but I am your mother and I'm telling you." You know? And I took it all in but I resented her. I think all of us go through that.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mrs. Johnson: And I was wondering are young people just growing up now? Their parents really don't speak to them...I think they are really missing something. These kids are mostly English spoken children and their parents are Japanese spoken parents...and there's something missing.

Ms. Marlatt: I guess it would be hard to have a very close conversation.....with that problem.

Mrs. Johnson: And I think they'll go through this very frustrating age between 12 and 19 or 20...can't communicate. I think it's.... anything...it's worth anything races....I think...You know, the German parent who speaks only German and their children speak English...and they can't communicate.

End of Track II