

Koizumi, Maya  
(Transcripts) - Original

222-1



MAYA KOIZUMI

Maya Koizumi And Her Study  
Of The Japanese-Canadians of B.C.

Interviewed by Daphne Marlatt  
1973

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Maya Koizumi: discusses her impressions of Japanese-Canadians and her study of the Japanese-Canadian community of Steveston, B.C. Comparison of Japanese and Japanese-Canadian lifestyles.

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Accession No. 222, Tape 1, Tracks No. 1 & 2, Speed 3 3/4



Ms. Maya Koizumi  
March, 1973

Accession No. 222, Tape No. 1, Track No. 1

Ms. Marlatt: Miss Koizumi, I understand that you've worked with the aural history project for some time.

Miss Koizumi: Yes.

Mr. Minden: Were you interested in Japanese-Canadians before you started this job?

Miss Koizumi: What was that?

Mr. Minden: Were you interested in Japanese-Canadians' community before you started working with aural history?

Mr. Weyler: She was a Japanese-Canadian.

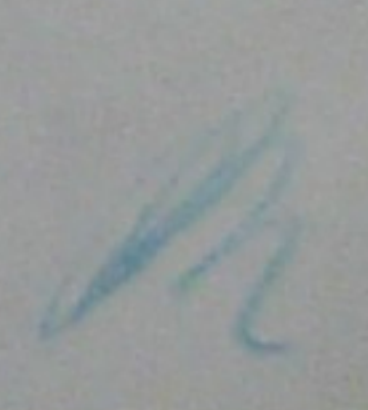
Ms. Marlatt: No, she isn't.

Mr. Minden: No, she's not.

Mr. Weyler: She's not?

Mr. Minden: It's not like that.

Ms. Marlatt: You're not naturalized, are you?





Mr. Weyler: Oh, that's right.

Mr. Minden: Maya, why the interest?

Miss Koizumi: Oh, because they are Japanese.

Ms. Marlatt: You'll have to speak louder.

Miss Koizumi: I go to buy Japanese foods and you meet a lot of people there who live sort of a little different from the people that I used to know in Japan.

Ms. Marlatt: In what way - how different?

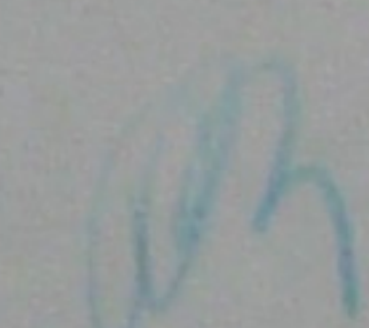
Miss Koizumi: Like their language is different; their Japanese has a lot of English in it and also a lot of them have accents - like they have dialect accents.

Ms. Marlatt: Dialect?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, which is not familiar to me because I'm from the east part of Japan and a lot of these people who immigrated came from the southern part, the southwest -- like around, you know, Osaka.

Ms. Marlatt: But Wakayana is...?

Miss Koizumi: Wakayana is south.





Ms. Marlatt: South?

Miss Koizumi: Southwest. South of....

Mr. Minden: How old were you when you came to Canada?

Miss Koizumi: Twenty-seven.

Mr. Minden: And had you formed direct impressions and feelings before you came about what Japanese-Canadians were all about?


Miss Koizumi: No. I didn't know anything about Japanese-Canadians.

Mr. Minden: Were you interested before you came?

Miss Koizumi: No, uninterested.

Mr. Minden: So what made you interested - just the fact that they had a different dialect?

Miss Koizumi: Well, because here, you see, you are interested in people who look like you. Like, there's a difference between white people and me, you know. There's a sort of good big difference, and then when you look at people who look like me they are either Chinese or Japanese, mainly, and then I'm more interested in Japanese than Chinese.





Mr. Marlatt: Maybe some of it was feeling nostalgic for Japan too.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, that is true, and also their way of life. In some ways they are Japanese, but in some ways they are very different.

Mr. Minden: What happened after you started finding out about what applied to the Japanese-Canadian? Did you get any big surprises?

Miss Koizumi: Yes.

Mr. Minden: Like what?

Miss Koizumi: Like the racial discrimination, because I never had experienced it in Japan.

Miss Irwin: You've had experiences of discrimination here?

Miss Koizumi: I myself don't remember very much but I hear lots from the people. Like, this man particularly, he was a chemist and he came to study at UBC for two years. He belongs to the very elite class in Japan and he came here and he was maybe very sensitive about that. He had a lot of experiences according to himself, you know, like the way like if you buy things in a store sometimes like people just don't serve him until all the



other people were served. That kind of thing really got him. Or when he got the change from people, you know, all the other people.... They're putting the change on the customer's hands. Well, he had experience of that - this woman just threw the money to him or something, you know. It was really ugly because he belongs to a very elite class in Japan, so it was really, you know - he really minded that he had to be treated like that. And he can't think of why he would be...the only reason is because he is Japanese, I think. Also, like in the States he said he went through a lot of this in the States - camping in places, for instance. He is very sensitive so he feels everything in that way after, you know, while I wasn't that sensitive or I maybe don't remember very much of discrimination myself.

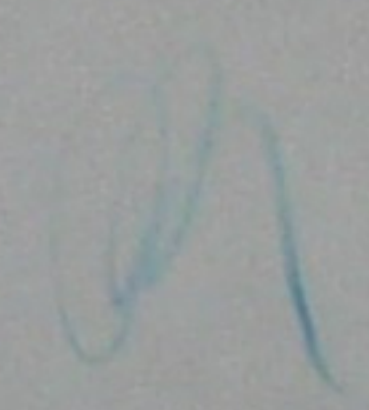
Mr. Minden: Is your experience of Japanese-Canadians that they are sensitive as that?

Miss Koizumi: My experience?

Mr. Minden: Do you feel that the Japanese-Canadians that you've met...? Are they...?

Miss Koizumi: Oh, they are very sensitive, yes.

Mr. Minden: In the same way as the Japanese?





Miss Koizumi: I don't know, theirs seem much more, sort of.... The discrimination is much more deep, I think, because, you see, these people from Japan are very angry but they know that they don't have to live here very long. They can go back in two years. So he resents against it very much, but, you know, he really doesn't have to commit himself to this anger because he doesn't have to live here. He can say, oh, you know, "This is only this summer; I'm going back." While the people who work, who were here all their lives, they don't....

Mr. Minden: Did you experience any resistance from then when you started studying?

Miss Koizumi: When I see them first time?

Mr. Minden: When you started deciding that you were, in fact, going to Japanese-Canadians with this project, did you begin to feel resistance?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah. I don't know if it came from them or it came from my feelings.

Mr. Minden: Well, tell me about that.

Miss Koizumi: Like, you see, I know, because they - the Japanese from Japan society here, like the university people or company people...and I heard a lot that there is always a big gap



between the two groups. The Japanese-Canadians are very...a lot of them don't like the Japanese from Japan because they say that Japanese from Japan are very arrogant and they look the Japanese-Canadian down. It happens especially in companies, apparently, because all the people who have positions are people sent from Japan and they stay here for two, three years and get a lot of money and they go back and the people - the Japanese-Canadians who work for the company are hired here and they don't get to upper positions. They have to stay at the lowest position, you know. So in the company there is always, you know, very big thing between those groups, and I heard about it from the Japanese community here.

f Also I heard from the Japanese people that the Japanese-Canadians are, in fact, intimidated. They are looked down by white people so they get very, sort of, sore about it, you know. It's very difficult to work with Japanese-Canadians, because they get very, you know, upset and things like that. I heard from this woman who attends the English class in YMCA or someone, the women who are wives of these two groups -- company wives and the immigrant wives -- and then, like, these two groups don't become friends, especially because economic things - like Japanese from Japan get more money and they can spend a lot here. They have more... vain sort of thing, while the people who live here much more substantial so that kind of thing.... So I hear things like that from people around me and that makes me sort of careful.

87



At the beginning when I went to meet them, you know, the old Japanese people, - and especially because they are not educated, like - a lot of them feel that they didn't have good enough education so whenever I go there they'd refer to me, like... "You go to the university. You have a lot of university education so, you know, I am just a humble person without any education, so what can you get from me? You know better," and things like that - kind of.... you know? So I had to be careful not to intimidate these people.

Mr. Minden: What I'm curious about is, when you arrived in Canada you began to form some impressions about a certain community of people. You then began to meet with them. I want to know how your feelings now have changed from your first impressions after you got to know some of these people very well now and now you have friends in this community. In what way were your impressions wrong, or what kind of surprises have you had?

Miss Koizumi: At first I didn't know then what kind of experiences they went through which, like, you know.... I didn't know anything about their.... Some of them came early in the 20th century and they had to work really hard....and this war experience. Now after the war they are sort of materialist. Materially, they are quite prosperous and they will be more prosperous in the future because, like, a lot of people.... Like, first there are differences between first generation and second generation and



you kind of have to... like, I am sort of.... I don't know, I'm not speaking about myself. Like, that's what you're asking, right?

Mr. Minden: Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: How I feel about that?

Mr. Minden: I'm curious how your feelings have changed during the course of your investigation.


Miss Koizumi: It's difficult, you see, because I never really thought about it before. I can say I feel more at home with them, you know. I can sort of see their background and so when I'm with them, you know, I can talk with them or feel I can ask them a lot more questions and things like that which at the beginning I didn't, you see, because I didn't know what habits these people....

Ms. Marlatt: So in the beginning you felt like a definite stranger?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: And now you don't feel that way?

Miss Koizumi: No, I don't. Yeah, now I don't feel that I'm a stranger, yeah.





Ms. Marlatt: Do you remember at one point you said you didn't want to do it any more because you would be taken over by concern for these people and you felt that...? Well, you said two things: you said that you couldn't see them without asking them questions - it was very hard to be just with them, to get out of the role of being an interviewer - and then, secondly, you said that you felt as if what we were doing was dangerous to their privacy.

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Miss Koizumi: Mmm-hmm, yeah, and I felt sort of...I felt very sensitive.

Ms. Marlatt: Yes.

Mr. Minden: Well, tell us more about that. What do you mean "dangerous"?

Miss Koizumi: I was sort of taking their attitude, like myself was one of them, and when I said that. You see, because of this sort of extreme thing they went through. Some people who are weak or who were really completely damaged, you know, I'm sure that they... that their very natural feeling was completely pressed down, and they can be extremely defensive, you know, so strangers sort of threaten them, you know.

Mr. Minden: Do you think the study was dangerous to their experiences and to their community?

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Miss Koizumi: No, it's not the study, it's the attitude that people take to these people, like especially the people from the universities or generalists or these people who approach them from curiosity, you know, and then write something about them for their own sake.

Mr. Minden: What way is this different than that? How do you feel that you can be any different from that?

Miss Koizumi: What I am doing?

Mr. Minden: Yes.

Miss Koizumi: I'm sure I'm doing it because... but at the same time I know that it's good that their experience will be exposed to other people so that other people can think about them and they can, you know, make.... they can think that they can be them under some circumstances, you know, because it's also against the individual, against the government, that kind of power thing, you know -- people against the establishment and things like that, you know. So people can really be taken advantage of by the government power and so if people -- other people, you know -- knew their experience, they can be aware of it... like the war measure and that kind of thing can really do that thing to anybody.

13



Mr. Minden: You don't feel that you, as an interviewer, that you are engaged in essentially an investigation of curiosity?

Miss Koizumi: No, I don't, no, because also at the same time, like, these people are -- especially old people -- they, you know, they've been living in the world, that mass communication wasn't in the way that we have now, like, their own experience, they lived in their own experience and they have family and that new world was good enough - good for them and they never think that their experience can profit other people. They never imagine that kind of thing. But by seeing a lot of people who went through this very hard hardship and still, you know, they have a very sane mind, you know... they are amazing people to me. And you know, they talk. You are telling other people about them or their experience is a very good thing to do. That, you know, I think that I believe it now. I have more confidence in informing about them to other people so, and if that kind of thing is not happening from themselves, you see, because they are so wrapped up by their own idea that their life was very... you know, nothing important to any other people, so they can't do it themselves so, you know -- I find it's very useful that I do it, if I can help a little.

Ms. Marlatt: So, in fact, you're not an objective investigator -- you tend to get ... you tend to be sympathetic?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.



Mr. Minden: You're a subjective investigator.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, I'm very subjective.

Ms. Marlatt: Yes.

Miss Koizumi: I'm doing it for my own subjective thing.

Mr. Minden: But you are also investigating subjectivity, I meant it in the double-barrel sense. She's a subjective investigator.

Ms. Marlatt: That's right, that's right.

Mr. Minden: I think I get the feeling listening to you that somehow that your being a subjective investigator doesn't hurt people, or doesn't tend to hurt people, or you minimize the danger to your... to the object of investigation, to the subject of investigation, than you would certainly if you were an objective investigator.

Ms. Marlatt: Maya, I think you put your finger on it when you said... essentially what you said was that you felt that reading this, people would be able to identify with the Japanese experiences during the war and all this. And so if you make an act of identification then you can't be vindictive because you're putting yourself in the other people's shoes.



Miss Koizumi: You see, that's what very often people do about research, especially because they have their own ideas at the beginning already and they do interviews because they want to prove what they believe is right. You see, they try to make use of other people to prove themselves, you know, and that is very wrong, and, like, some Japanese scholars went and, you know, wrote the articles about them and everything and wrote them, and the feeling I got when reading this... because the people take that kind of attitude and that's what people don't like, and people read, you know, what they are like if they are very insensitive, maybe they aren't aware of things, but people's feelings are very... these people are people who have strong feelings.

Mr. Minden: Right. How long have you been working specifically with this concern?

Miss Koizumi: This is just very... the last -- like, I wasn't aware of these things.

Mr. Minden: No, I mean with the Japanese community. How long has it been since you have been doing this full-time?

Miss Koizumi: I have been working with Aural History?

Mr. Minden: Yes.



Miss Koizumi: Since February last year.

Mr. Minden: So over a year.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, but not constant before Aural History, but my concern was over....

Mr. Minden: Right.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.

Mr. Minden: Do people trust your approach now?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, some people... like, I feel very comfortable with people these days. Like, I used to be really up tight at the beginning, you know, and I really hated to have to go, you know, to meet some people that I knew, but now I can distinguish, like, a group of people who aren't really interested in what I am doing. Then I don't... I can say that I don't care about them. But I have a group of people who are really very, you know, keen on expressing themselves, and with these people I feel very at home so ... and, you know, I think that's important, like, that I can find the people that are really, you know, want to use me as their way.

Mr. Minden: And without....



Miss Koizumi: Yeah, yeah, they help themselves and, you know... so I'm quite happy with this group of people. I don't care about the people who don't believe that I am useful to them.

Mr. Minden: You almost feel like you were a tool....

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.

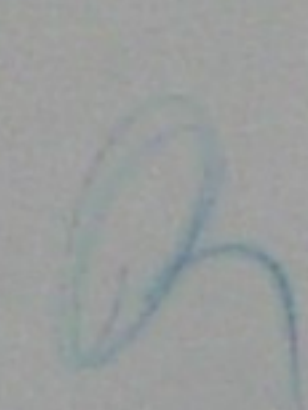
Mr. Minden: ... for other people's consciousness.

Ms. Marlatt: In the beginning, when you started working in Steveston, would you have imagined that you would be doing what you did last Sunday at the bazaar?

Miss Koizumi: No! (Laughter.)

Mr. Minden: Tell me what happened last Sunday -- I wasn't there. How did you get there?

Miss Koizumi: You see, I had to do this master of ceremonies thing for one of the programmes that was being shown at the language school, the school of languages, Steveston... the Japanese language school which belongs to British Church in Steveston, and, you know, this woman who used to do that became sick and the.... Apparently they tried, you know, to find someone to replace her, and they couldn't find anybody, so finally they asked Koko's father to ask Koko to do it, and Koko's father





somehow felt that Koko's Japanese is not good enough, or something. I don't know, maybe Koko's father didn't want her to do it, you know, because her relationship, you know, Koko has been sort of at the university so people can, you know, put a finger on her at any time, and things like that -- it happened all the time before -- so she did what he said.

Mr. Minden: Did it work?

Miss Koizumi: Yes, it seemed that it worked. It was interesting.

Mr. Minden: What was it like for you?

Miss Koizumi: You see, that stage show reminded me of the little country village, you know, happening. Like, there were entertainments and that happens in little villages with old people, with children running around and laughing, you know, babies crying and things like that, that kind of thing. Also, it happens in a school, you see, and then all the people, they are not sophisticated people. They are, you know, fishermen, you know, farmers, that kind of thing, and all the people from Japan say it, like... it was really like a country village show. But then, you see, people are really nice.

The fishermen, who are parents of the kids that go to school and learn Japanese, and they are Japanese, they are using their knowledge of the old days. You know, in the show they all came with suits and things, ties and coloured shirts. They realized



They realized that they looked really funny, but it's different. They never look like that -- it's only that kind of day -- and the women all dressed up, too, with their kimonos and their hair all set and all make-up, you know. It was really formal for these people and, you see, I was still of the mind that was not a formal thing -- this was just a country thing -- so that I didn't really dress up. I was going to go in pants and blouse and Lionel said, "Oh, you can't go like that -- you would insult the people," and he was right, and so at least I put a skirt on. Koko's mother said: "You should wear a kimono." (Laughter)

Mr. Minden: Did you used to wear a kimono when you were in Japan?

Miss Koizumi: No, kimono for me is really a very formal thing -- otherwise, it's a very casual thing. Different kimonos you wear for different occasions. If you wear it to a meeting or something, it's very formal, so I never thought of wearing formal, like that, so in some way I'm not really... my mind is not so with that, right? I'm sort of looking down on them, you know -- I didn't have to be that much formal. But for these people it was a really big thing, so if they asked me to come back next week -- next year again I think I will wear a kimono. (Laughter) Because after being with them, you know, I was in the same feeling that this was a really big thing and it was a really important thing.



Ms. Marlatt: Did the audience get dressed up too?

Miss Koizumi: No, I don't think the audience was dressed up; only those people who were examining -- examiners, the adjudicators. Mr. Hiyashi was one.

Ms. Marlatt: Was he? Anyone else we know?

Miss Irwin: Were the people who took part, were they sort of locally well known?

Miss Koizumi: Yes, women especially. The men are not.

Miss Irwin: Because some of them had really lovely voices.

Miss Koizumi: Oh, yes.

Miss Irwin: I didn't think they'd have so many talented people.

Miss Koizumi: No, they are locally....

Miss Irwin: I was surprised that the Steveston community went to that show.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.



Miss Irwin: And do you think that that's unusual for North America -- like, to have that kind of show and to have it that well attended?

Miss Koizumi: It's even unusual in Japan no, apparently.

Miss Irwin: Oh, really?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, to have that kind of thing, like all... like very strong community.

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End of track 1.

(Continued on track 2)

22



Ms. Maya Koizumi  
March, 1973

Accession No. 222, Tape No. 1, Track No. 2  
(Continued from Track 1)

Ms. Marlatt: Maya, let me know how you first started in Steveston. How did you first make contact with people in Steveston.

Miss Koizumi: First, I was introduced to Mr. Hayashi.

Ms. Marlatt: By whom?

Miss Koizumi: By a girl-friend of mine. And then I knew Mr. Kokubo, so these are the two people.... No, Koko knew Mr. Hayashi, so I went to Mr. Hayashi with Koko the first time then....

Mr. Weyler: This won't do, Maya -- you're going to have to sit over there.

Miss Koizumi: Mr. Kokubo introduced me to Mr. Murakami. The first meeting was.... Mr. Murakami, I think I interviewed the first time in Steveston.

Ms. Marlatt: Now who introduced you to Mr. Murakami?

Miss Koizumi: It was Mr. Kokubo.

Ms. Marlatt: And you knew Mr. Kokubo because he's Koko's father and Koko is your friend?



Miss Koizumi: Yes.

Mr. Minden: What did you do the very first time you went to Steveston?

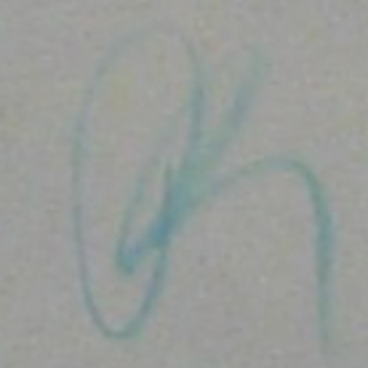
Miss Koizumi: I don't remember. (Laughter.)

Mr. Minden: What did you do? Did you knock on the door and say: "Hello, I'm doing a study."?

Miss Koizumi: Oh, the first... way, way back I went to Steveston and I saw two men at that time. I knew this guy who works in a language lab at Simon Fraser and I was doing a comparative study of Japanese in Canada and Japanese in Japan, so that was the first time I went to Steveston. This guy at the language lab assistant, he took me to Steveston. He knew these people, the two old people -- see, he belongs to the United Church or Anglican Church or something like that, so....

Miss Irwin: What was your impression of Steveston the first time you saw it?

Miss Koizumi: Those people... one of the persons was living in this big house with all the things, with all the Japanese dolls and things decorated in the different rooms, and another man that I interviewed was still living in a little bunkhouse at that time.





Ms. Marlatt: Really?

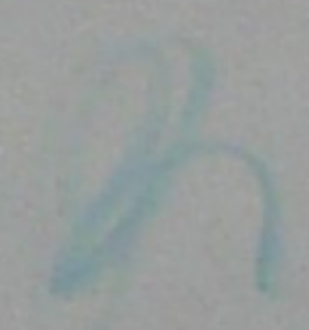
Miss Koizumi: Yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: What, at Star Camp?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, I don't remember if it was Star, but it was those bunkhouses, you know, at the back -- an old shack with tiny rooms -- so it was interesting to compare the two people. The one that lives in the big house say that it's not good for Japanese to live in those little ugly places.

Ms. Marlatt: Why?

Miss Koizumi: Because that means that he's not capable of living in a big house, also like, you know, before the war, one of the accusations they received was that the Japanese work here and send all the money to Japan and so they are not contributing anything to the Canadian government, and I'm sure that was in this man's house. This old man, you know, he advises everybody to buy the newest, modern boat, the most modern equipment, he was one of the people that moved into a big new house in Steveston. That's the way to demonstrate to the other people that they have this capability of doing. So he said it's a disgrace that they are not doing anything so I was sort of... you know, in the little bunkhouse it would be a very poor life, like, everything looked so old and it's a poor people's living, you see,





even if he may have a lot of money.

Miss Irwin: Were you aware, then, of the history of Steveston?

Miss Koizumi: No, I wasn't.

Miss Irwin: And do you see it as a whole different town now?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.

Mr. Minden: Do you think you'd like to live there yourself?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, I wouldn't mind. It's ...the only thing is that if you lived there to get to work and things...especially I don't drive, you know, so you'd become isolated from something, like being in Vancouver (laughter), if you had to drive a long way there. But I like that space, you know, on those farms and things, and especially in the spring and with the gardens. It is very high land, too -- you can grow a lot of things in it.

Miss Irwin: Knowing what you do about the history of Steveston, how do you feel about the changes and the way Steveston is now?

Miss Koizumi: Hmmmm.

Miss Irwin: Suburbs and....



Miss Koizumi: It's very bad. It's.... A lot of the Japanese people, they start to move out of Steveston, a lot of them into the Richmond area outside, like toward Tsawwassen or this way of Richmond. They live in big houses and they think it's good... like, they used to have little restaurants in Steveston before the war so when they have a party and things they used to have it in Steveston. Now the fishermen's parties, they all go to the Chinese restaurants in Richmond Centre.

Mr. Minden: Do their houses surprise you at all? Did some of these homes that you go into now, did they surprise you?

Miss Koizumi: I don't get surprised anymore.

Mr. Minden: But at first, at first.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, at first it was a strange combination.

Mr. Minden: In what way?

Miss Koizumi: It's not a western house. I mean, the house itself is western -- the furniture, the coffee tables and thing, all the furniture usually is not very bad taste, but it's typical, you know, those window displays. But still they put the flower arrangements, they put the Japanese scrolls, they put Japanese paintings, they put a lot of Japanese dolls and things, you know, and writings and, you know, things like that.

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Mr. Minden: How does it feel like when you first come in?

Miss Koizumi: It's kind of interesting, but it's not very visually stimulating, I mean, but it shows very much the way they're like. Like, they live in a western-style house, they sleep on beds -- like everything, as far as the house is concerned, it's western -- but, like, they eat Japanese food, you know. You can smell fish in the house, and they make all that dried fish and everything else, like the Japanese people used to eat, like salted salmon or sugar-cured salmon or all these sort of home-made things, and they put sort of a lot of things in their living rooms in a very disordered way, right. Did you notice? Like they have a lot of stuff, and they just have it full of stuff usually, and there is no place to keep them usually so they all set it out in the living rooms and bedrooms and things like that.

Ms. Marlatt: That's not Japanese origin, or is it?

Miss Koizumi: It's Japanese. It's very much a Japanese house thing, you know, and like the way to decorate a room is not western. You don't see paintings; very often the walls are bare, and like curtains and things, the selection is very ordinary; like, they have no imagination about those things -- their selection of pictures and lamps and things like that.

Mr. Minden: What is motivating the way they set up a living room? Like Mr. Hayashi, when I was there photographing, it really



struck me as a strange combination of western and eastern, but predominately western. When you get to know Mr. Hayashi, how is he setting up his space?

Miss Koizumi: He's, you see, a very old-type Japanese himself, and his morals and things are very Japanese, you know, like he'll do something for other people, or if you have, like elders, you have to respect the elder's people. Like you can put him in Japan and he can live there, I think, without having any trouble with other people, other Japanese. So you can kind of switch that house into a Japanese house in Japan and he's still there -- he can live in that environment -- while where the second generation is concerned, you can't do it anymore. If you put the second-generation Japanese out of Canada into a Japanese environment they can't live there, they are so unusual.

Mr. Minden: You mean like Ron's house.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.

Mr. Minden: You felt that there's a specific tension between Mr. Hayashi's living-room and Ron's living-room.

Ms. Marlatt: Well, Ron's even third generation. Mr. Kokubo's second generation.

Mr. Minden: There's even a difference between those two people?

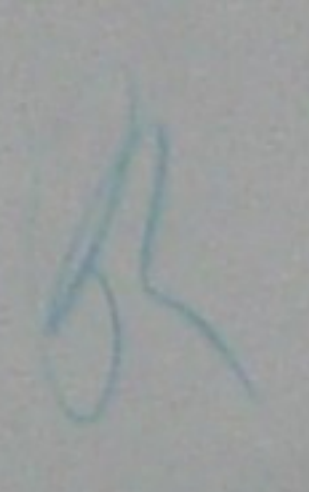


Miss Koizumi: Well, Mr. Kokubo still belongs to ...the older part of his education was completely Japanese-style. He went to Japanese school and he speaks Japanese with Japanese people. But another thing about their houses, like they have a lot of plants -- they make gardens and they put a lot of energy into, you know, taking care of plants and flowers.

Ms. Marlatt: Mr. Kokubo's house is full of living things. Is that, would you say...do people do that in Japan? Would they have birds loose in their house?

Miss Koizumi: I wouldn't know. The people that I know, because I also...I didn't live in the country, you know, I lived in the city -- that's quite different; it's really different -- so that the people that I know in the cities, they didn't live that way at all, like they didn't have so many plants, they don't have animals. In the country they do a lot of things about plants, like my grandmother, for instance.

Mr. Minden: Play a game with me for a minute. Supposing I'm a Japanese Canadian...supposing I'm a Japanese, okay, and I'm a Japanese sociologist from Tokyo, okay, and I come here because I'm going to do my Ph.d. thesis on Japanese-Canadians. Okay, I want you to tell me in what way you would be angry with me or in what way you try to encourage me to formulate my problem. Do you know what I'm getting at?





Miss Koizumi: As a Japanese from Japan, a sociologist, they'd be very interested in the wartime, but they...like they would say, you know, they would take a very clear-cut attitude, like, like....


Mr. Minden: Like what?

Miss Koizumi: Like the Japanese are completely manipulated by the government. Their experience is completely miserable. They really had a bad time -- nothing good at all -- and they were just...they were just like slaves. They didn't have their own will, that kind of thing. You see, that's another thing, like here. People, when they say things about war, they try not to say bad things about it. They had fun. They had all Japanese together so there were a lot of Japanese activities going on, like they used to have a lot of shows and things, groups and actors and musicians and things, and schools, and actually the school was taught in English. But since they all lived together, you know, they were very strong and community things happened.

Mr. Minden: In what way would you try to stop that? In what way would you try to tell me now? I want you to look at it from another point of view -- or is there another point of view?

Miss Koizumi: I don't know. It's very difficult.

Mr. Minden: Well, in what way do you feel that your investigation is different from a strictly...?





Miss Koizumi: In some ways mine is much more loose, I think.  
I don't know.

Miss Irwin: Are you trying to discover specific things when you ask people questions when you interview them? Do you have questions in mind?

Miss Koizumi: No. Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. Also, these people who I interview...like some people who have lived a very ordinary, obscure life, these people I don't prepare too many questions. But some people who do do something concrete, they have their own, and they did something for the community, these people I try to concentrate questions.

Miss Irwin: Do you feel that by talking to people and taping their conversations you're helping in any way to give them a sense of identity -- just by going into the Steveston community and...?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, it's developing somehow in the beginning. The first thing I try to know that person, what is he like, what kind of things he can give to...you know, that kind of thing -- to get used to his attitude, his behaviour, his attitude towards me and things like that. But, you see, at the beginning each time was kind of a first time to me, so that if the other person gets uneasy, I start to get uneasy. If the other person seems like he's not interested, then I start to feel very anxious. But it's only two, three months ago that I started.

31



Miss Irwin: Has word spread throughout the Japanese community so that people know who you are, so that a lot of people who you haven't met know what you're doing?

Miss Koizumi: I thought people knew about me and my doings. I thought they knew more than...but I was surprised that they didn't really know very much, like I found when I did that master of ceremonies.

Miss Irwin: I was going to ask you, most people in the audience didn't...?

Miss Koizumi: No, they didn't know, and even the people I interviewed, you know, I saw them and I said hello, you know. They said: "Oh, hello," you know.

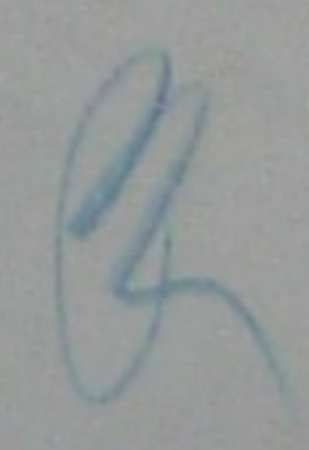
Miss Irwin: They'd forgotten.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah. So it may be that that's the way it is -- like, people don't really care very much about something outside their own life.

Miss Irwin: They don't respond to that recognition.

Miss Koizumi: No, no.

Miss Irwin: Do you think it's a Japanese attitude -- that they're very humble; that they're just disinterested in that kind of recognition?





Miss Koizumi: I'm not sure. I'd like to ask other people what they, you know.... It's hard to tell if it's Japanese or if it's the way people live here or....

Miss Irwin: Did the man who introduced you on Sunday explain to the audience who you were and what your involvement was?

Miss Koizumi: I think maybe a little bit but, you know, it was kind of good, but if it had happened half a year ago maybe it would have helped more.

V Miss Irwin: So you still feel a little bit...you don't feel completely in the community?

Miss Koizumi: No, I don't feel completely within the community at all, no; I still feel I'm outside.

Mr. Minden: How do you hypothesize that they would react to this book that you're trying to...?

Miss Koizumi: It's hard to say how many people will really look at the book.

Mr. Minden: If they would look at it....

Miss Koizumi: Well, when Lionel and I were in the cafeteria and he was doing the sketches and people came and looked at these sketches, they expressed very little...like, you know, they wouldn't

22



say good or bad. They just kind of looked or glanced at them, at Mr. Murakami's son.

Ms. Marlatt: Oh, yeah?

h/ Miss Koizumi: Yeah. In the grocery store, the man in Hiro's grocery, and he kind of looked at it, didn't say anything. So that kind of thing I, you know, can't kind of speak, like really, the back of those unexpressed things, you know, what they are really.

Miss Irwin: Is that a Japanese...?

Mr. Minden: What I'm curious about is, do you have any feelings about the way in which the people that you've met and talked to will respond to seeing a book about their experiences and their future?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, I'm sure they'll respond. In what way, you mean?

Mr. Minden: What do you think the feeling is behind this book?

Miss Koizumi: It's hard to say. It's hard to say before I've seen the book.

h



Miss Irwin: I guess from the fact that four outsiders, four Caucasians would be working on it and it would be the product of them as well, do you think that...?

Miss Koizumi: (Indistinct.)

Miss Irwin: No, but that the Japanese person would feel that it's just another outside survey or study, and that they're just being the subject of one.

Miss Koizumi: Which they don't really.... I think it's possible too. Like, I think that people will react differently. It's hard to say what, you know, they....

Mr. Minden: Do you think we'll get outrage or anger or what -- like, what right do you have to do a book on us?

Miss Koizumi: I don't think they really would in that way because like, for example, there are T.V. programmes about Japanese and usually people look at them. They can say a lot of little comments about this and that scene but, as a whole...like outrage from the Japanese-Canadian will come out -- like that will not happen, that sort of anger. I don't think that happens.

Ms. Marlatt: Do you think that all these movies and these surveys and books are serving to make Japanese-Canadians who have tried to be as integrated as possible in the Canadian culture and to lose their Japanese-ness, do you think that it might make them

82



feel a little prouder to be Japanese and might make them want to retain more of their culture?

5/ Miss Koizumi: Oh, yeah, I think they do -- some of them certainly feel in that way. Like they feel....

Mr. Minden: Is there a Japanese-Canadian community in Vancouver?

Miss Koizumi: It's very strange. There is this place called Japanese-Canadian Association and a lot of the...and the people established by the second generation after the war, but this is very inactive. But this man that I met in the show, he said that...he lives in Vancouver, you see, and he said he likes to go to Steveston and his family likes to go to Steveston sometimes, because he really feels that people are nice and people have a community sense and people are nice to each other, which he never feels in Vancouver. So there's a lot of Japanese living in Vancouver, but I think that the community feeling of Japanese living in Vancouver is very, very.... It's a good thing, I think, when people belong to a certain group, you know. There are some groups, like music groups and poetry groups -- the traditional poetry reading groups, or kendo, judo, you know -- so that people get together within these groups, like, it's not a whole Japanese-Canadian.... There's another....

Mr. Minden: Maya, after all this work now that you've done, all your explorations, what would you like most to do?

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Miss Koizumi: Now?

Mr. Minden: Yeah, in terms of this interest.

Miss Koizumi: I'd like to study, do research about the union and, you know, these unions before the war that were racist. I would like to....

Ms. Marlatt: Oh, the white unions.

Miss Koizumi: The white unions, yeah. Like, you know, I want to get some kind of idea of what it was. And also, I want to learn more about immigration laws and things, you know, that kind of outside thing that was around the Japanese, things that put them together into that position -- what was it, you know -- because I think it's very important. So it's more. It's not that I've been doing just interviews -- this person, that person, this person, that person -- so they all share these, right? They have different...especially Japanese, they all share very strong sort of experience, the same sort of experience which different people received in a different way. That's the.... But I like to get more outside things, like that kind of thing that put the Japanese together, you know.

Mr. Minden: Maya, you've just become a social phenomenologist.  
(Laughter)

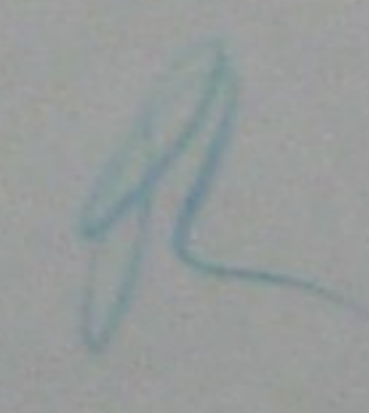
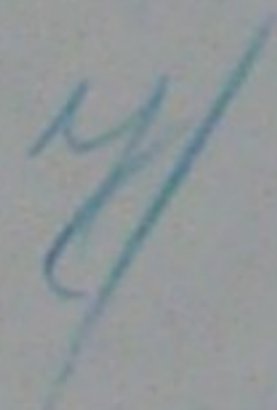


Ms. Marlatt: Yeah, you've just....sociological context.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah, or how the white people look at the Japanese -- that sort of thing

Mr. Minden: So you've given me two studies so far. I want you to give me more, like the study of labour before the war, the study of immigration laws. What else do you have? What are some more pieces in the jigsaw puzzle?

Miss Koizumi: Those two things are the immediate things I like to know. Like, for example, you can do the same study in Japan -- Japanese situation at that time -- like, why these people had to leave the country, you know. You see, also immigration laws.... In Japan it's such a self-satisfied little unit, to go out of the country is really a very big thing -- like it's really against the people in the country. You see, once you are out you almost betrayed your home, you see, so it's quite a decision. You hardly can do it by yourself. That's why people who came here are from certain villages or certain places. You see, then they could come because the relations...they had the support of the immigrating Japanese, while it's hard to find somebody who came by himself or, you know, because it's really difficult for him to do so. And they arrived here, they formed all the groups here, like the Wakayama group, and just before the war those were the very important things that supported the Japanese. Like there was a Japanese community here, but in the Japanese community there are a whole bunch of groups and they were...if you don't





belong to any of those groups, you get really isolated. Like I met this one old man who came from this place. There are only three people from this place, and he said he was always an outsider of the Japanese, in the Japanese community.

(End of track 2.)

End of interview.

ph.