

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #463-3

with

Agnes Eun Soon Rho Chun (AC)

December 16, 1992

Honolulu, O`ahu

BY: Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Agnes Eun Soon Rho Chun at her home in Nu`uanu, Honolulu, O`ahu, on December 16, 1992. The interviewer is Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay. For today's interview, we're just going to continue with your discussion of your years in school. And we'll start from the beginning, the first school that you went to, Na Lei Kindergarten. Where was it located and what do you remember about Na Lei Kindergarten?

AC: I remember Na Lei Kindergarten's location. It's right next to the Ka`iulani Elementary School (on North King Street, in Palama) and in the rear of the fire station. It used to be an old fire station, but I think it's no longer there. And the building [*i.e.*, *fire station*] is very distinctive, it has some kind of red brick border (on the front). And I remember, through (a) picture, I still have of us as a group. It was May Day celebration (photo and) I had a Korean costume on. I remember (making) paper hat, (that) look like army caps. I remember everybody (wearing) it (with one end at) the tip (of) your forehead to the back (of the head). But I wanted to be different. I wanted it to look nicer so I (wore mine with the ends right above my two ears). I remember, faintly though, we used to have white paper, brushes, and paint. I still remember (the) teacher that appears in that photo.

MK: You know, like what ethnicity were the children and the teacher?

AC: The children were (mostly) Orientals and you had Filipinos and maybe Portuguese, and that's just about it. I don't remember seeing any *Haole* kids. And the teachers, as far as I could remember, that one teacher was a sort of *Haole*-looking. She almost looks like a Portuguese lady, but I think she must have been a *Haole*-Portuguese, or—well, Portuguese nationality is considered Caucasian anyway.

MK: And so you were there for your kindergarten?

AC: Just for kindergarten at Na Lei, and then from there on we went to Ka`iulani [*School*]. I could remember the teacher's face, but I can't remember her name. She was a Hawaiian woman, either first or third (grade). (We did not have) tables and chairs, we (had rows of seats attached together that had tops with compartments). We had a monitor system and had to stay after school to sweep the floor. (We sprinkled) sawdust (on) floors (which) were all oiled. (We swept

the) sawdust, (and used) foxtail brushes (to sweep under the seats). We had to take out (the erasers and clap the chalk dust). We clean(ed) the eraser board. I remember we would sleep (on straw mats) in between (the rows of desks). I remember (being) in the health class (in my fourth grade). There was an exchange teacher from the state of Washington, Spokane. And I remember her name was Miss Rawlins. (As) we were in the health class we (had) these little paper (weight) charts. We had to have milk every day and had graham crackers to go with it. I distinctly remember that fourth grade.

(I remember going) on an excursion to Hind-Clarke Dairy (at what is now) `Aina Haina. We (were transported) on a truck. (Not in buses.) Everybody (was standing up holding on to each other and the rails). This is how we traveled to our excursion places. Miss (Elizabeth) Tseu, T-S-E-U, (was my fifth-grade teacher). Then I had Mrs. (Mary) Preston in the sixth grade. We experimented in the sixth grade, making health soup, a vegetable soup, right in class. In the sixth grade I was in the main building (on the second floor). Up until the fifth grade, we were out in the cottages.

I remember we had (lunches served in) tin plates (at the) cafeteria. (At) the cafeteria, the teacher (sat) at the head (of the table and) we all (sat) on the benches on (both sides). When(ever they) had lamb stew, I couldn't eat the lamb stew. It was so smelly, I just couldn't (eat the stew). And I would never—I just left it sitting. I (would) just (drink) the milk and I think we didn't have graham crackers except for break time. And I remember recess. We had milk in bottle(s). The milk always had this thick cream, about two inches on the top. What we would do is put the straw in, drink up (most) all the white part (on the bottom) and then when it came down to almost about a half, we would shake (the bottle which was covered) with those milk caps. (A) curd (is formed) on the top of the bottle. It sticks on the bottle cap. So we would take off the bottle cap, and rub it on the graham cracker (like butter) and ate.

MK: Oh.

AC: (I remember) Lois Nakayama was a very good friend of mine. I think she went to Central [*Intermediate School*] and I went to Kalakaua [*Intermediate School*]. Many years later, when I was working at Ford Island as the comptroller (for Commander Third Fleet), I had dealings with the office that she was working. It was so long ago (but) I still remembered she and I played (very well). (My) classmates (were) Donald Ching, state senator, (and) Albert Alfonso, who became the first Filipino West Point cadet. (Ralph Miwa was also my classmate.) From Ka`iulani I went to Kalakaua and on to McKinley [*High School*].

MK: Right, right.

AC: You know Ralph Miwa?

MK: Oh, yeah. [*Dr. Ralph Miwa, a political science professor and administrator at the University of Hawai`i at Manoa, was also a prominent member of the Democratic Party.*]

AC: Ralph Miwa was so smart, I remember distinctly, he skipped a grade in elementary.

MK: Gee, so in that school you had a lot of people who later on became really influential.

AC: I think so. I remember them very well because we were together in the classes.

MK: And like, you know, you remembered like Lois Nakayama, Donald Ching, Ralph Miwa—who else did you kind of associate with back then, or what types of classmates were you associating with?

AC: Others that I remember was this girl, Mildred Luke. I (met) her (again) at (the U.S.) Naval Supply Center [*at Pearl Harbor*]. She was one of the administrators over there. And then there's another girl, her name was (Wai) Hin Pang, (she also worked) at Pearl Harbor. We had some other Korean children that I went (to school) with, like this Lim boy, Pyong Yul Lim. And then we had another one, this Lee boy. I still know (a) Filipino girl—I still remember their names. And Haruko and Hanae (who) were (twins). Fukunaga (was their last names). I still remember (many of the names) when I look at those pictures.

MK: And you know you mentioned like shaking up the milk bottle and eating the cream at the top on your graham cracker. Nowadays children are playing milk bottle cap games.

AC: (Yes.)

MK: In those days, what did you folks do?

AC: We saved those milk caps too. You stack it up (two, three, four and so on) and then you're supposed to hit it (on the top). (Any that turned over, you kept.) I kept a whole bunch and I just threw it away (when I got older).

(Laughter)

AC: We had milk delivered to our home too. And so I had (milk caps). And at that time, milk was not homogenized so you have the fat on the top. When Marcus [*Agnes Chun's son*] was born in 1951, we (still) had that Guernsey (milk). The Guernsey milk was supposedly more rich.

MK: And so you play like milk bottle cap games—what else did you folks do around school?

AC: We played *peewee*. (The) little broom sticks (were) cut in different lengths and different shapes. And we played marbles. (We played) jump rope. That was one of the very popular recess games that we had.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: I guess we can continue with that discussion of what used to do for play. You know, you mentioned the milk bottle cap games, jumping rope, *peewee* . . .

AC: Marble.

MK: . . . marbles. Were there any other things that you folks used to do?

AC: Actually, during the recess hours (there's) not much time. And even if it was during lunch hour it really wasn't much. So most of the time, that's just about it and there was no directed games or anything like that. We were just let out and we did whatever. And then when the bell rang,

we just went in. So that's all I could remember.

MK: You know, during the lunch hours, I know you mentioned like school lunch where you disliked the lamb stew, did you folks bring home lunch?

AC: I don't remember taking home lunch myself, but maybe when I was in Kalakaua, a few times. But most of the time I was a cafeteria person. I remember (the) stringbeans with ground round and tomato sauce or tomato (at Ka`iulani). And it was so good. That's one of the dishes I never forgot. And in fact, I even tried making it after many, many years (and) that's one of my favorite (dishes). Oh, and they always had, I think, that macaroni or spaghetti. And it was baked spaghetti. I always didn't like baked spaghetti because that's what we ate before. When I started making spaghetti, we always pour the sauce over. When I think about it now, I like (the baked spaghetti). I started to bake because I have a good friend, Salome Han, and she periodically calls me up and she tells me (to pick up a pan she baked). Salome is like now eighty-five [*years old*], I think, and she's still baking.

(Laughter)

AC: And so I got to liking it that way.

MK: You know like during the lunches there, you were being served American food, yeah, American fare as opposed to the dinners or lunches that you'd be served at home by your mom. I'm wondering how did you feel about, say, having American food as opposed to the food that you'd have at home?

AC: I never had any kind of feeling. It was just there and I just ate it. I don't think I ever thought of that. And in fact, it was so funny, one incident. I remember this so well. We sat right on the benches and the teacher sat up front. She periodically comes down and looks to see whether we're eating. And we always had bread and butter, the two pieces (of triangles). One day, (the teacher) came and (said to this boy), "Why aren't you eating the meat?" She said, "That's good for you, you know."

He had a funny grin on his face because he liked the meat, chunks of meat, he was leaving it for the very end. And here she thought he was sorting them out because he didn't want it. She just assumed that he didn't like the meat. But the stews were good. That's right, I remember (we had) stew, stew and rice. That was good.

MK: Another question I have is, you know, for a lot of the nisei Japanese, school was an adjustment for them, or something new to them because they came from homes where their parents spoke Japanese. Now, in your home you have two parents who are Korean immigrants, how was that for you?

AC: Okay. As far as I can remember, my mother never spoke English. I understood what she was saying, in that baby way, but I never had any problem. She spoke Korean and I—my brothers and sisters, we all spoke English. I don't know about those Japanese children, I didn't observe. Talking about home lunch, they did. Many of them came with (the) *bento*(s). You had that aluminum looking *bento*. (On top of the *bento*), diagonally, they had this little slot for the two chopsticks. But it was (the) metal chopsticks. I remember that and invariably you'll have *takuan*

and *ume*. And sometimes the kids have this *musubi*. I never knew what that was, until recently when they (advertised the) Spam *musubi*. I don't remember seeing the round ones. (I remember) the flat thing with that *nori* wrapped around, and then they would have a little *ume* in the center. And sometimes just the plain rice, there's never a round ball. Not too long ago I found out that you never make rice balls round. That's for funeral. But for us at home, Koreans, I always made round balls because we didn't know any better, I mean, that's not our custom.

MK: You know, with your parents speaking Korean at home and your learning Korean as your first language at home, how was that in learning English in elementary school and. . . .

AC: I (don't) think I had any problem. When I went to Kalakaua [*Intermediate School*], I remember this teacher, a Dutch woman. She was the one that (taught us) phonics. And I learn(ed) from her those little what-you-call, diphthongs they call that and whatever. The short and the "ah" and "ay." She was good at it and she taught us (well). I still remember her.

MK: Oh, before we go to Kalakaua, you know, you mentioned Robello [*Lane*] School in a prior conversation and we were talking about it earlier. Since there's very little mentioned about Robello School, tell me about Robello School.

AC: Well, Robello School was at the end of the lane [*at 951 Robello Lane*], and as you go to the end of the lane, I think there was a little bit more of that lane down to Dillingham [*Boulevard*]. But anyway, when we were going to Robello, it was on the left-hand side, (a) two-story building. And I remember the teacher I had there. I remember in her class, we used to bring empty cereal boxes, empty cans with the labels on, and we'd play store. And another thing that I remember over there so distinctly is that we had to all have cod-liver oil. Every day we would have this—big, maybe it was like a pint-size medicine bottle, the cough syrup bottle. It was cod-liver oil, 100 percent cod-liver oil. Oh, that thing was so stink, I tell you, it smelled so bad. And you want to vomit. But we'd hold our noses, hold our breath, we'd take the teaspoon and we'd go outside by the water fountain, stand in line and she'd pour this (into our spoons). We'd take the cod-liver oil and most of us had something like *see mui* or orange we brought from home to eat right away after that to take the taste away. Oh, but that was the thing I remember about that place.

MK: What was the purpose of giving children cod-liver oil?

AC: Well, I think we were underweight that's why. Maybe you call that malnutrition, I don't know. But I was always tall for one thing, and I always was underweight. And so, as far as I can remember, up to high school, when I went to McKinley High School, I was in the rest class. They put me in P.E. [*physical education*] for a few weeks and then they catch up with me again. And then (they'd) pull me out of P.E. and into the (rest class). We spent one period sleeping on the cots at McKinley.

MK: And so it was only children who were . . .

AC: Underweight.

MK: . . . underweight got sent . . .

AC: Underweight.

MK: . . . to a rest room to rest?

AC: I don't know what criteria they used, but I was underweight so I always ended up there.

MK: How did you feel about being sent to the rest room?

AC: Was good because I hated P.E. anyway. You get sweaty. And I ended up in Kalakaua too, going to P.E. for a couple of weeks until they caught up with me. I never liked sports. So for me (it) was good (to) take a nap. But then, let's see now, I think what had happened was that when I was (at) McKinley, I stayed in the rest class, but then I got a job. I applied for that NYA, [*or*] National Youth Administration (job). It's a government-subsidized program and you got (paid). You worked the one period instead of going to the rest room. I went there to help in the library. So it was good. I got paid and I didn't have to go to P.E. (Laughs)

MK: You know, you mentioned you went to Kalakaua. Where did all the kids come from to go to Kalakaua in those days?

AC: All the Palama kids went to Ka`iulani, (from the) Vineyard Street area. And then, I think, from Liliha Street (to King Street) went to Kalakaua. And then, (across) Liliha, (the) downtown side, went to Central [*Intermediate School*]. But then, when we went to Kalakaua some of the kids went to to Central Intermediate. We went to Kalakaua and I think the Kalihi kids, (too). I remember (some of) the (Kalakaua) teachers. I had a homemaking teacher, Leatrice Ing, and I really admired her, well-dressed. She always wore those linen dresses. And then, another one was Mrs. Hope Park, she was also (a) homemaking teacher. And then there (were Mrs. Bertha Loui and Mrs. Lena Among).

A very good math teacher (at Kalakaua was Glenn Harada). One art teacher I remember is Reuben Tam. He became a famous artist (locally and abroad). And there was a very popular teacher at Kalakaua, Mr. (Mitsuyuki) Kido. I don't think I was there when he was there, but I remember him so well because my sister, Violet, was at Kalakaua, five years ahead of me. And they were in (his) newswriting class. And then, anyway, she became – she's very, you know, she can talk very well. (Chuckles) And then so she entered, I think, as Kalakaua School representative. I think there was a *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* oratorical contest. I remember going to listen to her. Where it was, I don't remember. But she was one of the contestants representing Kalakaua.

MK: Do you remember how well she did?

AC: I don't remember. And when I asked her, she laughed. She said, "Oh, I don't even remember that now." (Chuckles) You know, she just said that. But I remember.

MK: Funny you should mention Mr. Mitsuyuki Kido because he was a teacher there and later on he became very active in the . . .

AC: Business.

MK: . . . Democratic Party . . .

AC: Oh, and business.

MK: Yeah.

AC: And John Reinecke was at Kalakaua when I was there. I remember.

MK: What did you think of him, back then?

AC: Well, I don't know too much. And later on, you heard that he was Communist, card-carrying Communist or something like that. I just related to him as a teacher, although he was not my teacher.

MK: And, you know, when you went to Kalakaua, you had these Kalihi kids coming in and you folks were the Palama kids. Before when I've talked to Kalihi people, they really had a sense of being Kalihi, as opposed to being . . .

AC: Palama.

MK: . . . Palama. How was that?

AC: I don't know. I just went to school, did my business and I had no special feelings about being (from Palama). So I was kind of, maybe, a loner. I never really bothered.

But anyway, com[ing] back to [*the subject of*] Kalakaua, I think we did monitor work, but it was not sitting down—I mean squatting and then using the foxtail to clean out between the aisles, under the seats. But in Kalakaua, I remember the cafeteria and I believe we were assigned to do cafeteria work. I don't remember in the elementary school, but I think in Kalakaua we did. And then I remember eating this oatmeal cookies and the chocolate (cookies). I mean chocolate, just plain chocolate cookies. And every time I eat oatmeal cookies, I said, no this is not the recipe, it doesn't taste the same.

(Laughter)

AC: And even the chocolate cookies. And they were the shape of the big cookies now you find in the health store, that big size of a palm. And so was three for twenty-five or ten cents one, or something like that. So someday I would like to get a recipe for that.

MK: Yeah, so when you were going to like Kalakaua, did you ride the streetcar or did you walk?

AC: No, to Kalakaua I rode. Most of the time, I guess I rode because I was late, you know, in the morning. I'm a late sleeper, so I would ride. But many, many mornings I walked and many more afternoons I walked back. As long as I didn't have to go to Korean[-*language*] school. So that was the routine.

But anyway, when I went to Kalalakaua, I decided I wanted to go to McKinley [*High School*] because Farrington [*High School*] had just opened not too many years [*earlier*]. So I used my brother's address, they were living across from Central Intermediate School, that was Vineyard Street, right next to the Central Intermediate School. (On) Vineyard Street right across Central, there was this Leilani Court, a group of homes and apartments, that my sister-in-law's mother owned. That's where (the YMCA [*Young Men's Christian Association*] and) playground is now.

MK: Oh, I see.

AC: That's how I ended up in McKinley.

MK: You know, when you were like an intermediate school student about to go to McKinley, did you have any aspirations, any plans for the future, any hopes for the future?

AC: I don't know. It's a funny thing, but I had no plans. I didn't think of being a teacher or nurse, or, I just never thought about what I wanted to do. It never came into my mind. So when I went to McKinley, the first teacher I had was Mrs. [*Hugh*] Harding-Jones, oh no, I had a---well, I was in a different class first when I transferred. They told me to go to this other class, then they transferred me to Harding-Jones' class, and then I found out that when I was transferred from Farrington, they had the records there. And then later on when they screened the records, they put me in Harding-Jones' class. And they had what you call this XY and YZ kind of grouping. So I think they said our class was XY, which is the better students, so I went into that class. So I was transferred, maybe not quite a month later, into (Mrs. Harding-Jones' class).

MK: And, you know, when you went to McKinley, did you pursue a particular course of study?

AC: Well, when I first went I had, for sophomore [*year*], most of it was required, what do you call, core studies, which is English and social studies. Then I took algebra and I took biology. Biology was required, but not algebra. I was really stupid though. I wasn't that sharp math person. I (got) into that algebra class and had a good teacher. This is my experience in that class. We go to the board (to do one problem assigned as) homework. I stand there because I don't know (how to work the problem). She comes to me and (asks), "Oh, Agnes, are you having problem?" Then she'd help me.

But this is how I went through that class. So algebra, I didn't like. Biology wasn't too bad. But anyway, I passed algebra.

AC: Okay, so I said I passed algebra. And then I signed up for geometry and French (in my junior year). So I went in the class. I just couldn't make it. I just felt so dumb in that class, that French class, so I dropped French and I also dropped geometry. (But) they wouldn't drop it for me, they made me go (to) see Miles Cary, Dr. Miles Cary (the principal). Can you believe?

MK: Oh!

AC: I had to go to see him and give him a reason why I wanted to drop. I thought I could just drop it through the administrative office. They made an appointment for me and then I had to go (to) see Dr. Cary. Oh, I couldn't believe it! So I had a nice chat with him. He was so nice to me, but I told him, "On second thought I think I'd better think about working." I told him, "I'm

having a hard time in those classes and if I really put my mind to it, I think I'd probably be able to, but I'm going to have to, after graduation, help the family and not think about university." Can you believe that's what I thought?

So then, he said, "Okay."

And then, I went into this typing class and shorthand (class). Junior year, I had Mrs. Janet Landgraf. She was my core studies (teacher). And then, the war [*World War II*] broke out on December 7, so we didn't go to school. We helped with the registration, fingerprinting and so forth. And then, in January sometime, my brother-in-law was working (at) Ford Island [*Pearl Harbor Navy Yard*] at that time, so he (said), "Oh, we're hiring kids to be messengers. Would you like (a job)?"

I was sixteen at that time.

I put in my application (to start work) on February 2, (1942). (However,) they're going to open school again (on the same day) I'm going to go to work. So I decided to go to work instead. I went to work [*as a messenger*] on Ford Island, and in the meantime, (my class of 1943 graduates). And so now—oh, wait, okay, we're not going to talk about work now. (Telephone rings.) Right? You don't want me to talk about work yet.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: You know, I want to move back a little bit and, you know, go back to your McKinley School days and, like you mentioned, core studies. That's something that was very progressive, very revolutionary at that time. What was it and what did you think about it, as a kid?

AC: My exposure to this core studies, I don't know whether I'd be very pessimistic about it or—I see some good in it, but I hate to run down a system, not being an expert. What I think about it is this, during that period I was in core studies, in that sophomore year, we had scholastic, or what was that, *World Observer*? No, the *American Observer*. The *American Observer*, and then we had our textbooks, too. We also had *Macbeth* or whatever, the literature thing. But we didn't spend too much time on any subject if the teacher didn't care for that particular subject. I don't know how to graph, you know. In all my classes, maybe during Kalakaua years, we did have, what you call, that English, you know, this ...

MK: Oh, diagramming sentences?

AC: . . . diagram, sentences and so forth. I had a little bit of that, but as of today, grammar, I'm dead. I think these foreign students that come learn grammar that way in the foreign countries. Well, when they talk about those things, I hate to admit it, but I don't know. Because I never was forced into it. Even like Kalakaua, you had the same teacher (for) English and social studies, which was almost like core studies. It was no different, only thing we called it English and social studies, two periods with the same teacher. So when you talk about American history, world history, I'm dead. I don't know much about American history. That's why I (kept) telling my husband, that I (want to) read his book(s). And he (always) said, "You should read."

But every time I pick it up and I'm reading, I'm falling asleep. (I guess the) university world history books (are much) too advanced for me, at this moment, not knowing the basic. Well, I even went through the motions. I ordered this Time-Life [*series*] (of) American history with (twelve books and records). This was when I was working, so I was busy raising a family and I never had time to [*read*]. I guess if I really wanted to, okay. That's why even when I think back, I took the GED [*general equivalency diploma*] test when I was working. I remember distinctly it was 1955, someplace close to that and I took that (University of Hawai`i) accounting course. And the course was held at (Navy) Supply Center (and the) university people [*instructors*] (came) over. But I didn't finish it, I got pregnant. I got sick, (and) I couldn't (go) to work, so I dropped the course. I try to and I want to, but I (only) have a very extensive list of non-credit courses.

But anyway, going back, that's during work time, when I had this American history records and book, I never really applied myself to it. I feel, even today, I'm always complaining but I never did something about it, but I would sure like to. [*Even*] when watching TV, and they're showing a picture about the wild West or whatever, I cannot relate to that as my husband knows when he's watching. It comes back to them, all of these. Even like the Bible. I went to Honolulu Bible Training School for about a couple of years or so, and I don't even remember what I learned over there. I'm now, what, sixty-seven, and I still never really found out about (the) Bible until our pastor came about two years ago. Now I'm picking up and it stays in my mind.

[*In high school*] we had in classes group discussions, and we'd plan for our banquets. I planned for our sophomore year banquet (held at the) Honolulu Merchandise Mart (building), it's torn down now. The Merchandise Mart had the (old) YMCA [*Young Men's Christian Association*] there. I remember going over there, to the YMCA, to make arrangements to have our banquet, when I was in the tenth grade. We formed committees. And I think I learned a lot of things through the discussions in that class. And rather than remembering dates of American history you might have another core studies teacher, or English and social studies (teacher) who likes English, maybe that's what you're going to be exposed to all the time. I don't know what their classroom plans were or what they had to show, but that's the kind of experience I had when I was going to Mrs. (Landgraf's class). I only had her for, September, October, November, three months, and she was into history. She was very aggressive too. She was one of the good teachers too. Harding-Jones was also (a good teacher). But they operate(d) differently. There were two (brothers who were) teachers (at McKinley). One was Keith (Jackson) and one was Archie (Jackson). I think both of them were math teachers. I had Keith (Jackson as my geometry teacher). My biology teacher was Miss [*R.*] Millington.

MK: How were you as a student?

AC: I think I'm (an) average student because I never really studied. And even today, when I have any kind of project, I'm a procrastinator. I'm always doing it at the last minute. If I applied myself to these things, I think I would be a better person today. I'm always—even now—I'm always last minute writing minutes. I said to myself, how much better if I spent more time in writing the minutes and give a better product. And that's how I got by in school. When I see these kids nowadays, they put in a lot of time studying, and I guess that's the only way you can get ahead. But to me, I just slide through all the way.

- MK: You know, I notice that, you know when you said you went to see Miles Cary, you told him that, well, you thought you'd have to go to work because of your family situation. You know, in those days, did many girls continue on to, like, high school?
- AC: I don't think so because at that time, my sister was five years ahead of me. She had gone to university [*University of Hawai`i*] two years. We couldn't make it, so she went to work. She had to work and then she was working for the Kim furniture. I don't know where else she worked but it was hard for her. Knowing that we were struggling, I didn't feel I was interested (in higher education). I don't know why they sent me to the principal, but maybe he wanted to salvage me. Maybe he thought I had potential. But I don't know, maybe that was what they normally did, send you to the principal before you can drop courses. But it turned out for the good, because the war broke out and I ended up anyway, you know, because of that class, the typing and the. . . . I had typing in, I think was ninth grade, at Kalakaua. So I just took advanced typing, and then shorthand for the first time, I think. I don't think I had shorthand at Kalakaua. In the meantime, when the war broke out, because we were in those classes, they asked us if we would help with the fingerprinting. In October of 1943, (we were asked if we wanted to return to school for four periods). (My class graduated in June 1943 but) I wanted to go back to school, so I went. And that's how I ended up getting a diploma. And I continued shorthand and typing again. All I had was core studies in the morning and shorthand and typing, and then we quit at eleven-thirty and we went to work. That's how I got my diploma, so basically, I don't have any kind of real, solid background as far as college material is concerned.
- MK: You sure got solid background in preparing you for your future. You know, before we get more to World War II . . .
- AC: Right.
- MK: . . . and your career, I just have a couple more questions dealing with your education. You mentioned going to Korean-language school, what was the name of the school?
- AC: Oh, they called that the—if I recall correctly, Shin Hyung Korean School, language school, Korean language.
- MK: What do the first two Korean words mean? Is it a name or . . .
- AC: I don't know. But the language school I went to was located, actually, on School Street. Their address was School Street. That was where the church was. It was a wooden building and we used that as the church and the language school.
- MK: And what was the emphasis in the teaching?
- AC: The Koreans have their own alphabets. We were there to learn how to read and write and speak and then also we had history classes. All I could remember is when we were having history, she would talk about Silla (Koguryo and Paekche kingdoms). That's all I could remember. What it was all about, I don't remember. When I went to Korea (and visited) the national Museum and (saw) artifacts from the Paekche kingdom and the Silla kingdom, it brought back memories. (When we went to Kyongju) to visit the tombs, they (told us) what dynasty or period

it was. So everything kind of comes back. I don't think I learned anything because, like I said, we were only playing. And the teacher [*Mrs. Ki Moon Sur*] who taught me is still living. She's in her eighties (My friend) Salome (Han) and Mrs. (Ki Moon) Sur get in touch about once a week by telephone. (She is homebound so I told Salome), "One day, when I make the Korean *duk*," that Korean rice cake, "I would like to take some to her because she was my teacher." I don't know whether she remembers me but I'd like to see her.

So that's what my plan is and I said I'll try to do it before the Christmas holidays, but look how busy I am. (Chuckles)

MK: So did you learn Korean language when you went to that school?

AC: I---actually what it is is that speaking (telephone rings), I'm not very good at speaking, but mostly because of my. . . .

END OF INTERVIEW