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Among Second Generation Japanese Americans

by

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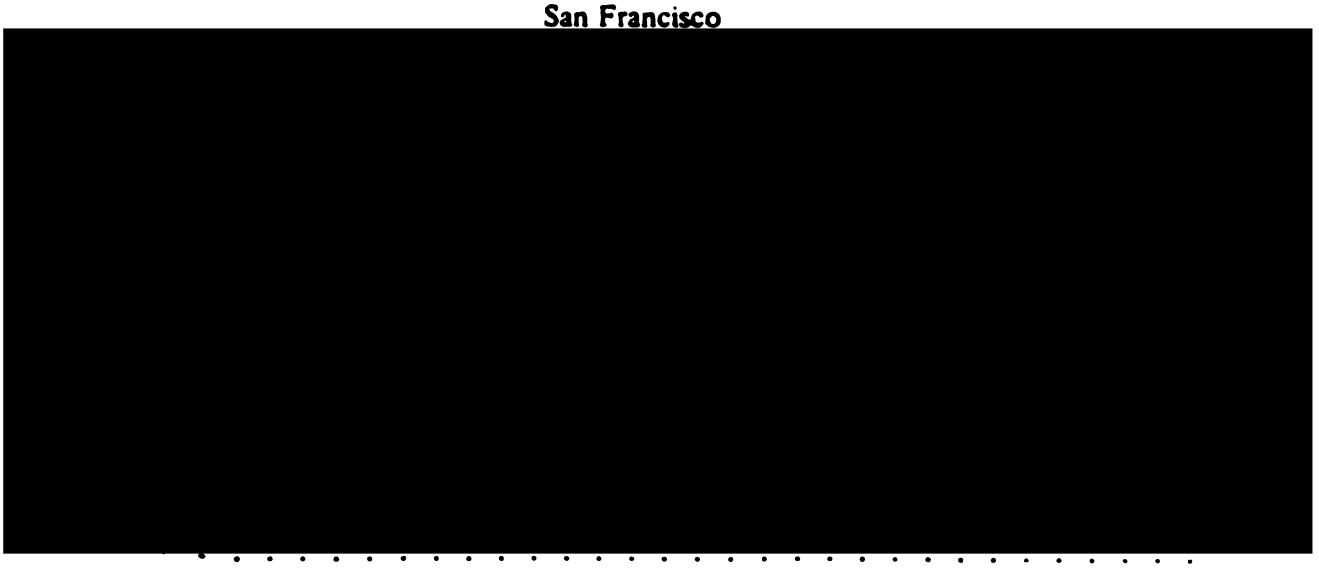

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ABSTRACT

ETHNICITY, RITUAL, AND AGING AMONG SECOND GENERATION JAPANESE AMERICANS

Mary Louise Doi

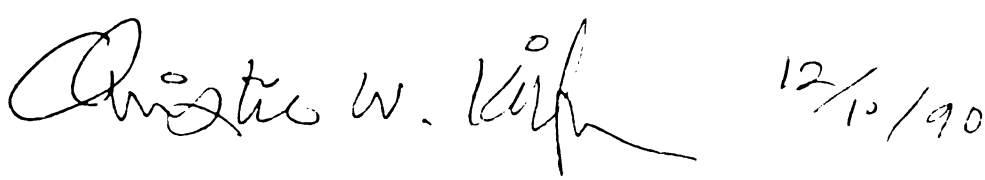
This is an ethnographic study of the Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) as they enter late life. The research on which this dissertation is based focuses on individual, family, and community rituals. In this thesis I analyze and interpret one ritual, the kanreki (a traditional Japanese rite of passage to old age at 60), to elaborate the social roles and statuses available to Nisei and the values placed on age, generation, family, and ethnic identity in the community. In this way, I seek to convey dimensions of the aging experience for my informants.

I spent two years doing fieldwork in a Japanese American community in a major West Coast city during the late 1980s. In addition to participant observation and record reviews at a social service agency, I interviewed 24 Nisei and asked a wide range of questions related to aging, ethnicity, and ritual participation. Each interview was tape recorded, transcribed verbatim, and coded. I rely on

what my informants have to say about the 60th birthday and quote extensively from the transcripts.

The kanreki-style 60th birthday presents several paradoxes and discontinuities facing aging Nisei. They are being celebrated with a Japanese ritual, yet they are not Japanese. They are being ushered into old age, yet they are not old yet. They provided care to aging Issei parents yet cannot expect and say they do not want the same from their children. And they will be old soon in an American setting that devalues the elderly. The 60th birthday is a collective way of addressing these dilemmas.

At the same time, the kanreki has been transformed in the Japanese American setting. Instead of being a rite of passage to old age centered on the initiate, the event is a rite of solidarity for the Nisei cohort to become the senior generation. The birthday celebration unites all participants in a collusion of meaning creation to help structure the unknown. In this way, the ritual has changed to reflect important distinctions in a new social context.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is an ethnographic study of the Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) as they enter late life. The research on which this dissertation is based focuses on individual, family, and community rituals. In this thesis I analyze and interpret one ritual, the 60th birthday, to elaborate the social roles and statuses available to Nisei and the values placed on age, generation, family, and ethnic identity in the community. In this way, I seek to convey dimensions of the aging experience for my informants.

By ritual I mean broadly patterned symbolic behavior which is repeated at specific times and communicates through action what words alone cannot convey. Rituals therefore are not restricted to the sacred realm, like the Roman Catholic mass, or the primitive, superstitious, and exotic, (e.g. cannibalism or shamanism) but are part of daily secular life even in 20th century America in events such as July 4th picnics, retirement parties, or funerals. However, studies of rituals involving the elderly as their focus have received little attention.

Background

The purpose of the dissertation will be clarified by describing the intellectual steps that lead to this approach in studying aging among the Nisei, what ideas guided the work, and how the project was designed and executed.

Three major influences pointed to this topic and approach. The first came from a rich and rewarding job experience which gave me broad exposure to the literature on Asian Americans and stimulated my interest in ethnicity and aging. From 1977-79 and again from 1983-86, I worked at the Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center (P/AAMHRC) in Chicago under the guidance of its director Dr. William T. Liu. This federally funded R & D center was designed, in part, to train ethnic researchers. I was fortunate to meet and work with senior scholars and younger researchers, especially at the annual Research Methods Workshops which were co-sponsored with the University of Michigan's Interuniversity Consortium on Political and Social Research. Here I met the first wave of Japanese American social scientists (S. Frank Miyamoto, Setsuko Matsunaga Nishi, Tom Sasaki, Harry Kitano, Kenji Murase, James Sakoda, Y. Scott Matsumoto, and Tamotsu Shibutani). In the early to mid- 1940's they had been college-aged Nisei. Many had been involved with the War Relocation Authority sponsored research on the World War II camp experience of Japanese Americans and the subsequent

relocation and adjustment in the post War years. After the War they continued their training in psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Most continued to have an interest in the effect of the camp experience on the lives of Japanese Americans. These scholars served as my Nisei role models. Their rigorous studies of Japanese Americans provide a longitudinal perspective that dates back to the 1930s.

Ritual Studies

Barbara Myerhoff's work with elderly Jews in southern California captured my attention from the first year of graduate school. She is my second major influence. Her research not only illustrated the important ritual life of the group but also presented the personal and historical context for its significance. A birthday party, protest march, mural, graduation, and Seder become vehicles for the seniors to tell their stories and redefine themselves in later life. These sacred and secular rituals give meaning to their lives. Myerhoff's work is the second major influence for several reasons. First, her ethnography (1980) of old age makes contributions to both social gerontology and ritual studies. Her second influence is analytic. She sought to understand the aging experience of her informants by interpreting various types of representations such as a protest march, texts such as life stories gathered from her informants, and objectifications such as art works. In this way, her work is part of what

Bruner (1986) calls the "anthropology of experience." This approach

> deals with how individuals actually experience their culture, that is how events are received by consciousness. By experience we mean not just sense data, cognition, or in Dilthey's phrase, 'the diluted juice of reason,' but also feelings and expectations (Bruner 1986, 4).

It is sensitive to the continuous interplay between experience, expression, and meaning creation and provides a way to interpret, among other things, what it means to grow old. Myerhoff's approach to fieldwork was also an inspiration. Victor Turner calls her combination of anthropological rigor and perceptive involved observation "compassionate objectivity" (Myerhoff 1978, xvii) and in this way too she served as a model for my work.

The final discernable influence came from a session at the 1986 Gerontological Society annual meeting titled "Reunions and Rituals: Vehicles for Individual and Family Continuity and Change in Late Life." Lillian Troll organized the session and later edited seven papers on the topic which appeared in the July/August 1988 volume of the American Behavioral Scientist. Gerontologists at the session agreed that serious consideration had not been given to the role of older people in family rituals or the meaning of these events to the participants. Therefore, continued research in this area seemed warranted.

A study of ritual among Nisei became the focus for my work. Rituals do more than enrich lives. Since they give expression to social status, roles, group membership, values, and feelings a study of ritual could serve as the lens to interpret the aging experience of my informants. Articles in the English section of the local San Francisco ethnic newspaper, Hokubei Mainichi, indicated the wide range of sacred and secular rituals that were going on right in my midst. In addition to funerals, regularly scheduled sports tournaments, and countless fundraising events, I noted that special 60th and 88th birthday parties, retirement parties, 40th and 50th wedding anniversaries, Day of Remembrance programs (marking the anniversary on which President Franklin Roosevelt signed the order that called for the evacuation and internment of all persons of Japanese ancestry), internment camp, high school, and town reunions, community festivals and pageants, and special celebrations honoring the elderly were frequent and regularly occurring events. Therefore, in the overall research scheme, I wanted to examine the types of individual, family, community, and ethnic rituals the Nisei took part in as they grew older.

What became clear not just from a daily glance at the Hokubei but also through intimate participation in community events was that many Nisei have active social lives, maintain status and prestige in the community despite advancing years, and remain engaged in meaningful roles and

activities. From these influences I drew a series of questions about how knowledge of aging, ethnicity and ritual come together to make the experience of the aging Nisei intelligible.

Japanese Americans were first labeled a "model minority" by sociologist William Petersen in the mid-1960s (Petersen, 1966). Census figures on education, income, occupation, and geographic dispersion showed that by 1960, Nisei had left the pre-WWII Japantowns and entered middle class occupations and neighborhoods. However, many of the events covered by this research, events such as birthday celebrations, reunions, pilgrimages, and funerals, attract Nisei participants from well outside the Bay Area and draw people back to the ethnic community. I wanted to know why aging Nisei make the effort to participate in these activities. What kind of system maintenance functions do rituals serve for the individual, family, and group? How do rituals help Nisei deal with the changes they face in later life? What kinds of stories are my informants creating about themselves through ritual? In what ways do rituals illuminate what it means to be Japanese American? And finally, how can one understand the aging experience of the Nisei by interpreting the kanreki-type (a rite of passage to old age in traditional Japanese culture) 60th birthday

celebrations which have become fairly widespread in the local community.

Citing My Ancestors

My approach to understanding the aging experience is embedded in the descriptive tradition. Some key examples in social gerontology are Cole's (1973) study of elderly Mexican Americans, Kaufman's (1986) analysis of the ageless self, Plath's (1975) developmental biographies, and, of course, Myerhoff's (1977, 1978, 1980, 1986) ethnography and articles which show how rituals help to structure social reality, standardize experience, and endow particular interpretations with legitimacy. Geertz describes her analyses as articulating

> the 'hard-won meaning' of [the realities of aging, Jewish history, Southern California, and 'death by invisibility'] . . .;[protest marches and murals] make clear to those who enact them, those who witness them, and those who 'study' them just what it is to be old and Jewish in a Venice where the canals are boardwalks and the gondolas, bicycles. Myerhoff is concerned with examining those meanings, with tracing out the mutual implications, some of them barely susceptible of discursive statement, between the large and the little, the persisting and the passing, the existent and the felt, that they project (Geertz 1986, 376).

What these approaches share is a method (long term field research), an analytic framework (where attention is given to individual informants' experiences and expressions in order to explain, interpret, understand, and make sense of the aging experience), and a product (ethnography).

Kiefer (1988) might find these works to be examples of "ironic social science" because they seek to "achieve understandings that, while they remain uncertain, are more and more useful" (Kiefer 1988, 213). These works are interpretive, not predictive. They do not pretend to grand theorizing; instead they allow for alternative understandings which "serve our culturally and temporally limited human purposes" (Kiefer 1988, 213). This stance is "tolerant of complexity and variation, . . . [and] is able to take into account the personal understandings that play a key role in all human behavior" (Kiefer 1988, 214). Indeed, this is how Myerhoff understands the protest march and mural. Elderly Jews took to the Venice boardwalk in order to enact their claims, proceeded to believe in the rightfulness of their self-consciously created reality, persuaded outsiders who witnessed the enactments, and ultimately transformed what Geertz (1965, 23) called the "dreamed of" into the "lived in" world for themselves and their witnesses.

Ethnography seeks to understand complex social process by relying on informants to tell us about their experience. Understanding comes by seeing things from what Geertz calls the "native's point of view." Geertz achieves this not by

> imagining myself someone else, a rice peasant or a tribal sheikh, and then seeing what I thought, but by searching out and analyzing the symbolic forms --words, images, institutions, behaviors--in terms of which, in each place, people actually

> represented themselves to themselves and to one another (Geertz 1983, 58).

Further, these symbolic forms are the "experience-near" concepts which an informant

> might himself naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others (Geertz 1983, 57).

I suspected that for both Issei (first generation Japanese immigrants) and Nisei, the challenges of aging are intricately tied to a strong ethnic identity. Japanese Americans not only identify themselves by the experience-near geo-generational terms of Issei, Nisei, and Sansei (third generation Japanese American), but also ascribe character traits, behavior, and shared background to each of the cohorts. Therefore, in this dissertation, I seek to describe the experience of aging for the Nisei as a generational cohort within an ethnic group.

Another experience-near concept that my informants use is to divide their world into separate "Japanese" and "American" spheres. These dimensions are partly explanations and partly ethnic boundary markers in widely disparate arenas. One might hear a Nisei say that Sansei children cannot be depended upon to take care of parents in old age because "we raised them to be too American." At the same time they say that their own caregiving experiences for aged parents is based on "traditional Japanese" values of

filial piety. They slight the fact that the Japanese American style of filial piety differs greatly from the "traditional Japanese" version of the behavior. In America, according to Yanagisako (1985), the Japanese American family is bilateral and all Nisei siblings not just the oldest son assume responsibility for aging Issei parents. Responsibilities for care of frail parents are assigned among and by the siblings based on gender and age. So, what the Nisei call "Japanese" is in fact not strictly Japanese or American but much more specifically "Nisei" in its interpretation.

However, as Yanagisako notes (1985, 11-12) even ethnic researchers gloss over this aspect of the emic by assuming not only an unchanging Japanese tradition in the original culture but also unchanging tradition in things labeled "Japanese" by Japanese Americans. For many researchers, especially those interested in acculturation, traits attributable to "Japanese" or "American" culture become the focus. However, I believe we should not focus on matters of authenticity but ultimately must decipher and understand components of experience-near concepts. Japanophiles fail miserably in studies of Japanese Americans because they use a yardstick of absolute and unchanging cultural veracity to gauge Nisei behavior when in fact they need to measure and comprehend the ethnic world in its own terms. This now brings me to a consideration of ethnicity.

Ethnicity and Aging

Recently, there has been increasing interest in the development of ethnogerontology within the field of social gerontology. Jacquelyne Jackson defines this specialty in the following manner: "Ethnogerontology is the study of the causes, processes, and consequences of race, national origin, and culture on individual and population aging" (Jackson 1985, 265). Subsequently, others have taken up a call for this type of research (Gibson 1989; Hooyman and Kiyak 1988; J. S. Jackson 1989).

My interest in ethnogerontology focuses on understanding the personal experience of aging for my Nisei informant. To this end, I believe an ethnographic approach lends itself to analyzing the way ethnicity is experienced by people and can show us what this has to do with growing older. For my purposes, ethnogerontology refers to both the ethnic content of the aging process and an ethnographic approach for examining the experience.

Previous criticism of research on ethnicity and aging reveals several themes (Gelfand and Barresi 1987; Holzberg 1982a, 1982b; Jackson 1985; Markides 1982; Rosenthal 1986; Sokolovsky 1990). First, the effects of ethnic culture are often confounded with the effects of social class or racial discrimination (Holzberg 1982a; Jackson 1985; Rosenthal 1986). This perspective has led to the development of double or multiple jeopardy models of ethnic minority aging.

Jeopardy models often appear in advocacy research to cast minority elderly as the deserving poor. For example, Fujii (1976) or Salcido, Nakano, and Jue (1980) take this approach in describing the social and health conditions of Asian American elderly. Their papers emphasize the poverty and barriers to social services faced by ethnic minority elderly and call for appropriate health and social service programs.

Other researchers are interested in the cultural content of ethnicity. They typically focus on traits of immigrant culture. This model usually serves to promote cross-cultural understanding, again of great value in a service delivery mode. From this kind of research one may learn, for example, about the diversity within the Chinese elderly population. Recent immigrant Mandarin speaking elderly typically have a different educational, family, and socioeconomic background from elderly Cantonese speaking never married men (Kalish and Yuen 1971; Wu 1975). This type of background knowledge of the culture of origin becomes a kind of checklist in providing appropriate services.

A third perspective sees ethnic ways as "'traditional' or non-modern . . . . Ethnic families are thus assumed to be characterized by respect for elderly members, familism, intergenerational cohesion and continuity, and high levels of support for older people" (Rosenthal 1986, 22). This

view of ethnicity allows us to better understand ourselves through the study of others.

Clearly, different models of ethnicity serve different purposes. In order to examine the individual experience of ethnicity and aging--a perspective which is concerned with aging as a personal problem of the individual within his culture, I develop the following stance.

Concepts of Ethnicity

Two broad approaches to concepts of ethnicity dominate the social science literature--one that is labelled "objective" and the other "subjective." Typically, objective definitions focus on cultural characteristics which distinguish the group from other members of society. A classic example is Gordon's definition of American ethnic groups.

> [An ethnic group is] any group which is defined or set off by race, religion, or national origin, or some combination of these categories . . . . All of these categories have a common social psychological referent, in that all of them serve to create, through historical circumstances, a sense of peoplehood for groups within the United States (Gordon, in Isajiw 1974, 113).

Objective approaches most often view ethnicity as trait based and view ethnic groups as a form of social organization. According to Kumekawa, this perspective casts ethnic groups as "interest groups bound by cultural ties . . . . ethnic groups are economic, social or political phenomena that are created out of the competitive and

oppositional nature of the social environment" (Kumekawa 1988, 14).

Subjective definitions typically focus on the emotional bonds which unite members of the group. In this approach, emphasis is placed not on social structural factors which serve to create, maintain, or minimize ethnic groups but on the ties of peoplehood. Shibutani and Kwan (1965) provide an example of the second approach.

> An ethnic group consists of people who conceive of themselves as being of a kind. They are united by emotional bonds and concerned with the preservation of their type. With very few exceptions they speak the same language, or their speech is at least mutually intelligible to each other, they share a common cultural heritage . . . . Far more important, however, is their belief that they are of common descent, a belief usually supported by myths or a partly fictitious history (Shibutani and Kwan 1965, 40-41).

In this approach, shared cultural criteria such as national origin, language, or religion become the meaning laden characteristics which invest consciousness of kind.

Barth offers a third, important perspective by concentrating on ethnic groups and their boundaries. He generally rejects approaches which characterize ethnic groups as biologically self-perpetuating, sharing fundamental cultural values, forming systems of communication and interaction, and having a membership which defines itself and is defined by others as distinct. He criticizes these formulations for presenting a "preconceived view of what are the significant factors in the genesis, structure,

and function of such groups" (Barth 1969, 11). Instead he concentrates on "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (Barth 1969, 15). Barth's model is referred to as ecological because he is interested in the conditions under which ethnic boundaries are maintained or dissolved.

In my examination of Nisei ethnicity and aging, I favor an eclectic approach which combines the subjective perspective with Barth's emphasis on the dynamic nature of ethnic groups. For example, although San Francisco's Japantown is populated by Caucasians, Blacks, Japanese Americans, and Japanese, there are clear and insurmountable boundaries between all these groups. One might hypothesize that cultural criteria such as shared national origin, common physical appearance, and some elements of shared cultural heritage would serve to link the Japanese and Japanese Americans factions as an ethnic group. However, there is no sense of peoplehood or consciousness of kind. In fact, one of my informants refers, rather disparagingly, to the Japanese nationals as the "made in Japans." I suspect that among Nisei and other Japanese Americans, he is not alone in choosing to consciously separate from Japanese economic and political interests. Japan's "economic miracle" has become a source of increasing concern for Japanese Americans who fear that they will once again be the target of anti-Japanese sentiment and racially motivated

hate crimes. Equally clear is the fact that no matter the degree of acculturation and social distance between a particular Nisei and the ethnic group, culturally significant occasions such as funerals arise in which the group appropriates the deceased member or his surviving kin as one of its own. The boundary is enforced both from the inside and the outside.

Finally, I favor Barth's perspective because it allows for the changing nature of the content of ethnicity.

> The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change--yet the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the changing cultural content.
>
> Socially relevant factors alone become diagnostic for membership, not the overt, 'objective' differences which are generated by other factors. It makes no difference how dissimilar members may be in their overt behavior --if they say they are A, in contrast to another cognate category B, they are willing to be treated and let their own behavior be interpreted and judged as A's and not as B's; in other words, they declare their allegiance to the shared culture of A's (Barth 1969, 14-15).

In a recent study of Nisei ethnicity and ritual, Takezawa (1989) argues that ethnicity has come to be marked by a shared sense of suffering brought about by the World War II internment experience. This unresolved suffering has lead to a stigmatized view of ethnicity for her informants. However, the Redress movement and collective rituals such as the Day of Remembrance have helped to correct the injustice

of internment through litigation, legislation, and symbolic action. These channels have provided Japanese Americans with ways to reinterpret their past and redefine their ethnic selves.

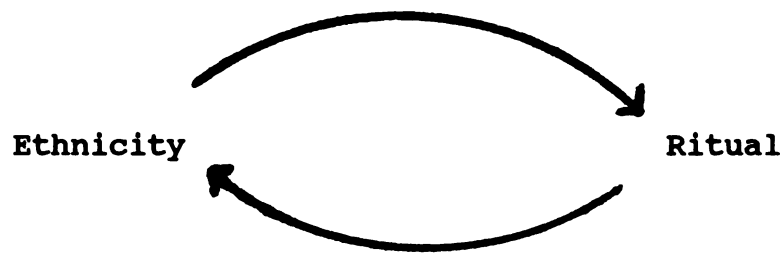

Figure 1
Relationship between Ethnicity and Ritual

One way that I understand her argument is to view ethnicity and ritual as phases of a hermeneutic circle (Figure 1). Rituals give people the opportunity to exchange feelings, through the medium of symbolic performance. This in turn helps them to refine and clarify their shared assumptions about the meaning of ethnicity. And finally, this refinement is renewed, validated, and extended through repetitive performance of the ritual. Rituals such as the pilgrimages to various relocation camps or the Day of Remembrance programs include symbols of suffering such as barbed wire, internment camp guard towers, and testimonies by former internees. These rituals also typically include representations of the federal government embodied in symbols such as the American flag or speeches by Euro-American politicians attesting to the injustice of the evacuation. Both the pilgrimages and the Day of Remembrance

give form to shared suffering; and the suffering of the group is made manifest through culturally meaningful symbols in these rituals. This is one useful model for how ethnicity and ritual articulate.

Rites of Passage

The classic work on rites of passage was done by van Gennep around the turn of the century. By searching for general laws of social processes, he identified a three-phase cycle in life crises ceremonies. He labelled these ceremonies rites de passage. These rites first separate the initiate from his previous status (séparation), then suspend him in a liminal or transitional state as part of the passage (marge), and finally incorporate him back into society in the new status (agrégation). Ceremonies may differ in the emphasis placed on a particular phase. For example, separation is a prominent aspect of funerals while incorporation is a major feature of marriage.

This study examines one ritual, a 60th birthday, among my Nisei informants. As it is marked in the Japanese American community, this celebration is modeled after the Japanese kanreki, a rite of passage to elderhood at age 60.

Myerhoff defines rites of passage as "ceremonial celebrations of change" (Myerhoff 1982b, 131) that mark alterations in role or position over the life cycle. These acts make cultural through ceremony the biological experiences of birth, reproduction, and death. For example,

funerals transform the corpse into the deceased; Bar Mitzvah introduces and incorporates the boy into his religious congregation as an adult male.

In addition to codifying physiological change such as puberty or death, socially determined life stages may be set off. In contemporary America, legal adulthood is designated by the right to vote which is conferred at age 18 regardless of social or intellectual maturity. Occupational retirement is largely determined by the calendar too without much regard for individual ability. Although these socially determined events may restructure an individuals life, they may not always be ushered in in socially significant ways. With retirement this may be due in large part to the relative normlessness of old age.

Rites of passage not only punctuate the life course and denote change for the initiate but also restructure the roles and statuses of consociates. The ritual process is both about flux and stability, change and order, movement and stability, or what Turner calls "structure and anti-structure" (Turner 1969). These rites provide a sense of coherence in the presence of change; they present order and continuity as the outcome of a process of transition and upheaval.

Another theme of rites of passage is that although the rite focuses on an individual, the group too participates in the occasion. For example, the importance of others is seen

in ethnographic accounts of the Japanese naming ceremony for infants. This is the first ceremony in the traditional Japanese life cycle and occurs on the seventh day. The baby is dressed in his or her best clothes, shown to relatives, friends and neighbors, and receives a name. This is a festive occasion and guests enjoy special celebratory foods such as sekihan (rice mixed with red beans) and sake (rice wine).

Through the naming ceremony, the child becomes a social being and is incorporated into the group. Although the baby is feted at this event, the naming ceremony is as much about the society that welcomes the infant, the sexual maturity of the mother, and the permanence of the marriage. As Embree notes,

> This naming ceremony and party is the first introduction of a child into society. The local group now recognizes the child as a new member, with a name and a real, if limited, personality. This celebration is the first party of one's life and one of the lesser ones. As with subsequent rites de passage it is not the individual concerned who counts but the event. The parents gain status through adding another member of their family to the community, the community takes the opportunity to welcome a new individual into their society and, incidentally, to get together for good fellowship cemented by plenty to drink and by indulging in the old familiar folk songs and folk dances.
>
> The birth of a child is a much more certain sign of a permanent marriage than is a wedding ceremony. Indeed, a marriage is often not put in the village office records until after a child is on its way. The birth of a child also gives the new wife a definite standing among her new neighbors. She is now truly a married woman and may indulge in the privileges of smoking, drinking, and sexual jokes (Embree 1939, 181-182).

Rites of passage can be powerful expressions of social roles and statues, life cycle stages, and the power of culture to provide meaning and order in the face of change and uncertainty. By examining the kanreki-type 60th birthday among the Nisei, I am interested in why a boldfaced expression about the passage to old age is being celebrated. Furthermore, if as seems to be the case, my informants do not believe the explicit message of the event--that it is a passage to old age--then what does this tell us about their experience of growing older?

Settings

Traditionally, in an ethnography one describes one's field setting, discusses problems of entry and methods for establishing rapport, and tells how one conducted research. I too will do this. However, this study is embedded in another setting by virtue of its topic and my ethnicity. As an ethnic researcher studying an ethnic group, this work is explicitly a part of the growing body of knowledge in Asian American studies.

Ethnic Studies

The early to mid 1970s saw a growing interest in Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian American studies. Students challenged colleges and universities to expand curricula to include historical, political, economic, and cultural analyses that included them, the "people of color."

Ethnic studies are often criticized for having no distinct body of theory or method. Few if any research oriented scholars have come directly from ethnic studies programs.

The Sansei wave of social scientists have been trained in the traditional disciplines (sociology, anthropology, psychology, history, and economics). Many have made their contributions by again focussing on Japanese Americans. A partial list includes Sylvia Yanagisako (1975, 1977, 1978, 1985), Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1986), Steve Fugita (1985), Russell Endo (1983), and Eugene Kumekawa (1988). These are my Sansei colleagues.

The 1970's saw not only growing interest in ethnic studies but also growing suspicion on the part of communities about the research enterprise. Researchers added publications to their vitae but minority spokespersons claimed that their communities were being "ripped off" and the research subjects got nothing in return. White academicians were at the top of the "enemy list" (see Bengtson 1979 for an account of how minority subjects gained a legitimate voice in the research enterprise). Ethnic researchers were also suspect, especially those whose work was not immediately applicable to improved delivery of social services.

Entering the Field

Suspicion and criticism of social research has abated in the last few years. However, when I entered the field to

begin my research in 1987, I knew that I had to earn my right to be there. Since key community agencies in San Francisco's Japantown were still protected by informal "gate keepers"--community members whose permission had to be secured by any researcher wishing to work in the community--my experience at P/AAMHRC was invaluable in providing the proper introductions to move inside. For the next two years I served lunch at a local social service agency for the elderly, took a knitting class with Issei and Nisei seniors, taught a craft class for seniors, participated in lectures of the Nisei and Retirement group, joined in the weekly activities of an exercise group, attended monthly meetings and helped to write a conference grant for a coalition of 14 senior agencies serving Japanese American communities in the Bay Area, got involved with the Redress movement, and made sushi for and attended fundraising events, festivals, and picnics. Most of these activities are female dominated. It was much harder to enter the men's world. I saw older men daily at the nutrition site, a senior lounge, and a local coffee shop but I did not have easy or direct access to their activities in the same way that I did to the female centered world. However, I was able to go to several activities sponsored by the Nisei Fishing Club and I volunteered at two golf tournaments.

In addition I joined local organizations such as the Japanese American Citizens League, the Japanese Cultural and

Community Center of Northern California, the National Japanese American Historical Society, the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations, and the Nisei and Retirement group. I took several special field trips. From October 1-2, 1987 I was one of about 3,500 Japanese Americans attending festivities in Washington D. C. to mark the opening of a Smithsonian exhibit on the wartime internment of Japanese Americans. In February of 1988 and 1989 I attended Day of Remembrance programs in San Francisco and San Jose. And in April 1988 I went on the 19th annual pilgrimage to Manzanar, one of the ten relocation centers where Japanese Americans were interned during WWII. So, entry to the ethnic community required first getting past the gate keepers and then establishing myself as an earnest, hardworking, community-minded person. I did this type of fieldwork for about a year before I approached a single person for an interview. Although this "pay at the door" style of fieldwork is tedious it ultimately facilitated the interview phase. By then I had established personal relationships with many Nisei friends who were willing to "help me with my school work" by being interviewed. They knew that my interests were legitimate and they trusted me to preserve their anonymity. None of the 24 informants approached for an interview refused.

Being Japanese American gave me relatively unquestioned access to membership in formal organizations and

participation in many community activities. However, at first my age distinctly separated me from Nisei who take part in senior activities. These barriers gradually broke down as I continued to attend meetings, volunteer with other Nisei, and join in activities. I was an ethnic insider but in significant ways I was undeniably and ineradicably a Sansei, a generational outsider.

What I saw in the first year of field work was a lively ethnic community which provided many meaningful social roles for healthy and active Nisei. Long standing organizations such as the churches continued as a focus for Nisei activities. Newer groups such as the National Japanese American Historical Society, the Japanese Cultural and Community Center, or the Nisei and Retirement club attracted Nisei membership and benefitted from active Nisei participation. And most importantly, efforts to gain legislative redress and reparations for the wartime internment of Japanese Americans brought a very special vitality to the Bay Area and other Japanese American communities.

In 1981, at ten public hearings convened across the country by the Congressionally sponsored Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, Issei and Nisei former WWII internees who had never spoken openly about the deeply felt psychological damage of the incarceration began to publicly confront the trauma. The

Commission recommended the first formal apology by the U.S. government to the former evacuees, establishment of an educational fund, and individual monetary compensation to each surviving internee. After nearly a decade of nationwide grassroots organizing and lobbying by Japanese Americans, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was signed into law. The legislative battle united the generations and minimized regional differences between Japanese American communities as everyone worked for a common cause.

For these reasons the late 1980's was an exciting time to do fieldwork. I hoped that a study of the Nisei as they enter late life could capture the rich and vibrant social context in which they are aging. I felt that this had been lacking in many of the earlier gerontological studies on Issei and Nisei. The few studies of Nisei aging (Ego 1980; Kuzuhara and Nambu 1978; Leonetti 1983) are based primarily on large scale sample survey results. Methodologically these studies are similar to previous gerontological research on the Issei (Ishizuka 1978; Osako 1979, 1980). No researcher other than Kiefer (1974a) has done an ethnography of late life among Japanese Americans.

Field Setting

Contemporary, urban fieldwork has many unimagined difficulties. A major one is the constant switching back and forth between fieldwork and everyday life. A minor one is that because one is not immersed in a site that is

foreign, exotic, and completely unknown, one is forced to reexamine the commonplace, the familiar. I traveled to my field site on the #38 Geary bus. I could speak the language (English) without an interpreter or special pre-fieldwork training. I have no spectacular tales from the field. However, I still faced many of the customary problems of entry. As mentioned previously, I had to establish my legitimacy with key community figures. I also had to enter the worlds of my informants.

One of my primary research sites was a social service agency originally designed to serve Issei seniors. Now a small number of frail, homebound Issei, growing numbers of Nisei, increasing numbers of Japanese international brides (war brides), and Asian and other seniors come for services. Most of my volunteer work took place here. This agency has a cadre of about 60 Nisei volunteers. Large numbers of Nisei clients eat lunch at the organization's meal site. Many of my Nisei informants were recruited from among the volunteers and diners.

A description of this Title XX lunch program will serve to locate Nisei participation both within the agency and in terms of the overall demographics of the Japanese American population and the specific demographics of the elderly segment of Japanese Americans.

According to 1980 Census figures, about 7.3% of the 716,000 Japanese American enumerated nationwide were aged 65

and above. Locally, in San Francisco County in 1980, about 9% of the 12,000 Japanese Americans were 65 or older. An additional 2,400 were between the ages of 50 and 64. These figures have undoubtedly changed in the 1990 Census to reflect the death of most Issei and the aging of the Nisei.

A record review of Japanese surname diners who received a lunch from the agency in December 1989 gives a rough approximation of the age pyramid for Japanese American senior clients. At that time, those who lived in the agency's board and care home had a mean age of about 87. These 19 residents were, by and large, the frail oldest-old Issei. In contrast, those 75 Japanese surname diners who ate at the congregate meal site were in their early 70s and were primarily the young-old Nisei.

With the passing of nearly all Issei seniors, I was at first concerned about how agencies such as this would continue to justify special bilingual/bicultural services for Japanese American seniors. Nisei were American born, spoke English, and easily negotiated mainstream American institutions. However, as I continued my fieldwork, I saw that a barrier did exist. It was not the straightforward linguistic one faced by the Japanese speaking Issei or other immigrant groups who do not know English, but a subtler cultural and social one.

I realized that other Americans are not part of the Japanese American social network and therefore are not part

of the web of obligations that link person to person, family to family, and generation to generation. Where guilt served as the "strategy of intimacy" among the elderly Jews in Myerhoff's study, reciprocity serves to connect Japanese Americans. This is why it is important to herald which Doi or Sato or Takahashi you are. "I am not a local Doi. I am Alfred Doi's daughter. My father is from Stockton, my mother is from Portland, and I grew up in Chicago." I repeatedly proclaimed my past to Nisei volunteers and diners shortly after meeting. With this short history my informants could not only place me and my family, but also could do the kinds of social reckoning upon which the reciprocity is based. And I incurred many, many debts--not just the perfunctory ones that social scientists proclaim in their acknowledgements (" this research could not have been completed without the help and friendship of those whom I studied") but intimate, long lasting ones. This requires that I "pay back" for what I took from the community, that I donate effort, time, money and my physical presence to key organizations, that I maintain personal ties with my informants, that I publicly acknowledge all the assistance received, and that I know there is no way to completely repay the debt once the relationship has started. Ending the reciprocity means ending the relationship. This is what outsiders do not hear and therefore cannot understand. It is the silent language of Japanese American social

relationships. And it is in this realm that even the Nisei, despite their English language proficiency, face "linguistic" barriers.

After I understood these barriers, I was able to see the lunch program anew. About 250 seniors eat on site. About one third are Japanese American. The rest are other Asian or white elderly. The site is open to anyone 60 or older. It does not serve a residential catchment area. In fact, though many black elderly live in the surrounding neighborhood, few come for lunch. In contrast, some diners spend over a hour commuting by bus for their noon meal.

Other researchers (e.g. Caudill 1952; Kiefer 1974a) have made a strong case for value compatibility between American and Japanese culture. I quickly saw that non-Japanese were attracted to the meal site because it was clean, the food was very good, the staff were polite, and the volunteer waitresses rivaled the German railroad for orderly, efficient, on-time service. From the agency's perspective, Title XX funds mandated that the lunch program be universally available to all seniors. But from the particularistic perspective of Nisei volunteers and other Japanese American diners, the room was full of outsiders who do not enter into social networks of reciprocity. Instead these others paid their $1.00 suggested donation and bought a meal from the agency. They are perceived as formal and somehow faceless recipients of social services.

In contrast, most of the elderly Issei and Nisei know each other on a personal basis, often from before the War. Not only do these friendship go back in time, but they extend broadly in scope. And the reputation of the agency is enhanced because seniors know the parents, grandparents, or other relatives of local Sansei staff members.

Both senior clients and Sansei staff engage in reciprocity in their support of the organization. Some seniors volunteer to express their support; others accept the agency's services. This helped me to understand the importance of "outreach" work by various staff members. For example, when a bed opened up at the board and care facility, no amount of professional persuasion by social workers could get a frail Issei woman to leave her apartment. Although she was socially isolated, could not get out to shop, and was unable to cook, she did not want to enter the Home. However, one of the Sansei staff members who knew this woman spoke to her. He convinced her that moving to the board and care home was not so much for her own health or safety, but that she would be "helping out" by helping the agency fill all the beds. In this way, she was able to accept services and reciprocate at the same time.

Methods

In addition to unobtrusive measures such as record reviews and the kind of participant observation mentioned

above, I interviewed 24 Nisei. I do not claim to have a representative sample in the statistical sense, but I did make efforts to recruit informants widely. However, I interviewed no frail, home-bound Nisei, and I suspect that my informants over-represent those active in Japanese American groups and under-represent otherwise healthy but non-community oriented Nisei.

I completed the entire semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix A) with 22 informants and have substantial information from the remaining two. The interviews lasted from two to eight hours with an average length of about four hours and were conducted over a minimum of two sessions. I received permission to audiotape the interviews from 21 of my informants and took copious notes, as close to verbatim as possible, in all instances. After fieldwork was completed, I spent several months transcribing verbatim each recorded interview; in those cases where the interview was not taped, I transcribed responses from my notes. I also wrote a "thumbnail" sketch of each informant.

I present and analyze several types of information from the interview protocol. Standard demographic variables such as age, marital status, education, and occupation and results from structured items on topics such as health ratings, participation in organizations, and friendship patterns are reported for all informants. In addition, selected portions of each transcript were coded by topic.

After multiple, close readings of the transcripts, I coded and recoded the segment on the 60th birthday. I was interested in whether my informant had this celebration or had been to or hosted the event for a spouse, parent, or other friend or relative, what symbols are associated with the observance, what meaning the event has for aging Nisei, where the celebration is held, what kind of activities go on at the party, and who hosts and attends such activities. All interviews were coded for these items. In this analysis, I rely on what my informants have to say about the 60th birthday and quote extensively from the transcripts. I used a software package called "The Ethnograph" (Seidel, Kjolseth, and Seymour 1988) to assist in the retrieval of my text based data.

I have chosen to attribute quotations from my informants using only identification numbers. A list of all informants with accompanying standard demographic information appears in Appendix B. Although this is a potentially awkward way to cite my informants, I believe it helps to preserve their anonymity and ensures that I do not inadvertently construct a pseudonym or biography which might be associated with an actual person in the community. Theoretical concerns inform this decision too because I am more interested in what is said than in who said what.

In addition to my own field materials, I rely heavily on previous research on the Nisei, on life histories, on

fictional accounts, and on community reports. In some instances, I use the autobiographical and fictional accounts to serve as examples of the complex human behavior I am interested in understanding. I rely on these Nisei writers to provide meaning to the events described. In other cases, previous research frames my questions and I collected data for comparative purposes.

What follows in the next three chapters is the bulk of the dissertation. Chapter II gives a demographic profile of my informants. I embed their current life situation as reflected in standard sociodemograhpic figures in a brief history of the Japanese American experience. Chapter III provides the social and cultural context of aging by which I understand the sociodemographic facts of life. Chapter IV focuses on the Nisei 60th birthday to show how rituals are expressions of the experience of ethnicity, aging, family, and generation. In the last chapter, I present the findings of this interpretive endeavor.

CHAPTER II

DEMOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

This study is based on two years of urban fieldwork in a West Coast Japanese American community during the late 1980s. During the field period I took part in activities in both formal and informal settings. My participation ranged from volunteering with informants at a social service agency, to attending community-wide ethnic events, to having dinner with informants in their homes. In addition, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 24 community dwelling Nisei. The following sections provide information on basic demographic and other social variables which will help to describe the current life situation of my informants. This information provides a context for understanding the Nisei in their later years. I do not intend to use these descriptors as "independent variables" predicting ritual participation by my informants.

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Informants

Twenty four informants, equally divided between men and women, participated in the interview portion of the study. Because I volunteered at a local agency serving the elderly, I recruited most of my informants from among the clients and

volunteers at this setting. I had known most for about a year when I asked for interviews and had little trouble in recruiting respondents. These informants were mainly the active joiners, in good health, and fully retired. I also tried to include less healthy and more socially isolated informants as well as a few younger informants who were still working. I do not claim that the sample is representative of Nisei in this city, but I did make efforts to cast a wide net in gathering informants.

Age and Marital Status

A minimal description of my 24 informants is that they range in age from 57 to 83, with a mean age of 67.7 years (S.D.=6.4). They are the "young old" and probably do not differ from middle class Euro-Americans of the same age on many demographic and social dimensions. Men and women show no significant difference in age, with a mean age of 68 (S.D.=6.3) for the men and 67.4 (S.D.=6.7) for the women.

Two thirds (N=8) of the men are currently married, one quarter (N=3) are widowed, and the one remaining male has never married. For women, about two fifths (N=5) are currently married, the same proportion (N=5) are widowed, and the remaining two women have never married. Generally, the men are still married while the women have begun the transition to widowhood. All widows and widowers live alone.

Examining marital status by gender and age produces a more complex pattern. Using the mean age as the dividing point, age makes a difference in current marital status. Generally, males and females among the "younger" informants (those less than 68) have about the same distribution of marital statuses. Four of the seven "younger" men are married, two are widowed, and one never married. The corresponding figures for the "younger" women is that three of the six are married, one is widowed and two have never married. However, among the "older" informants (those 68 or older) widowhood predominates for the women with four of the six widowed and only two currently married. "Older" men show another pattern with four of the five still married and only one widowed. Since Nisei husbands in this study are on average about 3.5 years older than their wives, the widowhood pattern probably reflects increased mortality due to the mens' age.

Diversity in this sample though, is not as salient a feature as the overwhelming homogeneity in life experiences which make the Nisei a cohort. The next sections present historical information--both life histories of the sample and a general history of Japanese Americans. Because only the broadest outline of Japanese American history will be presented here, I refer readers to excellent histories by Glenn (1986), Ichioka (1988), and Takaki (1989).

Issei Parents

My informants' Issei parents migrated from Japan during the first quarter of this century. Most came from the southern prefectures (ken) of Fukuoka (9), Wakayama (7), Yamaguchi (6), Hiroshima (5), and Kumamoto (4). All but 9 of the 24 sets of Issei parents married someone from their own prefecture of birth.

The original diaspora of Japanese to the United States, Brazil, and Canada in the late 1800s was propelled as much by the new Meiji governmental reforms encouraging emigration as it was by labor shortages in the countries of destination. Young men sailed overseas in search of money, adventure, and opportunity.

Large scale Japanese migration to the United States started in the 1890s though contract laborers arrived in Hawaii as early as the late 1860s and several hundred well-to-do young students were sent to American universities in the 1870s and 1880s. In the United States, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 cut off further Chinese immigration. These immigrants provided the first wave of cheap Asian labor. Many of the early Japanese immigrants who arrived in the late 1800s replaced the Chinese workers and quickly found jobs in agriculture, mining, lumber, and railroad construction. By the turn of the century, many of the Japanese sojourners worked in more permanent and lucrative

positions as sharecroppers and tenants in the burgeoning agribusiness of the West Coast.

At the same time that Japanese American communities were developing, anti-Japanese sentiments and legislation increased on the West Coast. Chinese, Japanese, and later Asian (East) Indian immigrants, being neither "free white persons" nor "persons of African nativity and descent" were all declared ineligible to become naturalized U. S. citizens.

In California, the Alien Land Law of 1913 prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning land and limited leases to three years. Washington, Oregon, and several other western states adopted similar laws. And as early as 1905, nativist organizations such as the Oriental Exclusion League began their "Yellow Peril" anti-Japanese campaign in California and other western states.

Early Japanese immigrants developed social, educational, and welfare organizations such as the Japanese Association of America partly in response to the racial and economic hostility of groups such as the Oriental Exclusion League. Kenjinkai (voluntary association based on the prefecture of birth) were also organized by the Issei. These groups provided many social services for the early immigrants.

Like most Issei immigrants, my informants' fathers found work in agriculture and small business within emerging

ethnic communities. Although the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908 between the U.S. and Japan put an end to immigration of male laborers it permitted family unification. From 1908 until 1924 when Japanese immigration to the Unites States was restricted altogether under the Asian Exclusion Act, Japanese women entered the country in growing numbers arriving as wives and "picture brides" of the immigrant men. Although I do not have detailed migration histories for my informants' parents, the men probably arrived first and then brought wives who had been selected by their families in Japan. While wives were called over by Issei men, their parents generally were not.

The life histories recorded by Sarasohn (1983) follow the general outlines noted above. Young Issei immigrants came seeking their fortunes. Several years later brides arrived. Here is Mr. Choichi Nitta's story:

> I myself married a picture bride. I left Japan when I was sixteen and got married when I was thirty years old. Though I was from Yamaguchi, the wife of a Japanese pastor here (Loomis) suggested that I marry a girl she knew from Aomori, Japan; but my mother was against my marrying a girl from another area. Unless the marriage was recorded in Japan, a wife could not come to this country. It took quite a while to get my family's approval; so I was about thirty years old when I got married. . . . My mother met my bride and liked her. I understand that they had an elaborate wedding ceremony. . . . my wife prepared for her trip to America and came here on the Shunyo Maru from Yokohama in March 1917 (Sarasohn 1983, 109).

With the arrival of brides, immigrant communities were further transformed. The family formation period began with the birth of Nisei. Beginning in the 1920s, the Japanese American population increased more through natural increase (births) than by immigration. According to James (1987, 12), "the children born on American soil grew in numbers, from 4,502 in 1910 to 29,672 in 1920 to 68,357 in 1930--in percentages, from about 6 to 27 to 49.2 percent of all Japanese Americans during those decades."

Nisei sibsets were large. On average, my informants come from families that had an average completed family size of 5.6 children. This figure is comparable to that obtained in the Nisei Aging Project (Leonetti 1983) though somewhat higher than an average family size of 4.3 children reported for the Issei women in the Japanese American Community study (Yanagisako, et al. 1977). Issei fertility was characterized by a peak in reproduction between the ages of 25 and 29; the highest rates of fertility for all segments of the Issei female population occurred in the 1920s.

Despite significant age differences between Issei spouses, usually the husbands were 10 to 15 years older than their wives, most of my informants grew up in intact families. Only two informants lost fathers during childhood, while three had mothers who died before the informant was 10 years old.

Life was not easy for the Issei pioneers. The hardships which Uchida (1987) describes in the lives of her parents' friends characterize the lives of my informants parents too.

> For them [the Issei] life in the 1930s was a dark desperate struggle for survival in a country where they could neither become citizens nor own land. Many spoke little English. Some of the mothers took in sewing or did day work in white homes. Others operated home laundries, washing clothes in damp cold basements, drying them on ropes strung across musty attics, and pressing them with irons heated on the kitchen stove. Most of the fathers struggled to keep open such small businesses as dry cleaners, laundries, groceries, or shoe repair shops (Uchida 1987, 10).

Issei life was community life. They developed ethnic enclaves in West Coast cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Fresno, San Jose, Stockton, Portland, Tacoma, and Seattle. Here many were in domestic service or operated small businesses such as grocery stores, laundries, restaurants, barbershops, or rooming houses. Goods and services were exchanged mainly within the ethnic community.

Although Issei were prohibited from owning agricultural property because they were "aliens ineligible for citizenship," many leased land and farmed in California's Imperial, San Joaquin, and Sacramento valleys or in the Yakima and Puyallup areas of Washington. These rural and urban settings are the hometowns for my Nisei informants.

Nisei Informants

Place of Birth and Childhood Experiences

As is typical for the Nisei generation, all but two informants were born on the West Coast. The two who were born in Japan classify themselves as Nisei because they grew up in America. Two other informants, though American-born, were educated in Japan and later returned to America. They are called Kibei Nisei. One of my Kibei informants was born in Seattle and lived with his paternal grandparents in Japan from age three to 16. The other Kibei, a female, spent the 4th and 5th grades in Japan. About half (N=11) of the other informants were born and/or raised in San Francisco. The remaining nine are from small agricultural towns in California such as Madera and Parlier near Fresno or Suisun, Hayward, and Vacaville in the greater Bay Area.

Over 80% of my informants say they grew up in a Japanese American community. Those replying that their family was not part of a Japanese American community quickly amplify their response saying that there were only two or three Japanese families in the area, hardly enough to form an ethnic community.

As a result of living in a Japanese American community, two thirds of my informants attended Japanese language school in addition to public school. Those who did not attend a school for formal language instruction were taught at home. Now, a little over half (54%) rate their Japanese

speaking ability as "fluent" while the remainder (46%) say they speak "some" Japanese. Verbal comprehension of Japanese shows a similar breakdown with 46% reporting that they understand Japanese "very well" and the remainder (54%) saying they understand "some" Japanese.

Attendance at Japanese language school creates a vividly remembered shared childhood experience among my informants. This experience also reminded the Nisei at an early age that they were not exactly like their white school mates, they were Japanese Americans. In her autobiography Nisei Daughter, Sone describes the ordeal of Japanese school.

> Nihon Gakko [Japanese school] was so different from grammar school I found myself switching my personality back and forth daily like a chameleon. At Bailey Gatzert School I was a jumping, screaming, roustabout Yankee, but at the stroke of three when the school bell rang and doors burst open everywhere, spewing out pupils like jelly beans from a broken bag, I suddenly became a modest, faltering, earnest little Japanese girl with a small timid voice. I trudged down a steep hill and climbed up another steep hill to Nihon Gakko with other black-haired boys and girls. On the playground, we behaved cautiously. Whenever we spied a teacher within bowing distance, we hissed at each other to stop the game, put our feet neatly together, slid our hands down to our knees and bowed slowly and sanctimoniously. In just the proper, moderate tone, putting in every ounce of respect, we chanted, 'Konichi-wa, sensei. Good day' (Sone 1979, 22).

Churches too have been and continue to be a focal point of community activity. Although three of my informants claim no religious affiliation, the rest are nearly evenly

split between Buddhists (45.8%) and Christians (41.7%). Now in retirement, several Nisei informants are active in the governance of their churches or in gender based fujinkai (women's association) activities.

Ethnic churches are by and large of various Buddhist sects (Jodo Shinshu, Zen, Nichiren, and Shingon) and Christian denominations (Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, and Congregationalist). According to Kitano (1969) the churches were important not so much for imparting orthodox theology as providing social welfare to Issei immigrants and teaching ethical behavior to Nisei youngsters. Uchida (1987) describes another function, that of creating a sense of community.

> The church not only enhanced their spiritual life but also filled the need for an ethnic community. As the Issei began to marry and raise families, it continued to be a focal point in their lives, providing support and a sense of community. Indeed it was almost an extended family, with each member caring and concerned about the lives of the others (Uchida 1987, 32).

Churches, language school, Japanese associations, and the family were the focus of Japanese American life in the prewar years. These are the key institutions that made up the "little community" of the Japanese American world in the pre-WW II years.

Over and over again in Nisei accounts of childhood (Hosokawa 1969; Kitano 1969; Sone 1979; Uchida 1987; Wada 1987), one reads about group assemblages such as New Years

celebrations and picnics sponsored by these key community organizations. Sone reports that in pre-WW II Seattle the annual Japanese school picnic was the "one occasion when every Japanese in the community turned out" (Sone 1979, 71). Kitano even describes the yearly picnic as a microcosm for the "workings of the Japanese-American community as whole and of the Japanese family through several generations" (Kitano 1969, 90).

If the picnic can show us the Japanese American world in a grain of sand, a description of the event will provide data for analysis. According to Sone, for a month beforehand, "The whole Japanese community buzzed like a beehive in preparation . . . and at school we practiced Japanese folk songs, folk dances, and marching drills to be performed at the picnic. The boys were drilled in mass calisthenics" (Sone 1979, 71). Her mother rose early on picnic Sunday to prepare the lavish picnic meal--makizushi, nishime, ham sandwiches, fried chicken, and macaroni salad. Family and food were loaded into the car and everyone converged on the designated park to join hundreds of other families.

Picnic activities were clearly defined by age and gender. All of the children participated in games and races according to school grade, girls first, then boys. Hosokawa remembers that "The winners were given merchandise prizes and the also-rans were consoled with pencils and nickel tablets" (Hosokawa 1969, 156). Although ability was

rewarded, these races highlight joint participation, the shared experience, not competition. All participants partake of the spoils. Status distinctions, even those based on such minor achievements as winning a three-legged race, are muted in order to maintain ties of solidarity.

Just as races were the arena for childhood competition, women were judged by their culinary skills. In the post-WWII era, competition occurred both among Issei and between Issei and Nisei. In fact, according to Kitano, this intense competition makes the event no "picnic" for the women.

> the situation is somewhat different for the Japanese woman. As in all endeavors that require the family to eat out of doors, for her it is not such a picnic. For one thing, she is probably already tired and tense. If she is Issei, she probably has been cooking various delicacies for several days before. Visitors, coming to exchange a few words with her husband or her, will be offered a sample and she will be covertly judged by the excellence of her cooking. Her daughter, of the Nisei generation, may have refused to be drawn into this subtle competition, and will have brought potato salad instead of o-su-shi, but, as any woman knows, it is not so easy to escape a practically inherent female tendency to become ego-involved when her cooking is on public display. Even the most advanced Nisei is likely to spend an extra, anxious moment over that potato salad. It is possible too, that she has been in overt conflict with her mother or mother-in-law over the whole matter (Kitano 1969, 93).

Perhaps because of the exacting standards of the silent cooking competition, women deflect the rivalry. Picnic food becomes the medium for gift-like exchange among friends and acquaintances. The food is presented with extreme humbleness and self-deprecation on the part of giver, and

equal decorum on the part of the receiver who reciprocates with her own food gift.

> Mrs. Kato came up smiling, in her new navy straw hat, offering us her own concoction of pickled eggplants and yellow radishes . . . .
> 'These are tasteless otsukemono, but please try some,' bowed polite Mrs. Kato. The pickles were very tasty, but propriety kept her from saying that they were even edible. Mother cried with delighted surprise, 'Thank you, thank you, you are so kind. I'm sure they're very delicious. I'd like to have you try some fried chicken. I did a very poor job on it, but please take pieces to your family....'
> Mother pressed a platter of her horrible chicken, turned to a luscious golden-brown, upon Mrs. Kato who bore it away, protesting Mother's kindness (Sone 1979, 75-76).

Sone, a pre-teen aged girl at these picnics, had limited access to the world of men. Kitano though, writing as an adult Nisei male, elaborates on the male world at the post-WW II annual picnics in southern California which drew thousands of Japanese American picnickers.

> The most conspicuous group at the picnic are not the young but the old--the Issei men--because many are 'tipsy.' The picnic is one of the few occasions during the year when workaday gravity, sobriety, and decorum are set aside. Now they gather in convivial groups upon the grass, pass the whiskey (overtly if they are single, and covertly if they are married), and indulge a license for 'racy' talk. There is, in fact, a faintly Japanese formality to the talk; it is laden with stylized metaphor about sex through gardens and seed, but in any event it represents sufficient departure from the usual conversational conventions to be striking. The Issei brand of loose talk probably sits unfamiliarly at first upon the tongues of the younger, Nisei men, who have learned the Western variety. But to the Nisei, it is a great satisfaction to be admitted to the Issei group; at least to be invited to drink with the Issei at the Japanese picnic is

> something akin to a rite depassage (Kitano 1969, 91-92).

Finally, picnic day ends with an organized clean up effort. "At a signal, at the end of the day, all, even the tiniest children, set about picking up every last scrap of cigarette butt, every tiniest fragment of potato chip" (Kitano 1969, 93). Kitano views the clean up as a "final, silent, reproach to white America" (Kitano 1969, 93) because the Japanese American picnickers leave the park even cleaner than they found it.

Undoubtedly, the community picnic was a time-out, "a rare occasion of complete relaxation and a chance to visit with friends whom they seldom saw in town" (Sone 1979, 77). But more importantly, as Kiefer (1974a) points out, this type of group recreation helps to pass on traditional values and define community limits. It enculturates participants to local norms, gender domains, generational relations, and even interethnic relationships.

At the same time that this collective activity maintains structure, it permits disorder in the noise, crowds, and drunkenness, or the testing of new roles when Nisei men are included in the coterie of Issei seniors, and competition through the children's races or cooking contests between women. These are all taboo in daily life.

World War II

The small face-to-face world in which the Nisei grew up changed drastically after Japan attacked the Pacific Fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

Evacuation, incarceration, and resettlement during WWII are central events in Japanese American history. On Feb. 19, 1942 President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066: beginning that spring, about 120,000 Japanese Americans (two thirds of whom were American citizens by birth) were forced from their West Coast communities. All persons of Japanese ancestry, including those with as little as 1/16th Japanese blood, were viewed as potential saboteurs and spies. First they were confined in temporary assembly centers under Army jurisdiction. Then, starting in the spring and summer of 1942, internees were transported to one of ten more permanent sites in California, Arizona, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah or Arkansas. These detention sites were administered by the War Relocation Authority (WRA). For detailed treatments of these "years of infamy" see Broom and Kitsuse 1956; Girdner and Loftis 1969; tenBroek et al. 1968; and Weglyn 1976.

All Nisei in this study were affected by the internment experience. Only one informant who settled well outside the West Coast in the pre-War years escaped actual evacuation, but her natal family was not spared.

Since my informants now range in age from 57 to 83, during the internment the youngest were in elementary or junior high school and the oldest was already in his late 30s, married with two children. Generally, at the time of evacuation the "oldest" informants (N=6), those over age 25 in 1942, had completed their educations, were married, and had embarked on careers. The "middle" group (N=15), those from about 18 to 25 years old were generally unmarried, in school or just starting their careers. The internment experience disrupted and altered educational and occupational plans for many in this age group. For the "youngest" group (N=3), those in elementary or junior high school, the wartime was disruptive but did not directly or obviously terminate educational plans.

The internment clearly destroyed the economic base of pre-War ethnic communities. Individual losses of property, income, and savings were great. In 1942 the Federal Reserve Bank estimated the loss at about $400 million; recent appraisals project losses about three to four times greater.

Just as devastating as the financial destruction was the social disorganization of key institutions. Many Issei community leaders were imprisoned shortly after Pearl Harbor. They were placed in separate internment camps run by the Justice Department. Uchida, whose father was picked up by the FBI on Dec. 7, 1941 recalls that

> Executives of Japanese business firms, shipping lines, and banks, men active in local Japanese

> associations, teachers of Japanese language schools, virtually every leader of the Japanese American community along the West Coast had been seized almost immediately (Uchida 1987, 46.)

With the internment Issei men generally lost another type of leadership, that of economic headship within the family. They were stripped of their businesses and farms. Now everyone, wives and children included, could work at camp jobs and earn as much as $19.00 per month. WRA bureaucrats assured the complete impotence of Issei leaders by making the Nisei, American citizens by birth, the spokespersons for those interned.

Rev. Daisuke Kitagawa was interned at Tule Lake in California. His account documents both the emasculation of the Issei and the odd logic of WRA. Camp administrators modeled the Community Council after city government and, therefore, limited voting and office holding to Nisei, the American citizens.

> The Council henceforth became the official spokesman for the entire Tule Lake community and its liaison with the administration. Let it be remembered that the Council was composed exclusively of Nisei, whose average age could not have been more than thirty, while the average age of Issei men was at least fifty-five. Where in the world was there a city, or even a village, run entirely by young people aged thirty and under, without men and women of maturer years participating in its affairs? Tule Lake and the nine other relocation centers were just such abnormal communities (Kitagawa 1974, 79).

Home was no longer a house, a farm, or an apartment but often a horse stall at a racetrack, a compartment in a

fairground building, and later a 16 x 20 foot room in a tar paper covered barrack. Family life was dismantled. Formerly private and controlled by Issei parents, family life was bureaucratized and controlled by WRA officials. The ritual of family mealtime was destroyed. Mothers no longer kept house or cooked. Now everybody ate cafeteria style in mess halls and waited in lines to use communal latrines, showers, and laundry rooms.

In significant and profound ways, the relocation centers were concentration camps. The barracks were surrounded by barbed wire topped fences, the sites were patrolled from guard towers, the military police pointed loaded rifles at the internees, and the evacuees were not free to leave at will. However, it was not until after the Battle of Midway (June 4-6, 1942), when it became clear that Japan could be defeated in battles in the Pacific, that the WRA established a relocation program for internees to leave the camps. Those who received government clearance were permitted to relocate to unrestricted areas away from the Western Defense Area. Within the first year of resettlement, an estimated 35,000 left the camps under this policy. Finally, on Dec. 18, 1944 in the case of Endo v. United States, the Supreme Court ruled that the incarceration of loyal citizens was unconstitutional. By March 1946, all permanent detention camps were closed.

The evacuation and incarceration are powerful shared

experiences that remain central life experiences for most of my informants. Beginning in the late 1970s, much community attention has focused on these events both through Congressionally mandated hearings on the wartime experience of Japanese Americans and then in the 1980s on efforts to gain legal redress and reparations. Two years ago the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was signed into law. Now all former evacuees will receive a formal apology from the government and by 1994, monetary redress will be made to all internees who survived until the law was passed.

In one sense, the Japanese American community was revived by these efforts, as most everyone united for a common cause. And now that over 45 years have passed since camp days, painful experiences are finally being discussed and the stigma of incarceration is beginning to fade.

The Post-War Years

Starting Up Again

Undoubtedly wartime is a disruptive experience for everyone. However, Euro-American veterans returned "to a joyous homecoming in a grateful nation with rising prosperity" (Elder and Meguro 1987, 447). When Issei and Nisei evacuees left the internment camps, they expected no joyous homecoming. In fact, many delayed their return to the West Coast. From camps, most informants (and Japanese Americans generally), first moved to midwestern or eastern cities where they continued their education or found work.

This was part of a deliberate resettlement strategy on the part of the WRA to promote geographic dispersion of Japanese Americans. However, by the early 1950s all but four informants had returned to California to Japanese American communities that existed before the War.

Nisei informants typically say that the immediate post War years were difficult. For example, one male informant describes the resettlement period as a time when "we were all struggling, coming back from camp, looking for jobs and housing, the basics." His is a typical description of the late 1940s for my informants.

Japantowns did not survive the War unchanged. A male informant born and raised in San Francisco reports that the late 1940s and early 1950s were a time when the Japanese American community was

> kind of disorganized, and everybody was slowly trying to get back into the way it used to be, probably prior to the War. You know, like Boy Scouts and churches and all the different organizations . . . . It was mostly trying to get back to what it was like before the War. And then, basically, the people that organized all that were the people who were here before the War, were part of the community. So I think the biggest movement was at the churches and Boy Scouts and, YMCA too, a little bit (Informant #117).

During the 1950s, resettlement continued. A female informant who grew up in San Francisco's Japantown recalls that in the decade or so after camp,

> There were many more of us in the J-town area at that time. It was the feeling of a small, a physical sense of community. Stores looked kind

> of ratty, but they had these, it was a Japanese store and there were at least three of them. And we were all trying to get started. Whether it was a church, or, uh, I think there was a vitality there (Informant #121).

Then in the 1960s, the Japantown area was redeveloped. Under the guise of urban renewal, homes, churches, and businesses were demolished. The physical and social community was transformed. A second "relocation" occurred. Several informants report that most of the Nisei migration from Japantown to the Richmond and Sunset Districts of San Francisco took place in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Now these two neighborhoods are home to over half of my informants.

Just as the War altered the physical and social shape of Japantown, it affected the life course of many Nisei. Interview data suggest that the incarceration influenced the timing and sequencing of events in the transition to adulthood and altered the educational and occupational opportunities of Nisei informants. In the next section, education, occupation, and marriage will be discussed in this light.

Education

All informants had at least a high school education; though nearly half reported termination upon high school graduation. Of the remainder, one fourth had post high school business or vocational training; three informants had some college; one was a college graduate; and three received

masters degrees. Generally, those with some college or more are the younger informants. The three with post-graduate training attended college after the War and are among the youngest informants.

Males and females do not differ greatly in educational attainment. About two fifths (N=5) of the women are high school graduates as are half (N=6) of the men. One quarter (N=3) of the women and one quarter (N=3) of the men have business or vocational training beyond high school. Two females and one male attended junior college or some college. One woman is a college graduate. And finally, one woman and two men have masters degrees.

The evacuation affected the educational attainment of several informants. In 1942, 11 informants were in school. The three youngest informants were in grade school or junior high school. They attended school in camp but completed their education after the War. Among this group, two received post graduate degrees.

Two males were high school students at the time of evacuation. They completed high school in camp. Although one went on to receive a master's degree after the War, the other said that he "missed out on educational opportunities." Providing education for his children became a life goal for him and his wife.

> Well that was one of the prime desires of my wife and I because we always discussed that since she and I were both the same age, 14, when the War came along and everybody evacuated, that we had

> lost out on our educational opportunities. So that was our one great wish, that our children would get as much education as we could possibly afford to give them. That was our goal in our life (Informant #122).

Three informants, all in their early 20s in 1942, were attending business or vocational schools and curtailed their education because of the evacuation. The final three (18, 19, and 21 year olds) were in academic programs at the college level. Of these, one completed her bachelor's degree after the War. The 21 year old was a college junior who was unable to complete the degree. His case is the clearest example of the negative consequence of the evacuation on education.

The evacuation also limited educational options for those who were working. For example, "Well because I had just got a taste of working for a doctor, you know, I think I probably would have tried to go to school and learn a little bit more, you know, to be able to work" (Informant #116). Another reports that he was preparing to attend vocational school right before the evacuation. The internment cut off their opportunities.

All Nisei informants in this study have at least a high school diploma. One way to gauge their educational "success" is to compare it with their parents' educational attainment. Most Issei men had the equivalent of about an eighth grade education in Japan. In this regard, the Nisei have done well.

However, although six male informants were drafted and eligible for educational opportunities under the G.I. Bill, only one continued his education after the War. Most other American G.I.s returned to intact communities; their family members had at least the basics, housing and employment. Returning Nisei soldiers were not as fortunate. As my informants report, in the late 1940s and early 1950s they were struggling to get back on their feet. So even though the G.I. Bill increased access to higher education for some American soldiers, it did not open the door for many Nisei in this study.

Occupation

Labor force participation for Nisei in this study was high. All informants were employed during their adult years. Although some of the women took time off when their children were young, all returned to work as the children got older.

Before the War, employment opportunities for Japanese Americans, both Issei and Nisei, were severely restricted. Generally, opportunities opened up for Nisei in the post-War years. The oldest informant recalls that in the 1930s,

> There were (sic) a prejudice toward us all at the time, you know. The reason I didn't even continue my school was because of that too. Because I knew what was the use of going to college and all that because there was no job for us. No job period. Even though you're out of college, there was no job if you're Japanese. And when I had a [small business], you know I had about maybe half a dozen boys, out of Stanford, out of California, you know what they were doing? . . . You know in those

> days, it was Grant Avenue Chinatown. It was Japanese, you know. .. . And that's where they were, these college graduates were working as salesmen. Making $45 or $50 a month (Informant #105).

During their pre-retirement years, females generally worked in the clerical/sales area (83%) or professional or technical positions (17%). Males, on the other hand, show more occupational diversity with about two fifths in the professional/technical rank, about one fourth as mangers/proprietors, one each in clerical/sales or craftsmen/foreman/machine operative positions, and a little less than one fifth in service worker or laborer positions.

Although one third each of the males and females in this study received post high school education, it appears that women had greater access to white collar positions, although in a limited sector, than men. Non-professional female informants worked exclusively in the female dominated secretarial field. Two men with advanced degrees were educators with occupations commensurate with their training. However, the three other professional men have achieved their positions without college degrees. Female informants found work in traditional "pink collar ghettos." Men, however, held various white collar professional, managerial or executive positions.

Marriage and Family Formation

Among the 24 Nisei respondents, 21 have married and three are single. This duplicates the marital histories of

their 96 siblings who survived to adulthood. Among my informant's siblings, 84 (87.5%) have married and 12 (12.5%) remained single.

The marital histories of my informants parallel the group history with marriages occurring in three broad time frames. Four married before the War; eight married during the War; and nine married after the War. The three never married individuals differ from the group generally because they are among the youngest and best educated. However, the marital histories of the other 21 informants indicate some of the ways that external factors may have influenced life opportunities for the Nisei in this study.

The four oldest informants married before 1942. All the women (N=3) married Issei men. Their mean age at marriage was about 25.7 years (S.D.=3.5). The one male informant who married before the War was 31 when he married a 19 year old Nisei woman. All of these informants were parents when they entered camps in 1942.

Another eight informants married during the camp years from 1942-45. The evacuation altered marriage plans for some. One informant who had a wedding scheduled for spring 1942, hastened the event so that he would not be separated from his fiancee. Another informant who was 27 when she married said that the wartime events delayed her marriage.

> Well just after the announcement came that we might have to evacuate, I don't know if my husband was thinking that we might be separated or whatever, I don't know, but he did sort of, not

> give me a ring, but sort of verbally, you know, said that he wanted to know if I would marry him and I said yes. And so in our own way, and quietly, we just, yet there was no sense in us getting married with the evacuation taking place. It would have been hard enough 'cause he had his mother and brother and sister (Informant #116).

However, those who married during the war years were generally younger at marriage than the first cohort of married Nisei. The women (N=4) married at a mean age of 24 (S.D.=2.2) and the men (N=4) married at an average age of 25.8 (S.D.=2.8). All marriages in this and the final cohort were to fellow Nisei. Camp life provided many social opportunities for Nisei young adults and may have helped to lower age at marriage.

The final group married after the War. It appears that the War delayed marriage for this group because they were considerably older at marriage than those in the first two waves. Among the women (N=3), the mean age at marriage was 30.7 years (S.D.=7.2); for the men (N=6), the average age was about 32 (S.D.=5.8). Informants in this group continued their educations and re-established themselves and their natal families before getting married.

Fertility patterns of Nisei women differ dramatically from their mothers'. Compared to the Issei, Nisei women produced fewer children in a shorter time span.

Four of the married informants are childless as are the three single informants. The 17 "parent" couples (i.e. couples with children) involved in the study raised 42

children (including 2 adoptees), an average of 2.5 children per parent couple. Sansei infant and childhood mortality rates were low and all offspring survived to adulthood. However, the Nisei family of procreation is about half the size of their Issei parents'. Now, among the 17 informants who are parents, 15 have at least one child in the Bay Area.

Of the 42 Sansei children, 25 are daughters and all are living. Of the 17 sons born, 15 are living. Seven of the 17 "parent" Nisei have no living sons while only two have no daughters. These adult children now range in age from 22 to 50 with a mean age of 37.1 (S.D.=9.5). Among the 40 living children, three fourths have married. Nationwide, Sansei have high rates of outmarriage to other Asian Americans and to Euro-Americans. I suspect that this trend, though not examined in my study, is also the case for my informant's children.

Just as mean age at marriage varies among marriage cohorts so does completed family size. The number of children born decreased in this sample from a high of 3.5 children (S.D.=2.4) among the four "parent" couples married before the War, to a mean of 2.5 children (S.D.=1.4) for the six married during the War, to a low of 1.9 children (S.D.=0.7) for the seven who married after the War. The pressure to re-establish themselves financially, occupationally, and residentially may account for the lower fertility of the later marrying couples. And age may be an

added factor in the low fertility of the post-War marriage cohort.

Only 11 of the 17 "parent" informants are grandparents. The mean age of informants on first becoming a grandparent was 56.4 (S.D.=7.0). At the time of the interview, the mean age of the six remaining "parent" informants who have yet to become grandparents was 65.8 (S.D.=4.4). Generally, those who are not grandparents are in the later marrying cohorts; they have fewer children; and their children are younger than 37 (the mean age of Sansei children).

Current Kin Roles

Siblings

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Nisei informants came from families with an average of 5.6 children. Despite high infant and childhood mortality among the Issei's children, all informants had at least one surviving brother or sister at the time of the interview. (One informant was an only child). In fact, even now these informants have an average of 3.6 living brothers and sisters and nearly three fourths have at least one sibling in the Bay Area.

Sibling roles are plentiful for informants as are in-law roles to their siblings' spouses and spouse's siblings. Likewise, informants are aunts and uncles to numerous nieces and nephews.

Issei Parents

In contrast to these multiple collateral kin roles, Nisei informants are no longer adult children to living Issei parents. Generally, however, their Issei parents were long lived. One of the Issei fathers and two of the mothers lived to be 100. The mean age at death for Issei parents (N=48) was 74.0 years (S.D.=16.4). This figure, however, obscures an interesting gender difference with Issei fathers living longer than Issei mothers.

Although this difference is not statistically significant, the mean age at death for the Issei fathers (N=24) was 76.9 years (S.D.=13.1) while for the mothers (N=24) it was 71 years (S.D.=19.1). Two words of caution are offered. First, because of the initial age difference between Issei husbands and wives, the older average age at death does not mean that the Issei husbands survived their wives. And second, the large standard deviations indicate the wide dispersion of age at death for both Issei fathers and mothers. So, although Issei fathers died at an older average age than the mothers, this trend does not necessarily reflect the pattern among the general Issei cohort and may be an artifact of a small and possibly unrepresentative sample.

In Chapter IV, I discuss Japanese rituals that mark transitions in late life. The first of these late life rituals, called kanreki, is held at age 60. Using this age

as a dividing point to set off those Issei parents who died "young" (before age 60) from those who died "old" (after age 60), two of the Issei fathers and seven of the mothers died at a relatively "young" age. Among the men, the mean age at death for the "young" (N=2) was 52.5 years (S.D.=4.9), while for those fathers who died at an "old" age (N=22) it was 79.3 (S.D.=11.0). For the mothers, the "young" (N=7) died at a mean age of 48.1 years (S.D.=9.6) and the "old" ones (N=17) lived to a mean age of 81.7 years (S.D.=11.2).

These figures show two things. First, because of their relatively early deaths, nine Issei parents were ineligible for kanreki celebrations because they did not live to see their 60th birthday. And second, there seems to be a "survivorship" factor to Issei mortality, especially for the women. If an Issei female lived past age 60, she seemed likely to live into her 70s or beyond.

Nisei as Caregivers to Issei Parents

This demographic description also suggests that many Issei parents survived to an age when Nisei children were pressed into filial duty. Such appears to be the case for many of my informants or their siblings. Because this study did not focus on Issei/Nisei late life relationships, I have sparse data on dyadic relationships and caregiving between the first and second generations. However, if residence of the Issei parent prior to death is used as a proxy for general caregiving, it seems that the Nisei in this study

had caregiver experiences similar to Nisei in other studies (e.g. Kendis 1989; Osako 1979, 1980).

Data are missing for two sets of Issei parents on late life residence but can be determined for the other 44 Issei mothers and fathers. Generally, if an Issei parent survived to old age and widowhood he/she lived with a Nisei child.

Among the Issei parents, seven each of the fathers and mothers not living with married and/or adult children at the time of their death, were living with a spouse or spouse and children. These tended to be the Issei who died at a "young" age, before age 60. In very late life, ten of the fathers were living with my Nisei informants and another five lived with one of my informant's siblings. In total then, 15 of the 22 Issei fathers lived with a child at the time of death. For the mothers, eight were living with my informant and another five were living with my informant's siblings at the time of death. A total of 13 of 22 of the Issei mothers lived with a child at the time of death. The remaining two Issei mothers were living on their own when they died.

Changes in Japanese American family roles and responsibilities especially as they apply to late life filial relationships have been the focus of much important research (Kendis 1989; Osako 1979, 1980, Yanagisako 1975, 1977, 1978, 1985). Yanagisako's work shows how kin roles reflect changing conceptions of family and gender. These core roles

are also central elements in how the Nisei define themselves ethnically (as Japanese Americans), generationally (as second generation), and chronologically (as aging). Much of the Nisei's images of aging, the topic of the following chapter, is rooted in the aging experiences of their Issei parents and in their own backgrounds as caregivers.

Perhaps because many Nisei informants lived with aging Issei parents, few recommend this living arrangement. Most could cite more problems that result from co-residence than benefits. Lack of privacy, disagreements over child rearing, and a general lack of freedom for aging parents and adult caregivers were commonly mentioned problems. Benefits to the aging parent were typically instrumental such as having a caregiver nearby in an emergency or being able to pool resources if needed. Generally though, informants say that they do not want to live with an adult child. In fact, even if they become widowed and are extremely frail, only a handful expect to live with offspring.

Family roles, as parents, grandparents, and siblings, are important anchors in my informants' later life. Though only one has a direct tie to the Issei generation through a living parent, another is a great grandparent. Several others have adult aged grandchildren and can reasonably expect to become great grandparents too. Clearly, in terms of kin roles, the Nisei are the senior generation.

Other role changes broadly associated with late life have occurred for most informants. The last sections of this chapter cover aspects of their current life situation.

Current Life Situation

Retirement and Household Income in Retirement

Eighty percent each of the men and women are retired from their main occupation though one each has gone back to work on a part time basis. The average age at retirement for the women (N=10) was 61.4 years (S.D.=4.9) with the men (N=10) retiring a few years later at an average age of 64.6 years (S.D.=6.0). Because the women were younger than the men when they retired, they have been retired longer. Female informants have been retired for an average of 7.3 years while the men left their jobs about 4.5 years ago.

Of the two women and two men still working, all but one man anticipate retirement in the next couple of years. The 66 year old male informant who has no imminent plans to retire owns a business and wants to work for as long as possible.

I asked informants to match their annual household income before taxes in 1987 to one of four income ranges. All but five responded. Among the 19 who listed income ranges, about one fifth (N=4) reported an income of less than $10,000; about one sixth (N=2) reported incomes in the range of $10,000-20,000; and the remaining two thirds (N=13)

reported retirement incomes in excess of $20,000 per annum.

Income varies considerably by marital status. All four in the lowest income range are widowed. In addition, three of these are renters who do not have assets either in current homeownership or from the previous sale of a home in the Bay Area. Nine of the 12 who have a current retirement income of $20,000 or above are still married and all but one is currently or has been a local homeowner.

Dividing income ranges into "low" ($20,000 and less) and "high" (above $20,000), there is no significant gender difference in retirement income. Two men and four women report "low" incomes while seven men and six women report "high" incomes.

Informants also rated the adequacy of their retirement income. Eighteen informants responded. One retiree judges his income as "poor"; about one sixth (N=3) feel their income is "fair"; nearly two thirds (N=11) believe their income is "adequate"; and one fifth (N=3) feel that their retirement income is "quite adequate."

Income adequacy does not clearly correspond to actual retirement income. Eleven of the 18 informants rated their retirement incomes as "adequate." This evaluation spanned all income ranges. Three rated their incomes as "very adequate." This includes one widow whose household income was less than $10,000 as well as two married informants with household incomes in excess of $30,000. The three mid-

income ($10,000-$30,000) informants rated their income as "fair" and the remaining informant, a widower whose household income was less than $10,000 judged his income to be "poor."

Generally, informants are getting by. Some may be near poverty but one or two have considerable savings. However, the cost of a catastrophic illness or nursing home care would wipe out the assets of nearly all informants. Compared to their Issei parents in retirement though, most feel they are reasonably well off. In addition, many own homes, a sizable asset in this part of the country.

Residential and Household Patterns

A full three fourths (N=18) of my informants live in their own homes and have been there for an average of 26.6 years (S.D.=9.5). Although the years immediately after the War were difficult, many informants bought homes in the 1950s and 1960s. By now, their mortgages are paid off. Renters, on the other hand, have been in their apartments for an average of only 5.4 years (S.D.=2.2). I do not know the housing history of all informants, but it seems that widowhood, retirement, or relocation from another region of the country typically precede the move to rental units.

By now, most have experienced "the empty nest" and one third (N=8) are widows or widowers. Among the men, 58.3% live with their spouse, one quarter (N=3) live alone, one lives with a spouse and adult child, and one with a non-

related individual. Half (N=6) of the women live alone while only one quarter (N=3) live with a husband. Two women live with a spouse and adult child, and one never married woman lives with a sibling.

Household size has decreased as children move out and spouses die. This trend will continue. No informant mentioned adult children moving back home. And since nearly all Issei parents have passed away, household size will not increase because of co-residence with frail parents.

Physical and Mental Health

Informants rated their health on several dimensions. First, they were asked to judge their health as excellent, good, fair, or poor. Next they compared their health to others their age. Finally, they provided information on limitations in activities due to health.

Among the men, one third (N=4) rated their health as "excellent" and another one-third (N=4) rated it as "good." One fourth (N=3) said their health was "fair" and a single respondent judged his health to be "poor." Women did not rate themselves to be as healthy. Only one women said her health is "excellent." About three fifths (N=7) of the women rated their health as "good" and the remaining third (N=4) said their health was "fair."

Men were also more likely to judge their comparative health as better than others their age. Half (N=6) of the men thought their health was better than their age mates

while only one fourth (N=3) of the women gave this response. Five men and seven women judged their health as the same as others; and one man and two women rated their health as worse than others. Those in the last category were among the younger informants and had chronic health conditions that limited their activities.

Among both the men and the women, three fourths have no limits on their activities due to health. They say they are able to get out, climb stairs, walk half a mile, and wash or paint walls. However, the other fourth each have some limits on what they can do. Typically, they are not able to do heavy household chores but are still very mobile and independent.

Despite overall good health and few health related constraints on activity, health problems are present. Ten informants have hypertension. Heart problems, arthritis, or night time urinary frequency were mentioned four times each as current health conditions. And two informants have diabetes, one requiring daily insulin injections.

Overall, the Nisei in this study are retired, financially stable, and generally healthy. In the last section I describe the community in which they are aging and the social activities in which they take part.

The Japanese American Community Today

To my informants, community means a locale, a group of organizations and activities, and a web of social relation-

ships. For example, contrasting the contemporary Japanese American community with the pre-War one, an informant said,

> most of us, we don't even live there anymore. I think we only go there because it's what's left of Japantown . . . . I guess most of the activity comes from Japantown, but the people that are in it are from all over. So basically, Japantown is not like we used to talk about it before. Well before, Japantown, that was your whole world. Church, Scouting, everything was there. And we lived in it too (Informant #117).

This description of the pre-War community illustrates what Kiefer (1974a, 6) calls the "intensity and generality of social relations" that make up the sense of social cohesiveness of community.

Now, at the most concrete level, informants speak of a geographic sense of community. I was told that before the War, the community covered at least a dozen square blocks. Redevelopment in the early 1960s "broke up the physical sense of community" (Informant #121) and now Japantown covers about half the pre-War area. A typical description is that "Japantown itself is much smaller now and we're gradually being eased out by the Chinese and Koreans" (Informant #123).

The Japantown area is becoming more ethnically diverse. Not only have Chinese and Korean merchants set up businesses but also growing numbers of foreign-born recent immigrant Japanese live and work in the area. This introduces a new element to community relations. According to an informant who was born and raised in the area, "I think the Japanese

community today is more like Japan. . . . I think we have two factions, the Japanese Japanese and the . . . Japanese Americans" (Informant #117).

The new Japanese element is such a strong presence that one informant calls them "the made in Japans." This phrase is ironic. In one sense, Japantown is becoming increasingly foreign to my informants as Chinese, Korean, and even Japanese businessmen move in.

However, new organizations and activities continue to attract ethnic participation. For example, an informant who has lived in the area most of his life said that he

> notice(s) all kinds of political groups and organizations. Simple things like the Japanese American Republican Club and Democratic bunch, and X social service agency and Y community center. All that is recent, it wasn't there at all before the War (Informant #110).

Others point to the increased vitality of the community in terms of activities and facilities. For example,

> It's more active. There's more things to do in the community and there's more facilities here. And I believe (with) the addition to this building . . . there will be quite a bit of space available for social activities and community activities (Informant #124).

The community has changed in other ways too. According to one informant,

> The Sansei brought back another sense of community which the Nisei probably were unable to do because they were busy trying to raise a family and make a go of it. [The Sansei sense of community is]. . . keeping in touch with people (Informant #121).

And finally, informants describe the community in terms of intergenerational leadership roles. The previous speaker thinks it is time for the younger generation to take over.

> Well, I think now that the Sansei have gotten, are in their 30s, I think they should start taking over some of the more established things, leadership reigns (Informant #121).

Still, another laments the transfer of power saying

> I think there was a period during which the Nisei took the helm, but it was not too long. The Nisei are not aggressive, they stay in the background. Sansei are in the foreground now, they're the movers and shakers and the pushers in the community. The Nisei are in their 60's and 70's now (Informant #123).

About half of my informants have lived in San Francisco for over 50 years, both before and after the War. Most others have been here in the city for at least 30 years. They have seen the physical boundaries of the community shrink. They have witnessed increased ethnic diversification in Japantown. Issei organizations such as the kenjinkai are no longer prominent. New facilities and activities have taken their place. And now that the "Nisei are in their 60s and 70s" their social world is changing again as Sansei assume leadership roles in key organizations. Despite all of these changes, most Nisei informants remain active in community organizations and maintain exclusively intraethnic voluntary memberships and friendships.

Membership in Voluntary Associations

All 24 informants belong to at least one voluntary organization, even if not very active members. In addition, 23 belong to at least one organization which is primarily Japanese American in membership. On average, my informants participate in 4.2 voluntary associations per person (S.D.=2.8).

Informants take part in 64 different groups. Several of these organizations are non-ethnic, national fraternal associations such as the Optimists or Masons, or sportsmen's groups like the California Wildlife Federation, or professional organizations such as the American Nurses Association. However, the membership of 48 of these groups is primarily Japanese American. These organizations cluster into several broad categories.

Eleven informants claim membership in various activities of local Buddhist and Japanese American Christian churches. These institutions represent the enduring community associations. Most of the churches were started before the War and many had Issei participation.

Japanese American civil rights, political, civic and educational groups claim 13 memberships among nine informants. Eleven informants participate in sports or hobby groups and claim 19 memberships in these activities. Finally, 16 informants have 26 memberships in local senior groups. The oldest of these groups started in the mid-1950s

and was designed to provide social services for Issei seniors. Another formal agency was created about 20 years ago to serve the same population. In addition, several grass roots organizations without formal agency sponsorship have been created to serve the social, educational, and recreational needs of Nisei seniors. These groups, generally less than 10 years old, are quite well attended by my informants and other community dwelling Nisei.

What these memberships show is the relatively high degree of participation in voluntary associations among my informants. One may argue that recruiting informants from among those who participate in community activities biases the results and makes questionable the "generalizability" of the findings. That is true. However, for my informants participation in these organizations is a way to maintain social ties with others, a way to contribute to the community, a way to handle some of the anxieties about aging, and a way to assert their ethnic identity. And it was precisely this that was the focus of my interest, so recruiting subjects from these organizations made sense.

Friendship Patterns

Friendships undoubtedly serve other functions but they also show a similar degree of intraethnic specificity.

When asked to list their three closest friends, all but two informants were able to list at least one friend. What is striking about friendship patterns is their ethnic, age,

and gender homogeneity. Both men and women listed nearly exclusively friends of the same ethnicity, age and gender as themselves. Among the 62 friends listed, only four were non-Japanese American, only three were Sansei, and only two were of the opposite gender from the informant. I have information on the length of friendship for 59 of the friends. About one fifth (N=10) of these friendships date back to childhood, about three fifths (N=37) of the friendships were formed during the adult years from 21-60, and the final fifth (N=12) are friendships formed after age 60.

These friends live primarily in San Francisco. The most distant friend for any informant lives in Los Angeles, nine friends live in the greater Bay Area, and all the rest live in the city itself. Their geographic proximity fosters frequent visits. Only one informant sees any friend as infrequently as once a month; five report seeing one of their friends about twice a month, and the remainder see a friend at least weekly. Telephone calls are made at least weekly to a friend by about half the sample. Five of the men use the telephone to schedule activities but not for more general conversational purposes.

Informants and their friends not only get together for social activities but serve as confidants too. Because most friends are also Nisei, they share memberships in voluntary associations, participate in the life of the ethnic

community, and have many common life experiences unique to Japanese Americans and more specifically to the Nisei.

This intra-ethnic friendship pattern is intriguing given the post WWII residential dispersion, the decline of the ethnic economy, the increased contact with non-Japanese Americans in the workplace, and the high outmarriage rates of the Sansei. S. Frank Miyamoto (1986-87), whose sociological study of the Japanese American community in Seattle in the 1930s stands as the first important work on the ethnic group, has proposed that the Nisei interpersonal style may account for this tendency to choose other Nisei as close friends. By interpersonal style, Miyamoto "refers to the typical manner in which an individual carries on interaction and communication (transmissions of meanings), both verbal and non-verbal, in direct person-to-person relations" (Miyamoto 1986-87, 30).

He bases his understanding on George Herbert Mead's theory of social interaction. In describing the interaction of two people, Mead identified three significant categories --the meaning of the other person, the meaning of the self, and the meaning of the subject under consideration. The interactants understand the meaning of the other by imaginatively taking that other's position and seeing things from the other's point of view. Meaning is transmitted through this type of role-taking where each interactant is

interpersonally sensitive to himself, himself as perceived by the other, and to the subject matter.

At the same time, self-perceptions may focus "subjectively" on one's own thoughts and feelings or "objectively" on how one imagines one appears to the other. Individuals and cultures vary in the emphasis placed on various aspects of interpersonal sensitivity. This is what Miyamoto sees as the crux of the problem which he elaborates as follows:

> I suggested that the Nisei's problem of interpersonal style arose from the attempt to fuse two contrasting styles, the Japanese and the American, and the difficulty of forming a unified, functional style. The problem can now be stated more specifically. The Nisei's problem arose from the fact that they learned from their parents a style of interaction that requires a strong emphasis on awareness of <u>other</u> and awareness of <u>objective self</u> but only a secondary emphasis on awareness of <u>subjective self</u>; whereas the American interpersonal style require awareness of <u>other</u> and of <u>objective self</u>, to be sure, but also emphasizes <u>subjective self-awareness</u> (Miyamoto 1986-87, 34).

Sone (1979) presents an example of just this sort of disjunction in her autobiographic novel <u>Nisei Daughter</u>. The protagonist, Kazuko Itoi, instead of enrolling at the university with her friends, becomes a patient at the North Pines Sanitarium. Here she shares a room with a white woman named Chris.

> I was determined to be unobtrusive, not to intrude upon Chris's sense of privacy beyond routine conversation, but it was like trying to ignore a room full of fireworks. I could not remain untouched by her brilliant humor and her irresistible zest for living. . . .
>
> At the sanitarium, I noticed that I was not quite in step with my companions. These discrepancies came as tiny shocks to me, for I had

> been so sure of my Americanization. I had always annoyed Father and Mother with my towering pride on this point. I could speak English so much better that they could. I felt no hesitation in wearing blood red nail polish or violent purple lipstick. But here I started to lose my confidence (Sone 1979, 139-140).

One day Chris brings a new patient to their table in the dining room and introduces Laura to the group.

> I greeted Laura with what I considered was one of my most cordial smiles and said, 'How do you do.' Laura seated herself at the table and Chris and Elaine plied her with all sorts of questions and exchanged confidences while I sat contentedly by, listening. After dinner when we had returned to our room, Chris startled me by saying, 'Kazi, Laura thought you didn't care for her too much. You did seem a bit cold, you know, just sitting and not saying a word to her. Didn't you like her?'
>
> I felt as if Chris had dashed cold water over me. I did like Laura. I had giver her my best smile and yet she had taken offense. I assured Chris that I would love having Laura at our table and apologized for having seemed rude. We never talked about it again, but I was too surprised to forget Chris's strange reaction (Sone 1979, 140).

In contrast, Sone describes her first meeting with two other Nisei patients at the sanitarium.

> I noticed two new ambulatory patients, Nisei girls. They sat by themselves at the far end of the room as if they were trying to remain inconspicuous. They seemed lonely so I walked up to them and introduced myself.
>
> 'Hello, I'm Kazuko Itoi. How does it feel to be walking around now?'
>
> They stared at me a moment as if they were trying to place me. Then they smiled shyly at me.
>
> 'I'm Nami.'
>
> 'And I'm Marie.'
>
> I waited. Then Nami said simply. 'It's nice, all right.' And Marie just smiled. They did not invited me to sit down, but looked expectantly at me as if they were waiting for me to state my business (Sone 1979, 141).

Their clipped conversation continues through a few more questions and short answers. Finally, Kazuko ends the interaction.

> We had wrung each other dry. Feeling thoroughly foolish and unnecessary, I tried to make a graceful exit. 'Well, it was nice meeting you. I'll be seeing you. Good-by.'
>
> Then Nami and Marie came to life and literally glowed when they said, ''By.'
>
> The girls had not meant to be unkind even though they had made me feel as if I were a spy at large. Their response was typically Japanese, and that was the way I had behaved with Laura. No wonder Chris and Laura thought I had been deliberately impolite.
>
> From a Japanese point of view, Nami, Marie and I had behaved in the utmost decorum becoming to modest maidens. At home whenever I was introduced to friends, I always bowed low and said, 'I meet you for the first time.' I did not lunge at the visitor and start cross-examining him. Instead I sat down and never uttered a word unless the guest spoke to me. Then I would answer politely and briefly 'yes' or 'no.' The important thing was to sit quietly and let the other folks talk about what they wanted to talk about, smile agreeably at all times, and keep the guest's teacup brimming full.
>
> Then I noticed that I was too polite. I always tried to let others precede me in entering or leaving a room, and invariably I stood at the tail end of queues. But nobody cared. At first I was baffled with the perpetual rudeness of other people. Chris, Laura, Elaine and the others were so casual about such things. The person who happened to be nearest the doorway went through first. Back home it was a regular battle of will among ourselves to see who could force the other to pass through the door first or to take the most comfortable chair in the room, All this maneuvering came under <u>reigi</u> or deportment which everyone was supposed to observe rigidly, if he wanted to be respected. . . . I decided to give up trying to be the most polite person at the sanitarium. When I did change my habits, nobody noticed it, but I felt more comfortable (Sone 1979, 142).

What I find useful about Miyamoto's explication and Sone's illustration is that it helps one understand the patterned behavior of Nisei friendships. It also serves as an example of how the Nisei integrate and make intelligible to themselves the often contrasting Japanese and American styles. It seems as if the contrast between Japanese and American models confronts the Nisei again and again in many areas of life from interpersonal style, to concepts of family, to models of growing old.

In this chapter I have delineated the general life patterns of my informants based on demographic materials. These dimensions were then examined as they meshed with larger historical forces that have shaped the lives of my informants. I hope what has emerged is some sense of how my informants' lives are structured and the nature of the community in which they live. Clearly in "young-old" age, Nisei are active in the community, engaged in rich and rewarding roles with friends and family, and relatively free from the devastating declines in health, income, and social status often associated with aging in America.

However, Nisei aging is far from problem free. As early as the mid-1970s, Nisei "retirement issues" became a concern of the national Japanese American Citizens League. At about the same time, social service organizations which were serving a primarily frail Issei population began to assess future programming needs for the growing population

of aging Nisei (Andrus Gerontology Center and UCLA/USC Long Term Care Gerontology Center 1983; Ego 1980; Kuzuhara and Nambu 1978). The challenges of aging for my informants are shaped by images of aging in both Japan and America, the Issei experience of growing old, and Nisei expectations about their future. This is the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF NISEI AGING

Cultures vary widely in the diversity and specificity of the developmental maps used by their members to navigate the life course. In American society, race, ethnicity, gender, marital status, health, financial situation, and social position are central determinants of what one can anticipate as one grows older. These expectations are part of the shared symbol system which direct and constrain what is desirable and possible in old age. Nisei aging too is subject to such factors. It is also shaped by the Issei experience of old age and broader societal forces which promote a relatively normless and devalued status for American elderly.

To my way of thinking, social questions about aging differ from cultural ones. When one examines patterns of actual social interactions, role relationships, or the repertoire of behaviors the elderly take part in, one is investigating social questions. Many studies of Issei aging (Ishizuka 1978; Montero 1979; Ujimoto 1987) have examined these concerns. For example, Montero (1979) tests Cummings and Henry's (1961) social disengagement hypothesis using

data on Issei visiting patterns and organizational memberships. He found that age is generally inversely related to social participation and concludes that the Issei case presents partial support for the disengagement model.

A second broad category of studies on elderly Japanese Americans considers aging from a more explicitly cultural perspective (Kendis 1989; Kobata 1979). Again, the focus is on the Issei experience. However, these studies typically link, a priori, cultural norms and values of traditional Japan with Issei values and Nisei practices. For example, filial piety may be cited as a key norm carried over from Japan to the American situation of aging Issei.

> In transmitting the cultural values to their offspring, the Issei emphasized the importance of filial piety with the strong expectation that their children would practice oya-koko in their old age . . . . It would be safe to assume that the concept of oya-koko is embraced by the Nisei on the whole, although caretaking methods may not always include physically caring for the parents in their own home (Kobata 1979, 99).

These studies neglect the pattern of meaning embedded in behavior that appears to conform to oya-koko (filial piety). I disagree with Kobata; we must not assume that Nisei embrace the concept of filial piety. I believe that we must explicate the meaning of the behavior even when care-taking resembles the so-called filial model.

A third type of study examines the effects of changing social conditions on the late life experiences of the elderly. These studies (Kalish and Moriwaki 1973; Kiefer

1974a; Osako 1979, 1980; Yanagisako 1975, 1985) not only identify aging norms and expectations in the Japanese culture of origin but also discuss ways that the Issei/Nisei families of late life adjust to the aging of the first generation by adapting familial behaviors and norms.

In this chapter, I highlight both the social concerns and the cultural constructs of aging for young-old Nisei. To do this, I will start at the broadest level by discussing images of aging in contemporary America and the pre-modern Japan of the Issei's youth. This serves as the backdrop against which Nisei gauge their own aging expectations. Next, I present Yanagisako's analytic framework as one useful way to examine kin roles in late life. This helps to understand Nisei perspectives of the Issei experience of old age. Finally, I discuss my informants concerns about the future and explicate their cultural expectations about frail old age.

Contemporary American Images of Aging

Industrialization and mass longevity have developed hand in hand in the United States and other modern, industrial nations. The number of Americans over the age of 65 has increased tenfold from 3.1 million (4% of the population) in 1900 to 30 million (12% of the population) in the late 1980s (Schick 1986). Since the 1960s, the over 65 age group has grown about twice as fast as the rest of the

population (Schick 1986). Within the senior population, the oldest old (those over 85) are the fastest growing segment (Schick 1986). Not only are more Americans living to age 65 and beyond, but most are living healthy, active lives as seniors. However, major medical advances also mean that the sick aged survive longer too. In the next decades, we will hear more about 65 or 70 year old children caring for 90 or 100 year old parents.

Despite the changing demographics, American images of aging are not positive. Ken Dychtwald, president of Age Wave, a communications firm that specializes in addressing the social, lifestyle, and business implications of an aging America, casts the problems of the elderly in these terms:

> At least in part, our images of aging are negative because of our glorification of youth. The image of youth as vigorous and powerful and sexy has as its shadow an image of older people as incompetent, inflexible, wedded to the past, desexed, uncreative, poor, sick, and slow (Dychtwald 1989, 26).

Aged Americans not only challenge our culture's glorification of youth, but dependent ones challenge those very values which underpin our technological advancement and increased material wealth--values such as individualism, competition, and productivity.

Devalued Status

Nearly thirty years ago, Rosow (1962) offered his perspicacious analysis of the moral dilemma posed by the elderly to affluent America. Here and now the aged are

devalued and comparatively roleless. They command few or none of the determinants of status that have served to increase their social integration at other times and in other places. According to Rosow, the seven factors which contribute to the status of the aged are: property ownership, command of strategic knowledge, productivity, mutual dependence, tradition and religion, kinship and family, and community life (Rosow 1974). American society's emphasis on individual economic self-sufficiency, high productivity, and low mutual dependence mitigate against a valued social status for the aged.

Normlessness

Like Rosow, Clark and Anderson (1967) find that "The roots of the problems of the elderly in American culture lie in the normlessness of the extended life epoch of relatively healthy old age" (p. 10). Weak kin ties, rapid industrial and technological change, increasing numbers of older people, and a dominant cultural value on productivity are the historical factors which contribute to the alienation of the elderly from American life. Many of the subjects in their study were proudly and fiercely independent both because this is the kind of autonomy which our culture values and because the elderly, like other adult Americans, cannot permit themselves to lean on others for help. Primary American values such as individualism, autonomy, acquisition and exploitation, self-advancement, and

productivity dictate that those who cannot uphold and act out these values are devalued, discarded, and ignored.

> It is the central values of American culture which lay down such cruel alternatives, and those elderly, not wishing to be thought of as foolish or useless, often believe the only way out of such an either-or dilemma is to keep their peace, their social distance, their insularity, their independence, their inviolable selfhood--even at the awful cost of loneliness and isolation (Clark and Anderson 1967, 425).

Social Problems of the Elderly

These scholars help us to understand how core American values contribute to the negative images we have of the elderly. These negative images are recast as the social plight of the aged. While I do not mean to imply that American seniors are exempt from sickness, poverty, homelessness and a host of other social, economic, and medical ills, I do want to point out that the negative images of the aged are so pervasive that the elderly themselves believe the myths. For example, two nationwide surveys conducted for the National Council on the Aging (1975, 1981) show that elderly respondents were as misinformed about the extent and severity of problems for aged Americans as younger subjects. In all instances, the problems (i.e. "not enough money, fear of crime, poor health, loneliness, inadequate medical care, and [problems] getting where they want to go" [National Council on Aging 1975, 38]) were judged to be worse in the lives of <u>other</u>

elderly Americans than the elderly perceive these conditions to be in their own lives.

In both the academic and popular understanding, American society believes that old people's lives are fraught with social problems. The elderly are stereotyped as sick, unproductive, unattractive, and generally "over the hill." Their devalued status and normlessness relegate them to the periphery of American life.

These negative images of aging co-exist with a competing myth of a pre-industrial Golden Past (even in America) when the elderly were lovingly ensconced in caring families (Nydegger 1983). According to Nydegger, in this mythic past the elderly held valued roles and were accorded respect because of their age. Of course, these images ignore the actuarial facts of high mortality at all ages resulting in small numbers of old people, or household statistics which suggest that few elderly lived with adult children, or the probable basis of respect for some elderly which lay in wealth and prestige garnered earlier in life.

Japanese Images of Old Age

Modern, industrial Japanese society presents many challenges to the status of its elderly members. However, the contemporary situation is not as important a reference point for my Nisei informants and their Issei parents as are images of Japanese aging from the pre-modern past. The

Issei, born during the Meiji Period (1868-1912), grew up in an era of rapid social change. In less than 100 years--from the beginning of the Meiji to the post-WWII era--Japan was transformed from a traditional, feudalistic society to a modern, industrial, democratic nation. Despite the fact that the Issei grew up in the midst of widespread reform, turn of the century Japan provides the conceptual anchor of "tradition" for their models of aging.

Meiji Era Reforms

Two broad forces shape Issei images of aging. The first reflects macro-level changes instituted by the Meiji government. Despite notions that filial piety underpins the status of Asian elderly at all times and for all classes, Confucian precepts of filial piety were generally restricted to samurai (warrior) families during the Tokugawa period (1600-1868) (Kinoshita 1982, 1984). However, the Meiji government adopted Confucian thought as central to Japan's efforts to build a modern, industrialized nation. According to Plath,

> the Confucian outlook was . . . a core element of the 'family system' and the 'vertical society.' The 'vertical society,' led by a paternal emperor in Tokyo and imperial parents in the home, was to be Japan's alternative to the models of industrial national society being tried in the West (Plath 1972, 139-140).

The Meiji Civil Code of 1898 legally established the patriarchal family system (ie) and institutionalized the support of aged parents. According to Befu,

> filial piety was deliberately propagated among all classes of Japanese. Through compulsory education, universal military conscription, and other state-sponsored programs, filial piety became part of the national ethic in only two or three generations. It became the backbone of family morality and provided a basis for parental authority (Befu 1983, 267).

My informants' parents were among the first generation to receive moral education in filial piety at the newly established compulsory grade schools. This ethical training was bound to have had some effect on Issei images of aging, both for their parents who grew old in Japan and for themselves. However, my informants' parents never returned to Japan to personally fulfill filial responsibilities. One Nisei informant told me how she chided an acquaintance about the Issei's lack of experience as filial caregivers to their own parents:

> Many Isseis have told me, 'My children never looked up to (me). I asked them to help me.' I said, 'Oba-san, have you ever taken care of your parents when your children were growing up?' She said, 'No.' . . . . So if you didn't show that . . . or if they have never seen you taking care of elderly persons, never expect anything from the children (Informant #112).

Perhaps, though, it is precisely because the Issei never experienced the day to day pressure of caring for their own aging parents that they found the promise of filial support so appealing and compelling. Another informant explained that she, like other Nisei, takes care of her aging parent because "Isseis, the Niseis already imbedded in them, the Isseis, you got to take care of your

mom" (Informant #101). Most Issei grew old expecting some filial support from offspring and many Nisei grew up expecting to "take care of your mom."

Traditional Japanese Images of Aging

The second major input in the Issei and Nisei images of Japanese aging is rooted in the Issei's pre-modern peasant origins. Here the ethnographic literature on rural Japan comes to bear.

According to Kinoshita (1982), one important source for the continued integration of the elderly was their critical role as a link between the living and the dead. Peasant life was generally influenced by the regularity of agricultural and seasonal rhythms; life's patterns followed nature's order. Perhaps for that reason, the Japanese peasant life cycle contained stages both in life and after death. Kinoshita (1982), citing Tsuboi, divides the life cycle into the following four stages: pre-adulthood, adulthood, identified spirithood, and unidentified ancestral spirithood. The domain of unidentified ancestral spirits "represents a pool of purified ancestral spirits cleansed through many ceremonies, which in turn would supply new lives for the family" (Kinoshita 1982, 47).

The life cycle came full circle; it did not end at death. For that reason, ancestor worship was the core of Japanese religious life. The elderly were held in high regard because they were on the verge of becoming ancestors.

In this cyclic perspective, "The existence of aged parents itself was a symbol of the continuity of one's family line" (Kinoshita 1984, 76). A family line continued not only because one had offspring but also because one had aged parents who were next in line to become ancestors.

Closely related to the importance of the elderly as "ancestors in the making" is a supraindividual perception of time. According to Kiefer,

> The traditional Japanese view sees the individual life as a single segment of a continuous cord. Life and its circumstances are gifts from countless prior generations, whose repayment flows on to the generations of the indefinite future (Kiefer 1974a, 185).

When life is seen from this perspective, care of aging parents represents repayment for the "gifts from countless prior generations." Filial care flows not just from Confucian injunctions but also from a world view which binds the strand of a single human life into a larger, on-going cord.

Elderly parents contributed by perpetuating the family line and provided additional hands and important practical knowledge in labor intensive activities such as farming. According to Kiefer (1974),

> The normal elderly were likely to have a good knowledge of weather and soil conditions and to have acquired skills such as tool mending, sewing, and the diagnosis and treatment of human and animal diseases. They could do light housework, tend fires and flood gates, cook, and--perhaps most important of all--look after children while the parents were in the fields. In short, their old age coincided with a time when the family

> badly needed whatever economic help they could contribute. Thus the gratitude and respect of younger generations were a natural result of contribution made necessary by these economic conditions (Kiefer 1974a, 183).

This image shows the continued economic utility of aged parents to the family enterprise.

This economic function should not be underestimated. The aged provided not only able hands when the family had hungry children to feed but through their continued labor, they helped the family to carry on as a unit of production. Despite traditional rules of patrilineal and primogenitural descent, Befu proposes "that the primary emphasis in the Japanese family system is not so much on the continuity of the 'blood' from father to oldest son as on the perpetuation of the family as a corporate group through its name and occupation" (Befu 1962, 34). Therefore, the labor of elderly parents represented not just important incremental help but contributed to the core function of the family as a corporate group.

These images of old age in pre-modern and modernizing Japan suggest that the aged were integrated into the social fabric. The Meiji Civil Code bolstered the legal status of the aged within the family, but the indigenous family system provided important roles for the elderly. And even after death, family members contributed to the welfare of the group "serve(ing) mainly as moral arbiters and sources of

emotional security" (Plath 1964, 307). These are the broad cultural patterns that directly influenced Issei aging.

An Analytic Framework for a Cultural Analysis of Kin Roles in Late Life

Yanagisako's work (1975, 1985) on Japanese American kinship is central to my analysis. In her paper, "Two Processes of Change in Japanese-American Kinship," she distinguishes between change in the cultural system (i.e. the ordered system of meaning and symbols) and change in the social system (i.e. patterned interaction). Her paper focuses, in part, on filial behaviors in the Issei/Nisei family of late life. She shows how the role of the successor-son, the one normatively responsible for the care of aging parents, has been transformed in the Issei/Nisei family.

Social Change

She argues that in the pre-WWII ethnic community, the Issei family of procreation was, like the Issei's natal family, a unit of production and consumption. Issei fathers were in charge of labor intensive family businesses. Household division of labor on age and sex lines served as the model for family business roles. Kinship units controlled the economic resources of the community. And due to the racism in the pre-WWII years, Nisei sons were dependent on their fathers and the larger ethnic community for economic opportunities.

Clearly the social, economic, and even geographic character of West Coast Japanese American communities was destroyed by the wartime evacuation. In relocation camps, Issei "men lost their jobs and their business, and with these the economic basis of their authority within the family" (Kiefer 1974b, 175). Issei men were no longer community leaders either. The War Relocation Authority designated the American born Nisei as the appropriate representatives in the camps. To a large extent, the wartime incarceration forced the Issei into "early retirement." Then, after the War, late middle aged and young-old Issei had to rebuild their lives.

In addition, the post-War situation presented expanded economic opportunities to the Nisei. Access to economic resources was no longer controlled by the Issei but was available from non-kin and non-ethnic sources. All Nisei benefitted from the increased access to education and jobs, not just oldest sons.

These exogenous factors altered the structure of kin relations, especially in the successor-son role. According to Yanagisako, the duties of the successor-son in the Issei natal family were ascriptively fused. She describes the role as entailing

> not only succession to the headship of the household and inheritance of the majority of its property, but also co-residence with parents after marriage and responsibility for their economic and social welfare (Yanagisako 1975, 204).

However, in the post-War situation, the family was no longer an economic group and kin unit. With this dismantling, she argues, the successor role was structurally differentiated.

> The first process of change generated by these alterations in the parameters of the system of family relationships was the structural differentiation of the status-role of the successor . . . . Structural differentiation entails the transfer of functions from an original unit with undifferentiated functions to qualitatively different units outside of it (Yanagisako 1975, 206).

She then identifies five components of the previously fused successor-son role. According to her Nisei informants, these functions are: headship of the family, financial responsibility for parents, co-residence with parents, care-taking responsibility for parents, and official inheritance. Nisei offspring were collectively responsible for the parents' welfare in old age. However, each of the component functions was assigned on the basis of gender and age.

Nisei sons took care of leadership and financial responsibilities. The eldest son was the preferred candidate for family headship. He assumed these duties because leadership is a male domain and his relative age gave him added authority. Men are the ones whose job it is to go outside of the home to earn money so sons should insure that their parents have adequate financial support. Ideally, from the Nisei perspective, fiscal responsibility should be shared equally by all male offspring.

Nisei daughters share in the nurturing functions. Again, the norm among the Nisei is to divide the responsibility equally among the sisters. The types of caregiving that daughters provide is co-residence and care-taking in the event of illness or physical incapacity. These are primarily late life contingencies which are assigned to daughters because they are said to be emotionally closer to their parents than daughters-in-law and to females because they are thought to have a natural nurturing ability.

In the traditional culture of origin, inheritance and succession went hand in hand. The successor-son assumed the executive and caregiving responsibilities for his parents (though it is unlikely that he provided actual bodily care; this was his wife's duty) as a result of official inheritance of the family property and occupation. This was not a personal inheritance of goods and property from one individual to another, but a transfer of management for the household enterprise from one generation to the next.

Yanagisako's informants agreed that if a Nisei son took over the family business and assumed responsibility for his parents, the inheritance was of the official Japanese type and went uncontested among the sibship. However, when there was no business to inherit or when no son wanted to manage it, inheritance then became a division of goods among

individuals. Personal inheritance created problems of meaning for both Issei and Nisei.

Cultural Change

So far I have outlined Yanagisako's social analysis of the structural differentiation of the successor-son role. The cultural aspect of her argument follows.

> Traditional Japanese kinship was ordered by a fundamental cultural postulate . . . . [which] states that structural wholeness is achieved through the complementary opposition of the dual elements of the 'inside' and the 'outside.' In Japanese ethno-theory, a unit is considered structurally whole, and therefore autonomous, only if it includes representations of both these elements (Yanagisako 1975, 204).

In the case of official inheritance, Issei and Nisei alike recognize and accept the transfer of property and responsibility as conforming to the Japanese type. In fact, even structural differentiation of the successor-son role into headship, financial, and nurturing components did not pose difficulties for the Issei or Nisei cultural construction of family. This differentiation was unproblematic because when offspring differentiated and divided these duties among sons and daughters, they did so using an accessible and legitimate cultural model. According to Yanagisako,

> the traditional conceptualization of the successor status-role was part of the higher level meaning of the family as a structural whole integrating elements of the 'inside' and 'outside.'. . . The Nisei were able to create . . . a set of normative rules [to accompany the differentiation of the successor status-role] . . . by utilizing a cultural criterion already conceived to be a

> legitimate means for achieving familial structural wholeness--the criterion of sex and the meaning attached to the differentiated sex roles of family members. . . . In other words, they ambiguated the higher order principle of complementary opposition. They then respecified this higher level meaning using traditional sex constructs which assigned females to 'inside' domains and males to 'outside' domains. In doing so, they created a new set of normative rules legitimated by the traditional system of meanings (Yanagisako 1975, 213-214).

Personal inheritance causes problems for both Issei and Nisei because it is not part of the traditional successor role and it is not consonant with the new model of complementary opposition based on sex constructs. To the Issei, personal inheritance falls outside of cultural prescription. It has no meaning.

To the Nisei, personal inheritance is ripe with significance. Like their parents, they recognize that personal inheritance is dissonant with cultural constructs associated with the Japanese family. However, unlike the Issei, the Nisei have developed a model of the Euro-American family which stands in contrast to the Japanese family and to which personal inheritance belongs.

> To the Nisei, the ideal Euro-American family is tied together by sentiment and its expression rather than by duty and constraint. They contrast their own natal family relationships with those of the ideal American family. To them, the former appears to be based on 'duty,' the latter on 'love.' At the same time, the Nisei learned the pervasive Euro-American ideology of equalitarianism and its counterpart in the domain of kinship: the rule of sibling equality . . . . A logical extension of the ideology of sibling equality and the construct of the family as a unit

> in which love is shared is the rule that parental love be distributed equally among all children. . . . Within this construct, any commodity given to children by their parents is symbolic of the distribution of parental love. Nisei who receive smaller shares or no shares of parental wealth thus feel unloved and rejected by their parents (Yanagisako 1975, 218-219).

Therefore, to the Nisei way of thinking, when offspring take equal responsibility for Issei parents along appropriate gender lines, parental wealth should be divided equally among all children.

Finally, Yanagisako's analysis shows that Nisei maintain two systems of symbols and meaning surrounding filial care and inheritance. When one son takes over the family business he is seen as the successor-son and is responsible for providing all aspects of care (except actual bodily care which will be done by his wife) for his aging parents. This distribution of the family estate and attendant responsibilities for Issei parents is part of the Japanese construct of family as a structural whole.

When there is no family business to take over, the distribution of parental wealth is a personal inheritance. Then Nisei informants invoke their Euro-American construct of family as a unit which shares love. According to Yanagisako's Nisei informants, in this type of Japanese American family based on the Euro-American model, equal inheritance and equal division of filial care should govern behavior.

Yanagisako's analysis serves as a touchstone because it shows how changes in behavior and changes in symbol systems occur. Her meticulous research flies in the face of Kobata's bold assertion quoted previously that we can assume Nisei embrace the concept of oya-koko.

Nisei informants in my study share with Yanagisako's informants the same context specific values and norms about filial responsibilities in their families of orientation. In addition, they conceive of their families of procreation as American families tied together by affection. In the remainder of this chapter, I speculate on how this causes problems for the Nisei system of meaning and symbols about aging and how this creates dilemmas about what they can expect in frail old age. Social conditions for Nisei aging also differ considerably from those that determined Issei aging. I believe that a cultural analysis of aging will help one understand how the social parameters of Nisei aging articulate with the beliefs, symbols, and values that structure the life course.

Nisei Perspectives on the Issei Experience of Old Age

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this study did not focus on the late life experience of the Issei or on the Issei/Nisei dyad. For detailed treatment of aging among the first generation, I refer interested readers to work by Osako (1979, 1980) and Kendis (1989). However, generally,

in very late life, after widowhood, and at the onset of frailty, Issei parents in this study lived with a child. Fifteen Issei fathers and 13 Issei mothers before they died lived with either my Nisei informant or another Nisei child.

Filial Care

Several informants spoke of the physical and psychological difficulties of caring for infirm parents. For example, one woman said that after her mother fell and broke her hip, she was no longer able to care for her. Her mother could not walk and "I had to pull her up to go to the benjo (toilet). Finally, we couldn't handle her. You know they're dead weight." (Informant #107). Her mother was placed in a convalescent home.

Another informant lived in the same home with his in-laws for about 20 years.

> My wife's parents lived with us here for, the father for 15 years and the mother for 20 years. Lived right here in this house until Mister became too old to handle so we put him in the rest home. . . . And when my wife passed away, the grandma moved down to Los Angeles (to) the other sister's home . . . . I think even among relatives, parents and children, there will always be some frictions. Especially when an outsider like the in-laws get involved in your personal living. Just like my in-laws lived with me here as long as they did, we always used to have frictions. And I used to take my share of monku (complaining) whatever. You know, but you just have to grin and bear it and do the best you can (Informant #123).

When dementia or frailty require around the clock attention, caregiving limits social interaction. For example, one female informant said:

> It's just that, my father used to get lost and he had strong legs and he'd go out and get lost . . . . It was hard for them [my parents] because their friends were all gone. It was just a constant, we couldn't go any place and we used to hate to ask the kids to take over the babysitting (Informant #121).

Another informant said that during the four years of living with her mother,

> my freedom was tied up because I stayed with her all that time and I hardly wasn't able to go anyplace. Although in the beginning I used to take her to (X) Center. And then when there's a concert or movies, I would go out with her. But I was always with her (Informant #111).

Caring for frail, aged parents at home is difficult. Whether it's problems in toileting, enduring the inevitable complaining, or being tied down, Nisei adult children have experienced many of the stresses associated with filial care. Plath calls the Nisei-aged contemporaries in Japan, the "last Confucian sandwich" (Plath 1975). This phrase aptly describes my informants as illustrated by the following comment from a female caregiver.

> our folks didn't have to take care of their in-laws. So we're right in the middle. We have to take care of the in-laws, we have to worry about ourselves, and if you got little children, you got the family to take care, your husband to take care. So we're right in the middle, squeezed in . . . . So when the folks live for a long time, you know, you've got them. You've really got them. And people who have lived together, it was tough. I know it was tough. So when the folks pass on, they're relieved (Informant #107).

Relief at the death of one's parents or in-laws because of the difficulty of providing care seems a scandalous

admission and one that is rarely heard. However, it may be more commonplace than not, especially after a decade or more of caregiving. This stands in stark contrast to one of the inviolate constructs in the ethnic community--that of the Issei pioneer.

"Our Issei Pioneers"

Generally, among all generations, the Issei hold what Kendis calls "high symbolic status as the pioneer generation" (Kendis 1989, 66). For example, in the life histories collected by Sarasohn (1983), an 84 year old Issei male reflects on Issei accomplishments:

> If young people learned a little more about the difficulties in the Issei's life struggle, their ideas might change somewhat. It is important for them to know that they can be as they are today because of their grandparents . . . . As pioneers, the Issei laid a foundation. Their tears and sweat lie at the bottom, and their efforts were rewarded. The struggle and hardships of the Issei are the very basis of prosperity that Japanese Americans enjoy today (Sarasohn 1983, 263-264).

Nisei informants in this study also think of their parents as the pioneer generation. They remember their parents as working hard, sacrificing, and enduring difficulties of life in America. Everyone agrees that the "Issei had it rough . . .work(ing) for the children's survival." (Informant #106). Another said that "You really have to hand it to the Issei as you look back for getting us established. [They provided us with] education, security, and a sense of responsibility" (Informant #110).

For the Sansei and younger generations, the image of the Issei pioneer has become part of what literary critic David Mura calls "a welter of politically correct stereotypes: all the [Sansei] poets have their obligatory barbed wire relocation poem, their obligatory Issei grandparent poem." (Mura, forthcoming. [Examples of such poems are "For Grandma" by Gregory Mark Uba, "Oba-san" by Jonny Kyoko Sullivan, or " Oba-chan" by Lane Kiyomi Nishikawa.])

The image of the Issei pioneer who laid the foundation for the success of the Nisei and Sansei has become the rallying point for action as a local social service brochure declares, "(X Agency) was organized by a generation who wanted to repay the commitment and dedication of the first generation pioneers." This same brochure states that the Issei's high symbolic value is the focus for "the cultural and ethnic identity of the Sansei."

The image of the Issei is inviolate and romantic. It is reinforced because the pioneer generation is a "non-renewable resource." Although there will be future generations of aged Japanese Americans, there will be no more Issei. Being Issei has not only high symbolic status; I believe they have become part of the shared symbol system of the ethnic culture.

Over twenty years ago, Kitano said of the Issei that

> They were, and remain, products of a vanished Japanese era, conforming, hard-working, group- and

> family-oriented, clinging to old values, customs, and goals . . . . [They are the] guardian of Japanese ways (Kitano 1969, 138-139).

In this way, "our Issei pioneers" have come to represent what is distinctly and indisputably "Japanese" in being Japanese American. At the same time, all generations (and more recently Japanese business leaders, diplomats, and politicians) acknowledge that Issei efforts are responsible for the economic and social mobility of succeeding generations. But being Issei is different from being old, from being frail, and from needing care. Cultural expectations for care in old age, gratitude for Issei efforts, and a healthy dose of guilt combine to assure filial care for frail parents. But from the Nisei perspective, caring for frail parents is frequently described as a burden.

The "Burden" of Filial Care

Yanagisako's analysis of Issei/Nisei kin relationships in the family of late life shows how the successor-son role was differentiated and respecified among Nisei siblings. These norms generally govern the caregiving experience of the Nisei in my study. As cited previously, many Nisei learned from their Issei parents that "you got to take care of your mom." My interview material suggests that along with the concept of Issei/Nisei natal family relationships as constrained by duty, comes an evaluation of filial responsibilities as fraught with burden.

> If you stress [to] your children to look after you when you get older and you start to depend on them, they have their own family. So I think you'll be a burden in many cases (Informant #112).

Recalling the experience of caring for a senile and incontinent mother, a Nisei couple told me that they don't expect their children to take care of them. The wife said, "I don't, at least I don't feel that I want to be a burden on them. That's hard, you know." The husband immediately agreed,

> Yeah, well maybe we feel that way because we looked after our Issei parents and we went through that so we ourselves try to put ourselves as independent and less dependable (sic) on our Sansei children (Informant #113).

Feeding, toileting, bathing, dressing, and medicating are among the daily tasks involved in caring for a decrepit, aged parent. Even if one is raised to "take care of your mom," these chores can be overwhelming. It is easy to imagine how duty becomes burden. And because many Nisei felt yoked with a cultural expectation to provide care, it was a duty and burden that could not be shrugged off.

These are the images and experiences of Issei frail old age as reported by Nisei informants. Clearly, many Nisei know first hand what it means to be caregivers to frail parents. And also, equally clearly, caring for aged parents is first and foremost a family based function. A majority (70%) of my informants responded that their parents raised them to be "more like a Japanese person." They say that

providing care to aging parents is part of their Japanese upbringing.

The Nisei family of orientation may be characterized as functionally diffuse, socio-centric, inclusive, and homogeneous throughout the family life cycle. However, what Kiefer (1974a) has identified as acculturative processes such as economic achievement, growing command of American skills, gradual loss of Japanese skills, geographical dispersion, growing individuation, and broadening intellectual perspective conspire to produce major changes in the Nisei family of procreation.

For example, there was no Nisei consensus on how they raised their own children. Of the 17 informants who are parents, about one third (N=5) said that they raised their Sansei offspring to be "more like an American person." One fifth (N=3) said that they "don't know" what they emphasized in childrearing. One fifth (N=3) said that they emphasized equally Japanese and American traits. And about one eighth (N=2) said that they raised their children to be "more like a Japanese person." The remaining 4 parents did not respond. This is one example of the uncertainty which surrounds the Nisei's family of procreation.

The Nisei/Sansei family may be characterized as functionally specific, ego-centric, atomistic, and ambiguous. Nisei cannot and do not count on the same family based support in frail old age as they provided for their

parents. In the next section, I will discuss how the Nisei image of aging is likely to differ from the Issei experience of old age.

Nisei Perspectives on Nisei Aging

Family Based Roles and Responsibilities

One way I tried to understand the Nisei experience of old age was to examine Nisei expectations for their children in those successor-son duties that had been parcelled out among the Nisei sib set. To do this I replicated questions asked by Osako (1980) in her 1978 study of aging, social isolation, and kinship ties among Japanese Americans. Her subjects were Nisei women with Issei parents or parents-in-law residing in the Chicago area and Issei parents with Nisei daughters or daughters-in-law living in the same area. Osako's Issei parents had a mean age of 78 (N=103) and the Nisei daughters were about 52 (N=119). At the time of my interviews in the late 1980s, my Nisei informants had a mean age of 68.

I was careful to emphasize to my informants that I was interested in the Nisei/Sansei relationship, not the Issei/Nisei one. However, in comparing the results of the two studies, one should keep in mind that the Nisei women in Osako's study were the providers of care; in mine, they are the potential recipients and quite a bit less dependent than Osako's Issei had been. Without a doubt, there is a vast

psychological difference between giving and receiving care. However, I offer my informants' perspective as an indication of their expectations for care in frail old age. When available in Osako's report (1980), both Nisei daughter and Issei parent responses will be included.

"Love or Money"

Yanagisako's (1975, 1977, 1978, 1985) research has shown that in many contexts and especially as it involves the successor-son role, Nisei characterize their natal families as "Japanese" ones bound by ties of duty. In contrast, Nisei characterize American families as groups bound by ties of love. For this reason, Osako asked her subjects whether the major responsibility adult children have to their aged parents is financial or whether ties of affection are more important (see Appendix A, Q. 93).

Osako's Nisei informants were somewhat more likely to choose ties of affection (59%) over either financial responsibilities or both affection and fiscal duties (41%) when it comes to the major responsibility they feel toward their Issei parents or parents-in-law. However, when my Nisei informants consider their relationship with their children, an overwhelming 82% feel that ties of affection from their children are most important. Less than one fifth chose financial ties or the combination of affection and financial responsibilities.

First, these findings suggest that Osako's Issei retirees in their 70s and 80s had fewer financial resources than my young-old Nisei retirees. However, from the Nisei perspective, these responses also suggest a move away from the notion of the family as bound by ties of duty in the Issei/Nisei family to a growing emphasis in the Nisei/Sansei dyad on families as entities bound by ties of affection. A childless, financially well-off informant said that ties of affection are more important because "you can't buy that with money" (Informant #124).

Financial Responsibility for Aging Parents

Another major shift occurs in the area of financial responsibility (Appendix A, Q. 94). About half (N=11) of the Nisei in my study felt primarily responsible for their own financial well being. About one quarter (N=5) felt that Nisei parents and Sansei children together were responsible for Nisei financial well being and the final quarter (N=5) felt that Social Security is primarily responsible for the Nisei's financial well being. Two informants gave no reply. No informant chose to rely solely on his children or on welfare for financial well being.

In contrast, only one third of Osako's Nisei daughters felt that Issei parents were primarily responsible for their own financial well being. Nearly three-fifths felt that this was the joint responsibility of parents and children.

The remaining tenth felt that adult children should assume responsibility for the parents' financial well being.

Osako's Issei subjects were nearly equally divided in their responses. One third felt that they were primarily responsible for their own financial well being. Another third felt that they and their children were jointly responsible. The remaining third felt that their Nisei children were primarily responsible for the Issei's financial well being.

The overall trend here seems to be in the direction of decreasing reliance on offspring for financial well being. Several economic factors are at work. Young-old Nisei informants are less likely to need financial assistance than old-old Issei parents. All Nisei in my study are eligible to receive Social Security and many have pensions, savings, and other investments. Compared to Osako's then middle aged Nisei, many Sansei are just starting their careers and are less able to provide financial assistance at this time. In fact, a frequently heard comment to this question was that Sansei children still receive financial help from their parents. Finally, compared with the Issei, more Nisei never married, more married Nisei remained childless, and married Nisei had fewer children so the overall generational strategy seems to be a planned for financial independence in old age.

Desired Residential Proximity

Co-residence with aging Issei parents was not only the norm but also the fact for many Nisei in my study. In response to a question on desired intergenerational living arrangements (Appendix A, Q. 97) my Nisei informants differ from Osako's subjects. Here again, the trend is toward increasing independence.

When considering residential proximity, Nisei in my study want to live farther away from their children than the Nisei or Issei in Osako's study. Because my informants are still healthy and ambulatory, many agree with one informant who commented, "As long as the Nisei are healthy, it doesn't matter where the Sansei live" (Informant #101). Perhaps as the Nisei become older and more frail, their preferences will change. For example, another informant said,

> Well, as long as the Niseis are healthy, they should continue to live where they've been living to be with their own social group. And by the same token, the children have got to go wherever their job is. But when the Nisei can't handle it, living by themselves, they're going to have to go where the children are, as much as you hate to (Informant #107).

Now however, about one fifth (N=5) of my informants want to live in the same building as a child, a little less than one third (N=7) want to live in the same neighborhood, about one quarter (N=6) want to live in the same city, and the final fifth (N=5) want to live far apart. The remaining informant said cited above (Informant #101) said that it does not

matter "as long as the Nisei are healthy." Interestingly, no informant desires co-residence with a child.

Although co-residence was not an overwhelmingly popular choice among either Osako's Issei (12.6%) or Nisei (7.6%) subjects, generally living close by was favored by both generations. Over one third of the Issei and one half of the Nisei wanted to live in the same building as the other generation. About one quarter of the Issei wanted to live in the same neighborhood as a child and another quarter wanted to live in the same city as one of their offspring. For the Nisei, about one fifth each wanted to live in the same neighborhood or same city as their parent or parent-in-law. In contrast to my informants, no Issei or Nisei in Osako's study wanted to live far apart from the other generation.

Nisei in my study both encourage their children to move for career advancements and actively discourage co-residence. They seem to favor intimacy at a distance. For example, a Kibei Nisei widow who has had repeated invitations to live with each of her out-of-state daughters said,

> Well, they [Nisei and Sansei] shouldn't live together, I don't think so. But, you know, they should have some kind of contact all the time. If they could live in the same neighborhood or city, I think it would be nice (Informant #111).

Another informant favors having both generations in the same neighborhood. This way,

> you could live close to your parents but have your own . . . house or whatnot, go back and forth.

> Then your relationship will be much better than living under the same roof and fighting because there's a generation gap and then there's a lot of conflicts many times (Informant #112).

The Nisei repeatedly cite similar problems that might arise if they lived with Sansei children and their families. According to my informants, co-residence results in a lack of privacy, a generation gap, conflicting opinions, and family feuds. In addition to these kinds of overt inter-generational disagreements, one informant elaborated on the difficulties it would cause for the Nisei aging parent.

> Well, the parent would really have to learn to keep their mouth shut because, especially if it's the son's family, you have to let the wife run the house, raise the children as she sees fit. And you have to be very flexible. On the other hand too, same thing with your daughter if it's your daughter's house. You want to be helpful but you have to pull in the reins. It's like, you're there but, it's like when the kids were little, 'seen but not heard' (Informant #121).

When Nisei are the hypothetical recipients of care as they are in my study, their responses to the same questions differ considerably from Osako's Nisei who were the providers of care. To recapitulate the findings, Nisei informants in my study feel that ties of affection between themselves and their children are of primary importance. Generally, they feel mainly responsible for their own financial well being. In addition, no Nisei relies solely on offspring for financial support. And finally, Nisei want to maintain separate residences from their children.

Although most want to live in the same neighborhood or city, one fifth want to live "far apart" from their children.

Living Arrangements Given Disability and Widowhood Desired Living Arrangements

Caring for decrepit, aged parents proved to be not only a culturally prescribed responsibility but also a common experience for many Nisei. To gauge Nisei expectations on this topic, I asked my informants to rate the desirability of several hypothetical living and caregiving arrangements predicated on widowhood and disability. They made their assessments using a 5 point Likert-type scale with 1 being undesirable and 5 being highly desirable (Appendix A, Questions 100-102). Informants rated the desirability of the following situations: living at home with extra services, living with a child, living with another relative, living in a non-Japanese American nursing home, and living in a Japanese American nursing home. Finally they described what would happen if they actually became disabled and were alone. These questions were used in the Nisei Aging Project study (Leonetti 1983).

In response to the hypothetical questions, my informants show a very strong preference for continued independence. Based on mean scores for each living situation, the most desirable arrangement is to remain at home with extra services ($\bar{X}$=4.13, S.D.=.87, N=23). All informants judged this option in a positive light; no one rated this as highly or even slightly undesirable. Living

in a Japanese American nursing home had the second highest mean score ($\bar{X}$=3.73, S.D.=.98, N=22). Many mentioned that they did not require Japanese speaking staff in a convalescent setting, but did hope to see friends and other Asian faces in a Japanese American nursing home. Living in a non-Japanese American nursing home ($\bar{X}$=2.6, S.D.=1.14, N=22) and living with a child ($\bar{X}$=2.5, S.D.=1.29, N=14) were judged to be generally undesirable. The least appealing option was living with another relative ($\bar{X}$=2.1, S.D.=1.31, N=22). This option was rated as desirable only by unmarried or childless informants who may have had to consider a wide range of options for the future.

Despite the generally unfavorable rating of living with a child, all informants say they would if poor health made it necessary. Daughters are the overwhelmingly favored for co-residence by my informants. Childless daughters or daughters with grown children are preferred over "parent-daughters", that is those with young children at home. Informants commonly explain that it is easier to get along with one's daughter than a daughter-in-law. As one informant and his wife said,

> Wife: You're closer to your daughter. You're always closer to you daughter. Cause you've got a daughter-in-law to think about.
> Informant: Yeah, because a daughter-in-law is not your own blood.
> Wife: Not in the family, you know (Informant #117).

In addition to this clear preference for care by daughters, Ishiyama (1984) discerns the following role for Sansei sons.

> It appears that sons are expected to provide less direct care, and more symbolic care, and daughters are expected to provide direct care but the care may not be valued proportionate to the level of care. One might say, at the risk of oversimplification, that the daughter's care is more expected but less appreciated, and the son's support is more valued but less expected (Ishiyama 1984, 11).

Expected Living Arrangement

Although most informants say they would live with a child if it were absolutely necessary, most did not mention this option as the expected situation if they actually became disabled and were alone. In fact, only five said they would probably live with a child under those circumstances. As one informant summed up, "It's not that you don't want to go to your whatchimacall [referring to his children], but that's the last straw" (Informant #117).

The majority of informants thought that if they were disabled and alone they would be institutionalized. Thirteen said they would probably live in a nursing home, a veteran's home, a convalescent hospital, or an old folks home. Three thought they would remain at home with extra services, one said she would probably live with another relative, and two did not know what would happen.

Nisei Aging Dilemmas

This issue of care is one that is in the forefront of any discussion about Nisei aging. Those attending the Japanese American Citizens League's "Nisei Retirement Planning Conference" in 1976 were already discussing the matter. Comments from that conference help to illuminate caregiving issues:

> As a Nisei, I don't depend on my children because I have seen Issei wanting to depend on them (the Nisei) and the children did not come through and they were disappointed. I think I don't want to go through that. If they want to help, fine, but do not depend on your children (Japanese American Citizens League 1976, 42).

My informants do not mention probable disappointments from filial neglect. Instead, they frequently said they do not want to be a burden to their children. For example,

> I told my children if I ever get to that point [disabled and alone], I told them to put me in a home. I don't want to be a burden to them, you know, because they have their own family . . . . Well, I told my children to put me in a nursing home, you know. I think a lot of people don't want to, but I don't want to be a burden on my children. (Informant #104).

The theme of not wanting to be a burden is voiced by another informant. However, she has not told her children to institutionalize her. She hopes they will be able to work out some mutually agreeable solution for parental care in frail old age.

> But I just hope that my kids will work with us to find us a situation that will be good for both of us. That's probably a daydream a little bit, but does that mean we're fantasizing? . . . But I think, really think most of us do not want our

> children to be burdened. Many of us had our own parents. Some have very trying experiences (Informant #121).

What is striking about these comments is that filial care for the Nisei is not presumed. Nisei do not want to be a burden nor do they want to be disappointed by having unmet expectations for care. They want to remain independent financially and residentially from their children (clearly core American values) and they want to keep strong emotional bonds between the generations. Even if they become disabled and widowed, they say they do not want to burden their children. Under such circumstances, most say they expect to be institutionalized. At best, they may hope to negotiate a mutually agreeable "treatment plan" with their children. What was filial <u>duty</u> in frail old age for the Issei/Nisei family becomes only an unvoiced and unpresumed possibility in the Nisei/Sansei family.

I believe what underlies this change is a shift in perceptions about families. Nisei view their procreative family as tending toward the American type. That is, Nisei/Sansei families should be tied together by bonds of love. From the aging Nisei parent's perspective, they love their children enough to spare them from the burden of filial care. However, by casting their fate in old age to an American model of the family as a unit that shares love, they also run the risk of growing old in the same way as

other Americans. And as argued in an earlier section of this chapter, American images of aging are negative.

The American model of aging holds for the Nisei the fearsome specter of being abandoned. I suspect that Nisei have no accurate notion of the amount of family care provided by Euro-American families to aged, frail elders. I suspect that Nisei, like other Americans, overestimate the rate of institutionalization for the elderly public. Nisei probably share with others many of the negative stereotypes about American old age and too readily assume that the elderly are dumped in nursing homes.

One Nisei informant whose incontinent Issei mother was placed in a convalescent hospital after she broke her hip, became bed bound, and suffered from Achilles tendon contracture, described the horrors of nursing homes.

> Finally, we couldn't handle her. You know they're dead weight. And so it's always the potty. And then . . . when you're in the hospital or anyplace, when you've got to go, you've got to go. And the potty's not there. You wet the bed. Therefore you're diapered. And then when you get wet, you've got to change them. The nurses and the helpers get so mad. The whole convalescent situation are (sic) terrible. What's in the paper, I believe every bit that they're saying . . . . And they [patients] get slapped black and blue. And they'll say, 'They hit me.' And I couldn't believe it at first. But now I'm not the only one. I was afraid to, I was ashamed to say it, to tell everybody that that was happening. And you read it in the papers, see... [So it happened to your mom?] Yeah, she had a black eye . . . . So I went and told the head nurse and everything. And when you report it, it gets worse (Informant #107).

In part, the reason that the issue of filial care looms so large in discussions of Nisei aging is that American old age clearly differs from Japanese old age or even Issei old age. And by confronting what it means to be growing old as a Nisei means that my informants once again have to negotiate what it means to be ethnic, to be Japanese American.

At this point, I see two concurrent, plausible strategies for Nisei care in frail old age. One is rooted in the family, the other is based in the ethnic community. The family model, predicated on the Nisei/Sansei family as a unit which shares love, suggests that Sansei caregiver norms will be based on cognatic love (the love of parent, child, and sibling). This motivation for caregiving allows both generations to keep intact their concept of the procreative family as a group that shares love. This is how I interpret the following comment made by a Nisei attending the Nisei Retirement Planning Conference, "We don't trust our kids to love us enough to want to do things for us" (Japanese American Citizens League 1976, 42),

A Sansei attendee at the same conference offers the younger generation's perspective.

> I would like my parents to tell me what they want but at the same time I don't expect that. I think it's difficult for them to say, 'I wish to live with you or whatever,' so I want my home open to them. But at the same time--let us do it in whatever way we can. My father shows affection

> but won't take it back (Japanese American Citizens League 1976, 42).

This Sansei speaker clearly views caring for his parents as an outcome of affective bonds. He demonstrates his love by keeping his home open to his parents and would like his father to receive his love by accepting filial care.

The second model looks to the ethnic community to provide social services which will meet the needs of frail, aged Nisei. Japanese American social services agencies, special housing for community dwelling elderly, residential care facilities, and nursing homes exist in every area with high concentrations of Japanese Americans. Many of these services were designed to meet the special cultural and linguistic needs of the Issei. However, now that they are in place, they can respond to Nisei/Sansei family needs.

The Seattle researchers on the Nisei Aging Project (Leonetti 1983) found few difference between those Nisei who, if they became disabled and had no spouse, expected to live with a child and those who expected to go to a Japanese American nursing home. These subjects are described as

> seek(ing) a protected and comfortable atmosphere within a Nikkei (Japanese American) world of family or Nikkei nursing home, a place where one does not have to 'explain oneself' to others, where a lifetime of experiences and understanding are shared and cherished with others (Leonetti 1983, 32).

Perhaps, then, the ethnic community has assumed some of the former duties of families. Care for frail, elderly parents was first the responsibility of the successor-son and his wife, then the joint duty of the Nisei sibset, and now ethnic community services play an increasing role in caring for the aged. Although family and ethnic norms for care in frail old age for the Nisei are still being worked out, it is clear that aging dilemmas exist. One way that this type of uncertainty can be examined is to look at symbolic expressions of the predicament of Nisei aging. This is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday parties, bingo, and crafts are the ubiquitous backbone of "social programs" for the elderly in America. The implicit purpose of such activities is usually to relieve the loneliness and boredom for which old people are assumed to be at risk. However, the "BBCs" as these activities are sometimes pejoratively labelled, may be uninteresting or even infantilizing for the more independent elderly. Nevertheless, societies use age as an organizing principle and mark its passing. Birthday celebrations are one way that social and chronological age is noted.

In this chapter I explore ways in which birthday celebrations can be meaning laden and meaning creating. Instead of being trivial, they may serve to affirm social ties, express cultural dilemmas, and realign intergenerational relations. I will show how late life birthday parties express the cultural content of ethnicity, the system of meaning and values held by Issei and Nisei. To do this, first I contrast seemingly similar events, a group birthday celebration at a Japanese American seniors club and one at a non-ethnic service setting for the aged. Next, I

examine how birthday celebrations and other life cycle ceremonies in the Japanese American community reflect processes of change and give expression to the adaptation of the culture of origin to a new sociocultural milieu. Then I return to the culture of origin and examine issues of social change and cultural content by comparing the Japanese kanreki, a traditional rite of passage to elderhood at age 60, with the 60th birthday celebration of the Nisei. And finally I discuss an old age celebration at age 88 for Issei and compare this with the Nisei 60th birthday.

Group Birthday Celebrations for the Elderly

In the last chapter I discussed the social and cultural contexts of Nisei aging. One of the most important dimensions of identity for my informants is ethnicity. Upon reading a Nisei informant's description of a monthly group birthday celebration at a Japanese American senior club and one provided by Colson (1977) of the same sort of event at a non-ethnic site, I was struck by just how strongly cultural dimensions of Japanese American ethnicity are evident in even the patterned social interaction of a senior center group birthday.

The Japanese American Senior Club

The Japanese American senior club was formed in the mid 1950s to provide social activities for aging Issei. Its founder was an energetic Nisei woman who started one of the

first programs for Japanese American seniors in the area. About twenty years later, a separate social service agency was developed staffed by Japanese American professionals to serve the same population in the same locale. The two organizations have a tacit working arrangement in serving the local Japanese American elderly.

The Japanese American senior club meets once a week in a facility run by the city's Department of Parks and Recreation. Now the club attracts the last of the Issei cohort and a handful of Nisei. On a typical Wednesday, about 60 seniors participate. They come for a half day of cultural activities that include minyo (Japanese folk singing), karaoke (a sing-along of Japanese popular tunes to an instrumental tape), odori (Japanese dancing), shiatsu (massage), trips, bingo, and lunch. Classes are taught by club members and the lunch is prepared by the Japanese American social service agency. Many of the senior club members see each other at the social service agency's lunch program on other days of the week. Non-seniors and non-Japanese Americans have a minimal role in the club. Age, ethnic homogeneity, and generation are highlighted here.

According to my informant, collective birthday parties are held at the senior club on the last Wednesday of the month. He reports that this is a special occasion for everyone when

> They honor people born in that month. And that day we have outside entertainment come in, ...

> Normally see, . . . in other words, (Center A) is actually a membership thing, you know. And people from outside come in there to entertain us, see, on the birthday, and so we have a special program (Informant #106).

Although all the seniors enjoy the special entertainment, this day differs markedly for the celebrant in several ways.

> they also get a cake and now . . . they have a free lunch that day. And special service that day, . . . Well, see, normal day you have to, it's like a buffet but you have to go up to the table and pick up your own plate, you know. But on that day, you're honored, and you sit there and a volunteer brings it (Informant #106).

In addition to the cake, free lunch and special service, all celebrants receive "some kind of present, you know. Of course, [it's the] same for everybody for whole year" These are ways in which the club honors the birthday people.

Gift giving is a major theme in both Japanese culture and Japanese American culture (Befu 1974; Dore 1967; Johnson 1977). This type of exchange helps to maintain reciprocity and bind social relations.

Likewise, the honorees mark the occasion and balance what they have received with a donation. According to the same informant, "They normally donate. Normally they donate whatever they could afford, you know." Donations not only balance the relationship between the senior and the club but also affirm one's membership and active role in the group.

Donating to the groups one belongs to has a long history in the Japanese American community. According to another informant, benefit movies were lucrative fundraisers for churches in the prewar years. At these events,

> they would write out in Japanese the donor's name . . . . And the larger the amount of donation, the larger the, what do you call it, streamer . . . . They don't put the amount, but usually you could tell by the size of the sign about how much was donated by that person. Now, the reason for that is if they did not put out the name tags or whatever, the donation, believe it or not, becomes half. Uh huh. People like to say, 'Hey, I donated $100.' Get their big name up there. But if they decide, uh, next movie we're not going to put up any names, it will be half (Informant #103).

The Japanese American senior club does not hang streamers marking the different levels of contributions. Instead, up until recently, a public announcement of each donation was made. However, when the club leadership changed, new rules went into effect. Now, contributions are not announced individually and a donation ceiling has been set at $25.00. The reason for the change is spelled out as follows:

> Yeah, before, you know, it would be, get up to $50 or $100, you know. And (X) used to announce that, see. And when they had a meeting, I thought they shouldn't have any, any limit, you know. But then . . . , because people couldn't afford it or didn't want to, don't have to thing, you know. If you want it, but it should be kept to under $50, you know. But Mrs. (Z), she said she wants $25 and she thinks she has to have $25, so they settled that way, you know (Informant #106).

This change reflects both structural and cultural aspects of the life circumstances of elderly Japanese Americans. Despite general perceptions of solid middle class status for most Japanese Americans, many Issei and a growing number of Nisei must carefully limit their spending. Donations, membership fees, contributions to Japanese American politicians, tickets to fundraising events, koden (monetary donations at funerals), and even subscriptions to the local ethnic newspaper strain the budgets of many retired Issei and Nisei. However, this type of giving is not optional for full participation in the ethnic community. It is in this light that one should interpret Mrs. Z's insistence about limiting the donation. She "wants $25 and thinks she has to have $25." Mrs. Z wants to participate fully which means giving the entire $25. For her, placing a limit on the birthday donation reduces competition and inequality among club members and ensures harmonious interpersonal relationships. Therefore, other club members acceded to her demand.

The group birthday party reflects another aspect of Japanese American culture. Group celebrations of aging have strong cultural antecedents in the Meiji era Japan of the Issei's youth. Then and up until the post WWII years, everyone in Japan became a year older on January 1st. Aging as a social phenomenon happened collectively and had nothing

to do with the chronological particular of one's actual birth date.

Birthday Wednesdays are clearly out of the ordinary meeting days for the Issei and Nisei seniors. Collectively, the celebrants are honored, entertained, and presented with gifts and special service. In return, they balance their obligation for what they have received with their monetary donation and reaffirm their commitment to a group whose members are lifelong intimates. The senior club offers opportunities for companionship and the type of social productivity that comes with building and nurturing human relationships.

The Bay Senior Center

In contrast, at the non-ethnic senior center described by Colson (1977), the monthly birthday party is a vehicle for community formation among a clientele of strangers. As in the Japanese American case, seniors at the San Francisco Bay Center attend classes and eat lunch at the site. But, unlike the Issei and Nisei who share history, biography, culture, and perhaps even kinship, the Bay Center seniors initially share only age and the tentative status of elder.

The Bay Center celebration differs considerably from the ethnic one. There is no free lunch, waited service, or gift from the Bay Center; likewise, there is no monetary donation from the celebrant. Instead, the Center marks the

event first bureaucratically, by sending special invitations to all those on their roll who have a birthday that month.

According to Colson, all celebrants sit at special tables placed in a horseshoe arrangement. The performative aspects that form the core of the ritual are as follows: a short music program, verbal introductions of each birthday person by the recreation director, applause for each honoree and then for the group as a whole. Colson says, "With this the ritual was completed and those who wanted to leave did so" (1977, p. 194). Ice cream, cookies, and coffee were served to the birthday people and to those who remained. And finally, some stayed for dancing after the tables were cleared.

> The elements stressed overtly in the ritual include the following: membership in the Center, the Center's appreciation of each member, the values of elderhood and so of age, the enduring values of masculinity and femininity, and the existence of individuality signalled by recognition of birthday, name, and early residence. These provide the common denominator that merge participants as a category and at the same time recognize their continued existence as individuals. All else that goes to make up personality and status was ignored. Indeed, it was not only ignored but was positively tabooed within the context of the ritual. Several speakers who began to give their year of birth or their age in years were quickly hushed by the Director who allowed participants no chance to compare relative ages and so deemphasize their common seniority. On the other hand several who found a way to stress pride in age won approval from both Director and their fellows (Colson 1977, 194).

Colson's analysis shows that the communal birthday party collapses the status system into the broad and inclusive category of elder. Then it elevates elderhood into a proud achievement shared equally by all Center members and celebrates this consciously created community. And finally, the birthday recognizes the elders "continued existence as individuals" (Colson 1977, 194).

Group Birthdays and Senior Centers: Social Context and Cultural Content

Although the group birthday party format at the two senior centers has shared elements as patterned social interaction, the events represent distinct frameworks of meaning. The efficacy of the Bay Center birthday party rests upon developing community, creating the social status of elder, and claiming the continued worth of each individual. In contrast, the Japanese American senior club members are already part of an ethnic community. The group birthday is yet another instance of affirming deep rooted and long standing connections.

Although there is blatant cultural content in programming activities such as minyo (Japanese folk singing) and shiatsu (Japanese massage) for the Japanese American seniors, there is an equally important though initially more obscure cultural dimension to these activities. Kiefer (1974a) found that among the Issei, recreational activities such as flower arranging and tea ceremony had social

productivity as their goal. These activities were also generative because they helped to pass on important meanings and values to the next generation.

Among the seniors at the Bay Center, classes, trips, and games occupy the time and energy previously devoted to work. French class, bridge, or currents events are done for individual enjoyment and recreation and lack the social productivity or the generative qualities of the Japanese American senior club programs.

The locus of activity also differs greatly between the two groups. The Japanese American club is a grassroots, informal organization created in response to an indigenously recognized need for senior activities. The club looms inviolable as the pioneering organization for the elderly in the ethnic community. For many Issei club members, senior programs which developed later at other sites claim only secondary allegiance. However, for a few, loyalties are strained between this original club and later service based organizations for the ethnic elderly.

In contrast, because the Bay Center is not anchored in any discernible community its members are at first strangers to one another. They are brought together episodically in a limited setting for a specific purpose. Conflicting affiliation is a moot point in the non-ethnic setting.

Where the Japanese American senior club is functionally diffuse serving many functions for the participants, the Bay

Center is specific. And while the birthday party for the ethnic seniors marks continued membership and affirms long standing ties among friends, the group birthday celebration at the Bay Center initiates relationships and creates the community of elders. The party in the ethnic setting conserves, preserves, and maintains; in the non-ethnic one it creates, manufactures, and constructs.

Adaptation and Change in Ritual

Because this chapter focuses on contemporary age based rituals in the Japanese American community, it does not address the effects of the process of social change on rituals except in the broadest of terms. However, it is important to trace changes that have occurred in the form, symbols, messages, and the manner social relationships are affected in ritual. The previous section illustrates how cultural elements reflecting Japanese American ethnicity are given expression in group birthday celebrations at a senior center. Here I trace major changes in Japanese American ritual and festivities that occurred during the childhoods of most of my informants.

Much of this section is based on Radin's (1946b) report of a 1934 survey of festivities among Japanese Americans in Oakland and Berkeley. His study serves as a baseline for understanding the kinds of rituals and ceremonies that were imported and adapted during the first third of this century.

In broad outline, Radin and his associate found that life cycle rituals at birth, marriage, and death show major changes in America. Other holidays such as New Year's (January 1), Festival of the Dead (mid July), Girls' Day (March 3) and Boys' Day (May 5) show minimal change when compared to the same events in Japan. And finally, certain Japanese holidays such as the Festival of the Weaver (July 7) and the death of the first Emperor Jimmu Tenno (April 3) were completely discarded by the Japanese in America. Here the analysis pays close attention to age and early life cycle rituals.

This early survey reveals three important trends in age based celebrations. First, in the pre-WW II era natal day events had little social significance in Japan or America. Second, childhood celebrations such as Girls' and Boys' Day were observed by the young Issei family. And third, the importance of festivals for children reflects the development of the Japanese American family and ethnic community. Each point deserves further elaboration and is supported by informants' comments.

In Japan, according to Radin individual birthday celebrations were "not a matter of any great importance, and birthdays are not much observed except by the eating of red bean rice on that day" (Radin 1946b, 154). The same absence of birthday celebrations marked the childhood of most Nisei.

As central as birthday parties seem among contemporary Japanese American celebrations, this was not always the case. It appears that in their own childhood, most Nisei did not have birthday parties. Economic factors weighed heavily as Wada (1987) attests. Like other Nisei who were children during the Great Depression, "Christmas for the Buddhist Wada family and my birthday meant a couple of apples and oranges" (Wada 1987, 7-8). Spontaneous comments offered by informants confirm this absence of birthday celebrations during childhood. One of the youngest informants, a 59 year male old said, "I don't remember having a birthday party. Issei's didn't have too many birthdays for children."

Another informant agrees:

> Well, we weren't big on birthdays, our family. We didn't . . . . I can't remember birthday parties as a matter of fact, ever. My mother was a pretty traditional Japanese and, as a matter of fact, I don't remember but maybe two birthday parties I've been to when I was a child. It wasn't a big thing, birthdays. I don't think the Issei knew (Informant #114).

One of the birthdays that she remembers was given by an Issei father who was a professional chef. He prepared a whole turkey for eight hungry Nisei teenaged girls who did not eat as much as they wanted because they were culturally constrained by <u>enryo</u> (to defer, hold back) behavior. The second birthday was an anomaly too. It was given for a cousin whose mother was an invalid. The same informant

reports: "So her sisters gave it . . . . it wasn't an Issei organized birthday, it was a typical American kind." Implicit in this statement is that birthday parties were not part of the "traditional Japanese" Issei world; they belong to the American world of the Nisei.

Radin's (1946b) survey found that Girls' Day (March 3) and Boys' Day (May 5) were celebrated by the Japanese in America with nearly the same enthusiasm as in the country of origin. Since these are holidays for children, their observance in America reflects fluctuations in the Issei family cycle. Before 1910 when there were few Japanese American families or stores to sell the necessary dolls, paper carp and other paraphernalia, the occasions passed unnoticed. However, from about 1915-25, Girls' and Boys' Day were gala events for Nisei children. From the late 1920s to the time of Radin's survey in the mid 1930s, these children' festivals waned both because of the financial depression and because "the young children were becoming too old to feel ecstatic on these festival days" (Radin 1946b, 170).

Another informant not only supports the previous claims about the absence of birthday observances for Nisei children, but also says that in her childhood group celebrations such as Girls' Day were the norm.

> No, no birthdays were not a big thing. It was New Year's and the more Japanese holidays like Boys' Day and Girls' Day. We used to put up the ohinasama (Japanese dolls), that stuff, and uh,

> the birthdays themselves were not that big. But that was when we did it (Informant #120). She goes on to elaborate that
>
> rather than the individual, it's the group so everybody celebrates those big things at the same time and, you know, but not birthdays. In fact, it was common for parents to forget when your birth date was. Was it this day or that day? Or whatever (Informant #120).

The comments of these informants stand in stark contrast to Joya's (1958) highly sociocentric (and perhaps wildly romantic) description of Japanese birthday celebrations. "Traditional Japanese" Issei parents neglected this type of birthday commemoration too:

> The tanjobi is more than a birthday anniversary. On that day the people rejoice because of the good year just passed and hope for many happy and prosperous future years. Again they offer their gratitude to the gods for the care and attention given them in the past. At foreign birthday celebrations, the parents receive little consideration, for the party is solely in honor of the one whose anniversary is being celebrated. At tanjobi celebrations, however, gratitude to one's parents for their loving care, and joy that they are still alive are emphasized by the celebrants. Therefore, in some districts birthday celebrations are held only while the parents are alive, and, when the fathers and mothers have died, they cease, since those who were the cause of the celebrations are no more.
>
> Since more meaning is attached to the tanjobi while the parents are alive, the celebration is more elaborate in the case of babies and children. The first tanjobi of a baby is made a great occasion. Feasting and festivity in all families, however poor, is the rule of the day. Toys and other presents are given to the baby by friends of the family, but the custom of giving birthday presents is not as common in Japan as it is in other countries. Feasting is the more important feature of the occasion.

> On each succeeding birthday, the child is taught to have love for its parents and to feel gratitude for their care (Joya 1958, 104).

Joya's description of the tanjobi celebration has as its focus the expression of gratitude from child to parent. It highlights both the parent/child relationship and the affective dimension of thanks for the loving care received and joy that one's parents are alive. The tanjobi seems to be absent from both the Nisei understanding and celebration of birthdays. Issei parents did not remember one's natal day. And perhaps the Nisei missed learning this kind of gratitude that forms the emotional motivation for the tanjobi because they did not have the socializing influence of grandparents. Birthdays then, for the Nisei, are not only explicitly American and non-Issei, but also they are not Japanese tanjobi type celebrations. Birthdays are personal holidays commemorating the individual's own history. While few of my informants had birthday parties as children, all report celebrations now for their children and grandchildren.

Earlier in their procreative family cycle, Nisei siblings held family wide birthday parties for Sansei offspring.

> We used to get really . . . tied down with my husband's family affairs. Oh, when we first got married, that was our whole social life. Mother's Day, Father's Day, birthdays. All the birthdays of the nieces and nephews. That, that just went on a couple times a month, all year (Informant #114).

Nisei aunts and uncles typically acknowledged their nieces' and nephews' birthdays with gifts when the children were small. Now though, according to two different informants these practices have stopped because the kin group is too large and the children are too old.

> We cut out all that stuff, you know. I mean what can you buy them? So, we don't do it. All my nieces, nephews and everybody, they're all, you know, they're either married or they're going to college. It's too big now (Informant #116).

> I think youngsters, up 'til they're about 21 or so, they look forward to little gifts, little special gifts (Informant #120).

Even for their adult Sansei children's birthdays, celebrations are now limited to getting together for dinner either at home or at a restaurant. Birthdays for Yonsei (fourth generation) grandchildren though neatly follow the elaborate activity based guidelines set out by Emily Post (1984) in her description of children's parties. Grandchildren's parties may be so child focussed, "fun filled", and commercialized that they exclude the Nisei grandparents as is seen in the following comment:

> And it's getting to the point where, you know, the kids are older and they have their own friends and they go to a movie or something and they go, like uh, to these pizza joints, or, you know, Mc Donald's or some place and they have their own friends, so, lot of times, sometimes we don't go. We just take the presents. And maybe later they might have cake at home (Informant #104).

Within the Nisei's lifetime, American style birthday parties have been adopted as the way to mark the passing of

another year. In childhood, my birthdays parties or those for siblings and cousins took place at home among friends and family. The celebration featured cake, candles, birthday wishes and spanks, presents, birthday cards and invitations, balloons, special paper tablecloths, plates, napkins, and decorations, games such as Pin the Tail on the Donkey, and a rousing chorus of "Happy Birthday to You" before the birthday girl or boy blew out the candles. Children wore party clothes for these occasions, dresses with petticoats and black patent leather shoes for the girls and slacks, shirt and bow ties or suits for the boys. Same age guests and their siblings came accompanied by their parents (our aunts, uncles, and parents' friends) who also stayed for the party.

Like other young-old Americans, the Nisei have witnessed increased elaboration, commercialization, and standardization of children's birthday parties. This trend continues. Now birthday parties for grandchildren take place at fast food restaurants, amusement parks, and video arcades. Hired entertainers such as clowns or magicians may perform at parties held in the home. Children's birthday parties are increasingly for the child and his friends only --to the exclusion of extended family members. These trends reflect both the acculturation of the Nisei and succeeding generations and the growing affluence of Japanese Americans and society generally.

So far in this chapter, I have shown how group birthday parties express shared meanings, norms, and values among celebrants at senior centers. Then I traced the incorporation of American style birthday parties into the Japanese American celebration cycle. In the next section I examine the transformation of a life cycle ritual the Japanese age 60 celebration called kanreki, from a rite of passage in the culture of origin to an American style birthday and a rite of solidarity in the ethnic community.

In order to understand how the Nisei 60th birthday differs from the kanreki, I discuss the Japanese rite of passage first in the culture of origin and then in the Japanese American ethnic setting. The kanreki is one of several age related celebrations which set off various stages in life in premodern Japan.

Life Cycle Rituals in Traditional Japan

In the traditional Japanese life cycle, early age related celebrations occurred in infancy and childhood. They marked the introduction of the child to the gods and society. At about one month, the newborn becomes a parishioner at the local Shinto shrine. Subsequent age related visits are made on November 15th by all three, five, and seven year olds to seek protection from the shrine deity. In premodern times, the child was not officially

listed in the family register until he survived to age seven.

The next transition comes at age 13 when boys and girls and their parents visit a shrine or temple to pray for wisdom. This visit is made on March 13th. In traditional society, one reached adulthood at age 13. As adults, they contributed labor on communal projects and were eligible for marriage.

Maturity lasted roughly until age 60 but was marked by critical ages when one was especially vulnerable to misfortune or even death. These are the yakudoshi or calamitous ages. The most important occurs at age 33 for women and 42 for men. During the yakudoshi, men and women were advised to postpone new ventures, avoid travel, and to take special care of their health.

The calamitous years differ for women and men. Kiefer (1974a) speculates that these ages are socially significant and may represent average ages when important family cycle events occurred. In premodern times, at about age 33 a woman had her last child and at about age 42 a man's oldest child reached puberty.

The yakudoshi of the middle years are inauspicious and full of danger. In contrast, age 60 is also a yakudoshi, but one that is joyous and celebrated. This age, and additional "old age" celebrations at 70, 77, 88, and 99 are all felicitous occasions.

The age 60 celebration is called either kanreki or honke gaeri. Both literally mean "return to origins." Age 60 represents one complete cycle of the 12 animals and 5 elements of the zodiac and marks the beginning of old age. One is "reborn" by returning to the animal and element combination of the zodiac under which one was born.

In premodern times, the kanreki was a status passage to old age primarily for males. The 60 year old man "retired" from active work and from the responsibilities of household representation and management. His successor, typically the oldest son, assumed control of the family enterprise and took care of his parents in their old age. The retiree's wife's responsibilities declined along with his. Traditionally, she passed the rice paddle to her son's wife to symbolize the transfer of responsibility for the internal management of household affairs. The retired couple were then referred to as inkyo which literally means "in seclusion." They provided important incremental labor by babysitting, doing chores, and helping with the family enterprise. In low productivity activities such as farming these extra hands were invaluable.

Kanreki celebrations formally heralded the transition to old age. Celebratory feasts were given to mark the occasion. The retiree wears red undergarments (Embree 1939), a red kimono (Plath 1972), or a red kimono, cap and socks (Joya 1958). Red is a festive and lucky color and one

associated with youth. Because one is reborn with the kanreki, one symbolically returns to childhood when he dresses in these special clothes.

After age 60, men and women have increased social freedom. They are no longer bound by the what Plath calls the "somber duties of middle-adulthood" (Plath 1972, 147). The new freedom includes swearing, sexual joking, and lewd dancing.

Children and grandchildren host kanreki festivities for the senior generation. The occasion is an expression of gratitude to one's parents. It is also an occasion to honor the celebrant and congratulate him for his longevity. He has survived to old age, a major accomplishment in premodern societies. Other family members and friends attend the party and offer best wishes for his new life.

Because age 60 also marks one of the calamitous yakudoshi years, rituals may include efforts to avoid or dispel misfortune. The 60 year old may visit Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples to pray and make offerings. The elaborate banquet itself is an attempt to dispel misfortune and bad luck is held at bay with Chinese "good luck" characters used as decorations.

In the traditional Japanese setting, the kanreki is a status passage to old age; it signals retirement; and it is a yakudoshi or calamitous age. In essence, it is an age transition and a role transition (Nydegger 1986). As an age

transition, the kanreki transforms social status by moving the 60 year old into old age solely with this chronological attainment. As a role transition, the 60 year old transfers occupational and headship responsibilities to his successor son. These transitions occur simultaneously. In the Japanese American setting, many of the explicit symbols have been retained but the celebration has taken on different meanings.

The Sixtieth Birthday in the Japanese American Setting

In contrast to the premodern Japanese culture of origin, special age related celebrations for the Nisei occur primarily in old age. Neither the childhood shrine visits nor the age 13 transition to adulthood occurred among my informants. The middle aged yakudoshi are also missing from the Japanese American sociocultural construct.

Because the majority of Nisei are young old, under 75, I did not examine any of the traditional Japanese "old age" birthdays among this second generation cohort except for the kanreki. Other researchers (Kendis 1989; Kiefer 1990) have noted the occurrence of special old age celebrations in the Japanese American community over the past 20 years. Among the informants in this study, eight of 15 who had an Issei parent surviving to his or her late 80's hosted a special celebration marking age 88.

In his study of aging among Issei, Kibei Nisei, and Nisei, Kendis (1989) reports that special birthday and anniversary celebrations are given by adult children for aging parents. He describes these events as expressions of gratitude and honor. Special parties are typically hosted for 25th, 40th, and 50th wedding anniversaries or on

> particular birthdays which traditionally were considered important (kanreki-60-which celebrated transition to old age; koki-70-'rare old age', kiju-77-'age which everybody enjoys', and beyiju-88-the character for which looked like the character for the word 'rice', a symbol of longevity). Frequently the children do not know the significance of these birthdays, but having heard that others have celebrated them, make the effort to arrange special celebrations. The parties are sometimes small, with 'only' 20 or 30 family members and friends being taken out to dinner by the children, and others are more elaborate (and expensive), with as many as 200 or more guests (Kendis 1989, 113-114).

These celebrations occur among my Nisei informants too. They are both hosts for the events while Issei parents are alive and honorees at events given by Sansei children. In contrast to Kendis' claim that adult children do not know the significance of these birthdays, many Nisei in my study can elaborate on the "traditional" meaning of the birthday celebrations. And now that nearly all Nisei have passed 60, they are familiar with the age 60 celebration and its symbols and significance. More importantly, these events have been transformed in the American setting to take on new meaning and significance which may be obscured in sample survey studies such as Kendis'.

Twenty one informants have passed their 60th birthday. Six men and three women had a special 60th birthday celebration. In addition, six spouses were given special parties. Although not every informant had this celebration, all have attended these parties for Nisei friends.

Symbols, Event, Significance, and Personnel

As in the traditional setting, the Nisei 60th birthday has many explicit symbols. All informants mentioned that the celebrant is supposed to wear special red clothing, often a sleeveless vest and red cap called chan chan ko, which are adult sized versions of baby clothing. The significance of both the color red (akai in Japanese) and type of garment is explained as follows:

> when you become 60, you're supposed to go back to a baby again. And baby in Japan, they call it aka-chan, see. So that whenever you wear, like in my case they gave me a red jacket, you know, vest, you know, and red hat. And starting new life again (Informant #106).

Two informants said that their husbands wore a red bib. In the first instance, the bib and coat are owned by her husband's family and loaned to family members for the special party. Here she describes the importance of the color and clothing:

> Oh, in Japan on the 60th birthday, they give the birthday person a red bib. It's supposed to, sixty is, was considered very old in Japan at one time. It just means a kind of return to childhood. So it's just a baby's bib, but it's red . . . . There is a ceremonial bib they sell in Japan, and people will send for it. And this baby's jacket . . . . And they pass it around the

> family every time there's a sixtieth (Informant #114).

In the second case, the husband wore a bib made from a red bandanna. She explains that the celebrants wear red because "when you reach that age, they're supposed to turn into second childhood so I think maybe you wear red." And this notion of second childhood is carried through with the bib, "That's why I think a lot of people make bibs, you know, because they're like a baby again." However, the color seems more important than the garment because other informants reported wearing a red jacket, sweat shirt, sweater, blouse, beanie, or golf cap.

The most detailed account of the celebration and the one closest to Japanese ethnographic descriptions was given by the oldest female informant, a Kibei Nisei. This 78 year old widow had been married to an Issei man. She and her daughters hosted a party for him at age 61 and she alone of all informants used the Japanese phrase, calling it a kanreki iwai.

> Well, I did it for my husband's 61st. They call it kanreki iwai or something . . . . That's the 61st birthday and I don't know if the ladies do it, that I don't know. But we did it for my husband. (What does kanreki iwai mean?) I don't know exactly. It's something pertaining to the years, ne. Anno, but I don't know exactly. That's more or less the turning point of your life, yes. Well, many people retires at that age. And then . . . sometimes people go down in their health and life style. But I don't know exactly. I look it up so I can know exactly. (So what do you do on the special 61st birthday?) Well, . . . for my husband what we did was we had a party with relatives and very close friends. And we made a

> little red hat and red ties because I didn't know how to make that little red jacket, so. And that's how we did it. We have a picture at home. (Uh huh. So why was it red?) Well, that's what they say. It's more or less going down to, going back to childhood, ne. Starting up, so they use red (Informant #111).

The yakudoshi unlucky year aspect of the 60th was alluded to by only one informant. She said that she did not have a special party for her husband because "I'm not too Japanese cultured" and went on to elaborate that "I know that you're supposed to do it so that he will live longer or something" (Informant #101).

Guests bring gifts to the celebrant. Again, the norm is to give red items such as clothing. One male informant said, "It's a Japanese custom to give something red on your 60th birthday. So we've given other people red shirts or red sweaters or red caps or whatever, you know" (Informant #124). A gift of money is also appropriate, though mentioned by only two informants.

Gifts are expected at a birthday party and so are the cake and candles which are part of the Nisei celebration. For nearly all informants, the cake was a typical layered frosted one purchased at a bakery. However, there can be variation as reported by one informant. She describes "a 60th birthday that was, I think, untypical. The husband of my friend who is very popular in his group. They had (laughs) a cake with a nude inside" (Informant #114). The nude popped out much to the celebrant's delight.

Only one informant had no cake. His case is interesting because he alone insists it is not a birthday party. During the interview, I consistently referred to the age 60 and 88 events as "birthdays" or "birthday parties." When asked if he had a cake at his party, he replied:

> No. It was a typical Japanese type of thing, you know. I don't think I had a cake that day. I don't remember. It's not a birthday, you know. It's one of those, uh, I guess on that 60th year, some time in line, they celebrate that thing, you know.

And when I asked if the party was held on or near his birthday, he said:

> I think it was close to my birthday. Maybe they meant it for a birthday. I don't know, you know. Maybe you ought to find out.

His insistence that these parties are not birthdays continued when I asked if they sang "Happy Birthday to You" at the 88th event for his mother. They did not sing.

> Well uh, they're celebrating their 88th. So . . . 88 could be the birthday, so you know, so it is a birthday, I guess . . . . I guess if you're doing a birthday, it becomes a birthday. But you might do it after the birthday or before the birthday. It all depends on how convenient it is, you know (Informant #106).

For all others though, the party reaches its climax with the cake, candles, and the singing of "Happy Birthday to You."

Often 1,000 red paper origami cranes will be displayed as another explicit symbol of the celebration. These birds presented in such quantity are symbols of longevity and good

fortune. All of the celebrant's offspring make at least one crane so that the finished product represents the children's and grandchildren's combined efforts. Origami cranes are featured at the 60th and other old age parties.

In a humorous newspaper essay, local Sansei columnist Delphine Hirasuna describes how her Auntie Sue and seven cousins on the Sasaki side folded 2,002 cranes for her parents' 50th wedding anniversary. Hirasuna admits that she and her siblings

> had a mental block against making 'da boids,' as we call them. They are festive and beautiful and symbolically caring, but to quote one of my sisters, 'Why can't we just buy them a platter with a crane on it or pay for their health insurance instead?' (Hirasuna 1989).

Here the practical though slightly off-centered attitude of the Sansei--paying for health insurance, buying a platter with a crane on it, and calling tsuru (cranes) by the partly Brooklynese, partly Hitchcockesque term 'da boids'--collides with the symbolic and the cranes prevail. Their importance is not just that they represent long life, good health, or fortune but that they signify human caring in the effort taken to fold and display multitudinous origami figures.

Most of the 60th celebrations reported by respondents were surprise parties. For example, one man describes his party as follows:

> (My) 60th birthday was sort of a surprise birthday party given by my children, my wife and friends. It was at one of my friend's home and it was quite a surprise . . . . Surprise right. I was supposed

> to go for dinner. I didn't expect a crowd to be there (Informant #103).

Family and friends go to great lengths to insure that the parties are indeed surprises. For example, in one instance the celebrant described these efforts as "a kind of conspiracy." Friends organized a day long fishing trip. When they got back home, "the house is full of people. Mrs. X and uh, she was there too. And uh, my brothers were there. That surprised the hell out of me . . . . I wasn't even thinking in terms of my birthday, you know" (Informant #115).

In addition to parties at home, the other typical site for the surprise birthday party is a Chinese or Japanese restaurant. Although Japanese food seems a natural choice, Chinese food is, according to the writer Hisaye Yamamoto, "the height of gourmandism, to be partaken of on special occasions, as after a wedding or a funeral" (Yamamoto 1988, 70). For Nisei, Chinese food ("China-meshi") is always Cantonese cuisine. Hosokawa (1969, 164) describes a typical feast: "There was nothing more pleasurable than stuffing oneself at a Chinese dinner--bean cake and pork, sweet and sour ribs, cold boiled chicken, shrimp chow mein, egg foo yung, rice, barbecued pork loin . . . ." A similar meal might be featured at the birthday dinner.

The party is hosted by the sexagenarian's children, though the celebrant's spouse helps with planning. One

informant says that by the parent's 60th birthday, "...most children would be out of school and hopefully able to spend a few bucks for the party." Another said that his children and wife threw the party. Then he laughed and said it was the children's idea, but the wife's money.

Two married but childless male informants had surprise 60th parties thrown by friends. Because the event is a birthday party and not an occasion to express gratitude to one's parents or one symbolizing a transfer of responsibility between generations, anyone, not just offspring can host it.

Again, the informant who insisted that the 60th celebration is not a birthday party offers a slightly different interpretation of the roles. He agrees that children host these parties. However, they do more than just host because they are supposed to "celebrate for us" or "supposed to do it for you." He emphasizes the passive role of being celebrated.

This is not what happens at all surprise parties. Instead, the celebrant is the sometimes unwilling center of attention. He may not always feel honored and some find it difficult to passively accept being celebrated. Two candid informants express their discomfort as follows: "I'm not too crazy about it, so I mean, you know . . . . I go along but that's about it" (Informant #115).

Another male informant who was the recipient of a surprise 60th birthday concurs.

> We're against a lot of birthday parties. She's [his wife] against it too. That's why we really didn't, we kept it very minimal. Not that I'm for it either. We don't mind giving the party but, I don't know, it's kind of embarrassing to have the party. (laughs) Some people really love it, you know (Informant #117).

Children, grandchildren, siblings, other relatives and friends typically attend the party. Some are lavish affairs with 50 to 100 guests. In part, the size of the crowd necessitates a public celebration in a restaurant. But also the formal nature of a restaurant banquet lends importance, honor, and solemnity to the occasion.

Nisei informants agree that this type of birthday is primarily for men. Only three female informants and the wife of another informant had a special 60th. In all cases, women's parties were much simpler than 60th celebrations for men. One of the female celebrants described her party as follows:

> Well, women they don't do so much. But my daughter did give me a party, you know a 60th party. And it was just family. My mother, my sister came up from Los Angeles. And so my daughter did have my 60th party. But it was just all family (Informant #104).

Another informant had a joint surprise birthday party with her brother-in-law. Each celebrant knew about the other's party and entered the restaurant expecting only to fete the other. Both were surprised to discover that they

were co-celebrants. Nevertheless, even at this joint celebration there was a gender distinction because my informant's brother-in-law wore a special red garment while she did not.

Others said that female 60th parties are "private" with "just the family" in attendance. Typically the woman is taken out for dinner. A common response as to why women do not have these special celebrations is that "Maybe they don't want to reveal their age" or "Women don't want to be reminded that they're 60. (laughs) They'd just as soon forget about that part."

However, men who had a 60th party apparently take no pride in reaching this age. The invidiousness of old age at 60 for Nisei is illustrated by the following comments: "After that, I'm trying to forget when my birthday is" (Informant #103) or "I don't want any more birthdays. I want to be like Jack Benny, 39" (Informant #115). Or referring to his 60th party, one man said, "It's traumatic. I had a little gathering at home. No red vest business. Don't remind me" (Informant #123)

The Nisei do not want to be reminded of their age. And they do not really believe the explicit Japanese message of the kanreki, that it is a calendrical rebirth, a return to childhood based on the zodiac. Although eight informants said that this birthday signals a second childhood or a turning point, a more typical interpretation of the event is

that "I guess, it's supposed to be when they reach 60, it's supposed to be going into second childhood, I think. But now 60, everybody is so young. It should be 70 or 80" (Informant #104).

The Nisei are young at 60. They are also still employed. Males, in this study, retired at a mean age of 65 while females retired at about 62. The Japanese American family differs considerably from the traditional Japanese stem family. None of my informants had a family business to pass on to a successor son and no informant chose to live with married adult children except under the most dire circumstances of ill health. Therefore, the occupational and family leadership aspects of retirement are absent from the Nisei celebration of the 60th birthday.

For numerous and diverse reasons, the Nisei feel themselves to be a cohort. And as a cohort, their awareness of being old comes in relation to their Issei parents and their Sansei children. Although only one informant has a living parent, all know and see very frail Issei who live in the ethnic community. While this handful of Issei survive, the Nisei are buffered from seeing themselves as the old ones.

In addition, many can deny their passage into the senior group of Japanese American because they are not grandparents yet. Although the average age of my informants is about 68, over half are not grandparents. Of these,

three never married, four are childless, and another six though parents are not yet grandparents. Therefore, many Nisei have reached their mid 60s without adding a family role typically associated with old age and the premodern Japanese family. The delayed parenthood of the Nisei's offspring contributes to the Nisei being off-schedule and therefore, "not old yet."

The Japanese American 60th birthday celebration differs from the kanreki in three major ways. It is relatively distinct from retirement; it is not a status passage to old age; and it has nothing to do with the idea of calamitous years. However, the kanreki form was culturally accessible to Nisei and Sansei because it broadly resembled American style birthday parties. Birthday parties provided a recognized and appropriate cultural opening for Japanese Americans to adapt this Japanese rite of passage. However, as the Nisei understand and practice the 60th birthday, it is not a rite of passage denoting a relatively structured late life but a rite of solidarity, a collective approach to the dilemma of growing older.

Rites of passage function in societies with relatively structured life stages and sequentially promote initiates and consociates through various age and role transitions. Rites of solidarity have as their focus creating and maintaining group ties. Because old age for the Nisei is still uncharted, the 60th birthday celebration is not a rite

of passage. As argued above, it does not usher in old age and it does not mark retirement. However, the event does provide a collective opportunity for the Nisei as a group to face growing older.

In the next section, I will discuss some of the implicit messages of the 60th birthday, how the celebration affects social relationships, and how it provides the promise of order to an unknown, and possibly chaotic future.

Form, Message, and Social Relationships

For most Nisei celebrants, the 60th birthday displayed many of the explicit symbols and messages that mark the event as a kanreki. Yet the Nisei clearly do not believe they have entered old age at 60 or worse yet a second childhood. However, given the prevalence of the event, the celebration takes place for reasons other than a vague social pressure to "keep up with the Tanakas."

Historical forces play a large part in determining whether events such as this Japanese American celebration of aging will occur. Issei parents did not have these special 60th birthday parties. When my informants' fathers were 60, many were in WWII relocation camps. Family life was in turmoil. Issei fathers were ignominiously stripped of power, status and prestige at home and had no authority in camp. They were forced into "retirement." And the Nisei by virtue of their citizenship were thrust into leadership roles. Informants report that it was neither the time nor

the place for a party. Or they say that their fathers turned 60 in the post war years when everyone was trying to get back on their feet and the Nisei offspring had no money for a party.

> I would guess that it was just right after the War. I just got out of the service. Frankly, I don't think financially the three of the children, my brother, sister, and I, financially I don't think we were in any position to give any parties (Informant #103).

External factors, internment and then resettlement, figure heavily in the absence of special 60th celebrations for Issei parents. Camp life was not conducive to family festivity nor was the money available in the post-camp years to pay for such an event. But the 60th birthdays did not occur for additional reasons--family relationships were in chaos. Rites of passage create new statuses, roles, and hierarchies. They realign relationships in a more or less stable social order. Family life for Issei men as they approached 60 was anything but ordered. Right relationships with Issei fathers leading families, businesses and communities had been destroyed. It was beyond the power of a mere 60th birthday party to reestablish the social order.

In addition, according to Kitagawa, during the internment Issei themselves no longer expected to retire in America. He reports that after about a year of camp life,

> the mental frame of reference of the Issei centered more and more on Japan as time went on. They appeared to be deliberately trying to forget what had happened to them in the immediate past and to look forward again to their retirement in

> Japan. The Issei had transferred themselves to a world of fantasy. Distant past and remote future became more real to them than the immediate past and the immediate future, or even the present (Kitagawa 1974, p. 107).

For those Issei who during the internment fantasized about retirement in Japan, a kanreki type celebration held in America would have been inappropriate and insulting. Such a party would also have been a cruel reminder about their present situation; they were imprisoned aliens growing old without respect, dignity, or honor. With few valued social roles, limited social standing, and the complete deterioration of human relationships, both intra- and extra-familial, their very humanity was called into question. In many ways their sense of self was obliterated by the camp experience so that kanreki celebrations were psychologically impossible.

However, now the Japanese American community has reestablished itself. Nisei/Sansei dyads have the economic resources, the ethnic pride, and the social stability to celebrate the 60th birthday with an explicitly Japanese overlay to the occasion.

Ethnicity is a resource to the Nisei in old age. Among my informants, friendship and kinship groups are overwhelmingly Japanese American. Organizational membership is also limited to the ethnic community. Even if in their middle years they lived and worked outside the ethnic community, clearly many will grow old with other Nisei. The

60th birthday party complete with traditional Japanese referents such as red vests, origami cranes, and the explicit message that the Nisei have entered a second childhood signals for many, a return to ethnic sources for their own aging.

However, I do not believe that Japanese American culture as it has developed for the American born second and third generations is simple mimicry of "things Japanese." Our culture may have roots in traditional Japan, but it is constantly being reworked to find its significance and meaning for life in America. The Issei life experiences and life course do not provide a viable model. Now the Nisei are searching for appropriate models for their own aging.

Ritual provides opportunities to examine the unknown, to address paradox and irony, and to make promises of order and predictability in the face of change and uncertainty. For most Nisei, old age is an uncharted segment of life. They know that their experiences will differ considerably from those of their Issei parents but they do not know how.

These dilemmas loom large. The search for order, meaning, and structure in later life was the impetus for a conference on Nisei aging sponsored by 14 Japanese American agencies serving the elderly. The two day meeting took place in 1988 with about 250 Nisei participating. The best attended workshop was one entitled "Bifocals and Life too--A

Dialogue with a Psychiatrist" and is described in the conference program as follows:

> Fears and illusions are part of the aging process. Here is an opportunity to examine both myths and facts about the physiology and psychology of growing older. An open discussion amongst kindred spirits can broaden our scope and allay our anxieties.

The dilemmas presented in this session succinctly outline some of the major problems that aging Nisei face. They have fears and illusions about aging; they know that growing older entails both physiological and psychological change; they know that they share many of the same anxieties about growing older; and they know that other Nisei are kindred spirits in ways that other aging Americans are not.

If one takes as a working definition that rituals are stories one tells oneself about oneself (paraphrasing Geertz 1973, 448), the 60th birthday presents several paradoxes and discontinuities facing aging Nisei. They are being celebrated with a Japanese ritual, yet they know they are not Japanese. They are being ushered into old age, yet they are not old yet. They provided care to aging Issei parents yet cannot expect and say they do not want the same from their children. And they will be old soon in an American setting that devalues the elderly. The 60th birthday celebration is a collective way of addressing these dilemmas.

Rituals help to realign social relationships of the celebrant and his consociates. The 60th birthday party is as much about the junior generation hosting the event as it is about the senior one. For that reason, another message of the 60th birthday celebration is that the Sansei have come of age. It is the children's social responsibility to host the party for their parents. While the birthday does not confer family or occupational leadership on the Sansei, it does begin to realign the parent/child relationship by having the younger generation take the lead. This lead may be largely symbolic and the older generation may pay for the party, but the Sansei are beginning to assume some responsibility in the ethnic social world in which they and their parents are aging. They are on the threshold of leadership in ethnic community activities, in establishing themselves in independent households, and perhaps in some matters pertaining to their family of orientation.

Since celebrants cannot host their own 60th birthday parties, they must rely upon others, principally offspring, to throw the party. In hosting the event, Sansei children are not only demonstrating their responsibility, but also declaring their dependability.

Many Nisei are afraid of future frailty; they do not want to be a burden to their children nor do they want to be abandoned in nursing homes. When Sansei children host a 60th party, an unspoken promise of predictability and order

is being made. The promise is that Nisei parents can depend upon Sansei children.

> It's a matter of trust. We're really saying we haven't done a very good job of bringing up kids when we say this. We don't trust our kids to love us enough to want to do things for us which we should. It's hard to accept things, to enjoy having our son driving us around or having our kids take us out to dinner. It's a matter of trust. You need confidence in yourself that you have done a good job of raising your children (Japanese American Citizens League and National Institute of Mental Health 1976, 42).

Just as for Nisei, late life is largely uncharted and the dilemmas are reflected in the 60th birthday, late life for the Issei has been relatively structured partly by having already been lived. It is also perceived as being more strongly determined by Japanese tradition. The 88th birthday for the Issei is an event that is less elaborate in explicit symbols but much more certain in its message. This is the topic of the next section.

The Issei 88th Birthday

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, eight of 15 Issei parents who survived to their late 80s had an 88th birthday celebration. Informants refer to this age as a "milestone." However, unlike the 60th birthday, few explicit symbols other than a birthday cake, gifts, and the singing of "Happy Birthday to You" are associated with the event. There are no gender distinctions in who celebrates

or how elaborate the party is and the occasion heralds no new status or role.

Traditional Japanese "old age" celebrations past age 60 were held at ages 70, 77, 88, and 99. Age 70 is called koki, or "rare old age." According to Joya (1958) and Linhart (1980), the significance of this age is attributed to a saying by the T'ang Dynasty Chinese poet Tu Fu who wrote that "Since ancient times, that age of seventy has always been rare in human life" (Joya 1958, 120). The double digit old age celebrations at 77, 88, and 99 are called the "age of joy", the "age of rice", and the "white age" respectively. The Chinese characters used to write the numbers become the source of visual puns that give the ages their labels. According to Palmore and Maeda (1985) the character for 77 is similar to that for "joy", the one for 88 is similar to the one for "rice", and "the character for white or purity has one less stroke than the character for one hundred and therefore can represent ninety-nine" (Palmore and Maeda 1985, 84). No Nisei informant referred to the 88th birthday as the "age of rice." Although Nisei informants have moderate proficiency understanding and speaking Japanese, few can read and even fewer can write the language. These referents to "joy", "rice", and "white" are all based on an ability to recognize the characters and make the appropriate visual associations.

Celebrations for the Issei 88th birthday differ considerably from the Nisei 60th. Many Issei are quite frail by the time they reach their late 80s. Recognizing this, adult children may hold the birthday a year earlier. For example, one informant describes her father's 87th birthday as follows:

> I know we celebrated my father's 87th and he died the following year. [It was held at] a Chinese restaurant in Japantown. They invited two of his very close friends, and one was, I don't know what their names are, but one had a laundry and he died shortly after that. There was another person, my father's real close friend. I can't remember who it was. And then of course, our family. It runs in the 30s with the grandkids (Informant #118).

The health of the celebrant determines many aspects of the celebration. For example, the healthier ones have parties outside of the house at restaurants while the frail have celebrations at home. Because her father was recently released from the hospital, one informant had his 88th birthday party at home. She says,

> He was hospitalized. He came out, so we couldn't, you know, go out too much so I made lot of things at home and everybody came over. [I made] typical Japanese style food that he liked. Osekihan and all those things and we all had it at home. Ham and everything, both American and Japanese food mixed together. So everybody, you know, came over and celebrated with him (Informant #112).

None of the 88th celebrations were surprise parties. In fact, when I asked one informant whether a planned 88th party for his brother-in-law was going to be a surprise, he replied, "No. This is not a surprise because they asked him

whether he's, you know, willing. Pretty old, 88. If he's up to it, be able to stand it" (Informant #106).

Just as frailty limits what the celebrants can do, the death of friends limits who attends. According to one informant whose mother had an 88th party at a Chinese restaurant, "the sad thing is most of her friends are gone, ne." While surviving, healthy friends are few, Issei celebrants have many children, sons- and daughters-in-laws, and grandchildren with whom to celebrate.

It is this theme of reunion which is the prominent feature of the 88th party. "As long as the kids come and get together, that's one of her enjoyments, really" (Informant #101). Another said that for her ailing 87 year old mother's party, "my brothers came from out of town. The year my mother passed away, well we knew that she was going to go, so well, all the kids and everybody got together and we gave her, you know, a birthday party" (Informant #104).

While reunion is hardly a theme of the 60th birthday, it is the hallmark of the 88th. One unmarried female informant attends celebrations for her brother-in-law's mother. She described the 88th birthday celebration as follows:

> we had a family reunion. It was actually their family reunion and my family reunion as well. My sister is married into that family. And, so there were about 30 people who came. And ever since, up until 2 years ago, we've had family reunions yearly. But then Grandma is not as well anymore. She's now 98, yeah, so next year if she's still alive, we might do something but it's just been

> too hard on [my brother-in-law] and Grandma so the past couple of years we decided not to, or he decided actually. (So what was the 88th like?) OK, the 88th was, it was great because she was still in fairly good health. And they got her a little red, I'll call her a cousin but she was married to my cousin and my cousin died and she got remarried but we still keep her in the family. Anyway, she made a little red knit jacket for her and I can't remember if it was that birthday or which birthday it was, but oh that birthday was a money tree. We made a money tree, a pretty little thing. We got crisp brand new money and we made little fans and little decorations and you put ribbons on it and then you hang it from a manzanita branch. That was really beautiful. In other years we've made, well I didn't make it but these other people, we all made one, and then they made a thousand cranes, literally a thousand cranes (Informant #120).

Beginning with the 88th birthday, these celebrations have become annual events until the grandmother's health and that of her son limited the activity. However, it was the first celebration, the 88th one that was of special significance to my informant's relative.

> And she was so thrilled and one of the things she said is, you know, the first time when we all sort of did this, she said it's wonderful because everyone is getting on so well together and she said they're coming here while I'm alive and not when I'm dead. She said, what's the use of coming to my funeral. She said nobody has to come to my funeral now because everyone has come here now. And I though that that was a very nice thing and I remember that at that time (Informant #120).

Issei in their late 80s are undeniably old. Only six Issei parents survived to their 90s. The 88th birthday has multiple tasks of reunion. First, it demands the presence of children, grandchildren and the few surviving healthy Issei friends. Second, the celebration may be the last time

the entire family gets together while the Issei parent is alive. It carries with it the unspoken though probably not unthought theme of finality, a last gathering of the clan around its founding member. Third, reunion not only brings family members together but it also reminds people of their ties to one another and provides an opportunity to reaffirm bonds. When family relations run smoothly as the last informant's relative said above, "what's the use of coming to my funeral."

The 88th birthday celebration has not received as much ethnographic attention as the kanreki. The accounts that do exist (Joya 1958; Linhart 1980; Palmore and Maeda 1985) say only that it is a happy occasion and that the family gathers in honor of the octogenarian. In this regard, the Japanese American celebration functions in much the same way as the traditional Japanese event.

Both America and Japan honor and respect the oldest-old, even if it is only with token and ceremonious expressions or to marvel at their longevity. However, one senses from informants accounts that surviving Issei parents are linchpins holding large family constellations together. Nisei siblings no longer congregate for their own birthday celebrations or those of children or grandchildren. And now that their Sansei children have married, they may not even get together for holidays such as Christmas or Thanksgiving.

With celebrations such as the 88th birthday though, families can and do unite to honor and respect their elders.

Informants describe the event as a "milestone" and a "reunion," a time for Issei, Nisei, Sansei, and Yonsei family members to be together. Significantly, informants speak of the 88th birthday with few referents to Japanese tradition perhaps because old age for the Issei has been largely and unquestionably structured by Japanese norms and expectations. Many adult children have provided care and support, and some have assumed responsibilities for decision making concerning the welfare of their Issei parents.

In contrast, explications of the Nisei 60th frequently contain the phrase "in Japan . . ." to explain why red clothing is worn or in what way this age marks a return to childhood. Japan must be articulated as the source of these traditions because Nisei aging is not presumed to be anchored in Japanese norms.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Interviewer: What would you say was the most important thing you tried to teach your children?

Informant: To be good human beings. And I always told them, you look at that face in the mirror and never forget who you are, where your roots are. Don't forget where your grandparents came from (Informant #121).

Although this dissertation has been about ethnicity, ritual, and aging among second generation Japanese Americans, I believe that it is ultimately about remembrance. It is about a community which in its early days was trying to figure out how to be Japanese in America and in its contemporary form is trying to decipher what it means to be Americans of Japanese ancestry. It is about having, accepting, and remembering a past and working that past into a coherent present.

I find Bellah's notion of a "community of memory" useful in thinking about my informants and the Japanese American community.

> Communities . . . have a history--in an important sense they are constituted by their past--and for this reason we can speak of a real community as a 'community of memory,' one that does not forget its past. In order not to forget that past, a community is involved in retelling its story, its constitutive narrative . . . .

> The stories that make up a tradition contain conceptions of character, of what a good person is like, and of the virtues that define such character. But the stories are not all exemplary, not all about successes and achievements. A genuine community of memory will also tell painful stories of shared suffering that sometimes creates deeper identities than success, ... And if the community is completely honest, it will remember stories not only of suffering received but of suffering inflicted--dangerous memories, for they call the community to alter ancient evils. The communities of memory that tie us to the past also turn us toward the future as communities of hope. They carry a context of meaning that can allow us to connect our aspirations for ourselves and those closest to us with the aspirations of a larger whole and see our own efforts as being, in part, contributions to a common good (Bellah, et al. 1985, 153).

As I mentioned in the introduction, the late 1980's was an exciting time to do fieldwork in the Japanese American community. This was due, in large part, to the vigor of the ethnic community here and across the country, in its fight for and eventual victory in gaining legal redress and reparation for the internment experience.

From a developmental perspective, I believe that the redress movement was a crucial "task" for Japanese Americans of all generations. The legal victory not only absolved former internees of any suspicion of guilt, but the redress effort itself helped the ethnic group to examine and thereby incorporate its past. For my Nisei informants, this might be seen as an example of Erikson's (1963, 1985) developmental task of old age--ego integrity vs. despair.

In turning a collective gaze on the painful memories and humiliation of the camp experience and in finally being exonerated, Nisei can now look back on their past and make sense of it. I believe that many will now be able to accept their lives as having more order, meaning, and continuity. They will be able to integrate their past with their present.

As sweet as the victory was for my Nisei informants, I believe the struggle was important for younger generations too. In acknowledging the pain of the past, Nisei parents bequeathed their history to their descendants. In finally telling the internment stories, acting them out in rituals, and returning to the camps on pilgrimages, Japanese Americans broke a 40 year silence and reclaimed the past. The community is now truly a community of memory.

This has consequences for Nisei aging beyond Erikson's final stage. Personal biography and history have come together to give the Nisei resolution for a painful past and a full life span that has been lived here, not in Japan, as ethnic Japanese Americans.

I believe that the Nisei 60th birthday sets the stage for my informants, their offspring, and their ethnic peers to figure out what it means to grow old as second generation Japanese Americans. The first finding of this study is that the birthday ritual unites all participants in a collusion of meaning creation helping to structure the unknown. The

birthday becomes a collective expression of what it means to be growing older as a Nisei.

The Nisei 60th birthday has many explicit symbols. There are the Japanese symbols and messages such as entering old age at 60 or the wearing of red, baby styled clothing to symbolize a second childhood. There are the American referents such as surprise parties, birthday cakes, candles, and the singing of "Happy Birthday to You." By combining these, the celebration contrasts the Japanese and American worlds which characterize the Nisei experience. Their lives have been continually structured around this contrast whether the context is friendship patterns and interactional style, concepts of family, or now models of aging.

Another way that I thought about the Nisei kanreki-type birthday was to consider why form predominates over message. That is I wondered why wasn't the message of the kanreki retained--that it marks retirement and signals old age--but its observance shifted to age 65? If this had been the case, the celebration would more closely mirror events in my informants' lives such as actual retirement from work or the bureaucratic designation of old age at 65 when one can draw full Social Security benefits. What was it about the Japanese form that was important? I believe that by appropriating this Japanese celebration Nisei informants and Japanese American kin and friends were acknowledging their

heritage and making a statement of self-respect about themselves as ethnically Japanese.

Another aspect of the birthday celebration that I find interesting is its transformation from a rite of passage promoting the individual into old age at 60 to what I called a rite of solidarity uniting the Nisei generation in charting its old age. The ritual is no longer organized around only the "initiate" as it would be in a rite of passage, but instead is a group event about the Nisei in the ethnic group generational structure. The second finding of this study is that rituals can change their emphasis to reflect important distinctions in new social contexts.

In one sense, this broadened focus parallels the respecification of the successor-son role. In traditional Japan, care for frail elderly parents was once the responsibility of the successor-son and his wife. In the Issei/Nisei family this same kind of filial care became the responsibility of the Nisei sibset. Generally, Nisei/Sansei families have not yet grappled with this problem, but I suspect that ethnic institutions such as social service agencies and nursing homes will play an increasingly important role in providing care to frail Nisei elders. What was once a family function has become a responsibility of the ethnic group.

Perhaps this can also be seen as part of the growing trend in America to make public what was once the private

function of the family. And perhaps this is another example of how many of the outward differences between Japanese Americans and Euro-Americans have declined. But now it may be that small differences in shared meaning systems between the ethnic and the Euro-American worlds play a large part in the continued importance of the ethnic group to my Nisei informants. The third finding is that rituals help to highlight possibly small but increasingly significant differences between Japanese Americans and their Euro-American neighbors. In the face of rapid acculturation, it is important to make note of the difference.

By this I also mean to suggest that ethnicity is a complex, dynamic, and varied resource to the elderly. It is no mere variable, something one has or does not have. And I also reject notions of ethnicity which see the ethnic culture as Tradition passed down unchanged from one generation to the next. This is clearly not what happens with the Nisei 60th birthday celebration.

Just as I believe that ethnicity powerfully shapes my informants lives, I expect that the Nisei will soon be perceived as a "pioneer generation" within the ethnic community. Their claim to heroic, vanguard status will be based not on an immigrant experience and harsh winters of hardship and suffering (Kikumura 1981) but on new authenticating criteria related to the camp experience and to being the first American born generation.

But even if this prediction does not come to pass, I believe that the 60th birthday dramatizes the duality of Nisei identity--both Japanese and American and neither fully one or the other--and their uniqueness as an aging cohort whose experiences earn them a special place in Japanese American history. The kanreki-type birthday celebration is an expression of this stage of Niseihood. It is about Nisei aging in the era of redress and about Sansei children who grew up in a time of heightened ethnic consciousness and pride.

I have come to this interpretative understanding of the Nisei experience of aging and ethnicity through participant observation, interviews and transcription of interviews, previous research that presents corroborative and contrasting views about Japanese Americans, and autobiographical fiction. Those critical of interpretive analysis might charge that these are mere textualizations which destroy the discourse of experience. However, I believe that the ethnographic impulse views these products metaphorically. I see the relationship between text and discourse as similar to that between a musical transcript and that music. Texts and ethnographies can be read and understood by those trained to read them. And part of this training comes from a perspective that dates back to Boas' notion that anthropology should be a "holistic study of complex

phenomena" (Stocking 1989, 268). With this as his goal, Boas said that the anthropologist

> holds to the phenomenon which is the object of his study . . . and lovingly tries to penetrate into its secrets until every feature is plain and clear. This occupation with the object of his affection affords him a delight not inferior to that which the physicist enjoys in his systematical arrangement of the world (Krupat 1990, 139).

I end this study with a heightened appreciation for the human need to create meaning in our social world and awe for our capacity to be continually inventive. I am deeply grateful to my informants, parents, husband, and academic advisors for the privilege of this journey.

APPENDIX A

Baseline Interview
Bradburn Affect Balance
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
Time 2 Interview
TAT Response

BASELINE INTERVIEW

ID #: _____ Name: _____ Gender: M F

Address:_____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Birth Date: _____ Birth Place: _____
City/Town State

1. Who lives in your household with you now?

	Name	Sex	Age	Relationship
a.				
b.				
c.				
d.				

2. Do you live in a:

a. House
b. Apartment
c. Condo
d. Hotel/retirement home
e. Other _____

3. Do you own your place or rent it?

a. Own
b. Rent

4. How long have you lived here? _____

5. What is your marital status?

a. _____ Married
b. _____ Widowed
c. _____ Separated
d. _____ Divorced
e. _____ Annulled
f. _____ Single

6. All together, how many times have you been married?
_____

7. When were you first married? _____

(If married more than once, date of subsequent marriage)

_____

8. Are your parents alive now?

   a. _____ Yes - How old is your father? _____
   Where does he live? _____
   How old is your mother? _____
   Where does she live? _____

   b. _____ No - At what age did he pass away? _____
   At what age did she pass away? _____

9. Where did your father live before he passed away?

10. Where did your mother live before she passed away?

11. How about your father-in-law?

12. Mother-in-law?

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about your life when you were growing up.

13. First, please tell me where your parents were born.

   a. Father _____
   Town/Prefecture

   b. Mother _____
   Town/Prefecture

14. What was your father's occupation? _____

15. Mother's occupation? _____

16. Was your family part of a Japanese American community when you were growing up?

   a. _____ Yes
   b. _____ No

17. Did you know any of your grandparents even if you did not live with them?

   a. Paternal grandfather: _____ Yes _____ No
   Name:
   b. Paternal grandmother: _____ Yes _____ No
   Name:
   c. Maternal grandfather: _____ Yes _____ No
   Name:
   d. Maternal grandmother: _____ Yes _____ No
   Name:

18. How many brother and sisters do you have in all?
_____

Sex	Alive (?)	Age	Marital Status	Occupation	Resides

19. Would you say your parents raised you to be

a. _____ More like a Japanese person OR
b. _____ More like an American?

20. What (is/are) the most important thing(s) that your parents taught you?

21. When you were growing up, what language did you speak at home?

a. _____ Japanese only
b. _____ English only
c. _____ Both

22. Do you speak Japanese?

a. _____ Yes, fluently
b. _____ Yes, some
c. _____ No

23. Do you understand Japanese?

a. _____ Yes, very well
b. _____ Yes, some
c. _____ No

24. Where did you learn it? _____

25. Did you ever attend Japanese language school?

a. _____ Yes, every day
b. _____ Yes, on Saturday
c. _____ No

26. With whom do you now speak Japanese? _____

27. How many years of school did you finish? _____

28. What religion do you belong to now? _____
29. On the average, how often do you attend church?
_____

30. What religion (do/did) your parents belong to?
_____

31. What religion do your children belong to? _____

32. What kind of wedding ceremony did you have?

a. _____ Buddhist
b. _____ Christian
c. _____ Shinto-style
d. _____ Other (please specify) _____

33. Is your spouse Japanese American?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No Specify _____

34. How many years of school did (he/she) finish? _____

35. Does (he/she) speak Japanese?

a. _____ Yes, fluently
b. _____ Yes, some
c. _____ No

36. Does (he/she) understand Japanese?

a. _____ Yes, very well
b. _____ Yes, some
c. _____ No

World War II was a turning point in the lives of Japanese Americans. Now I'd like to ask some questions about your camp experience and how you feel about it today.

37. Did you go to an assembly center?

a. Yes _____ Which one? _____

Entered: _____
Day Month Year

Left: _____
Day Month Year

b. No _____

38. Did you go to a camp?

a. _____ Yes

Name of camp	From (date)	To (date)

39. What were you doing before evacuation?

40. Who lived with you in your household at camp?

Sex	Relationship	Sex	Relationship

41. Were you separated from any family member at camp?

a. Yes _____ Who? _____

b. No _____

42. What kind of job did you have at camp?

43. What was life like in camp?

44. When did you leave camp?

45. Where did you go first?

46. Did you leave camp voluntarily?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

47. What was your main reason for leaving camp?

48. Who left with you?

49. Did you go to a job?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

50. Were you in the military during WWII?

		From (Age)	To (age)	Type of service
a.	_____ Yes			
b.	_____ No			

51. Did you volunteer?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No (drafted?)

52. How do you feel about the evacuation experience now?

53. Have you talked with your children about it?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

54. How do you explain to your children or other Sansei why the Niseis didn't resist being put into the camps?

55. Have your feelings and opinions changed over the years?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

56. Do you think about camp days very much?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

57. Has this changed over the years?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

58. What about redress ... do you know much about it?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

59. Do you support it?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

60. Do you think most Japanese Americans support redress or oppose it?

a. _____ Support
b. _____ Oppose

61. How do Japanese Americans who support redress differ from those who oppose it?

62. During the early 1980's the Commission on Wartime Relocation held hearings across the country and many Isseis and Niseis testified. Did you testify or attend the hearings?
a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

63. What did you talk about?

64. Did any of your friends testify or attend the hearings?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

65. How do those Isseis and Niseis who testified or attended the hearings differ from those who didn't go?

66. Moving on to your life now, how many children do you have?

Sex	Alive (?)	Age	Mar. Status	Occup.	Resides

67. How often do you keep in touch with your children?

a. Visits:
b. Phone calls or letters:

68. How many grandchildren do you have? _____

Sex	Alive(?)	Age	Sex	Alive(?)	Age

69. Are your grandchildren important figures in your life?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

70. How often do you see them?

a. Visits:
b. Phone calls or letters:

71. Do you have any great grandchildren?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

72. Would you say that you raised your children to be

a. _____ More like a Japanese person OR
b. _____ More like an American person?

73. What is the most important thing that you taught your children?

74. What language did you speak at home with your children?

a. _____ Japanese only
b. _____ English only
c. _____ Both

75. Did your children go to Japanese language school?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

76. Have you tried to transmit Japanese culture to your children?

a. _____ Yes (What and how?)

b. _____ No (Why?)

77. Did your children ever live with any of their grandparents?

a. _____ Yes (Which grandparents, how long, where, why?)

b. _____ No

78. How old were you (will you be) when your first child got (gets) married?

79. Which child was that (will that be)?

80. How old were you (will you be) when your last child became (will become) financially independent?

81. Which child was that (will that be)?

82. Moving on now to the present, I'd like to ask you about whether you work now.
    a. _____ Yes, full time
    b. _____ Yes, part time
    c. _____ No, retired Age at retirement _____

83. At what age do you plan to retire? _____

84. What did you do for a living? _____

85. What (is/was) your main occupation or job title?
    _____

86. Is your husband/wife working now?

    a. _____ Yes, full time
    b. _____ Yes, part time
    c. _____ No, retired Age at retirement _____

87. At what age does he/she plan to retire? _____

88. What (does/did) (he/she) do for a living? _____

89. What (is/was) (his/her) main occupation? _____

90. Considering all of the income for employment from all of the other sources for everyone in your household, which lettered category best describes your total household income before taxes in 1987?

    a. _____ Under $10,000/year
    b. _____ $10,00 to $20,000/year
    c. _____ $20,000 to $30,000/year
    d. _____ Over $30,000/year

91. How adequate is your income OR
    How adequate do you think your retirement income will be?

    a. _____ Quite adequate
    b. _____ Adequate
    c. _____ Fair
    d. _____ Poor

92. Could you tell me the (expected) sources of your household retirement income. I'll list the sources and you can respond yes or no.

a.	_____	Job (post-retirement job)	Yes	No
b.	_____	Social Security	Yes	No
c.	_____	Government old assistance or supplementary security income	Yes	No
d.	_____	Government disability (e.g., injury, workman's comp.)	Yes	No
e.	_____	Private disability	Yes	No
f.	_____	Veteran's Administration	Yes	No
g.	_____	Federal or State Employee's (or county or city) retirement pension	Yes	No
h.	_____	Income from business ownership/ partnership	Yes	No
i.	_____	Income from rental property	Yes	No
j.	_____	Income from interest on savings/ dividends/stock/bonds	Yes	No
k.	_____	Savings or sale of property or investments	Yes	No
l.	_____	Private retirement pension (company or union)	Yes	No
m.	_____	IRA (individual retirement) or KEOGH (individual retirement)	Yes	No
n.	_____	Insurance	Yes	No
o.	_____	Children or other family members	Yes	No

Now I'd like to ask some questions about your opinions concerning relationships between aging Nisei parents and their adult Sansei children.

93. Do you think that the major responsibility adult Sansei children have to their aging Nisei parents is financial, or do you feel that ties of affection are more important?

a. _____ Financial
b. _____ Ties of affection
c. _____ Both
d. _____ Neither

94. Here are some statements about financial arrangements for aging Nisei parents. Please tell me which one most closely reflects your opinion.

a. _____ Aging Nisei parents are primarily responsible for their own financial well being.
b. _____ Both aging Nisei parents and their adult Sansei children are equally responsible for the parents' financial well being.
c. _____ Adult Sansei children are primarily responsible for their parents' financial well being.
d. _____ Social Security is primarily responsible for the Nisei's financial well being.
e. _____ Welfare programs are primarily responsible for their financial well being.

95. If an elderly Nisei couple needed money to repair their home, do you think that the adult Sansei children should help out?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

96. Do you think the adult Sansei children should help out even if it means they (adult Sansei children) would have less money to spend for

a.	Their own children's education (the Yonsei's education)?	Yes	No
b.	Their own leisure activities?	Yes	No
c.	Groceries and other household items?	Yes	No
d.	A new car or new furniture?	Yes	No
e.	A vacation?	Yes	No

97. Which of these living arrangements do you think is best for aging Nisei parents and their adult Sansei children?

_____ To live in the same household
_____ To live in the same or adjacent building but keep separate households
_____ To live in the same neighborhood
_____ To live in the same city
_____ To live far apart
_____ Something else (specify)

98. What would be desirable aspects of aging Nisei parents living with their adult Sansei children?

_____

_____

99. What would be undesirable aspects of aging Nisei parents living with their adult Sansei children?

_____

_____

100. Given a situation in which you were alone (without your spouse) and had a disability, how would you rate the following living arrangements? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is undesirable and 5 is highly desirable. The first living arrangement is . . .

a. Living alone at home with extra home services (meals on wheels, visiting nurse, etc.) Please rate 1 to 5.
5 4 3 2 1

b. IF HAS CHILDREN:
Living with a son or a daughter.
RECORD COMMENTS: _____
5 4 3 2 1

c. Although you say this choice is undesirable, would you go live with your son/daughter if necessary?
Yes _____ No _____

d. Would you specify which child would probably be the one you would live with. Would that be a son _____ or daughter _____?

101. The next living arrangement is . . .

a. Living with another relative.
5 4 3 2 1

b. Living at a non-Nikkei nursing home.
5 4 3 2 1

c. Living at a Nikkei nursing home (i.e., Keiro).
5 4 3 2 1

102. Now that you've given the most desirable arrangements, what do you think would be the most likely arrangement, given a situation in which you were alone (without spouse) and your health got very bad?
RECORD COMMENTS: _____

_____

Now I'd like to ask about other family members, relatives, and friends.

103. Besides your children and their families, do you have any other relatives whom you feel close to?

a. Who are those relatives? _____

104. Do you see any of these relatives?

a. _____ At least once a day
b. _____ At least once a week
c. _____ At least once a month
d. _____ At least once a year
e. _____ Less than once a year

105. Does the relative you see most often live

a. _____ In your household?
b. _____ In your building?
c. _____ Within walking distance of your home?
d. _____ Less than 30 minutes driving time from your home?
e. _____ Between 30 minutes and 3 hours driving time from your home?
f. _____ More than 3 hours driving time from your home?

106. How are the 3 relatives you see most often related to you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now I'd like to ask about your friends. Please tell me a little about your 3 closest friends.

107. Are they male or female, how old are they, are they Japanese Americans, where do they live, how long have you known them, and what kinds of things do you do together?

	Sex	Age	JA	Resides	Length	Activities
1.						
2.						
3.						

108. How often do you see each of your close friends?

1. Friend #1 _____
2. Friend #2 _____
3. Friend #3 _____

109. How often do you talk to each of these friends on the phone?

1. Friend #1 _____
2. Friend #2 _____
3. Friend #3 _____

110. Do your closest friends know each other?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

Now I'd like to ask you about some things family, relatives or friends do with each other and for each other.

111. When you feel good about something, is there someone you can share your happiness with?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

112. Is there someone available for this?

a. _____ All the time
b. _____ Most of the time
c. _____ Only some of the time

113. Who was the first person you thought of when you answered that question? The second person? And the third person?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

114. When you have chores around the house that you can't do, is there someone you can depend on to help you?
a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

115. Is there someone available for this

a. _____ All the time?
b. _____ Most of the time?
c. _____ Only some of the time?

116. Who was the first person you thought of when you answered that question? The second person? And the third person?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

117. When you have a personal problem is there someone you can talk to about it?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

118. Is there someone available for this

a. _____ All the time?
b. _____ Most of the time?
c. _____ Only some of the time?

119. Who was the first person you thought of when you answered that question? The second person? And the third person?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

120. As people get older, concerns about health seem to increase. In general, how is your health now? Would you say it's

a. _____ Excellent
b. _____ Good
c. _____ Fair
d. _____ Poor
e. _____ Don't know/no answer

121. How would you compare your health with other people your age?

a. _____ Better than others
b. _____ About the same as others
c. _____ Worse than others
d. _____ Don't know
e. _____ Missing
f. _____ Refused

122. Which of these things are you able to do without help?

a. _____ Heavy work around the house like washing walls and house painting
b. _____ Walk half a mile
c. _____ Go out to a movie, to church or a meeting, or to visit friends
d. _____ Walk up and down stairs to the second floor.

123. Which of these statements fits you best?

a. _____ I cannot work/keep house at all now because of my health.
b. _____ I have to limit some of the work and other things I do.
c. _____ I am not limited in any of my activities.

124. Now I'm going to read a list of physical problems. After each one, please tell me if you had anything of the kind in the last year. In the last year did you have

a. Any sort of digestion or stomach problem?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Did you consult a doctor?
_____ Yes
_____ No

b. Any trouble with your kidney or bladder?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Did you consult a doctor?
_____ Yes
_____ No

c. Any kind of heart trouble?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Did you consult a doctor?
_____ Yes
_____ No

d. High blood pressure?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Did you consult a doctor?
_____ Yes
_____ No

e. Any weakness in your arms or legs?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Did you consult a doctor?
_____ Yes
_____ No

f. Any swelling in feet, ankles, legs?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Did you consult a doctor?
_____ Yes
_____ No

g. Do you have any chronic pain problem?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Did you consult a doctor?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Where are the pains?
_____ Hips
_____ Chest
_____ Head
_____ Shoulders
_____ Back
_____ Elbows
_____ Knees
_____ Hands
_____ Feet
Other (specify) _____

125. Have you had any of the following illnesses or ailments in the past year?

a.	Pneumonia	Yes _____	No _____
b.	Cancer	Yes _____	No _____
c.	Diabetes	Yes _____	No _____
d.	Any serious accidents/injuries	Yes _____	No _____
e.	Any fractures, broken bones	Yes _____	No _____
f.	MEN ONLY: Any prostate trouble	Yes _____	No _____

126. Have you ever had a stroke?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

IF YES:

a. How many strokes have you had? _____

b. How old were you at the time of the first one? ___

c. How long ago was the most recent one? _____
Months

127. Do you have any serious trouble with your eyesight?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

128. Do you have any serious trouble with your hearing?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

129. Have you, in the past year, had any other serious physical ailment or major operations that we haven't mentioned?

a. _____ Yes
b. _____ No

IF YES: What was that?

_____
_____
_____

Now I'd like to ask about your current activities

130. Please tell me the names of the clubs or groups you belong to. How often do you go? Are the members mainly Japanese Americans? Do you serve on any committees or have a leadership role?

Name	Attendance	JA	Committee/Leadership

131. Do you read a newspaper regularly?

a. _____ Yes, regularly
b. _____ Yes, sometimes
c. _____ No

132. What newspapers do you read? _____
_____

133. Do you listen to the radio often?

a. _____ Often
b. _____ Sometimes
c. _____ Never

134. Watch T.V?

a. _____ Often
b. _____ Sometimes
c. _____ Never

135. Go to American movies?

a. _____ Often
b. _____ Sometimes
c. _____ Never

136. Go to Japanese movies?

a. _____ Often
b. _____ Sometimes
c. _____ Never

137. What magazines do you read regularly?

_____

138. What kinds of books do you like?

_____

139. What other recreational activities do you do?

_____

140. Now I'd like to know a little bit about your activities and hobbies. Please tell me if you do each of the following to a great extent, a moderate extent or not at all.

		Not at all	Moderate extent	Great extent
a.	Travel	_____	_____	_____
b.	Gardening	_____	_____	_____
c.	Reading	_____	_____	_____
d.	Craftwork	_____	_____	_____
e.	The arts	_____	_____	_____
f.	Education	_____	_____	_____
g.	Church activities	_____	_____	_____
h.	Volunteer work	_____	_____	_____
i.	Social groups	_____	_____	_____
j.	Part-time work	_____	_____	_____
k.	Golf	_____	_____	_____
l.	Fishing	_____	_____	_____
m.	Watching TV	_____	_____	_____
n.	Listen to radio	_____	_____	_____
o.	Play with grand-children and family	_____	_____	_____
p.	Visit with friends	_____	_____	_____
q.	Other (specify)	_____		
		_____		
		_____		
		_____		

141. Looking ahead to the future, what would you say are your two greatest concerns? (Read list) Which is your #1 concern, which is your #2 concern.

a. _____ that you will lose your health

b. _____ that if you become ill, you will worry about who will take care of you

c. _____ that relations with other family members will not go smoothly

d. _____ that life will lose meaning

e. _____ that you will become senile

f. _____ that you will have economic problems

g. _____ that you will have problems about where to live

h. _____ others (please specify)

142. Which of the following two activities give your life meaning? (Read list) Which is #1, which is #2.

a. _____ to bring up children and grandchildren

b. _____ to take care of my husband/wife

c. _____ to take care of the house

d. _____ to work hard in the family business

e. _____ to make a fortune

f. _____ to participate in community or political activity

g. _____ to do volunteer work

h. _____ to enjoy my own hobbies

i. _____ to study for self-improvement

j. _____ others (please specify)

k. _____ there is no special purpose in life

BRADBURN AFFECT BALANCE

ID # _____ Date _____

A. Taken all together, how would you say things are these days. Would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?

1. _____ Very happy
2. _____ Pretty happy
3. _____ Not too happy

B. We are interested in the way people are feeling these days. During the past few weeks, did you ever feel --

	YES	NO
1. Particularly excited or interested in something?	_____	_____
2. So restless that you couldn't sit long in a chair?	_____	_____
3. Proud because someone complimented you on something you had done?	_____	_____
4. Very lonely or remote from other people?	_____	_____
5. Pleased about having accomplished something?	_____	_____
6. Bored?	_____	_____
7. On top of the world?	_____	_____
8. Depressed or very happy?	_____	_____
9. That things were going your way?	_____	_____
10. Upset because someone criticized you?	_____	_____

ROSENBERG SCALE

ID # _____
Date_____

Circle the response that best describes how much you agree or disagree with each question.

		Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4
1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	1	2	3	4
2.	I certainly feel useless at times.	1	2	3	4
3.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	1	2	3	4
4.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	1	2	3	4
5.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	1	2	3	4
6.	At times I think I am no good at all.	1	2	3	4
7.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4
8.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1	2	3	4
9.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4
10.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.	1	2	3	4

TIME 2 INTERVIEW

ID# _____ Date: _____

Age: _____ Years in SF post-WWII: _____

Father's age at death: _____ Year: _____

Mother's age at death: _____ Year: _____

1. Since I grew up in Chicago and haven't been in the Bay Area for very long, I'd like to know what the Japanese American community in San Francisco was like about 25 to 30 years ago.

2. What is it like today?

3. I'm interested in the kinds of things you do in groups with other people. Can you tell me about some of the everyday things and the special events you do with others?

4. What about birthdays? Whose birthdays do you celebrate?

5. Did you have a special 60th birthday? Why is it special and what does it mean? Who was there? Who arranged it? What did you do? Where was it held? Did you enjoy it? Etc.

6. Did you have any other special birthday?

7. Have you ever given a 60th birthday or any other special birthday for anyone? Who? Which birthday? What did you do? Who came? Etc.

8. Have you ever been to these special birthdays (60th, 70th, 77th, 88th, 100th)? What kind of Nisei are likely to have these sorts of birthday parties?

9. Did you hold any special birthday celebration for your own parents or for your in-laws? Which birthday(s)? What did you do? What does it mean? Who came? Etc.

10. How about retirement parties. Did you have one? Who arranged it? Who came? What did you do? Where was it held? Did you enjoy it? Etc.

11. Have you ever gone to a retirement party? Whose? What was it like? Etc.

12. How about wedding anniversaries? Have you had any special anniversary celebrations like a 25th anniversary or a 40th or 50th anniversary? Why are they special and what do they mean? Who arranged it? Who came? What did you do? Did you enjoy it? Etc.

13. Have you ever been to one of those special anniversary parties that get written up in the Hokubei or Nichibei? What are they like? What kinds of people have these parties?

14. How about funerals? When you go to an Issei funeral, what is it like? Get as much detail as possible.

15. What is a Nisei funeral like? Get as much detail as possible.

16. What kind of funeral did you have for your parents or in-laws?

17. What about the special Buddhist memorial services? What are the special ones? Why are they special and what do they mean? Do you have them for your parents or do you go to any?

18. What about koden? When do you give koden? To whom? How much? Why do you give it and what does it mean? Do you think the Sansei will keep this up?

19. Do you visit the cemetery? When do you go? With whom? What do you do when you go the cemetery?

20. How do you celebrate holidays like Christmas? Thanksgiving and New Year? What do you do? With whom? Where?

21. How about other holidays like Easter, the Fourth of July, and Labor day?

22. Does your family have any special gatherings? When? Who comes? What do you do? Where is it held? How is it planned and organized?

23. What about ken or fujinkai activities? Do you or your spouse participate in these kinds of things?

24. Are there any picnics or festivals you usually go to? Which ones? Where are they? Who comes? What do you do?

25. What about sports--do you participate in anything now like bowling, golf, fishing, basketball, baseball, etc.? Do you ever go to watch someone play? Who? When? Where? Why?
26. How about reunions, like high school, camp or town reunions? Have you gone to any? What was it like? Who went?

27. What about pilgrimages, like the Manzanar or Tule Lake pilgrimage? Have you ever been to one of these? What was it like? Who went, etc.?

28. How about the trip to Washington, D.C. for the opening of the Smithsonian exhibit? Why did you go? Who went? What did you think of it?

29. Are there other ceremonies that you take part in that we haven't talked about?

30. Now I'd like to ask about your daily routines. Please tell me what you do on an average day? When do you get up? Have your meals? Etc.

31. Thinking back to when your parents were your age, what was like for them? How does your life compare to theirs at the same age?

32. When you talk with your friends about getting older, what kinds of things do you talk about?

33. Do you and your friends or family have any stories or joke about getting older?

34. What kind of advice do you have for me and other Sansei about growing older?

TAT RESPONSE

ID# _____ Date_____

This is a chance to use your imagination to tell me a story. I am going to show you two pictures and I'd like for you to tell me what led up to the event in the picture, what is happening now such as how are the characters feeling and thinking, and finally how the story will end. People think up all sorts of things about these pictures and there are no right or wrong answers. I'm interested in what you think. Again, please tell me a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

7BM

6BM

APPENDIX B

List of Informants

List of Informants

ID#	Gender	Age	Marital Status	# of Living Offspring
101	Female	69	Married	2
102	Female	77	Widowed	7
103	Male	66	Married	4
104	Female	68	Married	4
105	Male	83	Married	2
106	Male	68	Married	1
107	Female	73	Widowed	3
108	Male	74	Widowed	1
109	Female	65	Married	0
110	Male	67	Widowed	1
111	Female	78	Widowed	2
112	Female	66	Single	0
113	Male	73	Married	3
114	Female	64	Married	1
115	Male	67	Married	0
116	Female	70	Widowed	1
117	Male	66	Married	2
118	Female	57	Widowed	0
119	Male	59	Single	0
120	Female	57	Single	0
121	Female	65	Married	2
122	Male	62	Widowed	2
123	Male	63	Married	3
124	Male	68	Married	0

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