Aging and Identity among Japanese Immigrant Women

by

Atsuko Kawakami


A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy


Approved April 2012 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Takeyuki Tsuda, Chair
John Johnson
Cecilia Menjivar


ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 2012

ABSTRACT

Ascribed elements of one's self-identity such as sex, race, and the place of birth are deeply related to one's national identity among Japanese immigrant women. Spouses, offspring, friends, networks in the U.S., or even information about their local area also represent the nation they feel they belong to. The feelings of belonging and comfort are the basis for their achieved sphere of identification with the U.S. This study found that few elderly immigrants would identify only with the host county. Likewise, very few elderly immigrants would identify only with the homeland. Therefore, most of them identify with both countries (transnational), or they identify with neither country (liminal) to an extent. Developing transnational or liminal identity is a result of how Japanese elderly immigrant women have been experiencing mundane events in the host country and how they think the power relations of the sending and receiving countries have changed over the years.

Japanese elderly immigrant women with transnational identity expressed their confidence and little anxiety for their aging. Their confidence comes from strong connection with the local community in the host country or/and homeland. Contrarily, those with liminal identity indicated stronger anxiety toward their aging. Their anxiety comes from disassociation from the local community in the U.S. and Japan. With regard to the decisiveness of future plan such as where to live and how to cope with aging, indecisiveness seems to create more options for elderly Japanese immigrant women with the transnational identity, while it exacerbates the anxiety among those who have liminal identity.

i

TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

"What am I supposed to do after my husband dies?" "Sometime I think about if I am going to die alone in a foreign country." This was a part of conversation that four of my Japanese friends and I had over a cup of tea in the dining room of one of the women's house. All of them were wives of white American men and they had been in the U.S. for no more than 5 years. They were between their late 20s and mid 30s, and all of them had at least an associate degree from a Japanese college or university. None of them had a child, parents, siblings, or relatives living in the U.S. Some spoke fluent English and some did not. One woman had a part time job, another woman was looking for a job, and the other two were housewives.

"My husband's grandmother was looking for a nursing home. Do you know how expensive it is!?" "Many elderly people cannot afford their medical bills in this country." "If you don't have money in this country, it's better to die early." The conversations about the fear and anxiety of getting old in the U.S. continued with their speculations of what-if situations. "If I have a child or grandchild, I wouldn't be so lonely, would I?" "Even if I go back to Japan, my parents will be gone by the time I become a widow and my sister and nephews will have their own families. There will be no room for me by the time I get old." Then the conversation returned to the original questions with a deep sigh. "What am I supposed to do after my husband dies?" "Am I going to die alone in a foreign country?" Their fear may be due to the fact that they are no longer a

temporary immigrant with a student visa. They are now permanent residents in the U.S. The time of excitement—moving to a new country and starting a life with a newlywed American husband, which probably got their friends' envious attention—is over now. They probably have started to see the disenchanting facts of the U.S., and as everyday life in the U.S. sinks in, so does a vague uneasiness. Even though my friends were far from retirement age, their concerns were real, imminent, and serious.

There are numerous gerontology studies that seek the formula for life satisfaction in old age. For example, activity theory explains that there is a positive relationship between one's activity level and life satisfaction among the elderly (Lemon, Bengtson, and Peterson 1972). The critics of activity theory see that the theory assumes the elderly "have a great deal of control over their social situations," while only a limited number of elderly people have such financial means to control their later life (Kart 1994:200). Exchange theory specifically adds its perspective on the financial means for social life of the elderly. Exchange theory sees that the elderly have more power and freedom when they have monetary resources or other materials to be exchanged for the services they need (Dowd 1975; Cavanaugh and Whitbourne 1999).

The assumption that all elderly people can make a free choice whether they get involved or not involved in various activities is too naïve, but the exchange theory's assumption that people always make a logical decision is also naïve too. The critics of exchange theory point out that even if all the elderly people do have such means and resources to control their social life, people do not

always make a logical decision based on a cost and benefit analysis (see Kart and Longino 1897; Raschick and Ingersoll-Dayton 2004).

Younger, well-educated Japanese immigrants tend to be economically stable compared with other racial and ethnic groups; their financial resources and means cannot be the only significant factor in creating a feeling of uneasiness for these Japanese immigrant women. It must be something to do with who they are in relation to their surroundings since their question for their future was about what to do without their husbands or children in a foreign country when they get old. It seems that a lack of social capital or resources is bothering them. The social breakdown/reconstruction model utilizes the concept of social labeling theory in symbolic interactionism. According to Joseph Kuypers and Vern Bengtson (1973) the social breakdown/reconstruction model explains that changing roles, norms, and reference groups have a negative effect on the self-image of the elderly. Elderly people feel incompetent as they start to lose control over various events and experiences, which results in their being labeled as incompetent; therefore the elderly start taking a dependent role or even a sick role (Kuypers and Bengtson 1973). This model gives the insight for explaining the anxiety among the elderly in terms of losing their self-identify in the surrounding environments. The source of anxiety could be explained by the uncertainty of self-identity in a host country for the immigrants. Although the family or career can offer some sense of belonging and identity, the family members may pass away and careers may end as time passes. If a Japanese immigrant woman with an American husband identifies herself in terms of her interracial relationship, she

3

may likely face the difficulty of finding a sense of competence in her old age in a foreign country, especially when she loses her partner or position at work. Likewise, if a Japanese immigrant woman identifies herself in terms of her career in the U.S., she may likely face the difficulty of finding a sense of belonging in her old age in a foreign country, after she loses her position at work. She might feel she does not belong anywhere or has lost her status.

While contemplating the relationship between one's identity, sense of belonging, and fear for aging in the host country, I had an opportunity to talk to an elderly Japanese widow. She was married to an American man and has been in the U.S. for more than 50 years. I summarized the conversation the younger Japanese immigrant women were having the other day and their dim outlook for old age. This elderly woman laughed about the concerns among the Japanese women of the younger generation and said "why do such young people worry about aging now? If anyone should be worried, it is someone like me, but I'm not worried about it at all!" My impression was that the younger women were more worried about getting old than the elderly women. It seems that the simple fact of "getting old" is not causing the younger immigrant women's anxiety. The anxiety seems to be based on a lack of confidence to survive by themselves in the host country in case of an unfortunate event such as the loss of their American husband. Their American spouse is the only resource of support for these newly immigrated women in the host country so far since they have not established their own social resources or a feeling of belonging in the host country yet. It seems that younger permanent-resident women cannot yet visualize how they can build

4

such confidence and resources because they lack experiences and length of stay in the host country. On the other hand, the elderly immigrant woman who has been living in the U.S. for a while seemed to feel more confident about aging because probably she knows from her experience that she can survive in the U.S. In fact, she has been surviving so far and she probably knows from her experience that a spouse is not the only social resource to count on for old age.

Purpose of the Study

Studying elderly immigrants becomes increasingly important in the U.S., a nation of immigrants with a rapidly aging population. There are numerous gerontology studies that analyze the relationship between one's social integration and life satisfaction among the elderly population. In order to add more knowledge to the study of aging, culturally specific immigration experiences must be taken into consideration. Ling (2007) expressed her concerns and motivation for collecting the oral histories of Asian women, including Japanese immigrant women who live in the Midwest area of the U.S. Ling (2007) thinks the voices of Asian women in the U.S. are often ignored even though they have been the major players in a significant amount of the Asian American history. This study also allows elderly Japanese immigrant women the opportunity to express their views and experiences.

After experiencing and observing Japan's rapid social changes in their childhood and young adulthood, the elderly Japanese immigrant women who migrated to the U.S. are now reaching retirement age, enjoying retirement, or

even preparing for the very last stage of their life in America. As they approach this final stage, how do they interpret their life history and how do they define who they are? How are they dealing with various aging issues in the U.S.? How do they feel about getting old and ending their life in the host country?

Emigration, especially permanent residence in a foreign country, and interracial marriages are still considered somewhat extraordinary experiences for Japanese people. By having ventured into these unusual experiences, Japanese immigrant women see themselves as distinct and different from "other Japanese women" (Kawakami 2009). Yet, these immigrant women often hold ambivalent feelings when they are simply categorized as "American," even many years after they became naturalized American citizens. Overall, those women who construct a distinctive individuality based on various collective identities, such as Japanese, American, or transnational identities, are less anxious about aging in the host country and more satisfied with the conditions in which they are living in their old age when compared with those who have not yet established their distinctive individuality based on their sense of belonging. For instance, while many recent young Japanese immigrant women with American husbands tend to express their anxiety about aging in a host country and feelings of rootlessness, the elderly immigrant women with a long history of living in the U.S. and a sense of belonging seem to have less anxiety and more confidence in their old age in America.

This project specifically examines the relationship between the immigrants' national identity and the ways of coping with their aging. Therefore,

the first question will ask how the elderly Japanese women's national identity has changed since they immigrated to the U.S. For example, what memorable events made them identify as American or Japanese? This question will be used to look at how national identity is understood as part of self-identity and whether these women's national identity has become more American, more Japanese, or more transnational (based on identification with both countries) or more liminal (based on identification with neither country). This question will be utilized to examine one's assimilation processes in development of national identity as well as to establish the dominant patterns of national identity in one's personal experiences. The second question will ask in what way Japanese immigrant women's national identity influences their coping with aging, and their decision to end their life in the U.S., Japan, or somewhere else. The combination of life course stages and nationalities is not only part of self identity; it also influences how immigrants utilize support systems for aging in the host country. This aspect is especially relevant for Japanese immigrants since they do not have well-rooted, kin-based support systems in the host society because most of their families and relatives remain in the homeland. This question hopes to uncover how their self-identity is translated into their satisfaction with the decision to stay in the U.S. or return to Japan within the context of available support systems and their current socioeconomic factors. For example, if an elderly woman who happens to have a strong Japanese identity thinks it is socioeconomically impossible for her to return to Japan at the last stages of her life, how does her national identity affect how satisfied she will be about her decision to stay in the U.S.? Does their Japanese

national identity affect how comfortable they are with the prospect of aging in the U.S.? It is also important to figure out if they really have no choice or they just think they have no choice. Finding out the reason why they think they have no choice but to stay in the U.S. may reveal how the elderly immigrant women define acceptable living arrangements and environments for old age.

Data: Research Participants and Sampling

The target population of this study is elderly first-generation Japanese immigrants aged 60 and above in the metropolitan area of Phoenix, Arizona. I interviewed 32 different Japanese women. All informants are age 60 or above except three women whose ages were between 47 and 57 at the time of interview. Most of the elderly Japanese immigrant women are wives of American servicemen after World War II. Some of them are wives or widows of American civilians, and they tend to be the younger generation such as mid-60s or younger. Most of them have middle-aged children, or grandchildren who are now young parents themselves. More than half of them are still married with their first or second husband. The rest of them were widowed or divorced. About half of them had had some kinds of full-time or part-time jobs in the past. Some of them still work part time or as temporary workers, and some of them even had a college education and career. Most of them are financially comfortable, and all of them are physically and mentally healthy and still able to manage their independent life styles.

There are various types of support systems elderly people can choose depending on their financial resources and personal preferences, ranging from informal ones based on family, relatives, friends, or community center-based social groups and organizations to more formal care systems such as the government-run health care system, the Social Security system, and commercial-based nursing homes and assisted-living homes. Even though the preference of caring for the elderly in Japan may be shifting from the informal private family based care to more formal care systems (Ogawa and Retherford 1993), the family/kin care based on primogeniture is still the social norm. Since these Japanese immigrant women are not living in such a Japanese care-giving system, they seek out other types of elderly care in the U.S. The Southwest area of the U.S. is considered one of the most popular retirement places in the U.S. due to the mild weather, yet the population of Japanese elderly immigrants is not as heavily concentrated as it is in San Francisco or Los Angeles. This situation makes it ideal to study the condition and norms of the elderly Japanese immigrants in a foreign country in contrast to well-established Japanese communities in West Coast cities that may already have developed well-organized support systems and social networks.

This study used qualitative methods, specifically snowball sampling, to obtain data through in-depth interviews of a limited number of first-generation Japanese immigrants in the geographical area. This sampling method provided a brief map of these women's social relationships since they introduced their friends to me. There is a social group of elderly first-generation Japanese

9

immigrants called the Southwest Social Group. Initial contact for this study began with this group. Most of the group members are between their late 60s and early 80s, with exception of a few younger members in their 40s and 50s. The membership is not limited to first-generation, Japanese, female, or the elderly, but the majority of them are elderly first-generation Japanese immigrant women from the middle to upper-middle classes. A few members are male, second-generation, or non-Japanese. Members pay small annual fees to receive a monthly newsletter. The group has about 30–35 members (the number fluctuates every year) and in the monthly meeting, on average, between 20 and 25 members show up. The group was established about 30 years ago by a Japanese widow. She had a career and many American coworkers and friends, but she wanted to speak Japanese and enjoy friendship with Japanese people on weekends. She put an advertisement in a local newspaper and posted flyers at oriental food stores to form a group. The founder of this group is still an active member of the group.

From a member of the Southwest Social Group, I was informed that there is another group of elderly first-generation Japanese immigrants in the area. It is called the Spiritual Group. This group is based on a well-established association in Japan that promotes high spirituality and high morals. In short, it is a religion-like study group that does not affiliate with any particular religion. Between seven to ten members of the Spiritual Group meet every month at one of the members' houses to study how to live well. Most of the members are between their early 70s to late 80s, with the exception of a few younger members such as late 50s. The membership of this group is not limited to Japanese, female, or the elderly, but all

of them are elderly Japanese women from the middle to upper-middle classes because they do not proactively recruit new members such as through personal ads in the newspaper or fliers on bulletin boards.

In addition, data were collected from other first-generation elderly Japanese immigrants in the Phoenix metropolitan area who do not belong to any Japanese social groups. The members of Southwest Social Group and the Spiritual Group referred their non-member Japanese friends for this study. In order to maximize heterogeneity of personalities, social classes, marital status, and working experiences, additional purposive sampling was employed by asking candidates if they knew anybody who was socially isolated or who did not have many friends, in order to contact these hard-to-reach categories of people. My initial hope was to include widows or wives of Japanese men since they may have different types of identities and perceptions about aging in the host country. However, it was extremely difficult to find elderly Japanese widows or wives of Japanese men with permanent residence status, and they were also hesitant to share their views. The requests for interviews were either denied or postponed indefinitely after much rescheduling. The main reason for the difficulty of locating elderly Japanese wives or widows of Japanese men was that the number of these women is already very small compared with Japanese wives or widows of Americans. Because of the study site of this project, it is difficult to locate Japanese couples who came to the U.S. Japanese companies started to branch out their offices on the West Coast or East Coast of the U.S, which created opportunities for Japanese businessmen and their families to migrate to the U.S.,

but the majority of them went back to Japan after several years, and only a few of them decided to stay in the U.S. permanently. In addition, Japanese wives of Japanese businessmen tend to associate with mostly other Japanese wives of Japanese businessmen, but not with Americans or Japanese wives of American husbands (Kawakami 2009; Fukada 1981; Satou 2001). In fact, my informants did not know Japanese wives or widows of Japanese men.

Another reason for the difficulty of locating Japanese wives of Japanese men might be that, as I will discuss in later chapters, Japanese tend to keep their personal experiences or family matters in private and not to discuss them with strangers. Since I could not ask questions in the form of an interview, it is just my speculation, but this tendency must be kept more strongly among Japanese-only couples compared with Japanese-wife-American-husband couples. It can be assumed that it is somehow easier for Japanese couples to keep Japanese norms and practices with others than adopting American norms since they would speak in Japanese at home, which forces them to think like Japanese and practice the social norms like Japanese. Thus, they may be more reluctant to do interviews where they have to talk about their personal lives. In sum, the limited number of Japanese couples in the area and their cultural practices and tendencies made it difficult to locate Japanese wives or widows of Japanese men in the area. Therefore, all of the participants in this study were wives, widows, or ex-wives of white American men except two women's husbands had Hispanic heritage (one husband had a white mother and Hispanic father; the other had a white Hispanic father and non-white Hispanic mother).

I had some follow-up interviews with some of those women because I realized that I was not sure what they meant when I was transcribing the interviews. As mentioned above, all informants are age 60 or above except 3 women who are still working full-time. I was not planning to have interviews with those younger women when I found out their ages. However they turned out to be great references and gave me many contact numbers and wonderful insights by sharing their experiences of the association with their older friends. Nine informants hold permanent resident status, and the remaining 22 became naturalized American citizens many years ago. One of the informants was a U.S.-born second-generation Japanese American who had lived in Japan for several years during World War II. Again, I was not planning to include her interview in this study, but it turned out that her views as an American who is very familiar with Japanese society were extremely valuable. However, I did not include her views in my analysis to keep my focus on the first-generation Japanese immigrants in this study, except in the particular section that describes Japanese society.

Methods: In-Depth, Semi-Structured Interview

Interviews were held at coffee shops, in the participants' homes, at restaurants, and at the local senior/community center. The shortest interview was only 20 minutes because of the time constraint the interviewee had on the day of the interview, and the longest one was 3 hours because the interviewee was very talkative and very detail oriented. The average length of the interviews was about

one hour; however, the conversation usually continued a couple more hours after the interviews, as I will describe later.

Since the topic may be considered too personal or sensitive for some Japanese people, forming a focus group to ask questions did not sound appropriate. Therefore, the individual in-depth interview was employed as a main method of data collecting. One woman's interview included her American husband as she wished, and he shared interesting episodes from when they were living in Japan. Semi-structured interviews were employed for this study to assure that the same questions were addressed for all interviewees to find general or dominant responses. Most interviews were conducted in Japanese, but many of them switched back and forth from Japanese to English and back to Japanese from time to time. When they started to use English, I started to reply to them in English and when they switched back to Japanese, I also switched to Japanese. The conversation often took its own course and led to a new subject and even a different direction. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed for later analysis. Brief life histories were also collected covering basic demographics such as age, education, career experiences, marital status, and legal immigrant status as well as their relationships with their in-laws and with their family of origin in Japan. Informants were asked if they participated in any types of transnational activities in their everyday lives and what personal memorable experiences made them feel they are "American" "Japanese," "both American and Japanese," or "neither American or Japanese." Their answers often led to a discussion of their

14

plans for the very last stage of their lives and the kinds of support systems they felt comfortable using for that phase of their life in their host country.

Participant Observation

The main activity for the Southwest Social Group is the monthly lunch meeting. In addition to participating in these lunch meetings, other events were documented such as the annual Japanese book yard sale, a summer retreat in a local hotel, and the Christmas party. The Southwest Social Group has five groups in different residential areas, and each group hosts a monthly meeting. After the meeting, it is a customary practice that the host group will then have a cup of coffee to discuss and plan for the next meeting. Often, this coffee gathering turns into an extension of the topics they had discussed in the restaurant meetings, such as updating each other about their personal lives, exchanging information, and even some gossip between the members. Usually, members are too busy to mingle with other members, and often the restaurant lunch meetings are too noisy to have continuous conversations. However before and after the meetings are ideal times for observing meaningful interactions and conversations within the group and outside of the group such as with non-Japanese restaurant staff. It often reveals the members' views toward "Americans" or "Japanese." I joined this social group in 2007, have participated in most of the monthly meetings and special events since then, and I have kept journals about memorable incidences with this social group of people. I have attended the Spiritual Group's study sessions and lunch meetings five times since December 2009. The main activity for the Spiritual

Group is the monthly study groups. After the group study, it is a customary practice to have lunch at a restaurant. Because the number is much smaller in this group, the conversations are more manageable at the restaurant. I kept journals about memorable conversations and incidents with this Spiritual Group, too, and these field notes provided valuable supplemental information and the general backgrounds of informants' patterns of thought and behavior.

Analysis

Extensive notes were coded according to the research questions and answers. All analysis of data including individual interviews and participant observation were used for the grounded theory approach. It is an inductive approach "to generate a theory from the constant comparing of unfolding observations" (Babbie 2008:324). It starts with observations and interview as well as collecting images and documents to form a theory by interpreting the data. According to John Lofland et al. (2006:173), the most widely discussed topic in qualitative fieldwork research has been "theoretical discovery or the development of taxonomies and mini-concepts from field study research as exemplified in grounded theory practices." This approach is useful for the selected topics in a particular setting or group to make original and new contributions within different topics, or on another aspect of the same topic, new units of analysis, theoretical discoveries, extension of theory, or refinement of previously explored settings (Lofland et al. 2006). The flexible nature of the grounded theory approach shows its strength in almost every situation except deductive hypothesis testing. These

flexible and creative features of the qualitative methodology significantly assist this study in its attempt to examine the existing topics such as identities of immigrants and aging in a newly emerging concept and phenomena such as transnationalism and rapid globalization.

Two types of coding were used for the data analysis concurrently: tree or network coding and open coding with the qualitative analysis software Atlas TI. Tree or network coding seeks for data to fit into existing concepts, while open coding detects previously unknown patterns and themes. Analytic themes started with two main concepts—national identity and plans for aging. These two main codes are then divided into sub-codes with open cording, creating a conceptual tree. A few examples of sub-codes for the national identity theme include superficial assimilation (behavioral/language/dress /hairstyle/make-up), value acculturation, and reasons for belonging to the nation(s) such as psychological or geographical distance, race, or place of birth. A few examples of sub-codes for the aging theme include the preference of care-receiving such as filial piety care or non-kin based care, actual plans for old age, having a permanent place to live for the rest of their life, and connection between the national identity and their confidence for aging.

Open coding identifies unknown patterns and themes, and it forces some concepts to be questioned with a fundamental meaning of the terms. For example, what initially seemed to be a clearly defined concept turned out to be in need of re-examination. When using "one's sense of belonging to a nation(s)" as the definition of the national identity, the term "belonging" needed to be re-defined

and conceptualized throughout the open coding. Thus, the meaning of "belonging" became a more complex subject matter.

The central theme of this study is to discover how the elderly immigrants' national identity is related to their plans for their old age, which results in their anxiety or satisfaction about aging. In line with this question, this study initially anticipated four different national identities; Japanese, American, Japanese AND American (transnational), and Neither Japanese NOR American (liminal). Accordingly, the responses for their views toward their futures were anticipated as follows. The individuals with Japanese identity would prefer traditional Japanese-style filial care. The individuals with American identity would prefer not to use traditional filial care. The individuals with both Japanese and American identities would show indecisiveness for their future plans with great flexibility, while the individuals with neither Japanese nor American identities would also show indecisiveness with great anxiety due to their lack of references or models of aging processes.

However, as Chapter 4 will describe in more detail, it became more apparent that first-generation immigrants' national identities are mainly categorized into only two groups as the analysis proceeded: the group of individuals with both Japanese and American identities and the group of individuals with neither Japanese nor American. Most informants immediately answered that they are Japanese, although their answers could not be simply taken at face value since they also expressed how it became easier for them to live in the U.S. compared with Japan because of their appearances or behavioral patterns. In

18

this study, I could not find an immigrant woman who identified exclusively with Japan such as a woman who feels comfortable only in Japan, interacts with only Japanese friends, avoids associating with Americans, and displays her indifference for the U.S. society or culture. In addition, assimilation in national identity among immigrants is often a matter of degree in terms of how closely they feel to the host nation. One informant indicated that she does not have a good memory of Japan and has no intention of going back or even visiting Japan. Her national affiliation is closer to the U.S., yet she was very clear about her national identity being Japanese because of her ascribed statuses such as race and place of birth. She does not intentionally avoid Japanese people but she does not expend too much effort to connect with Japanese people or engage in cultural practices. There is no clear delimitation in one's national identity between the host country and homeland for immigrants. Therefore, the national identities are determined by how informants expressed their sense of belonging and psychological and subjective distances from the host country and homeland. For example, an informant was categorized into the group of "neither Japanese nor American identity" when she emphasized her psychological or intentional distance from both countries such as "I can never be (or don't want to be) an American." and "I try not to get involved with Japanese people here." Informants were also categorized into this group when they expressed their unintentional but clear distance from interpersonal relationships in the U.S. and in Japan, such as the experience in simultaneous conflict with parents in Japan *and* in-laws in the U.S. Even if the elderly immigrant women have been in the U.S. for a long time,

19

repeated relocation within the host country also caused social disconnection. For example, in some cases, circumstances such as death of the spouse or a change in the spouse's work have caused multiple relocations, which weakened some immigrant women's ties to the local community in the U.S.

On the other hand, an informant was categorized into the group of "both Japanese and American identity" when she emphasized her belonging to both countries such as "my heart belongs to Japan … [but] the (physical) place I belong is the U.S." or "I'm comfortable in either country." There are a few individuals who actually maintain close social and interpersonal connections in Japan while living in the U.S. by visiting their homeland frequently. These informants expressed that they don't know how to articulate who they are. One of them said she is not Japanese or American, but rather she is "the person who understands both cultures." Even though the literal expression was "neither Japanese nor American," clearly, this individual should be categorized in "both Japanese and American identity" The total of 32 individuals was categorized according to their identities as follows:

Informants' National Identity

| Types of Identity | Both Japanese and American Identity | Neither Japanese nor American Identity | American Identity |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Informants | 26<br><br>*3 of those used to think they were American, but regained their Japanese identity as they age.<br><br>*1 informant indicated her closeness to the U.S. almost exclusively and a great distance from Japan, yet she clearly stated she is Japanese. | 5 | 1<br><br>*Second-generation Japanese American (not included in the analysis for identity and aging sections) |

As described above, the initial attempt was to classify people into four categories according to their national identities (Japanese, American, transnational, and liminal); however, the attempt was problematic from the beginning. The qualitative study with snowball sampling does not cover a wide range of the study population nor represent the entire population as comprehensively as a large data set with random sampling. A small sample size inevitably limits the ability to categorize people into detailed classifications. One could argue that this study's sample size may not be sufficient to make any distinctions between the subgroups. Basically, a vast majority of the informants

are in the category of Japanese and American identities. Even after employing the additional purposive sampling to attain the hard-to-reach categories of people, due to their social isolation, only five individuals with the liminal identity were found. Even though the initial thought or assumption was not realized, some distinctive characteristics of the subcategories and their tendencies were still observed among the informants. Qualitative research has great capacity to stimulate new typologies, discover new variables, and generate conceptual innovation in theory (Mahoney 2007). Likewise, from the observation, this study formed a typology around the initial concept of the intersectionality between the national identity and aging. The typology of identities, the plans for aging, and the level of anxiety were generated in the open-coding processes, as I will describe in Chapter 5. The informants' future plans and preferences of the care they receive turned out to be unrelated to their identities, as anticipated. However, the distinctive differences were observed in terms of one's level of anxiety or confidence in aging in the host country among different types of identities. Michael Buraway (1991:11) describes qualitative analysis as "a continual process, mediating between field data and existing theory." Throughout the analysis, new empirical evidence was examined and reconsidered constantly by going back and forth between idea, theory, and the data, as Bruce Berg (2007:24) suggests with "the spiraling research approach."

Struggle as Golden Rule of Good Ethnography?

Almost all qualitative researchers have mentioned in their work that a researcher's personal characteristics such as one's gender, age, race, or even

personality, do matter greatly in terms of data gathering and how he or she conducts the field research. For example, in the classic study of William Whyte's Street Corner Society (1943) to more recent studies of Elijah Anderson's Code of the Street (1999) and Philippe Bourgois' In Search of Respect (2003), ethnographers analyze their racial, class, and gender differences between the researchers and the study populations. It seems that it is almost customary for any ethnographic researchers to express their difficulties in fitting into the fields and express their frustration and differences between the researchers and informants. In fact, my impression about the golden rule of good ethnographic work is that ethnographers "are supposed to" have this particular type of difficulty and it makes the study more valuable and even more reliable. The comments of Carol Warren and Tracy Karner (2005:82) reaffirmed my impression about ethnographic work by using the example of Dorrine Kondo's famous study of the family and work in Japan, Crafting Selves (2001): "Being of the same race, ethnicity or gender does not, however, guarantee an ethnographic experience free of difficulty." Warren and Karner (2005:82) continue that "[a]lthough she was Japanese by heritage, she did not speak perfect Japanese, she had not been socialized into Japanese gender norms, and she was an American citizen. Thus, it was culture and nationality, not ethnicity or race, that formed the basis of ethnographic difference for Kondo." Thus, the difficulty and the researcher's frustration were presented effectively to highlight and accentuate the societal differences. The ethnographers rarely emphasize their easy access to the setting or express no struggle with the informants at all. Probably accentuating the

difficulties to be accepted by the group gives the impression of rareness of the study, and thus it may even increase the value of the study itself.

Contrary to my own understanding of the golden rule of good ethnographic work, the overall experiences of my data collection were overwhelmingly warm, trouble-free, and enjoyable. My status as a Japanese immigrant woman certainly facilitated access to personal and sensitive material from the informants. My personal characteristics and experiences such as being a permanent resident immigrant without any relatives from Japan certainly was advantageous for this study and helped me build rapport with the participants, who went through somewhat similar experiences and speak the same language. If I were not a Japanese female with the immigration experience, I might have had more difficulties in fitting in or slight frustration, like other researchers.

The only obvious difference between the informants and me was the age difference; however, I still did not feel much difficulty in fitting in with the group or in building rapport. When I joined the Southwest Social Group's monthly meeting for the first time, I was surprised how young the group members looked and how vibrant they acted for their age. However, my initial surprise, followed by many other unexpected findings, did not widen the difference between the informants and me or cause any major frustration, struggle, or distance. If I were in Japan and conducting the interviews with the elderly in Japan, I might have felt and showed more appropriate reserved distance out of respect and *enryo* (modesty). I still do respect my elderly informants, but I felt it is totally appropriate to act in a much friendlier manner with my informants than I would

24

usually act toward elderly people in Japan. To a certain degree, I was interacting with my informants the way I would interact with the American senior citizens. The fact that I was conducting the study in the U.S. and my study participants have been living in the U.S. for most of their life influenced me to become closer to the study population.

The only overwhelming feeling I experienced during the data-collecting process was when some informants repeated the same episodes or phrases and when some of them were excessively detail oriented. Even though some of them derailed from the subject quite often, all details, episodes, and anecdotes they shared with me still seemed interesting, relevant, and important. Several interviews lasted more than 3 hours, and there were few times I had to come back the next day to complete the interviews. I originally thought this might be due to their age, which allows them to spend a long time talking. However, what I experienced is nothing new in field research. My dominant feeling was not particularly related to the informants' age as Lofland et al (2006:55) describes this commonly experienced feeling with many examples of different researchers with different topics:

> [I]t is not uncommon to experience a sense of information
> overload. … All of the [information] is likely to appear both
> phenomenally interesting and conceptually or theoretically
> important. This is true not only when the setting is new, unfamiliar,
> and perhaps strange as… studying an imported religious movement
> or homelessness, but also even when the setting is familiar as

[studying one's own workplace, experiences of one's own disease, or one's own children].

My feeling of being overwhelmed was due to my inexperience in field research, not to the age difference between the informants and me. Besides, my feeling did not cause any frustration or conflicting feelings toward the informants. Because of my trouble-free data-collecting experiences, one might argue that this study may not be as objective as it could be due to the researcher's over-rapport. Over-rapport can be threatening in certain situations such as when the informants in religious cult groups try to convert researchers after building strong rapport (Gordon 1987; Rochford 1985; Peshkin 1984). Over-rapport is also threatening for the integrity of the study. Patricia Adler and Peter Adler (1987:17) alert to the danger of over-rapport as follows; "becoming too closely aligned with one group in the setting may prevent the researcher from gaining access to the perspectives of other groups in the scene…[and] bias researchers' own perspectives, leading them to accept uncritically the views of the members …as their own." Probably for that reason, most ethnographers place more emphasis on their difficulties in fitting into the group than on trouble-free access to the group or successfully built rapport.

Even though the importance of having an adequate distance should be recognized, the difference between the researchers and study subjects may have been emphasized just for the sake of emphasis as a matter of course in ethnography. Even if the researcher's ethnicity, nationality, language, age, gender, and social class are exactly the same as the study population, the researchers can

still find some differences. For instance, mentioning the difference in the levels of education between the researchers and the study subjects is very common. In their ethnography, graduate students or researchers from prominent universities often mention how highly or differently they are treated by the informants due to their educational attainment or their school's brand-name value. Then the researchers use this episode to analyze the effect of the education or social class on the informant's behaviors or psychology. What these researchers need to realize is that they are the minority group with certain characteristics who employ a particular kind of language and thinking pattern among the vast majority of the population who do not hold such an academic position.

I am neither arguing that noticing the educational differences between the researchers and the study population is an invalid observation, nor am I saying that using their realization for the educational difference to analyze the informant's behaviors is shoddy. What I am arguing is that overly accentuating the difference and difficulty between the informants and researchers to ensure the integrity of the study is as problematic as accepting informants' views uncritically. Being trained to become the minority in a certain way, of course, the researchers will find some differences between the study population and themselves. Disclosing the researcher's difficulties and the differences to be accepted by the informants does not mean the study is automatically guaranteed with the objectivity, validity, or self-reflection. Likewise, disclosing a researcher's trouble-free experience in the study should not be automatically degraded as lacking objectivity, validity, or self-reflection, either. Trouble-free

research is not inherently more or less valid than research full of difficulties and challenges.

Although I did not face any major difficulties, uncomfortable situations, or confrontations with my informants, the interviews were still full of surprises, and I heard many unexpected responses. Most of my informants were willing to talk in great detail, and many of them were so giving in their natures that I often stayed at their houses more than a couple hours after the interviews. They showed me their old pictures, documents, handmade crafts, and other memorable artifacts. Many of them hold the stereotype of students who are always hungry and do not have much time to cook good meals in the financially tight situation. Probably for that reason, they fed me with lunch or dinner after I had interviewed them. One of these ladies even tried to give me a nice Anne Taylor pastel pink suit and Pettit Sophisticates native blue dress that she does not wear anymore—after feeding me with a nice traditional Japanese style lunch and desert. As I will discuss in the next chapter, most of these elderly women are amazingly young looking for their age. Their choice of attire would be considered too young compared with the choice of the same age cohort in Japan. Indeed, I would have taken the gifts if the size had been right. Some ladies gave me their hand crafts, plants they grow, Japanese food, and books. Some other ladies invited me to their houses a few days later after the interviews. Some asked me to volunteer for the cultural and fundraising events they were involved in, and I was more than happy to return the favor and to be a part of these events. Warren and Karner (2005:84) state that "the research bargain" as "incorporation into a setting—being permitted to hang

around, interact, and talk with people—is a gift of time and attention. Both fieldworkers and respondents may see this gift as something that needs repayment." Again, Warren and Karner (2005) use Kondo's work as well as other that of other ethnographers to explain this repayment as a way they incorporate into the setting and observe the interactions and gender stratification. Although Kondo (1990) did not mind such repayment, occasionally she felt bounded by chains of obligation when her Japanese host family and friends asked her to teach English and help in the kitchen. Because Kondo's (1990) setting and situation and my setting and situation are totally different, it is not even possible to compare and contrast "the research bargain" of the two studies, but I honestly did not feel any chains of obligation at all as I felt honored to be asked and truly happy to return the favor for them. Volunteer opportunities were not only personally rewarding but also helped me to have a better empirical understanding of the enjoyment of reciprocity by exchanging a helping hand, as I will describe in Chapter 5.

About This Dissertation

So far in this introductory chapter, I have discussed the purpose of this study, research methods, and researchers' prevailing tendency to express their struggle in the fields. With the hope of explaining the relationship between the identity of immigrants and their views toward their aging in the later chapters, I will describe a brief history of Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. as well as the changes of living arrangements for the elderly in the U.S. and Japan in

Chapter 2, as the foreword for the following chapters and to provide preliminaries for later analyses.

Chapter 3 describes various kinds of interactions and everyday life experiences among the Japanese immigrant women in the host country, which turned out to be a part of the American value acculturation processes. Before analyzing the relationship between the national identity and aging, it is crucial to understand how Japanese immigrant women acquire new customs, attitudes, or even values and beliefs. Immigrant individuals define and identify themselves and their compatriots in a flexible manner in different situations from time to time. The elderly immigrants who migrated as adults and have been living in the host country for most of their lives often identify themselves with both the cultures of the host country and the homeland. In particular, I will discuss how these women experience and acquire some core values in the U.S., such as freedom and self-expression, through the mundane practices such as wearing young-looking clothing, hair styles, and makeup. Detailed examples will show how the choice of their fashion is interpreted by the immigrant women, their families, and friends in Japan as well as how it is related to their sense of belonging to the U.S. or Japan. Their idiosyncratic demeanor makes them look like they are "detached from Japan." Immigrant women's responses to such comments vary according to the different types of future plans they hold. It seems that immigrant women with a strong possibility of returning to Japan try to downplay their cultural differences, while those who plan to stay in the U.S. permanently do not mind being labeled as "detached from Japan."

Many immigrant women feel that the American way of human interaction is simple, individualistic, and open, while the Japanese way of human relationships is closely tied with the family and community, which makes it complicated and somehow secretive. Intertwined family ties in the community and secretiveness can be explained by the deeply rooted concept of social appearance among Japanese people and age-appropriate role expectations in Japan. I will discuss how Japanese immigrant women are feeling less restricted from the Japanese social expectations and less pressured to follow the Japanese social norms by using the episodes of their interactions as they openly discuss their private matters with anyone. This less restricted feeling of freedom makes them think it is easier to live with U.S. customs and values. Through this feeling, some of them reaffirm their bi-cultural orientation and some of them confirm their place of belonging in the U.S. From these examples, it became apparent that a memorable life-changing event does not trigger the feeling of belonging or enforce an immigrant's acceptance of the host country's values. The processes of value acculturation seem to be the continuation of insignificant, relatively effortless, mundane matters in everyday life. Cultural assimilation could simply mean a greater freedom that immigrants feel from their homeland's culture in the host country. In that sense, the specificity of the relationship between the sending and receiving countries will be inevitable to understand assimilation processes.

Chapter 4 will describe how the images of Japanese women, American men, and these two nations' international relationships might have influenced immigrant women's national identity. Throughout the personal experiences with

historical events, some immigrant women went through the changes of their national identities. Some women said that they used to have an American identity for a long time but regained a Japanese identity again in recent years. They think their changes of identities might have something to do with the fact they are getting old. Some of the elderly women associated their national identity with their gender, and others associated it with their race. I will describe how these elderly immigrant women have interpreted their international migration experiences, gender, and national belonging and how this is interconnected with their plans or perceptions of their futures at the last stage of their lives.

No informants identify nationally only with Japan or only with the U.S. The majority of Japanese immigrant women said that their national identity is Japanese, but they also feel they belong to the U.S. Many of those who answered their national identity as Japanese indicated that they are totally comfortable in both countries. In rare cases, some women indicated their discomfort and distance from both countries. From these examples, I will introduce the concepts of transnational identity and liminal identity. Some examples will show how the transnational identity, simultaneous affiliation for sending and receiving countries, is possible for some immigrants and the liminal identities, simultaneous disconnection from the both countries, is also possible for other immigrants. Within the same framework, the meaning of "affiliation for the countries" will be considered. From the observations, this chapter will explain how an individual's national identity is one of the important aspects for the elderly immigrants when

they consider their options and possibilities for their future at the every last stage of their lives.

As mentioned above, immigrants tend to identify their affiliation with both homeland and host country or neither country to a certain extent. For that reason, Chapter 5 will focuses on transnational and liminal identities and how these different types of identities are related to whether the immigrant women feel confident or anxious about their old age. I will describe the four different types of elderly Japanese immigrant women as shown by the following typology; elderly women with a transnational identity who have a decisive plan to stay in the U.S., elderly women with a transnational identity who are indecisive about where to stay for the rest of their life, elderly women with a liminal identity who have a decisive plan to stay in the U.S., and elderly women with a liminal identity who have not decided where to live for the rest of lives. By interviewing these four different types of women and analyzing their perspectives on the plans for their old age, some clear distinctions are observed.

The elderly Japanese immigrant women with transnational identity tend to show less anxiety and more confidence in aging. They see their friends as one of the sources to get support when they need help in their old age. In contrast, the elderly Japanese immigrant women with liminal identity tend to show more anxiety and less confidence in aging. Indecisiveness with regard to the future plan for women with liminal identity exacerbates their anxiety while it creates "more options" for the elderly women with transnational identity. Decisiveness for the future plan to stay in the U.S. for immigrant women with liminal identity does not

increase their sense of ease about the future, while having a decisive plan to stay

in the U.S. seems to be supported by strong confidence in the American Social

Security and retirement system among elderly Japanese women with transnational

identity. The significant difference seems to be that those with a transnational

identity have confidence in the retirement system of the country they will retire in

with concrete plans with regard to family, friends, or formal commercial-based

supports for the old age. On the other hand, liminal identity makes the elderly

women lack confidence in the retirement system in both countries due to a lack of

concrete plans for support systems regardless of whether they plan to remain in

the U.S. or are not sure which country they will retire in.

From this analysis, I will explain how identity does not seem to specifically relate

to one's preference of living arrangement for the future such as whether they

prefer filial care or formal commercial-based care; however, identity does seem to

be mainly related to whether these elderly women *feel* confident about old age or

are anxious and worry about it.

     Finally in Chapter 6, the relationships between assimilation, national

identity, and aging will be conceptualized by summarizing the main ideas of the

previous chapters with the hope of making contributions in the areas of

immigration, aging, and identity studies. I will discuss the implication of this

study and how the transnational framework continues to be a useful tool for not

only migration studies but also studies of aging and identity as the speed of

globalization increases.

Chapter 2

CHANGES IN NATURE OF MIGRATION AMONG JAPANESE

IMMIGRANT WOMEN AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE

ELDERLY

Before delving into the issues of assimilation, identity, and aging it is

crucial to grasp the basic backgrounds and history of the study population and the

subject matter. It will help with understanding how and why the study population

shows their particular preferences as well as display behavioral and thinking

patterns. For example, the preference for the living arrangement in old age and

thinking patterns for care-giving and care-receiving among Japanese immigrant

women might have been influenced by the historical facts in the homeland as well

as in the host country.

This chapter is the foreword to the chapters that follow; it starts with a

brief history of Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. According to the general

social characteristics, I will categorize these immigrant women into four eras: the

era of the students from the upper class, the era of the picture bride, the era of the

war bride, and the era of the internationalist women. Along with the description of

these women's characteristics, how their nature of migration has changed over the

years will be also discussed. After a description of the history of Japanese

immigrant women in the U.S., the chapter will also review the changes in living

arrangements for the elderly in the U.S. and Japan over the years as the

preliminaries for later analyses. It will display the clear differences in the

historical backgrounds of the public policies and preference of the living

arrangements for the elderly in Western society and Japanese society.


At the Beginning: Students from the Upper Class

After three centuries of self-seclusion from the rest of the world, Japan

transformed its feudalistic society into a modern society with the Meiji

Restoration in 1868. To compete against imperial Western nations, the

government was completely restructured and modernized. Vividly aware of

Japan's position in the world, the government needed to appear civilized in the

eyes of imperial Western nations. In order to achieve this goal, it sent five young

girls to the United States in 1871 to, ostensibly, raise Japanese women's

educational level and social status. Shortly after arriving in the U.S., two of the

girls returned to Japan due to illness; the remaining three remained in the U.S. to

be educated (Keksky 2001). Among the five girls, Umeko Tsuda became the most

celebrated. Only seven years old when she was sent to the U.S., she later became

the founder of Tsuda College—a prominent private college set up to educate

young women in Japan (Fukui 1992). The other women married Japanese men of

the aristocratic class and lived a private life (Mishima 1941). Thus, the immigrant

Japanese women of the early time were from upper-class families and their stay

was not permanent.

After the first five Japanese women landed in the U.S., a few more

selected Japanese women arrived in the U.S. to receive an education. These

women's privileged family backgrounds gave them a great advantage for living in

the U.S., compared with the later cohort of Japanese immigrant women from the working class. However, these women encountered great difficulty in readjusting to the Japanese *dansonjyohi* custom (literally, respect for the male and contempt for the female; the custom of predominance of men over women) when they returned to their homeland (see Sugimoto 1926; Sawada 1996).

Picture Brides

A few decades after the first five Japanese women came to the U.S., a larger number of Japanese male laborers from much less privileged backgrounds arrived in California and Hawaii in the 1890s (Ichioka 1980). Although the initial dream of these Japanese males was to return to Japan after earning enough money, many of them were forced to give up their dream and, instead, settled permanently in the U.S. (Peterson 2004; Ichioka 1980). Some of those settlers were married men who summoned their wives from Japan. Others were bachelors and they utilized the picture-bride practice which was not much different from the traditional *Omiai* (arranged) marriage custom in Japan (Ichioka 1980)—a common practice in which the parents arranged a brief meeting with a prospective groom and bride. In the meeting, the bride was "not even supposed to look at the groom directly" (Kondo 1990:132). Many men and women married after this single brief meeting. The only significant difference between a traditional *omiai* marriage and the picture-bride practice is that the bride married a man abroad instead of one in the same village or town. Because marriage was a matter of the two families instead of the individuals (Yanagida 1954; Kondo 1990), the

compatibility of the individuals was not a concern. Therefore, it did not require a courtship between the individuals before they officially registered as married couples. As a result, the picture-bride practice increased the number of Japanese immigrant women. Although the exact number of Japanese women arriving in the U.S. as picture brides who had never seen their husbands before coming to the U.S. is unknown (Ichioka 1980), the number of Japanese immigrant women increased dramatically. For example, the number of married Japanese women in the U.S. in 1910—5,581—increased to 23,930 in 1930 (Ichioka 1980).

Even though the lives of immigrant Japanese women were difficult, especially with the husbands they hardly knew, in an isolated farming land surrounded by male labors (Tsu 2009; Glenn1988; Peterson 2004), Cecilia Tsu (2009) argues that Japanese immigrant women enjoyed new options and freedom due to the gender imbalance at that time. Tsu (2009) agrees that Japanese immigrant women had to face adversity such as sexual harassment and aggression from their male compatriots. However, since the population of Japanese immigrants was predominantly male in the early 20 century, Japanese females could divorce their husbands and choose a new one without being bonded by family obligation (Tsu 2009). Alice Chai (1988) also mentions that those women at that time exercised their wills in business and other personal matters without seeking their husband's permission, unlike the stereotypical image of submissive Asian women. These unlikely behaviors of supposedly "obedient Asian women" could be due to the environment that gender imbalance created for these women, as Tsu (2009) describes. It could also be due to the selectivity effect, which

38

explains that more independent and adventurous women tended to emigrate to the U.S. Yuji Ichioka (1980) explains that some women came to the U.S. for an exciting new American life and some women came for economic reasons to support their families in Japan. As Ichioka (1980:345) continues, "no single motive explains why women came to the United States… [however,] most picture-brides no doubt simply obeyed parents. Betrothed by parental arrangement, they too came to join their spouses. To refuse would have been an act of filial disobedience, a grave moral offense."

If most of these women came to the U.S. to fulfill the family obligation and avoid filial disobedience, the assumption of the selectivity does not have a strong position since the independent and adventurous women would not be afraid of committing filial disobedience and would not be afraid of following their own choice of adventurous paths elsewhere. The particular environment such as gender imbalance and less restriction from the family obligation seems to explain better their independent behavior. It explains their unlikely behaviors as obedient women, such as making their own personal and business decisions, in the U.S. in the early 20 century. The selectivity effect might be a better explanation for the women who came after World War II.

War Brides

Prohibition of interracial marriage in Japan by law and cultural taboo for miscegenation among whites and non-whites prevented intermarriage during the early twentieth century until after World War II (Tsu 2009). However anti-

miscegenation laws were outlawed in 1948, and the old cultural taboo was rapidly replaced with a new exogamous practice among Japanese women and American, mostly white, men. In the 1950s, 80% of Japanese immigrants coming to the U.S. were women who were the wives of U.S. military men (Matsunaga 1995). "War bride" simply refers to Japanese wives who came to the U.S. with American servicemen after World War II. However, the phrase "war bride" seems to be associated with a negative connotation among the elderly Japanese women. For instance, Gerald Schnepp and Agnes Yui (1995:48) reported in 1955 that "[Japanese] parental opposition is generally at the start of the relationship [of their daughter and an American man]. It apparently was based on misgivings about intercultural marriage as well as fear that their daughters would be labeled 'prostitutes'."

The negative image of the title "war bride" was not created only by Japan, but was also espoused by U.S. society. A *Saturday Evening Post* magazine article in 1952 portrayed war brides as "the products of a defeated and somewhat backward postwar nation who are then hopelessly measured against the presumed superiority of the West" (Creef 2000:451). The tone of American scholars in the post-war period was in accord with the magazine article's low perception of Japanese brides. Schnepp and Yui (1955:48–49) insinuated their slight doubt about war brides' innocence as "The girls insisted strongly that they were not 'street girls.' This is probably correct, for 'their record was checked by the Japanese authorities to screen out known prostitutes and criminals'."

Japanese immigrant women who came to the U.S. in the 1950s as wives of American servicemen are now reaching their 80s and 90s. More than a half century after World War II and the post-World War II period, usage of the title "war bride" has abated to describe Japanese immigrant women. However, I have encountered many elderly Japanese women who expressed their abomination at being called a war bride even if they were, actually, war brides. Compared with the previous cohorts, these immigrant women's class variation expanded after World War II. They are from the lower working class to upper middle class, as Smith and Worden (1952) describe. While Japan's economic recovery from the war progressed and interracial relationships became less stigmatized, the partner selection choices expanded for Japanese women. Unlike the previous cohorts of Japanese women such as upper-class female students and working class picture brides, racial and class endogamy was no longer the only option for this cohort of women. As the relationships between the U.S. service men and Japanese women grew into the international marriage, which resulted in Japanese women's migration to the U.S., the variety of the social backgrounds of Japanese immigrant women expanded as well.

International Women

The latest Japanese immigrant women can be described as "internationalist women." After the defeat of World War II, the Japanese aristocracy was replaced by a new political system, democracy. The rapid economic growth of Japan was seen to be a miracle. The economic damages

Japan had from World War II were completely recovered with prosperity. All social classes are now merged, at least on the surface level, and everybody thinks they are the middle class. In fact, Japan has one of the smallest gaps of wealth and income between classes among the industrialized nations (Macionis 2007:273). International traveling was no longer for the few fortunate rich people, but leisure for common people. Studying abroad became a trend for young Japanese women (Kelsky 2001). Toshiko Marks (1997) cynically describes that the new affluent Japan is represented by people, especially young women, who travel abroad, possess name brand goods, and enjoy Japan's economic power in the world. Marilyn Ivy (1995:3) explains the Japanese policy of internationalization as a process of "domestication of the foreign and the dissemination of Japanese culture throughout the world." Internationalization "represents a distinct project from these women's vision of a Japan transformed according to Western liberal values" (Kelsky 2001:5). "Internationalists" became more salient in Japan as well as in the Western societies. The typical Japanese internationalists are career motivated, independent, well educated, and middle-class young females who speak English (Kelsky 2001). These internationalist women's romantic partners are usually white men (Kelsky 2001; Marks 1997). The difference between the internationalist women with white husbands and the war brides with white husbands in the previous cohort is that internationalist women emphasize their career-oriented nature as their reason for migration to the West or their selection of a white partner, whereas the war brides emphasize their love or marriage.

Overall, as mentioned above, historical events and specific eras give a specific image of a woman, and the images have evolved over time according to the position of the nation and its relation to the world. Individuals are keenly aware that they are categorized to be in certain classes of women such as "picture bride," "war bride," or "internationalist." Kondo (1990:273) states that "individual identities…are performed, but the possible forms and elements and tropes of those performances are always created within the terms of this larger narrative field." Kondo (1990:305) also describes the process of "crafting" self identity as follows:

> The ways our institutions, languages and social formations—
> schools, corporations, families, and meaningful cleavages such as
> class, race, gender and age—are vehicles for the disciplinary
> production of selves. Selves everywhere are crafted through
> coercions and disciplines, which offer culturally, historically
> specific pathways to self-realization as well as to domination.

As I will describe in a later chapter, I have observed that the timing of experiencing a historical event or era specificity make a significant difference in the process of assimilation as well as self-identity among Japanese immigrant women. Some elderly Japanese immigrant women are from the era of war brides, and some of them are from the very beginning of the internationalist women's era. Historically specific experiences have affected individuals' lives as well as their self-identities differently. In that manner, an individual's self-identity is largely based on one's nation and the nation's relative position and power in the world. Nation is a significant part of individual identity. It might be too simple to

43

categorize Japanese immigrant women age 65 or above in one homogeneous group as "elderly Japanese immigrant women" because a decade or even shorter period of time made such significantly different footsteps in these women's lives. Japan's rapid change in socioeconomic situations in the world may have accelerated the generational differences in their experiences.

Brief History of Living Arrangements for the Elderly in the U.S.

As the nature of migration among the Japanese immigrant women has changed over time, the lifestyles and living arrangements in the host country and homeland have also changed over the time. It is commonly believed that people in the pre-industrialization period lived with the multigenerational family forms. It is also believed that people married at a young age before the industrialization. Arland Thornton (2001), however, argues that marriage at a young age was not common before the early 1800s and that the nuclear household was the predominant family form before the Industrial Revolution. One of the reasons for the predominance of nuclear households was that parents did not live long enough to see their children starting their own families (Thornton 2001). Also, many women and men married late or never married. One of the reasons for the late marriage or singlehood is that the youngest daughters were discouraged from marrying since they were supposed to take care of the aging parents (Hareven 1994). Many young men simply did not have the economic means to start a family. Therefore, many people did not marry young enough to live with both offspring and parents simultaneously. Multigenerational families were rare in the

44

Western nations in the past (Thornton 2001), and the nuclear family form was prevalent long before the Industrial Revolution. Only with prolonged longevity and better economic situations did the multigenerational family form become possible.

In terms of the public policy for living arrangements, the Federal Housing Acts of 1937 and 1949 were, first, designed to offer public housing opportunity for struggling young families due to the Great Depression (Margolis 1990). Eligibility for the housing opportunity became available to the elderly population in the early 1950s (Koff and Park 1993). Since 1990, the elderly population aged 65–69 in the U.S. has the highest home ownership, which allows reverse mortgages to convert the equity into cash to pay the bills (Matcha 2007:132-133), to stay in their houses, and to avoid institutionalization as long as possible. Contrary to a common misconception, the majority of the elderly do not live in nursing homes in the U.S. According to the National Center for Health Statistics (2008), only 4 percent of the population aged 65 and above live in nursing homes. Today, in order to efface the negative images of impersonal institutions for bedridden patients, the culture of nursing homes has shifted its focus to emphasize the input of residents and the individualization of services (Hooyman and Kiyak 2011:465). Yet, while nursing homes are still based on the medical model of long-term care, assisted-living advocates stress the social model of long-term care for the elderly that emphasizes a more home-like, less-institutional, setting to encourage an active aging lifestyle (Hooyman and Kiyak 2011:467). Assisted-living facilities usually feature private apartments with a kitchen, living room,

bedroom, and bathroom along with the cafeteria, recreation room/gym, and common lounge area to socialize with other residents. The adult day-care system, including short-stay facilities, is another type of service available to the elderly. They can stay at their homes but receive various services from professionals (Hooyman and Kiyak 2011:472). However, despite these options for housing arrangements, the elderly adults in the U.S. still prefer to stay in their own homes independently as long as possible (AARP 2006). The current Internet technology can perform monitoring of the daily activities and health of the elderly to support the independent living at their home (Hooyman and Kiyak 2011:475–478), and these technologies can become a crucial component for their independence.

Brief History of Living Arrangements for the Elderly in Japan

Before the Meiji Civil Code of 1898, the family styles in Japan were less restricted and varied by areas and or social classes. For example, the youngest son or the elderly daughter was the dominant successor of the family in some areas (Ishihara 1981). Guided by the Samurai families, the Meiji Civil Code of 1898 outlined the family system of Japan; the legitimate oldest son became the successor of the family (Kondo 1990:169). This form of primogeniture was not a uniform practice across the country and in all time periods in Japan; however, after the Civil Code of 1898, this family pattern became the dominant form for all people across all areas and social classes (Asai and Kameoka 2005:112). One of the most important influential consequences of the Meiji Civil Code would be articulation of the importance of perpetuation of the *ie*, (the household or the

family in Japanese) of not only the noble, but also of the common people. Even though the Civil Code gave the preference to the legitimate first son, primogeniture style, various types of family continuity have been practiced in cases of incompetence of the first son or inability to have children. For example, when a family has only daughters, adoptive marriage has taken place for the family continuity. One of the daughters, most often the oldest daughter, takes the *muko yoshi*, (adopted bridegroom) as her husband, who takes the bride's family name to be the successor of the household (Kondo 1990; Nakane 1972). Kondo (1990:125) states that "the important issue, then, is the perpetuation of the *ie* itself. The way it is done is a secondary matter." Concerns, or even obsessions, for perpetuation of the family lineage created unintended consequences. Not only did the method of family continuity become a secondary matter for common people, but also individuality, marital happiness, and human emotions became insignificant matters within the family.

The ideas of the family continuity, loyalty, and selflessness were almost inseparable for the nation's ideology and existence in 19th century Japan. The family became the miniature nation, and the nation was the family for Japanese individuals. The Emperor was not only a descendant of god, but also the father of the Japanese Family. In fact, the translated word of nation is *Kokka* in Japanese, which literally means "*kuni* (country) and *ie*" (family or household). The Meiji Civil Code and social policies outlined how the family in Japan should be, as well as how an individual ought to be (Kaino 1988) for the nation as a member of the Japanese Family. For example, wives were supposed to obediently bolster

47

husbands and to care for all the family matters so that men could concentrate on being soldiers or being productive members of the nation. This type of family practice would support the newly reformed nation to gain its power and improve its status in the world. After the Meiji Restoration, Japan began to establish imperialistic militarism and impose it on common people. As the process and the results of modernization of the country, Japan was involved in major international warfare every ten years after the Meiji Restoration, including the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904, and World War I in1914.

The norm of family continuity and filial piety care was still strong after World War II, even after Japan's economic recovery accelerated and many people moved to the big cities for employment. Housing policy for the elderly in the 1960s in Japan was based on the idea of living in apartments next to one's children, most likely the oldest son and his family (Kose 1998). By the mid-1970s, creating a lager multigenerational household for the elderly, their child, and his family became the main concept of the policy (Kose 1998). On the other hand, Harry Nishio (1994) argues that Japan's traditional cultural expectation for the offspring to provide filial care made the governmental responsibility ambiguous. However, with the rapidly decreasing young population and increasing of the elderly population, today's Japan does offer various kinds of formal, commercial-based or public-based care systems for the elderly, such as adult day care, short-stay facilities, and nursing homes, as well as independent living with visiting nurses and high-technology monitoring systems. Yet, the

norm of filial care is still strong, and elderly care in Japan still has been seen as a private matter within the family (Asai and kameoka 2005).

Today's elderly Japanese immigrant women are mostly from the war bride era or the very beginning of the internationalist era. When these immigrant women were still young, they saw that their mother took care of her aging parents-in-laws in the same households as a matter of course in Japan. These immigrant women also witnessed the cultural shift to nursing homes, emergence of independent assistant living, and various kinds of living arrangements with high-monitoring technology in the U.S., as well. These elderly immigrant women have to make sensible decisions with all the available options and resources. One of the important aspects for immigrant elderly individuals is that the monetary factor is not the only factor that influences their decision. It is important to recognize that their level of assimilation is a large part of their decision for their old age. Less-assimilated individuals who cannot feel comfortable getting old in the host country may feel they have better retirement opportunities in the homeland, where the family filial care system is still culturally supported.

Conclusion

This chapter acts as the foreword to and provides the preliminaries for later analysis chapters. As such, a brief history of Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. was described, followed by the changes in living arrangements for the elderly in the U.S. and Japan. As mentioned above, it might be too simple to categorize Japanese immigrant women ages 65 or above in one homogeneous

group as "elderly Japanese immigrant women." A decade or even shorter period of time made significant differences in the experiences in these women's lives. Today's elderly Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. are from mostly the war bride era and the very beginning of the internationalist period. Even though they may have differences in educational levels and work experiences, most of these elderly immigrant women saw that their parents or aunts took care of the aging in-laws as a matter of course in Japan. They have also witnessed the cultural shift to nursing homes, assistant living, and independent living arrangements with high technology in the U.S. Considering all of the available options and resources, they will have to make sensible decisions. For immigrant elderly individuals, the monetary factor is not the only thing that influences their decision. Their level of assimilation in the host country will also greatly influence their preference of living arrangement, which may result in their anxiety or satisfaction in their old age. With that in mind, how the assimilation process is affecting these women's everyday life will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

ASSIMILATION PROCESSES: ACCULTURATION AND IMMIGRANTS'

FEELINGS OF FREEDOM FROM THE CONSTRAINTS OF HOMELAND'S

CULTURE

The concept of the nation as self-identity among immigrants is manifested

at the concrete level in everyday life, contrasting the homeland and host country

through assimilation processes. New customs, attitudes, and even values and

beliefs are acquired through various kinds of communications, contacts, and

experiences in the host country. Elderly immigrants who migrated as adults and

have been living in the host country for most of their lives often identify

themselves with the cultures of both the host country and the homeland. Acquired

customs, attitudes, values, and the national identity that were developed over

many years in the host country would certainly affect the view of those elderly

immigrant individuals' life experiences. How to cope with aging in the host

country would be one of the aspects that the elderly immigrants need to

considerer as they approach the final stages of the life course. Elderly immigrant

individuals experience their aging differently than non-immigrant elderly people

and may not necessarily go through a process such as adopting a new national

identity or considering retirement in the homeland or host country. How

comfortably immigrant individuals are assimilated into the host country as well as

retaining their identity from the homeland are crucial elements for their plans for

their old age.

Immigrant individuals define and identify themselves and their

compatriots in a flexible manner in different situations at different times. Guided

by this multidimensional model of assimilation, this chapter will describe the

process of value acculturation among Japanese immigrant women and how it is

related to their sense of belonging or national identification. Particularly, I will

discuss how these women experience and acquire some core values in the U.S.

such as freedom and self expression through mundane practices. First, the

assimilation literature will be reviewed. Then, detailed examples will show how

the choice of their fashion is interpreted by the immigrant women, their families,

and friends in Japan as well as how it is related to their sense of belonging. Some

elderly immigrant women simply accept comments from people in Japan when

they are described as "detached from Japan," while other immigrant women do

not believe these comments. How they react to the comments depends largely on

their possibility of returning to Japan permanently. Many immigrant women feel

that the American way of human interaction is simple, individualistic, frank, and

open, while the Japanese way of human relationships is more closely tied with the

family and community, which makes it complicated and secretive. All of these

observations can be explained with the deeply rooted concept of social

appearance among Japanese people and social and age-appropriate role

expectations in Japan. By using the episodes of their communication and

interactions with their friends and strangers, I will discuss how Japanese

immigrant women are less restricted by the Japanese social expectations. This

feeling of freedom makes them think it is easy to live with U.S. customs and

values. The processes of the value acculturation seem to be the continuation of insignificant, relatively effortless, mundane matters in everyday life. Through these experiences, some of them reaffirm their bi-cultural figures, and some of them confirm their place of belonging in the U.S. From these examples, I will consider what cultural assimilation means and suggest that it may mean a greater freedom that immigrants feel from their homeland's culture in the host country.

Theoretical Backgrounds of Assimilation

The classic study of Milton Gordon (1964) explains how newcomers adopt the American national identity in the process of seven stages of assimilation. He describes these steps as follows: (1) cultural or behavioral assimilation as change of cultural practice patterns, (2) structural assimilation as large-scale entrance into institutions of the host country, (3) marital assimilation as widespread intermarriage with the mainstream population, (4) identificational assimilation as identification exclusively with the host country, (5) attitudinal receptional assimilation as absence of prejudice in the host country, (6) behavior receptional assimilation as absence of discrimination in the host country, and (7) civic assimilation as absence of power and value conflict in the host country. Although Gordon (1964:71) sees these processes as the "steps" to go through, he also realizes "not only is the assimilation process mainly a matter of degree, but obviously each of the stages or sub-processes distinguished above may take in varying degree." For that reason, Leo Driedger and Shiva Halli (2000:60)

evaluate Gordon's theoretical contribution as relying on "his complex multi-linear, multidimensional views of the assimilation."

The word "assimilation" has been developed the negative connotation over the years as many social scientists see it as minority groups are imposed to lose their ethnic integrity by conforming to Anglo-American cultural patters (Glazer 1933; Alba and Nee 1997). Tomas Jimenez (2010:12) sees that classic assimilation theory is ill-equipped to explain the assimilation processes of non-European immigrants since the classic theory "posits assimilation as an inevitable and mostly irreversible process." It also assumes "immigration eventually stops as it did for European origin groups" (Jimenez 2010:12).

However, Richard Alba and Victor Nee (1997) argues that assimilation theory still hold great importance in contemporary migration studies and changing the terminology of "assimilation" would separate the realities and current issues of socioeconomic assimilation from the past. Alba and Nee (1997:863) argue that simply changing the terminology would end the examination on "the experiences of European Americans and those of new immigrant groups [which] lies at the very heart of the doubts about the relevance of assimilation for the contemporary United Sates."

Although rejecting the classical idea that assimilation as a sign or trajectory of improving status for immigrants, Emily Greenman and Yu Xie (2008) also agree that theory of assimilation is still valid and relevant to current social climate. By observing the positive and negative effect of the assimilation on educational, psychological, and behavioral well-being of immigrant children

from various ethnic groups, Greenman and Xie (2008) argues that emphasizing

the detrimental or beneficial effects of assimilation would be too naïve.  Instead,

they simply emphasize a concept of assimilation as decreasing differences

between groups, which is, indeed, rooted in the classic theory of assimilation

(Greenman and Xie 2008). In fact, Alba and Nee (1997:863) define assimilation

as

> the decline, and at its endpoint the disappearance, of an ethnic/racial
>
> distinction and the cultural and social differences that express it.  This
>
> definition does not assume that one of these groups must be the ethnic
>
> majority; assimilation can involve minority groups only, in which case the
>
> ethnic boundary between the majority and the merged minority groups
>
> presumably remains intact.

In most studies, one's assimilation is measured by a variety of

combinations of socioeconomic status, language proficiency, media consumption,

food consumption, ethnicity of friends, sense of belonging, familiarity of the host

country's culture and customs, and/or celebration of holidays (i.e., Hazuda et al.

1988;  Marin & Gamba 1996;  Phinney 1990; Suinn et al. 1992; Ying 1995).

Although these salient daily behaviors are valid and important measurements of

one's level of assimilation, these measurements do not always accurately capture

one's assimilation in national identification. Ling (2007) introduces a Japanese

woman, Kazuko, who was born in 1942. In her 50s, at the time of the interview,

she still speaks fragmented English after twenty years of living with her American

husband in the U.S. She identifies herself as American, even though she has not

taken the test for citizenship. Kazuko cooks Japanese food for herself and

American food for her husband. She describes that she and her husband are

financially struggling and working odd jobs in a Midwestern rural community.

Kazuko says, "I am used to living here [in the U.S]. I am used to the American

way. I can't tell any differences. I think of myself as an American" (Ling

2007:145). This interview exemplifies that the level of socioeconomic status,

language proficiency, or food consumption does not necessarily indicate or

determine one's level of assimilation in national identification.

Instead of weakening the ethnic identity, many immigrant individuals

identify with both the mother country and the host country as the bi-cultural/two-

dimensional model suggests. This model explains that identity with the host

culture and the culture of origin are two separate dimensions that allow

immigrants to accommodate the host culture as well as retain the culture of origin

(Porter and Washington 1993). However, immigrant individuals' identities are not

always defined with clearly delineated, stable two dimensions. How immigrant

individuals define and identify their compatriots and how they define and identify

themselves are dependent on different situations from time to time as the

multidimensional/pluralistic model suggests. This model emphasizes that the

processes and phenomena of acculturation and assimilation are complex,

multifaceted, and situationally dictated (Porter and Washington 1993).

Although the measurements of behavioral assimilation, such as

food/media/linguistic preference, have been well developed, some scholars

(Betancourt and Lopez 1933; Cuellar, Amold, and Maldonado 1995; Kim,

Atkinson, and Yang 1999 ) find that the aspect of value acculturation is largely

neglected. Several scholars (Szapocznik and Kurtines 1980; Szapocznik,

Scopetta, Kurtines, and Arandale 1978; LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton

1993) explain that the behavioral acculturation process precedes value

acculturation for economic reasons; in order to survive, it is necessary for

newcomers to acquire the behavioral patterns of the dominant group, but there is

no urgent or convincing motivation to adopt the values of the dominant group.

Bryan S. K. Kim, Donald R. Atkinson, and Peggy H. Yang (1999: 343) suggest

that "adherence to ancestral values and the values of the dominant culture are

essential components of an individual's acculturation," and Kroeber and

Kluckhohn (1952:181) state that "the essential core of culture consists of

traditional ideas and especially their attached values." In this vein, it is essential to

understand the connection between the value acculturation and one's national

identity among immigrants. In order to do so, an understanding of the processes

of value acculturation itself as well as the relationship between the value

acculturation and national identification will be necessary.


Dress Code: Colorful and Easy

A popular and long-running Japanese TV family drama show, "*Wataru

seken wa onibakari*" ("Making It Through" in English subtitle; screenwriter:

Sugako Hashida, producer: Fukuko Ishii, TBS 1990–2010), depicts the life of an

elderly couple with five middle-aged daughters and their husbands, children, and

in-laws. This aging father has an older sister who emigrated to Hawaii, but she

visits her brother's house in Tokyo occasionally. This character, the elderly immigrant woman, appears very briefly a few times in a season, yet she gives viewers a clear impression of a "stranger" in the family. She is different from regular Japanese people (*Nihonjinbanare*) in her attire and attitudes, and she is treated in a slightly different manner from the other family members. This Japanese immigrant woman is very animated, wears colorful, bright dresses, and uses many gestures when she talks. This is the image of a Japanese immigrant woman among non-immigrant Japanese people in Japan, and this image is not exaggerated in the eyes of Japanese people.

"They are definitely different. I cannot articulate, but I could tell that they have been living in the U.S. for a long time. …They are so powerful. … You definitely don't see anybody like that in Japan!" These were the comments a Japanese exchange student made, when she saw a group of elderly Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. when they gathered for their monthly lunch get-together. These women's English usage and gestures are inevitable after so many years of living in the U.S., but it is not just these things that make them look "foreign" to Japanese people who recently arrived. They looked "foreign" in the way they openly expressed their emotions. Their facial and body expressions were animated, unlike the same age cohorts of the elderly in Japan. Some of them were hugging and patting each other's shoulders. These cheerful behaviors looked "powerful" to this Japanese exchange student. But the most noticeable characteristic of all among these elderly Japanese immigrant women was their attire. They were wearing a light blue dress, yellow blouse, or red flared skirt with

a large pendant top necklace, bracelet, scarf, or hat. This is a strange or foreign

scene for most people in Japan. In fact, when Karen Ogulnick (1998:19) was in

Hiroshima for her Japanese language training, she "noticed a remarked distinction

between old and young women." She wrote:

> Young women looked girlish—and old [women looked] very old. The
>
> young women were dressed fashionably and seemed bright and cheerful,
>
> whereas many elderly women looked sad and miserable. Their clothes
>
> were gray, plain, and drab, but most striking of all was the lifeless
>
> expressions on their faces. I wonder if this is a result of living through the
>
> trauma of the atomic bomb…

Ogulnick's (1998) observation seems to be accurate, but the elderly women with

lifeless expressions and gray, plain, and drab clothes can be found in other areas

of Japan where the trauma of the war are not as severe as in Hiroshima or

Nagasaki. Masayuki Asai and Velma Kameoka (2005:166) report that Japanese

people "feel embarrassed when they behave differently from others. … [T]o

maintain harmonious relationships with others, Japanese people try not to be

conspicuous." This notation of avoiding conspicuity is clearly expressed on the

superficial level such as fashions among the elderly in Japan. The elderly in Japan

usually do not wear bright, colorful clothing. They are "supposed to" wear dark,

plain clothes. If an old Japanese person wears bright and colorful clothing in

Japan, he or she will be quickly pointed out as "*wakazukuri*," which literary

means "making-it-young." It insinuates that a person is actually old, but does not

look like or does not act like his or her age. The word has a slightly negative connotation.

J. Ross Eshleman and Richard Bulcroft (2006:217) describe that on top of the preference of speaking English as their dominant language, the second and third generation of Asian immigrants are likely to "adopt the dress codes …of their peers…that are at odds with traditional and parental values." In other words, the authors depict that the first-generation Asian immigrants do keep the dress codes of their mother country. Contrary to this textbook example of the first-generation Asian immigrant parents, most elderly first-generation Japanese immigrant women I interviewed have been parents but they do prefer wearing colorful dresses and bright makeup, unlike the dress codes for the elderly in Japan suggest. They look much younger than those who are in the same age cohort in Japan. There is no derogatory or negative connotation of "*wakazukuri*" at all among the elderly Japanese immigrants I interviewed.

In an individual interview with Sachiko, a 72-year-old widow, I mentioned how all of the immigrant Japanese women look younger and dress younger. Sachiko said:

> Most of Japanese people who have lived here for a long time receive the same comments. Look, I am wearing like this (she was wearing a short-sleeve red dress with a greenish-blue pendant top necklace). … If I were in Japan, wearing this dress, people would think I am an *Irokichigai*, (color-crazy). So, they all wear dark plain clothing in Japan when people get old.

But I think [the elderly people] look nicer and younger [if they are]

wearing bright color dresses.

*"Iro"* means "color", *"kichigai"* means "crazy", therefore it is translated as color-

crazy, but "*iro"* also contains a meaning of sexuality. Thus, "color-crazy" has a

connotation that the person is a sexually promiscuous person. In that sense, the

dress codes for the elderly people in Japan make sense. Pfeiffer (1977) points out

that a general taboo against sex in old age discourages the elderly not only from

engaging in sex, but also from even talking about sex. This taboo is supported by

the negative stereotypes of either an asexual or a hypersexual elderly person

(Belsky 1984; Nussbaum 2000). Even if this stereotypical image is not correct,

avoiding conspicuity and following the social norms are important for Japanese

people as described above. Since the social taboo discourages even talking about

sexuality by the elderly, it makes sense that the Japanese think they are "supposed

to" wear dark plain clothing according to their age. However, the Japanese elderly

women I interviewed are not associating "colorful" dress with sexual promiscuity

or being conspicuous.

Free from Japanese social norms and restrictions, the elderly Japanese

immigrant women seem to enjoy their choice of fashion. At the same time, their

choice of attire makes them look foreign to people in their homeland. Japanese

who have lived in a foreign country for a while are often seen as the outsider

(Nakane 1972), not purely Japanese, or even contaminated by a foreign culture

(White 1988). In fact, many informants said they were told that they do not look

like Japanese by their friends and family when they visited Japan. Thus, they

reaffirm their bi-cultural figure, and sometimes these comments reaffirm their place of belonging to the U.S. In this sense, their brightly colored dresses represent the manifestation of their life and their entity in the U.S. I am not suggesting that wearing the colorful dresses is the standard of U.S. culture or that wearing bright clothing is a necessary step for the cultural assimilation in the U.S. among the elderly immigrants. However, I am suggesting that elderly immigrant women's cultural assimilation or value acculturation seems to be conveyed through their behavioral assimilation, in which they experience freedom from restrictive Japanese dress codes for the elderly.

Misaki, a middle-aged Japanese immigrant woman who is an executive manager in an American firm, made a comment about the fashion trend in Japan and in the U.S. She can tell what kinds of clothing and hairstyles are popular right now in Japan without checking the latest Japanese fashion magazines. She has many opportunities to see groups of Japanese people, especially young women who are the interns, students in the language-training program, or college/MBA graduates seeking jobs or job training with U.S. firms. Many of them have been in the U.S. less than a couple years, and most of them are wearing very stylish, yet very similar, clothing and having an almost identical hairstyle. Contrarily, it is difficult for her to see what the current fashion trend is in the U.S. because "they wear whatever they have. People don't follow the latest fashion trend here [in the U.S.] like Japanese do." This notion of nonchalant attitude toward the latest trend or fashion in the U.S. gives Japanese immigrant women more relaxed feelings toward the dress codes and norms that they learned in Japan. In fact, when

Japanese immigrant women are asked to list the things they like about the U.S., almost all of them immediately answered that they like the relaxed dress code. They say that the American way of dressing is "*raku*" or "easy" for them.

Compliments in the U.S. and in Japan

The American custom of giving or receiving compliments to and from strangers about each other's fashion makes Japanese immigrant women feel more relaxed when wearing clothing that do not follow the latest fashion trends. In the elderly Japanese immigrant women's case, this custom of casual conversation with strangers makes them feel more comfortable or encouraged to wear brightly colored dresses, instead of the dark clothing that Japanese elderly people are expected to wear. One Japanese immigrant woman, age 60, told of an episode about a dress she brought from Japan a few decades ago. It was too nice to just throw away. One day she was looking for a particular dress in her closet, but instead, she saw the old dress. For a second, she thought the dress might be too young for her but she could still fit in the dress. She thought it would be a waste if she did not wear it at all, so, she wore the dress and went shopping. She said:

> When I was waiting for my husband to pick me up, an American lady
> came to me and asked me where I bought the dress I was wearing. … She
> thought it was very nice and she would like to buy something like that
> (laugh). It was an old thing. … But Americans do [give a compliment to a
> stranger] a lot.

Another elderly Japanese immigrant woman told a similar story about getting compliments from strangers and acquaintances about her hairstyle. She cuts her own hair. Her hairstyle is amazingly stylish; it can easily be on the professional hairstyle catalog for the young viewers. She is 82 years old. With her hairstyle, makeup, and clothing, she does not look like over 80 at all. It would be extremely difficult to find someone like that in Japan, especially in rural areas of Japan.

The nature of the compliments these elderly immigrant women receive in the U.S. and the compliments immigrant women receive when they visit in Japan are slightly different. In Japan, it is extremely rare for a stranger to give a compliment to someone whom they have just met and probably will never meet again, unless they are a store clerk trying to sell goods and services. However, in the U.S., the positive compliments are often given by total strangers who have just met, such as another customer who is waiting in line to pay for her purchase at a coffee shop or someone who is waiting for a bus or taxi. These people who give the compliments don't even know if these elderly immigrant women are from Japan, how long they have been in the United States or the fact whether they have "cool" transnational or cosmopolitan experiences. In other words, compliments these women receive in the U.S. are purely based on their appearance such as hairstyle and clothing. People in the U.S. don't give compliments based on their perception about these women's "cool" transnational or cosmopolitan experiences. In contrast, compliments these women receive in Japan tend to be based on the people's perceptions about the emigrant women or the fact that these women are living in a foreign country.

For example, when Misaki, the executive manager in an American firm, was working in Japan after graduating from a college, she used to follow the latest fashion trends and hairstyles, too. When she decided to come to the U.S., she brought some of her clothing and left the rest in her apartment in Tokyo, which she used to share with her sister. Several years later, Misaki visited her sister in Tokyo after completing her second college degree in the U.S. and starting her career in an American firm. Knowing that she was just going to stay only a few weeks in Tokyo, she did not bring many garments for the trip. Her old friends decided to get together at a restaurant for her after they heard that she was in Tokyo. Misaki did not have any currently popular clothing at her sister's apartment and did not have time to buy new garments. She just picked up her aunt's old dress that she found in the closet. The dress was at least a few decades old. She was wearing her sunglasses, just like she wears them in U.S. She described "how I looked was not the latest style at all. I might even look strange or weird with the Japanese standard." However all of her old friends said "Woo…you look so cool! So Americanized!" She thought their interpretation was ridiculous, but she did not say anything because she thought it convenient for her if her friends interpreted her out-of-date fashion as a "cool and American" style. The clothing she was wearing was not even American made or style. However, by not following the Japanese current fashion style, her fashion was positively received as American style by her friends in Japan. In the sense, it is not even her fashion style itself that was received positively. It is more like the unusual fact that she emigrated to the U.S. was well received by her peers. Emigration,

especially permanent residence in a foreign country, is considered a somewhat

extraordinary experience for Japanese people (Tsuda 2003b:106). By having

ventured into these unusual experiences, Japanese immigrant women also see

themselves as distinct and different from "other Japanese" (Kawakami 2009). It

seems that their transnational experiences have given them the permission to wear

out-of-the-norm clothing and even to receive positive recognition without being

categorized as strange, weird, or wearing "oldies costume" in Japan. When

Japanese immigrant women from the U.S. visit Japan, they may feel freer in

general because they are not expected to conform to Japanese cultural standards

as much as regular Japanese people. In addition, their differences are attributed

somehow positively to their American experiences.


Fashion and the Place of Belonging

Similar stories are found with many other elderly immigrant women when

they visit Japan. However, each immigrant woman interprets Japanese people's

mostly positive reactions differently according to how they think about

themselves. There are basically two types of interpretations. The first type can be

categorized as "doubting" what people say in Japan. It seems that when

immigrant women are not sure if they would stay in the U.S. for the rest of their

life, they tend to interpret Japanese people's reactions with doubts. One elderly

Japanese immigrant woman may be a typical case for the uncertainty in her

permanent residency decision. She has never felt that she would live in the U.S.

permanently. She felt she was "just moving to another city" when she and her

American husband left Japan. She visited Japan during a recent summer. When she was asked the question as to whether she received a comment such as "you look like an American" she answered:

> Not really. …Ah…yeah…I guess, when I went shopping and talking to a store clerk, she told me that my atmosphere is different from Japanese people. How I dress looks different and cool, she said. Of course, she may be giving a complement to sell a dress there.

The store clerk knew that this immigrant woman was visiting Japan from the U.S. because she asked if the store will deliver goods internationally before this conversation was initiated.

Another elderly immigrant woman who is retired from a U.S. transportation company answered in a similar way. This woman, who is living in Japan for half of the year and in the U.S. the rest of year, said:

> When I go to Japan, they don't notice anything about me as being Americanized. When I went to get a haircut, a friend of mine told the hairstylist that I have been living in the U.S. Then, the hairstylist said "ah, you look like someone who stayed in a foreign country." But if she didn't know I was living in the U.S., she wouldn't even notice. They say something like that, but they don't mean it.

Those women who have a strong possibility of coming back to Japan permanently seem to downplay the differences. Because of their strong possibility of returning, they may not want to be seen as "*nihonjinbanare*" or as different from regular Japanese.

The other type of interpretation is "accepting" what people say in Japan. It seems that immigrant women who know they will stay in the U.S. for the rest of lives tend to "accept" what Japanese people say and agree with it. Those women who have already decided to stay in the U.S. permanently seem to have no conflict to be seen as "*nihonjinbanare,"* as their stay in Japan is of a temporary nature. For example, an elderly immigrant woman who retired from a cosmetic company and enjoys her busy retirement life with various activities said she has no intention of going back to live in Japan. Keeping her fair skin, sophisticated makeup techniques, and dyed blond hair, this very attractive, young-looking elderly woman feels that she is not really "fitting in" in Japan anymore when she visits there. She said:

> Oh, yeah, I feel it. My family in Japan says so. When I visited my mother in [a rural area of Japan], she was OK to be with me as long as her friends didn't see me. So when we were shopping together, she was right next to me, and then she whispered suddenly "that woman coming to us is my friend. Act like you are a stranger. Make a distance now!" As soon as the lady greeted and left my mother, we walked together. But again, another person she knew was approaching to us, she said "quick, leave me and have a distance from me!" (laugh). To my mother, my appearance, clothing, hairstyles, makeup, everything looks too showy (*hade*) and detached from Japan (*nihonjinbanare*).

She didn't mind being treated in that manner at all, as she said it very cheerfully as if she were receiving compliments for being detached from Japan. The word

*nihonjinbanare* sometimes has a negative connotation such as eccentric, but *nihonjinbanare* does not necessarily always have a negative meaning. It could be used in a positive manner, too. For example *nihonjinbanare* could mean a person who can think and act "outside of the box." The word "*nihonjinbanare"* not only describes a person's psychological or behavioral characteristics but also depicts one's physical characteristics, as well,—when a Japanese person has a white person's physical characteristics in his or her features, such as fair skin, a distinctive nose, or height, the word *nihonjinbanare* is used to describe the person in a very positive manner. Within this context, the cheerful laughter of this elderly immigrant woman is understandable. Knowing that her mother who was close to 90 years old at that time in the rural area of Japan, this immigrant woman completely understands why her mother wanted to hide her emigrated "showy" daughter. These women do not doubt or reject the comments from other Japanese people in Japan. They agree that they are different from regular people in Japan, and they don't mind it at all since they know that their permanent place to live is in the U.S., not in Japan.

Another elderly immigrant woman who knows that she will stay in the U.S. for the rest of her life made a comment about the fashion that suggests the shift of her reference group in terms of fashion, which also indicates her position as an outsider in her homeland. She was surprised by today's fashion (costume) of young people in Tokyo. She thought it is too out of the ordinary, in that it makes the elderly immigrant woman's brightly colored attire look rather ordinary and not showy at all. What is so remarkable is that this elderly immigrant woman used

69

the fashion of Japanese youth to compare her generation, and she did not notice

that using such a reference might be strange for most Japanese people in Japan.

The concept of age-appropriateness for fashion does not have a heavy weight

among the elderly immigrant women, including this informant.

Overall, whether the immigrant women "doubt" or "accept" the comments

about their fashion may depend on their future plans to come back to Japan or to

stay in the U.S. Those immigrant women who may come back are conscious

about minimizing the psychological gap between people in Japan and themselves,

while those who will not come back do not care too much about being called

different, Americanized, or *nihonjinbanare*. Whether these women doubt or

accept the comments on their appearance, they do know that they possess a

certain kind of idiosyncratic atmosphere due to their choice of attire, hairstyles,

and accessories. Their choice of fashion could be due to their expressive nature

since a good number of them described that they were adventurous, expressive,

and independent even before they migrated to the U.S. Whether they realize it or

not, dressing the "American way" seems to be either one of the important parts of

the assimilation process or a fortifying reification of their expressive personality.

Choice of attire seems to be such a superficial level of assimilation or reification

of personality, but it may influence one's behavior and even penetrate into one's

way of thinking. One elderly Japanese immigrant woman, age 72, Yuki, said:

> Japanese people assume what the other people think and adjust their
>
> behaviors according to the assumptions. But Americans think if it is OK
>
> with them, everything is OK. … For example, it is hot here, right? If

someone is not wearing shorts, you ask, "don't you want to wear shorts?"

Then, Japanese would say, "Oh, no, I shouldn't show my ugly fat legs to

other people." Then, Americans would say, "It doesn't matter. That's none

of their business. If people don't want to see your legs, they don't see

them. If they do see, that's their problem."

It is rare that elderly women or even middle-aged women wear shorts in Japan.

After sharing the example, Yuki stated "I don't know if it is a good thing or bad

thing, but [this practice or way of thinking] should be said

'plain/simple/frank/straight' or should it be said 'clear-cut'… *(Iikoto ka waruikoto*

*ka wakaranai kedo so iu tokoro wa 'assari' to iuka 'warikitteiru' to iuka…).* " She

thought the American way of thinking is simple or frank because an individual

does not have to worry about what other people think of him- or herself too much.

Therefore, people can be less concerned about the offensiveness they might have

given to other people by showing their "ugly fat legs," for example.


Clear-Cut, yet Complex and Multifaceted Interactions

Yuki thought Americans' way of thinking is "clear-cut" because there is

no mixture or ambiguity of the borderline in terms of the feelings of others and

feelings of oneself. Wearing whatever they are pleased with and being relaxed

about the dress code could be a manifestation of individualism, which is one of

the main American cultural values. In fact, this well might be the first step of the

assimilation process to reach a deeper understanding of the relationship between

the self and the nation's values. When Japanese immigrant women describe their

71

way of thinking or their everyday lives in the U.S., many of them use the term "clear-cut" ("*warikiru*" or "*warikitte*"). It seems that they have been accruing an American style of "clear-cut" thinking through the flexibility of everyday life behavioral codes in the host country. Because the choice of attire is such a superficial level of change, it did not require lots of acquiring efforts or involve great difficulty to adopt for these Japanese immigrant women. As a matter of fact, they may not even be consciously thinking that they are actually making an "acquiring" effort because most of them, including Yuki, said the American way of wearing clothing or its dress code is easy (*raku*), and they perceived this change and adaptation in a relatively positive manner. However, Yuki and many other immigrant women avoided using their value judgment on the U.S. core value, individualism, as "good" or "bad."

Another example for the usage of the term "clear-cut" was observed in one of the Japanese women's social groups in the metropolitan area that meets once a month to have lunch at a restaurant. Hisako, in her early 40s, took her first turn to host the monthly meeting and had to find a restaurant and order the food in advance. She was disconcerted when a few elderly Japanese immigrant women expressed their dissatisfaction with the restaurant's food during the monthly meeting. Getting out of the restaurant, Hisako murmured about other elderly immigrant women; "They are so American. They pounded [me] with their criticism..." ("*Minasan sugoi americajin nandamon. Hihan bashi-bahi to…*") Setsuko, about in her mid 50s, who is a relatively younger member of this social group, replied to Hisako not to worry about what the other elderly women were

saying. Setsuko's explanation was "because they have been here so long, they speak their minds, but they are really nice." The first time when Setsuko took her turn, she felt bad after hearing negative comments about the restaurant and food, but she thought she "had to listen to [their comments] in the clear-cut manner" ("*warikitte kikanaito damenanda to omotta*") because they don't have "bad intentions to hurt one's feelings" ("*warugi wa nai*").

Listening to other elderly immigrant women's comments in the "clear-cut manner" means to condone these women's negative comments by giving up the expectation of what these elderly women are supposed to do. Hisako's expression about the elderly immigrant women represents the mentality of Japanese people in Japan. To her, people who speak their opinions are not "Japanese-like" because it creates a small uncomfortable situation. As a Japanese woman, she expected the elderly women to suppress discontented feelings about the food and the restaurant. What Setsuko told Hisako to do is to detach these elderly women's frank or even harsh comments from their benign personalities. Hisako did not give a "clear-cut" separation from the people's criticism for the restaurant and her reputation. The elderly women's negative comments on food do not reflect on Hisako's personality at all, but she took it rather personally as criticism of her. Setsuko jokingly said "Listen to [their opinions] with your right ear and dismiss it with your left ear, just like you do with your mother-in-law's [opinions]." After Setsuko and Hisako laughed, Setsuko said "don't worry about it, you will get used to it." Then, Setsuko started to share a few episodes of these elderly women's kindness in the past. It was obvious that Hisako was still concerned about the

73

other elderly members' opinions and her choice of the restaurant. While Setsuko was giving advice to Hisako, they found a small group of members who were still gathering and talking in the restaurant parking lot. Hisako approached the small group of people and said "please do not say bad things about me after I leave" with her soft voice, lack of confidence, and disappointed face. It was interesting that the Hisako expressed her wounded feelings and concerns about her reputation in front of people. It was even more interesting that Hisako did not realize that expressing her wounded feelings and preventing further negative comments from the other members are not exactly "Japanese-like" behaviors either.

Kazuo Miyake and Kosuke Yamazaki (1995) state that because Japanese value harmony within a group, other group members' interests and feelings come first over their own. Unlike people in Japan, Hisako did not follow the unwritten Japanese rules of concealing her own feelings. Hisako was agreeing with Setsuko's advice of how to condone the elderly Japanese immigrant women's disharmonious yet benign "American" attitudes. At the end of this conversation, Setsuko said "[hearing the complaints] reminds me that I shouldn't say anything about the choice of restaurants in the future meetings." Hisako agreed with her. As the multidimensional/pluralistic assimilation model suggests that the processes and phenomena of acculturation and assimilation are complex, multifaceted, and situationally dictated (Porter and Washington 1993), Hisako displayed her unconscious assimilated expressive behaviors, while she made the conscious learning effort to overcome other immigrant women's plain/simple/frank/straight "American" expressions. At the same time, she was consciously trying to remain

74

with Japanese norms of collectivity in the U.S. by being harmonious rather than expressive. Setsuko and Hisako are also reinforcing the fact that "other" Japanese immigrant women are exempted from following the Japanese norms. As the pluralistic assimilation model can explain, how Japanese immigrant women define Japanese-ness or American-ness depends on the situations and depends on who is defining whom.

Individual's Roles, the Family, and *Sekentei* in Japan

Since many Japanese immigrant women described the human interactions in the U.S. as plain/simple/frank/straight (*assari*) or clear-cut (*warikitta*) compared with Japan, there must be not-so-"*assari*" and not-so-"*warikitta*" human relations prevailing in Japan. Robert Marra (1996) introduces a case study of Yuriko, a Japanese elderly woman who was born in 1924 in a fisherman's family. Marra interviewed Yuriko in the 1990s when she was in her 60s. She would be 86 years old today, which is about the same age cohort as this study. Yuriko built her social networks to survive and feed her natal family in her village in Japan. She not only survived her natal family's financial adversity and World War II, but she was also able to feed her younger siblings as the oldest daughter; she continued to work hard after she married, raised her son, and became financially comfortable in her old age (Marra 1996). Marra describes the life lessons she learned at a very early age and the fruitful results from the lessons:

It was then that she first learned the lesson of being a good neighbor and saw how her personal image in the neighborhood could affect her family's

survival. She also began to develop her reputation as a good provider and someone who would make a good wife. …She needed supplies of various sorts, and although her neighbors had them to sell, she had no money to purchase them. The neighbors on the other hand, needed food, and Yuriko had fish from her father's catch that could be set aside to feed her neighbors rather than sold through the wholesaler. A barter system developed that fostered her image as a good family provider and a good neighbor (Marra 1996:108–109).

The *sekentei* (social reputation or social appearance) is the fundamental concept when considering some of the core values of Japanese such as collectivism. *Sekentei* is based on an individual's consciousness of the neighbors' surveillance, which leads the individuals to act so as to avoid becoming a laughingstock of the *seken*—society (Inoue 1977). Asai and Kameoka (2005) indicate that keeping a good *sekentei* or social appearance in Japan is not only for oneself but also for one's relatives, who are concerned about their social appearance for having troubled individuals in the family. It seemed Yuriko's natal family's financial adversity did not destroy the *sekentei* of the family since it was caused by something beyond the individual's control such as the monopoly of the fish market by the wholesaler, illness of her mother, and the war. In fact, Yuriko's good reputation, which was fostered by her hard work due to the family's financial scarcity, became a form of good *sekentei* for her natal family as well as her married stem family. When people see such a hard-working, admirable daughter or wife in a family, they would interpret that the family raised the

daughter correctly or the good family deserves such a good *yome*, or a wife/mother in the stem family. Marra (1996) analyzes Yuriko's personal reputation as "*kanshin na mono* or admirable" (113), and the title became her social capital throughout her life. It was built by a reputation as a good potential *yome* by utilizing the barter system. Later, she continued to gain her social capital by "being a liberal and farsighted" mother-in-law because she allowed her daughter-in-law to pursue her career (113).

Marra's (1996) analysis was focused on this elderly Japanese woman's social relations as capital. Building a good reputation was the method of building her capital in the community through human relations (Marra, 1996). There is no "clear-cut" separation between Yuriko's role and her family in terms of the material benefits she and the family receive. When Yuriko performed as a good daughter, she and the family also received material such as household supplies as well as the non-material benefits such as keeping an excellent *sekentei* and the title of the "admirable." These non-material benefits led her to build more capital in her later life with her married stem family. It seems that all individual behaviors, expected role performance, the family, and *seken* (society or community) may be too tightly intertwined in Japan, and thus sometimes role strain or role conflict for individuals becomes unbearable. Therefore, Japanese people often feel that they are restrained in their lives (Miyake and Yamazaki 1995).

One elderly immigrant woman mentioned the Japanese custom of giving gift money for friends and the relatives in many social occasions such as

77

weddings, funerals, births of children, hospital visits, moving, housewarming, traveling abroad, school/college entrance, new-year's day, and so forth. The person who receives the gift money for a certain occasion is obligated to return a gift that is proportionate to the amount he or she received. For example, when people are hospitalized, their friends and relatives are supposed to give "sympathy" money to them, but after the person recovers from the illness or injury, he or she is supposed to return the equivalent value of the "thank-you gift" back to the people who gave the money. When social occasions were concentrated in a short period of time, this immigrant woman's late father spent more money than he received from the pension. Sometimes he struggled because of that. He used to say that if the gift money is not "the same amount as other people would give" ("*hitonami no kingaku")* or the value of the return gift is not equivalent to the amount one received, not only would he be laughed at but also his wife would be scorned for letting him embarrass himself like that. Therefore, spending a large amount of gift money was considered necessary, basic spending to maintain one's social status and face. When sharing this episode, the elderly immigrant woman shook her head slowly and horizontally many times. It was obvious that she disagrees with this gift money custom. This behavior or thinking pattern is based on *sekentei*, as a man's expected role performance of giving gift money is directly connected to the evaluation of his wife in the collectivistic society. This gift money custom is not anything unusual. Most Japanese in Japan practice it and are expected to do so. An evaluation of a wife by the husband's behavior (or vice versa) or evaluation of a child by parental behavior (or vice

78

versa) may not be just Japanese practice, but it seems that Japan holds this particular view strongly.

After sharing this episode, this elderly immigrant woman said the interactions in the U.S. are more *assari* or plain/simple/frank/straight. She said "even for your relative's wedding, you don't give that much money here. You give about $300 for your friend in Japan, $500–$1,000 if it's your relatives. But here, you give whatever you can, like a small gift, or a card and cookies. That's it. It is very simple (*assari shiteru*)." At the same time, she cannot give up the idea or custom of the returning gift for the people who supported her or celebrated for her in some occasions. She said she feels she is Japanese when she just has to return a small gift right away for those people. However, she does not spend a large amount of money to buy the gift that is "equivalent" for whatever she received. Instead, she does what she can with the limited amount of income she has as a widow, such as baking cakes or cooking Japanese food. The financial reason is not the main reason for her choice of the return gifts. She thinks her intention to show her appreciation is more important than the amount she spends—as she said, it is "*kimochi no mondai"* ("a matter of your heart"). While this immigrant woman's siblings and relatives as well as the vast majority of people in Japan are still practicing the large amount of gift money custom based on *sekentei*, she said *assari* (simply) surpasses all of it in the U.S., and even in Japan when she visits there. It is less likely that this elderly immigrant woman is consciously following the U.S. custom of gift giving as a "training" of her value

acculturation, but, this *assari* manner of exchanging gifts in the U.S. has certainly affected how she thinks about the *sekentei*-based reciprocity.

Role Expectation and Age-Appropriate Roles

In her classic 1967 study of Japanese society, Chi Nakane argues that Japan's vertical society puts too much emphasis on the ranking and seniority in each human relationship and situation. Mayumi, a Japanese graduate student in her early 30s, described her Korean friends' experiences and shared her thoughts about seniority in the U.S. and Japan. Bong-Cheol and Chang-Sun studied in the same department at the university in Korea. Bong-Cheol was two years older than Chang-Sun at the Korean university. After graduating, Bong-Cheol started to work. On the other hand, Chang-Sun came to the U.S. for a higher degree right after graduation. After working two years, Bong-Cheol decided to pursue a higher degree in the U.S., too. A year later, Bong-Cheol was accepted to the same graduate program as Chang-Sun had been attending for a year in the U.S. Bong-Cheol was not intentionally following Chang-Sun, but since their study interest was very similar from the beginning, they ended up at the same graduate school in the U.S. Now Chang-Sun became one year senior to Bong-Cheol in the graduate program in the U.S. Chang-Sum and Bong-Cheol have been feeling very awkward about this reversed junior-senior relationship. Mayumi said she can appreciate both Bong-Cheol's and Chang-Sun's awkward feelings.

One might think, especially with the perspective of western minds, that this reversed junior-senior relationship should not cause such awkwardness or

80

concerns, especially considering the gap between those two individuals is only one academic year difference in the U.S. As Roger J. Davies and Osamu Ikeno (2002) explain, in contemporary Japan, *senpai* (senior) means those who entered or graduated from the same school or entered the same company before oneself, and *kohai* (junior) is those who entered the same school or company after oneself. While *kohai* are considered to be inferior to *senpai* because of their lack of experience, it is considered to be natural for *senpai* to be respected by *kohai* due to their experience in their jobs, schools, or other activities (Davies and Ikeno 2002). Since "[s]uch seniority rules have deeply permeated all aspects of Japanese life" (Davies and Ikeno 2002:188), Mayumi said she would feel really awkward too if she were in the same situation.

When Mayumi was asked if she feels awkward to have much older or younger Japanese students in the same cohort in her graduate school program in the U.S., she answered "that's different." If she knew a person in Japan and reunited with him or her in the U.S., the age difference does make a difference for their relationship. She would act differently to the person such as using more of the honorific language and acting accordingly toward the person to meet Japanese norms. However, Mayumi says if she meets a new Japanese person in the U.S. as a classmate or just a friend, the age difference does not make any difference at all, whether the person is much younger or older than she is. When a Japanese starts a new relationship with another Japanese in the U.S, both parties assume that they hold a clear understanding that the relationships would not be seniority or age-based. The reason behind of this assumption can be explained with the perception

about Japanese living abroad. Emigrants, especially permanent residents abroad, are considered deviants from Japan; they are either too capable or too incapable to fit in a narrow society (Tsuda 2003: 106). When two Japanese individuals have met abroad, the premise is that they both are the type of individuals who did not fit in a narrow Japanese society; therefore, they met abroad. Both parties assume and exempt each other for not following the Japanese rules of seniority. However, their relaxed attitude toward Japanese rules of seniority may not be necessarily because they are "special" immigrants, but simply because they don't feel Japanese social constraints in the U.S.

Davies and Ikeno (2002) are keenly aware of the fact that seniority based on age, rather than ability, is more emphasized in school settings in Japan than in companies and other settings. They also recognize that "[l]ately, *kohai* do not express as high a regard to seniors as in the past" (192). Davies and Ikeno's explanation of this recent change in Japanese school settings can be applied for the assimilation process among Japanese immigrants and their human relationships. Davies and Ikeno (2002) explain:

> While [juniors] use polite expressions, respect toward seniors has become rather superficial, and today, people tend to consider age less important because there is beginning to be more variety in the student body of Japanese schools with returnee students, non-Japanese, and so on. (192)

In the U.S., the percentage of non-traditional or older students is much higher than in Japan, and of course, the vast majority of the population in the U.S. is non-Japanese. It is inevitable that the *senpai-kohai* relationship or age-based seniority

rules become even more relaxed in the U.S. Therefore, as Mayumi describes above, the age difference becomes an insignificant factor for building a new friendship in the U.S. As Nakane (1967) observes, the western societies tend to see human relationships with horizontal perspectives, such as friends and colleagues, rather than with a perspective of seniority, such as junior-senior relationships. Less emphasis on the vertical perspective and more emphasis on the horizontal perspective in human relations in the U.S. puts less pressure on Japanese immigrants to take an "age-appropriate" role.

Of course, the Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. have to follow their expected roles just like anybody else in any society. However, the roles are not strictly defined by one's age in the U.S. In addition, the roles are not reified by the usage of different levels of the honorific language between the individuals. Due to the lack of honorific language in English, it is easier for immigrant Japanese to act outside of the expected role toward older or younger individuals in any social settings. This effect seems to permeate not only horizontal relationships such as friends and colleagues but also vertical relationships such as those between parents and children.

One elderly Japanese woman said that when her middle-aged daughter speaks "in Japanese, she becomes pretty (*kawaiku naru*) but when speaking in English, she says spiteful, insolent things (*nikutarashii, namaikina koto*)." This elderly woman feels her daughter acts "pretty" when she is taking the role of "Japanese daughter," which is embedded in the Japanese language with the norms for the rules of seniority. However, when the same daughter acts more assertively,

83

she looks spiteful or insolent to the mother when speaking in English, in which the norms for the rules of seniority are no longer embedded in their conversations. This example is not to say English speakers are all assertive; however, speaking English helps Japanese or descendants of Japanese to act differently from the expected role in Japan as languages embody different cultures. Speaking a second language in the host country may help Japanese immigrant individuals think of themselves as actors who are playing a role of the assertive "American" character on the front stage. Kelsky (2001) also observed that Japanese women claim that they learn and speak English for their self-expression, self-discovery, and individuality. Speaking English makes it easier for the Japanese daughter to be assertive and act outside of the role of the Japanese "daughter."

Another example of Japanese immigrant women's attitude of less conformity to the expected roles can be seen in the title of "old lady" or "grandma." One informant expressed her opinion about her aging processes and associated title as follows.

> I read the Japanese newspaper about a woman being murdered a few days ago, and the headliner was "an old woman, murdered" and the victim was only sixty-something. That's horrible; they call her old woman! I mean, that's horrible that she was mugged and murdered, but it was really horrible she was called old woman! … I am her age, but [I] don't feel old at all. If someone describes me as an old woman, I would assume the person is talking about someone else. I really don't like the Japanese custom. Strangers like sales persons or bank tellers call you *Obaasan*

(Grandma) or *Okusan* (Mrs.). They don't even know if [you are] married or have grandchildren or not. They assume [your position according to their assumption of] how old you are. When I visited Japan a few years ago, one of the middle-aged bank tellers called me *Okaasan* (Mother) and I told him "I don't have a child. I am not a mother and I am certainly not your mother!" The middle-aged bank teller was speechless….

This immigrant woman thinks the word "you" in English is convenient because of its gender-free, age-less, non-discriminatory nature. She commended the fact that Japanese society finally started to notice that calling "Mrs." or "Grandma" was *narenareshii* (impudent or overly familiar with the person) and even condescending by not showing enough distance and respect. Some organizations such as nursing homes and hospitals have been advocating awareness and sensitivity to stop calling the elderly patients "Grandma" or "Grandpa." More Japanese people are aware that this overly friendly attitude toward the elderly is condescending; however, it is still unusual for a Japanese person to actually protest against his or her unwanted title such as "Grandma," "Grandpa," or "Mrs." to a stranger such as a bank teller or store clerk. It is understandable that the bank teller was shocked and became "speechless" when he was confronted by this elderly woman since the idealized and expected image of elderly women in Japan is "*kawaii obachan"* or a "cute grandma." The word cute or "*Kawaii*" often includes the meanings of obedient, gentle, or meek.

The remarkable part of this episode was that for this elderly Japanese immigrant woman the problem was not the lack of distance or respect. Contrary to

the general descriptions of Asian immigrants who hold and follow the rigid family role expectations, what bothered this elderly immigrant woman was that of being categorized by what society expects her to be according to her age. Individualism as well as self-assertiveness is observed in this informant's episode. This elderly immigrant woman displayed her American attitudes and values clearly when she was categorized with unwanted titles when she visited Japan. Again, this example is not to say that English speakers become automatically assertive or unwilling to take the expected age-appropriate roles. In fact, English may not be necessarily the main reason to act more assertively. However, the condition the immigrants are in with speaking a second language, whether it is still fragmented or fluent, makes it easier for them to switch the role and act differently from the internalized expected roles.

Culture of Secrecy in Japan

The expected roles are internalized and reinforced with the consciousness of neighbors' surveillance in Japan. Asai and Kameoka (2005) describe the mechanism of *sekentei* as the criticism from a large group of non-blood-related people that regulates individuals' behavior in Japan; thus, each individual has to worry about how others think of him or her constantly. This *sekentei* consciousness creates Japan's culture of secrecy. To illustrate this culture of secrecy, an American woman who is very familiar with Japanese culture made comments about Japan and its culture as an outsider. Jun is an elderly *Kibei* (literal meaning is "Returned Americans"; the second-generation Japanese

American citizens who were born in the U.S., received education in Japan, and returned to the U.S.). Jun went to Japan when she was ten years old and stayed there for several years. After the war, she came back to the U.S. She used to visit her relatives in Japan quite often even after she came back to the U.S. She said:

> When I go to Japan, I see the societal differences. There are some things that hit me lightly (*Nanika kotsun to ataru kotoga aru*). Let's see…people there [in Japan] say "this is secret!" for something that does not need to be secrete. (laugh) "Don't say this to anyone"—but they already told me about it. Something like that, I notice it.

This elderly second-generation Japanese American woman identifies herself as "American," whereas she defines her elderly sister as "Japanese" because "[her elderly] sister does not want people to know about herself." Jun's sister was also born and raised in the U.S. for almost all of her childhood, went to Japan only for a few years for her education, and returned to the U.S. after the war. Jun's sister only associated with Japanese immigrants and the second-generation Japanese Americans in the closely knitted Japanese community in Hawaii. She did not make many friends at all. Comparing her older sister and herself, Jun said that

> Americans, including myself, say anything, it does not matter what they say [if it is too personal/non-personal or significant/insignificant], they will say it. Their life, family, and other things. They don't think about what other people think of them or their life, they just say it. … They express and release [the pressure, which resulting in prevention of] their depression, but Japanese are holding back (what they feel) and holding it

87

inside of them, and at the end, they get depressed. … I think that has

something to do with the lifestyle in Japan. It is so narrow and people

know and check what their neighbors are doing, or what they are cooking,

or what they are eating… they know it but they don't say it. It is not

individuals [causing the secrecy], but the society itself is like that.

This *kibei* woman's observations of Japanese society and its people are well

studied. Many scholars recognize Japan's culture of family secrecy and its

consequences, such as preventing Japanese families from seeking formal services

and support when they are in need of help (see Hashizume 1998; Mizuno *19*99)

because they want to avoid being ridiculed or becoming a "laughingstock of *seken*

or society" (Inoue 1977). All matters concerning the family and the family

members tend to be kept within the family and not shared with others easily.

Unless individuals become really close friends, they do not tell the name of the

school from which they graduated, their occupation, the name of their employer,

or the details of their family structures. Therefore, Japanese visitors are often

surprised by Americans talking about their families in great detail when they meet

them for the first time.


Openness of the U.S.

It is not unusual for Americans to start talking about their family members

to a person who just happens to sit next to them on the bus or to a person who is

waiting in a long line with them in a coffee shop. One day, two young female

Japanese students were talking in Japanese at a bus stop in front of the university.

While they were waiting for a bus, a middle aged white woman, about in her mid 50s, approached to them and asked if they were from Korea. These students answered that they were from Japan. From their fragmented English and the latest Japanese fashion and hairstyle, it was obvious that these young Japanese women were in the ESL program and came to the U.S not too long ago. The white woman apologized to them and started to talk about her son who is stationed in South Korea now. She kept talking about her son in Korea who had met a wonderful Korean lady and was planning to get married. She explained to these young Japanese women that the Korean lady was a few years older than her son and that her son has a daughter from his previous relationship. She was concerned if these circumstances would be problematic in Korean culture. The Japanese students did not say much but kept nodding until this American woman caught her bus and left the Japanese women behind at the bus top. After the American woman left, these young Japanese women started to talk in Japanese again to confirm if they understood what the American woman was saying and were amazed at how much detailed information she had given to them. One of the students said that she had a similar experience in Utah the previous winter with an American man, who used to be a Mormon missionary, when she was waiting in a line at a store. She was amazed how Americans like to talk about detailed personal matters to strangers. The other student said jokingly "I didn't ask [them to tell]!" ("*kiitenaiyo!*") and they laughed about the situation.

In terms of sharing personal information with others as a social networking building tool, there are many studies (e.g., Chodorow 1971; Gilligan

1982; Brannon 1999; Tannen 1990) indicating that females are more socially connected than males since men are expected to be more independent than females from an early age due to the gender socialization. This gender difference has been found across different cultures; however, how women build their social connections might be slightly different across the cultures. For example, Tannen's (1990) study of conversational differences between men and women, conducted in the U.S., found that women are more likely than men to disclose more personal matters and share their personal experiences with others by calling each other or gathering to chit-chat with others. In this sense, disclosing and sharing personal matters and experiences is the means of reciprocity to build social networks to rely on among females in the U.S. It is easily assumed that these Japanese students have felt that they heard too much from the American woman whom they just met at the bus stop. The American woman might have not even thought about a possibility of building social networks with these Japanese students. However, if sharing personal stories is a means of reciprocity, it is understandable why the Japanese students felt that they had no business receiving such detailed personal information from a stranger, since the reciprocity requires both parties to give personal stories voluntarily to each other. It explains why the Japanese student said "I didn't ask!" after the American woman left the scene.

One Japanese immigrant woman, Mika, shared a story about her complicated family lineage due to divorce, remarriage, and adoption of children by her grandparents. In addition to the rare complicated family lineage, divorce was also rare in Japan during the era of her grandparents. For these reasons, she

avoided talking about family matters to other people in Japan. She also said that

when she was living in Tokyo she did not want to talk about her parents who did

not have a college degree and were living in a rural area of Japan. However, now

she does not mind talking about her family background in the U.S. She attributes

her attitudinal change to the environment of the U.S. She thinks one's parental

education and background do not matter as much in the U.S. as in Japan in terms

of the possibility for upward social mobility. In Japan, she felt people would look

down on her when they found out her parents do not have much education or do

not engage in a white-collar occupation. There are innumerable studies that show

that parental socioeconomic status does affect children's educational,

occupational, and health-related outcomes in the U.S. (Blau and Duncan 1967;

Jencks 1972; Becker and Tomes 1986; McLanahan and Sanderfur 1994; Bianchi

et al. 2004; Haveman et al. 2004). However, the facts about the correlation

between parental socioeconomic status and children's outcomes are not as

important as the immigrants' perceptions when it comes to understanding the

processes of cultural assimilation. One the most popular and idealized elements of

U.S. culture is that anyone can achieve the "American dream." Many scholars

(e.g., Kao and Tienda 1995; Gibson 1988; Suarez-Orozco 1989; Tuan 1995;

Waters, 1995) point out this idealized notion is still strong among immigrants.

They call it the ideology of opportunity or immigrant optimism. While the

ideologies of opportunity or immigrant optimism give the hope for the

intergenerational social mobility for the children, it also can give the first-

generation immigrants themselves a reason to be proud of coming from a

91

disadvantaged background. Intra-generational social mobility such as the rags-to-riches archetype gives the idea that nothing is wrong with having uneducated, blue-collar parents from a rural area. In fact, it is something to be proud of, especially for the people who have achieved intergenerational upward social mobility. Mika, with the blue-collar parents, knows the fact that parental socioeconomic status does matter in the U.S., too, but she felt the degree of severity between the two countries is beyond compare. She does not have to avoid the topics of her family, and she does talk about her family in the U.S.

Another woman, age 60, expressed her bitter experiences in Japan in relation to the society, herself, and her family lineage. She could not get a job in any reputable companies in Japan because she was an illegitimate child. When she was a young woman, it was a common practice for Japanese companies, especially in the financial industry, to ask about both parents' backgrounds as well as to require applicants to submit the *Kosekitouhon,* (Family Register Documents) which reveal one's family lineage that easily trace back a century. It also reveals if one was an illegitimate child or not. In addition, it reveals if one's family is originated from the *dowa* district or *buraku* backgrounds (historically discriminated areas, or descendants of outcast populations), the common families, the *samurai* families, or the aristocratic families. It was a perfectly good legitimate reason for employers to reject an applicant if he or she is from the *dowa* district or *buraku* background or he or she was an illegitimate child at that time. This unreasonable decision was based on Japan's ideology of interdependence among the family members. One family member's behavior

represents all family members. The effect of one family members' honorable or dishonorable behavior is shared by not only by the immediate family members but also by the extended family members, including the descendants generations later. Of course, the employers have been criticized severely for all of these unethical practices, and it has become a rare practice nowadays, but there are still no laws to prohibit or punish these practices in Japan. Being discriminated against because of her family lineage, this Japanese immigrant woman felt working at the banks meant more than just employment for her. Probably that was the reason why the first thing this Japanese immigrant woman mentioned was her history of employment at a bank in the U.S. when describing her life history. In the U.S., she is no longer just an illegitimate child who does not deserve a job at a bank. She became free from the consequences of her ascribed deviant status that originated from her natal family, over which she had no control. She became a productive employee in a bank in the U.S.

In a way, these two immigrant women's experiences make a clear contrast from Marra's (1996) study of Yuriko from the fisherman's family in Japan described above. Yurkio saved her natal family's financial difficulty by her good reputation and grew in the stem family she married into. Yuriko's social network construction and her work experiences are built within the *sekentei* ideology, which inevitably comes with the notions of the family. On the other hand, the Japanese immigrant women's interpretation of building their networks or their work experiences in the U.S. is how they became free from their unwanted ascribed status that they inherited from the natal family. Since the immigrant

women's perception of American society is less rigid and is free from the ideology that individuals are deeply interwoven in the family, the most elderly Japanese immigrant women do not seem to be concerned about keeping their personal matters private or the family secrecy in the U.S.

It seems that immigrant women did not reconstruct the social control mechanism based on the avoidance of becoming a "laughingstock of society" and interdependent responsibility-sharing mechanism between the individual and his or her family in the U.S. Most elderly Japanese immigrant women are adopting some degree of openness. As an observer and a first-generation Japanese immigrant, I do notice the elderly Japanese immigrant women's openness in the U.S. When I attended a lunch meeting for the Japanese immigrant women's social club for the first time, some of the elderly women started to talk to me, a stranger, about their families and very personal histories with great detail at the restaurant, a public place. In the individual interviews, many elderly Japanese immigrant women shared a great deal of personal stories with me. Sometimes it was so personal that I was not sure if I deserved to hear such intimate stories. For example, one woman, when she was describing her life history, started to talk about how her daughter-in-law had an affair recently and her own husband used to cheat on her a long time ago. I met this elderly Japanese immigrant woman only once, very briefly, in a social gathering occasion before this interview. Her intention in bringing up these episodes was to explain all the adversity that had made her strong and to describe the importance of forgiveness and gratitude in life. Even taking her real intention of sharing these personal stories into

94

consideration, this openness was still remarkable. When people in Japan are confronted by strangers or casual acquaintances, they tend to withdraw from potential interpersonal relationships at first. Another elderly Japanese immigrant woman told me that she did not want to talk about her family or her personal matters when she was young, living in Japan. Now she does not mind talking about it; she said "maybe I'm getting too old to care about it now." This immigrant woman contributed her attitudinal change to her age, but one's age cannot be the only factor for the attitudinal change. Few other elderly women are still hesitant to talk about personal matters. It has to be not only their age but also surrounding environments, conscious effort, or a mixture of these factors that causes the first-generation immigrant women to adopt such openness.

Most of today's Japanese elderly immigrant women came to the U.S. after World War II with their military husbands, but not with their parents or kin. They started their lives in the U.S. without deep-rooted, multigenerational kinship or community-based relationships. By being free from Japan's social norms and restrictions, many Japanese women have distanced themselves from the internalized *sekentei* norms and now feel comfortable sharing family secrets or personal experiences. The lack of tight kinship networks with relatives back in Japan among the immigrant women could be used for their advantage, since the relatives of these immigrant women in Japan are less likely to find out or even care about what kind of family information they are sharing with others in the U.S. In the way, living in the host country creates the sense of anonymity which

95

encourages Japanese women to be open about their personal matters, family secrets, or even their vulnerability.

As a strategy for living in a foreign country, sharing their life experiences to construct social networks with people outside of families makes more sense than keeping family secrecy. The notion of individualism is observed in this adaptation. Their top priority is not keeping family secrecy for the sake of good *sekentei* or social appearances, but establishing new social networks. In other words, in order to build rapport with others, these women would not mind sharing their family or personal stories that might embarrass their relatives in Japan. In this particular case, individualism does not mean that an independent, individualistic person seeks no help from others. It appears that sharing personal and family stories, including not-so-admirable or even dishonorable episodes, is a significant part of the process to acquire individualism among Japanese immigrant women. It is almost ironical that the intimate practice such as sharing family or personal stories seems to reinforce Japanese immigrant women to step out from the web of deeply interwoven family consciousness based on *sekentei* and encourages them to act outside of the age-appropriate expected behaviors with a more "clear-cut" manner of interpersonal relationship. By being free from Japan's social norms, restrictions, and tight kinship, sharing the family secrets may be relatively effortless for the immigrant women in comparison with people in Japan. At the same time, immigrant women's collectivistic mind has not totally disappeared. As the example with Setsuko and Hisako's conversation at a lunch meeting in the restaurant, many immigrant women are conscious about keeping

96

their Japanese norms and practices of being harmonious. They make a conscious effort to not express their negative feelings, whether they succeed at it or not. Japanese immigrant women's learned individualism and conscious effort of keeping collectivism are manifested in unique episodes in mundane lives and experiences. These unique yet seemingly insignificant matters are in fact the acculturation processes of becoming Japanese immigrant women within an idiosyncratic atmosphere.

Conclusion

It is extremely difficult to define "American culture" as well as to describe "cultural assimilation in the U.S." due to its complexity and diversity unless one uses simplistic stereotypes of American society. I have described the elderly immigrant women's non-*sekentei*-based, non-collectivistic behaviors, such as choosing considerably younger-looking attire, expressing themselves assertively, non-conformity of age-appropriate expected roles, and sharing personal and family secrets. What I have heard from these women as their value acculturation processes and assimilation experiences are more like how these women feel in the U.S., rather than particular aspects of cultural assimilation to the U.S. The elderly Japanese immigrant women feel more freedom from the constraints of Japanese culture in the U.S., which is not exactly the same as assimilating to American culture. In fact, most of the women described Japanese cultural patterns of behavior and then expressed how they feel less obligated to conform to them in the United States. Since collectivism in Japan and individualism in the U.S. are

considered to be two polarized values, it is easy for them to describe their feelings of freedom in comparative terms.

If there is anything about American culture these women are assimilating to, it is probably the greater freedom and individualism immigrant women *feel* in the United States. The multidimensional assimilation model sees that identificational assimilation is a multifaceted, complex, situationally directed process. While the model explains the dynamics of identificational assimilation, what we consider to be "identificational assimilation in the U.S." may be simply a greater degree of freedom immigrants *feel* from their native cultures in the United States. In this sense, identificational assimilation and the value acculturation are very similar concepts in the U.S., and both concepts can be understood as a matter of the degree of freedom that the immigrants feel in the host country in comparison with the homeland.

Japanese immigrants are not radically and consciously adopting American core cultural values as their sign of identificational assimilation or trajectory of how close they have become to Anglo-Americans. Japanese immigrant women may be simply enjoying freedom from Japanese cultural constraints because they are living outside Japan. This could have been understood as adopting or assimilating core American cultural values such as "freedom," "individualism," and "openness." However, this could be merely a characteristic of the immigrant conditions in general such as being apart from one's homeland culture, not necessarily assimilating into the U.S. culture. In fact, Japanese immigrants in any western nation, France for instance, may have a similar experience. However,

Japanese immigrants in a culturally slimier host country such as Korea or Taiwan

for instance, may feel less freedom. Therefore, identificational assimilation would

be possible to understand only with the specificity of the sending and receiving

countries. Similarly, the concept of "assimilation as feeling freedom from the

homeland" cannot be applied uniformly to other immigrants in other countries

such as European immigrants in Asian nations to understand their identificational

assimilation.

    As Alba and Nee (1997:863) defined assimilation as "the decline … of an

ethnic/racial distinction and the cultural and social differences that express it", the

mundane everyday life in the U.S. offers opportunities for Japanese immigrants to

display their decline of restriction in whatever they were feeling in Japan.  For

more than 30, 40, or even 50 years, the elderly Japanese women have been free

from the ideology of *sekentei* social constraints and collectivism that Japanese

society imposes on people. The immigrant women display behaviors that are

separated from the *sekentei* ideology and the concept of family secrecy. They

enjoy the attire, makeup, or hairstyle that is considered "not age-appropriate" for

their age groups in Japan. However, their choice of showy fashion is excused or

even received positively by people in Japan due to the fact that they made an

extraordinary life choice as emigrants. They also gain the confidence of wearing

whatever they feel comfortable with by exchanging compliments with strangers in

the U.S. without being overly conscious about following the dress codes of Japan.

Through these mundane practices, Japanese immigrant women empirically know

that the American way of thinking is "clear-cut," with no ambiguity of the

borderline between the feelings of others and one's own feelings. Wearing whatever they are pleased with and being relaxed about the Japanese dress code is the manifestation of the psychological distance from *sekentei* and the fostering of American cultural values such as self-expression, assertiveness, and freedom.

Their fashion choice could be just the simple manifestation of their true individual personality or due to their expressive nature since a good number of them described themselves as adventurous, expressive, and independent even before they migrated to the U.S. The choice of their fashion could be also the result of their feelings of greater freedom and less restriction in the U.S., as almost all informants mentioned their feelings in the comparative terms such as "the dress code is so relaxed and easy compared with Japan." Either way, this surface level of expressiveness well might be the first step for most immigrant women to feel the shift from Japan-based self-identity to U.S.-based self-identity. Because the choice of attire is such a superficial level of change, it did not require great effort or difficulty for these Japanese immigrant women. However, these relatively effortless, superficial changes would lead to another level of change, such as value assimilation, or understanding of the host country.

As immigrant women feel more comfortable not to follow the expected age-appropriate dress codes, they also feel comfortable not following the Japanese way of expected role performance. The family and *seken* are not too tightly intertwined in their roles in the U.S. Being in the less-restricted environment, Japanese immigrant women feel that the interactions in the U.S. are more "*assari*" or plain/simple/frank/ straight than in Japan. While some Japanese immigrant

100

women make a conscious effort to stay with Japanese norms in the U.S., the condition the immigrants are in makes it easier for them to switch the roles and act differently from the internalized, expected roles as "*warikitte*" (the clear-cut manner). Speaking a second language in the host country makes Japanese immigrant individuals think of themselves as actors in the clear-cut manner; they can play a role of the assertive "American" character on the front stage. Speaking English helps Japanese to act differently from the expected role in Japan as languages embody different cultures. It makes it easier for the Japanese women to act outside of the role of the Japanese daughter, wife, mother, or grandmother and show their individuality, assertiveness, and expressiveness.

The concept of the clear-cut manner in family relations as well as other human relations in the society allows immigrant women to disclose their personal experiences to other people. Japan's social network construction is built within the *sekentei* ideology, which inevitably comes with notions of the family. On the other hand, the Japanese immigrant women expressed how they became free from their unwanted ascribed status that they inherited from the natal family. Many women feel that these statuses once were their vulnerability in Japan, but that they are now able to share personal experiences and family matters with others to build social networks in the U.S. Since the immigrant women's perception of American society is less rigid and more free from the ideology that individuals are deeply interwoven in the family, the most elderly Japanese immigrant women do not seem to be concerned too much about keeping their personal or family matters private. Living in the host country creates the sense of anonymity which

101

encourage Japanese woman to be open about what used to be their vulnerability. This process also reinforces Japanese immigrant women's individualism in their idiosyncratic way. At the same time, they have not forgotten their collective minds. The immigrant women make conscious efforts to adhere to the Japanese norms of not expressing their feelings in order to maintain harmonious situations, while making an effort to condone and excuse "other" Japanese immigrant women's disharmonious behaviors.

Assimilation cannot be understood by just measuring immigrants' language acquisition and their educational attainment or socioeconomic status in a host country. The process of value acculturation, acquiring, exercising, and feeling comfortable with the core values of the host country is also a very important aspect of assimilation study. Some of the core values in the host country may be very different from, if not the opposite of, those in the homeland. It may not be even possible for immigrant individuals to totally internalize the opposite values; however, they experience and learn to desensitize many small but uncomfortable situations within the host country's ethos over the years. These mundane experiences seem to be insignificant at first glance, but they are in fact significant parts of the assimilation processes of building their ethnic consciousness and their identity.

Since the elderly Japanese immigrant women have been living through these assimilation processes for such a long time, it is difficult to imagine that their national identity has not changed at all. Especially considering the fact that they immigrated to the U.S. during a time of drastic change in U.S.-Japan

relations, it is important to understand how nations and historical events would

have affected individual identity. With this aspect in mind, the next chapter will

discuss how elderly Japanese immigrant women define their national identity

Chapter 4

TRANSNATIONAL AND LIMINAL IDENTITIES: HOW HISTORICAL

SPECIFICITY, GENDER, RACE, AND AGE ARE RELATED TO

IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S NATIONAL IDENTITIES

As described in the previous chapter, the processes of assimilation among

Japanese immigrant women tend to be exercised and manifested in rather

mundane everyday life activities. They expressed their assimilation ambiguously

with their personal feelings of freedom rather than overt, measurable achievement

or dramatic and memorable moments in their lives. This "feeling" of those

immigrant women may hold an important key to identifying their place(s) of

belonging. In order to understand the sense of belonging among immigrants, it is

important to see how national identity is understood as part of self-identity. This

task can be accomplished by establishing the dominant patterns of national

identity among immigrants within their personal experiences. Going through the

international migration experiences with many years of assimilation processes,

some elderly immigrants have experienced the change of their national identity.

Those immigrants who identify the host country as their place of belonging are at

ease with staying in the host country for the rest of their lives. Other immigrants

may be anxious about staying for their old age in a host country because they

have not yet developed the "feeling" of belonging. One's personal feelings for the

place(s) of belonging or national identity would certainly affect how the elderly

immigrants see and plan their futures in the last stages of their lives.

In this chapter, I will start with brief theoretical backgrounds of the development of group identities. Then, this chapter will describe how the images of Japanese women, American men, and these two nations' international relationships might have influenced immigrant women's national identities. I will also discuss how the specific timing of elderly Japanese immigrant women experiencing historical events might have an affect their feelings of belonging in a nation. Through their personal experiences with historical events, some immigrant women went through the changes of their national identities. Some women said that they used to have an American identity for a long time but have been regaining a Japanese identity again in recent years. Some of those women think their changes of identities are due to their aging experiences, but it may also have something to do with their interpretation of the relationship between the host country and the homeland. Some of the elderly women associated their national identity with their gender, and some of them associated it with their race. In general, how these elderly immigrant women have interpreted their international migration experiences, they are interconnected with gender and national belonging when it comes to how they plan or perceive their futures at the last stage of their lives.

The majority of Japanese immigrant women said that their national identity is Japanese, but that they also feel they belong to the U.S. Some women said that they cannot articulate if they are Japanese or American because they feel they are totally comfortable in both nations. The national identity of these women should be called transnational because of their simultaneous affiliation with two nations. A few other women indicated their discomfort in both countries. The

national identity of these women should be called liminal because of their

simultaneous disaffiliation with two nations. These women's feelings can be

explained with the concepts of transnational identify and liminal identities. Some

examples will show how the transnational identity, simultaneous affiliation for

sending and receiving countries, is possible for some immigrants and the liminal

identities, simultaneous disconnection from the both countries, is also possible for

other immigrants.  In this vein, I will consider the meaning of "affiliation" for the

countries such as ascribed and achieved spheres of affiliation when transnational

and liminal identities are concerned. Furthermore, what determines whether these

women develop transnational or liminal identities will be discussed.  One obvious

factor would be whether they develop social networks in the U.S. and maintain

their networks in Japan.  In addition to the social network factor, women with the

liminal identity seem to idealize both countries more, than the women with

transnational identity. This tendency leads liminal women to disappointment and

disillusionment with both countries, which can be their cause of psychological

distance from both homeland and host country.  Finally, a conclusion will be

drawn on how an individual's national identity is one of the important aspects for

the elderly immigrants when they consider their options and possibilities for their

future at the very last stage of their lives.


Theoretical Backgrounds

　　　　Based on the classic studies of cognitive growth and life-course

development with the psychological approach (e.g. Piaget 1962 orig.1945;

Erikson 1959), individual identities are often imagined to be based solely on childhood or personal experiences in the surrounding environment—relatively immediate surroundings such as the family, school, and workplace. However, self-identities are also based on collective, macro-social perspectives such as the nation's relative position in the world. Members of a society cannot compare and contrast themselves without the awareness of other societies. This awareness leads people and their governments to be concerned about "preservation or loss of their cultural identity" (Turner 1991:296).

Jack Citrin, Cara Wong, and Brian Duff (2001:71) write that "national identity is one among many often co-existing and overlapping social identities, including territorial, racial, religious, linguistic, and gender identities." Social identity theory explains that one's awareness of belonging tends to foster positive feelings toward the group, the adoption of shared attitudes of the group, and acting as a representative of the group (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1986). Self-categorization theory stems from social identity theory. The significant difference between these two theories is that self-categorization theory sees the infinite range of identities based on social and personal levels in different contexts, whereas social identity theory tends to limit the range (Turner 1982). For example, while an individual holds different social group identities such as nation or gender at the social level, the personal level of self-categorization allows individuals to interpret themselves as a Japanese or American or how they consider themselves as a male or female in different contexts. In this vein, the significance of a group identity depends on an individual's accessibility to

categorization and how well the category fits the reality in a particular social context. Personal identities are more flexible and changing depending on the local context, compared with group identities. John Turner and Rina Onorato (1999:22) explain that "relative accessibility reflects a person's experience, present expectations, current motives, values, goals and needs. It reflects the active selectivity of the perceivers in being ready to use categories that are relevant, useful, and likely to be confirmed by the evidence of reality."

In the elderly Japanese immigrant women's case, their salient group identities such as Japanese and female are highlighted by the fact they are living in the host country. One's national identity is recognized at the personal level through their life histories and experiences as immigrants. How elderly Japanese immigrant women identify with the nation(s) becomes their salient social identity when they are talking about specific concerns and plans such as their aging experience and plans for their old age. A social group identity, or more specifically, a national identity in this case, is deployed differently by these women in different situations and life course stages as a form of personal self-identity. In other words, it seems that these women's understanding of their national identity is empirical and personalized because of their international migration experience. How these elderly Japanese immigrant women experienced historical events in a particular timing in their lives, what it means to be a woman, what it means to be a Japanese, and what they are going to do with their future are all interconnected.

Historical Specificity and National Identity

It is somewhat problematic to categorize elderly Japanese immigrant women as a homogeneous group since they come from different social backgrounds and have experienced historical events at different ages in their lives. For example, World War II for Japan started in 1935; therefore, the cohort of Japanese immigrant women aged 70 and above was born before or during the war. They are old enough to clearly remember the details of the war. Receiving a college education was rare for these women. Most of these cohorts met their American servicemen husbands in Japan. They have been seen as the war brides of these servicemen: Japanese women who were tender, loving, childlike, and innocent recipients of the goodwill of the U.S. servicemen (Kelley and Ryan 1947).

On the other hand, Japanese women who are 65 years old or younger were born on or after 1945, which is the year the war ended. Thus, they probably do not have vivid memories of the war. By the time they reached young adulthood, more women started to receive a higher education and occupational training. Japanese immigrant women who are 60 years old or younger experienced Japan's rapidly growing economy as young adults, and some women met their husbands in college or business-related environments, rather than military bases in Japan or on war-related occasions. While Japan was on the way to economic recovery and prosperity, a new image of Japanese women had started to emerge. Some of these women should be categorized as the precursors of the internationalist women era. These new Japanese internationalist women were no longer just innocent

109

recipients of American goodwill, but rather they wanted to be active contributors to cosmopolitanism and liberalism. Japanese internationalist women are trying to differentiate themselves from the rest of internationalist women who seem to have a desire to marry white men to achieve their international hypergamy (Kawakami 2009). These internationalist women often deny that they associate with "other" Japanese women because—as active contributors to cosmopolitanism, gender equality, and antiracism—they emphasize their "unique," color-blind relationship and their career-motivated reasons for their migration and partner selection. Overall, Japan's defeat in World War II and the following era of economic recovery—as well as the prosperity of Japan—created the new, historically specific prototype image for Japanese women. The country's economic power in the world and changes in the international relations between the U.S. and Japan have influenced individuals' self-identities.

The specific historical events and timing of migration may influence how immigrant women think about their nationality. While the precursors of the internationalist women are less likely to hold negative experiences pertaining to Japan, the older generation from the war bride era is more likely to have faced negative experiences in the past related to the relatively powerless position of Japan in the world right after the war. This situation makes a difference in individuals' sensitivity toward certain terms and perceptions with regard to their own social backgrounds in Japan. When Kaori, in her late 50s, gave me the contact information of several elderly Japanese immigrant women in the area, she warned me not to use the word "immigrant" or "war bride" in front of the elderly

Japanese women. Kaori had used these terms in the past, and her elderly friends were offended by the words, which created uncomfortable moments. Kaori also mentioned that most of her older Japanese friends who came to the U.S. with their military husbands claim that they are from a good family. Most of her elderly friends claim that they were the daughter of a high government officer, a professor at a prestigious university, a wealthy merchant, or even a noble family. Kaori said that "my husband once asked me, "are you the only Japanese woman who is coming from an ordinary common family?"" Her comments were insinuating that not all of her elderly friends are telling the truth about their family's high socioeconomic status or backgrounds.

The reason why Kaori mentioned her American husband's comment was that her husband speculates that some of the war brides might have been coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. In order to hide it, they tend to talk highly about their family backgrounds. Whether the speculation of Kaori's husband is correct or not, the word "war bride" definitely does have the negative connotation among elderly Japanese immigrant women within the particular historical period and international relationship of Japan and the U.S. After World War II, some women had to engage in prostitution to survive, and many of their customers were U.S. service men. One elderly woman, well assimilated, age 78, said "even if you were seriously dating with an American man, you were called a *pansuke* (whore) just because you were dating an American man. Marrying him and coming to the U.S. with him did not change how people in your neighborhood think of you. I hate the word, war bride…." This woman said her father was the president of a

111

factory and there were always two maids in the house until the family lost everything in the war.

Another woman said that she does not appreciate the fact that people automatically assume that she is a war bride just because she married a U.S. service man. She thinks she is too young to be called "war bride" since she is only sixty years old, and by the time they married in the mid-70s, Japan was already recovered from the damage of the war. These specific historical events and timing of their migration may have influenced how they think about their nationality. For example, many Japanese people, young and old, tend to attach negative connotations to the word "immigrant." The younger generations of Japanese immigrant women tend to be highly educated, but the general image of immigrants is poor, uneducated, or linguistically unassimilated. These negative images of immigrants are so strong that sometimes it does not occur to a younger generation of Japanese wives with American husbands to think of themselves as immigrants (Kawakami 2009). The older generation might have a slightly different feeling and reason for the negative connotation of the word, "immigrant." Kaori thinks that the elderly women who came in the 1950s are sensitive to being called immigrants because they saw how Americans looked down on Japanese immigrants as they were from a defeated, poor, undeveloped country. Therefore, these elderly immigrant women wanted to become American, not just an "immigrant." The older generation did not experience the economic prosperity of Japan as an adult. Most of the older generations of immigrant women were also not as highly educated as the younger generations. While many

younger, well-educated generations cannot even associate the word "immigrant"

with regard to themselves, the older generations are more likely to be empirically

aware of the fact that they were in fact immigrants from Japan, which was

relatively powerless right after the war. This causes the older generation to make a

conscious effort to disassociate themselves from the specific terms such as

"immigrants" or "war bride" from Japan. For that reason, the national identity of

the older generation of immigrant women may have been more closely identified

with the U.S. than Japan compared with the younger generations of immigrant

women.

Change of National Identity: Weird Japanese, American, and Japanese Again

Kaori's explanation of why the immigrants who came to the U.S. in the

1950s are so sensitive about being called immigrants or war brides might not be

too far off the mark. For instance, most of them became naturalized citizens, and

some of them had children, found a job, and associated with only Americans.

International traveling was not that common at that time, and many immigrant

women did not visit Japan again for a several decades. Linguistically and

culturally well assimilated, some of these women started to think they were more

like Americans than Japanese. In fact, there are some elderly women who came to

the U.S. in the mid-50s and -60s who expressed that they used to think they were

American rather than Japanese. However, these women say that how they think of

themselves has changed in the last several years or over the past few decades.

They feel more Japanese now than American.

For example, Aki is a socioeconomically and linguistically well-assimilated elderly woman who naturalized only three years after she landed in the U.S. She is a very energetic, young-looking 82-year-old who became a widow when she was only 40. Her American husband was 25 years older than she was. Aki also lost her son, her only child, in a terrible car accident about 25 years ago. She has no intention of going back to Japan to live, although she has been traveling all over Japan since she retired. Aki describes that she was a "weird" Japanese because when she was young in Japan she was already using English for her work in the U.S. Navy's office in Yokohama, and because her personality was very outgoing and full of curiosity. Basically what Aki was describing is that she did not fit the traditional Japanese women's characteristics when she was young, as most Japanese immigrant women in the Western countries would say regardless of their age. When she came to the U.S. with her American husband, she started schooling and obtained an engineering degree from a state university. Eventually she became a middle manager at a reputable electronics company. Even though she is retired now, she is still, understandably, very proud of her academic and career accomplishments.

She did not have any Japanese friends when she was working. All of her friends were American. She did not care for Japanese food, media, culture, or anything to do with Japan. Because her parents passed away long before she came to the U.S., she thought she did not have a reason to visit Japan for a long time. Socio-culturally and linguistically well assimilated and legally an American citizen, she said, "I truly thought I was an American." She was still working part

time until age 75. After she totally retired from the company several years ago, she coincidentally met a Japanese woman in the neighborhood. Through this Japanese woman, Aki started to join a Japanese social group and started to help organizing Japanese cultural events. After her retirement, she started to travel various places of Japan frequently. She is now taking various Japanese cultural lessons such as flower arrangement, tea ceremony, and calligraphy. Now she enjoys the popular and traditional Japanese entertainment and friendship with Japanese people. In fact, almost all of her close friends are Japanese now. Aki said "Now, I think of myself as Japanese. If you asked me [what national identity I have] 10 years ago, I would answer it differently. But now, it's changed."

Aki does not know what made her think she is Japanese again. When she was asked if her association with Japanese friends and activities is the reason for the change of her national identity, she just said "maybe." She also said her age may have something to do with the change of her national identity. Although Aki identifies herself as Japanese now, she still thinks she does not fit in Japan. She thought she was a weird Japanese even before she came to the U.S. She said she did not have to try to assimilate to the U.S. at all because she assimilated naturally. During the interviews, she repeatedly said "I don't know much about Japan," yet she was talking about all the Japanese cultural lessons she is taking and involvement with Japanese organizations and events now. It sounded as if she is trying to recollect all her Japanese connections that she had intentionally let go in the past 40 to 50 years of her life.

Another elderly immigrant woman who is active in various volunteer

activities such as coordinating Japanese art exhibitions and cultural events said:

Before, I thought I was not Japanese at all. My husband is a New

Yorker, and we have lived in the area where almost all residents

are white. How do I say this…I was pretty modern or American-

like…I think. But as I aged, I started to feel more like Japanese,

especially recently. You cannot completely erase [the fact of]

where you were born and raised. I became more and more like a

Japanese, and my husband becomes more and more like a New

Yorker. …When I was young, I was not like Japanese…the way I

think was not like Japanese. I thought things must be "yes or no,"

"black or white," and I expressed it clearly. I thought I had to

express myself and insist on my opinions. Because, in this country,

the more you act bitchy, the more respect you get. When you say

how wonderful and capable you are, the more people believe in

you. If you don't say anything or you don't express your opinions,

people think you are stupid. But now, I have started to feel that I

can do [things] with ambiguity… like so-so (*Ma-ma toiu kanjide…*

*Aimai ni suruyouni natta*). Even my preference of food has

changed, too. When I was young, I didn't care for Japanese taste,

but now I like it very much. Music too. I didn't even want to listen

to the *enka* (Japanese traditional folk) songs when I was young, but

recently, when I heard a Japanese song, I thought I would almost

cry. I was so moved by the song.

Again, this woman could not articulate what made her shift her national identity

from the U.S. to Japan, but she also mentioned that her age might have something

to do with her shift of national identity. The significant part of the above

comments is that it indicates her previous views toward the U.S. as a superior or

modern society and Japan as an inferior or backward society. She thought she was

"pretty modern or American-like…," and therefore she thought she was "not

Japanese at all." However her views toward Japan shifted as she aged, and she

"started to feel more like a Japanese." She could not "completely *erase* [the fact

of] where [she was] born and raised." Her comments also insinuate her effort for

the total assimilation and the inevitable failed result of her effort. When she was

raising her children, she did not agree with how other Japanese parents taught

Japanese to their children even though they are living in the U.S. After explaining

how she "raised [her] children strictly to make them American" by speaking only

English at home and hosting monthly formal parties to foster their social skills,

this woman said, "…but especially nowadays, if you are Japanese, you are

recognized for Japan's [social/international] position and welcomed by society.

Japanese people's work has been recognized, and Japanese people have been

doing fine jobs, too."

One's change in national identities could be partly due to failed

assimilation—trying to be American but realizing later in life that they can't be

really American. It could just be their nostalgic longing for their earlier, younger

117

lives in Japan or being away from their homeland so long and missing it in old age. However, the above comments indicate that the fact that they are getting old is not the only significant factor for some immigrant women to regain their Japanese connections and identity. It seems to be the rise in Japan's international stature and cultural image which causes these elderly women to identify with Japan more now than before, when Japan was not so well regarded.

Aging Experience and Timing of Historical Events

In fact, even though these women say that they have never been the "typical Japanese woman," their comments even indicate their intentional effort to disconnect from Japan in the past. Many other elderly immigrant women also said that the older they become, the more they long for the Japanese food, cultures, and practices. They have indicated their conscious effort of reconnecting their Japanese roots in the past few decades. Japan was still in the recovering process in the 1950s and 60s, and most elderly Japanese immigrant women left Japan around this time period. Japan's economic power started to emerge in the 1970s and reached its peak in the 1980s and '90s in terms of economic prosperity. Most elderly Japanese immigrant women started to retire or have more free time around this time. The elderly immigrant women have witnessed the damage that World War II brought to Japan when they were young, and they have also witnessed the affluent Japan by visiting and travelling when they became old. I am not arguing that these immigrant women abandoned Japanese identity when Japan was not one of the powerful countries and they regained their Japanese root because of the

improved Japanese economic power in the international community. What I am

arguing is that the international positions of the sending and receiving countries,

the historical events, and the timing of experiencing the events may have a strong

effect on how individuals identify with the nation(s) as their own and how they

personally connect to the nation(s). In fact, one of the elderly Japanese immigrant

women in her late 80s has never visited Japan since she left the country well over

more half a century ago. She has no good memories of Japan at all. All she

remembers is how horrible it was to see her brothers taken for the draft, how scary

it was to live under the daily bomb attacks, and how hard it was to obtain food.

She does not even want to visit Japan, although she knows today's Japan is

nothing like the Japan she used to live in as a young woman. As most immigrant

women indicate their national identity as Japan, she also thinks she is Japanese

because of her ascribed status, such as being born and raised in Japan. However,

she does not put too much effort into being connected with Japan, in terms of

cultural practices and food, as well as her relatives and friends in Japan (there are

none left in Japan) or Japanese friends in the U.S. Unlike other elderly women

who experienced the war as a child, this particular woman's aging experience or

Japan's economic prosperity in the past 30 to 40 years could not reverse her bad

memories of struggling Japan for this woman. She had to face the negative

experiences as a young woman, and she still remembers them vividly. Aging

experiences, and the specific timing of experiencing the war, became the tools of

interpreting what it means to be Japanese or to be American at a certain period

and shaped these particular women's way of identifying their affiliation for the countries.

Gendered National Identity

Historical events between the U.S. and Japan and both nations' power relations were translated into individual levels, and thus they influence the immigrants' self-identities. In addition, the immigrant Japanese women connect their gender and national identity in an inseparable manner as a part of self-identity in the host country. Several scholars have discussed how Japanese immigrant women perceive their national identity through cultural gender expectation and how they perceive their immigrant experiences through national cultural perceptions. Before Japan's defeat in World War II, the country's image of Japan was represented by masculinity based on imperialistic militarism; therefore, Japan was seen as a threat and even a villain to the world in the Far East (Dower 1999). However, as soon as Japan declared its defeat, innocent children and obedient, feminine women began to represent the image of Japan (Simpson 1994; Dower 1999). It was only a matter of time before American GIs who were "thrilled with [Japanese women's] apparent paragons of domesticity, shrinking fragility, and an alluring femininity" (Kelsky 2001;69) and Japanese women who were mesmerized with the Western ladies-first customs of American men to find each other attractive (Kelsky 2001). The U.S. official occupation policies were clearly against fraternizing with the local Japanese people; however, it did not

120

stop burgeoning Japanese female and American male romantic relationships under the U.S. occupation in Japan (Simpson 1994; 1998).

This international romance was translated as if Japan was the passive recipient of the goodwill of the U.S. Simpson (1994) analyzes the social psychology behind of the U.S. male-Japanese female relationship. It was a manifestation of American men's thoughts of themselves as father figures, protectors of Japan, and loving, democratic husbands of Japanese women who were just emancipated by GIs from Japan's unjust medieval patriarchal male chauvinism (Simpson 1994). Romance between GIs and Japanese women reinvented the image of Japan into a young woman who is more like an innocent child, but pleasant, hospitable, and curious (Kelley and Ryan 1947), needing the protection of American men to be freed from Japan's male chauvinism (Simpson 1994). In this process, both countries were "gender-ized" in the specific context— the U.S. as male and Japan as female.

This feminized Japanese national identity can permeate as one's self-identity and brings understanding of lives at the personal level for some women. For example, one elderly immigrant woman said that she does "not want to forget about the Japanese culture," which she thinks it is "moralistic." Her American husband laughs at her because:

> Men open the door for women here [in the U.S.]. But in Japan,
> women open the door for men. I do that too. I open the door for
> men [with the phrase] "please, after you." It's opposite from here.
> In Japan, woman is the bottom (of the hierarchy) so, women are

*atarimaeni* (supposed to) serve others. These customs stay with

me.

For this woman, the subordinate position of female and gender ideology is clearly associated with how she defines her Japanese-ness. Another example can be a 70-year-old woman, Emiko. She came to the U.S. in the mid '60s after she lived with her American husband in Japan for a while. She thought American men looked so great and gentle. Emiko said "America looked so affluent compared to Japan at that time." When she met her husband for the first time, she thought "it was a great *chansu* (chance, opportunity) to have an American husband [for her to live an affluent life]." After sharing personal experiences in the U.S., she said "We [Japanese immigrant women] are all survivors here. We made it this far without speaking perfect English. But I think we could do this because we are women." I expected to hear that Emiko would say something like "because women are more adoptable in a foreign environment" or "because women are mentally strong." Instead, she said "if you are a Japanese man, I think it is more difficult. Men have to make a living." Emiko's comments represent the relationship between gender roles, the U.S. as the host country, and Japan as a sending country, and how this relationship is translated into her self-identity. Even in Japan, men still have to make a living. However, Emiko thought the conditions that Japanese men have to face in the U.S. would make it particularly more difficult for them to make a living, because as Chizuko Ueno (2006:1214) describes:

After the Western concept of Orientalism was imposed on the east,

the intellectuals of this region took up the same framework as a

122

basis for their own expression of their self-identity. The use of

gender metaphors to refer to the East and the West has become

common.… The East-as-woman is inhabited by both men and

women. By implication, within this framework, Oriental men can,

to some extent, be assigned such feminine "traits" as passivity and

irrational thinking….

It is understandable why Emiko thought it would be more difficult for Japanese

men to survive in the U.S. since "gender-ized" national identity defines who gets

a decent job and becomes the breadwinner and who stays at home. Since the

elderly immigrant women's gender, expected roles, and ideology were all in

accord with the feminized Japanese national identity in that specific era, it

justified those women's lives and affirmed their self-identity as Japanese in the

specific context.

A Japanese feminist thinker in the early 20th century, Itsue Takamure, also

stood for the past and traditional gender roles with the emphasis on maternal

femininity to define a positive national identity for Japan (Ueno 2006). Although

Takamure was a feminist scholar of Japan in the 1920s and 30s, which was

precedent to the war bride period, she saw that opposing the modernism and

distinguishing characteristics of Western feminism were the ways to recover

Japan's positive identity as a nation (Ueno 2006) when the country just started to

emerge into its position in the world. As Ueno (2006:1215) indicated, "the

recovery of national identity and gender identity were the same thing for

[Takamure]." Takamure's view indicates the difficultly of making a clear

separation between the national and gender identities for Japanese women, especially when there is a schema that indicates the West as "male-and-modern" and the East as "female-and-traditional." Patriarchal gender expectations, by which women were supposed to stay home, were utilized to identify their nationality as Japanese and justified them in a positive manner. It can be easily assumed that this West-as-male-and-the-East-as-female schema would be more apparent among immigrants from the East in the Western society than among non-immigrants living in their homelands. However, because this "gender-ized" national identity schema is more apparent and somewhat idealized among some elderly Japanese immigrant women, the current trend of women's employment in the U.S. seems to be very daunting for some elderly immigrant women.

One elderly woman said she thinks of herself as Japanese and it has never changed, although she recognizes her Japanese roots more often by living in the U.S. She has never worked in the U.S., but she expressed her concern for the current pressure for women to work and fears for her middle-aged daughters. She said:

> When you have a job here and children, I wonder if it is better for
> kids to be here [in the U.S.]. …Women have to work the same way
> as men do here. In Japan, it is still considered that men are
> supposed to provide for women. Here, the relationship is equal.
> Both wife and husband are working; [it] is the norm here. So,
> being a working mother must be really difficult, I think. … When I

think about it, I feel I came to such a difficult place…It must have

been really difficult for my daughters.

This elderly woman indicates her traditional gender role ideology and her

Japanese identity as her inseparable self-identity. Since the immigrant Japanese

women connect their gender and national identity in such an inseparable manner,

her dissonance with the current U.S. trend of the pressure for women to work, as

if they were men, reminds her of her Japanese roots even more by living in the

U.S. I argue that compared with the younger immigrant women, the elderly

immigrant women who took the traditional homemaker role had less cognitive

resonance in terms of how they perceive their national identity as Japanese

because of the national gender expectation. It explains why some elderly Japanese

women mentioned that employment in the U.S. is a daunting task for immigrant

women. They expressed their admiration for younger Japanese women who

pursue a career, especially in the U.S. (or in Western nations), since they have

never tried or thought it was even possible for them to try. At the same time, as

the informant above mentions, some of them see the younger-generation women

with sympathy and define the place where they are living now as "such a difficult

place" for women.

However, many well-educated younger Japanese women are anxious and

willing to build their careers in the U.S. In fact, the initial purpose of transnational

migration for the younger women is to maximize their intellectual or business

potentials (Kelsky 2001).  This does not mean that the West-as-male-and-the-

East-as-female schema is no longer valid. Some Japanese women's national

125

identity is still "gender-ized" in a more covert way compared with the previous generations. For example, Emiko considered that meeting an American man was a great opportunity for a Japanese woman to obtain the financially stable, if not affluent, life in the U.S. Emiko is not the only one who thinks this way. Many career-oriented Japanese women of the younger generations see the opportunity in a similar way. Meeting an American man is a way to obtain permanent residency status in the U.S. (Kelsky 2001; Yamamoto 1993). However, the career-oriented Japanese women of the younger generations seek the permanent residency status to build their careers and develop their maximum abilities in the U.S. because they think that Japan does not offer women such opportunities (Kelsky 2001). Although analyzing how the younger Japanese women perceive their immigrant experiences through the national and cultural perceptions requires more careful interpretation, the basic idea of "Western men giving a chance to Eastern women" remains the same.

Racialized National Identity

The awareness of the connection between images of one's nation and individual identity is more salient among first-generation immigrants because their immigration experiences are directly related to their everyday life in the host country and their personal history, such as their marriages, their use of languages, or their assimilation to a new culture. Linguistic assimilation is often considered one of the most relevant and important aspects of acculturation (Fillmore 1989; Fillmore 1991; Rumbaut 1997; Veltman 1983), although linguistic assimilation is

not the only important element for one's self-identify in terms of assimilation in ethnic or national identification. Because English is the official language in the Philippines, Filipino immigrants are less likely to have problems in linguistic assimilation. The linguistic assimilation or length of stay in the host country may not be the only significant source of their self-identity. In fact, historical events and current relative positions of the homeland and host country must be considered when examining immigrants' individual self-identity. For example, Lowe (1996) explains how the collective memories of exclusion acts and naturalization laws have exacerbated the situation for Asian-Americans to remain as the foreigner within the U.S. In addition, Lowe (1996) argues that the formation of marginalized identity among Filipino immigrants begins in the homeland, which used to be a Territory of the U.S. Espiritu and Wolf (2001:169–171) also describe a Filipina who called her white husband "American" but called her Filipino-American brothers-in-law "Filipino." Similarly, Espiritu (2001) shows a Filipino man who has lived in the U.S. for 30 years yet does not identify himself as American because the quintessence of being American means being white for some immigrants. This example shows how national identity is racialized.

Non-Caucasian immigrants are racialized as non-American because they do not look racially white. Racialized national identity resonates with personal identity through one's marginalized experiences. Japan does not allow dual citizenship; therefore, becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen means the immigrant individuals have to give up their Japanese citizenship. Yet, because they look

Asian, Japanese immigrant women are also racialized as Japanese nationals even after becoming naturalized U.S. citizens. This explains why the vast majority of Japanese immigrant women immediately answered that their national identity is Japanese in the multi-racial/ethnic society, even though they became naturalized U.S. citizens many years ago. It gives immigrants the reason why they will never be "American," no matter how socioeconomically assimilated or how long they have lived in the host country, because they are not racially white. For example, Yoshiko is a 75-year-old Japanese immigrant woman who came to the U.S. about 50 years ago. She is a linguistically and socioeconomically well-assimilated, naturalized American citizen. She looks much younger than her actual age compared with the same age cohort in Japan due to her attire and makeup, and she has the talkative, non-secretive attitudes about her life that most of the elderly Japanese immigrant women have. Probably what makes Yoshiko look more assimilated than other immigrant women is that the fact she became more comfortable speaking in English than in Japanese. She often speaks in English when her Japanese friends are talking to her in Japanese. Even other elderly Japanese immigrant women described Yoshiko as "Americanized" or "*nihonjinbanare*" (detached from being Japanese). However, when I asked if she feels she is Japanese or American, to my surprise, her definite and immediate answer was "Of course, Japanese!" I said, "Really?… because you look like someone who was born and raised here [in the U.S.]…like *Nisei* (the second generation) … What makes you feel you are Japanese?  She replied:

When I'm the only oriental person in the bowling club or in some

gatherings and meetings, [such as] weddings, or funerals, you see

this oriental face. That reminds me that I am Japanese. Or when I

was treated differently than white people by store clerks,

restaurants, or cashiers. Now the world has changed, but in the

past, when I was young in California, an old man came to us

(husband and wife) in the restaurant and said "what is she doing

here?" My husband said, "she is my wife." Then, the old man said,

"Yellows are taking over the U.S.!" Something like that reminds

me that I am Japanese.

To Yoshiko, the physical or racial factor such as having the "oriental face"

determines her Japanese nationality. On top of her racial or physical difference

from the white Americans, her marginalized experiences fortified her national

identity as Japanese. Yoshiko also said:

No matter how long you stay in the U.S., you are Japanese when

you were born in Japan as Japanese. I don't know why so, but it is

so. I don't try to be like American, but sometimes I cannot recall

how to say certain things in Japanese. Or, reading and writing in

Japanese. I'm forgetting it. But my heart belongs to Japan.

However, when I asked Yoshiko, "So, do you feel you belong to Japan? Not

America?" She immediately answered "The place I belong to (live) is the U.S.

My son is here." She has no intention of going back to Japan.

Her Japanese identity is ascribed to them in American society because of her birthplace and racialization processes that cause her to be seen as forever Japanese and never to be accepted as American.

Transnational Identity: Ascribed and Achieved Affiliation

Several studies indicated that immigrant individuals who identify with both homeland and host country exhibit well-integrated bicultural competence (Jang et al. 2007; LaFromboise et al. 1993; Guarnizo and Díaz 1999) rather than abandoning the culture of origin or refusing to be assimilated. Well-integrated bicultural competence will eventually lead immigrant individuals to develop a transnational identity that is "based on a simultaneous affiliation and sense of belonging to two or more nation-states" (Tsuda forthcoming). From what I observed, it seems that one's affiliation is defined by the ascribed sphere and achieved sphere of the "self." In other words, "the place or nation these immigrant women recognize and identify with as a *fact*" and "the place or nation they *feel* they belong to and *feel* comfortable in" may not be necessarily the same. In other words, one's nation as a part of comprehensive self-identity is defined by both objective *facts* and by subjective *feelings*. As Yoshiko described that her "oriental face" determines her Japanese nationality, many immigrants think their national identity is based on rigid ascribed status, such as race and the place of birth. On the other hand, their place(s) of belonging seems to be based on something they achieved, obtained, or developed such as husbands, offspring, personal relationships, networks, or even information and knowledge they accumulated or

developed over the years to make them feel comfortable and give a sense of belonging. Gender unifies and fortifies their "Japanese-ness in the U.S." for some women with the *fact* they are female and they are *feeling* "moralistic" and "supposed to" to follow the traditional gender roles as wives of western men from Japan. Gender plays a role of the bridge between the ascribed and achieved spheres of immigrant women's identity in the U.S. Their Japanese identity and sex are ascribed, and their American identity and status as wives of American men are achieved; hence they have achieved a sense of belonging in the U.S. with their Japanese-ness.

Jack Citrin, Cara Wong, and Brian Duff (2001:74) stated that "the affective dimension of national identify refers to feelings of closeness to and pride in one's country and its symbols." However, the "feelings of closeness and pride in one's country and its symbols" may not come hand in hand for immigrant individuals, especially those who already decided to live in the host country permanently. Many of them indicate the pride of the homeland, Japan, yet closeness to the host country, the U.S. When immigrant women are asked why they are proud of Japan or being Japanese, they tend to give non-explanatory answers or non-apparent reasons such as "because Japan was the country where I was born," "because I am Japanese and it does not change no matter what happens," or "you should be proud of your own country." Basically, what they are saying is that they are proud of being Japanese because they are Japanese. Their pride tends to be based on ascribed elements; it is not because Japan gave them the opportunities to make a better life or build a career in Japan, whereas their

feelings of closeness to the U.S. tend to be based on action/achievement elements such as having many friends, starting a family, or making career progress in the U.S.

Place of Belonging

Although both ascribed and achieved spheres constitute one's sense of affiliation, the achieved sphere of affiliation seems to be the main factor determining one's sense of belonging to one country over the other for the majority of Japanese immigrant women. Most of immigrant women, including those who indicate the U.S. as their place of belonging, still do visit their siblings and relatives in Japan. Most of them have become naturalized a long time ago, and they know that they are going to stay in the U.S permanently. Many elderly immigrant women mentioned the reason that their belonging place is the U.S. is their offspring, but even some elderly Japanese immigrant women who became widows without a child also expressed their feelings of belonging in the U.S. For instance, one elderly widow without offspring thinks she has been living in the U.S. long enough to know "the people and how things are around here" in [her] residential area. She knows how the retirement system works in the U.S., which makes it easy and comfortable to live by herself. She said:

> Almost all of my Japanese friends who have been living in the U.S.
> for a long time have no intention to go back to Japan to live. I feel
> the same too. Because there is no benefit to go back to Japan.
> When a friend of mine was still young, she was telling everybody

that after her husband dies, she was going to go back to Japan.

They had no child. Now her husband passed away. I asked her if

she is still thinking about moving back to Japan. Then, she said she

is going to stay [in the U.S.], because no one is there [in Japan]

anymore. Even if you still have brothers and sisters in Japan, they

have their own families there.

Other immigrant women made similar comments about the U.S. as their

place to stay because of their own personal networks such as family and close

friendships they built over many years in the U.S. For example, an elderly

immigrant woman who was naturalized in the U.S. about 40 years ago said she

now has no intention to go back to Japan, even though she describes herself as

Japanese. She agreed to leave Japan to live with her husband in a small town in

Minnesota 50 years ago, with the only condition being that her husband would

leave the navy. The reason she asked for this condition was that she did not know

anybody in the U.S. Understandably, she did not want her husband to be deployed

and leave her alone in the U.S. She had no idea if she was going to see her family

in Japan ever again once she left Japan. Her initial thoughts of leaving Japan to

live in the U.S. for her love seem to be a rather tragic and brave heroic resolution.

When I asked if she knew that her place to live permanently would be in the U.S.

at the moment she landed in the U.S., she answered it indirectly with a well-

known and frequently used phrase among Japanese. She said, "Surely, '*Sumeba*

*Miyako*' is well said." A literal translation of "*Sumeba Miyako*" would be "once

you live there, the place will become your *Miyako*" (*Miyako* is the old way to say

the ancient capital city, Kyoto, in Japan, which was once considered to be the best place to live in Japan). In other words, anywhere can be the best place to live once you get used to it. Often, this phrase is translated as "There is no place like home" in English. The phrase indicates her growing feelings of easiness about living in the U.S. permanently or a sense of belonging in the U.S. She said, "I am going to be buried next to my late husband here."

Even though many of elderly immigrant women indicated some social distance from the siblings and relatives in Japan and emphasized social networks or interpersonal relationships they built in the U.S., most of them immediately identified their national identity as Japanese. Tsuda (forthcoming in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*) defines transnational identity as follows: "A transnational identity is based on a simultaneous affiliation and sense of belonging to two or more nation-states. For immigrants, this simply refers to a dual identification with both the sending and receiving countries." Most immigrant individuals identify with both the mother country and the host country in different situations from time to time. These immigrant women mentioned above may have stronger achieved affiliation with the U.S. than Japan; however, their ascribed affiliation to Japan is also a large part of their self-identity. For that reason, the national identity of these immigrant women who indicated weaker Japanese connection and stronger U.S. connection, yet who still hold the consciousness of ascribed affiliation to Japan, should be called transnational rather than simply American identity.

134

One informant had no hesitation in saying the place she belongs to is the U.S. because her "son is here [in the U.S]." Since her parents in Japan passed away a couple of decades ago, her feelings for the U.S. as the place of belonging have become even stronger. Also, since her parents passed away, she rarely visits Japan anymore. Yet, this informant said, "you are Japanese when you were born in Japan. I don't know why so, but it is so," which explains the nature of inseparable connection between the race and national identity among Japanese immigrants. Racial consciousness based on the ascribed national identity as Japanese is not going to change whether one becomes a naturalized American or not.

On the other hand, there are some women who maintain strong social connections with Japan such as close interpersonal relationships with siblings and friends there. Those who have strong achieved affiliation in the U.S. *and* Japan as well as using their ascribed affiliation to define who they are should be categorized as "truly transnational." They feel their place of belonging could be either Japan or the U.S. For example, Chizuko is a widow who likes Tokyo's lifestyle very much. However, she does not think she can go back to Japan permanently because of the high cost of living in Tokyo and her children and their families who are living in the U.S. Chizuko said:

> I want to go back to Japan if I have money. I like the lifestyle in
>
> Japan better than here. … You have to drive here. Everything is by
>
> car, car, car. In Japan, you have to walk to the station, so, the
>
> elderly people can still walk well. I like that. It is so modernized in

135

Tokyo and I like the kind of lifestyle... I can get anything there.

There is nothing you cannot get there. I can go anywhere by

walking and trains. My brother lives in Tokyo and we are very

close. I'm free of reservation or hesitation with my brother (*Otouto*

*ni enryo mo kigane mo nai*). I would love to live in Japan. But

probably I'll stay in the U.S. My children are here and they don't

want me to go back to Japan. If I had the money, I would love to

go back to Japan permanently.

Another woman, Miwa, said she was not sure if she would stay in the U.S.

permanently or go back to Japan. Miwa even mentioned the possibility of moving

to Canada, where her middle-aged daughter and her family live. Miwa maintains a

very strong connection with a group of her old friends and their spouses from her

middle school and high school; they meet every year in Japan. Living in the U.S.

for almost 40 years with her American husband while staying a few months in

Japan every year, Miwa does not know how to define "Japanese" or "American."

She said:

I am not a Japanese person and I am not an American

person,…mmm…should I say…I am a person who understands

both cultures (*Nihon jin demo America jin demo nai…ryouhou no*

*bunka wo wakaru hito tte iunokana*). I don't know what it is called

(*Nanijin to iunoka wakaranaikedo*). …Here [in the U.S.], you

don't say what you are [which country you are from] (*kokodewa*

*nanijin toka iwanai*), it is a melting pot. … You cannot define who

136

"Americans" are. But Japan is very homogeneous. … So [by

observing] some [of my] behaviors or demeanors, my mother told

me that my demeanors are Americanized. In that way, I am weird,

out step with ordinary Japanese. … But I haven't thought about

what I am (… *Demo jibun ga najin nanoka kangaetakoto ga nai*).

Miwa may not know how to define herself in terms of national identity; however,

she did not indicate her anxiety nor insinuate the negative connotation about not

knowing where her national identity is based. As "a person who understands both

cultures," she indicated her feelings of comfort in both nations and expressed no

difficulty with living in the U.S., Japan, or even in Canada when she visits her

daughter. Another elderly woman who lives in the U.S. for half of the year and

the other half in Japan made similar comments that she has never thought about

"what she is" in terms of her national identity, but she feels comfortable living in

both Japan and the U.S.

Overall, most elderly Japanese immigrant women became naturalized

American citizens quite a long time ago. Some of them are "truly transnational" in

the way they feel comfortable living in both the U.S. and Japan, and a few of

them actually do live in the U.S. half of the year and stay in Japan the rest of the

year. A vast majority of the elderly immigrant women said they are Japanese, not

American, when they were asked their national identity; yet, many of them do not

hesitate to say that they feel they belong to the U.S. and are more comfortable

living in the U.S. than in Japan. In short, even though many of these immigrant

Japanese women with the transnational identity may have weaker social

connection with Japan, they did not indicate their intentional effort to create a psychological distance from Japan or clearly identify their own detachment from Japan as some immigrant women with the liminal identity, which I discuss next.

Liminal Identity

Since the achieved sphere of affiliation, such as feelings of closeness or feelings of belonging to the nation(s), requires one's intentional effort in an individual's mundane everyday life experiences, the ascribed sphere of affiliation does not allow individuals to choose; therefore, one can argue that it is impossible to lose the ascribed sphere of Japanese affiliation since one's race or place of birth cannot be "lost." It is true that one's ascribed status cannot be changed; however, immigrant individuals can lose their connections from their ascribed sphere of affiliation by their intentional psychological distance. As the transnational identity—simultaneous affiliation for sending and receiving countries—is possible for immigrants, it is also possible for them to feel simultaneous disconnection from the both countries.

Turner (1969:95) identified the state of liminality, which is "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial." Guided by this concept as the opposite of transnational identity, liminal identity is defined as identification based on the sense of belonging to neither the homeland nor the host country. Turner (1969) sees liminal stages positively since he believes that liminality offer a sense of morality and obligation to social roles. However, Tsuda (2003b) pointed out that

138

prolonged liminality can cause social alienation, detachment, and rootlessness among immigrants. For example, Graves (1976) and Madsen's (1964) studies illustrate the negative consequences of a prolonged state of "neither here nor there." The loss of their identity from the homeland leads to alcoholism, social detachment, and alienation in a discriminatory host country, which in turn lead to other pathological behaviors (Graves 1976; Madsen 1964). Graves and Madsen's studies see the homeland culture as the source of pride for the immigrants and that those who abandon their source of pride will see the negative consequences.

How an individual defines the homeland culture as a source of pride may vary, but the definition of the homeland culture and the people tends to be an idealized version. Over-idealization could be detrimental if an individual sees the idealized definition of the homeland culture and the people as real and tries to live up to this unattainable definition. It makes an immigrant individual think he or she is no longer a member of the homeland any longer. Idealization of the host country is also detrimental if an immigrant sees the idealized definition as real and tries to assimilate to this unattainable definition. It makes an immigrant think that he or she can never be a member of the host country. From my observations, elderly Japanese immigrant women with the liminal identity tend to express their national affiliation and related matters in either an overly idealized or an overly stereotyped manner. Lack of concrete examples, episodes, or future plans at their personal level in their interviews and expression with abstract ideas was observed during the interviews. The lack of concreteness at their personal levels are directly due to their lack of societal connections since the immigrant women's liminality

139

is formed or defined by their feelings of rootless-ness, non-affiliation, or disconnection from both sending and receiving societies.

Erick, in his mid-60s, came to Japan when he was in his early 30s. He met his Japanese wife, Mitsuyo, and lived with her in Japan for a few years. They had felt they were treated somewhat differently from their Japanese neighbors in Japan due to their interracial/national marriage and their racially mixed baby. Erick seemed to enjoy the attention their marriage and baby bring in Japan, but Mitsuyo did not care for the attention. Then they moved to the U.S. and lived in the west coast, where many *chuzaiin*s (Japanese elite businessmen who are sent to Western nations temporarily for business) and their families live for about 5 years. Mitsuyo avoided associating with *chuzaiin*s and their wives because "they look down on us (Japanese wives in interracial/national marriage)." During these 5 years, Mitsuyo had a difficult time adjusting to U.S. life since it was not her wish to come to the U.S. In the meantime, they had an opportunity to stay in Tokyo for one year due to Erick's work in the fifth year of their U.S. life. They took the opportunity and moved back to Japan to stay there only one year. When Erick and Mitsuyo were living in Japan for their second time, they had some issues with a product they bought at a store. The store clerk was not helpful and was ineffective in solving the problem. Frustrated, Mitsuyo demanded to speak with the store manager to make an official complaint. When she came back home and described what happened at the store to Erick, she "burst into tears," according to Erick. What made her cry was not the store clerk's ineffectiveness in solving the problem or the annoying incident she had to deal with. What upset her

was her own assertive behavior she displayed at the store. After living in the U.S. for a while, she learned the American way of dealing with customer service problems. When she was frustrated with the situation in Japan, she demonstrated her American way of dealing with the problem. After she realized how assertively she had talked to the store clerk and the store manager, she thought she is no longer a "*Yamatonadeshiko*."

*Yamatonadeshikio* is a well-known and commonly seen flower (Japanese dianthus superbus), and the name is used to describe the idealized Japanese woman with all traditional graces. This particular flower may not have the strong fragrance, large and gorgeous bloom, or attention-grabbing characteristics like other showy flowers may have, but it possesses a small, modest, and fragile bloom which gives a neat, tidy, pretty, and graceful impression. This floral metaphor is used to describe the beauty of Japanese woman as well as to give the aim for Japanese women to become like this flower. After living in the U.S. for a while, she thought she could no longer identify with the idealized Japanese woman, *Yamatonadeshiko*. Holding rigid, idealized images of a homeland can cause these negative consequences. The source of pride can become distorted by an unrealistic, idealized version of the homeland or people of the homeland. Mitsuyo's definition of being a Japanese woman was the "*Yamatonadeshiko*," who is almost impossible to achieve for any real woman. It is impossible because the image of "*Yamatonadeshiko*" lacks a real sense of womanhood at the concrete and personal level. Because she thought she failed to be like the *Yamatonadeshiko*, she thought she was no longer Japanese. She thought her

141

experiences in the U.S. changed her. Probably her sense of self awareness of being Japanese was sharpened since she moved to the U.S. It is doubtful that she was actually the *Yamatonadeshiko* before she left Japan since it is just an idealized image of a perfect Japanese woman.

She might have not held an overly idealized image of Japanese if she had not married an American man, if she had not lived in the U.S. (and come back in Japan for a year), and if she had not had such a difficult time adjusting to life in the U.S. The fact or causation of becoming non-*Yamatonadeshiko* is inconsequential in this case. The significance of this episode is that Mitsuyo felt that she was no longer culturally Japanese in Japan while she was struggling to assimilate in the U.S. Her disassociation with Japanese wives in the U.S., over-idealization of what a Japanese woman ought to be, and lack of motivation to live in the U.S. are all indicative of her non-affiliation and detachment from both countries.

Since coming back from their one-year stay in Tokyo, they have been living in the U.S. Erick described that Mitsuyo has been concerned about her future and that she is very afraid of the day she becomes a widow in the U.S. She is worried about the financial situation, even though they have a financially stable life. She is worried about her capability to manage the finances and survive in the U.S. when she becomes a widow. Every time Erick tries to explain how the social security and pension systems in the U.S. work and how they are transferrable to Japan, Mitsuyo gets panicky and refuses to listen to Erick's explanations. She repeats that she doesn't understand it. However, returning to her family in Japan

142

does not look like an option for her. She thinks she will find no place for herself in Japan after living in the U.S. so many years now, and her siblings have their own families and lives. There is no room for her to live in her family of origin anymore. She thinks if she is going to live alone in Japan, there is no difference living in the U.S. alone. Again, she indicated her detachment and disaffiliation from both countries.

Mitsuyo was working for a Japanese company on the west coast of the U.S. before they moved to a new state. Since they moved to the new state where few Japanese companies exist, she has been extremely depressed. She wants to find a job, but has not been able to do so. She does not want to apply for American companies. Mitsuyo thinks that she does not have the necessary attitudes, job skills, or English to compete with American applicants. Mitsuyo got really depressed when she met a Japanese career woman in her husband's work place in the new state. This career Japanese woman was a "go-getter" and possessed "too positive" attitudes toward the job-hunting and career prospective. This career woman's "can-do" attitudes and her well-assimilated lifestyle made such a clear contrast with Mitsuyo's lack of confidence that she became depressed even more while the career woman was simply trying to cheer her up, giving advice on how to get a job, and introducing new friends for networking purposes. Even a few decades after she immigrated to the U.S., Mitsuyo still feels unassimilated, unconfident, uncomfortable, and even powerless in the U.S. because she is far from the ideal image of a successful woman in the U.S.—a capable, positive-thinking, go-getter woman. In many ways, Mitsuyo is not

143

affiliated with either country. She feels she does not belong to Japan anymore because she is no longer culturally Japanese enough, but she does not really belong to the U.S. either because she is not confident in the U.S. life settings. Another elderly Japanese immigrant woman, Mari, is an artisan who came to the U.S. when she was 45 years old after her first, husband, a Frenchman, passed away. Knowing she could not afford to provide a college education for her daughters in Japan with her limited income, she remarried her old American friend who just happened to have lost his wife. He offered to financially support her two teenage daughters and Mari's passion for creating Japanese traditional art and craftwork. When she was young, she was very mobile. She traveled a lot in many countries as a backpacker in "the Hippy era," as she describes it, but it has become more difficult for her to get out of her house and make friends nowadays. Her American husband is talking about moving to his hometown in another state, but Mari does not like the idea at all. She says she only knows a few neighbors now. It was difficult enough for her to be a friend of these few people since she does not get out of the house that much.

Mari not only is isolated in the U.S., but she was also isolated in Japan when she was still living there. However, her isolation from her neighbors in Japan was somewhat intentionally created by her and her late husband. When Mari's daughters were still young and her first husband was still alive in Japan, they traveled a lot. They had a long vacation every year to visit her husband's country. After living in a big city for a while in Japan, they moved to a rural area of Japan. One reason for the relocation was the cheaper living cost, but another

important reason was to avoid Japanese people's "eyes" on their racially mixed daughters. Initially, they commuted a long distance from the big city where they lived to the rural area every weekend to fix up an old house before they completely moved into the house. As soon as they moved, her husband passed away. Because of the mobile lifestyle they had chosen, she did not have strong connections with the community, friends, or her family of origin even when she was in Japan. When she was raising young children with her French husband in Japan, her intentional disassociation with people in Japan was not such a serious concern.

Mari explained that there were many routes and networks to get the craftwork jobs in the place she and her family used to live in Japan. Her work was supported and promoted by the artisan guild, but she could not receive enough orders to make profits from her craftwork. There were simply too many artisans in that area of Japan. Without becoming a member of the guild, she could not promote her work, but because the guild, her non-traditional style of work was discouraged. She thought that traditional art craftwork was losing popularity in Japan. Therefore, she thought she would have a better chance in the U.S. to create something new, such as the mixture of Japanese traditional craftwork in the non-traditional shapes such as tapestry or a handbag to match the Western taste, in "the land of free enterprise and equal opportunities." She saw a much greater possibility for Japanese traditional art to thrive in the U.S. since she believes the U.S. accepts new goods without prejudice if they are superior to others. However, her attempt to create a mixture of new and traditional art and craftwork in the U.S.

145

did not lead to economic success. Mari said "I wanted to create and present my artwork in the U.S., but it really did not happen." She blames nothing but herself for her disappointing economic failure from her artwork in the U.S. She said:

> This country values free enterprise, and this means you are free to
> do so, but you have to sell [the work] by yourself. To promote your
> work here, you have to push yourself [in front of people]. If you
> cannot do that, there is nothing you can do about it (*Sorega*
> *dekinainonara shouganai*). For me, the language is one issue.
> Another one is that I don't drive (to promote her work in various
> places). I don't know much about the computer either…

Whatever the ideal images individuals hold for the homeland or the host country, those who are trapped by the idealized images of sending and/or receiving countries seem to develop the prolonged liminal identity. To Mari, the free enterprise and equal opportunity was the ideal image of the U.S., but when she could not fully take advantage of the opportunity, she became less active and less mobile and withdrew further from society. Since Mari came to think that she does not possess what it takes to promote her artwork in the U.S., she has not produced much art for profit at all. She is worried about the day she becomes a widow again in the U.S. by her second husband because of her lack of linguistic, driving, computer skills, as well as any technological matters. Mari also said:

> Maybe people who have a job or are a member of a church have a
> bond between people horizontally. I am totally missing such bonds
> in my life. I came here when I was in my mid-40s. My daughters

were already teenagers, so I didn't really have strong bonds with

other mothers in school, like PTA. I am not a member of any

religious group. I really do not have horizontal connections with

people. …Here I cannot make deep friendships. How should I say,

…I think I am not sharing societal ties here. It is totally

missing…it is cut off (…*putun to kireteiru*).

When she was raising young children with her French husband in Japan, her

disassociation was intentional and it was not such a serious concern. However,

Mari now feels her current difficulty of developing social networks is a serious

concern for her, especially not being able to find a place she feels she belongs to

in either country in her old age. Her comments indicate her belief that she missed

the opportunities to be blended in both societies. She said:

I imagine my difficulty [of finding a comfortable place] is the

same if I go back to Japan [now]. I will have to pay attention to

another's need before my need [and act accordingly] in Japan…

(*Nihon dewa kiwotsukau desho…*). When you are young, no matter

where you are, here or there, you can use your "brake" to modify

your behaviors (act accordingly in the places you are currently

living). But now, I am not sure about being able to use the "brake"

or if I can act [accordingly and properly] as I am supposed to in a

new place, here [in the U.S] or there [in Japan]. In a Japanese

nursing home, I think I will be *"uku."* ("floating/drifted." = I will

147

be an "outcaste.") But in an American nursing home, I'm not sure

if I can be happy because of language, food, people…

Mari said she was seriously thinking about the possibility of returning to Japan if

she becomes a widow again, but right after she said it, she also admitted that it

would be difficult for her to be there by herself. However, she is concerned about

whether she would fit in at an American nursing home either.

Even though Mitsuyo and Mari had very different life histories and

experiences in terms of their upbringings, marriages, and occupations, some

aspects of their lives and the comments they made are amazingly similar. They

can be categorized as women with liminal identity who might have been trapped

by the idealized images of Japan or the U.S. Both of them were born and raised in

Japan, but they see the possibility of returning to Japan in a negative, hopeless

manner. Their fear of isolation in Japan overshadows their ascribed sphere of

belonging to Japan. Every two or three years, both of them do visit their old

parent(s) who are/were living with their siblings' families now due to health

issues, but both of them think that once their parent(s) pass away, they won't be

able to go back to their sibling's house that often, let alone live with their sibling's

family, which would be unrealistic for them. They don't see the point of moving

all way back to Japan to feel the same isolation they are feeling now in the U.S. If

they live in their own household by themselves in Japan, it would not be any

different from the condition in which they believe they will live alone in the U.S.,

without close social networks. Both of them said they still do have some old

friends in Japan, but it does not even occur to them to think these old friends can be their social networks or support for them when they are in need of help. Socioeconomically, both Mitsuyo and Mari do have a stable life due to their husbands' property, earnings, or savings, but both of the women are socially isolated in the U.S., without many American or Japanese friends. They are afraid of becoming a widow due to their lack of technical, social, linguistic, or financial management skills. Even though both of them do have an American husband and offspring in the U.S., they have not established the most significant part of the achieved sphere of affiliation in the U.S. such as *feelings* of belonging or comfort. Probably the most striking similarity was that both of them expressed their psychological distance from their husband. One of them said "this international marriage was a mistake." The other one said even now, she still feels she does not know her husband that well. Their husbands are their lifeline in the U.S. financially and socially, but these women's comments indicate their emotional detachment from their American husbands. Their in-laws are either living far from them or have already passed away. They feel the distance from the U.S. itself, even though they are living in the U.S. They also feel the distance from Japan. Not only the psychological distance, but also the geographical distance from Japan may have exacerbated the alienation from both countries for them. Thus, the liminal identity may be developed due to simultaneous disconnections from both counties.


Psychological Distance in Everyday Life

The psychological distance from one's nation(s) in the interpersonal relationships may influence (or be influenced by) one's development of the well-integrated transnational identity or the prolonged marginalized liminal identity among immigrants. Whether immigrant individuals develop transnational or liminal identities, their identities are translated in their interpersonal relationships. Their psychological distance from the homeland or the host country and whether they remain socially engaged in these countries are clearly related. One's level of integration in the host country is affecting (or affected by) the interpersonal relationships with one's spouse, friends, and family members in the U.S. and Japan. Even though the causation cannot be determined clearly, the correlation between one's level of integration and well-being of interpersonal relationships can be detected. This tendency may be more salient among the first-generation immigrant women with a foreign partner.

Unlike the traditional personality-development theories, self-in-relation theory explains that females develop their identities based on mutuality and empathy within the context of surrounding relationships with others rather than emphasizing individuation in a separated context (Chodorow 1974; Jorda 1997; Surrey 1991). Since the everyday life of Japanese immigrant women is already surrounded by bicultural experiences, these women identify themselves within the context of nations as well as interpersonal relationships. Therefore, it can be assumed that their relationships with their American spouses and in-laws or the relationships with their family in Japan are directly representing these women's psychological distance from either country. If an immigrant woman has a close,

intimate relationship with her American husband in the U.S., she is more likely to feel closer to the host country than a woman who is facing a crisis of divorce with her American husband. If an immigrant woman has a bad relationship with her family members in the homeland, she would feel more distance from the homeland than a woman who has a close, congenial relationship with her family in the homeland.

For example, one elderly immigrant woman stated that her parents were against her marriage with an American service man. Her parents were concerned that their *sekentei* (social appearance) would be damaged if their daughter married an American man. With the hope that their daughter would give up the marriage, they threatened to disown her if she married the American man. She married him anyway and came to the U.S, and she stopped contacting her family. There was no communication with her family in Japan for more than two decades. When her mother became sick, her family finally contacted her. She understood her parents' position, and she did not blame them because her parents were very traditional and held a strong prejudice and misconception about the relationship between Japanese women and American service men. She said "I felt I lost my country" during the long period of no interactions with her family of origin in Japan. She was also not really happy with her in-laws in the U.S. because of the difference in their personal lifestyles. Therefore, she has never felt she belongs to her husband's family either. Her simultaneous disassociation from her family in Japan and her in-laws in the U.S. made her feel she belonged to neither country. Her personal relationships were projected into her affiliation with the countries.

151

The personal relationships with the spouse, the family of origin, and the in-laws

are not the only sources of projection for one's national affiliation for immigrant

women. Another immigrant woman said she felt she was accepted and "welcomed

by this country" when her American neighbor invited her to the house for the first

time, which was the start of a close friendship with this particular neighbor. Since

her late in-laws used to live far away in a different state and were less involved

with her and her husband, this neighbor represented the affiliation of the host

country for her.

The differences between liminal and transnational identities in terms of the

psychological distance in the interpersonal relationships may be observed in their

behavioral or thinking patterns among immigrants. For example, when the elderly

Japanese immigrant women were asked if they would feel comfortable to get help

from other people in Japan, many of them used the term "*Nihon dewa

kiwotsukau*" or they "have to pay attention to another's needs before their own

needs in Japan." In other words, they are reluctant to get help from others or feel

hesitation in seeing their relatives or old friends in Japan as a part of their social

networks upon which to depend. One of the elderly women stated that Japanese

are raised not to seek help from others, because asking help means "to make other

people involved in your own troubles" ("*hitoni meiwaku wo kakeru"*). Therefore,

it is not even appropriate to ask or count on friends' support because a person who

pays attention to other people's needs should know better than making other

people feel involved in his or her own troubles. Interestingly, many elderly

immigrant women, especially women with the transnational identity, said they do

support each other in the U.S. by offering a ride to hospitals and clinics, and they are happy to do so. Even individuals who hold the strong belief of "not to making other people get involved in your own troubles" are willing to help others; however, they hope they do not have to be the receivers of help from others. This tendency was more apparent among the women with the liminal identity.

It was interesting to observe that there are clear differences between the liminal and transnational identities on the subjects of "getting help from others," "paying attention to another's need before one's own (*ki wo tsukau*)," and "not making other people get involved in your troubles (*meiwaku wo kakenai)*." The interview of elderly immigrant women with liminal identities indicated that it does not even occur to them to think that they could build close friendships with others as social networks to depend on. On the other hand, one well-assimilated elderly immigrant widow with a transnational identity said "I try to do what I can do …because I may need some help in the future. Even if I don't get the help from the same people I helped in the past. …What goes around comes around."

Even some elderly women with transnational identity thought it is difficult to count on relatives and friends in Japan due to their idealized image of what proper Japanese are supposed to do in their interpersonal relationships, that is "not to make other people get involved in your problems." However, it may be quite possible for women with transnational identity to develop social networks to rely on in the U.S. On the other hand, for those individuals with the liminal identity, the achieved sphere of affiliation in the U.S. such as creating and maintaining social networks seems to be a difficult task. In addition, their geographical

distance creates social as well as psychological distance from Japan, resulting in overshadowing their ascribed sphere of belonging to Japan. Thus, their rootless-ness is exacerbated.

Conclusion

The salient group identities such as nation and gender among the elderly Japanese immigrant women are highlighted by their international immigration experiences. Their empirical understanding of national identity is personalized and becomes a significant part of self-identity. How elderly Japanese immigrant women identity with their nation(s) becomes relevant when they are talking about specific concerns for the aging experiences and their plans for their futures. How the elderly Japanese immigrant women experienced historical events in a particular timing in their live, what it means to be a woman, what it means to be a Japanese, and what they are going to do with their future at the every last stage of their lives are all interconnected.

As one elderly woman said, to keep performing a traditional gender role represents her Japanese-ness—feminized Japanese national identity can permeate as one's self-identity and bring better understandings and social integration at the personal level for some women. Also, racialized national identity resonates with personal identity through immigrants' marginalized experiences. It explains why the vast majority of Japanese immigrant women immediately answered that their national identity was Japanese and explained why they feel they will never be

"American" no matter how well they are socioeconomically assimilated or how long they have lived in the host country.

What determines whether these women to develop transnational or liminal identities depend on whether they develop social networks in the U.S. and maintain the social connection with Japan. Whether or not one can develop social networks in the U.S. depend on the individual's personal resources such as possessing a sociable personality as well as occupation which gives opportunity to interact with American colleagues. Likewise, an occupation that allows or even requires traveling to Japan frequently helps an individual to maintain the connection with Japan. However, the meaning of "maintain the social connection with Japan" is not necessarily limited to the actual social interaction with local people in Japan or physical presence in Japan. It can be just a feeling or psychological connection to Japan. Many women feel they socially belong to the U.S. and no longer to Japan. They feel don't fit in Japan anymore, but they continue to identify with Japan. That is the basis for their transnational identification. Their Japanese identity is ascribed to them in American society because of their birthplace and racialization processes that cause them to be seen as forever Japanese and never to be accepted as American.

One's national affiliation is defined by the ascribed sphere and the achieved sphere of self-identification. Even though most of immigrant women are naturalized and indicate the U.S. as their place of belonging and intend to stay in the U.S. permanently, the vast majority of them still recognize their national identity as Japanese. Most of them still do visit their siblings and relatives in

155

Japan. However, some of those women with the transnational identity indicate their social distance and hesitation to count on siblings and relatives in Japan as a source of support and emphasize more the social networks or interpersonal relationships they have built in the U.S. with American husbands, offspring, personal relationships, networks in the U.S., or even information and knowledge about their local area they have accumulated over the years. These things represent the nation they feel they belong to and in which they feel comfortable. At the same time, the ascribed status such as one's place of birth or race also represents the nation the immigrant women recognize and identify with as a part of comprehensive self identity since transnational identity is a matter of degree in terms of one's simultaneous affiliation in both countries.

As many elderly immigrant women mention the reason of their belonging to the U.S. is their achieved affiliation, which tends have a larger impact on the degree of closeness to the nation among immigrants than the ascribed status of affiliation. The achieved sphere of affiliation, such as feelings of closeness or feelings of belonging to the nation(s) requires one's continuous intentional effort in mundane everyday life, while the ascribed sphere of affiliation does not allow individuals to intentionally choose. One may argue that liminal identity is impossible because an individual cannot lose the ascribed sphere of affiliation. It is true that one's ascribed status, such as race and the place of birth, cannot be changed; however, immigrant individuals can lose their connections from their ascribed sphere of affiliation by their psychological distance.

The immigrant women with liminal identity showed their status of non-affiliation with either country with their idealized images of Japan or the U.S. Their psychological and social distance from their host country and homeland is observed in their personal relationships. Since the everyday life of Japanese immigrant women is surrounded by bicultural experiences, these women identify themselves within the context of nations as well as interpersonal relationships. The relationship with an American spouse and in-laws or the relationships with their family in Japan are directly representing these women's psychological distance from either country. The elderly immigrant women with liminal identities expressed greater stress and anxiety for their old age and talked about the possibility of returning to Japan or staying in the U.S. in a very pessimistic manner, while those with transnational identity expressed their aging and everyday experiences in a more positive manner.

Most of the elderly Japanese immigrant women I interviewed are holding either transnational identity or liminal identity. I could not find any women who identify with only Japan or only with the U.S. There were a few elderly immigrant women who used to think they were totally American when they were young, but these women's identities have shifted back to Japan as they age. It is understandable that few elderly immigrant women would identify mainly as American since they are from Japan. Likewise, few elderly immigrant women would identify only as Japanese since they have been living in the U.S. for the most of their lives. Therefore, most of them identify with both countries, or they identify with neither country to an extent.

157

Overall, national identities do have significant impact on how the elderly immigrants see and deal with their aging process. In this aspect, the next chapter will discuss how the elderly Japanese immigrant women with different national identities plan for the last stages of their lives and how their evaluation of their own plan is translated into their personal satisfaction or anxiety with regard to their aging.

Chapter 5

AGING, IDENTITY, AND PLANS FOR OLD AGE: HOW IDENTITY IS
RELATED TO CONFIDENCE AND ANXIETY FOR OLD AGE

When transnational migration and return migration are discussed, attention
is usually given to the younger population, especially since their focus is on
economic behavior and its consequences (e.g., Zhao 2002; Ramos 1992). The
first-generation elderly immigrant population has been largely neglected from the
topic of transnational and return migration so far. The identity of immigrants
based on their native land and host country is a large part of their self-identities.
Immigrants' national identifies may affect or be affected by how they perceive
aging and how they prepare for and cope with their own aging in the host country
or homeland. Studying the views of the elderly immigrants on the various kinds of
care and support systems is becoming increasingly important in the U.S., a nation
of immigrants, with a rapidly aging population.

Some concepts and customs in terms of aging and care for the elderly are
almost universal. For example, filial piety is actually a highly valued concept in
both collectivist and non-collectivist cultures (Cheung, Kwan, and Ng 2006).
Traditionally, females have been the filial caregivers to the elderly (Abel 2001),
which results in great personal and career sacrifices for females (Hamon 1992) in
both cultures. However, some concepts and customs regarding the aging process
and care-giving are more important and unique in a specific ethnic group or
country. For example, the Meiji Civil Code of 1898 in Japan outlined the culture
of primogeniture in which the first son inherits all properties from his parents

(Kondo 1990:124–127; Ishida 1971). In exchange, his wife becomes the caregiver for the husband's parents; this system has prevailed in Japan until today (Asai and Kameoka 2005). In other words, the care for the elderly is specifically the responsibility of daughter-in-laws (Ishida 1971; Asai and Kameoka 2005) based on the idea of family continuity (Kondo 1990:124–127), and this is the basis for Japan's well-established means of caring for the elderly and is a quasi-official social security system for them (Ogawa & Retherford 1993). In addition, the consciousness of neighbors' surveillance leads to the consciousness of keeping good *sekentei*, or social reputation (Inoue 1977), which results in Japanese families feeling ashamed when the elderly members of the family are cared for by nonfamily members or formal services such as day care or government/commercial-based nursing homes (Asai and Kameoka 2005; Momose and Asahara 1996).

The elderly Japanese immigrants are not restricted by these social expectations and norms from the homeland. At the same time, because most of them came to the U.S. many years ago either by themselves or only with their American husbands, they do not have their kin from their family of origin in the U.S. They do not have the well-established means or patterns of the aging process or kin-based support systems that the elderly people are expected to have in Japan. Research shows that friends can be effective psychological supporters for the elderly, especially for those without children and those who have lost their spouse (Connidis and Davis 1990; Beckman and Houser 1982). These studies do not necessarily give special attention to the immigrant population, but the friend-

based support system can be a valid substitution for the kin-based support system among elderly Japanese immigrants, if they do not bring and hold the social norms of *sekentei* from the homeland and have adopted more American identities and social norms.

Asai and Kameoka (2005) argue that Japanese families are often misunderstood to hold the strong value of filial piety. Japanese families are perceived to prefer filial care over the formal care systems such as government-based or commercial-based facilities; however, the truth is that the concept of *sekentei* prevents Japanese caregivers from utilizing nonfamily based care systems (Asai and Kameoka 2005). Although their study population was Japanese people in Japan, Asai and Kameoka (2005) extended their scope to the Japanese immigrants and their descendants in the U.S. for the further consideration. Asai and Kameoka (2005:117) conclude their study as follows:

> The extent to which *sekentei* is relevant to Japanese Americans is
> unclear. The influence of *sekentei* on the behaviors of third- and
> fourth-generation Japanese Americans may be diminished yet
> manifested in more subtle ways and may be extinguished among
> those who have intermarried. The relevance of *sekentei* among
> these highly acculturated Japanese Americans, however, remains an
> important empirical question that needs to be addressed in future
> research.

To answer their own question about the relevancy of *sekentei* in the U.S. as the future research agenda, Asai and Kameoka (2005) surmise that the U.S.-born

grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Japanese immigrants may not show any significant behavioral differences influenced by *sekentei*. However, Asai and Kameoka (2005) insinuate that the children (the second generation) of Japanese immigrants and the first-generation Japanese immigrants may restrict themselves to utilizing nonfamily based support systems with the *sekentei* concept even in the U.S.

Shelley Taylor et al. (2004) found that Asians in their home countries, Asians (immigrants) in the U.S., and Asian Americans in the U. S. utilize social support less than European Americans. This finding may partially support Asai and kameoka's (2005) speculation. Taylor et al. (2004) explain that the East Asian cultural norms discourage the active engagement in social support networks for the purpose of solving one's problems. While Taylor et al.'s explanation may be accurate and adequate for well-generalized Asian populations, studying the effects of cultural and historical specificity on elderly individuals' lives becomes crucial in order to have a better understanding of the specific population and to determine whether the studies are to be used to develop policies or welfare programs for the elderly from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. For example, one cannot assume that how the elderly Japanese immigrants who became naturalized American citizens a couple of decades ago feel and the elderly U.S.-born Japanese Americans (children of Japanese immigrants) feel would be the same in terms of their aging. Due to the lack of sufficient data, scholars have to combine all "Asians" and "others" as one group in most quantitative studies in the area of immigration, gerontology, and racial relations. Children of immigrants and the

162

first-generation immigrants are often categorized as "immigrants" to find

statistical significance, resulting in general explanations such as that East Asian

culture discourages utilization of social supports, as Taylor et al. (2004) indicated.

In fact, several well-designed, detail-oriented, quantitative studies have been

conducted concerning the relationship between the levels of assimilation, ethnic

identification, available care systems, and/or self-evaluated well-being among

elderly immigrants (e.g., Jang et al. 2007; Angel and Angel 1992; Beyene,

Becker, and Mayen 2002; Mui, 1999). Although these numerous well-designed

studies take ethnic identity into consideration for gerontology studies as a control

variable, few of them focus on *how* national or transnational identity would affect

one's plan of utilizing various kinds of support systems for their old age and how

the plans would affect his or her anxiety level for their old age. In addition, it is

not well-documented how immigrant women with well-integrated transnational

identities, as well as those with prolonged liminal identities, would construct their

support systems in their old age.

In this chapter, I will indicate how different types of indentify seem to be

mainly related to whether the immigrant women feel confident or anxious about

their old age by describing the four different types of elderly Japanese immigrant

women as shown by the following typology: elderly women with a transnational

identity who have a decisive plan to stay in the U.S., elderly women with a

transnational identity who are indecisive about where to stay for the rest of their

life, elderly women with a liminal identity who have a decisive plan to stay in the

U.S., and elderly women with a liminal identity who have not decided where to live for the rest of lives.

Typology

Less Anxiety ←————————————————→ More Anxiety

| U.S. as a better choice?<br><br>YES | **Transnational identity with decisive plan to stay in the U.S.**<br><br>*Strong confidence in social security and retirement in the U.S.<br><br>*Little knowledge about Japanese social security and retirement in Japan | **Liminal identity with decisive plan to stay in the U.S.**<br><br>*Little confidence in social security and retirement in the U.S.<br><br>*Even less confidence in Japanese social security and retirement in Japan |
|---|---|---|
| U.S. as a better choice?<br><br>NO | **Transnational identity with indecisive plan**<br><br>*Confidence in social security and retirement in the U.S.<br><br>*Confidence in social security and retirement in Japan | **Liminal identity with indecisive plan**<br><br>*Least confidence in social security and retirement in the U.S.<br><br>*Least confidence in social security and retirement in Japan |

By interviewing these four different types of women and their perspectives on the plans for their old age, some clear distinctions are observed. For example, the elderly Japanese immigrant women with transnational identity tend to show less anxiety and more confidence in aging. They see their friends as one of the sources to get support when they need help in their old age. The consciousness of *Sekentei* (social appearance) seems to be minimum or even non-existent among

164

these women. Confidence in retirement in Japan does not mean that the elderly immigrant women with transnational identity are counting on the support from their family and relatives with a good *sekentei* approach. Those elderly women with a transnational identity who have an indecisive plan are not conscious of *sekientei* even in Japan; they are not necessarily counting on their family and relatives in Japan because they are comfortable enough to use various non-family based support systems even in Japan.

Contrarily, the elderly Japanese immigrant women with a liminal identity tend to show more anxiety and less confidence in aging. The difficulty of constructing their support systems with their friends for old age is based on avoidance of putting a burden on someone else (*meiwaku wo kakenai*). Their lack of confidence in retirement in Japan is due to either their *sekentei* consciousness or their lack of belonging in Japan. Some elderly immigrant women with a liminal identity expressed their conflicting thoughts that they are supposed to rely on family and relatives to keep a good *sekentei* instead of spending all of their life savings to live comfortably in a nursing home in Japan. Even though this plan is pondered to avoid any burdens on the family members, much consideration is needed for the fact the *seken* (the society) may see the plan as too individualistic or even egoistic to leave no money behind for the family members at all. Some of those women with the liminal identity feel that they don't even have any family members and relatives to return to in Japan. Those women tend to end up leaning toward the plan to stay in the U.S. by default. They seem to be still simulating the

165

ideas of "what to do in their old age," but it seems very difficult for them to create concrete plans at their personal levels.

Indecisiveness for the future plan for women with a liminal identity exacerbates their anxiety, while it creates "more options" for the elderly women with a transnational identity. Decisiveness for the future plan for immigrant Japanese women with a liminal identity does not increase their easiness for the future, while the decisive plan to stay in the U.S. seems to be supported by confidence in the American social security and retirement system among the elderly Japanese women with a transnational identity. The significant difference seems to be that those with a transnational identity have confidence in the retirement system of the country they will retire in. Those who have decided to stay in the U.S. have confidence in the retirement system in the U.S., and those who are unsure have confidence in both countries. Liminal identity makes these women lack confidence in the retirement system in both countries regardless of whether they plan to remain in the U.S. or are not sure which country they will retire in. From these observations, with more detailed examples, the conclusion will be drawn in terms of the relationship between the national identity and plans for aging. Identity does not seem to specifically relate to one's preference of living arrangement for the future such as whether they prefer filial care or formal, commercial-based care; however, identity does seem to mainly influence (or be influenced by) whether these elderly women *feel* confident about old age or are anxious and worry about it.

166

Transnational Identity with Decisive Plan to Stay in the U.S.

Japanese immigrant women who decided that they are going to stay in the U.S. for the rest of their lives tend to show satisfaction with the living conditions or arrangements in the U.S. and with their decision. Most of these women identity with Japan as their national identity, but they express their stronger connection to or sense of belonging in the U.S. Compared with women with liminal identity, those women with the stronger connection with the U.S. emphasize their social network beyond their families and do not plan to rely on family members in their old age. However, to my surprise, some of them still hold the filial care ideology as an ideal or normative situation even though this ideal is not necessarily practiced by them. Although some of them even expressed their preference for the traditional Japanese pattern of filial care, their preference is due to the personal affinity and closeness in their parent-child relationship rather than due to the *sekentei* consciousness.

A socioeconomically well-assimilated elderly immigrant woman, Aki, has grandchildren in the same community where she lives and maintains close relationships with them. Aki is a widow and a naturalized American citizen who lost her only son in a car accident many years ago. She refuses to live with and depend on her grow-up grandchildren but she mentioned her wishful thoughts to live with her son. "If my son was still alive, then it may be a different story, but grandchildren are different. They have their lives." Aki's comment indicates her preference of living with her son's family if he were still alive. However, it is not even an option for her to think about counting on her grandchildren if (when) her

health starts deteriorating. She said "No! I do not want to depend on them at all. I have always been independent. I do not want to put a burden on them." Her wish to live with her son will never come true, so she has already checked several independent living homes with her friends. She wanted to sell her condominium in the up-scale neighborhood last year, but the housing market has been so undesirable for the sellers that she decided to stay in the condo one more year. She laughed and said "I may stay here longer. When I cannot go upstairs to my bedroom, then I really will have to move. But right now I can jump up and go [to the upstairs] (*pyon, pyon ikeru*)." Aki thinks an independent assisted-living home is an ideal form for the elderly because "I would rather pay fees and be cared for by the professionals. … You have your own living space with kitchen, bath, everything, but if you don't want to cook, you don't have to cook. There is a cafeteria too."

Aki indicated her preference of living with her only and late son if he were still alive, but this preference does not seem to be due to her effort to keep the good *sekentei* (social reputation /appearance). If Aki were to care about her *Sekentei,* she would not choose assisted living because someone who cares about the *sekentei* might imagine that utilizing assisted living will give the impression of herself as a neglected grandmother by her grandchildren. Such a thought does not even occur to Aki. Her preference seems to be purely due to her good memories and affinity for her late son since she does not talk about her fear of utilizing the formal commercial-based support system nor does she talk negatively about the institution itself.

Almost all of the immigrant Japanese women said they are not expecting to be cared for by their offspring in their same household. However, some of them expressed their wish or responsibility to be a care-giver for their own parents in Japan. Again, this is more like affinity for their parents, rather than due to the *sekentei* norm to show that they are dutiful daughters, because they did not mention about care-giving to their husband's parents. For instance, another well-assimilated, especially linguistically well-assimilated, elderly Japanese woman, Miyuki, said she has no regrets about immigrating to and spending most of her life in the United States except one thing. She regrets that she could not take care of her aged mother in Japan who was a widow for many decades. Miyuki was already in the U.S. when her mother became ill. Following the social norms of filial care in Japan, Miyuki's sister-in-law (her elderly brother's wife) took care of her sick mother at their home, but her mother and her sister-in-law did not get along well. Miyuki was the youngest among her siblings, and Miyuki had the closest relationship with the mother during the childhood compared with her siblings. Now Miyuki is in her 70s, but she is not worried about her own aging in a foreign country because, as she described "I know the retirement system here. I don't even know how Japan's social security system works. I have to re-learn Japanese life again. But I know I can survive here. I have confidence and experiences … I am not rich, but the house is paid off, and I am doing OK financially." Miyuki wanted to take care of her parents, but she is not expecting her child to take care of her. She said she can purchase the services if her health

169

deteriorates. She said she is a "survivor" in the U.S. because her personal life experiences gave her a strong sense of self reliance for her old age in the U.S. Both Aki and Miyuki could not do what they wanted to do in terms of care-giving and care-taking within their parent-child relationships, but they are not worried about the inevitable day in the future when their health deteriorates in the U.S. Both of them mentioned that they know how the social security system works in the U.S., but they have very little knowledge about how the Japanese retirement system and social security system work nowadays. Miyuki said, "I have to re-learn everything (and re-enroll in the social security system) in Japan" if she were to return permanently. They also stated that they have the financial resources to purchase the necessary services in the U.S., but that is not the only reason why they feel comfortable about their aging. They are comfortable about utilizing a friend-based, informal support system in the case of emergency without feeling responsible for "putting a burden on" friends' shoulders. As Asai and Kameoka (2005:117) pointed out, it is important to consider empirically how relevant the *sekentei* concepts are in the U.S. in terms of utilization of supports for old age among children of Japanese immigrants. Asai and Kameoka (2005) speculate that U.S.-born descendants of Japanese immigrants may not show any significant behavioral differences, but *sekentei* may make the first-generation Japanese immigrants reluctant to utilize non-family based supports even in the U.S. environment. However, my research indicates that even among some of the first-generation Japanese immigrants in the U.S., *Sekentei* does not seem to have much significant influence, especially among highly assimilated immigrants. The main

170

reason these women do not care about *sekentei* is that they are in the U.S., where they do not feel such Japanese social pressures.

As Aki explained her reason for not counting on her grandchildren to live with her is that she feels comfortable asking help and support from her friends. She said:

> I do not want to be [restricted by] paying attention [to grandchildren's feelings to keep the harmony with them]. (*Ki wo tsukai taku nai.*) … I don't want to put a burden on my grandchildren. (*Meiwaku wo kaketakunai*) They have their lives. I would rather ask my friends for a little help. I am really happy when my friends are close to me and giving me a helping hand.

Aki said she does not want to count on her grandchildren's help, because it may be troublesome, or to put a burden on her grandchildren, but that it is "*ureshii*" (happy) when she is receiving her friends' help. She does not feel she is causing trouble or "putting a burden on" her friends. This view is not representing her distance from the grandchildren or her selfishness to take advantage of her friends. It is because of her consideration for the timing of the life course her grandchildren are going through right now as young parents. Aki and other informants said that they feel their middle-aged children or grandchildren are too busy to provide help, but their friends who are in the similar age cohort may have more time and flexibility, which makes them feel more comfortable to in asking for help. This pattern of thinking could be based on the practical matter of whether their middle-aged children are available to care for them rather than on

the elderly immigrant women's train of thinking based on their assimilation or transnationality. However, the *sekentei* consciousness in Japan does not discriminate the timing of the life course children and grandchildren are currently going through in terms of filial piety care. A person with a strong *sekentei* consciousness would assume the help from the middle-aged children or young-adult grandchildren regardless of their busy work schedule. In that sense, the pattern of thinking that Aki and other informants have is distinct from the *sekentei* consciousness in Japan.

Another reason of Aki's preference of receiving help from her friends is her interpretation of receiving "helping hands" from friends in the U.S. culture. Many elderly Japanese immigrant women who feel comfortable in aging in the host country expressed their easy feelings of utilizing friends' help. Another elderly Japanese immigrant woman shared her interpretation of building social networks in the U.S. in terms of taking and offering a helping hand. She made a comparison between Japanese and Americans in terms of "helping others." She thinks Americans know how to take someone's help when they need it and know how to offer when they can as a part of everyday life; thus, there is no special effort or sense of burden between the two parties.

> The ways they build the relationships are different here. It is so
>
> much easier to build [relationships] here [in the U.S.]. People help
>
> you. I can ask non-Japanese friends to help [me or my event] out.
>
> When I'm working on a [non-profit] project, it is easier to ask
>
> (*kigaruni tanomiyasui,*) my *gaijin* (non-Japanese or foreign)

172

friends to be the volunteers and helpers [than to ask Japanese

people]. … But with Japanese people…, they do not volunteer or

help easily because they feel they are obligated to take full

responsibility (once they have decided to help). Even if they do

help, they will do it so unwillingly because of *giri* (sense of

obligation). Then it will cause a problem later.

This elderly immigrant Japanese woman sees that Americans do not use a double

standard. If they don't want to help, they will just decline the volunteer

opportunity right away. She thinks American people know how to enjoy helping

and volunteering their time, but because a large part of their motivation for

helping others is based on their enjoyment, they do not follow through the job and

relinquish their assumed responsibility easily ("*Uraga nai kawarini yameru nomo*

*hayai.*"). She said "*sonohen wa assari shiteiruwane.*" ("In that way, they do it

with the clear-cut manner.") Even though they might not fulfill the responsibility

for the task this woman asks for, she still prefers to take a willing helping hand

from her non-Japanese friends over her Japanese friends who are helping

unwillingly due to their sense of obligation. Knowing her friends are willing and

actually enjoying helping with her events outweighs the feelings of receiving

unwilling obligation-like help from Japanese even though she can expect that the

tasks will be fulfilled in a responsible manner.

This woman sees that Japanese are not good at enjoying the reciprocity of

giving and taking helping hands due to their sense of obligation and avoidance of

burdening others. Enjoying volunteering as a personal recreation or the ability to

173

feel that offering and receiving a helping hand, especially being able to ask for assistance, is a sign of companionship. Not feeling too much of the *giri* (sense of obligation) and *meiwaku wo kakeru* (putting a burden on others) may be necessary skills or a personal quality to build social networks. This quality will build one's informal, friends-based support system that goes beyond the family support as well as that of a commercial or non-profit based formal support system. Although this woman made a comparison between Japanese in the U.S. and non-Japanese in terms of the meaning of offering and receiving a helping hand, her comments do explain why Aki, the well-assimilated elderly woman who associates with mainly Japanese friends, said she was *"ureshii"* (happy) when her Japanese friends offer helping hands. From Aki's comments, it is clear that she does not feel she is "putting a burden on" her friends. Aki used to think she was an American and did not associate with other Japanese people, but now she has been feeling and recognizing her Japanese roots more vividly for the past several years. She associates with mostly Japanese friends nowadays and feels comfortable receiving help from her Japanese friends. Being offered a helping hand by Japanese friends, she probably interprets that her friend actually enjoys the company with Aki, who needs the help at the moment. In this sense, Aki surpassed the Japanese *giri* (sense of obligation) or avoidance of *meiwaku wo kakeru* (putting a burden on others) concepts so well that she has been able to create her informal, friend-based support system with her Japanese friends in the U.S.

Another well-assimilated woman, Machiko, retired from a retail store a few years ago. She said she will definitely stay in the U.S., and she is not worried

174

at all about the future or physical incapacitation due to old age in the host country. Machiko thinks she would not "fit in" in Japan anymore with her bright, dyed hair color, makeup, and attire, even though she identifies herself as Japanese. She divorced a couple of decades ago, and now she is cohabiting with her American partner. This woman's view is unique in the way that her confidence in her old age in the U.S. is not based on her financial readiness at all. Michiko hosts monthly spiritual group gatherings with other elderly Japanese immigrant women at her son's house. Probably for that reason, her concrete plan for comfortable living at the very last stage of her life is based on her attitudes rather than the financial readiness as most Japanese immigrant women mentioned.

> If you worry about [becoming old] too much, you will receive all
>
> the negativity, and it will become true. Relax and not to worry,
>
> then, everything will be fine. Smile is the antenna of receiving
>
> happiness. … When the old people expect that people are supposed
>
> to be nice, then, it is not good. If you wanted to be treated nicely at
>
> a nursing home, you need to show application. When a friend of
>
> mine went to the nursing home, the staff members were not
>
> friendly and treated her poorly. But when she repeated "thank you"
>
> for any and every little thing the staff members do, they started to
>
> change their attitude toward her. It is human nature.

As almost all immigrant women mentioned their plan of utilizing assistant living and nursing home, Machiko also mentioned about utilizing a formal (non-profit or commercial-based) support system. In addition, as many immigrant women with

the decisive plan to stay in the U.S. mentioned, Machiko also described

availability and the importance of friendship and social networks. The unique part

of this woman's view compared to other immigrant women is that she trusts in the

help of the government and retirement system almost blindly in the host county.

For example, she said:

> I am not worried about it. When you are still healthy, you have a
>
> good time with other people, lunch, and gatherings. If you cannot
>
> sustain your household, you can go to assistant living. Then, when
>
> you really cannot move yourself, you can go to a nursing home and
>
> wait until the time comes. There are many institutions and systems
>
> to go through here. If you don't have money, you are not going to
>
> live in a very nice retirement place, but still, there are some places
>
> you can go. It's better to have money so that you can stay in a nicer
>
> facility, but if not, you can still find some places. The government
>
> will help you out if you have very little money. So, I am not
>
> worried about it. … Have little gatherings and lunch with your
>
> friends and have fun. … I think all the elderly people who reside
>
> here are living like that, making groups, join a church group… I
>
> didn't save much money, even when I was in my 40s or 50s, but I
>
> still feel everything will be OK.

This much trust in the host country's retirement and social security system is

unusual for the immigrant Japanese women, especially given the fact that she did

not save much when she was young. However, Machiko's comments indicate that

176

one's financial security may not be the biggest safety net for the elderly

immigrant women in the host country. In fact, as described later, many elderly

Japanese immigrant women who do have enough savings and property also

indicated their anxiety in aging in the U.S.

Overall, elderly women with transnational identity who have a decisive

plan to stay in the U.S. for the rest of their lives expressed their confidence and

very little anxiety for the day their health will deteriorate in the future, regardless

of their current marital status or the existence of offspring. Those women tend to

be naturalized senior citizens who are well assimilated socioeconomically and

linguistically, with much stronger connection with the local communities in the

U.S. than with Japan. Their readiness for the last stage of their life is based on

their financial resources, self-confidence, knowledge of the retirement system in

the U.S., or even the governmental support such as the social security system, and

their personal social networks that they have been constructing. Some women had

a career and some did not, but regardless of their work experience, they tend to

show their confidence in their knowledge of the U.S. retirement system and in

their survival skills in the U.S. These social networks are built by going beyond

the concept of Japanese sense of obligation or avoidance of putting one's burden

onto others. Truly enjoying the reciprocity of offering and receiving assistance

and believing it as a sign of affinity and companionship are necessarily skills to

build social networks. A person with this particular quality can build her informal,

friend-based support system that goes beyond the family support system as well

as commercial- or non-profit-based formal support system.

177

Transnational Identity with Indecisive Plan

As described above, most elderly Japanese immigrant women with transnational identity know that they will stay in the U.S. for the rest of their lives, and they are not too concerned about getting old in the U.S. They identify Japan as their national identity; however, the achieved elements of their identity such as a sense of belonging in the U.S. are generally stronger than in Japan. They recognize and identify their Japanese roots by their ascribed elements such as their place of birth and physical characteristics; however, many of them have not maintained their close social networks in Japan. A very few elderly immigrant women actually maintain their networks in Japan. It usually requires their physical presence in Japan in order to maintain their close relationships with their siblings, relatives, and friends. It is a difficult task to visit Japan frequently and regularly for most immigrant women, especially when they are employed, raising children in the U.S., or lacking the financial resources, but some women have been able to visit Japan regularly. Those women who have been able to visit Japan periodically and frequently hold the transnational identity that is based on not only the ascribed elements such as their place of birth, but also based on the achieved elements such as a sense of belonging in the relationships with friends and family in Japan and in the U.S. Those women tend to be indecisive about their plan as to whether they are going to stay in the host country for the rest of their life or return to the homeland at the last stage of their life.

For example, there is a retired Japanese immigrant woman in her mid-60s

who lives half of the year in Japan and the other half in the U.S. She was able to

visit Japan regularly for the past 45 years because her career required frequent

trips to Japan. She should be categorized as one of the very earliest of the career-

oriented, well-educated, internationalist women. She graduated from a well-

known, prominent private university in Japan. Her American husband was not a

serviceman, and her permanent residency status in the U.S. was obtained through

her employer. Her husband used to engage in importing and exporting to and from

Japan and the U.S. They have a condominium in upscale, gated communities in

the U.S. and in Japan. This informant is now looking for a realtor to sell the condo

in the U.S. and plans to return to Japan permanently since her husband enjoyed

living in Japan and always told her that he would like to live in Japan

permanently. This woman expressed her view toward her national identity and her

plans for aging as follows.

> I am still close to my old friends from high school and college in
>
> Japan. My brother is still there, but not parents. My cousins are
>
> like my sisters. I am still strongly connected to Japan. You see
>
> many older Japanese people, like late 70s and 80s, who did not
>
> keep a strong connection with their relatives and friends in Japan.
>
> The older generation, like Japanese who came right after the war,
>
> don't have much strong connection with Japan. They didn't go
>
> back to Japan for a decade or more when they came to the U.S.
>
> They tried very hard to assimilate to the U.S. Some of them are so

assimilated that their Japanese is a little strange or they even don't

remember some of the Japanese words. They tried to be American.

They don't teach Japanese to their kids. They were conscious

about other American people's eyes and tried to be American.

…The older generation experienced discrimination when they

came here. If they go back to Japan now, it is going to be very

difficult for them. I have never felt any discrimination here [in the

U.S.]. I've never tried to become "American" either. I think I am

Japanese, but I just…hmmm…have never thought about what

nationality I have. I just haven't. I feel very comfortable in both

countries. …  Either way, I don't have anxiety for my old age. I

have close friends in Japan. We can help each other. I do have

many friends from my work in the U.S., too. In Japan, some of my

old friends from high school still live in the same home town.

There [in Japan], people don't move around too much. So, you can

stay connected. Here, people move around, so, it is more difficult

to get help when you need help. But I feel no fear.

This woman and her American husband do not have children. She thinks that her

situation is different from other elderly immigrant women who have children in

the U.S. She thinks when one's children go to school in the U.S. and start a family

in the U.S. it usually results in being "rooted in" the host country. In other words,

she feels comfortable not to be "rooted" in the U.S., but "floating around." She

thinks that the country one lives in, whether one has a child, or even becoming a

widow, does not determine one's satisfaction in old age because one can always enjoy old age by having little gatherings with friends and helping each other. In fact, many of her friends who do not have children say they are planning to go back to Japan eventually. Actually, she said a few of her friends already returned to Japan permanently. They are both widows and had intellectual careers without children. According to her, both of them readjusted to Japan well and are enjoying their retirement there. It is interesting to see how this informant emphasized the positive results of her friends' decision to return to Japan.

Contrarily, another elderly immigrant woman with a decisive plan to stay in the U.S. emphasized the negative results of her friends' decision to return to Japan permanently. Hiroko, should be categorized as an immigrant woman from the war bride era who is in her 80s. She came to the U.S. with her American husband who was a U.S. serviceman. Hiroko commented about her friends' choice for the place to stay at the last stage of their lives. She said most of her friends have decided to stay in the U.S. after so many years of living in the host country. According to Hiroko, most of her friends changed their minds even though they used to say they would go back to Japan regardless of their marital status or existence of children. Only one friend actually went back to Japan permanently after becoming a widow despite Hiroko and other friends telling her about the possible difficulties she had to face in Japan. According to Hiroko, this woman regrets her decision because she feels she became an outcast in the community. The people in her community talk about the factual and fictional details of this woman frequently. Hiroko thinks this woman would be an easy

target for the rural people in Japan, especially having such a "very modern-looking fashion sense."

The discrepancy in the observations of their friends' satisfaction in Japan could be due to the selectivity of their friends such as associating with like-minded people. The woman from the beginning of the internationalist era indicates the successful experiences of returning to Japan, and the woman from the war bride era represents the unsuccessful example of returning to Japan. Another reason for this discrepancy is that both women might have used their friends' experiences to justify their own position and decision.

Another elderly woman with a transnational identity—which is based on not only the ascribed elements such as their place of birth, but also based on the achieved elements such as sense of belonging in the relationships with friends and family in Japan and in the U.S.—indicated the indecisive nature of her future plan. Even though her American husband is already retired, she is only in her late 50s and is still busy with her career. She said she is not sure where she is going to end up with her life. She has never thought about what nationality she has, but she emphasized her ability to understand and adapt to both the U.S. and Japanese cultures. She gets along with her American colleagues at her work place in the U.S. When she goes back to Japan every year, since her occupation requires annual trips to Japan, she makes sure to meet her old friends. Her ideal situation is to stay half of the year in Japan and the other half in the U.S. after she retires, but she is not sure if it will be possible to do so financially. For that reason, she is not deciding anything at this moment. She is not expecting to be dependent on her

only child, who is married and lives far away. Without any siblings of her own or in-laws who are living close by, she said "you cannot say that you are *anshin* (safe) here [in the U.S.] or there [in Japan] *because* you have a child (here or there). That's a separate issue."

This woman indicated that she has confidence and no anxiety about aging in the U.S. or in Japan. However, she made a comment about "other" elderly Japanese immigrant women who are the members of Japanese social groups. There is an exaggeration, if not misconception, about the Japanese immigrant women who join the Japanese social groups: they cannot speak English and they are always gossiping about other Japanese people. For that reason, some Japanese immigrant women stated that they intentionally avoid joining any Japanese social groups or associating with the members. The fact is that most elderly women in the Japanese social groups do speak adequate English, if not fluently, and some of them were engaging in office work or even intellectual careers in the U.S. About half of the members associate with non-Japanese friends when they are not spending time with other Japanese friends. However, this informant believes the members of Japanese social groups speak extremely limited English or even have not acquired English at all; therefore, they associate only with Japanese people. She imagines the situation for these elderly Japanese immigrant women would be troublesome ("*taihen nanja naikana?*") and thinks that these women must have been fearful since their Japanese friends are getting old and some of them have already passed away. She thinks these women would be left alone in the U.S. with the situation in which they are no longer able to seek support from their Japanese

183

immigrant friends on top of their inability to understand the benefit or procedure to be enrolled in the formal (public or commercial-based) support systems due to their lack of English. After making the comments about "other Japanese elderly women," she was asked if she spends time with her American colleagues outside of her work for recreation or networking purposes. She said "I am too busy to socialize with them outside of work." In other words, this informant is worried for "other" elderly Japanese immigrant women because she imagines that they probably do not have American friends to associate with, but she is not worried about herself even though she does not spend much of her private time with Americans at all outside of her work. From her comments and nuances, it can be assumed that her confidence for her old age seems to be largely based on the fact that she has a career, not just a job, in the U.S., and on her linguistic ability as well as her flexibility in adapting to both cultures. Even though she does not associate with her American colleagues outside of work, it is not because she is avoiding them or is unconfident of building friendships with Americans. During the long interviews, she did not make any negative comments about Americans or the U.S. in general. Even though she might have a misinformed or exaggerated view about Japanese social groups, she did not make any negative comments about, distance herself from, or express mistrust toward "other" Japanese immigrant women or Japan in general either. When she made a comment about "other" elderly Japanese immigrant women, it sounded that it was her honest concern for them.

The elderly immigrant women who have developed the transnational identity with strong connection to both Japan and the U.S. tend to have a career that allows or even requires visiting Japan frequently. They have been able to visit Japan frequently—a few times a year if their stay is short, and if they visit Japan once a year, then their stay tends to be a month or more. This situation allows them to maintain their old friendships in Japan and close networks with family and relatives. They truly feel they are comfortable in either country. They show confidence in their adaptability to live comfortably in either country for the last years of their lives. In terms of plans to cope with their aging, each one of them mentioned a few possibilities. For example, they mentioned moving to the state where their children live and renting an apartment until they have to live in an assisted-living home near children's house. One informant even mentioned the possibility of moving to a nursing home in Canada, where her daughter lives, in case of becoming a widow or when she becomes dysfunctional in everyday life. Another informant mentioned not only living close to her sibling's family in Japan but also staying close to her children in the U.S. Those who mentioned the possibilities of living close to their siblings and children did not indicate their consciousness for the *sekentei* to keep a good social appearance as their reason. They are not planning to depend on them, but they are not necessarily refusing their children and siblings as resources of support and networks. Again, the consciousness for the good *Sekentei* is not the reason, but their affinity is the main reason for mentioning the possibility of living with or close to children, siblings, and relatives. Many of them mentioned that having frequent lunches or gatherings

with friends and spending "a good time" will help their widowhood or compensate for not having offspring. One of them said that Japanese people still hold the misconception that a senior home or assistant living is a horrible, lonely place. It is possible to have "a good time" in a senior home. Another talked about the Japanese system of day-care services and the visiting-nurse system. Overall, the elderly immigrant women with transnational identities did not express the strong confidence in or preference for the U.S., like the women with transnational identity with the decisive plan to stay in the U.S. However, these elderly women tend to be less "stressed out" about their future aging. They also talked about utilizing a formal care system and non-family based informal supports in the future. Regardless of their employment histories, they tended to show the sense of achievement and the ability to deal with their own aging.

Liminal Identity with Decisive Plan to Stay in the U.S.

Most of the elderly Japanese immigrant women who have a decisive plan to stay in the U.S. indicated their transnational identity with stronger U.S. connection. However, there are a few cases of immigrant women with a liminal identity who have a decisive plan to stay in the U.S. For example, Naomi was divorced twice in America. After her bitter experiences of two failed marriages, she went back to Japan to take care of her aging mother and her father, who was very sick at that time. She said "as a human being, avoiding filial care for sick parents deviates from the way of being human" (*hito no michi kara hazureru*). As described earlier, Miyuki, who has a transnational identity, wishes she could have

186

taken care of her sick mother in Japan a few decades ago because she was very

close to her mother as the youngest daughter of the family. Miyuki was

heartbroken to hear that her sick mother and her sister-in-law (who was taking

care of Miyuki's mother) did not get along. Miyuki's primary reason of wishing

to provide the filial care to her mother was because of her strong affinity toward

the mother. On the other hand, Naomi's primary reason for taking care of her

parents indicates her duty; "not to deviate from the way of being human." Naomi

did not say she took care of the parents to keep the good *sekentei*, but there are

clear distinctions between Naomi's view and Miyuki's view in terms of their

primary reason for providing filial care.

While Naomi was taking care of her dying parents in Japan, she said, she

heard her own voice. The voice said, "I don't belong here." After the death of her

parents, Naomi came back to the U.S. and started her life again by staying in an

apartment of her grown-up daughter and her husband. However, this living

arrangement was uncomfortable for all of them. Naomi had to rent her own

apartment. She mockingly said "I did not receive any alimony from either ex-

husband. I had never owned a house from both marriages." Her comment

indicates her disconnected feelings from the host country.

As William Clark (2003) mentioned, purchasing a house means more than

just a homeownership for immigrants—it means becoming a part of the

community in the host country. That she had never had a house of her own in the

U.S. means that she never became a part of the community and a neighborhood in

the U.S. Naomi talked about her life stories in Japanese, but she suddenly used

English to express her marginalized feeling when she was taking care of her parents in Japan. "I don't belong [in Japan]." She said it in English. Naomi's marginalized feelings based on the experience of living in the U.S. emerged when she was providing filial care in the culture of origin to be a dutiful daughter. She felt she did not belong to Japan, yet she had never had a house of her own in the U.S. either. She took care of her parents to fulfill what she thought the obligation of filial piety, but she is still working part time at a retail store and living alone in her late 60s. There is no one she is closely associated with in Japan anymore. Returning to Japan one more time does not look like a very attractive choice for her, but she has, at least, her daughters in the U.S. Although she is not expecting her daughters to take care of her, she said she is going to stay in the U.S. for good. She said "what else can I do?"

It was extremely difficult to decipher her plans of coping with aging because she does not talk about it with clear or concrete plans. The questions had to be rephrased and reworded many times to get to her views and plans to cope with her old age, such as: "What are you going to do when your health deteriorates?" "Are you afraid of being old in the U.S.?" "What do you do when you need help, like a ride to a hospital or a clinic?" "Do you feel comfortable asking a help from your friends?" "How about your daughters?" "Whom do you contact when you become sick?" "What do you think about using a nursing home or assistant living home?" She answered all of these questions unclearly without finishing a sentence or her thoughts such as: "mmmm…how should I say this…I have to think about it, *ne* (right)?" "It would be a lie if I say I don't think about it

(the fear of the day when her health deteriorates)… mmm…but..*ne*?" "I don't

know what to say" All these illusive answers are given probably because she is

still trying to talk herself into the decision she made to stay in the U.S. by default.

Then, Naomi finally answered all of my questions indirectly at once. She changed

the well-used phrased, "*naruyouninaru*" (what will be, will be) to

"*naruyounishikanaranai*" (what will be, will be the *only* way it will be). "What

will be, will be" is usually used to describe one's nonchalant easy-going

optimism, but how Naomi changed the phrase to insinuate that her life will be

only the way the life itself decides to be for her. There is no easy-going nuance as

the original phrase of "what will be, will be." It also insinuates her acceptance of

disappointment or even expecting not-so-great outcomes, especially with the lack

of control over her own life. Naomi's case indicates the complexity of one's

national identity, places of belonging, and how an individual deals with her own

aging. Her lifestyle, such as being married to (and divorced from) American men,

raising children in U.S., going back to Japan alone for a while, and coming back

to the U.S., would be considered a transnational life style, but her identity was not

transnational at all since she has not yet established a sense of belonging in either

country. Returning to the U.S. did not help her feel that she belonged in the U.S.

Similarly, Her ascribed elements of Japanese-ness, such as her place of birth or

lineage, or following the traditional norm of filial piety and care, did not help her

feel belonging to Japan. While Naomi has lived the transnational lifestyle without

a feeling of belonging to either country, other immigrant women who rarely go

189

back to Japan clearly expressed that their Japanese lineage determines their national identity.

Naomi's marginalized feelings in Japan may be because of her sense of loss by observing and taking care of the dying parents, and her marginalized feelings in the U.S. may be due to her two failed marriages. However, some women who are still married to American men after many years are also feeling marginalized in the U.S. and anxious about their future. For example, another Japanese woman, Yoko, in her early 60s, said that she is very concerned about her future since she has developed rheumatism. She should be categorized as having a liminal identity even though she said that half of her friends are Americans and the other half are Japanese. The reason for this categorization is that Yoko's interviews are filled with abstract ideas and concepts with regard to Japan and the U.S., but when she talks about any concrete levels of her social networks in Japan or the U.S. she indicates the distance or disassociation she feels from both societies. For example, when she was still single and young, she lived in Europe and she became "a big Japanese nationalist." Yoko said "I realized how wonderful Japan was. History, people, … I am proud to be Japanese. … I cried when I thought about Japan and its culture. It is so beautiful and kind. I missed beautiful cherry blossoms, abundant nature, four seasons, it is so *yasashii* (mild/kind)." The images she described were rather too idealistic and stereotypical and sounded almost like something that foreigners (non-Japanese) would say when they see a promotional video of Japan made by the Japan Tourism Association. When Yoko was asked about her social networks with

190

Japanese people in the U.S. and in Japan, she said she tries not to get involved too much because it involves gossip and conflict in the closed relationships. She said "when you are living in the U.S., you notice that Japanese people are, somehow, closely connected to other Japanese people. You will be surprised [by the fact] that people know each other." She kept asking what she said in her interview will not be heard by other Japanese immigrant women and repeatedly confirmed with me the condition that her real name will not be disclosed.

Yoko also made a comment about Europe and the U.S. and the people in general of both regions. "…[In] Germany, it is *kibishii* (rough/strict) and cold. Here, too. American nature is rough and strict. European people are deep, and American people are positive and independent. … They are strong; I feel women who were not provided for by their husbands are *rippa* (admirable)." Yet, when she was asked about her own social networks with American people, she also indicated her distance from them. For instance, when Yoko attended a gathering at a friend's house to learn how to make a healthy juice to increase the immune system against various diseases, she brought a small gift to show her appreciation for the person who brought all the ingredients and the special mixer to teach how to make the juice. Other people did not bring anything for the person. This informant did not know most of the guests who were invited, but she thought "Eeeee, isn't it about showing appreciation?! ...But they don't do such a thing. I don't expect much from this [American] culture at all. … I gave up. That part [about not showing enough consideration for others] is very American. I can never be American."

Yoko and her American husband do not have children. She used to work at a restaurant, but she can no longer serve with her rheumatism, and she does not have confidence in her English to find a deskwork position, in addition to her old age. Her family in Japan were all against their marriage, and her oldest brother, in his mid 70s now, was especially upset about her international marriage. Just recently, he told Yoko that if she ever becomes a widow, she is welcome to stay with the brother's family. However, her parents died when she was young, and she did not go back to Japan for a long time, so her connection with Japan is very weak. Yoko's husband used to teach English in Japan about 20 years ago. She and her husband don't think he can find a decent teaching position today in Japan because they think the current trend in Japan is to learn some other Asian languages, not English. Therefore, returning to Japan does not look like a good idea for them. Yoko doesn't think she can even find a decent job in today's Japan due to her age and lack of skills. For these reasons, Yoko and her husband are going to stay in the U.S. However, Yoko is very concerned about the time when she may not be functional in the future in everyday life. She said "but, being worried [about the future] does not create extra money. If it did, I would worry more, but it doesn't. So, I am worried, but I try not to think about it." This comment indicates her view that the readiness and comfort for old age depends on financial resources. It was also difficult to get Yoko to answer when the topic becomes her concrete plans to cope with aging in the U.S. It is probably because at her age it is very unlikely that they will have a significant increase of monetary resources or a restructuring of their financial plans for drastic gain of income.

Since she feels that financial resources determine a comfortable retirement, she feels she does not have enough financial resources, so she cannot think in concrete terms of a comfortable life in the old age. She kept repeating how expensive the formal (commercial-based) support system in the U.S. would be and how she cannot afford to utilize it. Then, she returns to her conclusion of "not to think about it" to mitigate her anxiety for aging.

Even though Yoko and Naomi, described above (who went back to Japan to give filial piety care for her parents and came back to the U.S. after their death), have very different life histories, work experiences, marital status, or existence of offspring, they share common feelings. They both feel the U.S. is a better choice as a place to stay for the last stage of their lives compared to Japan, but their choice is by default, not because they feel more comfortable in the U.S. or feel stronger affinity. They do not have much optimism, confidence, or trust in the U.S. social security or retirement system compared with some of the elderly women with the transnational identity who have a definite plan to stay in the U.S.. Naomi's comment, "what else can I do?" summarize their decision-making processes and their conclusion to stay in the U.S. The way these elderly women deal with the anxiety for old age can easily predict the dim outlook compared with the women with the transnational identities. Instead of constructing personal support systems with compatriots and Americans to share her feelings of fear and anxiety or even exchanging useful information, these women depend on self-control of the fear through "giving up" and "not thinking about it."

Liminal Identity with Indecisive Plan

There are also a small number of immigrant women with the liminal identity who do not have definite plans for their future. Those women with the liminal identity who are indecisive about their future plans do not see positive aspects and attractive plans in either country. Even though most of them say they see Japan as their national identity, they lack a sense of belonging to the homeland as well as the host country. These elderly women with the liminal identity who are indecisive about their future plans tend to express the strongest anxiety among all the different types of elderly Japanese immigrant women. Their level of anxiety seemed to be higher even compared with the elderly women with a liminal identity with a decisive plan. This is probably because they have little faith in the retirement system of both countries and they are not sure which country they will retire in.

Ryoko became a naturalized American citizen for a  purely financial reason. Ryoko was advised to do so by her lawyer in order to secure the right to inherit all financial resources from her aging but financially sound American husband in case of his death. Ryoko has never worked in the U.S. She is interested in and aware of various social issues in both Japan and the U.S. She holds critical views on the social issues but she is not necessarily well connected in both homeland and host country at the personal level. For example, she doesn't like how Japan cannot defend and express its position when other countries criticize Japan's particular practices or political decisions. She is frustrated that Japan is still incapable of defending its position after so many years of being

194

criticized for its cruel acts in the neighboring countries during World War II. She

thinks Japan is still unable to learn how to negotiate well with other countries.

Ryoko says her frustration toward Japan makes her feels she is Japanese because

she would not feel this much of frustration if she were not Japanese. However, she

also displayed her critical views and frustration toward the U.S., too. For

example, she sees that the U.S. is acting as the policeman of the world—telling

other countries what to do and applying American standards. She brought up the

subject of traditional whale hunting in a particular area of Japan and said it is

arrogant for U.S. to attack Japan's traditional practice when most Americans

don't even know the history behind the traditional whale hunting. She said "that is

very ignorant …[and] problematic. In that way, I can never be like Americans."

She also fears for the U.S. politics, which she thinks it is influenced by religion as

politicians have to change their views on abortion or evolution to chase after

conservative Christians' votes. She sees all of these sociopolitical trends as the

sign for the end of the era of the white culture or limitation of Western norms.

Ryoko might be considered to be one of the elderly Japanese immigrant women

with a liminal identity because of how she defines her national identity. Most of

the elderly women with a transnational identity use their ascribed elements such

as a place of birth or lineage and achieved elements such as social networks to

define their nation(s). Ryoko uses her frustrated feelings toward Japan as a

barometer to define her national identity instead of using affinity. Interestingly,

she showed the same frustration toward the U.S. and said "I can never be like

Americans." This seems to suggest Ryoko's marginal position in both countries.

Her interview was filled with social and international issues when describing her personal entity in the U.S. or Japan. Similar to Naomi's interview, Ryoko's interview was filled with abstract ideas, but it did not indicate a strong connection with Japan or the U.S. at a personal level. She has not maintained her social networks in Japan to make her feel comfortable staying in Japan and has not developed social networks with other Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. or with Americans. Ryoko is very worried about the day when she will not be able to take care of herself in the U.S. Ryoko is contemplating the best way to prepare for the days that she will not be able to take care of herself in the future.

When she was asked if she has ever thought about returning to Japan, she answered "Oh, yes, I do think about it a lot. I think about what I am going to do when I become alone here. But I don't think I can make a living in Japan either. I haven't actually decided anything yet, but I think about it all the time. I am really worried about it." She is 65 years old, so she is too young to have the bad experiences or memories of World War II in Japan. Unlike her elderly Japanese friend who had adversity during World War II, she said "my memories of Japan are not that bad at all," but she also shows her reservation about returning to Japan. She said "my sister and brothers (in Japan) say come back to Japan, but I cannot go there, [because I cannot] live comfortably with the minimum amount of money." The reason why Ryoko mentioned the monetary factor is that her mother, aged close to 90, still lives in Japan, under the care of Ryoko's brother's family with commercial-based day-care services. Ryoko knows how expensive the cost of receiving high-quality services from a formal support system such as

196

commercial or even non-profit organizations can be. Then she mentioned that the

lack of nurses in these organizations in Japan is creating serious problems such as

neglect of the patients/residents. She even mentioned that it is about the time for

the Japanese government to seriously consider the possibility of opening its door

for immigrants from other countries and offer an alternative procedure such as

offering the exam in English or other languages to certify new immigrant helpers.

In Ryoko's plan, these foreigners who took exams in English or other languages

may not become necessarily nurses, but they should be allowed to be the nurses'

assistants. In this way, the cost of nursing homes could be more affordable,

immigrants who were willing to work in Japan would have more opportunities,

and the quality of the staff and services in nursing homes would not be

compromised. However, all of Ryoko's well–thought-out plans for her to live

comfortably in her old age in Japan do not surpass the abstract argument at the

national policy level. It may improve the elderly people's lives in Japan in

general, but it does not give her the concrete future plans for herself at the

personal level. Ryoko expressed her ambivalent feelings about going back to

Japan or staying in the U.S. She feels there is no way out from the inevitable

predicaments she has to face in the near future, no matter which country she

chooses to stay in. She said:

> Both of my daughters are living on [the east coast]. I see them
>
> maybe once or twice a year, at most. Then, [because the current
>
> situation already lacks the frequent visits] it does not make any
>
> difference even if I live in Japan. But if I live in Japan, then, they

have to travel even more [distance to see me] than they do now and

I don't want to cause such a burden for them (*meiwaku*

*kaketakunai*). In Japan, you will support your parents no matter

what with *giri* and your family will support you,… each other. But

here, you take care of yourself and you cannot count on that kind

of (family based) support. Then, the best way is being in a nursing

home close to my daughter's place [on the east coast]. But I don't

know if I can live in a new place like that. … If I have a clear mind

and I can do what I want to do in the institution, then, I think I can

bear living there. … I don't know. But I am really worried.

Someday my health becomes deteriorated and I cannot be

functional…. Children are living far away and not many people

visiting me in the nursing home…I wonder if I can make new

friends there or not.

Ryoko's concern for making new friends at a new place seems to be appropriate

since she still has not established social networks with any particular groups of

people since she came to the U.S. a decades ago. Her anxiety is exacerbated by

her disconnection from the society as well as the geographical distance from her

daughters. Yet, she is concerned that living with one of her daughters is putting

too much of a burden on her daughter. She thinks staying in the nursing home

near her daughter's area might be an option. However, on top of her concern for

relocation to a new place where she has no acquaintances, she is also worried

about whether staying in an American nursing home would be a good choice for

her. Her linguistic limitation and dietary differences between the U.S and Japan make her wonder if she can bear to live in an American nursing home. If she thinks about these issues, a Japanese nursing home sounds more bearable for her, although she foresees different kinds of difficulties in a nursing home in Japan. Even though she would not have a problem with the language and food in a Japanese nursing home, she has a critical view toward the culture of Japanese nursing homes. She is not sure about Japan's common customs to make quasi-family atmosphere in formal care institutions for the elderly such as nursing homes and day-care centers in Japan. She said "in Japan, nursing homes and other institutions try to bring more domestic, home-like environments. … They see the elderly people and treat them as 'people who are supposed to be taken care of in the house' and call them 'Grandma'." Ryoko thinks being called "Gradma" or "Grandpa" by the nurses and staff members actually encourages the elderly people to play the sick role in the nursing home, and so the elderly person becomes someone to be cared for by the others. To make her point about the respect for individuality in the U.S. and its separation between the institution and the family, Ryoko said "here [in the U.S.], even if the elderly person is asinine, the staff members call the person with his name. … Japan is not like that. I don't know if it is a good thing or bad, but it is supposed to be like that…."

Her anxiety is also caused by her feelings of mistrust of the pension/retirement systems in both countries. She seems to be trapped by the idea of what the aging process "should be" in both countries. It was obvious that she has been pondering this subject for a long time, yet she still has not reached a

satisfactory conclusion. Ryoko continued her comparison between aging in Japan

and in the U.S. as follows:

Here, you spend your own money to go to nursing home instead of

leaving money for children and children taking care of you.

Compared to Japan, parent-child relationships are independent.

Having children in America does not mean you have a security for

your age at all. … You cannot say you are safe (*anshin*) because

you have a child. You have to take care of yourself. It is very clear.

(*Totemo assari siteiru*.) So, the necessary, concrete steps I have to

take are either downsizing the house until I have to live in the

nursing home. But [because of the clear expectation of self-

sufficiency for old age in the U.S.] you will not let other people

say that what you are doing [such as not leaving property for

children or sending your parents to a nursing home] is wrong. In

Japan, it will not be that clear and easy. You have a strong wind

against you (*kazeatari ga tsuyoi*) if you do something like that. I

don't think Japan has yet reached that point [in terms of

independency between parents and children]. We cannot even

think about depending on children for old age here [in the U.S.] …

I really think it is a serious, primary problem for women. I just

don't think I can find a job in Japan now. I am not following the

current computer skills. [One's good retirement] depends on

receiving a clear, stable pension or not. I don't know how the

retirement or pension plan works in Japan now. Without the

confidence for Japan's medical or pension system, it is also

worrisome to be there. But the American system is not dependable

either.

Ryoko is concerned about her *sekentei* (social appearance) and its criticism for her

if she would return to Japan and would use all of her savings, instead of leaving

some money to the children or relatives, to be enrolled in an up-scale nursing

home in Japan where she would not have language and diet problems. She thinks

she will have to face "a strong wind (criticism) against [her] if [she does]

something like that [in Japan]." *Sekentei* seems to have some influence on less-

assimilated immigrant women. The main reason these women still do care about

*sekentei* in Japan is that they are still thinking about the possibility of returning to

Japan since they do not feel comfortable or confident in the U.S. With that mind,

Japanese social pressure is still large for them even though they are living in the

U.S.

The anxiety among these immigrant women may not be caused only by

their mistrust in the public social security system, but also by their fear of the

"unknown." Another immigrant woman with a liminal identity gets almost

panicky when her American husband tries to explain how the American social

security system works. She gets even more panicky and repeats "I don't

understand!" when her husband tries to explain how the pension and social

security are transferrable between Japan and the U.S. if she wishes to return to

Japan after becoming a widow. It seems to be a daunting task for many immigrant

elderly women to apply for the enrollment in governmental or commercial

retirement plans internationally, especially when one has depended on the spouse

in terms of their financial management and other household maintenance issues

for such a long time.

Sometimes the fear of the "unknown" is created by over-generalization,

such as small number of criminals in unrelated matters getting negative publicity,

resulting in mistrust of American institutions in general, including nursing homes.

> When you think about all these situations [such as Japan's high
>
> cost of living, lack of available nurses, and drastic decreasing of
>
> the young population], Japan is also [a] difficult [place to live] in
>
> the future. …  Then the feasible plan would be living in an
>
> American nursing home. … But, …, you hear about too many
>
> perverts, like pedophiles becoming teachers here [in the U.S.] …
>
> The quality [of teachers and caregivers] here is too unequal
>
> between the high-quality places (institutions) and low-quality
>
> places (institutions)…

Overall, one's ambivalent feelings and indecisiveness about the future

plan seem to be exacerbated by the mistrust of the U.S. institutions and the non-

affordability of Japanese institutions, especially among the elderly women with a

liminal identity. Even though a very small number of immigrant women have

developed a prolonged liminal identity, some similarities are still observed. They

tend to see very limited options for their old age and see the option negatively no

matter which country they consider to stay in. Indecisiveness for the future plan

for women with the liminal identity exacerbates their anxiety while it creates "more options" for the elderly women with the transnational identity. Mistrust in the American or Japanese social security or retirement system as well as the institutions for the elderly is observed more frequently among the elderly women with liminal identity.

Conclusion

No single reason explains or represents the transnational migration and return migration. Many studies of return migration focus on economic and political reasons for returning (Guo and Iredale 2003; Dustmann, Bentolila, and Faini 1996), and some others see more personal reasons such as reuniting with one's family of origin and ethnic identity (Gmelch 1992; Christou 2009). Whatever the focuses are, the literature tends to give more attention to the younger populations and their decision-making processes, especially when the studies have economic and political orientations. It is understandable that more attention is given to the younger migrant population since their main reason for migration is to seek better employment opportunities. Considering the home country's policies to determine whether the government would support the returners would be important issues for both returners as well as the homeland because they are likely to be the taxpayers.

However, economic and political aspects are important elements of the decision-making for the elderly population, too. Many elderly immigrant women mentioned economic aspects when they were explaining their decision-making

process regarding whether to stay in the U.S. or return to Japan. Of course, they are more concerned with the economic aspect as a consumer or welfare receiver rather than a jobseeker and taxpayer, but their economic aspects are a large part of their decision making. Also many elderly women compared policies on social security, pension, and retirement systems in the U.S. and Japan when describing their decision to stay or return.

Some of the elderly women talked about the aspects of reuniting with the family of origin as their reasons. Many of them used to think they would go back to Japan when their parents were still alive. Since their parents are passed away, most of them have difficulty in finding a strong reason to go back to Japan permanently. Although a small number of immigrant women mentioned reuniting with their siblings and relatives as one of the reasons to consider returning to Japan, it appeared that this is not as compelling a reason as reuniting with parents. For most elderly immigrant women, their children and husbands in the U.S. have become "the family," and often they are the reason to stay in the U.S. as the women have aged in their life course. As far as the identity aspects are concerned, a very few informants indicated their transnational identity as a direct determining factor to return to Japan or to stay in the U.S. However, this does not mean transnational identity has very little to do with how the elderly immigrant Japanese women see their aging and plan for their futures. Although there is no methodical way to determine the causality between individuals' transnational identity and how they view and construct their support systems, there are clear, distinctive patterns in terms of the different transnational/liminal identities and the

kinds of support systems they create for the inevitable day that their health deteriorates.

Most of the elderly Japanese immigrant women with transnational identity have a decisive plan to stay in the U.S. for the rest of their lives and expressed their confidence and very little anxiety for the day their health will deteriorate in the future regardless of their current marital status or the existence of offspring. Those women tend to be well-assimilated and hold much stronger connections with the local communities in the U.S. than in Japan. Their connection to Japan is largely due to their psychological affinity based on their ascribed elements such as place of birth and lineage, not on social networks in Japan. The readiness for the last stage of their life among these elderly immigrant women is based on their financial resources, self-confidence, knowledge of the retirement system in the U.S., the governmental support such as the social security system, and their personal social networks. Identity seems to influence (or to be influenced by) whether they are confident or anxious about coping with aging. Most of them associate with other Japanese immigrants as well as non-Japanese and American friends and see their social networks as one of the informal, non-family based support systems for their old age in the U.S.

A small number of the elderly Japanese immigrant women with transnational identities have not decided where to stay for the rest of their lives. These elderly women with indecisive future plans tend to have no children or only one child and had a career that allowed or even required visiting Japan frequently every year. This situation allows them to maintain their old friendships in Japan

and close networks with family and relatives there. Thus, their transnational identity is based not only on the psychological affinity with Japan, but also on actual social networks in Japan and the U.S. They truly feel they are comfortable in either country. They did not express the strong confidence in the U.S. or Japanese social security and retirement systems, like many of the women with transnational identity with the decisive plan to stay in the U.S. However, they did show confidence in their adaptability to live comfortably in either country during the last years of their lives.

Overall, the elderly immigrant women with transnational identities tended to be less stressed out about their future and aging compared with the women with liminal identity. Regardless of their experiences in employment, marriage, or childrearing, they tend to show the sense of achievement and confidence in their personal ability to deal with their own aging. Their social networks are built by going beyond the concept of a Japanese sense of obligation, social appearance, or avoidance of putting one's burden onto others. It seemed that truly enjoying the reciprocity of offering and receiving assistance and believing it to be a sign of affinity and companionship are necessarily "skills" for Japanese immigrant women and the means to build social networks.

While indecisive planning for the future creates "more options" for the elderly Japanese immigrant women with a transnational identity, it exacerbates the anxiety among the elderly Japanese immigrant women with liminal identities, who have not decided to stay or return. They described their feelings of "no-way-out" and expressed ambivalent views toward both the homeland and the host

country. Their anxiety seems to be heightened by their mistrust of the U.S. institutions and the non-affordability of Japanese institutions. However, decisiveness for the future plan for immigrant Japanese women with a liminal identity does not increase easiness for the future. The elderly Japanese immigrant women with liminal identities who have a decisive plan to stay in the U.S. for the rest of their lives described their choice as default, not because they feel more comfortable in the U.S. or have stronger affinity. They did not have the optimism, confidence, or the trust in the U.S. social security and retirement system, like some of the elderly women with a transnational identity who have a definite plan to stay in the U.S.

Overall, the elderly Japanese immigrant women with a liminal identity tend to be socially isolated from the local communities in the U.S. and in Japan. They identify their nationality with Japan; however, they do not indicate their psychological connections with Japan or the U.S. at a personal level. Some of them expressed their psychological affinity to ideal, yet stereotypical, images of Japan while expressing conscious effort to avoid Japanese people. Regardless of their experiences in occupation, education, or other personal histories, they describe their national identity with abstract ideas without the concrete and personal levels. Likewise, the elderly women with a liminal identity tend to talk about their plans for their future in either a very abstract manner such as implication of national policies or in a disconnected manner such as total avoidance of thinking about the future. They see very limited options for their old age and see their options rather negatively no matter which country they decide to

stay in. Uncertainty about the American or Japanese social security and retirement systems as well as mistrust of the institutions for the elderly are observed among them. These elderly immigrant women expressed their lack of financial management skills, self-confidence, knowledge of the retirement system in Japan and in the U.S., or personal social networks. The elderly immigrant women with a liminal identity tend to see their lack of these resources regardless of their legal status, actual assets, or marital situations. Their liminal identity might have caused their views of scarcity in their resources, or the actual resources, especially personal social networks, may have caused them to develop a liminal identity. Again, there is no methodological way to determine the causality between the two variables.

From these observations, the conclusion can be drawn that there is a correlation between the elderly Japanese immigrant women's national identities and how they view and plan for aging. However, identity does not seem to specifically relate to one's preference of living arrangement for the future such as whether they prefer filial care or formal commercial-based care. Instead, the transnational or liminal identity is related to whether the elderly immigrant women will rely on the American or Japanese retirement system, whether they feel comfortable utilizing non-family based supports in Japan or in the U.S., whether they have strong social networks with friends in Japan or in the U.S., and whether they have knowledge and assets to take care of themselves in Japan or in the U.S. The correlation between immigrants' identity and plans for aging can be attributed to one's availability of resources. Therefore, identity seems to mainly

influence (or be influenced by) whether these elderly women *feel* confident about old age or are anxious and worry about it.

The importance of financial factor becomes clearer throughout the observation even though most women in this study are economically well-off and it seems to be the lack of economic resources is not an issue for them when considering the plans for their aging. Those women who had or have a career seem to feel more flexible and comfortable utilizing their financial resources to visit Japan frequently. As a result, they are likely to develop transnational identities which make them more secure and confident about aging. Most women who did not have a job or career in this study are still financially comfortable because of their husband's income or financial management skills. However, they are reluctant to see their husband's income or financial resources and skills as one of their "own" or "shared" resources. Therefore, they feel they have limited financial resources. In this vein, plans for their aging may not simply be a matter of free choice, but it may be a reaction to the interpretation of their economic availability. Actual amount of saving or financial resources may not be relevant but how the person interprets her "own" financial resources may be more important when considering actual plans for aging. In other words, even if Japanese immigrant women prefer formal care, whether they actually plan to utilize formal care or accept filial care may dependent on how they interpret their financial means.

Finding or establishing a final home in the global scale or within the international scope was not a common issue before the current rapid globalization

and internationalism; however, it became a common agenda for many immigrant individuals. In a sense, the elderly immigrant individuals magnify this agenda since their focus tends to be the final home or place to spend their time for the rest of their lives. In the final chapter, the relationship between one's immigration and assimilation experiences, national identities, and sense of belonging during old age will be conceptualized by summarizing the main themes of this dissertation.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

The previous chapters have described in great detail how the elderly

Japanese immigrant women have developed new customs, attitudes, values, and

national identities over many years in the host country and how these elements are

reflected in the view of those women's everyday life and coping strategies with

aging in the host country. Although this study has some limitations as

summarized below, it also suggests future research possibilities. By summarizing

the main ideas of assimilation, national identity, and aging, this study hopes to

add the knowledge of the relationships between these variables in the larger area

of immigration, aging, and identity studies.


Assimilation

Without studying the value change or the identificational assimilation

process among immigrants, the immigration studies will miss a large part of what

cultural assimilation means. For example, collectivism is deeply rooted and

internalized in Japanese people with the ideology of *sekentei*, social appearance.

In order to keep up a good social appearance, Japanese people in general avoid

any conspicuous or unusual behavior and showy fashion that might be considered

out of the ordinary. These various unwritten social rules regulate one's daily

behavior with details such as what to wear or what to do in a certain situation.

They also foster the collectivism for Japanese people by providing the protocol of

age-appropriate behavior, fashion, and roles as the means for promoting social

211

unity. However, the elderly Japanese immigrant women in this study have been living in the U.S., where individualism is highly emphasized, for 3 or 4 decades or more. They have been free from the social restrictions from Japan for most of their lives. Japanese immigrant women's considerably young-looking fashion choices seem to be the result of their feelings of greater freedom and fewer restrictions. As Japanese immigrant women feel more comfortable in not following the expected age-appropriate dress codes, they also feel comfortable in not following the Japanese way of age-appropriate expected role performance. Being in the less-restricted environment, Japanese immigrant women feel the interactions in the U.S. are more plain/simple/frank/straight/clear-cut-manner ("*warikitta*" or "*assari*") than in Japan. The conditions the immigrants are in, such as speaking a second language in the host country, make easier for a Japanese immigrant individual to switch the role and act differently from the internalized expected roles. Japan's social network construction is built within the *sekentei* ideology, which inevitably comes with the notions of the family, whereas the family and *seken* are not too tightly intertwined in the roles in the U.S. The concept of the clear-cut manner in family relations as well as other human relations in the U.S. allows Japanese immigrant women to disclose their personal experiences to other people, which they would not do so freely in Japan. Declan Barry (2003:156) concludes his study of graded self-disclosure among East Asian immigrants as follows:

> Asian cultural norms promote guarded self-discourse. … Eastern Asian
>
> immigrants who reported accentuated ethnic pride (language, family) or

attenuated interpersonal distance were less likely to reveal personal

information about themselves to others. … Perhaps those who endorse

ethnic pride may eschew revealing personal information about themselves

to avoid the possibility of potentially embarrassing other family members,

and/or being rejected by ethnic peers. … [Based on previous literature] it

was predicted that guarded self-disclosure…would be higher [for

individuals who socialize with only ethnic peers] and/or marginalized

individuals [who do not associate with their ethnic peers nor with people

from the dominant culture] and lower among assimilated [individuals who

socialize with people from the dominant culture] and/or integrated

individuals [who associate with people from both their ethnic and the

majority cultures] because assimilated Asian Americans appear to be more

similar to European Americans in their emotional expression than their

separated counterparts. [The study results show that] while [Asian

immigrants whose] assimilation was not associated with guarded self-

discourse, East Asian immigrants who endorsed separation or

marginalization, and those who eschewed integration were less likely to

reveal information about themselves to others. This absence of

socialization/communication with Americans was associated with guarded

self-discourser.

Although Barry's (2003) study indicates the strong correlation between

assimilation and self-disclosure among Asian immigrants, it is still not clear that

the first-generation Japanese immigrant women's self-disclosure should be

considered a sign of assimilation to American culture or just a result of their

freedom from Japanese cultural pressure. Since the elderly Japanese immigrant

women's perception of American society is less rigid and free from the ideology

that individuals are supposed to be deeply interwoven in the family and *seken*,

they do not seem to be concerned too much about keeping their personal or family

matters private in the U.S. It is also less likely that the families of these women in

Japan would find out what their emigrated sisters, aunts, or daughters are telling

to other people in the U.S., which creates a sense of anonymity. The elderly

Japanese women may consciously or unconsciously utilize this sense of

anonymity to share their personal experiences with others to build their social

networks in the U.S.

Even though it is not clear that the elderly Japanese immigrant women's

self-disclosure is a sign of assimilation to American culture or just a result of their

freedom from Japanese cultural pressure, these mundane behaviors should be, at

least, considered as one of the important *processes* of assimilation among

Japanese immigrant women in their idiosyncratic way. The elderly Japanese

immigrant women's young-looking attire, non-conformity to the Japanese social

norms of age-appropriateness, assertiveness, and their sharing of personal and

family stories with others seem to be quite different from the Japanese elderly in

Japan. If they were in Japan, it is doubtful that they would choose the same

clothing, makeup, or hair styles they are enjoying now or act the way they act in

the U.S. because of the strong social pressure and their own *sekentei* (social

214

appearance) consciousness in Japan. *Sekentei* consciousness is still deeply rooted in Japanese people in today's Japan and regulates their behavior.

One might assume that the memorable life-changing events or personal achievements in the host country would establish a distinct self-identity that goes beyond the *sekentei* consciousness and reinforces particular aspects of cultural and value assimilation to the U.S., such as self-expression or assertiveness. However, my study suggests it is NOT about the day their racially mixed babies were born or the day they bought their fist house in the U.S. that made them feel comfortable in the U.S. It turned out to be rather ordinal and superficial practices in everyday life. These mundane practices are the *processes* and results of value acculturation. Choosing young-looking attire, sharing personal and family stories, and other small and rather insignificant experiences foster the feelings of freedom from the constraints of Japanese culture. When the informants were asked what made them feel they are a part of the U.S. society or feel comfortable living in the U.S., most of them expressed how they felt less obligated to conform to the Japanese norms in the U.S. and how much easier it is to live with the less obligated feelings. In other words, after describing Japanese cultural patterns of behavior, they expressed how they *feel* more freedom from the constraints of Japanese culture in the U.S. with the comparative terms. The freedom they feel is not exactly the same as value acculturation, but it is the value they have noticed and embraced in the host country. Some of the core values in the U.S. may be very different, if not the opposite, of the homeland. It may not be even possible for immigrants to totally internalize the opposite values; however, immigrants

continue to be culturally assimilated through their insignificant, mundane experiences. These mundane matters are in fact significant parts of the cultural assimilation process that builds their new values and consciousness in the U.S. Learning how they overcome the very Japanese value of *sekentei* consciousness gives an insight into the identificational assimilation process itself. If a total internalization of the opposite or different values is difficult, then idenitificational assimilation may never be possible for the first-generation immigrants, in the sense that Milton Goden (1964) defined idenitifcational assimilation as identifying exclusively with the host country. However, it is possible to, and some immigrants actually do, identify with the host country and homeland simultaneously. When the first-generation immigrants started to recognize themselves identifying with a host nation's identity in certain situations in different times, it could be the beginning of identificational assimilation with the host country. However, it is important to recognize that the exclusiveness of the identification with the host country should not be seen as the goal or the general direction in which immigrants are heading. Indeed, the total identificational assimilation is extremely rare, if not impossible, and therefore the process of identificational assimilation becomes the crucial focal point to understand the identity of immigrants.

In fact, the latest model in assimilation studies, which is the multidimensional/pluralistic model, emphasizes identity as the process (Porter and Washington 1993) rather than the fixed results of assimilation. Understanding identity as a process makes sense particularly when immigrants express their

216

growing feelings of belonging to the host country due to their cultural assimilation

yet still hold a sense of belonging to the homeland due to their race and place of

birth. While the multidimensional/pluralistic model explains the dynamics of

identificational assimilation as multifaceted, complex, and situationally directed,

what we consider to be identificational assimilation in the U.S. may mean the

growing feeling of belonging to the U.S., which is based on the greater freedom

and individualism immigrants feel from their native cultures in the U.S.

In this sense, identificational assimilation and value acculturation are very similar

concepts in the U.S.; both can be understood as a matter of degree, and they are

interrelated. Since freedom and individualism are considered to be the core values

of the U.S., the freedom and individualism that the immigrants feel in the host

country in comparison with the homeland matters greatly when it comes to

assessing one's value acculturation. Similarly, cultural assimilation, including

value acculturation, is crucial for immigrants in establishing a feeling of comfort

and the sense of belonging in the host country. Therefore, cultural assimilation,

including value acculturation, matters greatly when it comes to assessing one's

identificational assimilation.

       Therefore, understanding the identificational assimilation process would

be possible only with the cultural contexts of the sending and receiving countries.

The mundane everyday life in the U.S. offers opportunities for immigrants to feel

less restricted from whatever they were feeling in Japan. This concept of

"assimilation as a feeling of freedom from the homeland" may not be applicable

to other immigrants in other host countries such as European immigrants in Asian

host countries. Since the elderly immigrants in the host country have been living through these assimilation processes for such a long time, thoughts about how they identify and feel about the place of belonging, level of comfort in the host country (or homeland) tend to evolve. This tendency would be especially strong for the immigrants who came to the host country when the two nations' power relationships were changing rapidly and drastically. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how nations and historical events would have affected individual identity. That is another reason why identificational assimilation would be impossible to understand without specificity in the historical event, timing of migration, and the relationship between the sending and receiving countries.

National Identity

How the elderly immigrant women have interpreted their international migration experiences, gender, place of belonging, and self-identity are all interconnected. The majority of Japanese immigrant women said that their national identity is Japanese, but they also feel that they belong to the U.S. Some women said that they cannot articulate if they are Japanese or American because they feel they equally belong to both nations. A small number of women expressed their discomfort in both countries. In general, most of the women are categorized in either the transnational identity or the liminal identity. Few elderly immigrants would identify only with the host country since they are immigrants. Likewise, few elderly immigrants would identify only with the homeland since they have been living in the host country for most of their lives. Therefore, most

of them identify with both countries, or they identify with neither country to an extent.

A small number of informants in my study indicated that they used to think they were totally American when they were young, but that their identities have shifted back to Japan as they age. Their changes of identities might be due to their nostalgia or realization of failed total assimilation, but it may be something to do with their interpretation of the power relationship between the host country and homeland. Some of the older elderly immigrant women felt that they were American when Japan was not one of the economically affluent countries, but these women regained their Japanese identity when Japanese economic power became obvious in the international community since the '80s and '90s. The younger generation of the elderly Japanese women, such as those who do not remember the adversity of the war and Japan's previously powerless economic status in the world, did not mention the feeling of becoming completely American. From this observation, I suggest that the specific timing of experiencing the war became the tool of interpreting what it means to be Japanese or to be American at a certain period and shaped these particular women's way of identifying their affiliation for the countries. The international positions of the sending and receiving countries and the historical events should be more carefully examined when analyzing how immigrants identify with nation(s). The identities of immigrants are personally connected to the nation'(s') past and present as well as future, which will be an important aspect for them to determine their final home during old age.

219

The personal connections to the nation(s) can be also fortified with the concept of gender. The relationship between the nations in a certain period of history is metaphorically translated into the personal relationships with gender ideology. With burgeoning international relationships between American servicemen and Japanese women right after World War II, the West became the metaphor of the male and the East became the metaphor of the female. The West became the progressive protector, liberator, democratic husband, and father figure for the East. The East became the receiver of the goodwill of the West and traditional feminine wife or daughter figure who needs protection and guidance. This schema was utilized to identify the Japanese immigrant women's nationality since their gender as female and their country of origin, Japan, was infused with the feminine images in that specific era. In other words, the nationality was recognized in terms of gender ideology. Some elderly women find their nationality by performing traditional female roles and behavior in their relationships with American husbands. The self-identify of elderly Japanese immigrant women in the U.S., as a Japanese person and as a woman, was affirmed by being in accord with the schema of "the West as male and the East as female."

Today, the well-educated, career-oriented younger generation of Japanese women probably do not agree with this schema to identify themselves, especially with the attached patriarchal gender roles such as "male as breadwinner and female as homemaker." It is hard to imagine that today's Japanese women's nationality conforms to the schema by performing traditional female roles and

behavior in their relationships with American men. Again, the historical

specificity and the relationship between the sending and receiving countries must

be considered carefully when analyzing immigrants' national identity. With

Japan's improved international status and economic power, the image of the

relatively powerless position of the homemaker in the relationship to the

breadwinner American husband no longer represents these women's homeland;

therefore it is no longer the metaphor or manifestation of their nationality.

Ascribed elements of one's self-identity such as sex and race are deeply related to

one's national identity, especially among the immigrant individuals. In fact,

racialized national identity resonates with personal self-identity through

immigrants' marginalized experiences in the host country. In other words,

Japanese immigrants affirm their Japanese-ness in the U.S. with the negative

discriminatory experiences because of their race. It explains why the vast majority

of the elderly Japanese immigrant women immediately answered that their

national identity was Japanese. Because they are racially marginalized, they feel

they will never be entirely "American," no matter how well they are

socioeconomically assimilated or how long they have lived in the host country. At

the same time, the vast majority of them also immediately answered that they do

feel their place to stay for the rest of their life is in the U.S., and they feel they do

belong to the U.S., as well as Japan. Spouses, offspring, personal relationships,

networks in the host country, or even information and knowledge about their local

area they accumulated over the years represent the nation they feel they belong to

221

and in which they feel comfortable. This feeling is the basis for their identification with the U.S.

Some of immigrants with the transnational identity indicate their psychological distance from the siblings and relatives in the homeland and emphasize more the social networks or interpersonal relationships they have built in the host country. Yet, they indicate that their ascribed status such as the place of birth in the homeland or race determine their national identity. The ascribed elements such as the place of birth or racial heritage these immigrants recognize and identify with are also important parts of the comprehensive self-identity since transnational identity is a matter of degree in terms of one's simultaneous affiliation with both countries. From observation, one's national affiliation seems to be defined by the ascribed sphere such as the place he or she was born or race and achieved sphere of self identification such as sense of belonging, social networks one develops in the community, and affinity with and knowledge of the country. Understandably, after so many years of living in the host country, the elderly immigrant women's social networks and knowledge of the community tend to be based on the host country; however, a small number of truly transnational immigrant women actually maintain social networks, affinity, and knowledge of the homeland while developing their ascribed affiliation with the host country by visiting the homeland regularly and frequently.

The achieved sphere of affiliation, such as feelings of closeness or feelings of belonging to the nation(s) requires one's continuous intentional effort in everyday life, while the ascribed sphere of affiliation does not allow individuals to

intentionally choose what they want to choose. For that reason, one may argue that liminal identity is logically impossible since an individual cannot "lose" the ascribed sphere of affiliation with the homeland such as race and the place of birth. It is true that one's ascribed status, such as their Japanese racial heritage and the fact they were born in Japan, cannot be changed; however, immigrants can lose their connections from their ascribed sphere of affiliation by their psychological distance. Japanese elderly immigrant women with liminal identity have felt that they have not developed achieved affiliation in the U.S. but have also become socially and psychologically disconnected from Japan. Despite the fact that they still have ascribed status (racially Japanese and born in Japan), some of them clearly indicated that they don't belong to Japan anymore or that they felt they have "lost" their country. It seems that their reason of losing affiliation with Japan is that they lost their achieved social connection to Japan and never developed social connection to the U.S. Therefore it can be assumed that the achieved sphere of affiliation greatly influences how individuals see their ascribed sphere of affiliation. The ascribed sphere can be a meaningful, significant source of connection to Japan for the women who have developed the achieved sphere of affiliation in the U.S. but did not maintain the achieved sphere of affiliation in Japan. The ascribed sphere could also be a meaningless, insignificant source of connection to Japan for the women who have not developed the achieved sphere of affiliation in the U.S. and did not maintain the achieved sphere of affiliation in Japan.

Since the everyday life of immigrants is surrounded by bicultural experiences, these individuals identify themselves within the context of nations as well as interpersonal relationships. The relationship with the foreign spouse and in-laws or the relationships with their family in the homeland directly represent these people's psychological distance from either country. Interestingly, Japanese elderly immigrant women with liminal identity tended to express their sense of disconnection based on the idealized images of Japan and the U.S., while those with transnational identity expressed their understanding of national identity and reasons of belonging at the personalized, empirical, and concrete level.

To that extent, how elderly immigrants identify with their nation(s) becomes salient when they are talking about specific concerns for aging, confidence, anxiety, and plans for their future. The elderly Japanese immigrant women with liminal identity expressed greater stress and anxiety for their old age. They talked about the possibility of returning to Japan or staying in the U.S. in a very pessimistic manner, while those with transnational identity expressed their aging experiences in a more positive manner. My study suggests that individuals with different national identities plan for the last stages of their lives differently. Their evaluation of their own plan is translated into their personal satisfaction, confidence, or anxiety for their aging.

Aging

The future plans for aging and types of identities among immigrants can be summarized as the transnational identity with the decisive plan to stay in the

U.S. for the rest of their life, transnational identity with the indecisive plan to stay,

liminal identity with the decisive plan to stay in the U.S. for the rest of their life,

and the liminal identity with the indecisive plan. Cassarino (2004) summarizes

rhetorical differences in return migration with categorizing returnee's

preparedness, such as willingness to return and resource mobilization such as

financial capital, relationships, skills, and social networks. Cassarino (2004:271)

explains that "[p]reparedness pertains not only to the willingness of migrants to

return home, but also to their readiness to return. In other words, the returnee's

preparedness refers to a voluntary act that must be supported by the gathering of

sufficient resources and information about post-return conditions at home." The

concept of preparedness is applicable to explain one's level of satisfaction or

anxiety for the old age among the elderly Japanese immigrant women regardless

of the place they choose to live. Even though Cassarino (2004) was considering

just preparedness to return to the home country, this concept is still useful to think

about the preparedness of aging immigrants to continue living in the host country.

Guided by the concept Cassarino (2004) provided, the "willingness" and

"readiness" can be applied to the elderly immigrants as follows: preparedness

pertains to the willingness of elderly immigrants to adopt the cultures, practices,

and lifestyles of the country they choose to be in at the last stage of their life, but

also to their readiness for being comfortable in the "home" they choose.

Therefore, [the elderly immigrant's preparedness for old age] "refers to a

voluntary act that must be supported by the gathering of sufficient resources and

information about the conditions at home [wherever they choose to be]"

225

(Cassarino 2004:271). In that sense, transnational identity clearly has more elements of preparedness for their old age countries than the liminal identity does. Transnational identity allows preparing to live old age in both countries, while the liminal identity makes it difficult to prepare to live old age in either country. As Japanese elderly immigrant women with transnational identity expressed their confidence and little anxiety for the day their health will deteriorate in the future regardless of their current marital status or existence of offspring, the confidence comes from strong connection with the local community in the host country or/and homeland. The readiness for the last stage of their life among these elderly immigrants is based on their financial resources, self-confidence, knowledge of the retirement system in the country(ies) they are planning to end up in, the governmental support such as the Social Security system, and their personal social networks. Most of them associate with other compatriots as well as local people in the host country and see their social networks as one of the informal, non-family based support systems for their old age.

Regardless of their experiences in employment, marriage, or childrearing, elderly Japanese immigrants with transnational identity tend to show a sense of achievement and confidence in their personal ability to deal with their own aging. Their social networks are built by overcoming the concepts of the Japanese sense of obligation (*giri*), social appearance (*sekentei*), or avoidance of putting one's burden onto others (*meiwaku wo kakenai*). In addition to the formal supports such as commercial-based or governmental supports, individuals with transnational identity who have acquired the Western individual culture also see friends,

226

family, and relatives as sources of informal supports without feeling bad about receiving a helping hand. Shelley E. Taylor et al. (2004:360) explained this paradox eloquently:

> This counterintuitive cultural pattern may be explained in terms of how individuals from different cultures value the goals of the self in relation to the goals of relationships. In individual cultural contexts, relationships may be seen as means for promoting individual goals, and as such, one may recruit explicit help or aid from those in one's social networks in order to achieve one's personal goals. In collectivist cultural contexts, individual goals may be seen as a means for promoting relationships.

Therefore, truly enjoying the reciprocity of assistance (not only offering but also receiving it) and believing it to be a sign of affinity and companionship should be considered actually "skills" and the means to build social networks for Japanese immigrants in both the host country and the homeland.

On the other hand, as the elderly Japanese immigrant women with liminal identity indicated stronger anxiety toward their aging regardless of their current marital status or existence of offspring, their anxiety comes from disassociation from the local community in the host and home countries. The psychological disconnection with the homeland or the host country at the personal level is apparent. Regardless of their experiences in occupation, education, or other personal histories, the elderly Japanese immigrant women with liminal identity describe their national identity with abstract, overly idealized, or even

227

stereotypical images about both countries without concrete and personal

experiences. They also talk about or their plans for their future in either a very

abstract manner such as planning their future by suggesting implementing new

national policies or in a disconnected manner such as total avoidance of thinking

about the future.

Since immigrants with liminal identity tend to see very limited options for

their old age and see their options very negatively regardless of their legal status,

actual assets, or marital situations, their real source of anxiety must be their lack

of personal resources such as financial management skills, self-confidence,

knowledge of the retirement system in both countries, or social networks rather

than actual monetary resources.

With regard to the decisiveness of the future plan of where and how to

cope with aging, an indecisive plan for the future creates more options for the

elderly Japanese immigrant women with the transnational identity because they

are ready and comfortable getting old regardless of what country they are in. On

the other hand, the indecisiveness of the plan of where and how to cope with

aging exacerbates the anxiety among the elderly Japanese immigrant women with

liminal identity. One's psychological condition on which liminal identity is based

creates a dim view that neither country offers a comfortable place of belonging in

old age and mistrust toward boththe homeland and host country. However, a

decisive plan to stay in the host country does not increase confidence for the

future if the decision is by default, not by stronger affinity with the host county.

From these observations, this study suggests there is a correlation between the elderly immigrants' national identities and their views regarding their own aging, particularly their level of anxiety or confidence for the final stage of life. The elderly immigrants' level of anxiety or uneasiness for the final stage of life and their national identities are related by their personal connection to the local community(ies) in the host country or both homeland and host country. Whether or not this connection has been successfully developed (and maintained) over many years is strongly related to the individual's transnational or liminal identity. One's transnational identity or liminal identity is a result of many years of identificational assimilation and value acculturation processes in everyday life. Through mundane experiences, most of the immigrants in this study developed their own place(s) of belonging with their empirical personal experiences. They practice what they believe to be American ways such as disclosing self and family matters as a relationship-developing tool within their "clear-cut" human interactions. Some of them actually maintained their place of belonging in the homeland by frequently visiting the place. A few of them either could not or intentionally did not adopt such American practices, which more than likely resulted in psychological disconnection from the host country on top of their geographical distance from the homeland. In that sense, how elderly immigrants have been experiencing mundane events everyday in the host country, how they interpret the historical events in a particular timing of their lives, and how the power relations of the sending and receiving countries have changed affect

significantly, in the long run, their confidence at the last stage of their life. At the same time, various kinds of national identities are also influenced by these factors.

Contribution and Limitation of This Study

From the observations, this study found there is little correlation between the elderly immigrants' national identities and how they plan their old age such as which country they choose to live or preference of receiving traditional filial care or formal care.  However, there seem to be a correlation between the elderly immigrants' national identities and their level of anxiety or confidence for the final stage of life.   As far as the preference of receiving care for their old age is concerned, this study found that elderly Japanese immigrant women generally hold positive views on formal care in the U.S. regardless of their national identities. This is a contribution of this study.  Unlike many scholars suggested previously, elderly Japanese immigrant women do not consider using formal care is shameful or embarrassing. The consciousness of social appearance plays a minimum role when it comes to elderly Japanese immigrant women's preference to utilize formal care services in the United States.  They see receiving family based care is more psychologically cumbersome than purchasing formal long term care services.

One of limitations of this study is that all elderly Japanese women in this study were all living independently and cognitively and physically healthy enough to maintain their independent life at the time of interviews. It is unknown that

these women would have the similar opinions about filial care and formal care if they have been institutionalized in a formal care facility.

The qualitative study with snowball sampling does not represent the study population comprehensively. The inherent nature of the small sample size study inevitably limits the ability to categorize people into detailed classifications. The initial attempt was to classify people into four categories: Japanese, American, transnational, and liminal identities. Even though this categorization was not realized, some clear characteristic differences in terms of their national identities and perceptions toward aging were still observed. A vast majority of the informants were categorized as transnational identity, and a much smaller number of people were categorized with liminal identity. Even after employing the additional purposive sampling to include the hard-to-reach categories of people, their social isolation played a role of the gatekeeper to exclude them from the study. By increasing the sample size drastically, the original four categories of national identities—identification with the homeland, the host country, as well as transnational and liminal identities—would be possible. Creating more detailed definitions and criteria to categorize informants' national identities may help in asking more specific and structured questions in the future.

It is extremely difficult to define "American culture and society," and therefore describing "cultural assimilation to American society" is also a difficult task. Even if one uses simplistic stereotypes of American society, it still does not describe what cultural assimilation to the U.S. society means. In order to decipher the complexity and diversity of the U.S. society and acculturation of immigrants,

the level of one's assimilation is often measured by language acquisition test scores, dollar amount of income, and frequency of media consumption from the homeland. These interval or ratio measurements are considered objectively assessed due to the fact that these data are answered with concrete, actual numbers. However, not-so-apparent elements such as the change of one's values or the process of assimilation itself have to rely on ordinal measurement, which gives only the rank orders of the cases such as the Likert Scales. The General Social Survey 2004 focused on immigration issues and asked respondents their national affiliation with simple statements such as: "How close do you feel to your ethnic group?" and "How close do you feel to the USA?" and the choice of answers for each question was: Not close at all, Not very close, Close, Very close, Can't choose, No answer, and Not applicable.   Such simply defined and unarticulated ordinal measurements do not capture the complexity of immigrants' identity. In the effort of creating more accurate and detailed ordinal measurements about immigrants' value and attitudinal changes, the identificational assimilation processes must be considered more carefully. It would eventually offer the strong basis for creating detailed and well-defined measurements for the quantitative research as well as advancing theoretical questions in the qualitative study of immigration.

Home in a Transnational Era

Anastasia Christou (2009:113) describes the concept of "home" for immigrants and children of immigrants:

'[H]ome' is both a space and place, a time and a stage in one's life.

Home is as much fluid as it is rigid, it is flexible and complex. It

seeks to ground and is localized, but it is also an integral part of a

world of movement, it is relative and contested, a site of

ambivalence and a source of anxiety. Home as a concept that raises

issues of belongingness can become complicated and difficult to

deconstruct and even to contextualize and situate. It may trigger

memories, trauma, indifference, and evoke struggles over selfhood

and nationhood, the irony is that instead of giving people a sense

of stability, balance and relief, the search for 'home' can be

agonizing and a source of pain when displacement and dislocation

occurs.

Choosing a final home within an international standpoint was not a common issue

before the rapid globalization, but it became a common agenda for any

immigrants. There were, of course, immigrants before accelerated globalization;

however, the concept of transnationalism adds the notion of temporary nature to

the home with rapid global transportation and information. In other words, the

final home where immigrants are planning to stay for the rest of their life may not

be necessarily "permanent" with the concept of transnationalism. Of course, a

person can physically be at one place at a time and, realistically, the very sick

individual at the final moments of his or her life probably is not able to

internationally migrate. However, the flexibility of transnationalism allows

immigrants to evaluate the pros and cons of homeland and host country as their

233

final home within the available resources until the very end of their life. Without

the concept of transnationalism, people would not even think about moving to

another country in old age. In that sense, the transnational framework continues to

be a useful tool for not only migration studies but also studies of aging and

identity as the speed of globalization increases.

REFERENCES

AARP. 2006. Across the states: Profiles of long term care and independent living. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute.

Abel, Emily K. 2001. Historical perspectives on caregiving: Documenting women's experiences. In *Families in later life: Connections and transitions*, ed. Alexis.J. Walker, Margaret Manoogian-O'Dell, Lori McGraw and Diana L. White, 83-88, Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge.

Adler, Patricia A., and Peter Adler. 1987. *Membership roles in field research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Alba, Richard and Victor Nee. 1997. Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," *International Migration Review* 31(4)).

Anderson, Elijah. 1999. *Code of the Street: Decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Angel, Jacqueline L. and Ronald Angel J. 1992. Age at migration, social connections, and well-being among elderly Hispanics. *Journal of Aging and Health*. 4(4) 480-499.

Asai, Masayuki O. and Velma A. Kameoka. 2005. The influence of Sekentei on gamily care giving and underutilization of social services among Japanese caregivers. *Social Work*. 50:111-118.

Babbie, Earl. 2008. *The basics of social research*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth.

Barry, Declan T. 2003. Cultural and demographic correlates of self reported guardedness among East Asian immigrants in the US. *International Journal of Psychology*. 38(3):150-159.

Becker, Gray S. and Nigel Tomes. 1986. Human capital and the rise and fall of families. *Journal of Labor Economics*. 4(3): 1-39.

Beckman, Linda and Betsy House. 1982. The Consequences of Childless on the Social-Psychological Well-Being of Older Women. *Journal of Gerontology*. 37(2): 243-250.

Berg, Bruce. 2007. *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* 6th edition. Boston: Pearson education Inc.

Betancourt, Hector and Regerser S. Lopez. 1993. The study of culture, ethnicity, and race in American psychology. *American Psychologist.* 48:629-637.

Belsky, Janet.1984. *The Psychology of aging: Theory, research and practice*. Monterrey, CA: Books/Cole Publishing.

Beyene, Yewoubdar, Gay Becker, and Nury Mayen. 2002. Perception of aging and sense of well-being among Latino elderly. *Journal of Cross Cultural Gerontology.* 17(2) 155-172.

Bianchi, Suzanne, Philip N Cohen, Sara Raley, and Kei Nomaguchi. 2004. Inequality in parental investment in child-rearing: Expenditures, time, and health in 189-219. In *Social inequality*, ed. Kathryn M. Neckerman, 149-188. New York: Russell Sage Foundation New York.

Blau, Peter M. and Otis D. Duncan.1967. *The American occupational structure*. New York: John Wiley.

Bourgois, Philippe. 2003. *In search of respect: Selling crack in El Barrio*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bowd, *Alan D. 2003. Stereotypes of elderly persons in narrative jokes. Research on Aging. 25: 3-21.*

Buraway, Michael. 1991. The extended case method. In *Ethnography unbound: Power and resistance in the modern metropolis*, ed. Michael Buraway, 271-287. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Brannon, Linda. 1999. *Gender psychological perspectives*. 2nd ed. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Bryan S. K. Kim, Donald R. Atkinson, and Peggy H. Yang.1999. The Asian values scale: Development, factor analysis, validation, and reliability. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 46(3) 342-352.

Cassarino, Jean-Pierre. 2004. Theorizing return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*. 6(2):253 -279.

Cavanaugh, John C., and Susan Krauss Whitbourne, 1999. Research methods. In *Gerontology: An interdisciplinary perspective*, ed. John C. Cavanaugh and Susan Kraus Whitbourne, 33-64. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chai, Alice Y. 1988. Women's history in public: "Picture brides" of Hawaii. *Women's Studies Quarterly.* Spring-Summer*:* 51-62.

Cheung, Chau-kiu, Alex Yui-huen Kwan, and Sik Hung Ng. 2006. Impacts of filial piety on preference for kinship versus public care. *Journal of Community Psychology.* 34: 617-634.

Chodorow, Nancy. 1974. Family structure and feminine personality. In *Women, culture, and society,* ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, 43-66, Stanford, CA:Stanford University Press.

Chodorow, Nancy. 1971. *The reproduction of mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender. Berkeley*: University of California Press.

Christou, Anastasia. 2009. Emulating the homeland - Engendering the nation: Agency, belonging, identity, and gender in second-generation Greek American return-migration life stories. In *Return migration for the next generations: 21 st century transnational mobility,* ed. Dennis Conway and Robert B Potter, 101-118. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Citrin, Jack, Cara Wong, and Brian Duff. 2001. The meaning of American national identity: Patterns of ethnic conflict and consensus. In *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction*, ed. by Richard D. Ashmore, Lee Jussim, and David Wilder, 71–100. London: Oxford University Press.

Clark, William. 2003. *Immigrants and the American dream: Remaking the middle class.* New York: Guilford Press.

Creef, Elena T. 2000. Discovering my mother as the other in the Saturday Evening Post. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 6: 443-445.

Cuellar, Israel, Bill Arnold, and Roberto Maldonado. 1995. Acculturation rating scale for Mexican-Americans II: A revision of the original ARSMA scale. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences.* 17:275-304.

Davies, Roger J. and Osamu Ikeno. 2002. *The Japanese mind: understanding contemporary Japanese culture.* Boston: Tuttle Publishing.

Dinnerstein. Leonard and David M. Reimers. 1988. *Ethnic Americans: A history of immigration*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

Connidis, Ingrid A., and Lorraine Davies. 1990. Confidants and Companions in Later Life: The Place of Family and Friends. Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences 45:S141-149

Dorfman, Lorraine T., Karyn L. Berlin, and Connie A. Holmes. 1998. Attitudes toward service use among wife caregivers of frail older veterans. *Social Work in Health Care*. 27(4): 39-64.

Dowd, James J. 1975. Aging as exchange: A preface to theory. *Journal of Gerontology*. 30:584-596.

Dower, John. 1999. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: Norton.

Driedger, Leo and Shivalingappa S. Halli. 2000. Racial integration: Theoretical options. In *Race and Racism: Canada's challenge*, ed. Leo Driedger, Shivalingappa S. Halli, 55-76, Montreal, QC:McGill-Queen's University Press.

Dustmann, Christian, Samuel Bentolila, and Riccardo Faini. 1996. Return migration: The European experience. *Economic Policy*. 11(22): 213-250.

Eshleman, J. Ross and Richard Bulcroft. 2006. *The family*, 11th ed. Boston: Pearson Allyn and Bacon.

Espiritsu, Yen Le. 2001. "We don't sleep around like white girls do": Family, gender, and culture in Filipino American lives. *Signs*. 26(2) 415-440.

Erikson, Erik H. 1959. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. Psychological Issues Monograph I. New York: International Universities Press.

Espiritu, Yen Le and Diane L. Wolf. 2001. The paradox of assimilation: Children of Filipino immigrants in San Diego. In *Ethnicities*: *Children of Immigrants in America*, ed. Ruben.G. Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, 157-186, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fillmore, Wong L. 1991. When learning a second language means losing the first. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly. 6*:323-346.

Fillmore, Wong L. 1991. Language and cultural issues in early education. In *The care and education of America's young children: Obstacles and opportunities, 90th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, ed. by Sharon L. Kagan, 30-49, Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education.

Fukada, Yusuke. 1981. *Nihon akusai ni kanpai.* (Cheers to Japanese bad wives.) Tokyo: Bungeishunjyuu.

Fukui, Yoshiko. 1992. *Tsuda Umeko: Hito to shiso.* (Tsuda Umeko: The person and her ideas). Tokyo: Shimizushoin.

Gerald J. Schnepp and Agnes A.Yui. 1955. Cultural and marital adjustment of Japanese war brides. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 61(1):48-50.

Gibson, Margaret A. 1988. *Accommodation without assimilation: Sikh immigrants in an American high school*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.

Glazzer, Nathan. 1993. Is assimilation dead? *The Annals of the American Academy of Social Political Sciences*, 530:122-136.

Gmelch, George. 1992. *Double passage: The lives of Caribbean migrants abroad and back home*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Gordon, David F. 1987. Getting close by staying distant: Fieldwork with proselytizing groups. *Qualitative Sociology* 10:267-287.

Gordon, Milton M. 1964. Assimilation in American life: The role of race, religion, and national origins. New York: Oxford University Press.

Graves, Theodore D. 1967. Acculturation, access, and alcohol in a tri-ethnic community. *American Anthropologist, New Series*. 69 (3): 306-321.

Greenman, Emily and Yu Xie. *2008*. Is assimilation theory dead? The effect of assimilation on adolescent well-being. *Social Science Research* 37:109–137.

Guarnizo, Luis Eduardo and Luz Marina Díaz. 1999. Transnational migration: A view from Colombia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 22(2): 397-421.

Hamon, Raeann R. 1992. Filial role enactment by adult children. *Family Relations*. 41:91-96.

Hareven, Tamara K. 1994. Aging and generational relations: A historical and life course perspective. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 20:437-61.

Hashizume, Yumi. 1998. Salient factors that influence the meaning of family caregiving for frail elderly parents in Japan from a historical perspective. *Scholarly Inquiry for Nursing Practice: An International Journal*. 12:123-134.

Haveman, Robert, Gary Sandefur, Barbara Wolfe and Andrea Voyer. 2004. Trends in children's attainments and their determinants as family income inequality as increased. In *Social inequality*, ed. Kathryn M. Neckerman, 149-188. New York: Russell Sage Foundation New York.

Hazuda, Helen P., Michael P. Stern, & Steven M. Haffner. 1988. Acculturation and assimilation among Mexican Americans: Scales and population-based data. *Social Science Quarterly*. 69:687-705.

Hooyman, Nancy R, and H. Asuman Kiyak. 2011. *Social gerontology: A multidisciplinary perspective*. 9th edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Ichioka, Yuji. *1980. Amerika nadeshiko: Japanese immigrant women in the United States, 1900-1924.* Pacific Historical Review. 49:339-357.

Inoue, Tadashi. 1977. *Sekentei no Kozo* (The Structure of Sekentei) Tokyo: Nihonhoso shuppankyokai.

Inui, Kiyo Sue. 1921. California's Japanese Situation. In *Annals of the American academy of political and social science, Vol. 93-95.*ed. by Clyde L. King et al., 97-104, Philadelphia: A.L. Hummel for the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

Iredale, Robyn and Fei Guo. 2003. The view from Australia. In *Migration in the Asia Pacific: Population, Settlement and Citizenship Issues.* ed Robyn R. Iredale, Charles Hawksley, Stephen Castles, 26-46. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Inc.

Ishida, Takeshi. 1971. *Japanese Society.* New York: Random House

Ishihara, kunio. 1981. Trends in the generational continuity and succession to household directorship. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 12(3):351-363.

Ivy, Marilyn. 1995. *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

James, Mahoney. 2007. Qualitative methodology and comparative politics. *Comparative Political Studies*. 40:122-144.

Jang, Yuri, Giyeon Kim, David Chiriboga, and Bellinda King-Kallimanis. 2007. A bidimensional model of acculturation for Korean American older adults. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 21: 267-275.

Jared. Smith, W. and William L. Worden. 1952. They're bringing home Japanese wives. *Saturday Evening Post*, 19 January 19, 27.

Jencks, Christopher. 1972. *Inequality*: *A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America.* New York: Harper & Row.

Jiménez**,** Tomás R. 2010. *Replenished Ethnicity: Mexican Americans, Immigration, and Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jordan, Judith V.  1997. A relational perspective for understanding women's development.  In *Women's growth in diversity: More writing from the stone center*, ed. Judith. V. Jordan, 9-24, New York: Guilford Press.

Kaino, Michiatsu. 1988. Some introductory comments on the historical background of Japanese civil law. *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*. 16:383-393.

Kao, Grace and Marta Tienda. 1995. Optimism and achievement: The educational performance of immigrant youth. *Social Science Quarterly*. 76:1-19.

Kawakami, Atsuko. 2009. From an "internationalist woman" to '"just another Asian immigrant": Transformation of Japanese women's self-image before and after permanent settlement in a western country. *Journal of Identify and Migration Studies*. 3:22-39.

Kart, Cary S. 1994. *The realities of aging: An introduction to gerontology*, 4th ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Kart, Cary S and Charles F. Longino. 1897. The support systems of older people: A test of the exchange paradigm.  *Journal of Aging Studies.* 1(3): 239-251.

Kelsky, Karen. 2001. *Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams*, Durham: Duke University Press.

Kelley, Frank and Ryan Cornelius. 1947. *Star-Spangled Mikado.* New York: Robert M. McBride.

Koff, Theodore H. and Richard W. Park. 1993. *Aging public policy: Bounding the generations*. Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Co.

Kondo, Dorinne K. 1990. *Crafting selves: Power, gender, and discourses of identity in a Japanese workplace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kose, Satoshi. 1998. Housing elderly people in Japan. In Housing older people: An international perspective. ed. Satya Brink, 125-139,  New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Kuypers, Joseph.A. and Vern L. Bengtson.1973. Social breakdown and competence: A model of normal aging. *Human Development*, 16(2):37-49.

Lemon , Bruce W., Vern L. Bengtson, and James A. Peterson. 1972. An exploration of the activity theory of aging: Activity types and life satisfaction among in-movers to a retirement community. *Journal of Gerontology*. 27(4)*:* 511-523.

LaFromboise, Teresa, Hardin L. Coleman and Jennifer Gerton. 1993. Psychological impact of biculturalism: Evidence and theory. *Psychological Bulletin* 114:395-412.

Ling, Huping. 2007. *Voices of the heart: Asian American women on immigration, work, and family.* Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press.

Lofland, John, David A. Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland. 2006. *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis.* Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Lowe, Lisa.1996. *Immigrant acts: On Asian American cultural politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Macionis John J. 2008. *Sociology* 12th edition. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

McLanahan , Sara and Gray Sanderfur. 1994. *Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps*.  Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Madsen, William. 1964. The alcoholic Agringado.  *American Anthropologist, New Series*. 66 (2):355-361.

Matcha Duane A. 2007. *The sociology of aging: An international perspective*. Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY: Sloan Publishing.

Maeda, Daisaku and Marvin B. Sussman. 1980. Young adults' perceptions of the elderly and responsibility of caring for the aged parents. *Shakai Ronen Gaku*. *12*: 29-40.

Margolis, Richard J. 1990. *Risking old age in America*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Marin, Gerardo and Raymond J. Gamba. 1996. A new measurement of acculturation for Hispanics: The bi-dimensional acculturation scale for Hispanics. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*. 18:297-316.

Marks, Toshiko. 1997. *Hiyowana otoko to fuwafuwa shita onna no kuni nihon.* (Country of Weak Men and Ethereal Women; Japan). Tokyo: Shisousha.

Marra Robert J. 1996. Social relations as capital: The story of Yuriko. In *Re-Imaging Japanese women*, ed. by Anne E. Imamura, 104-134. Berkeley: University of California press.

Mishima, Sumie. 1941. *My narrow isle: The story of a modern woman in Japan.* New York: John Day.

Miyake, Kazuo and KosukeYamazaki. 1995. Self-conscious emotions, child rearing, and child psychopathology in Japanese culture. In *Self Conscious emotions: The psychology of shame, guild, embarrassment, and pride*, ed. by June. P. Tangney and Kurt.W. Fischer, 488-504, New York: Guilford Press.

Mizuno, Michiyo. 1999. The changes and strategies adopted by the public health services and medical society in Japan. In *Asian voices: Asian and Asian American health educators speak out,* ed. Lin Zang, 146-167. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett.

Momose,Yumiko and Kiyomi Asahara. 1996.  Relationship of  "sekentei" to utilization of health, social and nursing services by the elderly. *Nihou Koshu Eisei Zasshi*. 43:209-219.

Mui, Ada C. 1999. Living alone and depression among older Chinese immigrants. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*. 30 (3:4):147-166.

Myers, Fred. 2001. The Wizards of Oz: Nation, state, and the production of aboriginal fine art. In *The empire of things: regimes of value and material culture*, ed. Fred. R. Myers, 165-206. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Nakane, Chie. 1972. *Japanese society.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Nakano Glenn, Evelyn. 1986. *Issei, nisei, war bride: Three generations of Japanese American women in domestic services*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). 2008. *National nursing home survey*. Hyattsville, MD:NCHS.

Nishi, Setsuko M. 1995.  Japanese Americans. In *Asian Americans: Contemporary trends and issues,* ed. by Pyong Gap Min, 95-133. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Nishio, Harry Kaneharu. 2004. Japan's welfare vision: Dealing with a rapidly increasing elderly population. In *Graying of the world: Who will care for the frail elderly?* ed. Laura Katz Olson, 233-260, New York: Haworth Press.

Nussbaum, Jon F., Loretta L Pecchioni, James D. Robinson, and Teresa L. Thompson.2000. *Communication and aging*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Association Publishers.

Ogawa, Naohiro and Robert D. Retherford. 1993.  Care of the elderly in Japan: Changing norms and expectations. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 55(3):585-597.

Oglnick, Karen. 1998.  *Onna rashiku (Like a woman): The diary of a language learner in Japan.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1986. *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Peshkin, Alan 1984. Odd man out: The participant observation in an absolutist setting. *Sociology of Education*. 57:254-264.

Peterson, Tiffany. *Japanese Americans*. 2004. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

Pfeiffer, Eric. 1977. Sexual behavior in old age. In *Behavior and adaptation in late life*, ed. Ewald W. Busses and Eric Pfeiffer, 130-141. Boston: Little Brown.

Piaget, Jean. 1962. *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood*. New York: Norton. (La formation du symbole, 1945)

Phinney, Jean S. 1990. Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: A review of research. *Psychological Bulletin.* 108:449-514.

Porter, James R. & Robert E. Washington. 1993. Minority identity and self-esteem. *Annual Review of Sociology* 19(1):139-161.

Raschick, Michael and Berit Ingersoll-Dayton. 2004. The cost and rewards of careiving among aging spouses and adult children.  *Family relations*, 53(3): 317-325.

Rochford, E. Burke. 1985. *Hare Krishna in America*.  New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Rumbaut, Ruben G. 1997. Assimilation and its discontents: Between rhetoric and reality.  *International Migration Review. 31:* 923-960.

Satou, Katsuki. 2001. *Mainichi ga amerika* (Everyday is American.) Tokyo: Bungeisha.

Sawada, Mitziko. 1996. Tokyo life, New York dreams: Urban Japanese visions of America, 1890-1924. Barkley: University of California Press.

Simpson, Caroline C. 1994. American Orientalisms: The gender and cultural politics of America's postwar relationship with Japan.' Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin.

Simpson, Caroline C. 1998. Out of an obscure place: Japanese war brides and cultural pluralism in the 1950s. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. 10(3) 47-81.

Steil, Janice. 1995. Super moms and second shifts; Marital inequality in the 1990s. In *Women: A Feminist Perspective,* ed. by Jo Freeman, 149-161. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Co.

Suarez-Orozco, Marcelo M. 1989. *Central American refugees and U.S. high schools: A psychosocial study of motivation and achievement*. Stanford: Standard university press.

Sugimoto, Etsu Inagaki. 1926. *A daughter of the samurai.* New York: Doubleday.

Suinn, Richard M., Carol Ahuna, and Gillian Khoo. 1992. The Suinn-Lew Asian self identity acculturation scale: Concurrent and factorial validation. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*. 52: 1041-1046.

Surrey, Janet L. 1991. The "self-in-relation": A theory of women's development. In *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the stone center,* ed. by Judith V. Jordan, et al., 51-66. New York: Guilford Press.

Szapocznik, Jose and William M. Kurtines. 1980. Acculturation, biculturalism, and adjustment among Cuban Americans. In *Psychological dimensions on the acculturation process:Theory, models, and some new findings*, ed. Amando M. Padilla, 139-159. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Szapocznik, Jose, Mercedes A. Scopetta, William M. Kurtines, and Maria D Arandale, M. A. 1978. Theory and measurement of acculturation. *Interamerican Journal of Psychology*. 12:113-120.

Tajfel, Henri. 1978. Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations. London: Academic Press.

Tajfel, Henri and John. C Turner.1986. The social identity: Theory of inter-group behavior. In *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin, 7-24. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Tannen, Deborah.1990. *You just don't understand: women and men in conversation.* New York: William Morrow.

Taylor, Shelley E., David K. Sherman, Heejung S. Kim, Johanna Jarcho, Kaori Takagi, and Melissa S. Dunagan. 2004. Culture and social support: Who seeks it and why? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 87(3):354–362.

Thorton, Arland. 2001. The developmental paradigm, reading history sideways and family change. *Demography*, 38:449-465.

Tsu, Cecilia M. 2009. Sex, lies, and agriculture: Reconstructing Japanese immigrant gender relations in rural California, 1900-1913. *Pacific Hhistorical review*. 78(2):171-209.

Tsuda, Takeyuki. 2003. *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland* New York: Columbia University Press.

Tsuda, Takeyuki. 2003b. Homeland-less abroad: Transnational liminality, social alienation, and personal malaise. In *Searching for home abroad: Japanese-Brazilians and transnationalism*, ed. by Jeff Lesser, 121-162, Durham: Duke University Press.

Tsuda, Takeyuki. Forthcoming. What happened to simultaneity? Transnational migration theory and dual engagement in sending and receiving countries. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.

Tuan, Mia. 1995 Korean and Russian students on a Los Angles high school: Exploring the alternative strategies of two high achieving groups. IN *California's immigrant children*, ed. by Ruben G. Rumbaut and Wayne A. Cornelius, 107-130, La Jolla: CA Center for U.S.-Mexicans Studies.

Turner, John. C.1982. Towards a cognitive redefinition of the social group. In *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations,* ed. Henri Tajfel, 15–40. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, John C. and Rina S. Onorato.1999. Social identity, personality, and the self concept: A self-categorization perspective. In *The Psychology of the Social Self*, ed.Tom. R. Tyler, Roderick M. Kramer, and John P. Oliver,11-46. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Turner, Terence. 1991. Representing, resisting, rethinking: Historical transformations of Kayapo culture and anthropological consciousness. In *Colonial situations*, ed. by George W. Stocking, 285-313, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Turner, Victor W. 1969 *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.

Ueno, Chizuko. 2005. Are the Japanese feminine**?** Some problems of Japanese feminism in its cultural context. In *Sources of Japanese tradition: 1868 to 2000 Volume 2*., ed. by William Theodore De Bary, 1213-1219. New York: Columbia University Press.

Veltman, Calvin.1983. *Language shift in the United States.* Berlin: Mouton.

Waldforgel, Jane. 1997. The effect of children on women's wages. *American Sociological Review*, 62:209-17.

Waters, Mary. 1999. *Black identities: West Indian immigrant dreams and American realities*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Warren, Carol A. B., and Tracy X. Karner. 2005. *Discovering qualitative methods: Field research, interviews, and analysis.* Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.

White, Merry. 1988. *The Japanese overseas: Can they go home again?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Whyte, William F. 1943. *Street corner society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Yamamoto, Michiko. 1993. *Deyoka nippon: Onna31sai americka chugoku o yuku* (Shall I leave Japan? A woman at 31 travels American and China) Tokyo: Kodansha.

Yanagida, Kunio. 1954. *Meiji bunkashi 13 Fuzoku* (A History of the Meiji Culture 13 Customs) Tokyo: Youyousha.

Ying, Yu-Wen.1995. Cultural orientation and psychological well-being in Chinese American. *Journal of Community Psychology*. 23:893-911.