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Title: Jun Dairiki Interview  
Narrator: Jun Dairiki  
Interviewer: Naoko Wake  
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**<Begin Segment 4>**

NW: Now, your interest in, I suppose, classical music, is that something you just acquired when you were growing up?

JD: Well, let me tell you something about my mother, then. Okay. My mother was a person who felt that each of her children should learn something. So my oldest sister, the one that was married and living in Chicago, she took classical Japanese, the traditional Japanese dancing, so that's what she took. The sister that was in between us, she took ballet, tap dancing, and piano.

NW: Hmm. It's a very different kind of thing from what the older sister learned.

JD: That's the way my mother was. She did not think it had to be steeped in Japanese traditions necessarily, she appreciated it, but it didn't have to be steeped into it, and with me, I took voice lessons. And the little town I grew up in after the war, it happened to have a voice teacher. And so I took voice lessons.

NW: Nice coincidence, then. So that's based on your mother's teaching philosophies, so to speak. And you liked it.

JD: Yeah, oh yeah, I always enjoyed singing. I think my mother must have seen that in me. And I remember making a comment to her, when I was still in, because when we came out of camp, I was in like seventh or eight grade, middle school anyway, and she says, well, you know, one of these days, we ought to get you to go in to take lessons, voice lessons. But she did not push me at the time I was in middle school, um, but once I became a freshman in high school, she didn't let up until I called the teacher. She was very pushy in that respect. She says, "I want you to call Mrs. Benning," that was the name of the teacher, "And make an appointment for us to see her." So, I kinda, procrastinator, you know, but finally I did call Mrs. Benning and told her, that we'd like to make an appointment to see her, so, we made an appointment, went to see her. And she took me on as a student. Now, I was Mrs. Benning's first Japanese student.

NW: Oh, so she had Caucasian students, but not Japanese or Japanese Americans, for that matter.

JD: So, I was her first Japanese student. I am not saying this as bragging, but I was also her first success. I got a lot of awards in my high school years, and I sang at the high school graduation, and so forth and so on. So anyway, that's why I wanted to go to Europe, I wanted to further my voice lessons, you know.

NW: Why do you think that your mother was so eager to kind of push you ahead so you can continue to do this voice lessons?

JD: She wanted each of us to have something.

NW: So, she wanted to make it concrete.

JD: I think that probably was a goal of hers. You know, because in Japan, I don't know about now, but in old days, you had to learn *ikebana*, learn how to cook, and learn how to do this, and maybe you took classical dancing, too, I don't know. I think that's what they did in Japan, I don't know. Maybe some of that was still instilled in her when she came here. Okay, we're still in America, true, but it doesn't mean that you can't, shouldn't be taking something. So each of us was instilled to do something. And my older sister was actually quite good at Japanese classical dancing. So good to the point that her teacher wanted her to go to Japan to get further training and get a certificate and all that. And my sister said no way. She did not want to go. So, I mean she took classical dance, she was very good at it, but not willing to go to Japan to further that part of it. 'Cause like I said with my other sister, it was all American style, you know, ballet, tap dancing and piano. And then with me it was voice. So it was . . . just that my mother was very adamant about the fact that each of us kids had took something.

NW: And, uh, I know you know, in case of Jack, he was just in Japan, although he's born here, and he just was in Japan because his grandfather was ill.

JD: His grandfather was ill.

NW: Right. Whereas, in your case, it could have been the case that your mother probably wanted you to, or your sisters to go to Japan and could have been in a similar situation as Jack.

JD: I don't know. See, I don't know about that, yeah.

NW: Your impression is that, let's say, among the family like yourself, Japanese American families, of the time, it was common thing for parents to send kids back to Japan.

JD: I think a lot of them did send their kids to Japan for education reasons. Yeah, we have some friends who were sent back there because of that, you know. I don't think my parents were going to send us back to Japan though, for education. I don't think that was their intent. I think she just wanted all of us to have some kind of cultural, I guess it was mostly cultural, thing. Because my mom and dad are Christians. Yeah, they were not Buddhist. They might have been Buddhist in Japan, but when they came here my mom decided to convert to Christianity.

NW: So, change it. Okay.

JD: So she'd be . . . She and my dad are Methodist, because in Idaho where we lived, there was a town called Ontario, Oregon. And although we lived in Idaho, we were six blocks away from the river . . . where the bridge was, and if you crossed that bridge, you were in Oregon. And Ontario was like twenty miles away from where we lived. And that's where the hub of the Japanese community was. So *obonoburi* [?] was in Ontario. The Japanese grocery store was in Ontario, there was a pretty good sized Japanese population in Ontario, you know. But, here was a

Methodist church, and there was a Buddhist church, they were across the street from each other. But I never went to the Japanese Methodist church, my mother and dad at the time were so busy working and trying to make a living that they didn't have time to go all the way to Ontario, so the church I went to was all Christian, but there was Christian churches in the town that we lived in.

NW: Oh, so it's nearby. It wasn't far away.

JD: There were a lot of churches in our town, tons of churches in our town. [laugh]

NW: [laugh]

JD: So I went to one of them, and that's where I did a lot of singing, too. So, so I was in an all Caucasian church most of the time. So that's what we did. That's how come all of us took some kind of lessons. That's why I wanted to go to Europe instead of Japan. But anyway, to go back to Japan, I worked there for two years, and I was assigned the U.S. Air Force. And I came home and settled here, and looked around for a job and found a job in San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank. And uh, before I went to work for them, I had applied for different places, one of whom was Chevron, which was at that time known as the Standard Oil Company of California, they are now known as Chevron. Okay. But, at that time, that's what they were known as, and I applied there as well. But at that time the jobs were frozen. And when I was trying to go to Europe, with Uncle Sam, federal jobs were frozen as well. So we must have had some kind of economic downturn at that time, I guess, you know. So anyway, I finally found this job at the Federal Reserve Bank and I worked there for about three months. And I got a call from Chevron. And they said "Are you still interested in working for Standard Oil in California?" and I said absolutely. Because I wasn't really happy at the Federal Reserve Bank.

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