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Interview with Aiko Fisher, Professor of Japanese

Aiko Fisher

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Macalester College Archives, DeWitt Wallace Library

Oral History Project

Interview with: **Aiko Fisher**
Professor of Japanese, 1970?-2000

Date: **Wednesday, July 25th, 2007, 9:00 a.m.**

Place: Macalester College DeWitt Wallace Library, Harmon Room
Interviewer: Laura Zeccardi, Class of 2007

Interview run time: 55:04 minutes

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Beginning to teach courses

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Interview with Aiko Fisher

Laura Zeccardi, Interviewer

**July 25th, 2007
Macalester College
DeWitt Wallace Library
Harmon Room**

[00:00]

LZ: My name is Laura Zeccardi and I am a new graduate of Macalester College, conducting interviews for the Macalester Oral History Project. Today is Wednesday, July 25th, 2007, and I am interviewing Aiko Fisher, Professor of Japanese, in the Harmon Room in the DeWitt Wallace Library. We are also joined by Jerry Fisher, Professor of Humanities, Media, and Cultural Studies, and History. So, to begin if you'd just like to state your name and where you're originally from, and then what year you first started teaching at Mac or got involved at Macalester.

AF: My name is Aiko Hiraiwa Fisher. I'm from Japan. And the first year I started teaching at Macalester...I don't remember, you know, so it isn't clear. So, that's it, I guess.

LZ: So, let's talk about your educational background and then what led you—

AF: To the United States? I was raised in Japan and I graduated from liberal arts college in Tokyo, and after that I came to New York to do the graduate work. I was specialized in audiovisual education, and I engaged in producing a radio program in Japan. That's the reason I came to study in New York.

LZ: What led you then to come to Minnesota?

AF: Minnesota... [laughs] I went back to Japan after I studied in New York and I met Jerry Fisher in New York, in graduate school. Then we married in Japan, then we came back to the United States, and he finished up his Ph.D. program. Then, second job I guess, and he was hired from Macalester, his old home school. Then that's why I was here.

[02:21]

LZ: Did you have much involvement with the college before you started teaching, since...?

AF: Not quite.

LZ: How were you approached then by—were you approached by Macalester or...?

AF: At those days, there is—we came to Twin Cities in 1969. There are not many Japanese then. And Jerry taught Japanese history, and students started to be interested in that field, but there wasn't much of anything of Japanese language education except the University of Minnesota. In Twin Cities, I'm talking about. Then, out of the necessity, I start teaching Japanese language informally to the students who are interested in learning.

LZ: So, you had students that approached you about teaching first of all?

AF: Yes, that's *his* students. The students who took his history course. They wanted to know more about Japan.

LZ: So then, you taught them in an informal setting in your home or...?

AF: Yes, yes. Several students came up to me and asked me to teach them Japanese language, so the small, informal class began in the living room of our house on the Vernon Street over there. And those students are the most motivated group I have ever had all through my years at Macalester College.

[04:21]

LZ: How many years did you teach out of your home, was that something that you—?

AF: Just two years. Second year, just the small, casual class continued, I think. Then the third year, I taught a full-week intensive course during January, interim course. Are you familiar with it? And then, meeting place, of course, moved to Macalester College. The subject was fresh, you know, so there are many students who are interested in that subject, and there is no campus among the colleges in Twin Cities had Japanese language course then. So, I have about twenty students in the course each interim, and I think I taught interim for three or four years. Then, next, following, several years, the Japanese course was given by ACTC [Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities]. Do you have that now?

LZ: Um-hm.

AF: And then the classroom was loaded among Macalester, St. Thomas, and St. Catherine. But, more than half of the students in the course were from Macalester students. So Macalester student has to make a big commitment and sacrifice to attend the classes, they have to commute to the class.

[06:20]

LZ: The Macalester kids did?

AF: Yes, when we had a Japanese course at St. Catherine's, for instance, they have to come there. Then, finally, Macalester decided to have its own Japanese course. One course at first, and the faculty wasn't very receptive then to the newcomers, this new course. Then, at first, the reason why they were not so receptive is they thought that Japanese was too exotic for the liberal arts college then. Macalester has been very international, but those days, their international was just Europe-oriented. That's why they thought that Japanese was too exotic. At first, we didn't have an office space, nor the budget to buy tape for language lab. You know, the tapes are essential for learning language. Then we sent out the letters to the graduates asking small contribution. Fortunately, the reaction was great and very cooperative. So, in spite of all these difficulties, Japanese course had a good, solid start. You know, that's...students are so interested and eager in learning Japanese. Soon we needed next level of Japanese language classes and a second language instructor was hired on the basis of part-time. And students' enthusiasm and motivation showed in the numbers of enrollment; we needed more faculty very badly. Phyllis Larson was hired for the full-time, tenure track position. Then Phyllis taught modern Japanese

literature, besides languages. Then, this is something very impressive to me, middle of '80s, 1980s, the three students came up to me and mentioned that they wished to set up the Japanese Language House. German, Spanish, French, and Russian houses were already established, so these three students collected enough signatures and wrote the petition and took it to the provost. And the provost told them to submit it to CC, Community Council, and then after they had a discussion—committee has a discussion and consideration, and committee told them that you have to live as group in a part of the dormitory, and give several cultural events for the whole campus before you move into the house. The committee, I think, wanted to check how firm their commitment was. Then they completed three years. But it wasn't so easy to obtain that language house right away. Then, thanks to Phyllis Larson, in 1992, I think, the Japanese House was born. Students are great, I thought. And had potential. And some students take initiative and volunteering to take part in the national speech contest sponsored by Japanese embassies. And more than five of them received honorable award, including grand [prize] award, in several years. So, those things, through those things in Jap—Macalester became recognized as being one of the best place for the Japanese studies. And we sent out numerous students to various campuses in Japan to study language and experience Japanese life and its culture. And at the middle of '80s, 1980s, we established sister-school relation with Miyagi Kyoiku Daigaku, Miyagi University of Education in English. And during the next two decades about thirty students studied at Miyagi Kyoiku Daigaku and at least as many faculty, Macalester faculty, visited the campus. And this is the exchange agreement that brought their students, Miyagi Kyoiku Daigaku's students and their faculty to Macalester as well. And all the faculty and most of the students who partook in this exchange program received the support from the Japanese Ministry of Education. And this whole thing gave a new great dimension to Japanese language

program and even to the Macalester as a whole. And...what other things? Oh! I should have mentioned here that the great deal—great contribution over years by students who came from Japan. They served as native language assistants and participated in Japanese House program and all the things related to Japan. And...do you want to add something there?

[14:55]

Jerry Fisher: Well, I'll just say two things. One, the problem with Japanese being established and getting going was no different than a lot of new things in a small college. And there were some faculty that were very supportive, and others which were very much against it and fought against it even once it was established. But what turned the tide, one of the big things, was this exchange program—of not only students, and they saw their good students going to Japan, coming back, and going on to great graduate schools and things like that—but particularly the faculty. Because the Ministry of Education paid their way over and gave them a stipend and they have formed some very good relationships, and joint study projects and stuff, with the professors at Miyagi Kyoiku University and sister school. I should say Miyagi Kyoiku University, it's a national university and we had, as an educational institution, the first educational institution in the United States that had an official relationship with a Japanese national university. Even the big universities didn't have such a thing. So, that made a huge impact. And about the Japanese students helping in the program, one thing that Aiko probably forgot, but I'm sure will remember now, is that we had some remarkable things that happened. For instance, there was a very bright and able blind student here at Macalester who was very interested in Japanese language. And she—of course, a lot of extra work on the teachers and students and such, but she actually completed four years of Japanese. And one of the students particularly that helped was a girl

from Miyagi Kyoiku University whose sister, I believe, was blind and she knew a great deal about someone like—Tracy was the American girl. So that was pretty remarkable. And, in fact, she was—we nominated her, and Miyagi Kyoiku University accepted her, as an exchange student. But the Japanese Ministry of Education unfortunately would not give her a scholarship because they were afraid that—

AF: Something happen to her.

JF: Something might happen to her. Which is really a tragedy, you know, it was really too bad. But we had some very unusual things like that, that happened too.

[18:06]

LZ: So students would go and study; you know, when they talk about study abroad now, was that similar?

JF: Well, it was very different. That was a very special relationship because there were no classes in English at Miyagi University and at that time there were no Japanese language classes. They would get tutoring in language; they had to be pretty good in language before they went, and they went to regular classes, lived in the dormitories. Which again, there's not a lot of schools that even have dormitories in Japan, most of the kids commute. And they would work out arrangements with their teachers before they went, some of them would go for a whole year. But we'd evaluate them on the progress of their Japanese when they came back and gave them credits. And some of the people, they would work out independent study arrangements with

their professors here. We had one person, a physics student who had to get in a physics course, and he was able to actually do the work with tutoring by a teacher in Japan, and then sat for the regular test that we have here that was administered by the teacher over there. So, a lot of cooperation, very unusual. Of course, these days you can't do things like this; it's much more organized and such. But that was quite a unique opportunity for those students. A few of them got married [laughs] to each other, one of them exchanged—one of them is now a professor of Japanese literature at the University of Chicago and he married one of the Miyagi Kyoiku University girls.

[20:01]

LZ: When did students start going abroad, was that several years after you started teaching?

JF: Linda [Johnson?] was the first. At first it was alumni, actually, people who had just graduated. And the first one to go was 1972, I think.

AF: Two or three. The students in '70s, they were so independent. Energetic and active in social issues, I'm sure you are aware of it. And they involved in civil rights, in anti-war movement. And they are courageous, I should say, to take risks and devote themselves to other people, especially underprivileged people. They are so unique and creative, and some of the students created their own majors. I think—is it allowed to do that now?

LZ: I think it's pretty rare, but I do think that you're still allowed to do...

AF: Oh [unclear] wonderful. So, Japanese language program flourished even now, even more, I should say. In four different levels of language class. Literature and Japanese linguistics are taught now. And two tenure position and one full-time teaching position. They've grown so much. But all this growth, in the process of growing, the student motivation and interest, enthusiasm, powered the program to go forward and, of course, needless to say, that faculty contributed a great deal as well.

LZ: Did you start teaching only the Japanese language?

AF: Yes.

LZ: And was that what you specifically taught while here or did you...?

AF: Yes. So, I filled my work, big contribution is just starting Japanese program on this campus. Now, the program is in good hands.

[22:39]

LZ: So did you have much, I guess, contribution from other faculty members in different departments in the beginning of the program or was that—

AF: Not much. What do you think?

JF: Very little. Although, I must say that when we wanted to establish the Japan House, I don't know how helpful she was within the faculty, but Helene Peters in the French Department was very helpful as far as information and helping us. Because she had started the French House many years before. And in particular, you know, we appreciated her help.

AF: It's very, very difficult for us to put the first step on the campus, right?

JF: Right, right.

AF: And that's the part that he worked very hard. He knows about that things, situation, very well.

JF: Well, it was rather—I can remember very closely another person that really made a huge difference, although she didn't do anything as far as setting up things. We had a faculty meeting when we first suggested, or put forward, the concept of teaching some Japanese. And much of the faculty was very much opposed, particularly the other language teachers. And in fact, I can remember very clearly, someone in the Classics Department getting up and saying that if an exotic language—if students wanted to study exotic languages they should go to the University of Minnesota, which I thought was rather ironic. If it was someone in French or Spanish or something—but this was someone who was in the Latin and Greek program. And then Hildegard Johnson, who you've probably heard of in some of your interviews, just an amazing person, you know, very thick German accent, got up and really laid it on. And said, "You talk about languages and exotic," and pointed out that there are many more people in the world who

speak Chinese and Japanese, certainly much more—less exotic than Greek and Latin, et cetera, et cetera. And she was such a dominant person; I don't think anybody dared say anything after that [laughter]. So, at least the program passed and passed the first thing, but still they didn't, as Aiko said, they didn't have an office, didn't have money for language tapes, you know. But, eventually, I think particularly that a lot of faculty got a chance to go abroad to Japan and stuff, it changed the attitude.

[25:56]

LZ: In the beginning was it just that it was such an exotic language or was it just...?

JF: Well, it's not exotic—

LZ: Right. I mean, was it considered that, I guess, or was it just, maybe, this campus...?

JF: Well, it's politics, I mean. Unfortunately, if there's a rise in Japanese, it appears that maybe some of the other languages would decrease their numbers. And then, eventually—I won't get into the details of this because it's kind of embarrassing, particularly for some—well, president that we had in particular. But after the Japanese language was well-established, from the top, fortunately, that was—came from the president's office, they wanted to get rid of Japanese, so they could start Chinese. Which many of us feel is a very racist position; if you're going to establish Chinese, why do you have to get rid of Japanese? But this was *very* common throughout the United States in colleges and universities. They would pit the people taking Chinese against Japanese, with a zero sum game. And usually they were often joint departments,

so they wouldn't give a new position in Japanese because there was more pressure to give a new position in Chinese, or vice versa. Which, really, I mean after all, that's not where things should be. I mean, if it was a modern language department, then it would make more sense, you've got various positions and various languages, but they were separate entities here. And I'm very glad that Chinese has finally started here, but that was also kind of funny because, quite frankly, I think that one of the reasons that some of the faculty really came around to support the Japanese is when they saw that the president might get rid of the Japanese Department, Japanese programs, and they figured, "Well, if he can do that, we'll be next." That's just my own personal feeling. But we got a lot of support then, and unfortunately, that meant it took longer to get the Chinese. It's pretty ironic, but I'm glad finally we've got both and Macalester recognizes that there's another sphere to internationalism, there's also Asia as well.

LZ: Do you know when Chinese started to be taught here? Is that a fairly recent...?

JF: Very recent.

AF: Very recent. So that the students' interest, and also the growth of Japanese program, went along with Japan's growth in prosperity too. So then all of a sudden, people are interested in Japan [laughter].

[29:19]

LZ: Since you didn't have an office that first year, where were your classes held, did you—

AF: Oh, we have a classroom, but I don't...

LZ: Okay, but you didn't have an office.

AF: So, I met students in the hallway. They have to make an appointment of course.

JF: We actually had one, Aiko probably doesn't remember this, but there was one time when we were going to have a class, before this got accepted by the faculty. We had made arrangements with the University of Minnesota for them to teach a university extension course at Macalester. And it was through their department, because Aiko also taught at the University of Minnesota, it was their department, but they would do it at Macalester so it's easy for our students to take it. But ironically, as far as Macalester is concerned, too many students signed up for it, so they said they didn't have room for the students, they didn't have a classroom that was big enough. So that's indications of the problems we had.

AF: Over years, the students' power and interest and enthusiasm overwhelmed. So the administration and faculty moved by *their* power, it sounds like, for every stage of the program's growth.

LZ: What types of students were becoming interested in Japanese studies and the language and I guess...?

AF: At the beginning or right now?

LZ: I guess maybe both. Talk about in the beginning and then how you've seen that change.

AF: *Ahhh*, there's a history there. First, of course, that's new, fresh subjects that people are interested in. But at the beginning, students were interested in culture. For instance, Zen Buddhism, and what, and architecture, and those Japanese, so-called, Japanese culture. And then they realized the growth of Japanese economy, so economy students are interested in it. And then after that comes the technology, people are interested, those field students are interested in. And lots of pre-med students I had. You know, they said that it's a good start in their—what do you call—application form, in that they had something, diversity, in what they are doing. Then right now, of course there are lots more, other students who are interested in other things, but these days—or, I should say, when I retired around 2000, students are so interested in Japanese anime, animation. They want to know the language that they are saying. So after computer, interest in computer, anime comes.

[32:59]

LZ: Do most students pair Japanese with another major or another field of interest to kind of try and combine the two?

AF: Yes. There are not many full-major, Japanese only.

LZ: What are some other examples of majors that they would combine with Japanese?

AF: There are lots of them.

LZ: Just, kind of none in specific?

JF: We had a few interesting, very interesting students that were—one in particular, and he was probably the main force behind establishing the Japan House, was a physics major, which was very unusual. But there were people like that, I mean, that's one of the great things about teaching at a school like Macalester. And both Aiko and I have had quite a few pre-med students, some of whom have remained very close friends, and we've always enjoyed that. But there would be, particularly in anthropology. But not especially. And then, of course, history, because I teach history.

[34:18]

LZ: Now, you taught classes within kind of the department, have there...I guess who were some of the...?

JF: I didn't teach in the Japanese Department, although I did give a course once. We had enough students who were good enough in Japanese; I could give a course in reading history in Japanese. And it was a small class, as you can imagine, because you'd have to be pretty good in Japanese and you'd also have to be interested in history. I think we had maybe five students. And we had a student who sat in for the whole course, and she was one of our graduates who was working on her dissertation, and she was a graduate student of Stanford University. And she was around here while she was working on her dissertation and she took the class. And she said

at that time there was no—there is now, but at that time there were no classes like that at Stanford, so it was pretty unusual.

AF: We sent many students to the graduate school for Asian studies—

JF: Yeah, the Japanese, and Japanese history, and literature, arts, stuff...

AF: And one time, three or four Macalester students were in the Stanford University graduate program for the Asian studies and they are known: Macalester Mafia [laughter].

JF: Actually, we had, I think, at one time there were five.

AF: Five?

JF: Including the ones in Chinese area, because some of my students that Aiko didn't have, and some of them have really become quite prominent.

LZ: Oh, so they've continued then—

JF: Yes.

LZ: —to go on?

AF: The Macalester students are great. Endless potential [laughter].

[36:24]

LZ: I'm curious; did, in the beginning, when there was kind of a—not a negative reaction, but less than enthusiastic reaction about the Japanese program. Did that have anything to do with Vietnam and kind of feelings about Vietnam and what was going on over there? I'm curious, it seems as though...?

AF: Not directly, I should say. But those students are so energetic that they want to know lots of things in the world. So, those students are involved in the anti-war movement, but at the same time, they're very courageous and creative and willing to take risks and want to do something different.

JF: Let me ask a question, because I'm not sure about this, but I think later, perhaps the enrollment in Japanese went down a bit because they were, students were less interested in taking risks. They were afraid this is something they hadn't tried before and they might not be able to get good grades.

AF: And also they are afraid to suffer their major, subject.

JF: Yeah, that's right, they didn't want to focus on it.

AF: That's what they said. You know they—you don't know because you are very young, but there's the, you know, the students' personalities, or what can I say, nature? Were different from the current students. I think that the society is different.

JF: But, she understands a bit because she was one of Emily's advisees.

LZ: Yeah, Emily Rosenberg's.

AF: [laughs]

JF: So she's one of the little bit different kind of students [laughter].

AF: Just, you know, that the students in the '70s, they are *dynamic*. But it doesn't mean that I don't put the value in current students, no. But, of course, they have some [laughter] problems, too.

JF: Right, right. It's not as if our life was any easier with those students [laughter].

AF: They are not controllable [laughter], they are untamed. But, at the same time, they are very active and energetic, dynamic above all. We enjoy them very much too.

[39:11]

LZ: So is the program today a fairly... it's pretty strong?

AF: Very strong, they are doing good job.

LZ: When you left about how many students would you have in a class?

AF: When I left there—three and a fourth one is part-time, four faculty, so...

JF: Although the actual number of students went down. At one time, I think the high mark was almost a hundred and twenty, which means about, a little bit less than ten percent of the campus had studied Japanese. Well, eight percent or something like that. She was really busy then, she was teaching overloads and everybody was working much harder than they should really. And there in particular the students were so helpful. Fortunately, we were able to have a number—they were on work-study arrangements, but—native speakers working in the program.

AF: Those years, because the subject was fresh in other campuses, they don't...

JF: Yeah, we had quite a few students from other campuses too, that came here. Yeah, and some of did very well, went on, became quite well-known.

AF: The program is doing good even now. The number isn't as high as they want to have, but the quality is better and they're doing a good job.

[40:57]

LZ: Have you been able to get back to Japan to do work quite a bit since you've been at Macalester?

AF: Yes, often [laughs]. At least once or twice each year, I went back. I attended the seminars and observed their Japanese language class in Japan. Language class for the foreigners, non-Japanese, I should say, non-Japanese. And I attended workshops and I did as many as I could in doing research.

LZ: Have you been involved in publication that's been outside of...?

AF: I did several articles in the magazines, Japanese language education...

LZ: Did you also write a textbook, I think I had read somewhere perhaps, that was used—

AF: But I didn't publish it.

LZ: Oh, you didn't publish it. Okay.

JF: Yeah, we didn't have good textbooks either at the beginning. I mean, nobody did for Japanese. They came along—one thing, it's not so strange now, but one thing that was unique with our program compared to most everywhere in the United States is, from the beginning, the way Aiko taught, was to begin with people reading Japanese, not romanization. And to learn the Japanese alphabet and the Chinese characters that they use and everything, from the beginning.

And also to speak in very adult Japanese, with very good etiquette and such. Because you could learn; the idea is that once you get enough background and you go to Japan, you can learn how to talk like a college kid or something like this at any time, but to learn really refined, good language, and be able to read from the beginning is not that easy. And it takes a lot of discipline with kids, because Japanese is a very difficult language, I mean...

AF: I don't want you to say difficult. *Different* from English.

JF: Well, in terms of—they've got—you can talk to linguists about this, I don't know, I've just heard from them. But as they grade languages in terms of difficulty to learn at certain levels, it certainly is—it's always rated as one of the more difficult.

AF: Yes, yes, yes, yes, they say so.

[43:57]

LZ: Do you find that after students have taken four years of Japanese that they're fairly proficient in it, that they've—

AF: Yes, some of them. Very well.

LZ: Some of them? So, it's definitely one of those languages you really need to buckle down with [laughter]. Oh, have you had much involvement with the Linguistics Department, I know that's been kind of...?

AF: Yes, at the beginning. I didn't have any place to belong to. At the beginning it wasn't a problem yet. And then should I belong to one of the modern language department? No. If they have a collective department for the modern languages, then I know we had a place to go, but certainly it wasn't suitable for us to belong to History. So there is an—they were kind enough or [laughter] they may not have a choice, but we belonged to the Linguistics Department for a few years, right? Then we set up the program.

LZ: So the Japanese program is separate from the East Asian Studies program, is that correct?

AF: East Asian programs belong to History, right?

JF: No.

AF: No?

JF: It belongs to everybody—

AF: Everybody. Oh, interdepartmental—

JF: Eventually it got big enough so that the head of that program would be in various departments.

AF: So, most of the things that I mentioned today is the early part of the Japanese language program. And it grew very rapidly and we owe a lot to the students for that.

[46:14]

LZ: What do you think was the biggest—I guess there was probably quite a few, but—the biggest thing that happened within the department that really secured its place at Macalester? Was there every a moment when you said, “Okay, we’ve got this and they’re not going to get rid of it?” Or was it always kind of...?

JF: No, because it was pretty well established and all of a sudden the president decided to get rid of it [laughter] and substitute Chinese, so... But he wasn’t able to, and part of that is because the faculty exchange had already started. And I think that gave us a lot of support. A lot of support—we had support from places we never would have imagined it. For instance, like Vasant Sukhatme in Economics. I mean, that wouldn’t be the normal place to have support. But he went over in exchange and got involved in stuff—and I understand he was one of the people who helped pushed for Chinese, I may be mistaken, but... Although, you would say, well, he’s from India, of course maybe he’s interested in that, but it took—I think it wasn’t natural, particularly for him, because he was focused on the U.S., just like everybody else. We had also, I’m trying to think of her name—was in the Music Department—Edwards, Michelle. She did a lot of research; she started a whole new field of her research doing things on Japanese women composers and stuff, and presented papers in that and presented some of their new compositions here. And Jerry Webers worked with someone over there on some joint papers. Then we had Miyagi Kyoiku University professors, several of them that came here, that were here for several

years teaching in a kind of exchange situation. And one of them was in the...what, chemistry?
[unclear] Chemistry area. So, there was a lot of really very nice stories as a result of this
exchange.

[48:50]

LZ: Do you see the program as growing as kind of Japan has become kind of one...? You know,
if you were to put it in terms of U.S.A., Europe, and Japan now, do you feel that that there will
be renewed interest in the future in the program or that...? Should Macalester ever worry that
they're going to get rid of it again, or...?

AF: I doubt those things happen. I hope that they expand areas to Arabic too.

JF: Yeah, right, they should be teaching that. They don't, now?

LZ: I don't think at Macalester you can take Arabic. I think you can go to another one of the
ACTC schools, but... Do you feel that Macalester needs to do more to offer more languages
than it does?

AF: The more the better, I think. If possible.

JF: Well you see, one of the questions you asked me, which is interesting because I thought
about it. You asked me about, you said, something about we didn't have very many vocational
courses. We don't now—what about then. And I really started thinking about that, because, in

fact, schools like Macalester tend to look down their noses at a course which teaches you how to do something. So, it's journalism, accounting, and beginning languages. There's a lot of—I'm not talking about in particular people, but in general there's kind of a prejudice against teachers, people who mostly teach introductory and second-level courses and that kind of courses on campus. And I think it completely misses the point. First of all, it's essential. But secondly, because I've taught a fair amount of English abroad, particularly at that introductory level, it's such an opportunity to get people involved in the culture, in many ways. And just, when you're doing a simple sentence, the nuances and such. So a good teacher of elementary, secondary, you know, first/second year language, is probably one of the most valuable possessions a liberal arts college can have. And obviously language teachers, a lot of them, most of them, understand that, but faculty—in fact, it's ironic that it's all right if you're in linguistics to teach first or second year, because then it's assumed that's part of your research. But, you know, it's—and that's not just Macalester, it's a lot of places that are like that. So, that's why it's hard to get a new language started. And they always, the administration, almost always—and again, not just Macalester—plays off the languages against each other in a power game. So, if Arabic comes on then that means something else decreases, or something like that. It causes that type of thing. I mean, it wouldn't—maybe anthropology would, but no. [laughter] Or economics or something like that. They don't even consider that.

[52:44]

LZ: That's interesting. So, you retired from Macalester in 2000 you said?

AF: 2000, I think.

JF: That long ago?

AF: Yeah, that's why I hesitate to say 2000. [laughter]

JF: I thought it was 2002, wasn't it?

AF: I think 2000.

JF: It may be 2000.

LZ: Have you had any involvement with the college since you retired or have you focused...?

AF: Not regularly basis, but I'm involved in events.

LZ: Was it, I guess, gratifying to leave after knowing that when you had started at Mac there was virtually no—

AF: Yes, yes, but I missed the classroom activities very much. Since then, I've seldom had the—work with the young people. That's the part that I miss. But I enjoy watching Macalester growing.

[53:45]

LZ: Have you seen that the college—or, in your mind, has the college changed as a whole quite a bit from when you first started?

AF: You mean the students? Or the facility—*yes*.

LZ: Have you seen that students have changed in any way?

AF: You know, I don't have a chance to mingle with current students, so I hesitate to mention about it. Aren't you happy to be here? [laughter]

[54:20]

LZ: I have one last question for you, and I was wondering if you have kind of a favorite time at Macalester or favorite memory or class, or just kind of moment that really sticks out in your mind when you—

AF: Just one particular one? In general, I really enjoyed the activities in the classroom. So.

LZ: Well, those are my questions. I don't know if either of you have anything that you'd like to mention?

AF: Is there anything that you...?

JF: Done a good job, I think.

LZ: Well, thank you very much.

AF: Thank you.

LZ: It was fun to hear about the Japanese Studies program.

[End of Interview, 55:04]