

AOKIS IN LOS ANGELES

SAY THEY'RE HAPPY

Home, However, Shows Evidence of Great Poverty, and Family Even Obligated to Sleep on Floor.

NEIGHBORS DIVIDED IN THEIR FRIENDSHIP

Young Mother Says She's Absolutely Indifferent to Public Opinion and Wants to Be Let Alone.

LOS ANGELES, Monday, July 18.—After a residence of a month in the city, keeping closely within doors to avoid the curiosity of neighbors, Helen Gladys Emery Aoki and her Japanese husband have been found.

They were in an attractive two-story house at 4269 South Main Street, where they had moved three weeks ago under cover of darkness, that they might escape the scrutiny of neighbors whose objections might have been aroused by the odd sight of this Japanese-American family.

Little Sophronia Frances Uta Aoki, just a year old, was beating her tiny tanned hands against a screen at a porch window. Mrs. John Emery, the grandmother, stood guard at the front door of the strange little family's place of refuge. A few curtains hung in the windows.

House Comforts Few.

Outwardly the place looked cheery. Within the scant furnishings told a mute story of the near-poverty that Aoki and his wife have been fighting against as they have been buffeted from one place to another because of unsympathetic neighbors.

There were no bedsteads in the house. The family sleeps on mattresses upon the bare floor. Aoki is working in the city. In a few weeks, he said yesterday, the interior of the house will take on a more comfortable appearance—that is, if no opposition to the family develops in the neighborhood.

A division of feeling for and against the family exists in the neighborhood. The neighbors do not see much of the Aokis. The two women spend most of their time indoors. Aoki is the boldest of the family, and sprinkles the lawn. The house, for a long time unoccupied, began to look better after the Aokis moved in. The change was so much for the better that M. R. Sherer, who lives near by, found them desirable neighbors.

The Aoki family asks no sympathy and accepts none when it is proffered. Offers of financial assistance meet the same fate.

Absolutely Indifferent.

"I am absolutely indifferent as to what the people think about me," said the young mother yesterday. "Why speak of sympathy, when it does not enter into consideration in our little family? We want to be left alone.

"We want no substantial assistance, though we may need it," she declared as she stood with the little black-haired babe in her arms. "We are prepared to fight our own battles."

"We ask nothing," repeated Mrs. Emery, as she looked up from her sewing basket, where she was at work on baby clothes that would fit an infant much younger than little Sophronia. "We will buy everything we need. The world has been hard, and it has made us hard."

The destinies of the home are presided over by Mrs. Emery. She has made no calls and has extended no invitations to neighbors to call. Aoki goes to work early in the morning, neatly attired. He walks along with a jaunty air, and he is commonly talked of as a well-dressed man.

"I see we cannot get into a quiet home," he said. "I think we will have no trouble living here," he continued, "because our neighbors here are broad-minded people. We ask to be left alone; that is all. We know that Christians will treat us well; we do not care what others do or think. I am working, and I intend to stay here and establish myself."

May Be Forced to Move.

Aoki's plans for the present are only temporary. Though considerable sympathy for his white wife and the babe exists among the immediate neighbors, a queer rule has been established among the property owners. It is more of a tradition than a rule. Should it become operative more than likely the Aokis may be deprived of their present abode.

Anticipating that the tract of land surrounding the Aoki house would attract the wealthy, clauses were inserted in the original deeds setting forth that if the property in the tract should be occupied by Chinese, Japanese or negroes it should revert to the original owner. There are neighbors in the locality who do not care to press the operation of this clause.

It was with the understanding that real poverty was pressing upon the little family that an offer of employment was yesterday made to Aoki.

"We feel certain that they have not many of the commonest comforts," said one woman neighbor. "Their house is practically empty. There has been no furniture brought in and the one couch they have Mrs. Emery hammered and fixed out in the yard."

Not Utterly Cheerless.

But if the house be poor, it has the living spirit of home. Aoki himself washed the windows and they shine spotlessly. Pale pink straight Japanese curtains blowing out over white muslin draperies in one bedroom denote a bit of cheer. In the front upper porch, screened from the curious, swings a white hammock, and here sleeps little Miss Aoki.

Nearly every day the girl is seen about the lawn playing with her American Teddy bear and a Japanese doll.

When Aoki comes home dressed in an American suit of brown, dark green tie and big felt hat, and comes rushing up the steps, the wife hurries to his arms, the stern-faced mother-in-law relaxes into a smile as she pats his shoulder and the baby stretches out its dimpled hands and coos smilingly "Da-da."

"Are you and Mrs. Aoki truly happy now, despite all your difficulties, and are you actually reconciled since the withdrawal of the divorce suit instituted at Reno?" was asked.

Declares They Are Happy.

The wife nodded gently and slipped her hand into her husband's as he replied, "There is more happiness in our family than in many others. Some people don't think so, but as soon as I am established here I will welcome any one into our home to see if it is not an ideal place." Mother (turning to Mrs. Emery) knows we are happy, and all we ask is to be left alone and to live our own life."

From Mrs. C. C. Pierce, who with her husband for years has done much missionary work among the Japanese, it was learned that the Aokis have ordered their household goods shipped from Seattle.