

Museum of History and Industry
Historical Society of Seattle and King County

Transcript

Frank Miyamoto, April 23, 1985

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This is an interview with Dr. Frank Miyamoto on April 23, 1985. The interviewer is Lorraine McConaghy for the Museum of History and Industry.

Q. I wanted to start by asking you something about the political and international situation that led up to the war, as you perceived it. What do you think were the dynamics, in the Pacific and in international affairs, that led up to the attack on Pearl Harbor?

Dr. Miyamoto That's a more complicated problem than I really care to comment on. It's not an area of specialization for me.

In general I would say that Japan, which was moving in the twentieth century rapidly toward a western form of society and the industrialization characteristic of the time, found itself in the 1920's faced with difficulties which it saw as hampering the development along these lines.

And the elements within the country which were, in a sense, opposed to this kind of westernization, took this difficulty as an opportunity for re-emphasizing the classical Japanese approach to international relations: a nationalistic as opposed to an internationalistic view that was being proposed by the liberal government.

Added to that, I think, was the fact that the Western nations, such as the United States and Britain, showed by such acts as the Immigration Act of 1924 their, in a sense, poor regard for Japan as a national entity.

Q. Do you perceive this racially? Or colonially? As an imperial dynamic?

Dr. Miyamoto It is racial; it is colonial - it is everything of that kind, but this was true for Japan and China, as well as for the United States and Britain. I don't see racism or colonialism as a peculiarity of the Western nations. It just happens that historically that this was a set of circumstances in which the Western nations were the imperialists, and the Far Eastern countries - China, Japan, and the Philippines - were the colonized.

So in that circumstances, yes, it was colonialism; it was imperialism; it was Western racism, but I do emphasize the point that I don't see racism as a peculiarity of the Western countries.

Q. The co-prosperity sphere that Japan was instituting in the Pacific in the late thirties - do you perceive that as a kind of reaction to the kind of imperialism and racism you discussed, or was it a purely nationalistic and imperialistic act on the part of Japan?

Dr. Miyamoto I would say it was very definitely a matter of national interest, but terms like "racism" and "nationalism" and so on have such global connotations which I don't care to add to my discussion, that I would prefer to avoid such ideas.

It was to the national interest of Japan that they have sources for natural materials which they lacked. If the country was to industrialize, they felt at that time that they needed to have access to the kind of territorial control that the United States, for example, seemed to have. Given that kind of view of the situation, it was deemed necessary to control access to the resources available on the continent which Japan did not have. This is my interpretation of how Japan was seeking to move ahead in the 1920's.

The difficulty which Japan ran into, however, in its economic policies or in its economic advancement in the 1920's, worked against those who favored an internationalist policy, or a liberal policy with respect to the development of the Far East, and gave the opportunity for the increasing strength of the nationalist sentiment in Japan to take over in the 1930's.

And that, I think, was the background in international affairs leading up to the war.

I view these matters as extremely difficult international processes which I am not qualified to analyze adequately at the present time.

Q. Well, perhaps we could switch the perspective then and talk about notions. How did the Issei community here in the United States, and the Japanese-American young people at that time - the Nisei - perceive Japan? There must have been a spectrum of perceptions...

Dr. Miyamoto Starting with the Issei, I would say that they viewed Japan not only as their country of origin, but as the country with which they necessarily had to identify themselves. Inasmuch as the Issei lacked eligibility for citizenship in the United States, they needed a country which they could call their nation or their nationality, and Japan was it by virtue of circumstance.

Part of it, of course, was sentimental. That is to say, Japanese saw themselves to be Japanese, and that added to the feeling. But in addition to that, the American statutes such as the one that prevented their gaining citizenship here added to the pressure toward orienting themselves toward Japan.

One should add also that oriental cultures, being so drastically different from the western ones, made it more difficult for Japanese immigrants to identify themselves easily with American culture - moreso than for, say, German or Italian immigrants coming over roughly in the same period.

It was a combination of circumstances that led the Issei to very definitely orient themselves toward Japan.

Now, on the other side, I should add that as these Issei immigrants lived in this country for several

decades - that is to say, most of them came in the 1900, 1910 decades, or going into the 1920's - and if they lived here for twenty or thirty years, and further, if they established families, the old orientation towards Japan, which has been called the "sojourner attitude" of coming here, quickly making money, and then returning to Japan which was very definitely the attitude that the Issei brought with them, tended to fade over the years.

By the 1930's most Issei - the majority of them - had come to view the United States as the country where they would probably die, as the country where their home was.

A factor that added to that was the fact that many Issei did in fact visit Japan or return to Japan, and found that they were now aliens in that country, to some degree. They found that what they thought true of Japan was no longer true for them, and that after all their identity was with their children, and their children were oriented to the United States.

The sojourner attitude had declined markedly by the 1930's, I would say. Still, this is the kind of thing which is not clear-cut. The barriers of legislation and so on against the Japanese immigrants - the ineligibility for citizenship, the anti-alien land laws, the discriminatory attitudes to be found - made the Issei uncertain as to where in fact their home was. There was never a comfortable feeling of "Yes! this is where I belong."

There was always some reservation felt by the Issei regarding the United States for these reasons. But fundamentally, my sense is that they were, at long last, oriented toward the United States as their home rather than Japan.

Q. Is there any generalization that could distinguish the parents who sent their children back to Japan for their education? Did they tend to be from a certain part of Japan, or to be from a certain economic level, or to have a certain intellectual orientation?

Dr. Miyamoto I would say it was partly socio-economic level - those who came from the less educated and less well-off families - and it was partly an intellectual orientation - related to socio-economic class, to be sure.

These classical notion in Japan is that the family is what is called the "hon kei" - the "main stem" - and the "hon kei" for Issei was wherever they came from - Hiroshima-ken, or Fukuoka-ken, or wherever. The "main stem" is the place where the family would have identified with - this is the classical notion I'm talking about. That was one factor.

In addition, there was the view, especially initially, that the family would not be here in the United States, but would ultimately return to Japan and that it was well to maintain contacts with Japan.

Now, as you may imagine, those who were least broadly oriented and the most conservative, would tend to retain that kind of view the longest. Therefore, when their children came along in the 1920's and 1930's, these

conservative families were the ones who tended to abide by the classical view of what the family relationship should be.

There were many other factors thrown in here. There was the factor of discrimination against Nisei; that even the best trained scarcely had a chance of getting much in the way of economic opportunity before 1940 here on the West Coast.

For example, Yamasaki, whose name you may know as he is an internationally famous architect, grew up here in the city of Seattle, graduated from the University of Washington in 1934, or 1935, in architecture, and had made an excellent name for himself as a student. But, although it is true that this was the Depression period and one has to take that into account, nevertheless, he failed to get any kind of a position here. Finally, he threw in the towel as far as the West Coast was concerned, and went to New York where, very shortly, he began to make his place as an architect.

We have some very fine newspaper people who graduated from the local university here. One became ultimately editor of the Denver Post; one became editor of the Osaka Mainichi. They had tried to get some kind of newspaper position here, failed, and gave up and went elsewhere to better job opportunities.

Particularly down in Los Angeles, there was a bitter feeling among college graduates that the only thing you could do after getting your B.A. degree or B.S. degree was to work in the vegetable markets. There were all kinds of college-trained people selling fruits and vegetables, or gardening, rather than doing something along the lines of their special training. That was the situation here on the West Coast in the 1930's for the Nisei. It was a closed shop, as far as economic opportunities went. Only a small percentage of people who were lucky got position that were in line with their training. The bulk of them had the view that this was not a place where one could make any kind of headway given that they had professional or advanced training.

Now the Issei took account of this situation, and wondered what the chances were for Nisei in this country. They had better be trained in Japan - thought the Issei - and also take advantage of whatever training they can get here, and there ought to be then some basis of relationship with Japan so as to assure that they would be able to make the most of opportunities.

Q. Do you mean Kibei going back to Japan for education, then remaining in Japan for their careers?

Dr. Miyamoto Well, partly that. The idea was to keep your options open. If Japan is the place where you are going to make your future, you had better have that background, but also if you are coming back to the United States, then use your knowledge both of Japan and the United States as the basis for your future opportunities, for instance, in foreign trade.

Q. How open were options in Japan to the Nisei? Did they face the same assimilation difficulties that their parents,

had they wanted to be sojourners, would have experienced when they tried to return to Japan?

Dr. Miyamoto I think that there were certainly barriers for the Nisei in Japan that many may not have anticipated in going to Japan.

On the other hand, the Kibei generally went over fairly young, at eight or nine years of age frequently, and were trained for several years in Japan before coming back to the United States. In due course, then, they got fairly substantial linguistic and cultural training in Japan, and many of them did reasonably well in Japan or as well as Japanese in Japan could, given the economic circumstances of the time.

I also know, from some of my friends who were Nisei and trained here in the United States as college educated persons, and then went to Japan seeking opportunities, that some of them did very well in engineering and in foreign trade and in journalism - that case I cited of the Osaka Mainichi editor. They used their English knowledge as the basis for finding advantageous opportunities in Japan.

That was one way of doing things. On the other hand, many Kibei had anticipated that given their Japanese background and with some knowledge of the United States, that they could then use this particular kind of bi-cultural background to make a position for themselves here in the United States. Now that possibility turned out to be poorer than many thought. As a matter of fact, the kibei were a badly adjusted lot, by and large, because what had been promised them turned out not to be so in many cases.

Q. The general Japanese-American community, including the Issei, here in Seattle or in any West Coast city - what was the social and intellectual structure of the community, including things like newspapers, Japanese language schools, the family?

In Seattle, there seems to have been - not a ghetto - but a concentrated area of urban settlement, and then people farming out in the valley and on Bainbridge. Was that - and this is a lot of questions! - a cohesive, coherent community, and what held it together, if anything?

Dr. Miyamoto It is a big question, and I'll answer pieces of it.

Was it a coherent community? No, it wasn't a coherent community - the Issei spoke Japanese, and the Nisei spoke English - this is one of the big divisions within the community: the Issei-Nisei division. There's always a generational gap between the older and the younger, and what happened within the Japanese minority here was greatly aggravated by linguist and cultural differences between the older and the younger generation.

I'm not sure to what extent these same problems existed among the Italian and Swedish immigrants. But there's this problem about the Japanese language: the Japanese written language, based on Chinese characters, is very difficult to learn, and unless you apply yourself in a highly disciplined way, one has very little chance of

learning the Japanese language.

I will tell you that I attended a Japanese language school for eight years, and I really learned nothing from those eight years. I would go every day, for one hour or an hour and a half, after the regular school. I went faithfully - well not "faithfully" so much as "necessarily" because my parents felt I should have such a background. I went regularly over the eight year period and I will tell you that what I learned was virtually nothing. And this was true for most Nisei.

The primary difficulty is that unless you acquire a reading capacity, your vocabulary tends to be limited and your understanding of the culture on which the language is based is limited. You have no way of getting an adequate entree into the language unless you have a reading knowledge.

So here, then, is the major barrier for the Nisei with respect to language. They gain an exposure, and they speak Japanese in a very broken and vulgar fashion. This is another problem with the Japanese language - unless you know how to speak the Japanese well, anytime you open your mouth, you're likely to sound like a very uncouth individual.

Q. So parents were making an effort not to speak Japanese in the home?

Dr. Miyamoto Oh, no, they were speaking Japanese, and the kids, like myself, would understand the Japanese spoken by their parents but the discussions would invariably be about everyday matters and life necessities and it was impossible to get beyond that level of discussion by and large.

One could communicate, in a fashion, about more difficult matters, but it was by using one's wits that one understood the other person than that one had a real grasp on what was going on, communicatively speaking.

So here you had this tremendous linguistic barrier between parent and child which is almost unimaginable in any family. I've brought up our kids, and I just don't understand how a family could have operated with the linguistic barriers that I experienced with respect to my parents, and which every Nisei experienced with respect to their parents.

I should not say, "every Nisei." Some parents trained their children systematically in the Japanese language. Especially in the Buddhist churches, children tended to get better-trained in the Japanese language than those growing up in Christian churches. That is to say, if you have a culture and environment within your home and in your activities where the language is emphasized, chances are you will learn the language better, more effectively, than if there isn't such a setting.

So some Nisei did get a better grasp of Japanese than others. In some instances they became very good at it. They could read the Japanese newspaper and so on. Incidentally, in those cases, chances are their Americanization was more limited than in the case of people

like myself. I grew up speaking English primarily, and I think I got a pretty good command of the English language but my Japanese was always very poor.

Contrariwise, some of the people I knew had a good command of Japanese, but their English sounded rather Japanized, if I might say so.

I've forgotten where we started...

Q. Let's see. The enormous topic is the structure of the community...

Dr. Miyamoto Another problem with respect to the barriers between the Issei and Nisei is this: the immigrant Japanese come over as relatively young people, twenty and thirty years of age, from Japan, and then they start establishing families in the 1910 - 1924 period. Suddenly, by virtue of the Immigration Act of 1924, this immigration stopped.

So here you have the incoming of the population broken off. Then the children start to come, and you can imagine what the character of this community is. You have one group of people up here, who are thirty, forty, fifty years of age, and another group of five and ten year olds, and this is the way the community moves up. This was a kind of structural barrier between the generations, of a kind you normally don't have in communities.

The communication between the two generations is interrupted even by demographic factors.

And you were asking about the structure of the community, and there was this kind of division. There was division by virtue of class: some people were better educated or had a broader orientation than others. There was always the issue of how much one should orient oneself toward America, and trust the American people. The less educated and more conservative - those less capable of adapting themselves to American society - tended to stay within their own group more closely than some of these others who had, so to speak, larger visions of what they wanted to do in this country. So there were divisions of this type. The community was by no means completely cohesive.

Q. Was this related to choice in occupation? Did it tend to be the more independent and assimilation-minded who would be out farming in the valleys and on Bainbridge?

Dr. Miyamoto No, it was the opposite. Those with farming backgrounds tended to be the less-educated and more conservative, although by virtue of being out in the larger American community, they tended to get assimilated by virtue of that. However, initially, they came with a more Japanese orientation than many of the city people.

Within the city people, many who became shop owners in the strong entrepreneurial orientation of the Japanese community, running their own grocery store or, as in my father's case, running a furniture and hardware store, they tended to have a broader orientation than those who were working in the central core community of the Japanese minority.

Dr. Miyamoto Fundamentally, the Japanese community was more cohesive than virtually any other immigrant community, with the possible exception of the Jewish communities in the United States. At least, the solidarity and cohesiveness was similar to that of Jewish communities.

The basis was different. For the Japanese, their cohesiveness grew out of the traditional feelings that Japanese have about each other.

In the first place, there's the notion - and this is a Japanese notion - that Japanese, though they may not verbalize it, in fact behave as though they were different from any other people in the world. A Japanese relating to a Japanese is different from a Japanese relating to a Chinese, a Korean, or anybody else.

As a matter of fact, in Japan, outsiders - particularly Asian outsiders like Koreans, Chinese, Southeast Asians - are really rather badly treated because of the barriers that the Japanese set up against these people who might otherwise seem the same as everybody else in Tokyo or wherever.

Now that's one notion - namely, that a Japanese somehow - they would say in the ancient or classical sense that "the blood is different," - and it's a feeling that still exists even among relatively modernized people.

But beyond that, the Japanese are a very groupy people. Nakane, in her book Japanese Society in fact talks about this. I notice in Japanese films, for instance "The Seven Samurai" that people don't act individually, they act in groups. If someone is called upon to do something, you find not individual persons moving in that direction, but the group moves in this direction or that direction. There is a groupiness in the Japanese which is rather unique, I would say, to the Japanese people.

How does this come about? Well, it seems to me that Japanese society is structured, particularly in the villages and towns, on groups. The classical Japanese legal system is based upon the notion not that the individual had any rights but that the family had rights, or the family had legal standing. If you are disconnected from a family, you are in a sense a non-person as far as the legal system goes. This is very similar to the old Roman law, and to Roman society.

Not only is the family the important unit, but the family is inevitably clustered together in the Japanese village or town into neighborhood groups. Nakane, in her book, says that territoriality is another important concept in Japan; that is to say, your place of land origin. You will find that Japanese names, for example, "Miyamoto", are by and large almost 100% place names. "Miya" is a shrine, and "moto" is "foundation". Okay, my family lived somewhere near the base of a shrine.

Or "Kawaguchi." "Kawa" is a river or a creek; "guchi" means "mouth", and that's where the family came from. People said, "Kawaguchi - oh, yes. They're over

by the mouth of the river."

Or "Morita." "Mori" is "forest"; "ta" is "field." Okay, at the margin of the forest and the field - that's where the family is. It would tell you that was where Morita is.

So the place has a rather strong significance for Japanese, and then with respect to the place, you would invariably have groups established who would oversee the affairs of people living in this general area. For this reason, on the West Coast here, prefectural connections - "ken" connections - such as Hiroshima-ken, or Okiyama-ken, or Yamaguchi-ken, and so on - these ken connections came to take on a very great significance of a kind that simply doesn't compare with anything else I can think of.

You might say, "Oh, yes, I'm an Iowan," or "I'm an Alabamian," but that doesn't signify the same sentiment that existed among people from Hiroshima in dealing with other Hiroshima people, or Miyazaki - my parents came from Miyazaki and we knew all the Miyazaki people in the city of Seattle.

Q. Was there a social hierarchy that came from the old country? from that ken?

Dr. Miyamoto No, it was simply that if you are from the same ken, you have a connection with the people from it that is different than with those from any other area.

Q. Were there dialectal differences?

Dr. Miyamoto Oh, yes, dialect would be a definite factor. But [the ken] was supra-dialect - it was, "I know the people of that area, and I have a sentiment about this that is different from my sentiment toward anybody else." This is the kind of attitude that existed.

Basically, this system is connected to the feudal system. That is the lord of the manor, and all the people of the area belong together. Or you can look at it the other way, the Japanese are family-oriented people and the whole nation is a family. The degree of kinship closeness is related to where one's real family is and those who are in the immediate area. Classically, Japanese society was not a highly mobile society, but a highly immobile, highly fossilized system. Therefore if one's family lived in the village of Hiroshima in 1600, this is where the family was in 1868 - this kind of situation. Therefore the people who lived in given territories tended not only to generate a kind of group sense but a kind of organization among themselves that managed the affairs of the people of that area.

Now it is not as if this organization was directly transplanted to the West Coast, but the idea of it was transplanted. So that if you, as in the case of our family, came from Miyazaki, then the chances are that anyone coming from Miyazaki will search out my parents or those who come from this area, and seek assistance. Not only do they seek assistance, but beforehand a family from Miyazaki offers

aid to anyone coming from there, and there's this kind of relationship that is established.

Now with regard to hierarchy, those who established themselves in more favorable circumstances are expected to help those in less favorable situations, and vice versa, those who are in less favorable circumstances and get assistance from those who offer assistance, for them there's an obligation that they repay in some fashion, most fundamentally by loyalty for the claims established to those who have granted them assistance of some kind.

Q. Did this imported system exist side by side [in America] with the JACL and other emerging....

Dr. Miyamoto Oh, no! I'm talking about a cultural system, whereas the JACL is an organization of a totally different character - it's an American organization. It has no connection with that sort of thing.

What I'm talking about is the Japanese notion of relationship which does not tie into any formal organization.

Now there arose in the Japanese community something called the Japanese Association. The Japanese Association is an organization, but what I'm talking about is the substratum of an organization like that.

Let me elaborate a little bit more. What you have there is basically in Japan today and here in the United States among the Issei a system of obligations developed such that those that belonged to the same family had an obligation to each other that is special for that family. There are claims of the parents upon the children, and of the children upon the parents - an obligatory system.

Terms like "on," or "giri" have been written about by Ruth Benedict, in The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, as fundamental notions in the Japanese system. And that is correct; these are very fundamental notions. People don't talk about them very much any more - well, "on" they still do - but if you watch the behavior of people, there's no question but that the system operates.

Here, in the United States, for example, I have had students from Japan whom I've helped, and that was back in 1955, let us say. And I helped them in one way or another, or at least they thought I helped them. I will get gifts from them today. Almost annually, at Christmastime, they will send me something because they became obligated to me because of assistance, and I can't imagine what assistance would bring about that kind of claim on an individual. But they send me something, and it is an acknowledgement of the indebtedness.

You can see a system that operates, particularly in the village among people that are closely related. They help each other in a mutual aid system. If anyone is in difficulty, there is an obligation among friends and neighbors who feel sentiments of closeness to the individual to help him or her. In turn, the person who's helped has an obligation to the helper, and this is the basis on which a formal system of village relationship gets established.

Then you get a kind of hierarchical system arising. They will establish groups who oversee the relationships among people, make sure that these obligations are met, etc. So this is the beginning of organization.

Ultimately, it ties into larger organizations. For example, I would suspect that the whole feudal structure of Japan was built up on this kind of thing.

Now, you asked about JACL. JACL is an American organization to begin with, but let me take a comparable example - the Japanese Association.

The Japanese Association was the comparable organization of the Issei.

Q. Here in the United States.

Dr. Miyamoto Yes, here. They were called the Japanese Association of Seattle, the Japanese Association of Fresno, and so on.

Ultimately, they became incorporated - though I don't know that they were ever legally incorporated, but I know the Seattle Japanese Association was incorporated in the city of Seattle - into something called the Japanese Association of North America.

Now, what was this Japanese association? Well, it was a loosely coordinating agency overseeing all the various organizations within the community. Then, what were the organizations within the community?

First of all, there were the "kenjinkai" - the prefectural organizations - and there were any number of them: Hiroshima-ken, Okiyama-ken, and you can go on and name virtually all the prefectures of Japan of which I think there were forty or fifty.

Every group represented in this country tends to pull itself together into a ken, either informally or formally, if they are large enough. These ken organizations don't function so much as formal organizations, but they formed very substantially the basis of something like the Japanese Association. The reason was that if the community wanted to act, the easiest way for it to act as a community was to work through these established organization organizations of the ken: Hiroshima, Okiyama, and so on.

For example, if the Japanese community was to support the Community Chest - do you know what the Community Chest is?

Q. Yes.

Dr. Miyamoto Yes, it's the present United Good Neighbor Fund - UGN. Well, the old Community Chest would want to carry on a campaign in the Japanese community and get financial support. To simply go out and seek support in the community at large was very inefficient. It was much better to do it through these ken organizations which in the larger cases were organized formally enough that they had presidents, and secretaries, and treasurers, and they could get the ken people behind this effort.

Or, if it was decided that the community needed a Japanese language school, the capitalization of such

a thing would be managed through the Japanese Association by drumming up support and through sub-units.

The "kenjinkai" were by no means the only organization supporting the Japanese Association. The churches, of which there were many, supported the Japanese Association, so in a sense the Association had its mutual aid sector - related to the "kenjinkai" - and it had its religious service sector - related to all the churches that had developed - and it had its educational sector - related to the Japanese language school it would establish, plus its relationship to the public schools in the community and to certain notable people in the public schools.

The Japanese Association then became the representational group for the Japanese community, but its basis lay in these sub organization of which there were innumerable numbers in the community.

Q. May I jump ahead to evacuation and internment because of the time?

Dr. Miyamoto Yes.

Q. I hate to get away from what you've been talking about. Is there a way, as we get to Pearl Harbor and past it into the first six months of '42, to talk about the changes in the community, using the Japanese Association as a mirror?

Dr. Miyamoto Let me talk about it this way. The evacuation comes about by virtue of the failure of the larger American society to understand what the character of the Japanese-American population was.

That is, if we examine the brief history of the events immediately preceding the evacuation of the Japanese minority to try to understand what it was that caused this event, one would have to say that the thing that clearly stands out is that American society, the federal government, the people leading the federal government, the politicians, the newspapers - all of the larger society and the masses of people on the West Coast - had a deep mistrust of the Japanese minority, and that this mistrust arose because of their lack of knowledge and their misapprehensions concerning this population.

Well, how did this deep mistrust or misapprehension arise? Well, in the first place, it arose because of Pearl Harbor, what Roosevelt called the "stab in the back event." This is how the American people perceived that event - it's the way one would look at something like that if one was American.

And that aggravated the situation. But beyond that there was already a mistrust, and a deep prejudice, if we may put it that way, among the larger American public, particularly here on the West Coast, toward the Japanese minority, that dated back decades.

This prejudice - this racial attitude - toward the minority, both of superiority on the one hand and attitudes of white supremacy, and of mistrust of this alien population, was inherited from the attitude here on the West Coast toward the Chinese minority which preceded the

Japanese. It was implicit, or apparent, in the white population's dealings with the Japanese minority from the beginning of the immigration from Japan to this country.

It persisted through the 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 periods right up until the war, and gave the foundation for the evacuation. Given this kind of attitude in the larger society, as I've already commented, it was very difficult for the Japanese to move out of their community into the larger society.

Nisei could not get work opportunities in the larger society. Japanese could not find residence outside their own communities, except by shoving and pushing very aggressively. My father was one of those who was oriented to becoming a part of the larger society and we moved out into an area on Beacon Hill. Beacon Hill is part of the Japanese community today, but in those days, it was on the frontiers of race relations.

I must say that I personally took a kind of psychological beating from being in that situation although I also learned how to cope by virtue of being in that circumstance. There were a lot of kids in that area who looked upon the Japanese minority as scum who should not be out here, and treated you that way. And you had to prove yourself to get along.

I very soon established my standing, and I had buddies - big white boys! - big guys who would go around protecting me if anybody caused any trouble but you had to deal with a problem that was rather unpleasant, and left psychological marks on anyone who tried to get into that circumstance.

You have economic barriers, you have residential barriers, you have social barriers - my sister started going to an American Congregational church on Beacon Hill, and ultimately gave up because she sensed there was a social segregation, especially in regard to parties from which she was excluded. So she gave up the idea, and we became members of a Japanese Congregational church.

Okay, the barrier of prejudice and racial attitudes that existed was such that the Japanese were a segregated population and created a segregated community.

Now, as I told you, it happened that the Japanese became intensely organized, and that only aggravated the situation of the barrier between the white society and the Japanese community. As far as the Japanese community was concerned, it helped greatly in their making a place for themselves in the larger society. For example, the juvenile delinquency rate in the city of Seattle was lowest in the Japanese area - in the school district attended by Japanese students in 90% or more - as compared to any other school district in the city of Seattle. Laurelhurst was the second lowest.

The peculiarity of the Japanese community situation was that these were kids who were growing up with the highest rates of criminality all around them. Prostitution was to be found in every other house in some parts of the Japanese community. Gambling was widespread, and everyone knew about the Chinese gambling houses down in that area.

So here was this segregated community, brought on in part by discrimination - but not totally for it was partly a self-imposed condition - but it was certainly promoted by the barriers that were set up.

So given those barriers, what can the larger population think of them? They're simply an alien population. You don't know them, you can't trust them, you don't understand us, and they don't belong with us. When the war comes, Pearl Harbor promotes this, and the news media pick it up and promote it.

Going back to the causes of the evacuation, it is interesting to note that right after the outbreak of war on December 7, 1941, the Department of Justice in the federal government issued directives to West Coast officials urging that the Japanese minority not be persecuted for something that they had no part in.

The claim was that the FBI knew about the population, and had them under observation - there was perfect control over the situation, there was no need for hysteria against them - treat them like the rest of the population.

So, in the first month or so, substantially because of these directives from the federal agency, there was restraint in the attacks upon the Japanese minority population.

Now, in January, 1942, in the first week or so, there were concerns on the West Coast, but the first rumblings or articulations of the idea that this minority needs to be gotten rid of, begins to be publicized. A man named John B. Hughes, who was the brother of Glenn Hughes who was director of the Repertory Theatre here, was down in L.A. as a Mutual Broadcasting Company news commentator and he began a series of ten programs over a two week span pushing the idea that this was a dangerous population that we needed to get rid of.

The Department of Justice said later that Hughes probably was as instrumental as anybody in promoting the idea of evacuation. He was not alone, but he was a promoter.