The Return:

North American Nikkeijin Who Put Down Roots in Japan

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INTRODUCTION

The past decade has seen a number of publications focusing on the identity and experiences of North Americans of Japanese descent written both in English (e.g., Adler, 1998; Takahashi, 1997; Westbridge Young Writers Workshop, 1994; Yamamoto, 1999) and in Japanese (e.g., Befu, 2002; Ritsumeikan Daigaku Nikkei Bunka Kenkyu-kai, 2003). Literature written by Japanese Americans and other Asian (North) Americans has also been the subject of several recent works (e.g., Cheung, 2000; Muller, 1999; Shinoda and Yamamoto, 1998). However, few have considered those North Americans of Japanese descent who have made the return journey and taken up residence in their ancestors' homeland. While a great deal of research has been devoted to the surge in immigration to Japan of Nikkei Brazilians, Peruvians and other Latin Americans of Japanese descent since the revision of Japan's Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990 (e.g., Hirabayashi, Kikumura-Yano & Hirabayashi, 2002; Hirataka, Koishi & Kato, 2001; Lesser, 2003; Linger, 2001; Roth, 2002; Sellek, 1997; Tsuda, 2003), North Americans of Japanese descent who have put down roots in Japan have yet to receive much scholarly attention.

The number of Americans and Canadians of Japanese descent living

in this country is difficult to determine because they are not distinguished from their fellow countrymen and women in immigration records. Nonetheless, it can be said with relative certainty they are far outnumbered by the estimated 278,414 South Americans of Japanese descent who were living in Japan in 1999[1]. All the same, the fact that my personal acquaintance includes five North American Sansei—all of whom have lived in Japan for well over ten years—made me think that there may be a larger number of these seemingly invisible immigrants than the amount of research on them might lead one to believe.

Thus, as a researcher interested in bilingualism and biculturalism in Japan, I decided that for my contribution to this collection in honor of Professor Yamamoto Iwao, whose research career focused on Japanese Americans and their literature, I would examine the "return journeys" made by some of their progeny. In exploring the phenomenon of reverse immigration, I wanted to see what brought these Japanese Americans and Canadians to Japan in the first place and how they view themselves and their children after decades of residence in this country.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Japanese Americans

During the first decades after World War II, North Americans of Japanese descent were a relatively homogeneous group of people who shared a similar history of family immigration during the late 1800s or early 1900s and also had many experiences in common, including

racial discrimination and, in many cases, internment during the war. After the war, their numbers steadily increased, mostly due to births rather than immigration (Takahashi, 1997). By the 1970s, Japanese Americans comprised the fourth largest "racial group" in the United States, behind African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans.[2] Also by this time, many of the hurdles to education and employment that they had previously experienced had been lowered, albeit not completely eliminated. As a group, Japanese Americans were seen as a "model minority" who had achieved "higher levels of education, income and employment relative to other minority groups" (Takahashi, 1997, p. 158). Nonetheless, according to a 1998 study by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, their average earnings were still well below those of white males with the same educational levels living in the same areas.[3]

During the sixties and seventies, Japanese Americans dealt with expanding opportunities as well as continued racial positioning in increasingly diversified ways, especially on the west coast (Takahashi, 1997, p. 167). While some became active in political movements such as the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) and the Asian American women's movement, others "formed very different sensibilities about themselves as a minority group and devised new avenues for dealing with their racial position" (Takahashi, 1997, p. 167).

Meanwhile, in the Midwest, where Japanese Americans often did not live in close proximity to each other or have strong ethnic communities, many third and fourth generation Japanese Americans "had little contact with Japanese customs, language and dress and considered themselves more European American than Japanese" (Adler, 1998, p.

2). In her study of 35 Midwestern Japanese American women, Susan Matoba Adler (1998) found "a qualitative difference from the culture that Japanese American women experience in places like California, Hawaii, New York, or wherever there is a strong ethnic community" (pp. viii - ix). She noted that most "don't speak Japanese fluently, nor do we truly understand Asian customs any better than most mainstream European Americans" (Adler, 1998, p. ix).

By the eighties and nineties, there were growing numbers of mixed-race children ("*happa*") and second-generation Japanese Americans whose parents had immigrated after the war (*shin Nisei*) whose experiences tended to be very different from those in the families of earlier arrivals. According to Takahashi (1997), even on the west coast, the "*happa*" and *shin Nisei* often attended schools in white suburbs and did not experience the kind of "communities whose institutions and practices were grounded in the Issei and Nisei legacy" (p. 209). For them, "ethnicity is not always salient in their early lives. Encounters with racism and an awareness of racial issues is generally limited as well" (Takahashi, 1997, p. 209).

Thus, although they may share some similar experiences in terms of family culture and positioning in society, Takahashi (1997) notes that the Japanese American population today is "increasingly complex and differentiated" (p. 209).

Identity

Theoretical Framework

It is not within the scope of this paper to offer a complete review of the wealth of research which has been done on the nature, origins and

expressions of identity in the past few decades. Instead, this literature review will cover only work that appears to be particularly relevant to the current study.

While identity is often associated with culture, Bourdieu (1977) sought to refine this notion, using the term "habitus" to more accurately describe how individuals display "ways of being, or dispositions, learned interactively through participation in practices most typical for members of a particular class or group" (summarized by Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 251). For North Americans of Japanese descent, this would mean that the degree of "Japanese-ness" of their ethnic identity might vary according to the family and community in which they grew up.

In addition to culture, language is often seen as "vital in the formation of group boundaries" (Giampapa, 2001, p. 284). For individuals, particularly immigrants and minority group members seeking to identify with dominant groups, Heller (1992) states "it is necessary to display appropriate linguistic and cultural knowledge in order to gain access to the game and playing it well requires in turn mastery of the kinds of linguistic and cultural knowledge which constitute its rules" (p. 125, quoted in Giampapa, 2001, p. 284). For Japanese Americans and Canadians living in Japan, language proficiency—both in Japanese and English—would therefore also be important factors in identity formation.

According to Blackledge & Pavlenko (2001), there have been several major shifts in the theoretical frameworks used to view identity in the field of linguistics over the past three decades. First, variationist sociolinguistics, which describes linguistic phenomenon and views them as

ways in which individuals express fixed identities, was supplanted by the sociopsychological paradigm, in which identity is "viewed as reflective self-images constructed, experienced, and communicated by individuals within a culture and within the context of a particular interaction" and which individuals may try to modify or change if they find them to be unsatisfactory (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 244). Later, the sociopsychological view was criticized because it assumes not only that all individuals within a group are the same, but also that all cultures are monolingual and homogeneous and that individuals have to abandon one to be able to move into another (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, pp. 244 - 245).

Research in the past few years has therefore adopted a "poststructuralist" view of identity which rejects "the simple formula of 'language equals identity'" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 254) in favor of a far more fluid approach in which individuals are seen to "cross" between different ethnic groups, and an individual's identities are seen to be "multiple, dynamic, and subject to change" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 249). Thus, an individual may see herself as Japanese in some contexts and Canadian in others, a rebel within society but a loyal family member; she may emphasize her role as a mother while her children are young, but place much more importance on her career after their children leave home.

The poststructuralist framework of identity incorporates the concept of *positioning* set forth by Davies and Harre (1990, p. 48, cited in Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001). Positioning is a type of identity formation rooted in conversation, with *interactive positioning* referring to the way in which one person in a conversation may use language to

ascribe a certain identity—Asian or American, for example—to another, and *reflective positioning* referring to the process by which individuals attempt to create certain identities for themselves (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 249). Although people tend to view the world from the positions they take up, these positions are not stable (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 249). Giampapa (2001) found that the Italian-Canadian participants in her study drew on different aspects of their ethnic identity in different contexts. Thus, even ethnic identity is not seen as singular and static; rather, "self-ascription shifts from context to context" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 251).

Blackledge & Pavlenko (2001) point out that

> often instances of reflective positioning are contested by others and many individuals find themselves in a perpetual tension between self-chosen identities and others' attempts to position them differently. (p. 249)

Susan Matoba Adler's story (1998) is an example of this type of tension: Adler describes how she grew up viewing herself as very American, but as she grew older, she found the Caucasian men she dated referred to her as their "'oriental' girlfriend" (p. 2), while colleagues at the educational institutions she taught at identified her "as one of a small group of professors of color" (p. 2). At one point in her life, people in a town where there were many Asian "war brides" even asked Adler how she learned to speak English so well (p. 4).

Identity Negotiation

Thus, individuals often find themselves having to negotiate their identities through "the interplay between reflective positioning, that

is, self-representation, and interactive positioning, whereby others attempt to reposition particular individuals or groups" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 249). A study by Giampapa (2001) of young Italian-Canadians gives an example of this kind of interactive positioning. Stereotypes of Italian-Canadians in the media and society at large affected the participants' views of themselves and the "possible positions that they can hold" in Canadian society (p. 283).

Individuals can negotiate their identities in a number of ways. The choice of which language to speak and frequent codeswitching are two well-recognized linguistic "acts of identity" (LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1985, as cited in Pavlenko, 2001, p. 339). Giampapa (2001) argues that

> a speaker at any given time can lean on and negotiate his/her identities through the interplay of linguistic codes, thus positioning him/herself in a particular way. Through linguistic practices, speakers can challenge, reproduce and debate their positional identities on their terms. (pp. 284 - 285)

Expressions of cultural knowledge as embodied in appropriate action can also be viewed as a means of establishing identity. For example, Hensel's (1996) study of people in a small town in Alaska found that the participants' acceptance of others was based not so much on whether or not they were natives of the area as it was on whether or not they knew how to act in certain activities (summarized in Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 251). Thus, knowledge of Japanese culture and behavior in certain contexts—or lack of it—might be an important element in the interactive positioning of Japanese

Americans and Canadians in Japan.

Identity negotiation is seen to be especially complex in multilingual settings that have "implicit monolingual ideologies" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 248). This is particularly true for immigrant second language learners. Pavlenko (2001) argues that access to linguistic resources and opportunities to interact with L1 speakers will be affected by the "linguistic, social, cultural, gender, racial, and ethnic identities" of the L2 learners (p. 319). In addition, motivation to learn the second language and the amount of time and energy they invest in it will be "shaped by the range of identities available to them" (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 319).

Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001) argue that "in many contexts, certain identities may not be negotiable because people may be positioned in powerful ways which they are unable to resist" (p. 250). In some cases, L2 users may be positioned in ways that are "seen ... as unacceptable or incompatible with the ... positions they occupied previously" (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 319). This often occurs "in immigrant contexts when individuals suddenly find themselves positioned as incompetent adults, workers, or parents" (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 319).

Heller (1999) observed that "Those who find themselves marginalized are left to find a way in, to resist, or to bail out altogether" (p. 14, as quoted in Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 254). Similarly, Pavlenko (2001) stressed that the inability to negotiate acceptable identities "may lead to depression, resignation, return to one's native country (if this is a possible option), or, in some cases, for a painful search for new terms, memberships, and belongings" (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 331).

Bicultural individuals may find identity negotiation particularly complex because of "the either/or terms imposed on them by the dominant discourses of language and identity" (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 340). Adler (1998) described the tension some of her participants felt between Japanese and "American" cultures, and noted that "This dichotomy of cultural difference led some families and individuals to move toward one culture while avoiding or rejecting the other" (p. 71). Pavlenko (2001) echoes this concern, noting that when the host community seems to demand "clearly readable" identities, "some bilinguals ... reposition themselves (or to allow themselves to be repositioned by others) in terms of discourses comprehensible in their new society" (p. 332).

Giampapa (2001) explains that the participants in her study seemed to have to perform "a balancing act across their worlds both in terms of their language practices and their ethnic identities" (p. 308). In fact, one of the participants in her study calls himself a "chameleon" because he keeps changing and showing "different parts of his identities at different times" (Giampapa, 2001, p. 294). Similarly, author Helen Kim wrote, "I could not meld together the two cultures or find a happy medium. Rather, I dealt with the demands by pulling out a different identity from the compartments of myself as I needed" (quoted in Pavlenko, 2001, pp. 333 - 334).

Giampapa (2001) noted that one factor in her participants' "ability to move within and across worlds" was the "capitals at play within their worlds", including the value of their languages and cultures in different contexts (p. 295). Depending upon whether the participant is in a place that values English or the regional variety of Italian that he

learned at home, the participant "is sometimes living on the periphery, and sometimes moves towards the center in his 'multiple worlds'" (p. 295). Given the high cultural value attached to English in Japan, the notion of languages and cultures having different values as "capital" is relevant to North Americans of Japanese descent in this country.

Asian American Ethnic Identity Development

Takahashi (1997) points out the complex nature of the ethnic identity of Japanese Americans:

> Most ethnicity-based studies have approached this issue by posing such binary alternatives as assimilation or pluralism, although a recent study suggests that Japanese Americans are moving along the dual trajectories of structural assimilation and ethnic solidarity. (p. 205)

Tse (2000) summarized previous research on ethnic identity development which suggests that most members of ethnic minority groups go through a process of ethnic identity formation in which at first they are uninterested in their ethnic culture or actively reject their heritage, preferring the dominant culture instead, and then they gradually become more aware of their ethnicity, explore this culture and their identity, and eventually integrate their ethnic identity into their "overall social identity" (pp. 186 - 187). The developmental stage during which ethnic minority youth are not interested in their heritage culture is called Ethnic Ambivalence/Evasion, or EAE.

Several other studies support this model. Kondo-Brown (2000), for example, found that all of her Japanese American participants had resisted learning Japanese or felt indifferent to it when they were chil-

dren, although at the time of her study they were learning Japanese in college and were integrating their two languages and cultures in their identity. She also reported that their strategies had "changed from assimilative to additive modes over the years" (p. 13). Shibata and Koshiyama (2001) also noted that many of the Japanese American participants in their study of heritage language acquisition had not been interested in learning Japanese when they were children and had to be pushed somewhat by their parents to do so.

Similarly, Susan Matoba Adler (1998) tells how she "thought of [herself] as "no different from [her] European American friends, neighbors and classmates" when she was growing up in the Midwest, except for a few incidents of prejudice she encountered (p. 1). However, in high school and college, she began to be aware that others considered her to be different, and later on, her Asian background was often forefronted in her professional life. This made her "reflect upon the need and perhaps desire to begin an earnest study of [her] family's cultural history and of [her] own identity as a Midwestern Japanese American woman, educator and scholar" (p. 2).

Takahashi (1997) also describes how many Japanese Americans on the west coast become much more aware of their ethnicity when they go to college, where they experience "racialization" through Asian American political groups and study programs. "Through a cultural reawakening, prompted partly by racialization, many students have developed an interest in their ethnic roots and its implications for their own ethnic identity" (Takahashi, 1997, p. 210).

The salient features of EAE Tse (2000) gleaned from her analysis of the personal narratives of 38 Americans of Asian descent include 1)

desire to be accepted into the dominant group, 2) desire to look like members of the dominant group (in America, whites), 3) desire to distance themselves from their ethnic culture and parents or other relatives who represent it, and occasionally, 4) feelings of alienation.

Brown's (2003) study supports Tse's findings that Asian Americans have special identity issues because of their physical distinctiveness. She points out that Asian Americans need to cope with the difference between their own feelings of being American and American society's perception of them as different (Brown, 2003, p. 63). Similarly, Adler (1998), a self-described "midwestern Japanese American" Sansei (p. viii), refers to Asian Americans as "visible minorities" (p. vii). She describes how "European Americans" often pose a "challenge to the nationality of Asians" in the way they respond to them, "continually reinforc[ing] the concept of foreignness or 'other-ness' rather than Americanness, or citizenship" (Adler, 1998, p. 4).

Tse (2000) also examined how EAE affected Asian Americans' feelings about the majority language and their heritage language. She found that in many cases, "The desire to be part of the dominant culture translated into negative feelings toward the HL but positive attitudes toward the dominant language" (p. 195). Thus, "the need to assert American identity was also mirrored in the need to prove English fluency" (Tse, 2000, p. 198). It also sometimes led to "ambivalent or negative feelings toward" the heritage language (p. 196).

However, in an earlier study, Tse (1997) found that "bilingual students who had stronger proficiency in their heritage language considered their ethnic group more positively than those with lower heritage language proficiency" (summarized in Brown, 2003, p. 54). A study by

Oketani (1997) also found a strong correlation between positive views of ethnic identity and oral Japanese proficiency among her 42 Japanese Canadian Nisei participants (summarized in Brown, 2003, p. 54).

In her longitudinal study of four Japanese *kikoku shijo* (returnees), Kanno (2003) also noted the relationship between language proficiency and ethnic identity development, reporting that for returnees in Japan, "deficiency in Japanese language was considered synonymous with deficiency in being Japanese" (p. 18). Similarly, Yoshida's (2000) study of returnees suggested that Japanese language proficiency, and in particular, Japanese literacy, was closely associated with feelings of "Japaneseness" in terms of identity.

Kanno (2003) summarized Norton Peirce's (1995) concept of the way language learners may balance their investment of time and effort in language learning against anticipated returns such as recognition and acceptance as well as jobs and income (p. 4). Kanno (2003) argues that, "When society grants recognition to a particular competence, it is easier to incorporate it into one's positive identity" (p. 125). She concluded that her participants' "brand of bilingualism and biculturalism had more value as symbolic capital in Japan than in North America" because of the value Japan places on English (Kanno, 2003, p. 125). She also summarizes a study by McKay and Wong (1996) which utilized this concept of investment rather than motivation in language learning, and found that the teenage Chinese immigrants in their study sometimes stopped learning English in order to preserve positive images of themselves, since they had other identities to choose from (Kanno, 2003, p. 4). Thus, language proficiency—or lack of it—

can be seen as a strong indicator of ethnic identity.

However, Adler (1998) concluded that heritage language proficiency is not the only factor in the development of Japanese American identity. Even for those of her Midwestern Japanese American participants who did not speak much Japanese, she found that while they seemed to be "highly Americanized on the surface, underneath they share some common values and unanswered questions about their heritage" (Adler, 1998, p. 72).

While these studies by Tse and others appear to describe a shift in identity focus in Asian North Americans from one culture to the other, Kanno (2003) found that the four Japanese *kikoku shijo* (returnees) she studied "moved away from the simplistic strategy of total assimilation or total rejection, and shifted to more flexible ways of negotiating bilingual and bicultural identities" (p. 122). She also stressed that, "Having learned this lesson in turn helped them accept both languages and cultures, since they realized that in order to belong to a society, one does not necessarily have to sacrifice parts of oneself" (p. 122). She argues that bilinguals' identity development

> is not always from the dominant to one's ethnic culture; rather, it may be more accurately characterized as a move away from polarization to a middle ground. Put another way, it is a move away from an *either-or* orientation to bilingualism and biculturalism toward a more balanced *both-and* approach. (Kanno, 2003, p. 128)

Kanno (2003) also noted that her participants had gradually become aware that each of their cultures contained diverse elements. As this awareness developed, "They came to identify with parts of each cul-

ture they were comfortable with, and by participating in those aspects, they were able to affirm that they belonged to both cultures" (p. 130).

In *Farewell to Manzanar*, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston describes her own coming to terms with her two cultures:

> I have come to accept the cultural hybridness of my personality, to recognize it as a strength and not a weakness. Because I am culturally neither pure Japanese nor pure American does not mean I am less of a person. It means I have been enriched with the heritage of both.

The Nikkei in Japan

Finally, I would like to touch upon the experience of Japanese American anthropologist Dorinne Kondo, who lived with a Japanese family and worked at a Japanese factory in the Shitamachi area of Tokyo while conducting research on the development of Japanese identity, as I feel that she describes the kind of identity problems that North Americans of Japanese descent might face when they come to Japan.

In the first chapter of her book, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses in a Japanese Workplace*, Kondo (1990) describes her interactions with her Japanese hosts in great detail in order to explain the setting and framework of her work. She notes that she was given access to Japanese homes and workplaces because of her Japanese heritage, but that this came with expectations that she would act Japanese. When she succeeded in doing so, things went smoothly, but when she made linguistic or cultural mistakes, she was met with expressions of:

> bewilderment, incredulity, embarrassment, even anger, at having to deal with this odd person who looked Japanese and therefore human, but who must be retarded, deranged, or—equally undesirable in Japanese eyes—Chinese or Korean. (p. 11)

Despite her ethnic heritage and her study of the Japanese language in college, Kondo found that "Courses in literary Japanese at Harvard hadn't done much to prepare me for the realities of everyday life in Tokyo" (p. 11). She was constantly confronted with "exasperation and disbelief. How can someone who is racially Japanese lack 'cultural competence'?" (p. 11). This "dissonance" was "stressful" for both Kondo and those around her.

Nonetheless, those around Kondo did not rethink their positioning of her. She found that

> Most people preferred to treat me as a Japanese—sometimes an incomplete or unconventional Japanese, but a Japanese nonetheless. Indeed, even when I tried to represent myself as an American, others did not always take heed. (p. 13)

Thus, over time, Kondo found herself adapting increasingly "Japanese" behavior patterns in order to reduce the dissonance between her physical appearance and her behavior in the minds of those around her.

However, as a result of this "conspiracy to rewrite" her identity "as Japanese" (p. 17), she felt a dissonance in her own mind—"a kind of fragmenting of identity" between her Japanese and American sides (p. 14). This shift in identities reached a climax a few months after she came to Japan, as Kondo felt her American identity "collapse". This

crisis led her to begin emphasizing "the *differences* between cultures and among various aspects of identity" (p. 17). She decided that "in order to reconstitute myself as an American researcher, I felt I had to extricate myself from the conspiracy to rewrite my identity as Japanese" (p. 17).

The current study will examine the experience of seventeen long-term Japanese North American residents of Japan to see what experiences they had in common with Kondo and with each other.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I began with two main research questions for my study on North Americans of Japanese descent who have put down roots in Japan.

First, I wanted to know who returns, and why. Specifically, I decided to investigate whether the Nisei and Sansei who have settled in Japan share any common characteristics. Based on the above research, it seemed possible that certain North American communities—particularly on the west coast or in Hawaii—might have closer ties to Japan which might make it easier for members to come. Also, I thought that families which maintained stronger ties to Japan in terms of language, culture and family communication might encourage their young to seek out their "roots"—a particularly popular undertaking after the release in the early 1970s of *Roots*, Alex Haley's novelization of his family's history and its origins in Africa, and the subsequent 1977 television series based on that work. In designing the questionnaire used to conduct my research, I therefore asked a number of questions about the language(s) used in the participants'

family while they were growing up, the frequency of contact with Japanese relatives, and the extent of their knowledge of the Japanese language and culture before they came to Japan.

Another possibility I considered was that Nisei and Sansei who had experienced particularly virulent discrimination or who had an especially negative self image while living in the U.S. or Canada because of their Japanese background might have been more likely to seek out an environment where they would be part of the racial majority. My questionnaire was therefore designed to probe the participants' feelings about their family's background during childhood and the teenage years and to investigate any negative experiences the participants may have had due to their ethnic background.

Finally, since the above research suggested a relationship between Japanese language proficiency and positive feelings toward Japanese culture, and because my own research on the development of active bilingualism in bicultural families in Japan (Noguchi, 2001) suggested that the older children in a family tend to be more proficient in the minority language, it occurred to me that older children in a family might also have more positive views of their heritage culture and be more likely to explore the family's background by returning to the "home country". The questionnaire therefore included questions on the participants' place in their family.

My second research question concerned the kind of identities long-term North American Nikkei residents negotiate for themselves in Japan. I asked questions to investigate how they are positioned and how they try to position themselves.

METHODOLOGY

Since I knew of no previous quantitative research on North Americans of Japanese descent living in Japan, this study was conceived as a preliminary exploration of the background, language use and negotiation of identities of Americans and Canadians of Japanese descent who have lived in Japan on a long-term basis.

I began by designing a questionnaire to try to elicit answers to the above research questions. To determine if those filling in the questionnaire fit the parameters of the study, the survey instrument began with questions on citizenship and number of years of residence in Japan. The age and sex of respondents were also elicited, and one question asked whether or not the respondents were married to a Japanese national, as it was felt that this may be a reason for putting down roots in Japan. Most of the questions, however, were designed to gather information on ethnic background and identity to answer the research questions, as explained above. The survey instrument is reproduced in the Appendix for reference.

The questionnaire was distributed by email to Sansei friends and acquaintances who had been living in Japan for many years. I also asked these participants as well as other friends to pass the questionnaire on to other North Americans of Japanese descent who had been living in Japan for more than three years. In addition, I posted a call for participants on two internet bulletin boards for people doing research on bilingualism in Japan.

Fortunately, one of my acquaintances is a member of a newly forming network of Japanese Americans living in Japan, and he forwarded

the questionnaire to the members of that network. In addition, some-one who read my call on one of the web-based bulletin boards encour-aged a Japanese American acquaintance to fill in the questionnaire, and that participant forwarded it to several relatives, who also responded. Thus, although I began the study knowing only five poten-tial participants, within the space of three weeks in December 2004 I was able to gather responses from 18 U.S. and Canadian citizens of Japanese descent who had lived in Japan for more than three years. With the exception of one, all are still living in Japan.

While collecting this data, I received several emails asking whether I wished to include Japanese Americans who were raised in Hawaii and also, those who were biracial. Since Hawaii is part of the United States, I encouraged Japanese Americans who grew up in Hawaii to respond. On the other hand, because I felt that identity issues would be more complex for people of mixed ethnic background, I excluded those of mixed parentage from the study.

Since this is a small-scale convenience sample, the reliability of sta-tistical analysis of the responses could not be assured. Therefore, I took an open-ended approach to analysis, compiling the answers for each question and then searching for commonalities. The results are presented below in hopes that they may serve as a springboard for fur-ther research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal Profiles of Participants

As explained above, in trying to discover if North American

Nikkeijin who have settled in Japan have any common characteristics, the survey instrument included questions about when the participants' families had arrived in North America, which generation (Nisei, Sansei, Yonsei) the participants were, and whether they had older and younger siblings. Eighteen people responded to the questionnaire. The data for one was regretfully excluded because one of his parents was not of Japanese descent and it was felt that his mixed ethnicity would make it more difficult to draw conclusions from the data.

While I felt that it would be easier to present the data if names were used for the participants, the need to protect their privacy was also important. I therefore gave each participant a different name for the purposes of this paper, assigning Western names to those who had Western first names and Japanese names to those whose first names were Japanese.

The personal profiles of the 17 participants are presented in Table 1. In tabulating this information, I loosely grouped the participants by generation and birthplace. Two of the participants answered the question about generation by saying that they were "between Nisei and Sansei", since their fathers were Sansei but their mothers had been born and raised in Japan. I realized that this was true of a number of other participants who had called themselves Sansei, so for all participants whose mothers were Issei, I have added the short-hand label "2.5", which was created by one of the participants, in the generation column.

Although this was a convenience sample, the sex ratio of the participants is almost equal, with nine females and eight males. The aver-

TABLE 1: Participants' Personal Profiles

Name*	Age	Sex	Gene-ration	Years in Japan	Married	Japanese Spouse	Citizenship / Birthplace	Family Arrival in West**	Place in Family
Doris	60	F	Sansei	34	Yes	Yes	U.S.A. (Chicago)	1910s	1st of 3
Sarah	52	F	Sansei	30	Yes	Yes	U.S.A. (Chicago)	FF: 1899 in Hawaii, 1904 in San Francisco MF: Early 1900s	4th of 4
Barbara	55	F	Sansei	22	Yes	No	U.S.A.	Early 1900s	4th of 4
Linda	52	F	Sansei	30	Yes	Yes	U.S.A. (Seattle)	FF: 1900s MF: 1910s	1st of 3
Tim	39	M	Sansei	15	No	No	U.S.A.	FF: 1890s MF: 1920s	2nd of 3
Alice	43	F	Sansei ("2.5")	17	Yes	Yes	U.S.A. (California)	FF: 1920 M: marriage in 1957	3rd of 3
Kevin	46	M	Yonsei ("2.5")	14	Yes	Yes	U.S.A.	FF: 1880s M: marriage	1st of 2
Shizuko	44	F	Sansei ("2.5")	18	Yes	Yes	U.S.A.	FF: 1930s M: 1958	Only child
Ken	38	M	Sansei ("2.5")	10	No	No	U.S.A.	FF: 1940 M: marriage in 1958	2nd of 2
Judy	61	F	Sansei	22	Yes	No	Canada	FF: early 1900s	1st of 5
Leonard	37	M	Sansei ("2.5")	13	No	No	Canada	Father born in Canada M: marriage	3rd of 4
Sam	28	M	Nisei	7	No	No	Japanese / Canadian Dual (Vancouver)	F: 1960s M: 1970s	Only child
Gene	37	M	Nisei	11	Yes	Yes	Canadian / Japanese Dual	Late 1960s	1st of 2
Peter	42	M	Nisei	17	Yes	Yes	U.S.A.	F: Late 1950s M: 1960	1st of 3
Gary	55	M	Sansei ("2.5")	11	No	No	U.S.A. (Hawaii)	FF: before WWII M: marriage in 1947	Only child
Susan	49	F	Sansei	23	Yes	Yes	U.S.A. (Hawaii)	1920s	1st of 6
Lucy	52	F	Sansei	22	Yes	Yes	U.S.A. (Hawaii)	Early 1900s	4th of 4

Notes: * Participants' names have been changed to protect their privacy.
    ** FF: Father's family; MF: Mother's family; F: Father himself; M: Mother herself; marriage = came to get married.
    "2.5": One Nisei parent, one Issei parent

age age was 46, with two participants in their early sixties, five in their fifties, five in their forties, four in their thirties and only one in his late twenties.

As can be seen in Table 1, all of the participants had resided in Japan for well over the three years I stipulated in my call for respondents, with only one having lived in Japan for less than ten years. The average length of their residence in Japan was 18.6 years at the time of the survey, and seven of the participants had lived in Japan for more than twenty years. By subtracting the number of years of residence in Japan from the participant's age, I calculated each participant's approximate age on arrival. All were in their twenties (12) or early thirties (3) when they arrived except for Judy, who was 39, and Gary, who was 44. Judy mentioned that she had in fact lived in Japan earlier as a graduate student. Thus, all but one of the participants began living in Japan as young adults. With the exception of Ken, who moved back to the United States after living in Japan for ten years, and Gary, who commented that he might well move back to the States after his mother dies, none of the participants indicated that they had plans to move back to America or Canada. It is fair to say, then, that all of the participants had settled in the land of their ancestors on a permanent or at least long-term basis.

Thirteen of the participants were U.S. citizens and four were Canadian nationals. Two of the Canadians also had Japanese citizenship. Unfortunately, the survey instrument did not elicit information on where in the United States or Canada the participants were born and raised. However, many of the participants made this clear in their answers, so for them, this information is also provided in Table

1. Specifically, two noted that they grew up in the Chicago area, four on the west coast of Canada or the United States, and two in Hawaii. Gary was born in Hawaii but also spent parts of his childhood in Tokyo and California. Kevin is the son of a diplomat and lived in numerous countries, including Japan and the United States, while he was growing up.

   Eight of the participants are Sansei whose families immigrated before World War II, six have a Sansei or Nisei father and a mother who was born in Japan, and three are what Takahashi (1997) called "*shin Nisei*", whose families came to North America well after the end of the War. Seven of the participants were the oldest child in their family and three the only child, while five were the youngest sibling and two were middle children.

   Only five of the participants—all male—were unmarried at the time of the survey. Of the twelve married participants, all but two were married to Japanese nationals. Although four of the women came to Japan after they had married Japanese men, the others got married after arriving in Japan.

   Upon initial inspection of the personal background data, then, it can be said that the participants appeared to be fairly equally divided in terms of generation, place in the family and the area of the United States or Canada from which they came. The two things that many of the participants had in common were the facts that they arrived in their twenties or early thirties and that they now have a Japanese spouse. It should be noted that both of these things are also true of many North Americans of European descent who have become long-term residents of Japan.

In trying to determine what may have led the participants to "return" to the land of their ancestors, I hypothesized that exposure to the Japanese language and Japanese relatives during childhood might be a salient factor. I also surmised that Japanese Americans and Canadians might be more likely to come to Japan to live if their parents had received some of their education in Japan. I therefore asked questions on family language use and ties to Japan. The participants' answers to these questions are presented in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2, there was substantial variation in the amount of Japanese the participants were exposed to in their families while growing up, as well as in the frequency of visits by relatives from Japan. In eight of the participants' families the parents communicated with each other exclusively or mostly in Japanese, while the parents used a mixture of Japanese and English in five participants' families, and in four of the participants' families, the parents used exclusively or mostly English in communicating with each other.

In terms of parent-child communication, Japanese was the exclusive language used in only one case, although it was the main language of communication in two others. In two families, one or both of the parents used Japanese with the children when they were very young but switched to English later on. Both Japanese and English were used by the parents when talking to their children in five of the families, while English was the exclusive or main language of communication with children in eight of the families.

Rather than a certain pattern of language use being common to all or many of the participants, family language use appeared to vary according to the area where the family was living and the number of

TABLE 2: Language/Cultural Input Received in North America/Hawaii

Name	Parent-Parent Communication	Parent-Child(ren) Communication	Parents' Education in Japan	Family Visits
Doris	E	E	Father educated in Japan for 9 years	Often
Sarah	E & J	E	Both parents sent to Japan in teens to learn Japanese for 3 - 4 years	None
Barbara	E	E	No	Several times
Linda	E	E	No	Parents' siblings in 1950s
Tim	E except for gossip in J	E with a few J words mixed in	Paternal uncle a *kibei*; father worked in Japan during U.S. Occupation	Distant relatives, a few times
Alice	J	M: J F: E & some J	Mother lived in Japan until marriage Father and uncle raised by grandparents in Japan for 10 years	Occasionally
Kevin	J & E	J & E	Mother lived in Japan until marriage	1 visit from cousin
Shizuko	J or mix	Mostly E	Mother lived in Japan until marriage	Frequent visits from a number of relatives
Ken	J	E	Mother lived in Japan until marriage Father lived in Japan for a time as a child	Almost annual visits by near relatives
Judy	J	J at first; later, mostly E	Father and uncles—elementary and junior high school in Japan	Frequent visits by father & grandfather to Japan
Leonard	J	J	Father in Japan during internment; parents later came to Japan to work temporarily before Leonard was born.	Occasional visits by uncle & grandfather
Sam	J	J & E	Parents born and educated in Japan	Grandparents once
Gene	J	Mainly J	Both parents raised in Japan	Aunt came to Canada to live
Peter	J	J until Peter was 7, then M switched to E	Both parents raised in Japan	Maternal aunts once
Gary	J	Mostly J, some E	No	Two visits in early 70s
Susan	Mostly E	E	Both parents spent brief periods in Japan during their early childhood	Frequent visits by relatives
Lucy	J, E & pidgin E	E, pidgin, & J	Father raised in Japan by grandparents	Periodically

Notes: E = English; J = Japanese

generations since immigration. All of the Sanseis who grew up in the continental U.S. were raised in an exclusively English or mostly English environment. In contrast, in the families of the Canadian participants, as well as in those of the Nisei participants, the parents used Japanese with each other and spoke Japanese to their children when they were young, and in some cases, even when the participants were older. In the families of participants whose fathers were Nisei or Sansei but whose mothers were born and raised in Japan (labeled "2.5" on Table 1), the parents spoke Japanese with each other but used English most or all of the time with their children. Interestingly, the three participants who grew up in Hawaii had three different language environments: one was almost exclusively English, one, mostly Japanese, and the third, a mixture of Japanese, English and pidgin. Thus, family language use *per se* was probably not a factor in why the participants ended up settling in Japan.

However, as can be seen in Table 2, one or both of the parents of all but three of the participants received some or all of their education in Japan or at least had lived in Japan. Thus, rather than use of the Japanese language in the family or frequent visits by relatives, it appears that the experience of the participants' parents in Japan, especially in terms of education, is something that many of the participants have in common.

Knowledge of Japanese Language and Culture Before Arrival

In the main part of the questionnaire, the participants were asked the extent of their knowledge of the Japanese language and culture when they arrived in Japan (questions 3 and 6). As might be surmised

from the information already provided on language use in the partici-pants' families and visits from Japanese relatives, the answers were quite varied.

The participants' Japanese language skills when they arrived in Japan ranged from "virtually none" to highly proficient. Doris, Barbara, and surprisingly, Gary (whose parents reportedly used Japanese with each other and for the most part, with him, too), said they could speak very little Japanese when they arrived. Shizuko, Ken, Peter, Lucy and Susan indicated that they had learned basic con-versation skills in the family. Linda, Tim and Leonard had studied Japanese in college and thus acquired what they called "textbook Japanese". Sarah attended Japanese school for an hour and a half weekly from age nine through high school and also took three years of Japanese in college, yet she wrote, "I had textbook knowledge of Japanese, but never had had a real conversation with anyone." Alice also studied Japanese in college, and this plus what she had learned from her parents meant that she "was able to understand most of what was said [in] daily conversation" and could also read and write fairly well. Kevin noted that he had lived in Tokyo for six and a half years while he was in elementary school and therefore could handle conversation in Japanese. Sam had passed the second grade (2-kyu) level Japanese Proficiency Test before arriving in Japan, while Gene had passed the first grade (1-kyu) test. Finally, Judy had been exposed to Japanese in the home and studied it in college, so that by the first time she came to Japan, she knew "enough to do graduate work in Japanese and teach elementary and intermediate classes."

Similarly, there was a range in the understanding of Japanese cul-

ture claimed by the participants. Barbara and Linda, two Sansei who grew up in the continental U.S. with English as their home language, both responded "not that well" to question 6. Doris, whose background was similar to Barbara's and Linda's, answered,

> Very superficially. I lived next door to my grandparents, so I was exposed to a lot of Japanese things but I couldn't communicate with them well.

Sarah, the other Sansei woman who grew up in the continental U.S., appeared to have gained most of her knowledge of Japanese culture from activities in the community rather than at home. She wrote:

> I wasn't familiar with Japanese culture other than what I experienced attending Buddhist Sunday School and Japanese American events. I did some tea ceremony as part of a Japanese culture course in college and did some Japanese "*buyo*" in high school which I really enjoyed.

On the other hand, Tim, the fifth Sansei who grew up in the continental U.S. and experienced a mainly English home language environment, felt he had learned quite a bit about Japanese culture at home. He wrote:

> I actually knew quite a lot. At my grandmother's we would make *Mochi* during the New Years and eat all of the traditional New Years food. We also celebrated Boys Day and Girls Day at my grandmother's and went to the cemetery during Obon. I feel that I am about the same level culturally as someone of my age in Japan, but I have often done more things, such as going Matsutake picking or making *Mochi*, or helping out at Bon Odori at the Buddhist temple. Or even helping set up the house *Butsudan*. Of course, someone in Japan feels that all of these things are natural and typical and not apart of their special identity, where I felt all of these

things were an important part of my identity—of being me.

In answer to question 1 (Why did you come to Japan?), Tim also had the following to say:

> My grandmother was very traditional, so everything in her house was Japanese. There were bonsai trees, a Japanese garden in the back yard, a *butsudan* in the wall, many folding screens and scrolls on the walls. Her house was like a window to Japan, so I just wanted to see it for myself. I often consider myself more between a Nisei and Sansei—a "2.5". Because my grandmother was so traditional, I learned all about Japanese culture through her and other traditions by going to the Seattle Buddhist Temple / White River Buddhist temple.

The other participants—the Canadians, the "2.5" generation participants, and those from Hawaii—all felt a fair amount of familiarity with Japanese culture. However, several participants qualified this in two ways. First, Judy, Peter and Susan mentioned that the Japanese culture they learned at home was dated. Susan wrote that she "found it had modernized here in Japan", while Peter characterized the culture he learned as "time-bound to 1960s values and not in tune with those of the time."

The second qualification mentioned by three of the participants echoes the lack of deeper understanding or "cultural competence" described by Kondo (1990). Lucy briefly touched upon this in her response to question 6:

> I grew up watching Japanese movies, going to bon dances and eating Japanese food, so the culture didn't seem foreign to me at all. Being comfortable with a culture, however, is not exactly the same as understanding it.

Leonard explained the problem in a bit more depth:

> I had the basics…but I was in for a surprise after actually coming to Japan. (i.e., giving money at weddings and funerals, gift giving [*oseibo, ochugen, omiyage* to your co-workers/friends/neighbours, etc. after coming back from a trip], *nomikais*, sexual harassment that goes on in the office, personal questions, *nijikais*, karaoke, etc.)

Alice's response offers the biggest insight into the difference—suggested by Kondo (1990)—between the knowledge of material culture that many North Americans of Japanese descent acquire at home and everyday cultural competence developed while growing up in a completely Japanese environment. Alice wrote:

> I thought I had a pretty good handle on it until I got here. In other words, compared to most Nikkei-Sansei and beyond, our family was much closer to being "Japanese" by virtue of my mother and father's background of having lived in Japan during their very formative years and speaking the language at home. I would say the majority of Japanese-Americans that I know in the Seattle area know very little Japanese and that their version of Japanese culture has been substantially Americanized (e.g., turkey on New Year's day along with *Osechi*). My mother, however, was a purist. She had to have only the best and appropriate foods for New Year's (Okayama style) and would actually cringe at what she thought was a bastardization. We also celebrated Girls' Day with *Osekihan* and *asari* soup (in place of *hamaguri*), and she even made her own *sakura mochi*. I would say in terms of food and holiday culture, our family was and is in many ways more traditional than many people in Japan today.
>
> Having said this, after living here for a while, I realized that I actually knew very little about Japan and its culture. I had always heard or studied about consensus decision-making, *nemawashi* and the pressure to conform, but I never really knew what it meant until I got married, started working professionally and really got settled into life here. The whole socialization process here is a different can of worms!

> This was something I had not been exposed to in the U.S. and thus was really not prepared for at all. The sheer amount of conformity required to live peacefully in school and neighborhood communities astounds me to this day. You see, because of my background and so-called "racial purity" (gosh, I hate that word), I felt more pressure. I had the proverbial you-should-know-what-to-do-you're-one-of-us tricks thrown at my face quite often. But I also realize this was because my Japanese was good enough to pass as a native. I suppose coming to Japan has made me realize just how American I really am.

In this answer, we get a hint of the tensions between the participants' pre-arrival beliefs about their ethnic identity and their understanding of Japanese culture and their actual cultural orientation. We can also see how this gap might lead to problems in dealing with people in Japan, since Japanese people might expect that people who look Japanese, speak Japanese and have experienced a certain amount of Japanese culture while growing up would conform to Japanese cultural norms most of the time.

Reasons for Coming and Intended Length of Stay

Many participants gave more than one answer to the question "Why did you come to Japan?" The most common reason, however, was expected. Ten of the participants indicated that they came to learn more about the land of their ancestors and/or to study the language. Barbara wrote, "I wanted to see things with my own eyes. I was interested in exploring my 'roots'." Two of the participants were accompanying their Japanese (Issei) mothers when they came, while four of the women came with their Japanese husbands. One of the men said that in addition to conducting research, he also wanted "to

find a wife", and in fact, he managed to do that. Another man said he wanted to "re-connect with family relatives." In addition to the many answers directly related to the participants' ethnic background, other responses given by more than one participant were to work (4) and to do graduate studies (2).

Only three of the participants appeared to have come with the idea that they would stay for a long time, two of them because they were accompanying their Japanese husbands, who were planning to work in Japan, and one of them who was accompanying his Japanese mother, who had decided she wanted to return to Japan to live after her second husband passed away. One of the other women who came because of her husband's job had been led by his boss to believe that they would be able to go back to the States after a few years, but the promised transfer back never materialized. Another two said they hadn't thought about how long they'd stay, while the remaining 11 said they intended to stay anywhere from two weeks to five years. Thus, 14 out of the 17 participants did not come to Japan with the intension of putting down roots here.

Current Knowledge of Japanese Language

After living in Japan for a decade or more in most cases, all of the participants indicated that they could handle daily conversation in Japanese. Two reported that they had passed the level 2 (2-kyu) Japanese Proficiency Test, while six rated themselves as fluent or "near native". However, two of these qualified this sanguine evaluation. Sarah wrote, "I can easily have an everyday conversation, but am limited when it comes to topics concerning politics and economics."

Judy explained that she could speak "Fairly fluently, but with a recognizably non-native deficit of vocabulary and natural expressions, especially as the conversation progresses beyond daily generalities."

Reading and writing were much more problematic for all of the participants. Only two professed much fluency, and even then, Judy noted, "Currently, I can write letters and emails with the help of handbooks, but it's not an easy undertaking." Seven of the participants felt they could handle daily writing tasks and read simple materials. Eight indicated that they were reading and writing at the lower elementary school grade levels. Two of the women with Japanese spouses noted that they asked their husbands for help when they needed to write something.

Moreover, four of the participants reported that their literacy skills had deteriorated over time. Alice explained: "These days (especially after having a child), Japanese studies have taken a back seat." Lucy commented at length on her backsliding:

> I think I became lazy about trying to polish my reading/writing skills in Japanese because my husband takes care of all of the "formal" stuff (tax reports, etc.) and my children read important memos to me. Sometimes it amazes me that I can function in this highly literate society with the barest of skills in reading and writing, and I feel embarrassed about it. I can identify with my grandmother from Japan who did not speak a word of English despite having lived more than 60 years in Hawaii.

Thus, after decades of living in Japan, even participants whose parents spoke Japanese to them and who studied Japanese in college did not claim near-native literacy skills. This may not be surprising to Second Language Acquisition specialists, but it may well be unexpect-

ed in Japanese society at large.

Considered together, the participants' evaluations of their Japanese language proficiency before arrival and at the present time suggest that most worked on their language skills after they arrived, but then at some point, stopped studying it. The reason why many of them stopped may be that as they aged and settled down, work and family demands made continued study difficult. However, it is also possible that, like the Chinese immigrants in the McKay and Wong (1996) study cited by Kanno (2003), they stopped learning in order to pre-serve a positive self image—in this case, of an English-speaking Westerner.

Feelings About Ethnic Background

Questions 8 through 10 on the survey instrument were designed to explore the participants' feelings about their family background while they were growing up in order to see if they had gone through the pat-tern described by Tse (2000) of Ethnic Ambivalence/Evasion (EAE) fol-lowed by interest in their family background, as it was thought that such heightened interest in their heritage may have led to their deci-sion to come to Japan. I also thought that it was possible that feelings of alienation from North American society could possibly have led some of the participants to abandon the country of their birth for a land in which they would be part of the racial majority.

The participants' answers to question 10, which asked if they had ever felt uncomfortable about their family background/ethnicity when they lived in North America, can be broken down into three types. Four of the participants, including two of the three Nisei and the two

women who grew up in Hawaii, indicated that they had never felt uncomfortable about their Japanese background. The third Nisei, Peter, said he experienced very little discrimination from white Americans, but that both he and his sister had experienced prejudice, and in his case, jeering and the threat of physical violence, from South Koreans.

Of the other twelve participants, four were made to feel uncomfortable by overt discriminatory behavior by others, including ridicule by classmates and even teachers, and in one case, verbal and physical threats. The remaining eight all mentioned discomfort based on the fact that they perceived themselves to be different from those around them. For some, this discomfort arose from a general longing to be like their peers. For instance, Ken responded:

> I never felt uncomfortable about my family background/ethnicity per se, but there were times when I wished I grew up in a more Americanized family, so I could identify/communicate easier with other Americans. (disconnect in cultural literacy)

For Sarah, being different seemed to be almost painful. She wrote:

> I was always uncomfortable about being Japanese. I remember being embarrassed when I had to introduce my grandparents (who did not speak any English) to my friends. They represented a part of my life that I didn't want anyone to know about. They were so Japanese and represented the Japanese side of me, the side that I wanted to hide. I was so tired of being different and not blending in, and my grandparents made me feel that we were not Americans. I wanted my family to be a "typical white American family". I just wanted to be like my white friends. My world was so small. I guess my parents never had the time to talk to me about life, about being proud of my heritage, about believing in myself. They

were so terribly busy trying to make ends meet and, being the youngest of four children, they didn't have time for me. Wanting something I couldn't have, and not being able to verbalize those feelings and not having anyone to give me the confidence I needed to feel good about myself were things that I desperately needed as a child.

For some of the participants, this difference was felt more in specific circumstances— particularly during history lessons. For example, Barbara commented:

In school I did not want attention drawn to me if the history lesson turned to WWII or about Japan. Though teachers never put me on the spot or singled me out, I heard and felt comments about my being Japanese. (I heard the term "Jap", for example.)

Tim mentioned that he became more aware of his background when his high school class was told to interview someone who had been alive when Franklin D. Roosevelt died. He discovered that his aunts and uncles, who had been in internment camps at the time, didn't have much of a reaction to the President's death, unlike the relatives of Tim's classmates. This made Tim more aware of the fact that his family's background was different and spurred him to find out more about it.

The above experiences the participants related in responding to question 10 are reflected in their answers to question 8: "How did you feel about your family background/ethnicity when you were a child?" In total, ten of the participants noted some negative feelings about their ethnicity or efforts to distance themselves from it. On the mild end, Doris "Felt a little self-conscious" and Shizuko noted "at some

point I do remember wishing I were more American looking, like one of the 'Brady Bunch', and had more of a life like theirs." Alice explained that in the racially diverse community she grew up in, children distinguished between new arrivals and "Americans", and that she and her brothers identified themselves with the latter. She said she believed "this contributed to a rejection of our Japanese culture when we were young children." On the harsher end, Sarah confessed, "To be honest, I was ashamed of being Japanese American. I wanted to be 'white' like my friends." Gary answered, "Not good. Always ridiculed at school because of being oriental." Judy's reaction was an interesting mixture: "I both resented being a visible minority with all the things that meant growing up in post-war Canada and was secretly happy because I thought I had a unique background."

In contrast, three of the participants reported having no special feelings about their background. Tim chalked this up to his personality, as follows:

> I didn't really think about it. I lived in the suburbs with very few Japanese. I just thought I was a typical American (90% the same with the rest being your own personality). I thought of my Japanese [side] as my own personality. There was no discrimination or separation in school because of me being Japanese, but I might have just been naïve.

For Lucy, on the other hand, the diversity of the community in which she grew up in Hawaii made her feel that her background was normal.

> Everyone in the neighborhood had Asian or Pacific family roots (Japanese, Chinese, Samoan, Filipino, etc.). It was only natural to have your own

ethnic origins, customs and foods, and to be proud of them.

Susan, the other participant who grew up in Hawaii, also indicated that she felt "OK" about her ethnicity in her childhood.

On the positive end of the scale, two of the male participants, both of them Nisei, reported feeling good about their background. Sam answered that he was "Proud to be Japanese". Peter responded, "I thought my ancestors were samurai. It was kind of fun to see my classmates gross out on my pack lunches—ramen noodles, and raw fish."

As they moved into adolescence, the situation changed for some of the participants. Barbara seems to have gone through a pattern of EAE in her teens. In response to question 8, she mentioned that she had "moved to a state with very few Japanese-Americans" in her child-hood and after that, she "was not particularly proud of [her] heritage. It seemed to be a disadvantage." Then, in response to question 9, she wrote, "The feelings of denial of my heritage were magnified during adolescence." Peter, who reported feeling positive about his back-ground as a child, also seemed to have developed problems during his teens. He noted, "I felt inferior not having a middle name."

On the other hand, the answers of four of the male participants, Tim, Leonard, Ken, and Gene, indicated that they had begun to emerge from the EAE stage and feel better about their background or take more of an interest in it during their teens. In Tim's case, this was a direct result of the homework assignment that had made him notice the differences between his relatives and the families of his classmates. Two others—Alice and Kevin—who had distanced them-

selves from their background as children, said they did not think about it as much in adolescence. Alice quipped, "By the time I was a teenager, the above issues didn't matter much anymore—boys took center stage."

For other participants, their feelings appeared to have remained the same during their teen years. The two women who grew up in multi-cultural Hawaii continued to feel comfortable with their background, and Sam, a Nisei, kept his feelings of pride in his heritage. Meanwhile, Doris, Judy and Gary indicated that they still had problems with being different. Sarah and Shizuko also mentioned problems, but noted that Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) activities provided some relief. Linda also mentioned that "most of [her] social interactions were with other Nikkei" at this time.

To sum up, the participants' experiences and feelings about their background varied greatly, depending upon their generation, the community in which they grew up, and their personality. The Nisei and the participants raised in Hawaii do not appear to have followed the pattern of ethnic identity development described by Tse (2000). Many—but not all—of the Sansei who grew up in the continental U.S. and Canada, however, did seem to have gone through the stages Tse described. In fact, their emergence from EAE may have been at least part of the motivation for them to come to Japan in early adulthood, given that most mentioned a desire to learn more about Japan or learn more Japanese language in explaining why they came to Japan. While four of the participants reported having experienced prejudice and discrimination, judging from the reasons they gave for coming to Japan, alienation caused by this behavior and/or self perceptions of

difference do not appear to have been the direct cause of their move to this country.

Identity in Japan

Question 11 asked how participants felt about their family background after they came to Japan. Lucy found that "It was initially a shock for me to look like everybody else in the country." Nine of the participants, however, responded that they felt good or all right about it and/or that it had helped them understand themselves or their family more. Alice, for example, just responded "Darn proud of it." Shizuko answered, "I felt much better somehow. More comfortable, proud in a way." Doris commented, "It helped to make my transition to Japanese life very smooth. I never felt that it got in the way living in Japan." Linda noted,

> I felt I could understand my grandparents much more after having acquired sufficient communicative skills and made an effort to write letters/visit with them when I was in the States. At times, I felt I had become the "expert" in my family about Japanese culture, which I tried to share with my family in the States.

Barbara noticed some difference between the culture of her own family and what she experienced in Japan, but still felt some cultural affinity. She wrote, "I noticed how different the Japanese were from my family and other Japanese-Americans I knew. I began to get a sense, however, of the 'Japanese' influence on my own behavior/values."

In contrast, Sarah complained that her Japanese background didn't help as much as she expected:

I thought living in Japan would be easy because I was no longer the visible minority, but I soon found out that being the invisible minority is almost as bad. I blended in but I certainly didn't feel comfortable.

Judy also expressed frustration with her situation:

I felt deceived because I had always been brought up to believe that I was Japanese. I soon realized that no one else in Japan considered me Japanese, and often, as something less. My love affair with Japanese culture from my university days continued as long I was in the Zen environment, but reality did intrude from time to time.

Similarly, Ken noticed a difference that made him feel "more American than Japanese." He went on to say he found "The culture gap between native Japanese people and me was much larger than the gap between American friends and me." Sam may have felt something similar, for he remarked that he was "Disappointed in the Japanese mentality." Gene's reaction appears to have been somewhat mixed. He found this a "Hard question", but then summarized his feelings as "still proud but less patriotic. More like Alex Hailey than Mel Gibson."

Interestingly, only one of the participants mentioned the kind of problems that Kondo (1990) described. Kevin, after noting some unpleasant procedures required because of his "foreigner status (red tape in applying for visas, being fingerprinted for foreigner ID card, my Japanese name in katakana, wife's married name also in katakana though she is Japanese)", went on to echo Kondo's complaints:

There's more pressure functioning in Japan due to my name and ethnicity.

> Although I'm an Asian foreigner as opposed to a Caucasian foreigner, there is a variance in expectations and reliance, perhaps higher, in the adjustment and functioning socially and culturally.

Nonetheless, most of the participants had positive comments in response to question 12, which asked "How comfortable would you say you are living in Japan?" Five answered that they were "very" or "quite" comfortable. Shizuko and Peter both commented that they thought they were more comfortable than they might have been if they had stayed in America, though their reasons were different. Shizuko explained: "It is nice to look like everyone else, to be able to blend in." Peter, on the other hand, seemed to have both the recent U.S. Presidential election and his current location in mind when he wrote, "more comfortable than in 'red' America now. I prefer '*inaka*' to living in the city."

Another five participants answered that they were comfortable, but then added some kind of qualifier. Sam complained again about the Japanese mentality, answering "Quite comfortable, but dislike the Japanese hard-headed thinking." Gene responded: "Another tough question … reasonably comfortable material-wise, but there are also unresolved issues. (Prefer to remain vague here.)" Lucy suggested a certain coldness and lack of acceptance of diversity in Japan, stating "I feel very comfortable living here. At the same time, there is no place like Hawaii where even strangers are friendly and ethnic and cultural differences are casually accepted." Both Susan and Gary noted that language difficulties made life harder for them. Susan commented, "recently wish I could get more information about things. Something

simple can take a long time for me." Gary stated, "Mostly OK. The language is still a problem. Everyday life is normal. No big problems." Barbara also mentioned language difficulties, although she put a positive slant on them: "there are always things that I don't understand (either language or some unstated behavior or value); I like the challenge of trying to understand these 'new' things to me—it's certainly never boring."

Two other participants did not respond completely in the affirmative, but at least indicated that they have adjusted to living in Japan. Like Susan and Gary, Kevin mentioned language problems in his response:

> More comfortable but not as comfortable as living in the U.S., mainly because of the language and cultural barrier, but most of all, how dramatic Japan has transformed from the 60s to the 90s.

For Sarah, the problem seemed to be one of fitting in, but she appeared to have reached a compromise.

> I am as comfortable as I am ever going to be. I know that I will never feel 100% comfortable living in Japan, but I know that it would be hard to live in the U.S. again. I can move in both societies fairly easily and that's good enough for me.

The only participant who did not say he was comfortable in Japan was Ken, who ended up returning to the U.S. after living in Japan for ten years. He answered question 12 as follows:

> N/A: but I can say I feel more comfortable in the U.S. now. The main rea-

son is language. The stress of struggling with language in and outside of work is no longer there.

It appears, then, that Americans and Canadians of Japanese descent who put down roots in the land of their ancestors in general find their background helpful in settling in this country and come to feel a fair degree of comfort because of this heritage and the fact that they look like the people around them. One of the biggest factors in any long-term discomfort they may feel tends to be due to language difficulties. As reported above, even the most fluent of the participants noted limitations on both their spoken and written Japanese language proficiency.

Yet despite these professed limitations in their Japanese, most of the participants reported using Japanese with some or all of the members of their family in Japan in answer to question 7. Six said they used only Japanese, while eight said they used Japanese with some people and English with others or Japanese and English with some family members. Only two of the participants said they only use English with family members, and in both cases, the other family members were not Japanese. Leonard said he speaks English with his brother, while Judy speaks English with her Anglo-Canadian husband and their daughter, who went to an international school.

Question 13 asked, "How would you describe your ethnic identity now? Do you think of yourself as Japanese, American/Canadian, Japanese-American/Canadian, as something in between, or do you take on different identities at different times and in different situations?" The most common answer, given by seven of the participants,

was "Japanese American" or "Japanese Canadian", although almost all of the participants gave lengthy, complex answers.

Two of those who answered in that way admitted that their identity changes in different situations. Another six participants gave detailed explanations of how their identity changes. Kevin, for example, wrote:

> Working at a Japanese educational institution, I'm reminded that I'm a foreigner. In memos and school documents, my name is typed in romaji. I'm constantly asked to proofread English abstracts and papers. When I don't appear to understand something communicated to me in Japanese, colleagues are "kind" to switch to English.
>
> My wife and I attend a Christian church where services are held in Japanese. We feel more Japanese in this environment because we communicate with our friends in Japanese.

Sam made a list of his identities: "I am a Canadian in Japan. A Japanese in Canada. And a Taiwanese (wannabe) in Taiwan." Peter explained his changing identity as follows:

> I shift depending on people's initial reactions in situations. With students, I try to assert my American identity as well as my Japanese ancestry. With people I'd rather not be familiar with or those who question my "American-ness", I'm content to be viewed as Japanese.

Interestingly, Gene used the same metaphor that one of the participants in Giampapa's (2001) study did—he called himself a chameleon. He wrote,

> I reluctantly think of myself as an opportunistic culture-chameleon of sorts, i.e., I adapt to my surroundings in such a way that I don't get hurt. Pathetic? Yes. Call it a survivalist instinct.

Only one participant completely emphasized his North American identity in answering this question. Leonard said, " I view myself as Canadian in Japan when I'm with Japanese and other non-Canadians." Two other participants avoided choosing any labels. Doris, in fact, made a point of this, stating, "I feel blessed that I have two cultural heritages and don't want to get hung up with labels."

In responding to question 11, two of the participants wrote lengthy answers that provide insight into the process of Nikkei identity development in Japan. I will therefore quote them here. First, Sarah wrote:

> Although I've been here for 30 years, I still feel awkward and unsure of what is the "right" thing to do in Japanese society but it doesn't bother me as much as before. The longer I stay in Japan, the more I feel I can never be totally Japanese nor totally American.
>
> I have grown to be proud of being Japanese American or "Sansei". I am proud that many of my Japanese American friends and their children are active in Japanese cultural activities. They are doing their part to preserve Japanese culture by taking classes in Japanese dance, tea ceremony, "*taiko*" and so on. They enjoy making New Year's dishes and do things that most Japanese people no longer do.
>
> After coming to Japan, I began to read more about Japanese Americans and tried to understand what effect being in the internment camp had on my parents. I am beginning to understand why they were unable to talk to me about their experiences during and after World War II. I now feel guilty and ashamed of not trying to get to know my grandparents more and not treating them better even though we lived in the same building. I see how foolish I was for being ashamed of my heritage. I see now that I missed a lot of opportunities because of my feelings of inadequacy.
>
> But, most importantly, after years and years of trying to run away from who I was, I have realized that I am proud to be Japanese American and regret that my parents are no longer alive to hear me say that.

In Sarah's words, we see not only a good example of the pattern of ethnic identity development described by Tse (2000), complete with an EAE stage, but also, a final stage in which Sarah moved away from an *either-or* approach to a *both-and* identity like the identities developed by the *kikoku shijo* in Kanno's (2003) study.

Next, I will reproduce parts of Judy's answers to questions 11 and 13.

(11) Linguistically, it took a long time not to feel ashamed of my Wakayama/Kansai accent. I think I owe much of this to the rise of interest in folkloric studies and *hogen* in Japan. It took some digging into family history to regain my sense of pride in my family roots but now I wouldn't have it any other way.

(13) I call myself Japanese-Canadian but after so many long absences from Canada I'm a little different from Japanese-Canadians who don't speak Japanese or have never been to Japan. When I look at the Canadian-Japanese histories written by Sansei, I sometimes feel as though I missed out on being part of the community and important events there such as the redress movement. I realize that I cannot speak Wakayama-ben and am saddened by that. But I also realize that the generation of my parents will probably be the last to speak the unique Canadian mix of English and Kishu-ben.

I do seem to drift in and out of a couple of different identities. For example, at the university I work at, I find myself feeling just as comfortable with the Japanese teachers as with the Western teachers but shift mannerisms and attitudes depending on the language being used. When I'm talking to my Japanese-Canadian aunt who has spent most of her life in Japan, I feel most at home because she knows where I'm coming from. In the end, none of that is really of any import because my real identity is a spiritual one and my real home is the Baha'i world where multiple national and linguistic identities abound.

Here, too, we see a move away from a polarized *either-or* identity towards the kind of "middle ground" reached by the returnees in

Kanno's (2003) study.

Question 14 was designed to see how the participants are positioned by Japanese. It asked "How do you think Japanese people view your ethnic identity now? (Please be as specific as possible if different types of people view you in different ways.)" The most common answer, given by eight participants, was that different types of Japanese view them in different ways. I will quote two examples of this type of answer. First, from Linda:

> With those whom I interact in Japanese, most would probably say I was Japanese, and sometimes they have remarked to that effect since I cook Japanese food and follow many of the customs. With my Japanese colleagues, I am the native speaker, so that seems to override everything else. I can usually "pass" when speaking with store clerks. Students who meet me for the first time wrestle with my identity and unabashedly ask if I am "Half".

Second, a long, funny answer from Alice:

> My work peers view me as American.
> My students figure it out in a couple of weeks and thereafter view me as American.
> My in-laws and other relatives on my husband's side STILL think I'm from Canada (!) but treat me in a very Japanese way and expect me to have all the values inherent.
> My relatives on my mother's side (in Okayama) treat me as the daughter of my mother, i.e., Japanese of Okayama descent.
> My neighbors view me as Japanese but can't figure out why we have two name plates on our door and don't live with the in-laws.
> My daughter's friends view me as her mother who speaks English all the time ("Oh, so SHE's the *gaijin*!")
> My daughter's teachers don't know what to do with me nor do they know how to address me, as my daughter and I have different surnames.

> The milkman loves my convoluted kanji but still can't figure out who the foreigner in the family is.
> My Birmingham Univ. advisor can't make heads or tails out of me.
> My "dentist" wants to do a root canal and thinks I can only say "*Konnichiwa*", while he can only say "teeth" in English. I only want him to say "root canal" in English and everything else in Japanese.
> I could go on … but you get the picture.

The other participants each offered a single answer to this question. Three said Japanese American, two said Japanese, two said American, one said *gaijin*, and the last gave a long answer indicating that people generally just accept him for himself.

Almost none of the answers were short, however; most of the participants elaborated. In the explanations, several common themes emerged. Five of the participants mentioned that Japanese people had asked them if they were "half", as Linda reported in the above quote. Five said that they thought some people viewed them as "strange", or "strange Japanese". For example, Sarah noted that "People who have little or no interest in English see me as a strange Japanese woman or a strange woman who can't speak Japanese. They tend to keep their distance from me." Sam noted a similar phenomenon: "Some Japanese look at me as a strange Japanese, somewhat cocky and intimidating, while others look at me as an interesting unique Japanese."

Something else mentioned in three of the participants' answers was an NHK series called "Sakura" which was broadcast in 2002 and focused on a Hawaiian Yonsei who came to Japan to work. Barbara felt the situation it portrayed was "inauthentic". She said that the character was highly fluent in Japanese from the time she arrived—

very different from the situation of the 17 participants in this study. On the other hand, Sakura had trouble with a number of customs that Barbara said "we all picked up very quickly." Barbara actually got so upset by the portrayal of Sakura that she began contacting other Japanese Americans living in Japan to talk about their situation and they formed an informal network in the fall of 2003.

Judy also mentioned this program, stating, "The NHK series did both a service and a disservice to overseas Japanese. While raising public consciousness on one hand, it also glossed over too many important distinctions." Shizuko, too, referred to the program in her answer, quoted below.

> I think that Japanese people see me as Nisei-Sansei, perhaps think of me as a "Sakura" (from the NHK program.) I still do not feel that I am totally accepted as one of them and I believe that I never will be. I feel strangely like I lose out on the advantages of being a true *gaijin* in that perhaps the Japanese feel that I am not 100% foreigner because my coloring is not blue/blond or whatever. I feel this especially when applying for jobs. So, I feel they view me as sort of a distant relative, not completely unrelated, but not 100% one of them.

Thus, in this section we have seen that most of the participants feel that their background helped them settle in Japan, and most said that they are comfortable living here. Although most see themselves as Japanese Americans or Japanese Canadians, Japanese people react to them in a variety of ways, with some Japanese confusing them with so-called "halfs" (biracial people) and others regarding them as "strange" Japanese. It appears that not even the public broadcaster NHK really understands them.

Positioning and Identity Negotiation

Some of the answers quoted above have given examples of how the participants have been positioned by the Japanese they interact with. Shizuko's answer, for example, details the way she feels she has been positioned as "a distant relative". Judy hit a similar theme, saying, "One thing that will probably take a long time to dissolve, is the outsider-insider barrier. Nisei and Sansei are placed on the outsider side of the fence. Genetic origins are not enough to overcome the cultural and linguistic hurdles."

Sarah, on the other hand, mentioned how people view her once they realize she is a native speaker of English:

> People who are learning English or are interested in English see me as an American with a Japanese face. Unfortunately, they always want to know how to say something in English or what people in America think and it's hard for many of them to see me as a person. I'm always the American.

Several of the participants also mentioned how they position themselves in order to negotiate identities that are comfortable for them. Three of them—Tim, Barbara and Gary— emphasized that they always tell new people they meet that they are Japanese American, "to enable them to 'place' me", as Barbara says. Tim explained his strategy at length in his additional comments at the end of the questionnaire:

> I just usually open most conversations by asking if they speak English and then continue the conversation in my broken Japanese. This gets you though the first barrier of a homogenous culture. Then they don't assume you know the hidden meanings in most phrases or words.

As seen above, Peter asserts his American identity in some cases, but unlike Tim, Barbara and Gary, he does not always choose to do so.

Leonard also mentioned that he sometimes asserts his Canadian identity, pretending "not to speak any Japanese and [going] English all the way" at international parties because otherwise, Japanese girls seemed only to be "interested in 'blond hair/blue eyes'". He reported that this strategy "works most of the time."

Lucy's answer to question 13 suggests that she asserts her American identity, too, but mostly in order to escape Japanese society's strong gender role expectations. She admits, though, that since she came to Japan after marrying a Japanese man, "much of my identity is being wrapped up in being a woman in Japan", and the cultural disconnect means that "things get a little confused because gender differences are also so culturally ingrained here."

In contrast, Linda said she made "a great effort to 'blend in'" in her neighborhood. Alice said she does that too, but also feels free to emphasize her American identity when it is to her advantage:

> When I am speaking Japanese, I think I become Japanese. (Ooooh, does that make sense?). I believe I have acquired most of the necessary mannerisms that go along with the language. I also believe that I take on a Japanese identity when it is convenient, i.e., when I am in a situation where I don't care to be categorized—I only want to get on with the business at hand and not have to explain myself. An example of this would be when I am speaking to a neighbor very casually or attending a community meeting.
> I also become very "American" when convenient; e.g., when I don't want to join the PTA or other organization considered "voluntary", etc.—basically when I don't want to conform. I'm sure it sounds odd to have this sort of dual persona, but I believe many bilingual/bicultural individuals do this—just ask our kids! And it is probably more prevalent with those that look

like the majority.

The second part of Alice's answer is reminiscent of the way Kondo (1990) began emphasizing differences between American and Japanese culture in order to resist having her identity "rewritten as Japanese". Both Alice's and Peter's answers echo the kind of identity the returnees in Kanno's (2003) study developed, with the freedom to pick and choose from various elements of both of their cultures.

While efforts at reflective positioning helped some of the participants feel more comfortable in Japan, two participants found that having a spouse who understood them was also important. Peter commented:

> My experience in Japan has been enhanced greatly being married to a Japanese woman who has experienced living abroad (1 year in the U.S.) and thus who can empathize [with] being discriminated and misjudged (she has lighter skin and brown eyes despite having full Japanese ancestry, so she was even called "*gaijin*" in elementary school.)

Similarly, Alice concluded:

> I would say I have now come full circle, and having once made the decision not to conform to some aspects of society here (for very valid reasons) and having a partner who is rather unconventional himself has made life in Japan much easier.

In the above answers, we can see that the comfort most of the participants felt living in Japan was secured for at least some of them by negotiating identities that were not Japanese in some or all contexts.

Children's Identity

The survey instrument included several questions about the participants' children, since it was believed that the participants' attitudes about their identity and the permanence of the "return" might be revealed in the way they dealt with their offspring and the way the children negotiated identities for themselves.

On the profile section of the questionnaire, participants were asked if they had children and if they did, what kind of schools they went to. All nine women have children, but only one of the men does. All but one of the participants who had college age children had sent them to Japanese schools for at least some time between kindergarten and high school, and then moved them to an international school or sent them to college in the U.S. or Canada. Three of the participants who had children who were still in elementary school and one whose children had already gone to college sent them to only Japanese schools.

Question 18 asked how well the participants' children speak English. Five participants answered that they speak it fluently or well. In two cases, the mothers noted that their younger children were not as proficient as their older children—a phenomenon I also found in my study of bicultural children (Noguchi, 2001). In one case the mother said her children can only "read and write a little" and "speak some". Only in one case—the one in which the children had gone all the way to college in Japanese schools and the mother speaks to the children only in Japanese—did the participant say "They don't speak English much at all."

Question 16 asked how the children viewed their own identity. Most of the participants suggested that their children were still in the

process of figuring their identity out, but in general, they were reported to have positive views of their dual cultural background. However, six of the participants reported that in Japanese society, their children were accepted completely or for the most part as Japanese. Only in Judy's case, where her husband is Anglo-Canadian and they sent their daughter to an international school from a young age, was a child reported to be seen as "foreign". Shizuko's answer, however, suggested that her children were also viewed as not completely Japanese. She wrote:

> They expect fluency in English. (And I'm sorry to disappoint them!) Because they are tall, they comment that they are "*yappari chigau*". Even though they are physically totally Japanese, because of their height, better English pronunciation skills or whatever, they are "different"—something is "different" about them. In other ways, perhaps less is expected of them.

   Finally, question 15 asked what kind of an identity the participants would like their children to have. Five of the ten participants who had children responded that they hoped their children would develop a bicultural identity. One hoped her daughter would become "A citizen of the world with an ability to love and understand not only Japanese and North Americans but people of every race and culture." Two expressed hope that their children would come to understand and appreciate their mother and why she was different from the people around her. Another wrote, "I would like them to be comfortable and proud of their background." Only one felt that her children should have "a strong Japanese identity", and it was this mother who spoke only Japanese to her children and sent them only to Japanese schools.

From the above answers, it would appear that with the exception of one mother, the participants who had children tended to hope that they would maintain both of their parents' cultures rather than limiting themselves to Japanese culture alone.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was intended to be a preliminary exploration of the characteristics of North Americans of Japanese descent who come to Japan and put down roots here, the reasons for their "return", and the types of identities they negotiate in Japan.

The seventeen participants came not only from Hawaii and the west coast of the United States and Canada, but also from the midwestern United States. The amount of time their families had been living in North America or Hawaii varied. Moreover, the participants differed in their position in the family. In addition, the participants' experiences of acceptance or discrimination and their feelings about their Japanese background diverged greatly. The Nisei and participants from Hawaii had generally always been comfortable with their ethnicity. However, many of the Sansei who had been raised in the continental U.S. and Canada appear to have experienced ambivalence towards Japanese culture or made attempts to evade it during adolescence, and it was only when they emerged from this phase, referred to by Tse (2000) as Ethnic Ambivalence/Evasion, or EAE, that they took interest in their ethnic background. It was in this stage, as young adults newly interested in their heritage, that many of the participants came to Japan.

What many of the participants from all areas of North America and Hawaii had in common, in addition to their desire to explore their "roots", was the fact that their parents had lived in Japan and received part of their education here. None of the participants appeared to come because they felt alienated from North American culture and society. Thus, it appears that they were drawn to Japan rather than pushed out of the nation of their birth.

Most of the participants did not come with the intension of staying in the land of their ancestors for more than a few months or five years at most. However, marriage to a Japanese national appeared to be a factor that helped stabilize many of the participants' residence in Japan.

Although most of the participants thought they had a fair understanding of Japanese culture before they arrived in the country, many discovered that, in fact, they had a very different cultural orientation. This gap not only created difficulties for some of the participants themselves, but it also upset some of the Japanese they interacted with, as their hosts often expected them to conform to Japanese cultural norms. In addition to limitations in their cultural knowledge, many of the participants lacked high levels of proficiency in the Japanese language when they arrived, and in this, too, they experienced a gap between their reality and the expectations of the host society.

After living in Japan for an average of 18.6 years, however, most of the participants had acquired a great deal more cultural competence and Japanese language proficiency. Still, a number of the participants reported that their Japanese language skills—especially their

Japanese literacy skills—had been deteriorating. It was found that, contrary to the image of Nikkeijin projected by the NHK series "Sakura", even participants whose parents spoke Japanese to them and who studied Japanese in college did not have native level literacy skills after decades of living in Japan and found it difficult to express themselves freely in high-level discussions. This may have been because earning a livelihood and/or taking care of a family took up much of their time, but it may also have been due to a need to preserve a positive self image.

Despite these tensions between the participants' actual linguistic and cultural competencies and the expectations of Japanese society at large, most of the participants stated that they now feel quite comfortable living in Japan. This may be because the participants' ethnic background helped them fit into Japanese society more smoothly than most Westerners, and also because their racial background makes them visually less conspicuous.

However, many of the participants also mentioned that they asserted their North American identity occasionally or habitually in order to free themselves from expectations of linguistic and cultural competency and from pressures to conform to Japanese social norms. In fact, when participants were asked what their identity is now, the most common answer was "Japanese American" or "Japanese Canadian". Moreover, all but one of the participants who were parents expressed a desire for their children to have a bicultural identity or to be comfortable with their dual background. Thus, it seems clear that for North Americans of Japanese descent who put roots down in Japan, comfort does not derive from feelings of complete cultural similarity or

assimilation, but rather, from negotiating identities that allow them, like the *kikoku shijo* in Kanno's (2003) study, to pick and choose between the different elements of both of their cultures.

This study was based on a small convenience sample, so further research is needed to confirm its findings. In addition, exploration of the contexts in which North American Nisei and Sansei choose to negotiate their identities in Japan and the strategies they use to do so may prove fruitful.

It is hoped that this study will not only promote better understanding of North Americans of Japanese descent who have settled permanently or semi-permanently in Japan, but that it also may suggest some of the problems faced by the increasing number of South American Nikkei immigrants to this country.

Notes

1. From *International Research Project, First Year Report,* published by the Japanese American National Museum; as cited in Hirabayashi, et al,. 2002, p. xvii.
2. Takahashi, 1997, p. 157.
3. Cited in Takahashi, 1997, pp. 158 - 159.

Acknowledgments

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire for North Americans of Japanese Descent
Who Are Long-Term Residents of Japan

This questionnaire is designed to investigate the identity, background and language use of Japanese-Americans and Japanese-Canadians who have been living in Japan for three years or longer. Information provided on this questionnaire will be used solely for research purposes and care will be taken to protect the privacy of all respondents. Your cooperation in filling it in and/or passing it on to others would be greatly appreciated.

Personal Information

Nationality:

Age:

Sex:

Generation (*Nisei? Sansei?*):

Number of: Older brothers _____   Older sisters ____   Younger brothers ___
      Younger sisters___

Number of years of residence in Japan:

If married, is your spouse Japanese?

If you have children, please explain what kind of schools they have gone/are going to (e.g., Japanese public schools, international schools, schools in North America, etc.)

Family Background

When did your mother's family arrive in North America?

When did your father's family arrive in North America?

Did either of your parents ever return to Japan to live or go to school (permanently or temporarily)? If yes, please explain who and when.

Did any of your Japanese relatives ever visit your family in North America? If yes, please explain who and when.

What language(s) did your parents speak to each other?

What language(s) did your parents speak to you and your brothers and sisters?

Main Questions

1. Why did you come to Japan?
2. How long were you intending to stay when you arrived in Japan?
3. How much Japanese (language) did you know when you arrived in Japan?
4. How well do you speak Japanese now?
5. How well do you read and write Japanese now?
6. How well did you understand Japanese culture before you came to Japan?
7. If you have a family in Japan, what language(s) do you use with each member of the family?
8. How did you feel about your family background/ethnicity when you were a child?
9. How did you feel about your family background/ethnicity when you were a teenager?
10. Were you ever uncomfortable about your family background/ethnicity when you lived in North America? If yes, please explain when and why you felt this way in as much detail as possible.
11. How did you feel about your family background/ethnicity after you came to

Japan?

12. How comfortable would you say you are living in Japan?

13. How would you describe your ethnic identity now? Do you think of yourself as Japanese, American/Canadian, Japanese-American/Canadian, as something in between, or do you take on different identities at different times and in different situations?

14. How do you think Japanese people view your ethnic identity now? (Please be as specific as possible if different types of people view you in different ways.)

15. If you have children, what kind of an identity would you like them to have?

16. If you have children, please explain how they view their own ethnicity.

17. If you have children, please explain how the Japanese people they interact with view them.

18. If you have children, how well do they speak English?

Please write anything else you would like to share about your experience living in Japan.

Thank you for your cooperation.