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Over the seas, over the generations: narratives of multigenerational Korean women in Japan and Japanese American women in the United States

Kayoko Aoki

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PREFACE

When I go to the Golden Gate Bridge, I think of my home, Japan. Even though I cannot see it, I imagine, if I could go west, it would be Japan. Then I become emotional because as I look down at the water, I think of the first immigrants who came here from Japan by ship more than 140 years ago. As they passed through the gateway of the bay, what did they think? Did they think of Japan while looking at the beautiful sunset? Did they dream about success in the new land?

I am here in the United States as a Japanese international student. After more than a five year stay, I have come to realize my “double consciousness” in the United States, and at the same time, the way I used to see the world was based on what I saw and heard in Japan. Like most Japanese in Japan, I had never knowingly encountered people with different ethnic backgrounds than mine when I was growing up in a rural town of Kyoto prefecture. Although I knew Japan was not a homogeneous country and wondered where and who “they” were, I never tried to find out actively or ask questions of teachers about the diversity in Japan because I also sensed this would make me face the dirty part of the Japanese history, the other “reality.” It felt like grabbing a cloud—it seemed I could see it, but never touch it.

It was ironic that the first Korean Japanese friend I made, was Mi Ja, in Minnesota where I went as an exchange student in 2001. Because most Korean Japanese use Japanese names rather than Korean names, I might have met Korean Japanese before I met Mi Ja, but I would not have been able to tell. I remember when I first met her; I was surprised that she did not have a Japanese name. At the same time, meeting her changed the way I understood Japan and the Japanese (or rather, it finally made me touch the
cloud and face the other side of the reality).

I found that even though Mi Ja and I share Japanese as a first language, there are differences between us because of ethnicity (and culture), and moreover, nationality. At the same time, Mi Ja found differences between herself and Korean students from South Korea, even though they shared common ethnicity and nationality. Even after she showed her South Korean passport, her South Korean friends would not accept that she was Korean. Mi Ja’s identity, as a third generation Korean Japanese woman, was as a Zainichi, an ethnic Korean residing in Japan, often referred to as ethnic Koreans in Japan.

Through interaction and dialogue with Mi Ja and my experiences in the United States, I came to understand what it means to be the Other, alien, an outsider, which Mi Ja had experienced since she was born. I was called a “student of color” for the first time in Minnesota; often times I was the only international student and student of color. In that sense, I was “visible.” At the same time, I felt invisible because nobody seemed to notice I was there, or what I thought and said. About one year after I arrived in Minnesota, I came to realize that my accent in English and my skin color made it difficult to fit in the “mainstream.” Especially, the influence and outcomes of 9/11 on the international students (backlash, stereotypes towards Muslim students, and immigration law changes) made me think what it means to be Japanese in the United States. Since I didn’t have many friends who were students of color in Minnesota, I didn’t feel I was a “student of color” quite yet, but I wasn’t a white student either even though I made friends with Korean adoptee students. However, when some people spoke to me in Chinese or talked about Japanese manga (comic books), I often felt silenced because I didn’t know how to react to these stereotypes.
Later, when I came to San Francisco, I expected to see more Asian American students, especially Japanese American students. In fact, I was excited to see many more Asian faces on campus. However, even though I have met only a few Japanese American students, most of whom are from Hawaii at my job as a Japanese tutor, I have not had many chances to talk about how they feel about their identity or how they grew up. Rather, I have felt a distance, an awkward relationship; it could be my accent in English. But I could not help but wonder where the other Japanese American students were and where I could hear their voices.

Experiences and interactions with these few Japanese American students brought both excitement and frustration. Some students find several colloquial expressions still used by their family and feel like they are listening to their mother or grandmother when I am speaking, just as Mi Ja felt with her Korean friends from South Korea. However, some students feel too frustrated to take the time to learn Japanese (which they might have expected to be easier). Although I find that Japanese American students and I share similar cultural values, there are differences. One student said she needed to bring *omiyage* (souvenir) when she went back to her home in Hawaii, just like I do. However, she also said she could not imagine going on a hunger strike for the anti-immigration law in 2006. It seemed she was not interested in issues around immigrants or even not willing to support the people who were doing hunger strike. To me she was both “Americanized” and traditional. For this multigenerational Japanese American student, it seemed difficult to imagine what kind of experiences new immigrants were having and she felt distanced from them, while at the same time, she was carrying on Japanese traditions and values.

One day, when I brought a Japanese magazine to the tutoring session, another
Japanese American female student said “It is exciting to see so many Japanese models. I have never seen so many of them.” It was an exciting moment for her, but at the same time, I think she realized that the face of her ethnicity is invisible in the United States.

It is ironic that only when I became a “minority” in the United States, have I come to think about “minorities” in my home country. Encountering the stories of Korean Japanese has made me see the other side of Japan. At the same time, thinking of why I struggle with the distance from Japanese Americans and why I become emotional when I go to the Golden Gate Bridge, it makes me think of people who had to be silent and invisible to survive on this land. Over the seas, over the generations, what stories have they passed down?
CHAPTER I
RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

This study explores the negotiation of identity of Korean Japanese and Japanese American women in Japan and the United States, respectively, from intergenerational and feminist perspectives on the history of marginalization of these two specific groups. Although there are many fundamental differences between these two groups of women, such as language, citizenship, and history, many similarities remain, particularly, in terms of self-identification.

Korean Japanese (Zainichi Koreans, or ethnic Koreans, residing in Japan) compose one of the biggest minority groups in Japan. Most of their ancestors came to Japan from 1910 to 1945 because of the annexation of the Korean Peninsula by the Japanese military (Lie, 2000; Ryang, 2000). The Japanese government forced Koreans to take Japanese names during the occupation, and many Koreans in Japan continue to use these names hiding their identity to avoid discrimination (Fukuoka, 2003). Japanese Americans, most of whose ancestors first came to the United States starting in the end of the 19th century and who experienced anti-immigrant sentiment and internment during WWII, are a distinct ethnic group in the United States. Many Japanese Americans have adopted Western first names and American customs to avoid discrimination and fit into the American culture (Takaki, 1993).

The members of both groups are multigenerational and speak the languages of where they reside (Japanese/English), while some members of both groups have maintained their ethnic (heritage) languages through education and culture: Zainichi
Koreans have ethnic schools which teach Korean; Japanese Americans have Japanese Saturday schools which teach Japanese.

According to DuBois (1989), the construction of identity of ethnic minorities has a “two-ness” or “double consciousness,” a “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (p. 5). This statement is relevant to the situation in which Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans find themselves particularly the women in each group; their identities are constructed not only by the self, but also by the dominant group. At the same time, the experiences of these two groups has made questions of identity more complex than the doubleness mentioned by DuBois, due to the nature of each group’s relationship or interaction with the dominant culture; specifically the events associated with the annexation of Korea and the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII.

Zainichi are different from Korean ethnics living in Korea; Nikkei are different from Japanese ethnics living in Japan, yet they are both “Other”—strangers in their countries of origin and of the residence. Further, the complexity of their identity contains internalized conflict (instigated by the dominant society), which is generated not only by Korean or Japanese ethnicity, or residence in Japan or citizenship of the United States, but by being Zainichi or Nikkei (Japanese descent). The self-differentiation or denial of ethnic identity adds another layer to that identity. This complexity has often been ignored or avoided in discussion because of necessity to play a role and thus deny ethnic identity in order to be accepted by the dominant society and that erases their identities, making both groups invisible to majority and even to themselves.

Because of the myth of homogeneity in Japan (there are other distinct groups such
as the Ainu, the indigenous Japanese; Burakumin, the outcast people; overseas Chinese), Koreans who have Japanese names, speak Japanese, and look Japanese, have been invisible as Koreans, according to Nomura (2002), “We encounter many South/North Korean ethnics everyday beyond prominent figures. Despite that, why can’t Japanese see them? How have they been made invisible?” (p. 25). In Japan, the notion that “we are all Japanese” has created a conflict for Zainichi Koreans, the desire to assimilate on the one hand, and to maintain their cultural identity on the other. Further, for Zainichi Koreans, the exclusion of “Other” in Japan has made them invisible and perpetuated their foreignness institutionally and culturally (Lie, 2000).

Because of the myth of heterogeneity, used here as an ideological term, not a geographical one, in the United States, Japanese Americans, who now have western names and speak English, and are a “model minority” in the “melting pot,” are also invisible as Japanese or American (Lowe, 1996; Tuan, 1998). Tuan stresses that there is little research on the racial and ethnic concerns of Asian-Americans:

Surprisingly, a paucity of research regarding these questions is available. Further, the results of most of these studies conflict one another. On one side are those who stress how far Asian-Americans have come in gaining acceptance. “Oh, they’ve got no problems. What do they have to complain about?” Variants of this sentiment can be heard from lofty academic circles to mundane lunchtime conversations. And proof offered? News stories emphasizing Asian-American students’ apparent “takeover” of American higher education institutions; rising outmarriage rates along with low residential segregation patterns; and a rapidly growing professional middle class. (p. 7)

The notion of “we are all Americans” has caused a conflict for Japanese Americans in the United States which is similar to that of Zainichi Koreans in Japan. Lowe (1996) points out, “Asian immigrants and Asian Americans have not only been ‘subject to’ immigration
exclusion and restriction, but have also been the ‘subject of’ the immigration process and are agents of political change, cultural expression, and social transformation” (p. 9).

Moreover, Asian Americans have been left on the margins of the national identity:

The national institutionalization of unity becomes the measure of the nation’s condition of heterogeneity. If the nation proposes American culture as the key site for the resolution of inequalities and stratifications that cannot be resolved on the political terrain of representative democracy, then that culture performs that reconciliation by naturalizing a universality that exempts the “non-American” from its history of development or admits the “non-American” only through a “multiculturalism” that aestheticizes ethnic differences as if they could be separated from history. In contrast, the cultural productions emerging out of the contradictions of immigrant marginality displace the fiction of reconciliation, disrupt the myth of national identity by revealing its gaps and fissures, and intervene in the narrative of national development that would illegitimately locate the “immigrant” before history or exempt the “immigrant” from history. (Lowe, 1996, p. 9)

Further, Lowe points out that “[s]tereotypes that construct Asians as the threatening ‘yellow peril,’ or alternatively, that pose Asians as the domesticated ‘model minority,’ are each equally indices of these national anxieties” (p. 19).

The negotiation of identities of Zainichi Koreans or Japanese American women is further complicated by their gender and the marginalization of women in both the majority and minority cultures. This marginalization has had the effect of making them invisible even in their own cultures. Their voices remain unheard by men in the larger society or within their own group both in Japan and the United States, in both of which they were perceived as silent. Yet, because women have had the primary role in raising children, they are important transmitters of culture and identity. They remember the stories they have heard from their grandmothers and mothers, passing them on to their daughters and granddaughters. To what extent have women of these two groups
negotiated their identity in relation of the dominant societies? To what extent have they remembered their mothers’, grandmothers’, or great-grandmothers’ stories and their inherited cultures? To what extent are they transmitting their stories to the next generation?

The experiences of Asian women in Asia and the West have been largely ignored and their voices have been silenced despite their contribution to economy, culture, and history (Espiritu, 1997; Jue, 1993; Okihiro, 1994). Japanese American women have been represented visually, as picture brides, exotics, or images of obedient women with strong accents, but not as doctors, CEOs, artists, engineers, or professors (Adler, 1998). Zainichi Korean women have been portrayed in Japanese films as laborers, mothers, bar hostesses, naïve high school students, through the complex lens of colonialism, sexism, and ethnocentrism (Yang, 2003). The Confucian values regarding gender and age still remain for Asian and Asian American women even though both Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women have been influenced by evolving values in Japan and the United States (Adler, 1998; Kubota, 2002; Yang, 2003). Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women writers have questioned the patriarchal nationalism of their respective communities recently, yet more research on Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women is needed (Ryang, 2000).

The experiences of Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women have primarily been preserved and their identities constructed by recounting stories. Hirsch and Smith (2002) indicate, “Identity, whether individual or cultural, becomes a story that stretches from the past to present and the future, that connects the individual to the group, and that is structured by gender and related identity markers” (p. 8). Further, feminist
perspectives support the relationship between gender and the construction of identity:

[Developments] in feminism and work on cultural memory demonstrate that the content, sources, and experiences that are recalled, forgotten, or suppressed are of profound political significance. What we know about the past, and thus our understanding of the present, is shaped by the voices that speak to us out of history; relative degrees of power and powerlessness, privilege and disenfranchisement, determine the spaces where witness and testimony may be heard or ignored. (Hirsch & Smith, 2002, p. 12)

Women’s identity is also constructed through interaction within the larger ethnic community, with the mainstream and other marginalized groups and moreover, through constant dialogue with self. Increasing diversity in Japanese minority groups and the Asian American population has created yet another layer of identity which is more inclusive. Zainichi Koreans may share the identity as “Zainichi (Resident) Foreigners” in Japan with other people of “foreign” nationality such as Chinese ethnics or Japanese-Brazilians (Lie, 2000). Likewise Japanese Americans may share “panethnicity” as Asian Americans with Chinese, Korean, or Indian Americans (Takaki, 1998). However, these two groups are still distinct from other ethnic groups because of their unique experiences and status in the dominant society (which will be discussed in more detail later). Many Zainichi Koreans, sometimes identified as “oldcomers,” who still hold Korean nationality, gained permanent resident status after Japan and South Korea started diplomatic relations in 1965 (Wender, 2005). Japanese Americans, who experienced internment during WWII and received an apology and some compensation from the government in 1988 after a long battle to claim their rights, have to some extent established their entitlement as American citizens. The multilayered ethnic identity of both groups warrants more investigation.
By documenting the narratives of Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women, this study attempts to make their silenced voices heard and make visible what has been invisible in order to examine how they negotiate their identity. Further, these stories will uncover contrasts and similarities, giving a deeper understanding of both groups within the dominant societies of Japan and the United States.

Statement of the Problem

The experiences of Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans during and after World War II have been expanded upon in research (Kang, 2005; Kitano, 1969; Fukuoka, 2003; Ryang, 1997; Takahashi, 1997; Takaki, 1993). Narratives and oral histories about the identity of Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women have been investigated (Hayes, 2000; Kim, 2005; Matsumoto, 1996; Wender, 2005). However, there is little research on the complexity of multigenerational Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women’s identity from a feminist perspective (Adler, 1998; Wender, 2005). Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans have different situations regarding naturalization systems, racial demographics, population size, political participation, and so on, which have been dealt with to some degree in the literature. However, similarities exist: their identities as members of multigenerational groups, language and cultural maintenance and acculturation related to education, their use of names, their gender roles within the family and society, and the relationship to the dominant culture (Adler, 1998; Fujita & O’Brien, 1991; Kim, 2006; Lee, 1998; Maeda, 2005; Moriguchi-McCormick, 1999; Ogoshi, 2005). The specifics of the similarities in these groups have not been discussed in detail in scholarship. It is the dynamic combination of these factors that create the
identities of these women. Thus, research on how women in each group negotiate their identities in terms of these elements such as their choice of names and school experiences, is needed.

Background and Need for the Study

The Japanese system of naturalization and citizenship is different from that of the United States, where the 14th Amendment of the Constitution guarantees citizenship at birth to almost all individuals except the children of foreign heads of the state or foreign diplomats under *jus soli* (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, n.d.). To be a Japanese citizen, one needs to have a Japanese parent (it used to be only the father until 1985). Therefore, second, third, or fourth generation Zainichi Koreans, both of whose parents hold South or North Korean passports, cannot be Japanese citizens even though born in Japan. Zainichi Koreans continue to be “foreigners” although they have permanent resident status (Tanaka, 2004). Every year more and more Zainichi Koreans naturalize, while some still keep South or North Korean nationality even though they were born and raised in Japan. As mentioned above, most have Japanese names, originating in the renaming system which started in 1940, during the annexation era. According to Harajiri (1998), research showed that in Kanagawa prefecture, Japan, out of 866 Korean students, 91.3 % used Japanese names in 1986. To avoid bullying in school and discrimination in the job market, using Japanese names is often necessary for Zainichi Koreans in Japanese society in which everyone is supposed to have a Japanese name and thus to perpetuate the myth of homogeneity.

Many ancestors of Japanese Americans, on the other hand, came to the United
States starting in 1860. As their counterparts in Japan, Japanese Americans have been marginalized. Japanese immigrants were prohibited from owning property by the Alien Land Law in 1913. Moreover, the children of Japanese immigrants were segregated and sent to Oriental school in such places as Chinatown, San Francisco, in 1906. In 1942, more than 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of whom were United States citizens, were interned as enemy aliens (Kitano, 1969). Japanese Americans are now considered a (relatively) small ethnic group integrated into American society; however, at the same time, they have been seen as immigrants or visitors (and sometimes, even enemies or competition) (Akindes, 2002; Takaki, 1993; Tuan, 1998). In other words, both groups have been perceived as foreigners (institutionally, politically, or socially) in both Japan and the United States.

The status of Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans has been influenced by international relations, domestic politics, and colonialism, such as the residential status of Zainichi Koreans and the internment of Japanese Americans during (and even after) WWII. Historically, immigration of Koreans to Japan and Japanese to the United States was caused by push-pull factors. In Japan, a workforce was needed to develop construction industries, mines, and so on. Many Korean men headed to Japan for jobs because they had lost their land. In the United States, workers from Japan were welcomed in farming and fishery, while many Japanese men emigrated to the United States to escape poverty. Almost a century after the first immigration, many people of Korean descent in Japan and people of Japanese descent in the United States still struggle with their ethnic and national identities and continue to endure the stigma of “racialized other,” as Tuan (1998) points out.
The underlying problem here is the labeling of people as Japanese, Korean, or American, and who applies those labels. Historically, what we have seen is only the side of the dominant group, the oppressors, the males. Few efforts have been made to give voice to women from Asian cultural backgrounds. While research exists on the history and experience of Japanese American immigration and identity in general, much less research is available on Japanese American women in particular. Also, there is much to be learned about the struggles of Zainichi Koreans in the Japanese dominated society. It is the hope of this study that experiences of two groups of women in two different countries will lead to a better understanding of them as well as of the dominant societies and genders. Therefore, the voices of these participants need to be brought to the forefront of academic research. This study, inspired by oral history methods, which gives voice to “true words,” seeks to break the silence enforced by the dominant group:

Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world. To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection. (Freire, 2000, p. 88)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how multigenerational Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women in Japan and the United States, respectively, construct and negotiate their identities and how their complex layers of consciousness are reflected in their lives. This study attempts to explore how their ethnic and national (Korean ethnic identity and South or North Korean national identity for Zainichi Korean women in Japan; and Japanese ethnic identity and American national identity for Japanese
American women in the United States), gender, and generational identities are
constructed and negotiated through interaction with others.

This study utilizes a qualitative research design, specifically using narrative
perspectives. Therefore, the purpose of the study is also to listen to the participants’
stories and make their voices heard: what they have experienced, what they want to tell
about, and what they expect the next generation to pass down. In doing so, this study
searches for deeper understanding of intergenerational Zainichi Korean women in Japan
and Japanese American women in the United States in the dominant societies.

Research Questions

The questions that address the purpose of the research are:

1. How do Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women construct their identity?
   a. How do they construct ethnic and national identity? Is the complexity of
      “double consciousness” of Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women
      reflected or practiced in their everyday lives?
   b. How do their interactions with people around them influence the construction
      of their identities?

2. How do culturally specific gender roles affect their construction of identity?

3. How is the ethnic and gender identity maintained and transmitted through
generations?
   a. How have multigenerational Zainichi Korean and Japanese American
      women’s experiences been transmitted from one generation to the next?
   b. What expectations do these women have for maintaining their cultural
Theoretical Framework

Analysis and discussion in this study are based on three theoretical rationales: ideological hegemony, feminist theory, and identity theory. These are essential to understanding the negotiation of identity of both Zainichi Korean women and Japanese American women. Ideological hegemony refers to the power wielded by the dominant over the subordinate group within a nation-state. Feminist theory, especially liberatory feminist theory, refers to the importance of critical reflection in women’s lives. Identity theory addresses relationship with self, others, and construction of multiple or transcultural identity.

Ideological Hegemony

The concept of hegemony, as developed by Antonio Gramsci, is pictured as “an equilibrium between civil society and political society” which is maintained by both direction and domination (Gramsci, 1973, p. 42). In a hegemonic relationship between the dominant and dominated groups, the dominant group establishes its control over the resources of society by using the mass media and educational system which allows the dominant group to make its view of the world seen inclusive and universal (Giroux, 1981). Further, Giroux (1981) states that “[as] the dominant ideology, hegemony functions to define the meaning and limits of common-sense as well as the form and content of discourse in a society” (p. 94). Hegemonic ideology allows the dominant group to limit and exclude oppositional discourse and practice. In other words,
ideological hegemony is “a form of control which not only manipulated consciousness but also saturated and constituted the daily experiences that shaped one’s behavior” (p. 40). Ideological hegemony is maintained by the dominant group institutionally, disciplinarily, and interpersonally (Collins, 2000).

Therefore, the dominant groups in Japan and the United States have control over the subordinate groups including Zainichi Koreans in Japan and Japanese Americans in the United States in not only cultural and economic activities, civil rights but also daily activities such as where they live, where they work, or which school they attend. For example, in Japan, the dominant group has imposed its value which recognizes only Japanese names for Japanese citizens, so that many Zainichi Koreans use Japanese names in everyday public life which impacts their formation of identity.

Hegemonic ideologies are embedded in race, class, gender, and nation (Collins, 2000; Omi & Winant, 1994). Hegemony exists between the Japanese and the Koreans in Japan; it also exists between Zainichi Korean men and Zainichi Korean women. Hegemony exists, as well, between the American mainstream (White) and the Japanese Americans; it also exists between Japanese American men and Japanese American women. These intersecting oppressions through the social hierarchies perpetuate the submission of Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women. The dominant groups wield their power even in the most intimate situations:

The complexity of hegemonic control is an important point to stress for it refers not only to those isolatable meanings and ideas that the dominant class “imposes” on others but also to those “lived” experiences that make up the texture and rhythm of daily life. (Giroux, 1981, p. 94)

Ideological hegemony has perpetuated patriarchy in women’s everyday lives by making
dependence and submission equate to femininity. These experiences are shared by both Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women across generations through the manipulation of images and values (Collins, 2000). Most of these women do house chores and raise their children, while traditional cultures is passed down informally through activities such as cooking, singing, sewing, and storytelling.

To deconstruct ideological hegemony, to establish the notion of counter-hegemony is necessary, as Collins (2000) states, “Gaining the critical consciousness to unpack hegemonic ideologies is empowering. …[The] dimension of empowerment within hegemonic domain of power consists of constructing new knowledge” (p. 286). This study attempts to deconstruct hegemonic control over Zainichi Korean women in Japan and Japanese American women in the United States. Counter-hegemonic knowledge raises the consciousness about how women have been taught to be is not how women are. Oral traditions, which have been unrecognized by the mainstream, allow women to deconstruct hegemony producing counter-hegemonic knowledge.

Zainichi Koreans in Japan and Japanese Americans in the United States are subordinate groups in both countries, whose dominant groups have determined founding beliefs and values which perpetuate their dominance. Hegemony in Japan and the United States has maintained inequality for Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans, particularly for women.

**Feminist Theory**

Feminist theory is necessary to shift women’s consciousness and to resist oppression. In modernist theory, according to Scott (1995), women are “either invisible,
treated paternalistically, or used as a litmus test for determining the degree of
‘backwardness’ of particular Third World country” (p. 25), in which their roles as women
in family and community are considered as “traditional”:

Embedded within constructions of traditional society are ideas about
women, family, and community that function as points of contrast for
modernization theorists’ idealization of a rational, forward-looking, male-
dominated public sphere. Conceptions of linear time also play an
important role for modernization theorists, with tradition and the feminine
viewed as part of the past. (p. 23)

Therefore, women’s stories communicated from mother to daughter remain invisible and
untold to the mainstream. Hirsch and Smith (2002) indicate how women’s stories are
remembered:

Women’s history as counterhistory that restores forgotten stories to the
historical record certainly illustrates [the juncture of private and public].
But…the technologies of memory, the frames of interpretation, and the
acts of transfer they enable are in themselves gendered, inasmuch as they
depend on conventional paradigms and received cultural models, on codes
that are culturally shared and available. Furthermore, experience, as well
as its recollection and transmission, is subject to gendered paradigms. But
gender, like memory, must be grounded in context if it is not to remain an
abstract binary structure. (p. 7)

Listening to and writing down women’s stories are attempts to ground them in a new
feminist context. Further, this new context will include not only gender, but also
nationality and ethnicity of the women who tell these stories. Women’s experiences have
been transmitted to children through their stories such as marriage lessons and through
the clothes which their mothers gave them or through the food which their mothers and
mothers-in-law taught them how to make.

The first feminist theorists, while trying to break away from a male point of view,
unconsciously imitated the academic style devised by males. Since these women were mostly white, they necessarily wrote from that privileged position. Thus, their focus on academia combined with their ethnicity resulted in valuing the written over the spoken words. In contrast, liberatory feminist theory is based on everyday life experiences driven by critical reflections, according to hooks (1994):

To me, [the] theory emerges from the concrete, from my efforts to make sense of everyday life experiences, from my efforts to intervene critically in my life and the lives of others....Personal testimony, personal experience, is such fertile ground for the production of liberatory feminist theory because it usually forms the base of our theory making. While we work to resolve those issues that are most pressing in daily life..., we engage in a critical process of theorizing that enables and empowers. (p. 70)

Therefore, critical reflection on feminist theory deconstructed early feminist theory, which privileged written arguments over oral narratives (hooks, 1994). Moreover, liberatory feminism recognizes ethnic diversity as it affects “construction of femaleness” (hooks, 1994, p. 63). Critical reflection led to “a profound revolution in feminist thought and truly interrogated and disrupted the hegemonic feminist theory produced primarily by academic women, most of whom were white” (hooks, 1994, p. 63). Moreover, Ong (2001) states that “Western” feminist theory has maintained the hegemony of Western cultural superiority over non-Western culture by using Western standards to determine the degree of patriarchal oppression inflicted on women as wives and mothers. Non-Western women have been considered non-modern and out of time with the West, which has had with little interest in indigenous constructions of gender and sexuality (Ong, 2001).

Sometimes women don’t realize how they have been oppressed, not only by society or males, but also by their perception of themselves as women (many women
think they are powerless or not smart), which was actually imprinted when they were young. To deconstruct the hegemony they haven’t realized, this liberatory feminist theory emphasizes the importance of the oral history of women, which evokes their own “liberatory voice” to enable them to liberate from oppression:

The struggle to end domination, the individual struggle to resist colonization, to move from object to subject, is expressed in the effort to establish the liberatory voice—that way of speaking that is no longer determined by one’s status as object—as oppressed being. That way of speaking is characterized by opposition, by resistance. It demands that paradigms shift—that we learn to talk—to listen—to hear in a new way. (hooks, 1989, p. 15)

Liberatory voice allows women to articulate their lives in their way in order to be understood. Memories and experiences are often either untold or silenced, especially when their experiences concern sensitive or hurtful topics such as, in this case, internment (Adler, 1998). Specifically, voices of women have been silenced because of the patriarchal culture of Korea and Japan, of Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans, and their status as ethnic minorities. When they establish their liberatory voice, their identity is no longer determined by the dominant groups.

Identity

Being a member of a marginalized group in a society influences the formation of identity. The nature of self-identifying involves countering similarities and differences:

The term “self-identity” is composed of two countering notions: “self” (ipse), that which is the opposite of otherness and strangeness; and “identity” (idem), that which remains the same, the extreme singular, the opposite of change. The idea of self-identity holds the two notions of difference and sameness in tension. (Polkinghorne, 1998, p. 146)
According to Erikson (1963), the sense of identity is “the accrued confidence that the inner sameness and continuity prepared in the past are matched by sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others” (p. 261). In the case of Zainichi Korean women and Japanese American women, this produces a conflict which is not easily resolved. If they (members of minority) succeed in seeing themselves as others (the majority) do, they will see themselves negatively. Suárez-Orozco (2004) refers to the social mirror theory suggested by child psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott, in which the sense of self is shaped by the reflections mirrored back by others—family, relatives, siblings, teachers, peers, people on the street, and even the media. These reflections can be accurate or inaccurate, positive or negative. Both positive and negative reflections have impact for self-identity; however, negative distortions are “most worrisome,” especially for immigrants “who encounter a negative social mirror, structured inequality in the opportunity structure…will face an arduous long-term struggle” (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 122). In order not to reflect the social mirror, Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women use their Japanese names or English names, which ultimately make them keep invisible to the mainstream or saw their representation in a distorted mirror.

Because identity is ever-changing, as Modell (1993) states, “The self endures through time as a sense of identity, yet consciousness of self is always changing. The self derives its sense of coherence from within, yet at the same time depends on the appraisals of others” (p. 3). According to Polkinghorne (1998), identity is constructed through interaction with other people and reflects on behavior across the life span and moreover,
concept of self may be vague and disintegrated. Identification is a process of articulation, not a subsumption, as Hall (1996) states:

identities are about questions of using the resource of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not “who we are” or “where we came from,” so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (p.4)

Therefore, if Zainichi Kroean women and Japanese American women accept the images which have been perpetuated by the dominant group in Japan and the United States and/or men in each minority group, these images will continue to distort their construction of identity.

For most Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans, who are second, third, fourth, or fifth generation, identity may depend on how the individuals or their parents have maintained their culture of origin:

If there is little contact with the culture of origin, however, then all of the “cultural lessons” fall upon the shoulders of the parents to teach. Parents are, no doubt, a critical source of information in the quest to form an identity (Suárez-Orozco, 2004).

As time has passed by, the younger generation’s self-identity will change not only because of less exposure to the culture of origin, but also because of intermarriage (Nomura, 1996; Wu, 2002). As mentioned in the feminist theory, gendered experiences also reflect identity (hooks, 1989; Lowe, 1996; Suárez-Orozco, 2004). Women have been expected to take gendered roles or responsibilities at home, school, or work.

Transcultural identity allows people who have two (or more) cultural backgrounds to “incorporate traits of both cultures while fusing additive elements” (Suárez-Orozco,
Many Zainichi Koreans belong to organizations which support them in learning Korean and traditional music and arts, while many Japanese Americans seek their positions of hybrid identity as “Asian Americans” (Lowe, 1996). Globalization has made more and more people develop multiple and complex identities (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). Also, Gates (2003) states that:

[t]oday the ideal of wholeness has largely been retired. And cultural multiplicity is no longer seen as the problem but as a solution—a solution to the confines of identity itself. Double consciousness, once a disorder, is now a cure. Indeed, the only complaint we moderns have is that Du Bois was too cautious in his accounting. He’d conjured “two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings.” Just two, Dr. Du Bois? Keep counting. (p. 31)

Cultural hegemony remains in Japan and the United States, although developing global or transcultural identity may be a solution for the future generation.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study focuses on the construction of identity of multigenerational Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women in Japan and the United States respectively. The Zaincihi Korean participants have lived in Japan and the Japanese American participants in the United States since birth.

The limitation of comparing the two groups in two different countries was due to situational differences of the two groups, such as: motives of migration, political participation, or cultural maintenance (because of their historical background). However, those differences which are already known are stated in Part II, Review of Literature.

Language was also a limiting factor. Since I speak Japanese as a first language,
there were limitations in interpretation of literature written only in Japanese, which I translated. The dialogues with Japanese American women participants were in English, which is my second language, and the dialogues with Zainichi Korean women were in Japanese, but translated and interpreted into English by me.

Even though qualitative research allows me to investigate many issues in depth, the small number in the sample may also be a limitation because of the uniqueness of each participant’s experience which may or may not reflect the totality of Zainichi Korean or Japanese American women’s experiences. I attempted to bring their voices into the mainstream, providing a glimpse into the lives of the two groups of women because they all lived in history and their stories reflect not only their individual histories but also Japanese and American history and society.

Finally, the oral history interviews did not cover everything the participants’ experiences throughout their lives because of the limitation of time. One of my participants, Soon Ja, a 64 year-old second generation Zainichi Korean woman, said at the end of the interview, “That is about my life. But I don’t think I told even a half of it.” Her comment reflects my own feelings. Even though I spent more than four hours with each participant, it was not nearly enough to tell the whole story.

Significance of the Study

This study explores the construction of identity of Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women by providing the opportunity for these participants to engage in dialogue about their own identities. Moreover, it attempted to deepen understanding of the two groups of women and fill the gap between how they have been portrayed and
what they have actually experienced. Another goal is to raise critical awareness by identifying the responsibility of the dominant groups (societies) in Japan and the United States, which have been the flipside of the women’s invisibility and voicelessness, and to contribute to education in Japan and the United States by providing the insights of the women involved. The narratives in this study are potentially beneficial to all ethnic minority women who have been silenced and rendered invisible publicly and whose self-image is distorted in private.

Definition of Terms

In this study, I used “Zainichi Korean” mainly to describe the Koreans living in Japan as explained below. In English, the people of Korean heritage are called Koreans, but in Japanese, several terms have been used to refer to Koreans in Japan and Korea itself and have acquired negative connotations due in part to the political conflict in the Korean Peninsula and international conflict among Japan and North and South Korea (Harajiri, 2003). This, in turn, has created a multilayer of identity among Koreans residing in Japan, including my participants. Therefore, I included the terms I used and I did not use in this study to indicate how many different expressions there are.

The Japanese terms for generations are used for immigrants. They can be used not only for Japanese descendants in the United States or other countries such as Brazil, but also, for Zainichi Koreans. However, in this study, I used these terms only regarding the literature on Japanese Americans and the interviews with Japanese American participants.

1. 在日 - Zainichi: The word itself means “someone living in Japan as a foreigner.” If
you put *chugoku jin* (China people: 中国人) after this term (*zainichi chugoku jin*: 在日中国人), that means Chinese living Japan as foreigners. However, *zainichi* itself is usually used to describe Korean Japanese, for instance, “she is *zainichi,*” meaning “she is Korean Japanese.” In some literature in Japanese, *Zainichi* is often written with quotation marks to imply that the term itself is somewhat problematic. In this study, I use this term only when the participants describe themselves *Zainichi.*

2. **在日朝鮮人 / 在日韓国人 - Zainichi chosen jin/ zainichi kankoku jin:** Koreans living in Japan. *Chosen* (originally meant Korea, but now usually refers to North Korea.) or *kankoku* (meaning South Korea) is used to distinguish North Korean and South Korean. Sometimes those whose ancestors came from South Korea, might still use “*chosen*” because it means the Korean peninsula. In the Korean language, *kankoku* is pronounced *hanguk,* and *chosen* is pronounced *choson.*

3. **在日韓国・朝鮮人 - Zainichi kankoku-chosen jin:** when people want to include or do not want to distinguish between both countries, this expression is used. This term is used often in the media or official government documents to include both people of South and North Korean nationalities.

4. **韓国人 / 朝鮮人 - Kankoku jin/ Chosen jin:** South Korean/ North Korean. The Koreans in Japan may use this term to self-identify while Japanese may use it identify them as foreigners. In this study, I use this term in the participants’ quotes.

5. **在日コリアン - Zainich Kori-an:** Using an English word “Korean,” written in *katakana,* the Japanese writing system used for foreign words, can describe both North and South Koreans, which is convenient for both Koreans and Japanese, because there was no South or North Korea when the Koreans came to Japan. This
term was produced very recently, but it has been seen more and more because of convenience and positive image, although older generations tend to hesitate to use this term. I chose this term to describe the Koreans in Japan for this study for these reasons and also I wanted to maintain the nuance of “Zainichi” in Japanese.


8. Nisei (二世): Second generation/ the immigrants’ children. This term sometimes understood as Japanese Americans who were interned during WWII.

9. Sansei (三世): Third generation/ the immigrants’ grandchildren

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Immigrant history of the Zainichi Koreans in Japan and Japanese Americans in the United States has been deeply related to the situations in their mother countries. Since they settled in the new places in Japan or the United States, their status has been influenced by international relations and the host countries’ domestic situations especially when nationalism is exercised. Nation, as Anderson (1983) defines it is an “imagined political community,” which is “always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (pp. 15-16). Moreover, Puri (2004) states that nationalism refers to “relatively recent beliefs and practices aimed at creating unified but unique communities within a sovereign community” (p.2). People assume that each nation is independent with a sovereign territory and each person has a nationality that affects whether she or he can exist in the state, work, travel, or have rights and responsibilities (Puri, 2004). The concept of nationalism is often exercised by the dominant group to maintain hegemony, as discussed in the Theoretical Framework, Part I. The notion of otherness, separation of “us” and “them” leads to a sense of superiority:

[I]n the unselfconscious use of ‘our’ (which becomes ‘their’), and the description of the faith of the Christians as ‘truest’ rather than ‘true,’ we can detect the seeds of a territorialization of faiths which foreshadows the language of many nationalists (‘our’ nation is ‘the best’—in a competitive, comparative field). (Anderson, 1983, p.24)

Furthermore, even though it is believed that “people of a nation are equal, or ought to be equal if they are not,” there is a “fundamental flaw of nationalism,” as Puri (2004) states:
Not only do aspects such as race, class, gender, place of birth and belonging, sexuality, ethnicity, and religion make people different but these aspects explain why not all citizens are treated equally. These inequalities are not simply incidental, but are a routine part of our lives; they are built into the social and legal infrastructures. All kinds of people may be (north) American citizens, but racism and xenophobia filter who truly belongs and who is denied full rights of inclusion into the national community. (p. 6)

Not only in the United States, but also in Japan, nationalism has been embedded in the everyday life of both majority and minority groups, and this has influenced particularly minorities, including Zainichi Koreans.

After 1868, the social upheaval caused by nationalism and rapid industrialization of the Meiji government formed the impetus for the mobilization of people across borders—Korean migration to Japan and Japanese emigration to the United States. The emigration of Japanese had begun earlier in 1860, while the migration of Koreans to Japan originated in the ancient interconnected history of Japan and Korea. While in the pre-Meiji era, the Edo government focused inward, due to modernization and European influence, a national consciousness and nationalism developed (Ryang, 2000; Weiner, 1997). As a result, after 1868, Imperial Forces territorialized Hokkaido and Ryuku Islands (Okinawa). The militarized regime led Japan to victory in Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), and annexation of the Korean Peninsula in 1910. The bulk of Korean migration to Japan took place during this period (1910-1945) and Japanese nationalism has impacted Zainichi Koreans’ status and identity in Japan ever since.

The rapid industrialization and transition to modernization in Japan produced serious poverty, especially in the countryside during the 1880s. Many farmers could not
pay taxes because of the tax reform. Therefore, young women left home and worked sixteen-hour shifts at factories, and second or noninheriting sons moved to cities for employment (Takaki, 1993). The purpose of immigration to the United States was to study abroad at first; however, the negative economic conditions pushed many Japanese youths from Japan to work outside the country for a better opportunity. The “pull-cause” for the host country was the shortage of labor especially in Hawaii and California because of the Chinese exclusion laws in 1882 and 1892, although the immigration of the Japanese was also restricted in 1908 (Buell, 1994a). As in the case of Zainichi Koreans in Japan, nationalism, international relationships, and colonialism affected Japanese Americans in the United States in the form of anti-immigrant laws and the unique experience of Japanese Americans especially during WWII.

This section first looks at the myths of homogeneity in Japan and heterogeneity in the United States historically and socially. Next, it looks at the historical background of nationalism, Zainichi Koreans in Japan and Japanese Americans in the United States and then discusses the historical background, citizenship and nationality, and the significance of names of Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans. Finally, it looks at women’s narratives from a feminist perspective and discusses the generative themes and contrasts for both groups.

Double Myths: Homogeneity in Japan and Heterogeneity in the United States

*Homogeneity in Japan*

According to Lie (2000), the main ethnic groups in Japan are the Ainu, Okinawans, Burakumin, Koreans, Chinese, and “Japanese-Japanese” (p. 3). These days,
international labor has increased in low-wage jobs such as construction, seasonal work, manufacturing, the sex industry, and illegal business, from the Philippines, Thailand, Iran, Brazil, Bangladesh, and also from China and Korea all of whom came to Japan relatively recently. Those immigrants are visible because they are in particular jobs, speak limited Japanese, and look and act differently. Increasing numbers of immigrants have exposed the Japanese to the reality of a multiethnic society, which makes the Japanese feel insecure and threatened because for many years they have been used to the security of a homogeneous society.

Various other groups have constituted a multiethnic society in Japan for a long time. The Burakumin are the descendents of outcasts in Edo period, from 1603-1867, and are still discriminated against (Lie, 2000, p.84-89). The origin of Burakumin, whom Hawkins (1993) introduces as “Japan’s invisible race” and “a discrete subgroup in Japanese society,” and whom Ogbu (1987) describes as an “involuntary minority,” goes back to the ninth or tenth century, when Buddhism and Shintoism created beliefs about purity and impurity. Therefore, people in certain occupations associated with impurity—blood and death—were considered as “polluting” people. These included those involved in menial labor, such as butchers, leather workers, cremators, etc (p. 206). In Edo period, the class system became more formalized, and Burakumin were more identified by “official papers, residence patterns, occupation, and other identifiable symbols on their clothes and person” (Hawkins, 1983, p. 206). Bondy (2003) mentions the political reasons for the class (caste) system at this period in the endnote of his report, “[b]y maintaining a social group below farmers, artists and merchants, the military government was able to maintain a society that was rigidly controlled and heavily taxed” (p. 33).
During the first half of the Edo period, the class system itself worked well to control the
citizens, but after 19th century, the government had to impose more restrictions on
Burakumin lifestyle, for example, food and clothes, which indicates the line between
classes was becoming blurred. (Tsukada, 2002; Sumimoto & Itakura, 2002).

Living mainly in Hokkaido, the Ainu are indigenous Japanese, whose land was
invaded by the Japanese and who were forced to speak Japanese (Emori, 1997; Kato,
1997; Lie, 2000). The Japanese had trade relationships with the Ainu since the late 1100s,
but identified them as barbarians (Poisson, 2002). According to Emori (1997), from the
end of the 17th century, Japanese merchants started the fishing industry instead of trading
for fish with the Ainu so that they could make more money. Many Ainu men and women
were taken and forced to labor in the fisheries, and as a result, only old people and
children were left in the villages causing the Ainu life and culture to collapse (Emori,
1997).

In 1871, the Meiji government annexed Hokkaido, Kuril Islands, Sakhalin (Kuril
Islands and Sakhalin are Russian territories now), and Okinawa. The government
required the Ainu to register as indigenous people with Japanese names rather than their
own names in their own language (Emori, 1997; Kato, 1997). The Ainu were prohibited
from hunting and fishing, tattooing, or wearing earrings, which were very important to
the lifestyle and culture of the Ainu (Kato, 1997). The government encouraged Japanese
farmers to open up Hokkaido, causing the ratio of the Ainu to Japanese pioneers to
decrease (Emori, 1997).

Finally, Korean ethnics were forced to come to Japan as laborers after Japan
annexed the Korean peninsula in 1910. Many people of Korean ancestry have been
considered foreigners or sojourners, even though they were born and raised in Japan (Lie, 2000). Murphy-Shigematsu (2004) explains how people in Japan are divided into groups, which seems clear but is actually ambiguous because the official categories ignore divisions caused by ethnicity, race, and social class:

The people of Japan will be divided into two categories based on legal status of nationality as defined by the state. One group are Japanese—people who hold Japanese nationality. The second group are non-Japanese—residents who do not have Japanese nationality. These categories appear solid, unlike the ambiguous categories of race, ethnicity, or culture, the borders of which are blurred. Legal restrictions define who is and who is not a Japanese national. But even these boundaries are being challenged, with shifting meanings of dividing lines between people who have deep political and social implications and ramifications. (p. 306)

Because these boundaries are changing, people in Japan can be more precisely divided into four categories: (1) ethnic Japanese with Japanese nationality and citizenship, (2) non-ethnic Japanese with Japanese nationality and citizenship, such as the Ainu, Okinawans, and Burakumin, although, Lie (2001) insists Burakumin is a different ethnic group from Japanese-Japanese, who speak Japanese and have assimilated, (3) non-Japanese without Japanese nationality or citizenship. This last group is divided into two: (a) people who came to Japan before the WWII such as Korean or Chinese residents and who speak Japanese, some of whom are bilingual and bicultural, and (b) people who came to Japan after the 1970s, for example, Cambodian refugees, Chinese returnees, and descendants of Japanese immigrants from Brazil and other South American Countries (around the end of 1980s), and other immigrants including legal and illegal, many of whom don’t speak Japanese as a first language and (4) multiracial or multicultural Japanese, with or without Japanese citizenship.
After WWII, patriotism and state consciousness became weaker because of demilitarization, the thorough political and educational reforms by GHQ (US general headquarters during the occupation of Japan), but closed-mindedness and a sense of superiority to minority groups remained. Most Japanese people are “passive racists” and “difficult to indict” (Lie, 2000, p.175). Even though they would divide people into Japanese and non-Japanese, they would say, “we are all human beings” (Lie, 2000, p.143).

**Heterogeneity in the United States**

The United States is a heterogeneous country in terms of diverse population. Unlike Japan, whose heterogeneity has been covert and often denied, the heterogeneity of the United States has been an acknowledged fact as the metaphor “melting pot” indicates. United States has accepted immigrants from the beginning of its history, although there has been slavery and oppression and marginalization of Native Americans. At the same time, civil rights movements and women’s movements have acknowledged and promoted the concept of pluralism and equal access to civil rights. Therefore, in this context, heterogeneity not only indicates the presence of different cultural, ethnic, or religious backgrounds, but also indicates that everyone is treated equally to some extent. However, the concept of being American has often been associated with being white, as the exclusion acts directed only at Asian immigrants seem to support. (Curtis, 2002; Koshy, 2001; Morrison, 1992; Omi & Winant, 1994; Takaki, 1993, Wu, 2002).

Asian Americans have been assigned two contradictory images: model minority and perpetual foreigners (Tuan, 1998; Wu, 2002). The model minority image has been supported by Asian American’s academic achievement and economic status (Wu, 2002).
According to Adler (1998), the 1980 census indicated that 37% of Japanese Americans aged 25 to 64 earned high school diplomas, 15.6% earned college degrees, and 2.6% received doctorates or had equivalent years of education (p. 117). In the 1990 census, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, (1993), 89.9% of Japanese American males aged 25 and above had high school diplomas or higher, compared to 85.6% for females. In California, 26.28% of Japanese Americans aged 18 and above held college degrees, compared to 16.26% of non-Hispanic whites in the 1990 census (Tuan, 1998). However, since the late 1800s, the model minority image has often been in comparison with the African American or Latino minorities because these groups competed for jobs (Adler, 1998; Wu, 2002). Moreover, Wu (2002) points out that the social mobility of Asian Americans has been limited:

Although the average educational levels of Asian Americans might be taken as substantiating the model minority myth, the more plausible reading is that Asian Americans have had to overcompensate. Asian Americans receive a lower return on their investment in education. They gain less money than white Americans on average for each additional degree. They are underrepresented in management, and those who are managers earn less than white Americans in comparable positions. … Even though Asian Americans are associated with education, they remain underrepresented even in higher education at all levels beyond students and entry-level teaching positions in a few departments. Asian American women are granted academic tenure at rates lower than any other demographic group. (p. 51)

Therefore, although it seems that Asian Americans have gained “social acceptance” and are considered the “newest additions to the American mainstream” and “honorary whites,” they are still underrepresented in the higher level positions in corporations or educational institutions when compared to whites (Tuan, 1998, p. 30).

The image of foreigner consistent with the US-Asian diplomatic relations has
been used to exclude native-born Asian Americans, as Wu (2002) points out that the “Yellow Peril images of Asians are being transformed through transnationalism, but the developments may be hazardous for Asian Americans because of the emphasis on racial bonds to Asian homelands” (p. 95). One stark example is internment of Japanese Americans many of whom were American citizens. Even though numerous Japanese Americans assimilated before the war, and were even then called “model citizens,” they faced “loss of liberty, livelihood, and property during World War II based on unproven suspicions that they would be loyal to an enemy nation because of racial ties” (Wu, 2002, p. 234). Moreover, it is problematic to stereotype all immigrants whose countries of origin are in Asia as “Asian” Americans because the bond that exists between people from such a huge and diverse continent is tenuous at best, yet:

Immigrants from the Far East, especially those with common racial features, are lumped together under the label “Asian” or “Oriental.” In this instance, the gap between ethnic labeling and actual reality is even more egregious because groups so designed do not even share a common language. (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996, pp. 134-135)

Moreover, people from “Asian” countries do not necessarily share a common religion, cultural heritage, or even alphabet.

According to Lowe (1996), by the 1960s, multiculturalism was introduced as a “national cultural form that [sought] to unify the diversity of the United States through the integration of differences as cultural equivalents abstracted from the histories of racial inequality unresolved in the economic and political domains” (p. 30). However, the racial and political exclusion of Asian Americans and their perpetuated foreignness contradict the notion of multiculturalism. Moreover, Wu (2002) states that neither assimilation nor
multiculturalism is satisfactory because together they put Asian Americans in a “no-win” situation in which they are either “all-American” or “gooks,” who are one day told to assimilate and the next that they have lost their cultural heritage: “If Asian Americans assimilate, we can never appease whites who appear to be arbiters of the matter from above and whose whims dictate the trends from preppy to grunge” (p. 229).

While Japan needs to create a new sense of national identity by affirming its diversity historically and for the future, the United States also needs to rethink national identity by resolving the “false dichotomy” between assimilation and multiculturalism:

The test is not whether we have a single common culture or many different cultures; it is whether our culture is educational, with each of us a creator, an active participant in living traditions, or entertainment, a virtual reality universe with only a few distant stars to be gazed upon, leaving the rest of us to be passive consumers of interchangeable commodities. (Wu, 2002, p. 258)

If ideological hegemony is perpetuated by the dominant group creating common-sense, one single common culture, and making the active creation of identity impossible for minority groups and women, the myth of heterogeneity will remain alive.

Zainichi Koreans: Historical Background and Contemporary Issues

The Emergence of Japanese Imperialism and Nationalism

The modernization of Japan started in the mid nineteenth century. Previously, the Edo Shogunate (government) had traded only with China, Korea, and the Netherlands from 1636, and only one port was open—Nagasaki. The government also forbade its citizens who traveled overseas from returning to Japan, even those who had accidentally drifted out to sea and were rescued by foreign ships (Haruna, 1993; Kawai, 1993; Ogura,
People could not travel freely even inside the country without permission at the time. In that way, the Edo government could exclude the heathen, the Christians, and control its citizens (Ogura, 1993). At the end of the eighteenth century, the era of imperialism and colonialism, European countries, such as Britain and France, started to make contact in order to trade with Japan, but weren’t successful (Gordon, 2003).

Gradually the Edo Shogunate lost its centrality and sovereignty. In 1853, when (American) Commodore Matthew Perry arrived with a flotilla of armed ships in Tokyo Bay forcing the Edo Shogunate to open the country by threatening cannon fire, it was revealed that the Shogunate had lost the power to protect Japan from foreign countries (Gordon, 2003). In 1858, Japan and the US signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which was unequal to Japan. In the 1850s, the United States, as well as European countries, was trying to expand its hegemony in Asia, although the stated purpose of demanding open trade with Japan was to have a port to refuel whaling ships (Kajita, 1997; Ryang, 2000). After Japan signed the treaty with the US, Britain, Russia, France, and the Netherlands demanded Japan sign unequal treaties with them (Gordon, 2003). By 1867, the Edo Shogunate had lost all credibility, and the threat of revolution forced the restoration of the Emperor Meiji.

In 1868, the Meiji government established Japan as a modern nation with an Imperial Regime. The Meiji leaders carried out rapid industrialization and militarization in order to avoid invasion or other diplomatic and military actions, such as the Opium Wars, by Europe or the US as had happened in most of Asia (Gordon, 2003). In 1876, the Meiji government opened Korea and signed a treaty which was unequal to Korea (Ryang, 2000). Japan’s strategy of imperialism was to modernize Korea and thus to expand its
The Japanese government sought to forge a close political relationship to Korea rooted in the centuries-old tribute system. Its goal was to promote a regime in Korea that was independent of both China and Russia and deferential to Japan. In the strategic thinking of Yamagata Aritomo, the most important geopolitical strategist among the Meiji leaders, Korea was to be part of a buffer “zone of advantage” protecting Japan’s home-island “zone of sovereignty.” (Gordon, 2003, p. 116)

Weiner (1997) points out that the notion of Japanese minzoku (ethnicity; nation; people) and Japan’s superiority to other countries especially in Asia was forged in the early Meiji era:

It was within the context of the political, economic and social processes which developed under colonial rule in Hokkaido, Korea and Taiwan that the new Japanese identity was most fully expressed. If a strongly collectivistic nationalism allowed the Japanese to partake of a modern and progressive identity, the existence of empire confirmed their own manifest superiority vis-à-vis the peoples of Asia. (pp. 10-11)

At the same time, this developed the “Japaneseness” as well as “Otherness” in the sense of “racialized” identity (pp. 2-4).

According to Oguma (2002), two theories have circulated about the formation of Japanese nationalism: “the theory that Japanese and Koreans share the same ancestor” or “Nissen dōsoron” (p. 64) and Japan as “single, pure, homogeneous kinfolk” (p. 50). Under the expansion of imperialism, the former theory of Japan as a nation of mixed ethnic groups was developed to justify the annexation of Korea and assimilation of the Korean people. Korean (and Taiwanese) citizens were told that they were children of the Emperor in a Family State (Oguma, 2002; Weiner, 1997). After World War II, this theory no longer worked:
As a result of the defeat, Japanese intellectuals could no longer call upon logic of the past, such as the theory of assimilation or the Family State, and lost the framework with which they could discuss alien ethnic groups within Japan. Most of these intellectuals found it impossible to talk about coexistence with alien peoples except in step with the expansion of empire. (Oguma, 2002, p. 298, italicized by Aoki)

In other words, there was “a tendency to believe that it would be better to help [the Koreans, Taiwanese, and others left in Japan] return to their newly independent countries as quickly as possible, rather than to formulate a new vision of coexistence in Japan” and a “new Japan as a multi-national state” (p. 298). This tendency advanced further the theory of a homogeneous nation along with the economic recovery and reformation of all kinds of policies, which deprived Koreans of certain rights, among their citizenship, they had had until WWII ended (Oguma, 2002).

Pre- and Post World War II

Most Zainichi Koreans in Japan have the roots of their ancestry in the annexation of Korean Peninsula by the Japanese military (1910-1945). Many Korean farmers and their families migrated to Japan as cheap labor in industries such as mining, civil engineering, and cotton spinning because they had lost their land and homes to the land reform of the Japanese military (Kim, 1994). After 1939, at the beginning of WWII, the number of people migrating from Korea (men and women) dramatically increased. Some were forcibly taken to supply the shortage of labor caused by accelerating militarization just as many Japanese civilians including young students also had to work at military arsenals (Kim, 1994; Ryang, 2000). At the end of WWII, more than two million Koreans were in Japan and out of those, about 600,000 people stayed because they had settled
down or found the situation in Korea to be unstable (Kim, 1994). Moreover, many people who tried to go back to Korea had to give up going home because the property and money they could bring were restricted and the transportation was chaotic (Kang, 2005, Kim, 1994). Those Koreans who stayed in Japan lost their Japanese citizenship after the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951 and became Korean nationals and foreigners in Japan because the Japanese government had given up possession of its colonies (Kang, 2005; Kim, 1994).

Zainichi Koreans are the children and grandchildren of these Koreans. Some of them have naturalized, while others are South or North Korean nationals. Nowadays, about 10,000 Zainichi Koreans naturalize every year and about 80% of Koreans marry ethnic Japanese, so the number of Korean Japanese “foreigners” is decreasing, while the number of the “Newcomers” from South Korea is increasing, so the population remains stable, approximately 600,000 (Kim, 1994; Tanaka, 2004).

The division of the Korean peninsula affected the Koreans in Japan, polarizing the community. As the Cold War intensified, so did the division. Various political groups formed by Koreans in Japan mirrored the political situation in their homeland. Chonryun and Mindan are the largest organizations which were founded to support North Korea and South Korea respectively and both organizations have played an important role to better the situation of Koreans living in Japan.

From 1959 through 1984, about 90,000 Koreans in Japan “returned” to North Korea through the “returning campaign,” in which Japan, North Korea, the former Soviet Union, and the North Korean organization in Japan were involved (Kang, 2005). As mentioned above, Japan encouraged Zainichi Koreans to “return” because the Japanese
government did not want to have “aliens.” According to Kang (2005), liberal newspapers and activists of Japan supported the Koreans who were going back. The motive for Zainichi Koreans was to liberate themselves from hardships and discrimination in Japan (Kang, 2005; Kim, 2004; Yang, 2006). Many Koreans longed for and believed in a free and equal nation. However, this divided many families; the people who stayed in Japan can only go to North Korea using limited and restricted transportations, while those who “returned” can never come back to Japan again because of the two countries’ relationship (Yang, 2006).

Citizenship and Naturalization

From 1945 to 1947, the status of Korean residents in Japan was unclear because Japan had lost its colonies at the surrender (Kang, 2005; Kim, 2005; Ryang, 2000). In 1947, the Japanese government implemented the order of Alien Registration for foreign residents (Ryang, 2000). Korean residents registered as “Chosen,” meaning Korea(n) in Japanese, for convenience (at the time the situation in Korea was unstable). After South Korea (Kankoku) was founded in 1948, people could register as South Korean citizens if they had a certificate of South Korean nationality (Kang, 2005). In 1952, when San Francisco Peace Treaty was implemented, all ethnic Koreans and Taiwanese in Japan needed to register as “foreigners” (Kang, 2005; Tanaka, 2004).

Since then, many people have changed their registration status to South Korean, while some have remained Chosen. Therefore, remaining registered as Chosen does not necessarily relate to North Korea. However, Chosen nationality can mean “stateless” and is ambiguous because the Japanese government does not recognize this nationality since
Japan does not recognize North Korea as a country (nation). At the same time, among people who maintain Chosen registration, some support the North Korean government politically even though they might come from southern part of Korea (Kang, 2005; Kim, 2005; Ryang, 1997).

As mentioned earlier, in Japan, people whose parents do not have Japanese citizenship cannot become Japanese citizens even if they were born in Japan. Those who are “foreigners” by birth need to be registered within 60 days of birth according to the Alien Registration Law, which was implemented in 1947. At age 16 and above, “foreigners” in Japan need to reregister with their pictures and more details such as their occupation, family members, and so on. In 1955, the Ministry of Justice required all non-Japanese to be fingerprinted (in 1958, people staying in Japan less than a year were exempted; HAN, 1995). During the 1980s, the anti-fingerprinting movement grew, especially among Zainichi Koreans, and so the Alien Registration Law was revised to make the process simpler. In 1992, people with special permanent resident status (most of whom were Zainichi Koreans) were exempted from fingerprinting and in 1999, fingerprinting was abolished for all registered aliens (Global Citizenship NET, 2003; Tanaka, 2002). However, according to the Ministry of Justice (n.d., a), all registered foreigners must always carry alien registration cards and show them when an authority requires; otherwise, they must pay fines. The Minister of Justice can only naturalize people who meet the following conditions: residence in Japan, legal capacity, (good) behavior, (good) financial condition, no dual citizenship, and compliance with Constitution (Ministry of Foreign Affaires, 1999; Ministry of Justice, n.d., b).
Korean Language Education

To reassert their ethnic identity (their right to learn Korean was taken away during WWII), Koreans living in Japan founded Korean schools for students of Korean ancestry after World War II. In 1948, there were more than 600 of these schools (Kishida, 2001). However, between 1948 and 1949, General Headquarters of the Allied Forces (GHQ) and the Japanese government forced some schools to close because many were connected to the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (a North Korean organization). Therefore, GHQ and the Japanese government were afraid that this education was too political. Many Korean students had to transfer to public schools even though many had previously faced discrimination from Japanese students and teachers, and public schools offered little opportunity for students to learn about the Korean students’ history, culture, or language.

In 1955, the resurgence of the Communist leaning North Korean Organization (its members considered independent North Korea rather than American governed South Korea the ‘true’ Korea) added yet another layer of complexity to Korean Japanese ethnic identity. North Korean ethnic schools (run by the North Korean Organization) decided to educate their children to become loyal Korean nationals. By 2003, one university, twelve high schools, 42 middle schools, and 65 elementary schools were run by the North Korean Organization in Japan (Shin, 2005). In these schools, the students learn Korean as a second language in elementary school, and gradually, the instruction becomes all Korean (Lee, 1998). The North Korean government used to donate to support the ethnic schools; however, nowadays, the donations have stopped and the ethnic schools have financial problems. Moreover, the number of students who enter the ethnic schools is
decreasing because of the falling birthrate and maybe the weakening political power of North Korea. For a long time, the Japanese government has not recognized these non-licensed schools, so the students who graduate from Korean ethnic high schools have to take an assessment test for the certificate of high school graduation in order to take entrance exams for Japanese universities. In 2003, the government changed the law, but still students at ethnic schools face many restrictions.

There are only four South Korean schools in Japan, two of which are considered licensed private schools. Those schools have to follow the curriculum and manuals of the Japanese government and the instruction is basically all in Japanese. A private school, Kenkoku Gakuen (K-12), one of the licensed Korean schools in Osaka, has accepted Korean-born students who come to Japan because of their parents’ jobs. According to Maeda (2005), in 1997, Korean students from South Korea comprised 50 % of kindergarteners and 40 % of elementary students at Kenkoku Gakuen. For those students from South Korea, the school offers classes in Korean and Japanese as a second language. In the kindergarten, the instruction is in Korean (Maeda, 2005). Kenkoku Gakuen also invites teachers from South Korea to teach Korean, supported by the South Korean government. Maeda says that unlike the Korean language spoken in other Korean ethnic schools, which has been influenced by the Japanese language, Korean taught by the Korean dispatched teachers at Kenkoku Gakuen reflects the present Korean language. But at the same time, teachers and students are afraid to make mistakes and anxious about speaking “correct” Korean (as defined by Korean dispatched teachers) which might be obstructing development of their Korean language proficiency (Maeda, 2005).

According to Ogoshi (2005), more than 80% of Korean Japanese students go to
Japanese school, mostly attending public schools. Therefore, most Korean Japanese students do not have the opportunity to learn Korean at school. In Osaka, with the largest Korean Japanese population in Japan, about 160 elementary and middle schools have had after school programs for Korean Japanese students to learn Korean language, arts, and history once or twice a week, since the 1950s. However, many Korean instructors have had difficulty obtaining enough equipment and have also fought discrimination against Korean Japanese students in school (Kishida, 2001). Even now, most of these teachers are adjunct instructors, so they teach at several schools and classes cannot meet every day. Since the students can have Korean classes only once or twice a week, they cannot learn Korean very well. However, those after school programs are important for Korean Japanese students since they support minority students studying at Japanese schools. According to Nomura (2002), students at schools with Korean after school programs are more likely to use their real names (17.4 %) than students at schools without Korean after school programs (7.5 %).

*Names and Zainichi Koreans*

Just as language and identity are strongly linked, so are an individual’s name and identity. For Zainichi Korean parents, how to name their children is the most important and difficult decision if they raise children in Japan. After the annexation of Korea by Japan, the Japanese government forced the Koreans to exchange their names for Japanese names. This was insulting for the Koreans and even now, there is an expression in Korean such as “I swear on my name (Korean name)” or “I will change my name if what I’m saying is not true,” because of their experience (Hyun, 2002).
After WWII, most Koreans who stayed in Japan continued to use their Japanese names for convenience or to avoid discrimination: to rent a room, to get a job, and so on (Kim, 1994). The second generation of Koreans who went to school (around 1960s-70s) mostly used Japanese names at school. Kim (1994) indicated his feelings about his name:

I hated my Japanese name which sounded Korean even if said the Japanese way. I was afraid for my ethnicity to be revealed. Actually some of my peers knew when I was in high school and I was insulted sometimes. I felt affronted and angry with myself, and wanted to escape being a “Korean” (Kim, 1994).

When I interviewed Korean women in 2004, one of the interviewees told me her name represents Zainichi Koreans’ situation really well, because she uses her Korean name, but pronounced Japanese way. What she meant was that even Zainichi themselves who chose to use their real Korean names, pronounce them in a Japanese way, indicating both assimilation and retention of ethnic identity. As she said, people now have some choices about their names:

1. Korean name said Korean way: *Kim, Young Ja* 金 桂子
   (* In Japan, usually pronounced Japanese way: *Kimu, Yon Ja.* )
2. Korean name said Japanese way: *Kin, Keiko* 金 桂子
3. Japanese name: *Kaneyama, Keiko* 金山 桂子

* Bolded parts are different from Korean name, (1).

Usually, in (1) and (2), the Chinese characters’ of the name are the same but read differently while in (3), the family name is changed. In Zainichi Japanese family names, often the added Chinese characters are based on Korean names or districts to maintain cultural identity. According to Harajiri (1998), research showed that in Kanagawa, Japan, out of 866 Zainichi Korean students, 91.3 % used Japanese names in 1986.
Currently, a movement exists to encourage Korean students to use their Korean names (Harajiri, 1998). Although the number of Zainichi Korean students who use their real names at school is increasing, some Zainichi Korean parents still hesitate to choose Korean names because they may be afraid of discrimination. Even if choosing to use their Korean names is the “right” thing to do, in terms of ethnic consciousness, Zainichi Korean students struggle with discrimination in Japanese schools as a minority. On the other hand, Korean students who have used Japanese names in school often feel they have lied to other people and to themselves (Chen, 2005).

Hyun (2002) describes his complicated situation; he has used three names (patterns [3], [2], [1], respectively). Even though he awakened his ethnic consciousness to become “real Korean” by using his real name, pattern 1, with his Zainichi Korean colleagues, he still uses pattern 2 for the Japanese. When he goes to Korea, his relatives call him by his first name the Japanese way, but with Korean accent. He also feels awkward seeing his name in Roman letters, for instance, on his passport. Moreover, his parents and relatives in Japan used to call him by his real name with a suffix. In Korean, people don’t address others using first names alone but add a suffix, which is equivalent to “san” in Japanese. The way his Zainichi Korean colleagues address him is not correct in contemporary Korean, but they use this form because “they have lived in the world too far from using contemporary Korean language and hesitate to use those expressions” (p.77). Hyun (2002) says even though some people might say a name is just a symbol which your parents chose without your will and has nothing to do with your “real nature,” he says he feels skeptical about those opinions:

That is because we, the second generation Zainichi Koreans have lived
telling many lies, and on top of all that, not being able to tell which is false and which is true, we have not been able to dispel the “doubt” if we’ve continued “lie” after “lie.” We’ve lived in insecurity wondering if self-existence itself is lie or false. And we wish, someday I want to be “real me,” but where is “real”? (Hyun, 2002, p.78)

Zainichi Koreans are sensitive about their names because of the insulting historical relationship with Japan that forced them to change names, but simply using a ‘real’ name does not become a solution to their identity crises.

Lee (2004), also second generation, says she was bewildered at first when she was told that she and her friends needed to use their Korean names:

The first time I found out that I had Japanese name and Korean name was around when I was in junior high school. When I entered junior high, I was told that the school required the students to use real names. Ikuno District in Osaka city had the largest population of North and South Koreans, and one out of four students was Korean. Therefore, the real name system started, although the Korean names were read the Japanese way. … When I asked the teacher at the junior high, the teacher said, “We want you to be proud of yourselves.” In our school, we had name tags. But all my friends from before went to the same junior high, so I felt uncomfortable to have my real name on my name tag. … I mean, I had been called Morimoto, then once I got in junior high, I became “Lee.” Some of my friends from elementary school still call me by my Japanese name. They say it’s hard to call by my real name even though they were told to. (Lee, 2004, para. 3)

Lee (2004) decided to use her Korean name in high school too. She says many students chose to use Japanese names at junior high or high school in the end; even though they had to use Korean names before in elementary school because their teacher forced them to do so (Lee, 2004); “When they are in school, teachers protect them (Korean students). However, when they are outside school, they’re not always protected. Children cannot have the strength to stand by themselves.”
Nomura (1995) states that Japanese school and Japanese society have made Zainichi Koreans invisible and discrimination against Korean Japanese invisible, too. Nomura (1995) also says, “The situations by which Zainichchi Korean students have been made ‘invisible’ has brought much ‘disbenefit’ to Japanese students,” and “has become the reason the Japanese have difficulty in communicating with people around the world, which sometimes has caused troubles (p.98).” (In this quote, “Japanese” means ethnic Japanese.) Using Korean names is the first step to multicultural education in Japan. Just by looking at Korean names, students can see there are Korean students in school, and that Japan has multiethnic society.

Japanese Americans: Historical Background and Contemporary Issues

*Immigration Policies and American Nationalism*

Immigrants in the United States have contributed to the development of the country, and yet have been the target of exclusion throughout history. Even though America has been heterogeneous in ethnicity, culture, and religion since the beginning (as mentioned above), and American national identity has been constantly redefined, it has remained white because the English immigrants and their descendants had hegemonic power to make and define American culture and public policy (Takaki, 1993). According to Lowe (1996), “In the United States, not only class but also the historically sedimented particularities of race, national origin, locality, and embodiment remain largely invisible within the political sphere” (p. 2). American national identity, especially regarding the inclusion or exclusion of minority groups and women, has remained ambiguous and contradicted because minority groups and women have had little voice in determining
who represent the country, whose memories deserve official recognition, and who will be guaranteed the full rights of citizenship and whose rights will be limited (O’Leary, 1999).

The term “nationalism” is used not as often in the United States as it is in Japan. However, this does not mean that nationalism does not exist in the United States (Faruqui, 2003). According to Secor (2004), there is a distinction between ethnic nationalism which is based on blood and soil, and civic nationalism which is based on contracts, citizenship, and consent. Civic nationalism has played a role in protection of national security, while ethnic nationalism has played a role in immigration restriction since 1790 (Curtis, 2002). Both contradictory nationalisms were exercised during WWII, when “[a] civic nationalist war against Nazi racism did not prevent the denial of basic civil rights to Japanese Americans, who on the basis of race could not be trusted as loyal citizens” (p. 321).

Therefore, even though the term nationalism is not often used, racism and exclusion of immigrants have led to xenophobia and anti-immigration laws. Immigrants and their descendants have challenged the definition of citizenship and national identity forcing the dominant group to redefine or narrow who can be American, which also challenged their maintenance of the hegemony of whiteness:

The arrival of Asian immigrants in the United States represents a crucial juncture in the formation of whiteness. The definition of white identity, thought to have been settled by defining precisely through the law who was black and what the place of Native Americans was in the polity, had to be reopened and more narrowly articulated to address the question of whether Asians could become Americans. Thus, the entry of Asians had a strong impact on shaping of national identity, placing tremendous strain on the courts for resolving the problem at the legislation came to provide a mechanism for excluding most people of Asian origin from the nation, whether by denying them entry or by denying them citizenship status. (Koshy, 2001, p. 165)
This contradictory attitude of excluding Asian immigrants at one moment and accepting them the other was actually caused by and a sign of changing national consciousness which was influenced by international relations particularly imperialism, as Lowe (1996) states:

Both in the period from 1850 to World War II and in the period after 1965, immigration has been a crucial locus through which U.S. interests have recruited and regulated both labor and capital from Asia. It is also to maintain that there as been an important continuity between the considerable distortion of social relations in Asian countries affected by U.S. imperialist war and occupation and the emigration of Asian labor to the United States throughout last century. (Lowe, 1996, p. 7)

While Asian immigrants have claimed and to some extent received their equal access to civil, cultural, and economic rights, the process of naturalization and citizenship has continued to be influenced by international relations between the United States and their home countries.

Cultural nationalism, another concept of nationalism, defines a nation as an organic being and focuses on cultural elements which form collective identity and community (Hutchinson, 1994; Omi & Winant, 1994). Cultural nationalists consider nation-based theory rooted in the dynamics of colonialism, which have continued to influence racial oppression which originated in national oppression; “Cultural nationalists sought to define and recapture the specificity of their minority cultures, an objective which they identified as ‘nationalist’” (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 109). They did this by developing minority consciousness of their own histories, cultures, and collective identities. They challenged the imposition of dominant mainstream (white hegemonic) culture. Cultural or ethnic nationalism such as Black nationalism or Chicano nationalism
has promoted the empowerment of the minority groups, and has played an important role in civil rights movements (Omi & Winant, 1994). Asian American nationalism has also been powerful centering on community control, such as the community redevelopment of Japan Town in San Francisco whose residents and small businesses were displaced in the 1960s and the 1970s (Omi & Winant, 1994).

Finally, nationalism has often been understood as and used interchangeably with patriotism, which is associated with loyalty to one’s country, pledging allegiance, loyalty oaths, flags and other symbols. The concept of patriotism was exercised in the American Revolution and other wars such as the Civil War, Spanish-America War, WWI, and WWII (Appadurai, 1996; O’Leary, 1999; Vincent, 2002). Patriotism, which can lead to valuing racial purity, cultural and linguistic oneness, contradicts the concept of liberty (O’Leary, 1999; Vincent, 2002). In the sense of patriotism as a search for and promotion of democracy, nationalism as patriotism has held a contradiction, especially for African Americans and other minority citizens in the United States, although public schools have played a role in educating African American and immigrant students to become “100 percent Americans” (O’Leary, 1999, p. 149). At the same time, patriotism is an unstable sentiment which does not allow people to be bicultural, diasporic, or transnational or to change the definition of Americanness (Appadurai, 1996). This sentiment of patriotism can also be used to generate xenophobic hysteria or to lead a country into war, during which even their own citizens can easily be targeted because of their ethnic or religious backgrounds, such as the internment of Japanese Americans. Moreover, the September 11 attacks have accelerated patriotism especially as propagated by the media. Puri (2004) points out that Muslim Americans, Arab Americans, and South Asians had to show their
loyalty to America and be patriotic, while they were targeted by and received threats and actual physical abuse by those, largely white, Americans seduced by the underside of nationalism in the form of racism and xenophobia.

*Pre World War II*

The first Japanese who arrived after the official start of US-Japan relations, were members of diplomatic mission in 1860. In 1872, the Iwakura Mission, which included political leaders and students, arrived to learn Western policies and systems for the modernization of Japan and to receive higher education.

After the Japanese government legalized emigration in 1885, the first immigrants, contract workers, left Japan for Hawaii (Buell, 1994; Waugh, Yamato, & Okamura, 1988). Even after Hawaii was annexed by the United States, which prohibited contract labor after 1885, private immigration brokers continued to support contract immigrants (K. Tanaka, n.d.). Most immigrants in the early days planned to return home after their contracts finished or they made enough money. According to Takaki (1993), “Of the 200,000 Japanese who entered Hawaii between 1885 and 1924, 110,000 or 55 percent, went home. What is so striking and so significant is the fact that so many sojourners stayed” (p.264).

The population of Japanese in the United States increased from 148 in 1880 Census to 2,038 in 1890, and jumped to 24,326 in 1900 (Waugh, Yamato, & Okamura, 1988). Many Japanese immigrants in Hawaii also moved to the mainland US; according to Buell (1994a), in 1902-1904, 6,838 moved from Hawaii to the West Coast, in 1904-1905, the number increased to 13,803. The influx of the Japanese immigrants to the
mainland, especially California, caused anti-Japanese sentiment. The fear of the “Yellow Peril,” first aimed at the Chinese, had also spread to the Japanese by the beginning of the 20th century. The reason was not only racial bias or “bad images” of temporary workers, staying for while to make some money, not-assimilating, gambling, but also political conflict between Japan and the US. In 1904, the Russo-Japanese War began, and international concerns about Japan’s increasing power caused American politicians, anti-Japanese leaders (agitators) and local newspapers to fear that Japanese immigrants would take over the country (Buell, 1994). Soon, an anti-Japanese movement arose with newspapers providing a platform for politicians and agitators.

In 1908, the Japanese government agreed not to issue passports except to travelers, students, and family members of the immigrants. The anti-Japanese movement temporarily ceased. Ironically or not, this Gentlemen’s Agreement in 1908 brought female immigrants from Japan: picture brides. This created a Japanese community, which meant the Japanese were getting settled by producing families. The population of Japanese increased in California through new immigration and childbirth, which made anti-Japanese groups complain that the Gentlemen’s Agreement was being violated (Waugh, Yamato, & Okamura, 1988). Since the Japanese government was concerned about stricter immigration laws against the Japanese, it banned picture bride emigration in 1920, before the US amended the Alien Land Law as described below (S. Tanaka, n.d.).

*Citizenship, Naturalization, and World War II*

The first Japanese immigrants worked in fields, railroad construction, the canneries, lumber mills, mining camps, and sometimes stores, restaurants, and small
hotels (Takaki, 1993; Library of Congress, n.d., b). Thousands of them lifted themselves up from back-breaking work and became self-employed farmers in the twenty years from the arrival of the first immigrants, by the contract and sharing systems of obtaining land (Takaki, 1993). The success of the Japanese farmers did not lead to their acceptance, but rather caused a backlash. By 1910, the Japanese owned just less than two percent of producing acreage; however, they produced 70% of California’s strawberries, and were also successful producing other crops, such as berries, tomatoes, onions, and potatoes (Takaki, 1993; S. Tanaka, n.d.). In the state of California, the Alien Land Law which prohibited non-citizens from owning and leasing land passed in 1913. The law did not mention the Japanese by name but as “aliens ineligible to citizenship”, although it was obvious that the law was designed to exclude Japanese farmers. At the time, the naturalization law, which had been reformed in 1906, barred Asians from naturalizing (S. Tanaka, n.d.). Therefore, Japanese immigrants could not become citizens, which meant they could not own or even lease land.

In 1924, Congress passed the Immigration Exclusion Law, which included prohibiting the entry of “aliens ineligible to citizenship,” a “code phrase” for the Japanese (Takaki, 1993, p. 63). Before the submission, the Japanese ambassador Masanao Uehara sent a letter to the Secretary of State, Charles Hughes, explaining the Gentlemen’s Agreement and expressing his concern that the immigration act might bring “grave consequences,” which was taken as a threat by the Congress (S. Tanaka, n.d.). The relationship between Japan and the US became even worse, and immigration from Japan stopped completely for 28 years.

On December 7, 1941, the attack on Pearl Harbor by a Japanese Naval force
changed the Japanese Americans situation dramatically. Navy Secretary Frank Knox’s statement, “the most effective fifth column work of the entire war was done in Hawaii” (Takaki, 1998, p. 380), accusing at the Japanese Americans of being spies, which was inaccurate, eventually became the justification for the FBI’s arrest and later internment of Japanese (Americans), some as enemy aliens and others, who were US citizens, suspected of treason.

There might have been military or economic purposes, but there was no “military necessity” (Takaki, 1998, p. 392) to evacuate the Japanese and Japanese Americans and place them in internment camps. In January 1942, Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt proposed the exclusion of the Japanese Americans and the first series of orders was established to remove all enemy aliens from the Pacific Coast by US Attorney General Francis Biddle on January 29 (Kitano, 1969). On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which “designated military areas where military commanders could exclude persons, and authorized building of ‘relocation’ camps to house those people excluded” (Kitano, 1969, p. 32). The Executive Order was implemented, as Kitano (1969) summarized;

On March 2, 1942, General John DeWitt, then Commander in charge of the Western Defense Area, issued an order to evacuate all persons of Japanese ancestry (defined as children with as little as 1/8 Japanese blood), from the Western half of the three Pacific Coast States and the southern third of Arizona. More than 110,000 of the 126,000 Japanese in the United States were affected by the order. Of this group, two-thirds were United States citizens. (p.33)

After about six months stay at assembly centers, they were sent to internment camps (“permanent camps,” Kitano, 1969). They were separated into ten camps; Manzanar and

Japanese Americans, who were thought to be disloyal or fifth column, protested against the internment and tried to prove their loyalty and patriotism by enlisting in the army (Library of Congress, n.d., b). However, in September 1942, all young Japanese men were classified as IV-C, or enemy aliens by the Selective Service (Takaki, 1998). On February 6, 1943, the government required all “internees” to answer loyalty questionnaires whose purposes were “to enable camp authorities to process individual internees for work furloughs as well as for resettlement outside of the restricted zones and to register Nisei for the draft” (Takaki, 1993, p.397). This was contradictory to the main reason they were sent to the camps—that they could be the fifth column. However, with these questionnaires, they could show their loyalty, although some of the Japanese Americans refused to answer the questions. The all-Nisei 442nd regimental combat team was formed after the loyalty questionnaires had been administered.

According to Takaki (1998), 33,000 Nisei men served in the U.S. Armed Forces; most of them served in Europe, and a few in MIS, Military Intelligence Service, which trained Nisei fluent in Japanese to become interpreters or translators. In May 1945, when the war in Europe came to end, 442nd was the most decorated unit in United States military history (Takaki, 1998; Library of Congress, n.d., b); however, it had 9,486 casualties. On August 6, 1945 the American military dropped an atomic bomb in Hiroshima, also where many Issei came from, and again on August 9 in Nagasaki, ironically the only port open to foreigners in the Edo period. From 1946-1947, in the
Tokyo Tribunal of War Crimes, Nisei MIS members became translators, and some of former 442nd soldiers served in occupied Japan after WWII (S. Tanaka, n.d.).

Post World War II

Although it was a slow process, most Japanese Americans returned to the West Coast after WWII ended, but the population was not as concentrated as before the evacuation (Takahashi, 1997).

In the spring of 1945, only 1,500 or so evacuees had ventured to return to the Coast out of 55,000 cleared for return; 40,000 were residing in other states. By August 5,000 were reestablished on the Coast, representing 5 per cent of the American Japanese population. By January, 1946, 50 per cent were back, and another 25 per cent were expected to come gradually from the Midwest and East. (Girder and Loftis, 1969, p. 424)

Moreover, anti-Japanese backlash was still strong in their former neighborhoods; the returnees were welcomed with “outright violence, social ostracism, social harassment, ‘bureaucratic sabotage,’ and economic boycotts” (Takahashi, 1997, p. 114). They had a hard time buying homes, renting apartments, or being served at hotels or restaurants. Many Issei had lost their property and savings; therefore, they were unable to reestablish the lives that they had prior to the war. Many Nisei had to seek employment that “relied on white patronage” (p. 115). For example, Japanese American women were in domestic work, and Japanese American men were in contract gardening. Gradually, during the 1950s, they started work in clerical and technical fields impacted by the Korean War. By the 1960s, as they acquired higher education, they entered the professional fields.

The Japanese American Citizenship League (JACL), founded in 1929 to promote and claim Japanese American identity, played an important role in the 1952 McCarran-
Walter Immigration Act which granted Issei the right of naturalization (Takaki, 1998; Takahashi, 1997). In the 1960s and 1970s, many Sansei, the third generation Japanese Americans, got involved in civil rights and Asian American movements:

More important than the changes in the social and economic position of Japanese Americans was the cultural and political turmoil of the late 1960s that provided a social space in which Sansei encountered new cultural and political possibilities, options that were quite different than the choices open to their parents’ generation. The emergence of Black Power, anti-war, and women’s movements challenged the prevailing social and racial order, as well as the dominant racial ideology. Within this changing racial and political context, young Japanese American activists, in collaboration with other Asian American youth, began to rearticulate their notion of identity and politics. (Takahashi, 1997, p. 160)

Murakami (1997) points out that especially after the compensation was awarded to the survivors of the internment camps in 1999, the gap between the younger and older generation has continued to widen; the younger generation often identifies itself as Asian American, not Japanese American. Even so, some younger Japanese Americans continue to seek their identity and their history as Japanese American. Some Sansei have organized an annual trip to Manzanar or Tule Lake, and more than 300 people participated in the 1996 trip to Tule Lake. For many Sansei, whose parents never talked about their experience of internment, knowing their history through the trip to Manzanar or Tule Lake is a process of healing the trauma of their parents’ experiences. Untold stories of Nisei parents or grandparents have been kept alive by their children, Sansei and Yonsei, the fourth generation, through novels such as *Farewell to Manzanar* and *Desert Exile*, and films such as *Picture Bride* and *American Pastime*. 
In 1893, the San Francisco Board of Education introduced a bill to segregate all Japanese children sending them to Chinese school because the Japanese students were older than American (white) students (Listening for a Change, n.d.; S. Tanaka, n.d.). Because Japanese immigrant students needed to study English first; older Japanese students and younger American students studied together, which was not considered acceptable by American educators who worried for the safety of (white) female students (S. Tanaka, n.d.). The Japanese government and the ambassador Sutemi Chinda protested strongly, so the regulation was withdrawn later that year (Listening for a Change, n.d.; S. Tanaka, n.d.). Thirteen years later, in 1906, the School Board of San Francisco passed the order of segregation of Mongolian students sending Japanese students to the Oriental school in Chinatown. At the time, segregating “Mongolian school students” from white students was legal; the law did not mention the Japanese by name, but only as Mongolians (Buell, 1994a). Out of 25,000 students who were attending San Francisco public schools, only 93 students were Japanese; 68 of them born in Japan, and 25 in the US (Buell, 1994; S. Tanaka, n.d.). When President Theodore Roosevelt was informed about the protest by the American ambassador to Tokyo; he sent a dispatch demanding an investigation to San Francisco which found the School Board’s charges against Japanese contradictory and exaggerated (Buell, 1994; Listening for a Change, n.d.). The President then sent a message to Congress, denouncing the School Board’s action as “wicked absurdity” (Buell, 1994). As a result, in 1907, the School Board of San Francisco rescinded the segregation measure, though strong anti-Japanese feelings remained (Buell, 1994; Listening for a Change, n.d.).
Before the present Japanese day schools or supplementary schools were founded in the United States, Japanese language schools for Japanese immigrant children were established in Hawaii, in 1893 (Asato, 2003). At one time, there were more than eighty Japanese language schools; however, they became too political (for example, students were paying respect to the Emperor’s picture) which became controversial in 1918-1919 (Asato, 2003). Eventually, Japanese language schools in Hawaii were all closed because Japan-America relations deteriorated. The only exception was MIS, the Military Intelligence Service school, during WWII. In this language school, students (most of them second generation Japanese Americans, some of whom had even been to Japan) were required to master Japanese to deceive Japanese soldiers. In this school the students needed to acquire high Japanese language proficiency at all levels, from local dialects to ancient Japanese and Japanese calligraphy (S. Tanaka, n.d.).

After WWII, with increasing numbers of Japanese sojourning overseas to work at Japanese company branches and factories especially from the 1960s, the number of children studying outside Japan increased. When those children returned to Japan, they had problems readjusting to the Japanese schools because of the differences between Japanese and foreign system. To solve this problem, from the end of the 1960s through the 1980s, a lot of supplementary schools and some day schools were founded in the US for the children of sojourners. Basically the supplementary schools were sponsored by parents, local Japanese companies, and communities (Moriguchi-McCormick, 1999). According to Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan, in 2007, there were four full time Japanese schools, three full time private schools, and 74 supplementary schools (29 schools have teachers from Ministry of Education).
Japanese Names

Unlike what happened to Koreans in Japan, no laws have forced immigrants to change their names to English names in the United States, although name changing was common even on Ellis Island for non-English speaking immigrants from Europe. Some people consciously chose English names to become Americanized or to be disassociated from “foreignness,” while others translated or shortened their names, or used nicknames, or misspelled their names (Rose & Ingalls, 2005). For Asian immigrants whose last names come first, renaming was also common on Angel Island (Lin, n.d.).

Most Japanese immigrant Issei parents gave their Nisei children Japanese names. However, many Nisei, who grew up in Japanese and American culture, “seemed to feel their ‘twoness’—as both Japanese and American. Their lives and their identities were bifurcated between the land of their parents and the land of their birth” (Takaki, 1998, pp. 214-215). Their twoness was reflected in their names:

Nisei names reflected their dual identities. Many changed, shortened, or Americanized their Japanese first names—for example, from Makoto to Mac, Isamu to Sam, and Chiyoji to George. They also gave themselves English translations of their Japanese names such as Lily for Yuriko, Violet for Sumire, and Victor for Katsu (“victory”). Others simply gave themselves or one another American names and they became Marie, Thomas, Doris, Ralph. …Many Nisei had two names—their Japanese names at home and their American names in school and the playground. (Takaki, 1998, p. 215)

These days, some Japanese American parents give their children Japanese first names and American middle names, but many do not use their Japanese names in daily life (Lin, n.d.).

Even though most Japanese Americans now use English first names, their
Japanese last names are often difficult to pronounce:

Asakawa. Ah-sa-ka-wa. Pretty simple, right? Very phonetic. At least, I think so. Yet, all my life I’ve heard my name mangled by people who don’t take time to read it. They see seven letters and the fact that it’s not, well, American. … I tend to use a broad, Americanized pronunciation even if the individual syllables are correct. I have an American accent, which I guess I can live with. But some [Japanese Americans] act like Japanese names are foreign. (Asakawa, 2004, p. 60)

Since many Japanese Americans don’t speak Japanese, it is hard to pronounce their last names in Japanese way. Some early European immigrants changed their last names by marriage, and afterwards their offspring did not know their original names (Rose & Ingalls, 2005). Like those who became “white” in the United States, some Zainichi Koreans in Japan, who took Japanese names and naturalized have become “Japanese” and their children might not know that they are of Korean descent. However, Japanese last names have been passed on to the next generation unless interracial or interethnic marriage changed them, whether or not Japanese Americans are able to pronounce their own names.

Women’s Voices: Research on Zainichi Korean and Japanese American Women

Women’s voices and images are portrayed and perpetuated by films, novels, poetry, art, and so on, such as Picture Bride, Farewell to Manzanar, or The Sky of Los Angeles. Scholarly research investigates and problematizes how these voices and images have been represented, interpreted, and heard. For example, Yamamoto (1999) investigated how images of Japanese women and Japanese American women have been formed and expressed by films and literature, including Japanese American women’s
autobiographies. Yanagisako (1985) researched kinship change among Japanese American Issei and Nisei women and men in Seattle. Adler (1998) investigated their work ethic and values of child rearing by interviewing intergenerational Japanese American women in the Midwest. Although much research has been done on Japanese American history, not as much has focused on Japanese American women.

Some research has been conducted with Zainichi Korean women, although the number of studies is relatively small. Kim (2004) analyzed Zainichi Korean women’s literature. Yi Yangji, a poet, and Yu Miri, a novelist, have been studied and profiled by American scholars (Hayes, 2000; Wender, 2000, 2005; Yoneyama, 2000). Kim (2005) researched first generation Zainichi Korean women’s oral history.

Narratives through literature have played an important role in expressing women’s struggles and oppression. Lee Jung Ja, who is a second generation Korean woman and a tanka poet, once said that even though tanka is a Japanese traditional style of poetry (a longer version of haiku), writing tanka, enabled her to liberate herself (Kim, 2004). Japanese American women also documented their experiences and emotions in their poems and novels. Mitsuye Yamada, a Nisei poet, recontextualized the “language of duplicity within its disruptive power” (Yamamoto, 1999, p. 209). Women have expressed their emotions as well as maintained their traditions and customs through literature (Kim, 2004).

Summary

All immigrants have unique histories and stories about why and how they came to the new land, and these stories are entwined with the history and politics of the countries
involved. Japanese imperialism and nationalism during the late 19th and mid 20th century impacted both Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans. The exclusionism of Japan and the United States has built barriers to naturalization. In Japan, many Zainichi Koreans maintain Korean nationality and continue to be “foreigners,” although born and raised in Japan. In the United States, Japanese Americans seem to have become more assimilated, although they have often been portrayed as perpetual foreigners.

Both Zainichi Koreans in Japan and Japanese Americans were influenced culturally and linguistically by war. Even now, the diplomatic relations between Japan and North and South Korea and between Japan and the United States continue to influence the situation of Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans, after eighty to a hundred years.

Even though many younger Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans do not speak their heritage language, Korean or Japanese, many have devoted themselves to retaining and regaining them through language education. They might have changed their names. Some Zainichi Koreans do not use their Korean names any more; some Japanese Americans cannot pronounce their names correctly, but linguistic and cultural maintenance remain important to each community.

As all immigrants have their own stories, so do their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women have expressed their memories, emotions, and struggles through literature. However, few research studies have focused on the construction of identity through narratives. How they have been told about their history, will tell the stories to the next generation, and have both kept and lost their culture will be explored in this research.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This research study explores the construction of identity of Zainichi Korean women in Japan and Japanese American women in the United States. To achieve the purpose of the study, qualitative research was conducted, specifically oral history narrative research, which allows the investigation and analysis of this topic in depth by looking at participants’ stories at a micro level rather than a macro level (Creswell, 2005). This section includes the research design, theoretical background, research setting, selection of research participants, questions to guide the initial dialogues, data collection, data analysis, protection of human subjects, profile of the research participants, and background of the researcher.

Research Design

This study, inspired by oral history methodology, attempts “to give voice to what would otherwise remain voiceless even if not traceless” (Connerton, 1989, p. 18). However, while the stories of these women are documented at length, I have chosen to employ a simple qualitative design that juxtaposes the participants’ voices and my analysis to present, interpret, and contextualize the data (Creswell, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research is a “field of inquiry in its own right” (p.2), in which the researchers stress how socially constructed nature of reality and social experiences are created and given meaning. This study used a feminist approach to allow the women to find their “liberatory voice[s]” as defined by bell hooks, to make the invisible Zainichi
Korean and Japanese American women visible to the dominant society, to deconstruct hegemony and revise the history perpetuated by the dominant groups. This study also utilized the idea (philosophy/theoretical framework) of participatory research, which aims to listen to the voices of people who have been silenced and oppressed and to create knowledge collectively (Maguire, 1987; Park, 1993).

Theoretical Background of the Research Methodology

*Feminist Oral History*

This study attempts to make women “historically visible” by encouraging them speak about themselves in their own words, demonstrating “the importance to women of autonomy and self-definition” (Armitage, 2002, p. 62). Gluck (2002) states that through oral history, women create and construct their own history by using their own voices and experiences to affirm that their everyday lives are history. Women’s lives, activities, and feelings have been overlooked and unrecorded leaving an incomplete picture of reality which is based on the story told by the dominant group (Armitage, 2002). Therefore, women’s oral history is a basic tool and has “another significance, because the female subculture has often been a defense against, and a critique of, male dominance” (Armitage, p. 63). In other words, including the history of minority women is a way of restructuring history, of retelling the story to reflect their experiences and perspectives, and thus create a new reality as Connerton (1989) says:

[The] very construction of meaningful shapes will obey a different principle. Different details will emerge because they are inserted, as it were, into a different kind of narrative home. For it is essential in perceiving the existence of a culture of subordinate groups to see that this is a culture in which the life histories of its members have a different
rhythm and that this rhythm is not patterned by the individual’s intervention in the working of the dominant institutions. (p.19)

Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women have been marginalized historically. Feminist oral history research will bring their life stories from the margins to the center, the historical significance of which is “to lend context and significance to their history so that we as a nation might learn to bridge our differences and how we make it better” (Yung, 2002, p. 95).

Listening is one of the most important elements in oral history because “[w]e will learn what we want to know only by listening to people who are not accustomed to talking” (Armitage, 2002, p. 65). Therefore, Armitage says she hardly interrupts, rather gives the participant control over the structure of the interview and does active listening. At the same time, researchers need to be patient with silence:

The best oral history is a quasi-monologue on the part of the interviewee that is encouraged by approving nods, appreciative smiles, and enraptured listening and stimulated by understanding comments and intelligent questions. Though the ideal interviewer is there primarily to provide a broad leeway in which to help the interviewee structure her recollections, sensitivity to both individual idiosyncrasies and class or culturally determined characteristics, might lead to more direct questioning in some cases and total silence in others. (Gluck, 2002, p. 13)

Moreover, people have different styles of recollecting and shaping their reminiscences (Armitage, 2002; Gluck, 2002). Oral history researchers need to be sensitive to all these factors when listening to participants.

**Participatory Research Perspectives**

This research will bring in critical perspectives inspired by participatory research
methodology, “a self-conscious way of empowering people to take effective action toward improving conditions in their lives” (Park, 1993, p. 1), which is about the right to speak, to be heard, and understood (Hall, 1993; Wadsworth, 1998). Participatory research and feminist oral history are related because both advocate self-determination and transformation as opposed to the maintenance of inequitable social relations (Maguire, 1987).

Participatory research seeks a new understanding of social science; in other words, a new paradigm of reality that provides the view of what should be investigated and solved and in what methods should be chosen for investigation and action (Maguire, 1987; Wadsworth, 1998). Unlike the positivist paradigm which is empirical-analytical and technical objective knowledge, the alternative research paradigm is produced by critical and emancipatory inquiry, which acknowledges “the degree of subjectivity inherent in all forms of knowledge” (Maguire, 1987, p. 15). Moreover, participatory research will explore potentiality rather than actuality (Maguire, 1987; Wadsworth, 1998).

**The Relationship between the Researcher and Participants**

Feminist oral history researchers build relationships with participants by placing themselves in a subjective position within the project to create a dialogue (Minister, 1991). Oral history can only be successful based upon a collaborative effort of the researcher and participants through face-to-face interaction which becomes more than the sound of one voice (Gluck, 2002).

Since this is not a survey in which the researcher wants to learn only the facts, but
one through which both the researcher and participants want to address a problem or improve a situation, the relationship is more ritualized and cooperative. In other words, as Freire (2000) says, describing the teacher-student relationship of revolutionary leadership, “teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both subjects, not only in the task of unveiling of that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge” (p. 69).

In oral history, the researchers need to anticipate and confront their bias and recognize their influence in the interview process (Gluck, 2002). Feminist historians need to make an effort to maintain a balance between what they think important and what the women they are interviewing think important about their own lives. Moreover, Armitage (2002) points out that “[i]t is simply untrue to describe oneself as a neutral, anonymous observer when, in fact, one has invested so much emotional effort and honesty in achieving rapport in the interview” (p. 64). Therefore, oral history research has a different paradigm with potential of in-depth investigation which survey research does not have.

**The Relationship between Dialogue and Creating Knowledge**

As we attempt to analyze dialogue as a human phenomenon, we discover something which is the essence of dialogue itself: the word. But the word is more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible; accordingly, we must seek its constitutive elements. Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the word. (Freire, 2000, p. 87)

Through dialogue, the researcher and participants create knowledge. Park (1993) explains that “dialogue produces not just factual knowledge but also interpersonal and critical knowledge, which defines humans as autonomous social beings,” capable of
transforming their lives (p. 12), and examines praxis.

True dialogue requires constructivist listening in which the talker is “responsible to what to talk about, at what rate to proceed, and what conclusions to draw” (Weisglass, 1990, p. 359). At the same time, the listener is in charge of helping the talker to explore his or her thoughts and feelings extensively by asking appropriate questions with interest, caring, and acceptance (Weisglass, 1990). In oral history research, which allows participants to explore deeply and create knowledge to make change, constructivist listening is embedded in the Freirian concept of dialogue and empowerment.

Research Setting

This research was conducted in the Kansai area of Japan and in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. The Kansai area is composed of the cities which comprise the largest population of Zainichi Koreans, including Ikuno Ward, Osaka, since Ikaino in Japan (the old name of Ikuno) was the gateway for Korean migrants who arrived by ship. Likewise, the San Francisco Bay Area has Japantown (J-Town or Nihonmachi), also with a large population of Japanese Americans. Both Ikaino and San Francisco Bay Area have long histories with their respective groups. The dialogues both in Japan and the United States with each participant were held at their convenience in a comfortable setting such as her home, a restaurant, or a coffee shop.

Selection of the Research Participants

Since this research aims to explore the construction of identity of intergenerational Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women, I attempted to select
the research participants depending on their age and generation. The recruitment of the participants was done by sending flyers to community organizations, through personal connections, my job in the United States and friends in Japan with most of the participants selected through personal connections. I had one participant for the pilot study, a third generation Zainichi Korean woman. I then dialogued with three other Zainichi Korean women, two third generation and one second generation. I also dialogued with three Japanese American women, two second generation and one third generation.

I asked Mi Ja to participate in the pilot study because she has studied in the United States and has a Master’s degree in Social Work and moreover, I have known her for about six years and she knows my academic interest. Because I didn’t have to build a relationship with her, I thought she was an appropriate person to have the first dialogues with which would allow me to develop and improve my interview questions. Later, I contacted two Zainichi Korean women in Japan who had participated in my previous study in the summer of 2004. Each of them introduced a potential participant to me whom I contacted directly and asked to participate. I also contacted one more Zainichi Korean woman whom I knew through my brother (She actually introduced one potential participant, who owns a Korean restaurants in Kyoto, but she was too busy. I was hesitant to ask her questions while she was managing the restaurant and she was also hesitant about formal interviews, although she was willing to talk in a casual way at her busy restaurant).

For the Japanese American participants, I recruited two second generation women I met at an event (held at the Tanforan Shopping Center in September 2007,
commemorating the Tanforan Assembly Center in 1942), to which I was invited by one of
the organizer at Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, who
was a former student of the professor I work for as a research assistant. Then I tried to
find another participant, a third, fourth, or fifth generation Japanese American woman,
but this was not as easy as finding second generation women (which was the opposite for
Zainichi Korean women). I contacted my former students by email but did not receive
any replies. I also contacted my friends who might know potential participants. However,
one did not live in the San Francisco Bay Area, while the other was a young second
generation who had spent about ten years in Japan when she was young. Finally, I
contacted one of my former classmates, who lives in Los Angeles, and she said she would
be able to spend time with me when she returned to San Francisco for the holiday. I had
to have dialogues with her on two consecutive days because of time limitations.
Therefore, I could not bring the transcription of the first dialogue to the second meeting
although I listened to the tape and summarized the first dialogue for the reflection which
was discussed at the second dialogue.

Questions to Guide the Initial Dialogues

In this study, I asked questions to facilitate the dialogues. To address the research
questions, I asked open-ended questions, such as how the women identified themselves,
what it was like when they were growing up as Zainichi Korean or Japanese American
women, what and how they wanted to maintain of their culture, and so on (see Appendix
A). I asked follow-up questions for deeper understanding and clarification.
Data Collection

I conducted two sets of dialogues with each participant. After I selected the participants and they agreed to join the research, I contacted them and set up the date and place for the dialogues. The location of each dialogue was either at participant’s residence, a restaurant, her office, or my house. All dialogues were audio-taped; I used two audio devices in case one of them did not record well. During the dialogue, I tried to focus on listening to the participant by making eye contact and nodding, not interrupting except to change tapes; however, I took notes if I found important themes I wanted to hear more about or to clarify later with the participant. I had to explain further and clarify some questions because they were too general. I was careful that the participant was comfortable with talking about herself and that she was not tired answering questions. I was also careful about covering the questions but not interfering too much with the flow of the dialogue when going on to the next questions.

First Dialogue

After I explained the purpose of the research and the protection of human subjects, the participant and I started the dialogue. For the participants whom I met for the first time, in order to build rapport, I talked about my background such as what I do, where I come from, and why I am interested in this topic. When I had the first dialogue with Motoko, one of the Japanese American participants, I forgot to explain about my background. She asked me at the last moment of the second dialogue, “Why are you interested in this topic?” The first dialogue lasted about two hours. The length of the dialogue was different for each participant. I sent the list of questions to most the
participants ahead of the time either by mail or email; however, for some participants I
was not able to send the list beforehand. Some participants did not look at the list but
answered freely, whereas others looked very carefully and tried to answer exactly what I
asked on the list.

After the first dialogue, I set up the second with the participant. I transcribed the
dialogue and found generative themes, making notes on what I wanted to clarify or ask
the participant to elaborate.

Second Dialogue

Each participant received a copy of the transcript from the first dialogue at the
second meeting except the participant I had to meet for two consecutive days. In the
second dialogue, each participant and I reflected on the first dialogue and discussed
generative themes. First, I asked questions for clarification and further understanding.
Then I asked the rest of questions which we had not covered the last time. In this session,
the dialogue became deeper and more reflective because they were responding their own
thoughts. Participants and I were more relaxed and (I observed) talked more openly. For
some participants, the second dialogue took longer than the first. After the second
dialogue, I transcribed and sent the transcription by mail or email. If clarification or
elaboration was needed, I contacted the participant by phone or email. Later, some
questions about dates or gaps in the conversations with some participants were clarified
by email.
Data Analysis

Data analysis is about “discovering the dimensions of the problem under investigation” (Park, 1993, p.13). Compared to quantitative research, according to Park, qualitative data analysis allows deeper awareness:

Qualitative data require different analytical approaches, which are in some ways more capable of uncovering the depth and nuances of the problem than quantitative methods. In qualitative analysis, data are not abstracted into summary statistics, but allowed to speak for themselves as a manifestation of different aspects of the problem. (p.14)

This analysis enables the researcher to recognize underlying themes (Freire, 2000).

Moreover, the process of the analysis digs further and broader, as Freire states:

As a process of search of knowledge, and thus of creation, it requires the investigators to discover the interpretation of problems, in the linking of meaningful themes. …[T]he process of searching for the meaningful thematics should include a concern for the links between themes, a concern to pose these themes as problems, and a concern for their historical-cultural context. (p.108)

The researcher found generative themes through dialogue and from the transcriptions regarding the research questions focusing on the construction of the participants’ identities. The themes were developed during the actual dialogues with the participants, transcribing the dialogues, reading the transcriptions, and coding the transcriptions. The data analysis was done by “work[ing] back and forth” between the transcripts (Silverman, 2000, p. 831). Emerging themes were also found through analysis. The questions I asked the participants were designed based on the research questions. Therefore, the categories were built along with the research questions, such as name, school experiences, gender roles, and so on. The process revealed subcategories, for
instance, about using a Japanese name in Japanese school, what they felt and experienced.

Protection of Human Subjects

All participants signed the informed consent forms thus addressing ethncial considerations. The purpose of the study was explicitly stated. I explained that participants could stop the interview at any time and that they didn’t have to answer the questions with which they feel uncomfortable. Summary findings were available to participants. The confidentiality and anonymity of the data was maintained. In this study, I used pseudonyms for all participants. I did not use any specific information which could identify the participants’ private information. This research was conducted with voluntary participation.

Research Participants

Four Zainichi Korean and four Japanese American women participated in this study (see Table 1; more detailed table in Appendix B). As mentioned above, the Japanese American participants were relatively older, which allowed for a more historical perspective. The second generation participants did not live with their grandparents; therefore, they had little or no contact with them because they lived apart from their parent’s home country. Three of the third generation participants’ grandparents had already passed away before they were born, and thus, they had little to no recollection of them. How much the participants knew about when their parents or grandparents came to Japan or the United States varied because some stories were untold or unheard by the children or grandchildren, or they lost family members and lost contact. Some spelling
and pronunciation of Korean words and places may vary according to the sources from which they came. Several spellings were used for that reason.

Table 1. 
Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Pilot/ZK</th>
<th>ZK</th>
<th>ZK</th>
<th>ZK</th>
<th>JA</th>
<th>JA</th>
<th>JA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mi Ja Park</td>
<td>Zainichi Korean</td>
<td>Hong Ja Cho</td>
<td>Yu Ja Song</td>
<td>Soon Ja Chu</td>
<td>Motoko Liu</td>
<td>Mrs. T (Yasuye)</td>
<td>Katherine Akiko Fujikawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>Third</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>S. Korea</td>
<td>S. Korea</td>
<td>N. Korea</td>
<td>S. Korea</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Place</td>
<td>Shiga</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>Kyoto</td>
<td>Kyoto</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Nursery school teacher</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Middle and high school teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ZK= Zainichi Korean, JA= Japanese American

Zainichi Korean Women

Mi Ja

Mi Ja, who participated in the pilot study, is a 29 year old third generation Zainichi Korean woman from Shiga prefecture with South Korean nationality (Kankoku). She went to public schools in Japan and used her Korean name pronounced the Japanese way Paku (Park), Yoshiko. At her junior college in Osaka, she started to use Park, Mi Ja. After she graduated from junior college, she studied abroad in St. Paul, Minnesota and stayed there about four years, where I met her. After receiving her Bachelor’s degree in Social Work in Minnesota, she came to San Francisco to find a job, and eventually she got a Master’s degree of Social Work at a university in the Bay Area. In total, she lived in the United States for about seven years. Mi Ja met her husband, a South Korean citizen, in San Francisco but they moved to South Korean. At the time of the study, they had been
living in South Korea for seven months.

Mi Ja’s paternal side was from Daegu (or Taegu: 대구, Gyeonsanbukdo Area (경상북도), South Korea and they came to Japan around in the 1930s. Her maternal side was from Busan (or Pusan: 부산), a southern city of Korea. Her maternal grandfather was born in Busan and came to Japan also in the 1930s. However, her grandmother was actually born in Japan. Therefore, Mi Ja said her mother identifies herself as closer to third generation.

Hong Ja

Hong Ja is a 22 year old third generation Zainichi Korean woman from Osaka prefecture, who has South Korean nationality (Kankoku), but went to public schools in Japan. She is a nursery school teacher in Osaka. About six months before we met, she had started going to the young Korean organization in Osaka to learn the Korean language and the traditional Korean musical instrument called janggu (chango, in Japanese pronunciation). She uses her Japanese name Matsumoto, Hiroko in school and at work but has chosen to use her Korean name Cho, Hong Ja at the Korean organization. I was introduced Hong Ja by a Zainichi Korean woman who I met for my Master’s thesis project.

Hong Ja’s paternal grandparents came from Gyeongsangnamdo Area (경상남도), South Korea, arriving in Tsushima, Nagasaki prefecture, before WWII. Hong Ja’s maternal grandfather was born in Korea and came to Japan when he was in elementary school, but her grandmother was born in Japan. Her paternal grandmother lives in Osaka and her maternal grandmother lives in Nara prefecture.
Yu Ja

Yu Ja is a 30 year old third generation Zainichi Korean woman from Kyoto. She has North Korean (*Chosen*) nationality and went to Korean ethnic school from pre-kindergarten (two years old) through high school. Because the Ministry of Education in Japan did not recognize the high schools affiliated with Chongryun (a North Korean organization), Japanese universities consider students graduated from those schools unqualified to take the entrance exams unless they take the national certificate exam for high school graduation. Yu Ja was lucky enough to get accepted to one of the few universities, a private one in Kyoto, that accepted the students from Korean ethnic schools. She is Korean and Japanese bilingual, although she primarily uses Japanese. She never used her Japanese name except when she worked part time as a student. At the time of the study, she worked for an organization which supported Zainichi Korean and Korean international students in Osaka. At the beginning of the first meeting, Yu Ja’s mother sat with us at their house and told us about her family history. Yu Ja and I knew each other slightly through my brother before this study. Therefore, this was the first time to talk with her in depth.

Yu Ja’s maternal family came from Gyeonsanbukdo Area (as did Mi Ja’s paternal side). Both Yu Ja’s maternal and paternal family came to Japan before WWII. Yu Ja’s maternal family used to work in mines in Kyoto. Yu Ja’s paternal side has been in the kimono industry in Kyoto.

Soon Ja

Soon Ja is a 64 year old second generation Zainichi Korean woman, born in
Kyoto, but mostly raised in Shiga who has South Korean nationality (Kankoku). She went to Japanese public schools and a vocational school after graduating from middle school. After she married a Zainichi Korean man, she moved to Kyoto. At the time of our conversations, she worked full time at a corporation in Kyoto and indicated that she primarily used her Japanese name. She grew up with parents who spoke Korean, so she is comfortable with her comprehension of the Korean language but feels less so about her ability to speak fluently. She is a mother of two children, a son and a daughter. She is also a grandmother of three grandchildren. Her daughter-in-law is Japanese. I was introduced to her by another the participant from my Master’s thesis project.

Soon Ja’s parents were from Gyeongsangnamdo Area, South Korea (as was Hong Ja’s paternal side). Soon Ja’s parents got married in Korea and came to Kyoto, Japan, presumably in the early 1930s, when they were about twenty years old. Later, they moved to Shiga prefecture.

*Japanese American Women*

*Katherine*

Katherine is a 44 year old third generation Japanese American woman from San Francisco. She says she relates more to the experiences of the second generation because her father was Issei, first generation, and her mother, Nisei, second generation. Her mother can also be identified as kibei, a returnee who spent some years in Japan when she was a child. Katherine studied Japanese at an after school program in elementary school and took Japanese in middle and high school as well. She is bilingual in Japanese and English and talks in Japanese with her mother. She also took lessons of minyo (Japanese
folk songs), Japanese folk dance, and shamisen, Japanese traditional three-string guitar. After she graduated from high school, she went to college in Tokyo, Japan for two years. She then transferred to a university in the United States. When she was in the Master’s program, her father became ill with cancer. She had to quit graduate school in order to take care of him and manage legal matters for her family. She taught social studies and history at high schools in San Francisco for some years. She now teaches Japanese at a middle and high school in the Los Angeles area. She used her Japanese name in American schools, but started using her English name, which was her middle name, after she studied abroad in Japan. I met her in one of the classes at my school.

Katherine’s maternal grandfather was from Kanagawa prefecture, Japan, and came to the United States somewhere between 1917 and 1922 for job opportunities. Her mother was born in California in 1924, but sent back to Kanagawa at age three because her mother passed away. However, she returned to the United States to live with her father when she became young adult. Later, her maternal family moved back to Japan after WWII, although they returned and stayed in the United States for some years. Katherine’s father was born in Hirosaki, Aomori prefecture. Katherine’s parents got married in Japan and came to the United States around 1955.

Motoko

Motoko is a 69 year old second generation Japanese American woman from San Francisco, who is retired but who at one time worked at a company in the Bay Area. She went to American public schools, but has kept using her Japanese name. She lived with her Chinese American husband whom she met in high school. She is a mother of two
sons and also a grandmother. She understands and speaks Japanese fairly well although she didn’t learn Japanese formally. She learned Japanese mostly from her father. This couple made a special impression on me since I was able to experience their warm hospitality. They not only provided transportation for each scheduled interview but also invited me into their home. I recruited her at an event in Tanforan in the San Francisco Bay Area. She was hesitant at first when I asked her to participate. However, once she agreed, she was open to talk about her experiences to me. She introduced me to Mrs. T at the event.

Motoko’s father was from Fukuoka prefecture, Japan, and so was her mother’s side. Motoko’s father came to the United States about 1920 when he was around 19 years old, arriving in San Jose, where her grandfather was already living, and becoming a farmer there. Motoko’s mother was actually born in San Jose. However, Motoko’s mother died in a drowning accident when Motoko was almost three years old. So, Motoko said that she never had a mother.

Mrs. T

Mrs. T is a 92 year old second generation Japanese American woman from San Francisco, who used to own an import business selling furniture from Japan and China. She went to San Francisco public schools and studied Japanese at an after school program. She went to a University of California. She has always used her Japanese name in school and social life. She now lives in a senior facility along with her younger sister. Her active engagement with the world, reading and traveling made her a fascinating speaker. She was the oldest participant in this study, and the longest interview.
Mrs. T’s parents were both from Yamanashi prefecture, Japan. Her father arrived in San Francisco, where his cousins already lived, in 1901. He owned a laundry business by himself later. Her parents got married in 1911 in Yamanashi and her mother immigrated to the United States. Both of her parents had studied English before they came to the United States, even though their speaking skill was “unacceptable,” Mrs. T said.

Background of the Researcher

Growing up in a mixed traditional and modern environment in Kyoto, Japan, I also absorbed two sets of cultural values, traditional and modern, although ethnically my hometown was very homogeneous. I went to Japanese schools and university, and became an exchange student in my senior year in college at the University of St. Thomas, in Minnesota. I stayed there for about one year and a half (from September 2001 to December 2002), and went back to Japan for about eight months. I started my Master’s program at the University of San Francisco in fall 2003, and am now earning my Doctorate at the same university.

Coming from a homogeneous town in Japan, St. Paul, Minnesota, another homogeneous city (at least the school) was somehow comfortable for me; however, I realized I was racialized because of my skin color and was more “yellow” or “colored” in Minnesota than in Japan. The longer I stayed in Minnesota, the more I felt “white” inside and “yellow” outside. That is when I realized that I had added a layer of “racial identity,” as well as a “national identity,” which I had never experienced in Japan.

I have met more Asian and Asian American students in San Francisco, compared
to when I was in Minnesota, including a few Japanese American students. I became very close to Taiwanese and Korean students. Through relationships with them, I felt my view of Asia has changed, broadened and “Asianized.” The diversity of San Francisco was a shock for me at first, but eventually I became comfortable being “Asian” and identifying myself as Asian. In the diverse city and classroom, I do not have to blend with white students. I am still the only Japanese student in class often times, but I am not the only student of color anymore in San Francisco.

Even though my participants and I share the “Asian-ness” racially or culturally, I also have the outsider-insider struggle as a researcher, and as a Japanese woman from Japan. Zainichi Korean women and I speak the same language, Japanese (although their heritage language is Korean); we also share cultural background as persons who were born and raised in Japan. However, I may not share ethnicity or nationality with them, if they hold South or North Korean nationality. Moreover, I have privilege as a member of the dominant majority in Japan.

Japanese American women and I have the same ethnicity and (some) cultural values as Japanese. However, we do not share the same nationality or cultural background because they were born and raised in the United States. I don’t speak English as my first language as they do and also compared to them, I am still “privileged,” I do not have the baggage of those who have been members of minority in the dominant society since birth nor inherited from previous generations, especially the experience of the internment during WWII. Even though like Japanese American women, I am a “woman of color,” I don’t have American citizenship; I cannot work outside campus and I need a signature from school to reenter this country.
Both groups of women may feel I am an outsider. I speak English with a strong accent and soft voice; I am the “oppressor.” One day, my good friend Mi Ja (the third generation Zainichi Korean, mentioned in Preface) and I were discussing political issues about how some Japanese politicians wanted to omit some details of WWII from history books, one particularly controversial detail was that of comfort women, who were abused sexually, physically, and emotionally. We talked about how it was awful and unjustifiable. I said it was unbelievable that some people still don’t believe what happened to those women and moreover, some politicians think schools shouldn’t teach about it. Then Mi Ja said to me, “But you guys did it, right?” I couldn’t do anything but admit it, even though I did not do it.

My Japanese accent in English may create the sense of an outsider. Although most Japanese Americans I have met are nice and friendly, one day, I was told that I had “pronunciation problem” in English by a fifth grade Japanese American student during an observation at an elementary school with a Japanese bilingual bicultural program. The Japanese American teacher of the class heard what he said, but she didn’t say anything to him. It was a hurtful experience, one that keeps reminding me that I am Japanese. At the same time, this experience has made me think about Japanese Americans’ experience during WWII, when they had to deny their Japaneseness and prove that they were loyal Americans.

Being in an outsider-insider position may take extra effort to gain trust from my participants. However, I believe this in-between position enables me to bring out their voices not only into their own community, but also to the larger society. My critical responsibilities as a Japanese researcher who studies at an American university are, I
believe, to keep listening to their voices and reflecting them to the larger society domestically and internationally.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

Introduction

Throughout this study, each participant dedicated time and space to share her family history, personal experiences and thoughts. This section discusses findings from my interviews with Zainichi Korean women in Japan and Japanese American women in the United States. One second generation and three third generation Zainichi Korean women (including pilot study) and two second generation and one third generation Japanese American women were interviewed. This section begins with an introduction of each participant’s family history and memories of the first generation. Next, findings are presented for each of the groups.

Most of the findings in this chapter directly correlate to issues included in my research questions: for example, those of ethnic identity, gender roles, expectations for future generations, and so on. Other findings, while not directly correlating to the research questions in Chapter I, have been included because they were commonly expressed by the participants as being related to the development of their identities. The interviews with Zainichi Korean women were held in Japanese, and the quotes used in this chapter were translated into English by the researcher, whose native language is Japanese and second language is English.
Mi Ja, a third generation Zainichi Korean woman, 29, said she didn’t know many
details about her family history. However, when I contacted her after the interview, she
asked her relatives and told me a little bit more about the details. Her paternal
grandparents married in Korea but her grandfather first came to Japan before World War
II and used to go back and forth between Japan and Korea. Her paternal grandmother
came to Japan in 1933 when she was 18 years old. First they settled in Yamaguchi
prefecture, which was one of the ports that had a largest influx of Koreans, and then came
to Shiga prefecture. Mi Ja told me that she found out that it was a remarriage; her paternal
grandfather had been married once before, but this had been long time secret until she
contacted her aunt for this research.

Mi Ja doesn’t have much memory of her grandfathers on either side. Her paternal
grandfather passed away when her father was in fourth grade. Her maternal grandfather
was born in Busan and came to Japan also in 1932 when he was seven years old. He used
to work for human waste disposal business, but he left his wife and children, nine
daughters and an adopted son, all of whom her grandmother raised almost by herself.
When Mi Ja was growing up, her maternal grandmother was still raising the children
because her mother is the second oldest with seven younger sisters and a brother.
Therefore, she didn’t spend much time with her maternal grandmother.

Mi Ja said her paternal grandmother had the most influence on her. When she was
in high school, her paternal grandmother began to need care and her family brought her to
their home. Mi Ja’s mother took care of her grandmother mostly; however, she sometimes helped her mother. She told the story of the most memorable experience with her grandmother:

[My grandmother] lay on the bed and couldn’t move, so she could only speak. At that time, my father and mother used to argue often and I thought it was grandmother’s fault. …Maybe she was demented, but thinking about what I learned about dementia [at university] and later in Social Work, that people who speak the second language fluently begin to speak their mother tongue when they get older, she was having that symptom. Hanme, grandmother, [would say something in Korean] and I couldn’t understand it, so she had to translate it into Japanese again and again. One day, she started to speak Korean at quite a pace. At that time, I was at the peak of frustration and I said to her for the first time, “I can’t understand!” and we were yelling each other… Then, hanme said crying, “Why can’t you guys understand Korean!” [Mi Ja cried.]

Mi Ja said she used to think about this experience at least once a year for about three or four years, and every time she remembered what her grandmother said, she cried so hard. She said she was glad that she had this experience because she could understand with that one sentence, what her grandmother had been through as a Zainichi Korean woman and how she felt about her grandchildren who could not understand the language.

**Hong Ja**

Hong Ja, a third generation Zainichi Korean woman, 22, said her paternal grandfather who was the son of the head of a small private school, grew up having to study hard. Hong Ja’s father was proud that her grandfather was rewarded for his filial devotion to his parents many times when he was young. However, her grandfather did not like studying, so he left home. He and her grandmother had their first child in Korea. Then they came to Tsushima, Nagasaki prefecture, Japan more than 60 years ago because
they were living in poverty in Korea. Hong Ja’s father was born in Tsushima and the family lived until he was seven years old with her paternal great-grandmother who was very strict with her grandmother. Hong Ja said even after they came to Japan, they were still poor because they couldn’t speak the language and they didn’t have any special skills. Hong Ja’s grandparents and her father used to live in a small simple house made of trees cut in the mountains with a tin roof. Hong Ja talked about when she visited Tsushima with her family:

Last year, we visited Tsushima. Although there is no home there, [but] my father said he really wanted to go. When we went there, the mountainside was all covered with trees…. [At the time] they made charcoal from the trees and all children including my father helped my grandfather, who sold the charcoal in town….The oldest sister had to take care of the other brothers, so she could barely go to school. She didn’t learn how to write or read…She wasn’t educated, but she’s got wisdom of living…. They were selling charcoal, but they were often cheated because they were Korean or they couldn’t speak Japanese. [When we went to Tsushima,] my grandmother said she would never want to go there, I guess she had a really hard time.

When her father was in sixth grade, the family came to Osaka and worked at a glass factory. Life became better but they were still having financial difficulties.

According to Hong Ja, her paternal grandmother is active and strong, and often talks about hard times in Tsushima. She also remembers that she and her paternal grandmother often went grocery shopping in the Korea Town in Osaka for jesu (제사), or chesa, in Japanese pronunciation), the ancestral ceremony which is held at New Years, mid-summer, and ancestral death days. She liked going there with her grandmother because the atmosphere was different from the outside world.

Hong Ja’s maternal grandparents had a sock factory when they were younger.
Therefore, compared to her father, her mother grew up without financial difficulties. She didn’t know many details about the maternal side of the family. However, she remembers her maternal grandfather often taught her about the roots of the family:

He must have known little about Korea because he was young when he left there. But he talked about the Cho family’s history with this book which our ancestors’ names are on…. You know, I was like in elementary school so I wouldn’t understand fully, maybe he liked talking about it, I remember listening to him telling the story.

Yu Ja

Yu Ja, a third generation Zainichi Korean woman, 30, didn’t know very much about her father’s side of the family because his parents (her grandparents) passed away before she was born. She knew them only by pictures and she hadn’t heard their stories very much. Yu Ja’s paternal family came to Kyoto and has owned a kimono textile business since then. Although most Japanese people don’t know that many Koreans in Japan have been in the kimono business, in Kyoto, many Korean workers were hired around 1920s and 1930s in kimono textile industry and those who had acquired skills started their own businesses after WWII (Han, 2004). Yu Ja’s father side of the family has been one of the Korean skilled kimono makers.

Yu Ja said she knows a little bit of her maternal grandparents. Her maternal grandfather passed away when she was in middle school and her grandmother was ill, so she could not talk very much with her. She said she doesn’t remember that her grandmother talked about the past; she even seemed not to want to talk about it. So, Yu Ja mainly knows about their stories from her mother, who sat with us when I asked how her grandparents came to Japan. Yu Ja’s mother told us that because she was interested in
how her parents came, she asked her parents (Yu Ja’s grandparents) about the story.

When Yu Ja’s great-grandfather died in Korea, her great-grandmother’s relatives and her grandfather’s oldest brother were living in Kyoto, Japan. Her great-grandmother then came to Japan with her grandfather, the third son, and his sisters, having left behind the second son, who had a cleft palate. Yu Ja’s grandmother, the middle child of the seven children, came to Osaka to take care of her relative’s children, and then went to Hiroshima, where her sister lived. There she worked at a rubber shoes factory (wearing kimono and geta, Japanese sandals, Yu Ja’s mother said because at the time, people from Korea couldn’t wear traditional Korean clothes). After WWII, her sister and her husband went back to Korea, but her grandmother stayed in Japan. She went to Okayama where her relatives lived, and then came to Kyoto. Soon after that she got married but had a hard time because there was no help from their parents. Later, Yu Ja’s mother met her grandfather’s second oldest brother in Korea where he had been left by his mother. Yu Ja’s mother said he was really angry with his mother about leaving him. He said he had searched for his mother all around the country, and told his children that he would not think of her as his mother. Yu Ja’s mother kept contact with him, but he passed away several years ago.

Yu Ja remembers her maternal grandfather used to drink and argue with her grandmother. Also, he was very fashionable buying his clothes by himself. Sometimes he changed his clothes several times a day. Her grandmother was a very good cook, especially in making kimchee. Every time Yu Ja visited, her grandmother gave her good food and some money. Yu Ja’s mother told us she was never scolded by her father (Yu Ja’s grandfather). He never said anything to Yu Ja’s grandmother about having four
daughters. Yu Ja’s mother said that because her grandparents didn’t receive proper education growing up, they wanted their children to receive at least a high school education, even though they had four daughters and only one son. Especially her grandmother was eager for her children’s education, even though they were living in an old house.

Soon Ja

Soon Ja, a second generation Zainichi Korean woman, 64, said she didn’t know much about what her family did in Korea except that her uncle was a school teacher. She said her father also was educated, so after she was born, her father registered her birth certificate in Korea, although parents of many second generations were not able to register their children soon enough for their age to be accepted as valid by the Japanese government. Soon Ja said there were many Zainichi Korean friends who were the same grade in school but born in different years because the Japanese local government only recognized the year of birth in which the children were registered in Korea. While Soon Ja’s maternal relatives stayed in Japan, Soon Ja’s paternal uncle was the only relative on her father’s side who stayed in Japan, but later he also returned to Korea.

Soon Ja’s family lived in Kyoto for a while when she was little in the late 1940s. She said they were doing anything for living such as collecting cardboard, because they couldn’t speak Japanese at that time. Soon Ja said she doesn’t remember when they lived in Kyoto, but remembers coming to Kyoto with her mother who was selling rice. Soon Ja’s family moved to Shiga prefecture later and were in the mining and then lumbering business.
Soon Ja said her father must have wanted to go back to Korea once but her father who was the fourth son, used to say “I am the unwanted son, so it doesn’t matter.” Soon Ja’s father often took her to the theater when she was small, although he was strict about discipline. Soon Ja’s mother managed their family lumber business. Soon Ja said her mother did not receive proper education and could not even write her name. However, Soon Ja’s mother learned with her when Soon Ja started to go to school. Moreover, Soon Ja’s mother was very good at calculating money and memorizing. Soon Ja said her mother’s brain was like a computer.

When Soon Ja was in third grade, in the early 1950s, her family almost returned to Korea. She remembers they packed their belongings. She didn’t know the exact reason the family did not return to Korea, but she said once she asked her mother when she was bullied at school, “Why do we have to be here!” her mother answered, “We couldn’t return because we didn’t have enough money!” She assumed that her parents decided not to return because they had eight children, and they didn’t have enough money to travel back to Korea. Soon Ja said she didn’t like to be with her mother in public when she was young because her mother looked different, walked differently and used to carry heavy things on her head. Soon Ja preferred her father to come to school because he was a gentleman. However, at the same time, her father liked gambling. Soon Ja said that many men from Korea made their families cry because of gambling. As a result, women became stronger because they had to manage everything, she said, “Women were in charge of taking care of children and managing the living. Men did make money in all families, but most of the money they made was spent on gambling; that was the first generation.” However, thinking back, Soon Ja said the first generation men who came to
the strange country, must have had stress and strain and gambling was the way to release it. Therefore, Soon Ja said Korean women learned to be patient. Soon Ja’s mother said when she was dying, “Your father often made you cry because of gambling, but please understand him.”

Soon Ja grew up with her younger sister and brother because the older siblings were already independent from their parents. Therefore, Soon Ja grew up like the eldest sister in the family. The relationship between Soon Ja and her mother was strong because her mother often assigned her to cook and care for her younger sister and brother. She was glad she learned cooking from her mother, but at the time when she was taught, she was upset that she was the only one who was “caught” by her mother. Soon Ja said her mother didn’t care about her children’s education, so Soon Ja had to take care of her sister and brother’s school activities. Only once she asked her mother to come to a school athletic festival:

It was the first time I asked my mother [to come] and she made lunch box for me. I can never forget how happy I was. When I ate lunch [with her] on the levee at the school, I cried….I asked my mother to take care of me at least a little bit [laughter], I said, “I am doing everything you say. Why can’t you listen to me?”…I was furious [at my mother].

Even though Soon Ja’s mother was busy managing their family business, she had an influence on Soon Ja’s life.

*Japanese American Women in the United States*

*Katherine*

Katharine, a third generation Japanese American woman, 44, was knowledgeable
about her family history. Katharine said that her paternal grandfather, who came to the
United States in the early 1920s, probably did try agriculture in Fresno, California, but he
never owned property. Later he settled down as a gardener. Her maternal biological
grandmother was a nurse, but she was frail and weak. Katherine said her grandmother did
not want to come to the United States but she had no choice because her husband wanted
to come. After Katherine’s grandmother bore a daughter (Katherine’s mother) in 1924,
her health condition became worse and she passed away when her daughter was three
years old. Then her grandmother’s family brought her mother back to Kanagawa and she
was raised by her grandparents (Katherine’s great-grandparents). Significantly,
Katherine’s mother grew up being taught her father was dead. However, she found out
that her real father was alive and told her relatives who were raising her that she wanted
to live with him. At that time, her father, living in California, had remarried to a woman, a
seamstress from Hiroshima, Japan, who got on the boat and went to Yokohama, which
was the main port in Japan, to pick up Katherine’s mother. Even though Katherine’s
mother was born in the United States, she had to go through the immigration process
again at that time:

They got on a boat and made a long voyage…And the boat docked at San
Francisco. And then, typically, like most Asian immigrants, my mother
had to go to Angel Island, immigration station… [The] immigrant
experience on the Pacific side, on the west side, is very different from the
immigrant experience on the east coast, Ellis Island, typically…white
European immigrants would come... Basically they were kind of treated
like criminals… [My] mother, the little young girl, she had to stay on
Angel Island and go through the customs process and she had to stay at
least one night, maybe it was a little bit longer… Apparently it was not a
very pleasant experience for her…. [Her] feelings about it are not isolated.
I’ve read other accounts about other Asian immigrants who had to go to
Angel Island… [But] that’s how my mother’s family came to the United
States.
Katherine said she didn’t know much more about the maternal side of her family. After her maternal grandfather and his relatives immigrated to the United States, the family fell apart. Katherine’s maternal biological grandmother’s family was “very much into education” and they were respected in their community in Japan.

Katherine said her paternal family was samurai from Aomori prefecture in Japan. Katherine’s paternal grandfather was a general in the Japanese Army and had participated in Russo-Japanese War. Katherine said he was well decorated, and he and his wife even met the Emperor of Japan. Katherine’s father was born in Hirosaki, Aomori prefecture. Later the family moved to Tokyo, and was given a large plot of land in Nishihara, Tokyo. Katherine’s grandfather passed away in around the 1930s, but she had heard from her father, relatives, and neighbors that he was very stern and scary because he was a military person. When Katherine was in Japan, one of her neighbors told her about her grandfather’s funeral saying that Tojo Hideki came to the funeral and there was a procession. Katherine heard that her grandmother was also strict because they had a large household with seven children, so she had to direct the servants.

Katherine met her maternal grandparents in Japan. They had lived in the United States when World War II broke out and were interned in Tule Lake. Katherine reasoned that because they didn’t have property in the United States, they were not committed to the country:

[In] terms of the loyalty…they answered no-no [for the loyalty questionnaire]. So they thought Japan was going to win….And my mother did too. But I’ve concluded that they answered that way because they didn’t own property. They didn’t feel like…they had any rights. And they were never ever really going to be able to claim a real life for their own in the United States. So, therefore, why should they claim their loyalty to a country that doesn’t recognize them?
After World War II, her grandparents went back to Japan, but returned to the United States in the 1950s. Then they decided to retire and live in Tokyo, Japan.

Katherine, her younger brother, and her parents visited them in 1967. She remembered that her grandfather was into gardening; he was very meticulous and detail oriented. Katherine said he was sometimes difficult and stern, because of his zen upbringing. On the other hand, her step-grandmother from Hiroshima, who was *Jodo Shishu* (浄土真宗), which is pure land Buddhism, was a warm and nice person. Katherine said it is touching that her step-grandmother raised her mother as if she was a real daughter. Katherine said her mother never talked about negative experiences being raised by a step-parent. Katherine also said her maternal grandparents were devoted to the art of *biwa* (琵琶), which is classical Japanese musical instrument. Katherine’s grandfather told her about how after World War II, when the United States occupied Japan, General MacArthur and GHQ wanted to erase everything from Japanese society and culture that was reminiscent of samurai culture, including *biwa*. Katherine said, “I learned history…I’m a fan of history, so I definitely read things over the years, but…I learned from either my maternal grandfather or from my father, and…some things from my mother as well.”

Motoko

Motoko, a second generation Japanese American woman, 69, said she doesn’t know much about family history. Motoko thought her parents’ marriage was arranged through the Fukuoka connection, because her father had said that he didn't know her mother before. Motoko said her other relatives also married Fukuoka people, staying
within the same region. Since Motoko lost her mother when she was three years old, her father raised her and other three children by himself. After the war, Motoko and her family moved to San Francisco and her father was a gardener. Motoko said she doesn't remember too much about her paternal grandfather who was in the United States before her father because he died in an internment camp, when she was about four years old. After her mother died, her father associated more with his family than her mother’s. However, Motoko has kept in contact with her mother’s relatives.

Motoko remembers that her father was not a stern parent and they had a good rapport. Her father used to play the *shakuhachi* (尺八), Japanese traditional bamboo flute. However, after they got out of [an internment] camp, he stopped playing because he had nobody to play with, Motoko guessed. Motoko remembered her father was artistic. He would find drift wood and make something out of it, or look out the window at the garden, and try to visualize where he could make a pond. Motoko remembers that her father and her siblings went camping and fishing. However, they didn’t have much time to spend together because her father had to raise his four children. Motoko said, “By time he [came] home from work, we ate dinner, we had to do our homework…so there’s not so much [time] that we [could] intermingle with [him] in the evenings.” Therefore, eating dinner together was important to him. She said they knew they had to be home by dinner time or her father would get mad. Motoko, her two older brothers, and an older sister were assigned to do the housework such as cooking, washing dishes, clothes, and cleaning the house. Even though Motoko did not have much time to spend with her father growing up, she said she doesn’t have any negative memory of him.
Mrs. T, a second generation Japanese American woman, 92, had more detailed knowledge from any other participants of this study. Her father’s side of the family came to Yamanashi in 12th century from Nagano prefecture where they owned a small castle as samurai; however, the family had to escape from there to Yamanashi after an historic battle. In 17th century, the family was given a large area of land in Yamanashi by the Tokugawa shogunate. In the Meiji era, 19th century, the family gave up the status of samurai, but kept the old fashioned life style, Mrs. T said. Mrs. T’s father was the mayor’s third son in Yamanashi. He had a “boyish curiosity [about] anything mechanical.” When he was a teenage student, he was interested in learning physics and science. His family sent him to study English and ancient Chinese at a Buddhist temple nearby their house. One day, three of his cousins who had been in the United States for three years returned to Japan. Since Mrs. T’s father looked to America as a modern country, a land of opportunity, and a land where he could study the latest modern innovation, the “automobile,” he asked his cousins to take him to America. His mother, Mrs. T’s grandmother, thought if he could get someone to look after him, it would be better than sending him to Tokyo to be an engineer and then drafted to the Japanese military for training because she thought the health of Mrs. T’s father was too delicate because he had asthma. Mrs. T described how her father took a long journey from Yokohama, Japan to San Francisco:

[They] took him to Yokohama and…he spent about one month, getting ready to buy a ticket [to] board a ship, which was the one ship per month went to America…And, he…was measured for a suit [by a] tailor, and a shirt maker was making shirts for him, and shoe maker had to sew up his shoes…[That] was an incomplete outfit, because he needed a hat. So, he
had to go to a hat maker. And, they said to him, “Young man, where are you going?” “America.” “Well, America is a big country, did you know that? What part of America?” He said, “I don’t know. But, I’m going to the West Coast, and the city is called San Francisco...” And, “Oh, San Francisco...It’s in the place called California, which is part of the Wild West. And, we know exactly what kind of hat you need.” ...So, with his complete outfit, he boarded a ship which arrived in San Francisco and my father had over one hundred American dollars besides his new outfit. And, he had second class passage, and this young boy came off the ship in San Francisco, where the three cousins said, “Oh, that, there’s our cousin.” And [they said], “You look fine, except something very wrong with your hat. You’re wearing a cowboy hat...Nobody wears that kind of hat here.” So, they...took off his hat, and put it on the bed, and drew a line around on the big rim, and they cut it off and...they put it dent in the middle and put it back on his head and said, “Oh, now, your hat goes with the rest of your costume.”...In February of 1901, more than one hundred years ago, my father arrived in San Francisco.

Although his family could afford to give him a great deal of money when they sent him to the United States, Mrs. T said her father’s family respected money and practiced economy. In contrast, her mother’s family had more privilege because they owned a spinning mill for silk which employed about five hundred girls from the surrounding area. Mrs. T said they grew up in very differently even though their homes were only about two blocks apart in the same village.

Mrs. T’s mother received a secondary education, which was the highest level of education available to women in Meiji period. She enjoyed learning English, which people thought “looked like worms wiggling” horizontally. Mrs. T said her mother’s educational achievement was not considered positively especially for marriage:

[W]hen she came home, after graduation [from secondary school], people in the village used to hide behind the door and peek at her, and point and say, “There goes a girl who’s overeducated.” And they say that...[a] girl who could read and write English is unsuited for marriage because she’s overeducated and no man is going to stand for that. And so, yome ni moraite ga nai [嫁に貰い手がない: no one will marry her]. And
therefore, that poor girl is going to be a single all her life, and the best she can do is [to] become a school teacher.

However, to become suitable for marriage, Mrs. T’s mother continued her education, in flower arrangement, water color painting, calligraphy, and hand-sewing of Japanese garments, each of whose teachers visited her home. When Mrs. T's father was coming back to find a bride in his home town, Yamanashi, Mrs. T’s mother was introduced because she had studied English. Mrs. T’s mother and father married in the tenth year of her father’s immigration, in 1911.

Mrs. T said that her father experienced the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco where he had his own laundry business after he helped his cousin who had started his laundry business at the time he came to the United States. She shared her father’s stories about evacuating from his store in Japan Town:

Golden Gate Park was [an] open area, and the Red Cross and the Army supplied tents… [M]y father had three days after the earthquake to escape. So, he got his horse and wagon out of the stable, and he piled, uh, ochawan [お茶碗: small rice bowl], and, donburi [どんぶり: bowl], and, uh, ohitsu [おひつ: rice container], and, onabe [お鍋: pan] and everything on the wagon. All day, from [where he lived] to Golden Gate Park [he] went back and forth, made several trips and took everything out. So, if you stand in the Red Cross soup line, you have to have some kind of container. And most people escaping the earthquake just wore their clothes and took precious things, but no dishes. So, people came to my father’s place and said, “Hey Jap, let me borrow a bowl.”… [O]f course, they took extras… they gave out many pieces. And, everybody claim that they’re borrowing, but of course, nobody ever returned anything. And, my father hopes that they saved it, and remember the Jap boy that they got it from, you know.

Mrs. T’s father was also active in kenjinkai (県人会), the association of people from the same prefecture, which played an important role especially for Japanese farmers to get loans. Mrs. T explained banks were not willing to loan to Japanese immigrants
because of anti-Japanese sentiments. Moreover, the banks from Japan were also not willing to loan to the Japanese farmers and small business owners. Only Japanese elite company employees, doctors, dentists, were considered and formed a different group from the farmers and retailers. Therefore, these associations started their own mutual loan system. For the Japanese immigrant farmers and small business owners, these associations made not only financial but also social and cultural connections.

Growing up, she had constant contact with her relatives from Japan who visited her family. Her uncle would bring her and her sister gifts from Japan at every visit. Mrs. T talked about her trip to Japan when she was seventeen years old, visiting their relatives in Yamanashi. Mrs. T remembered that she was looked with curiosity by the children in the village:

I thought it was a wonderful trip. Everything I saw, everything I smelled, everything I ate, everything was unusual and new, and surprise… I remember the children in the village, uh, came out to look at us, and they would say, “Oh, that Americans have black eyes. Their hair is not blond, their eyes are not blue! Boring!” [なーんだ、アメリカさんでも、目が、黒いじゃん。髪も黄色くないし、目も青くない。つまらんなあ。] And, you know, they thought we couldn’t understand them…but we understood everything.

Mrs. T met both her paternal and maternal grandparents there and they gave her and her sister each a kimono. Mrs. T said that she and her sister in kimono looked just like other children in the neighborhood.
Like most Zainichi Koreans, Mi Ja grew up in a predominantly Japanese environment. However, unlike most Zainichi Koreans, Mi Ja used her Korean name with Japanese pronunciation at school, Paku Yoshiko (Park, Yoshiko). She said this was her mother’s decision because her mother had gone to a predominantly Japanese school using her Japanese name. One day, her mother told her identity to her close friend. But the friend stopped the friendship after that. Mi Ja’s mother thought she never wanted her children to have the same experience. Therefore, Mi Ja’s mother decided to send her daughters, Mi Ja and her two younger sisters to school, using their Korean names. Mi Ja said it was rare to use Korean name at a predominantly Japanese school. Her cousins went to the same school (elementary and junior high school), but used their Japanese names.

Mi Ja decided to use her Korean name with Korean pronunciation, Park, Mi Ja, when she entered junior college and kept this name when she studied abroad in Minnesota and California. She said she did not have a huge reason but it sounded cute in Korean and she liked being different from everyone else. Now she likes both names Yoshiko and Mi Ja, but she said there was a time she didn’t like her Japanese pronounced name Yoshiko when she was in the United States:

I was going through anguish before I came to the United States. And then I discovered new self there and enjoyed myself as “Mi Ja.” At the time, I think I wanted to forget about the past when I didn’t like myself. It was only recently when I came to like both Mi Ja and Yoshiko. I found that I am both Korean and Japanese. In other words, when my consciousness as
Zainichi and accept everything now, I like Mi Ja and Yoshiko both.

She also told me that when she was dating her husband from South Korea, he suggested she create another Korean name because Mi Ja sounded too Japanese and not really Korean; moreover, it is reminiscent of the Japanese Imperial era. She said she had a big argument with him because she identified Mi Ja as her name and explained why it was important for her to keep her name Mi Ja because she wanted him to understand about Zainichi Koreans, which not many Koreans in South Korea know much about. Now her husband likes her name Mi Ja, she said. One of her younger sisters taught Japanese in South Korea and found out when she started working, the language school preferred her name with Japanese pronunciation. Mi Ja guessed it was because the school thought the teacher shouldn’t have a Korean name (a name with Korean pronunciation) for teaching Japanese because it would not be authentic.

The use of a name, even the way a name is written, can reveal the authentic identity of an individual. Mi Ja said when she writes her name, Mi Ja, in Japanese, she does not use *katakana* (ミヂャ), which is a Japanese writing system used for foreign words except Chinese, but uses *hiragana* (みぢゃ) which is another writing system representing words of Japanese origin. Even though there are some ethnic Japanese whose names are written in *katakana* (such as マリ; Mari, まり in *hiragana*), most people who use *katakana* names are foreigners. Therefore, the fact that Mi Ja chooses *hiragana*, not *katakana*, to write her name implies that she is demonstrating her identity as an “insider” and not as a foreigner.

It doesn’t mean I had thoughts about this [before], but I liked my name written in *hiragana* more. But now, I really do think so, it’s not *katakana*’s
Mi Ja. [I asked: Do you think it should be hiragana’s Mi Ja?] Yes. Because I was born in Japan. I am of Japan. It may sound I put the reason later, but if write Mi Ja in katakana, I become a person from a foreign country. But I am from Japan, so it’s good to be hiragana’s Mi Ja.

As she says, the Korean name Mi Ja with hiragana writing represents who she is, both Korean and Japanese.

Hong Ja

Hong Ja has used her Japanese name all her life at school and at work. At the time of the interview, she belonged to a Korean Youth Organization where she was learning Korean and also starting to use her Korean name. She said it took her a while to get used to being called by her Korean name at first:

These days, I participate in the events at the organization and I sometimes go there more than once a week. So, recently I have been called by [my Korean name], I became less unfamiliar with my Korean name…At first, I wasn’t at all. It is my name, but I wasn’t used to be called, so I felt awkward, like “Who, me?” But now everyone calls me so naturally. I slowly have realized this is also my name; I am still in that level though.

Because Hong Ja meets many Zainichi Koreans some of whom have stronger sense of ethnicity, she feels that she is still in the process of recognizing her Korean name, and thus her Korean identity. Since she still uses her Japanese name at work, I asked her what I should call her. From the beginning of our contact, I called her Hong Ja, so she let me call her by her Korean name. She said actually she doesn’t have a Korean name, but “Hong Ja” is the Korean pronunciation of her Japanese name, Hiroko. However, she said she doesn’t like her Japanese name very much because it sounds old fashioned, rather she likes the sound of her name by Korean pronunciation.
Even though she said she was not used to being called Hong Ja, she used her Korean name when she traveled to Guam with her Japanese college friends. When she introduced herself to one of her father’s acquaintances there, she used her Korean name “unconsciously,” she said, “There, I introduced myself as Korean, and said, ‘My name is Hong Ja.’ Once I step out of Japan, I feel I am Korean. …Only in Japan do I use my Japanese name… So, I think I realize that [Korean name] is true name, maybe.” She also said that being outside of Japan made her secure:

In Japan, I might hide my identity. But in the United States, which is very multiethnic, I can feel that Korean is just one of the many ethnic groups. Being Korean is not that special and I could feel safe. In Japan, people might be surprised [if I talk about my identity] and say “Really!?!” but in the United States, it would be normal. When I thought about that, I felt I could say my name naturally.

Using a Japanese name in school did not necessarily mean hiding her identity because she talked about her identity in class when she was in elementary school. However, it took a lot of courage:

I think it was in fourth grade, we learned about Zainichi Koreans at school…we were going to read the story about this boy, who lived as a Korean at home, but was using a Japanese name at school…[My] classroom teacher suggested, “Why don’t you talk about [your identity] in class?” I thought, “Why?” I guess my teacher thought that if I didn’t say anything and kept using my Japanese name, other students wouldn’t know, but that could be hiding my identity…I remember I was really nervous. …I was shaking so much…After we read the story, we were going to discuss our thoughts in class. So, I was thinking when I should speak, when I should speak. I was so nervous and raised my hand. I remember with my shaking voice, I said I am Korean. I don’t remember what else I said, but I did say that. The rest of the students applauded…When I was in sixth grade, once again, I talked about it in class…At that time, I don’t know why but tears rolled down when I said it. My friends said “It’s all right.” But I never experienced discrimination because of that.
Even after such an experience, she said she never felt she was different from other Japanese students or experienced discrimination, maybe because she kept using her Japanese name. She said that before she talked about her identity in class, she was worried that she might be discriminated against and that her close friends wouldn’t talk to her anymore, but that did not happen at all. However, this experience was not the end. When she entered the junior high school, where students came from two other elementary schools, one student said to her, “You are Korean, aren’t you? Go back to Korea.” She said it was the only time she was told that;

I was so shocked. I thought I shouldn’t have talked about my identity. I thought, why am I Korean even though I live like everyone else? I didn’t like that I am Korean. I was glad that I had Japanese name. If I use Korean name, I cannot hide [my identity], can I?

Moreover, she said it was a shock to be told by someone she didn’t know at all. She talked about her identity in class in elementary school because she trusted her classmates. Therefore, she was disappointed that what she said was told by someone to the student in a negative way. However, that experience didn’t hurt her for a long time, she said, “I thought the kid said that without thinking deeply and I trusted my other friends. So it was mortifying, but it didn’t become a trauma.” She said talking about her identity in class in the elementary school made her start to think about her ethnicity and her “country,” Korea, even though she lived with not much difference from the Japanese. Hong Ja said until junior high school, she was hesitant to talk about her identity and never talked about it to her new friends there. However, when she entered high school, she met other Zainichi Korean students using Korean names and Vietnamese students using Vietnamese names. She said, “Looking at those students using the real names proudly, I thought ‘why
am I being so small [and not telling my identity]?’” She talked about her identity to her best friend in high school because she wanted her friend to understand everything about her, and later, she talked about it to other close friends. Hong Ja said her friends were not surprised and reacted calmly. Hong Ja said, “It became easier and easier to talk about my identity by repeating to tell people. It was only first time.”

Hong Ja has continued to use her Japanese name at work; it does not necessarily seem negative to her maybe because she has been confident enough to keep her ethnic identity. Hong Ja said her father uses his Japanese name in business but talks about his identity openly, because of which he has been more successful. This may have made her confident that she has constructed her ethnic identity as Zainichi Korean with a Japanese name.

Soon Ja

Like Hong Ja, Soon Ja, a second generation woman, also has been using a Japanese name at school and work. She said her paternal uncle who was educated and a teacher in Korea, named her. Soon Ja said that Soon Ja is a Korean pronunciation of her Japanese name, Junko. She also said her uncle gave her a Japanese name because she was born in Japan. Soon Ja said she has used her Japanese name mostly in her life. When I asked her how I should call her, she said “Just call me Iwata [her Japanese last name].”

Soon Ja said her parents spoke Korean between themselves, but they called her by Japanese name, Junko. Growing up, she used her Japanese name at school; however, her classmates knew that she was Korean even though she didn’t tell her identity to the class as Hong Ja did. Actually she was bullied in school because she was Korean. Therefore,
using a Japanese name did not hide her identity. At work, she uses her Japanese name, but she does not think she should reveal her identity;

I think I don’t have to say my [Korean] name Chu, Soon Ja. I don’t have to announce my name. I think I am cheating in a way. [I asked: Cheating?] It’s cheating, isn’t it? I cannot express myself honestly. My daughter is different. She expresses herself….Like us the second generation, there was a time we wanted to hide our identity… If we said it, we would be bullied. If we say a word, it’s over… [So] I didn’t tell [my classmates] by myself. When I was in elementary school, they knew because they lived in the same area. But when I went to junior high and vocational school, I thought I didn’t have to promote by myself. If it happens, it happens. [I said: You were open.] I was. What’s wrong with it? Did I have to say my identity to you? Yeah, did I make trouble with you?... [If] they don’t ask me, I don’t have to say anything.

However, she said she has become more open recently after the Korean boom in Japan began around 2003, starting with the World Cup Soccer in 2002 which Japan and South Korea co-hosted, later Japanese media started to broadcast popular Korean dramas which became a huge success. She thinks now no one bullies Koreans for their ethnic identity anymore, which was opposite of what she experienced growing up.

Soon Ja said, at the same time, she can be flexible using each Korean and Japanese name. She has used her Korean name when she belonged to the Young Korean Organization where she started going after she graduated from middle school and found fellow Zainichi Korean friends. She said, “I can use both flexibly. If I go to the gatherings of the Koreans, my body reacts naturally being called Soon Ja. If I go to a Japanese company, then I become ‘Iwata-san.’” For Soon Ja, Junko is also the name she was called by her parents since she was born. She also calls her son and daughter by Japanese versions of their names. Soon Ja said her children also think the Japanese versions are their names as well. Her flexibility about her name reflects how she interacts with others,
both Japanese and Koreans. She realizes that her body reacts when she is with her Korean friends making her keep her ethnic identity even though she mostly uses her Japanese name in her social life with Japanese friends and coworkers.

*Yu Ja*

Yu Ja, who went to Korean ethnic schools, has used only her Korean name most of her life. She said she used her Japanese name when she worked part time as a student and on the official document of the national health insurance card under her father’s Japanese name. Significantly, the Japanese government has not recognized their Korean names, but only Japanese names. Most Koreans who use Korean name in daily and social life, therefore, have had to use their Japanese names in official documents such as national pension, insurance, and also banking account (in Korean name system, wife’s name does not change by marriage but Japanese name system does, so the official systems do not recognize a couple with different family names as a family). This has been changing slowly and some Zainichi Koreans use their Korean name in official documents. Since Yu Ja works and is independent, her insurance is in her own name (not her father’s), so she uses her Korean name on the card. Therefore, she said if she had to show something related to Okamoto, her Japanese family name, there is nothing she can prove officially.

Yu Ja said she was named by her father. Her mother said there was nothing they could give to her but a name. Yu Ja said she likes her name because people can remember it easily, including friends from South Korea. Even though she has used her Japanese name, it has been for a limited time. The name Yu Ja for her, therefore, is the only one
and that reflects her identity as Zainichi Korean.

Growing up as Zainichi Korean in Japanese Schools and Society

School Experiences

Mi Ja, Hong Ja, and Soon Ja went to Japanese public schools with predominantly Japanese students; however, the experience of each is different. Mi Ja and her two younger sisters were the only students who had Korean names in their schools while their cousins in the same school used their Japanese names. Hong Ja, a 22 year-old third generation, and Soon Ja, a 64 year-old second generation, both used their Japanese names, but while Hong Ja said she did not experience bullying, Soon Ja did.

Mi Ja said she was an active and responsible student and that because she was using her Korean name and other Japanese students knew that she was Korean, she had to be strong to survive in a predominantly Japanese environment:

I was strong-minded… I would say somewhat aggressive [to some classmates]… but when I was thinking back—and this may sound an excuse—but probably because I am Zainichi, I knew I might be bullied as Zainichi in Japanese school, using different [Korean] name. Also I was told to be strong by mother. So, if I was strong enough, I wouldn’t be bullied and I took that decision. If I were weak and using Korean name and being different in Japanese society, I would have been bullied.

However, at the same time, she tried to fit in the group which was also a way to survive, and sometimes she still talks about that with her mother:

I was always in the most popular group in class. Other friends in my group were all cute and I was the funny one. I wasn’t cute one, but I was there. I didn’t know why I was there…the reason why I was in that group was because I was a funny person and I knew that. If I was always funny, then I wouldn’t be pushed out of the group…. Maybe this is nothing to do with
being Zainichi, but using a different name and knowing that I came from different background, that was the way I tried to survive.

Mi Ja did not experience bullying, maybe because she was strong enough; however, her immediate younger sister was once told by her classmate to go back to Korea. When her sister wrote an essay about her identity as Zainichi Korean, some of her classmates reflected and said “I’ll be nice to you,” but she felt that was not the point. Her sister thought her classmates did not understand or learn anything from her essay.

Mi Ja also wondered how deeply her classmates understood when she talked about her background in class. She also got a similar reaction from her classmates and also felt that was not the point. She said even if the intention of the teachers was to encourage the Japanese students to understand Zainichi Koreans, sometimes students could not understand fully.

Mi Ja said she liked being different from everyone else so she never saw doing things related to Korean culture negatively. She talked about the first and only time she felt negative about being Korean:

The first time I felt negative being different from other people was when I filled out foreign registration form. I was on a basketball team in high school, 16 years old—I remember clearly the day when I went to the city hall to fill out the form—my mother came to school to pick me up. …At the time, there was still a fingerprinting system. And then when my fingerprints were taken, I thought, oh, I am a foreigner. Even though I had been living as a Korean, looking at my foreign registration form, [thinking that] I had to leave my team during the time we were to play together …[Also] my fingerprints being taken and looking at civil servants, I was thinking what they were thinking about me, maybe they were thinking I was a foreigner. That was my first experience, feeling negative [about being Korean]. Other than that, I was totally okay. I loved being different.

Growing up as Zainichi Korean with a Korean name, Mi Ja has constructed a self-identity
of being Other.

In contrast with Mi Ja, Hong Ja who used her Japanese name in school, said she felt little difference from other Japanese friends as stated above. When I asked her when she thinks she is Japanese and when she thinks she is Korean, she said she is Japanese when she is trying not to be different and that idea itself is Japanese. Moreover, she feels Japanese most of the time and sometimes feels half of her identity is Japanese because she doesn't do anything different than the Japanese in daily life; she eats the same food as the Japanese, except she grew up looking at her father eating different things (spicy Korean food). Her school life was nothing different from other Japanese students; she was active on the athletic team in middle and high school and led her class at the time of school events, except when she talked about her identity in class in elementary school. Even after she became older, on the coming of age day (age twenty), when traditionally many Japanese girls wear kimono for the local ceremonial events, she wore kimono along with them. Later, she found out that her mother actually wanted her to wear hanbok, Korean traditional clothing.

Soon Ja’s experience as a student was about not only being a minority in predominantly Japanese school but also being poor. Growing up, her house did not have electric lighting until she entered elementary school. Both her parents were busy working and did not spend time with her and her siblings. She said she didn’t live in the area where there was a concentration of Koreans; therefore, she couldn’t be in the Korean student group in which she could have fought back when she was bullied:

I didn’t like being poor and being bullied… there was bullying because I am Korean… My lunch box was different [from other Japanese students], so I went back home to eat lunch even though I lived far away from
Soon Ja also remembers that she could not buy rubber shoes like other students but used to wear wooden sandals (geta). Soon Ja said, even now, she feels pathetic when she looks at a picture of when she was in elementary school and only she, among all the students, was wearing sandals. When she and her former classmates gathered and looked at the picture, her friend asked her why only she was wearing sandals, and she answered by saying “Because I didn’t have shoes.”

Soon Ja did not mention that being poor or the fact that she had to help her parents had influenced her education, but it was clear that bullying at school had a severe impact on her motivation:

I tried not to stand out, rather sat in the back...I guess [the Japanese students] didn’t like me standing out. I think it was in third grade, when we were memorizing multiplication. If I raised my hand first and answered, they’d say “Why do you remember first, Chosen (朝鮮)!”...So I had to turn in my exam at very last. While doing that, [study] became harder, and I became less motivated. Until [the third grade], I studied hard, but when I was in middle school I thought no matter how hard I study, it won’t change.

The word Chosen, meaning Korean, was used here negatively to insult her, as many Japanese used this word with negative connotation. It is important to note that, as later mentioned, Soon Ja does not identify herself Chosenjin (朝鮮人), a person of Chosen, but Hanguksaram, equivalent to Kankokujin (韓国人) in Japanese, meaning South Korean.

Soon Ja did have sad memories of bullying and being poor; however, she mentioned that she had close Japanese friends she used to play with and still keeps in touch with. Soon Ja also said a school teacher was nice to her. When she told her teacher
she was not going on a field trip because her parents would not be able to make a lunch box for her, the teacher told her to come anyway and prepared a lunch for her.

After Soon Ja went to middle school, she needed to buy a bicycle to commute, but her parents could not afford it, so she had to walk to school for about two months. However, she said she was able to take care of herself mostly when she started going to middle school, making her money gathering firewood and selling it. Soon Ja’s mother, who did not receive a proper education in either Korea or Japan, wanted her children to have a good education so that they would have an easier life. Therefore, her parents sent Soon Ja to a dressmaking vocational school for three years.

Soon Ja talked about the reunion 48 years after graduation from junior high school when she met former classmates including the woman who bullied her. Soon Ja said, “I went there and said all what I wanted to say to her…I said, ‘How could you bully me so much!’…[Then the person said] ‘Did I bully you so bad?’ I said, ‘It was more than bullying!’” Soon Ja said she could finally say what she had wanted to say for a long time.

Unlike other participants, Yu Ja grew up learning Korean culture and language in Korean ethnic schools from about two years old. Yu Ja said she learned Korean children’s songs there, so she is not familiar with Japanese children’s songs very much. Yu Ja said her parents wanted to send their children to a Korean ethnic school, “My mother says if we go to Korean ethnic school, at least we will be able to read [and write] in Korean…No matter how bad our grades are, we’d acquire the language.” Yu Ja thinks her father had more thoughts. Her father was involved in Korean ethnic education; he used to coach the volleyball team of a Korean ethnic school. At the Korean ethnic school, she not only learned Korean language and culture, but also constructed her identity as Korean.
The good thing about the education of Chongryun is [no wavering] about identity. There is no denial about self-identity. So, [I wouldn’t think] that I hated being born and raised as non-Japanese or why [I wasn’t born Japanese]... Throughout my life, I’ve never been distressed over my identity… It is hard to be normal, but “normal” in my definition is, living as Korean in Japan is normal, that’s not something I need to explain, that’s not something I don’t like, that’s not something not good. This is the normal, myself. And the [ethnic] education and the environment have influenced that identity.

One of the few negative things she mentioned about Korean ethnic school was, significantly, that in middle and high school, the class president was always a male student and the vice class president was a female student and other positions were also decided by sex (and it hasn’t changed; this is different from Japanese schools). Therefore, no matter how good the grades of a female student or how her great leadership skills, she could not become a class president. Yu Ja said this does not mean that she wanted to become a class president, but she felt it unjust to see a male student who had worse grades than she did. Her mother said Yu Ja was always top five or above throughout the school and also active on the volleyball team. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that had she been male, she could have become a class president.

Post-secondary Experiences

Not only school experience (preK-12) but also postsecondary experience has influenced the construction of identity of the Zainichi Korean participants. For Soon Ja and Hong Ja, even though their generation and age are different, belonging to a Young Korean Organization had and has played an important role, association with other
Zainichi Korean youth. In this kind of organization, members learn the Korean language, folk dance, and traditional musical instruments. They also learn about the history of Korea and Zainichi Koreans, and get involved in political movements such as the reunification of the Korean peninsula. Soon Ja said her parents sent her to Japanese schools because they lived in Japan; however, they said she shouldn’t forget about their country, Korea. Therefore, her parents encouraged her to learn the Korean language. Soon Ja started to go to the Young Korean Organization when she was in vocational school at around seventeen years old. She said she learned the language and dance there, and also participated in the movement to reunify the Korean peninsula:

I think there was influence of [South and North Korea]…Even though we were doing reunification movement in Japan, we listened to information from South and North Korea…In those days [in the 1960s], we wished if we could reunify…we had that dream.

Some of the Young Korean Organizations are still active in the reunification movement; for many, the country of origin is not two Koreas, but one.

Soon Ja said it was the best time in her life when she was in the organization, making friends with other Zainichi Koreans to whom she could open her mind:

Unlike when I was with Japanese friends, I felt I could be myself. We could say the same thing with each other having similar struggles. Being bullied or going through other experiences, it was all similar [experiences] for us, second generation. If someone would say “I experienced this,” then another would say “I experienced that.” [laughter] So, it was the place for us to talk about our struggles and hardships. [I said: It was different from being with Japanese friends.] You know, I couldn’t talk from one to ten [A to Z] with Japanese friends… If we hear [Korean] music, [we would react the same way] shaking our shoulders together naturally.

Even though Soon Ja had a close Japanese friend and she could be friends with Japanese,
by belonging to the organization, she could share feelings that she could not share with Japanese friends.

Hong Ja, who has just started going to the Young Korean Organization, said that she decided to go there because she wanted to relate to other Zainichi Koreans, which she could not do when she was in high school, being busy with school. Through the organization, Hong Ja has learned the language, history, and *janggu* (장고: Korean musical instrument, *chango*, in Japanese pronunciation). The influence on her identity is not only that:

I think the influence [of belonging the organization] is tremendous for my life… I began to love my country [Korea]… All people in this group love the country. I’ve met many friends who have similar struggles and experiences… So I can feel secure… I just started going there, but I feel a connection.

Belonging to the organization has given her more confidence and that has affected her relationships with friends. Hong Ja said that she shares what she is learning with her Japanese friends:

These days, I talk about [my ethnicity] proudly… I think I became proud of it… and talk with my friends about what I am doing at the organization, saying “You know, my country is like [this and that]. And I am learning to play the drums,” something like that. I want my friends to know about [Korean culture], that way, [I can change] the images that they have negatively. I don’t think many people have positive image about [Zainichi Koreans].

Even though Hong Ja said she grew up with few differences from her Japanese friends, close to the end of the second interview, she actually said that she knew she was different and lonely growing up because she didn’t have any other Zainichi Korean
friends. Knowing that she was the only different one, Hong Ja might have been seeking a place where she could feel connected and have a sense of sharing the same ethnicity.

Significantly, even though using her Korean name openly, Mi Ja also said that she could not share her struggles with her Japanese friends in the same way as Zainichi Koreans because they did not understand fully and she felt shut down:

I thought I was open to my Japanese friends, but it was different. I just did not hide my identity. Being Zainichi was a big issue for me while for other Japanese friends it was crushes or career, being Zainichi was included in mine. However, I knew I shouldn’t talk about that with them. It was often avoided…when I tried to talk about that [struggles of being Zainichi Korean] in middle school, my friends did not seem to want to talk about it. So I realized I should not talk about these issues with them. Even if I did so, they would say “Never mind.”…“It’s okay,” or “We are the same.” But I wanted to talk more with them. Without listening to me, how could it be okay?

Mi Ja said she only realized this after she studied abroad and met some Japanese friends who really listened to her. She said it was “a big discovery” that she had not opened up her mind with her Japanese friends before:

[When I went to the United States, I met Japanese friends who listened to me with interest in Zainichi Koreans for the first time. I could talk about what I was thinking without shutting down… Then I realized I didn’t have truly close friends when I was in Japan—I met friends to whom I can really open up my mind in the United States…I still talk with middle school Japanese friends, but I don’t talk about that issue [of Zainichi Koreans] with them…Through the experiences that I was avoided [implicitly]…I learned I should not to talk about it to survive…if I sensed things would go smoothly without saying something, I wouldn’t say anything. I still do that now.

Again, Mi Ja has used her Korean name and has had to learn how to “survive” in Japanese society by being different.
Studying abroad in the United States influenced and impacted Mi Ja’s identity as Korean. She talked about the experience of being told she was not Korean by Korean international students from South Korea:

When I met Korean students from Korea for the first time…there was a Zainichi Korean student who went to Korean ethnic school and could speak Korean…. One day, the Korean students [and other Zainichi Korean student and myself] were discussing if I was Korean or not. All my Korean friends said I was not Korean…I had lived as Korean for about 20, 21 years and I was told I was not Korean and thought, “What?” It was a bolt from blue. I didn’t know what to think, I felt refusal and confusion. Someone said, [the other Zainichi Korean student] was Korean…and I was not Korean because they can talk to [the other girl] but they cannot to me. Conversation!? If I could speak Korean, I can be Korean? Because I cannot speak Korean, I cannot join them as Korean. Since then, I felt [frustrated] about not be able to speak Korean and started to think what it means to be Korean. Am I not Korean? If so, am I Japanese? It took me three to four years of struggle about being Korean or Japanese. I had this [frustration] for a while about not being able to speak the language.

By the encounter with Korean students from South Korea in the United States, she discovered that what she thought to be Korean, such as cultural practices and Korean expressions they maintained throughout generations were often ridiculed as old-fashioned. Mi Ja said that the Koreans in Korea think of Koreans in Japan as people who escaped from and abandoned the country; therefore, they look down on Zainichi Korean culture and language as not authentic. Mi Ja said she feels closer to Korean Americans who grew up in a different country because she can share similar situations with them:

[T]here are some feelings that I cannot share together with the Japanese, but [if a person is Korean,] only because I share the same ethnicity, no matter how [different] life this person has, there should be a relation. Even if the person has decided to live as Japanese, there should be at least once when he or she had struggled as Zainichi… So, I feel connected and have commonalities with people of Korean ethnicity [who live outside Korea], because they have this background, no matter where they live.
Since Mi Ja stayed in the United States for about seven years, the commonalities she found might be related to diasporatic experiences of Koreans living overseas. They have had to live as minority and maintain their culture which is not recognized by the mainstream or by the Koreans in Korea.

Growing up in Korean ethnic schools, Yu Ja said she never realized she was a minority until she entered a Japanese university. Unlike other participants whose friends were mostly Japanese, Yu Ja had mostly Zainichi Korean friends growing up. Even though she made friends with (ethnic) Japanese students when she was doing distance learning in high school for the graduation certificate, she made more friends with Japanese students when she entered the university. Of course she continued to use her Korean name, but every time she introduced herself, she had to explain that she was Korean. Then she said she realized that there were some people didn’t even know that people called “Zainichi” exist in Japan. One of her closest Japanese friends at university told her that Yu Ja was the first person she met who used Korean name:

When first time my Japanese friend stayed over at my place…she told me that her parents, who are school teachers, told her not to make friends with Koreans. That friend, because she is from countryside, knowing only a small world, never met someone like me, who showed the Korean identity in public without any hesitance. She had had the negative image of minority people, who would live hiding their identity. So, when she first met me, she thought how ridiculous I was to indicate my identity, I would be hurt or discriminated against. When she told me that, I thought, it is true, that the Chosenjin [Koreans, could be discriminated against].

To Yu Ja, Japanese students seemed ignorant. She said, to her, the Japanese students were the people she needed to teach about Zainichi Koreans. Her university friends, however, listened to her with interest and supported her in the Korean student movements. Yu Ja
became active in the Korean student organization and its network all over Japan, started to think about the situation of Zainichi Koreans in Japan, and participated in activities in the Korean student organization. There she also met many Zainichi Korean friends who went to Japanese schools and had different experiences from hers. Yu Ja would teach those friends what she knew and also think together to better the situation. Yu Ja said after she graduated from university, she met some Japanese anti-war activists who changed her image of Japanese as passive and ignorant. Even though her activism has focused on improving the Zainichi Korean situation, those activists she met broadened her view of the world.

**Language: Learning Korean, Learning Heritage**

All my participants, like most Zainichi Koreans in Japan who were born and raised in Japan, speak Japanese as a primary language. Significantly, all my participants had studied Korean or were studying Korean, which is not always necessarily the case for many Zainichi Koreans. However, Hong Ja said it is shameful for her not to be able to speak Korean fluently because she is an ethnic Korean, and that was one of the reasons she started to go to the Young Korean Organization and learn the language:

I really would feel ashamed when I am asked my name and if it’s Japanese name, but [I would also say] I am actually Korean. Then people would ask me if I can speak Korean, I would say no, then they’d ask why. I feel ashamed [that] I am Korean but I cannot speak Korean, and I use Japanese name… I feel like I’m hiding my identity…unconsciously, I feel that way. I am ashamed of not being able to speak Korean, so I started to learn Korean.

Hong Ja wishes she could have learned Korean when she was small, like her father who
had to learn Korean by himself to communicate with his parents who could not speak Japanese. Not only because she feels shame, but also because being able to speak the language strongly relates to her self-confidence, she has wanted to be more fluent in Korean:

I feel I can say I am Korean only after I can speak the Korean language. Now I cannot say that. Only when I can speak Korean [fluently], I can be confident enough…For me, [the Korean identity] is about being able to speak the language.

Studying Korean as an adult can be seen as part of a process of constructing identity as an ethnic Korean. At the same time, she said as she learned Korean, she thought of her identity more positively:

I didn’t have good image about Korea…[but] I don’t think so anymore. Rather, the world became wider, for example, I started to learn Korean and learned about the culture, and if I were Japanese living in Japan, I can only know about Japan, but I have two worlds and two view points, which widens my world. I thought I am lucky and I am glad that I am Korean now.

Learning Korean language and culture is significant to Hong Ja’s identity. Korean culture might have been close to her in daily life but she did not have opportunity to learn it. Her reflections on the experiences at the organization indicate the importance of learning the Korean culture for self-esteem.

Mi Ja also said that she used to feel ashamed not being able to speak Korean especially through her experience with her grandmother and meeting with friends from South Korea. However, she said now she doesn’t feel ashamed:

Now, I don’t feel ashamed studying Korean in Korea because I was born
and raised in Japan. It is natural [not to speak Korean] and I can speak Japanese….However, I do think I wish I could speak Korean because becoming first generation in Korea from third generation in Japan by coming to live in South Korea, I thought how hard it would be if my children or grandchildren cannot speak my mother tongue. I realized that is how my grandmother felt, having third generation grandchildren who knew only Japanese. Then I felt it would be better if I could have spoken Korean. I want to speak Japanese with my grandchildren…I think my language is Japanese. Before, urimal [우리말: literally meaning our language in Korean] used to be Korean, but now, urimal, my language or my mother tongue is Japanese, definitely.

As Mi Ja studied Korean, she found that Korean for her is not a completely foreign language; it is not urimal nor mother tongue, but rather a language in-between. At the same time, she found the importance of being bilingual and educating her children and grandchildren to be bilingual.

Yu Ja said the fact that she can speak Korean fluently is a powerful force which backs up her ethnic identity because she thinks ethnicity, culture, and language are strongly related to each other. However, young Zainichi Koreans who do not speak Korean are not to be blamed taking into account the historical background and Japanese education. Yu Ja said she has discussed this issue with Korean friends from South Korea:

[Some] people of South Korea think that Koreans overseas should be able to speak Korean if they are to be Korean. However, I feel antipathy for that idea. Language links to ethnicity and people want to learn it, but the attitude that Koreans [overseas] are supposed to be fluent is just rude to minorities… Looking at the historical background and of the children who were born and raised in Japan, how could they say such an irresponsible thing? …I think people [who take it for granted that Koreans overseas speak the language] lack knowledge... [In] Japan, [the ethnic or heritage language education] is not guaranteed… It was the South Korean government which abandoned the Koreans in Japan. Without giving any support, how could they say why we cannot speak the language?

At the same time, Yu Ja thinks the Korean language she learned at the Korean ethnic
school or the one taught at Korean ethnic classrooms which remain mainly in Osaka, is
the language with which Zainichi Koreans have fought exclusion and oppression.
Therefore, Koreans from Korea should not laugh at the accent of those who learned
Korean in Japan, rather they should think why Zainichi Koreans speak differently or
“poorly,” and how they can support better language education. Yu Ja, herself, is fluent,
almost the same level as native Korean speakers in Seoul, South Korea; however, she also
thinks that the graduates of the Korean ethnic school shouldn’t feel ashamed of their
accents, which are influenced by Japanese and the dialect of their teachers’, Gyeonsando,
Southern South Korea.

For Soon Ja, Korean was the language she heard everyday from her parents.
Therefore, she said she can understand Korean almost perfectly. Although Soon Ja said
she cannot speak Korean perfectly because her “tongue would not move” properly, she
speaks it when she is with her second generation friends. She said when she speaks with
her coworker who is also second generation Zainichi Korean, she definitely uses some
Korean expressions naturally. From time to time, she speaks to her children in Korean,
such as “Wake up!” and they understand her. However, she said she cannot teach Korean
because she cannot pronounce it correctly and it’s better for them to take lessons and
learn Korean formally.

Not all second generation can understand and speak Korean; if their parents, first
generation, came to Japan when they were small, they grew up speaking Japanese more
than Korean. So, their children, second generation, would be raised listening to less
Korean. Soon Ja said that she feels privileged to be able to understand Korean. At the first
interview which was held in a restaurant, a young couple who sat next to us was speaking
loudly. She said, if some people were talking very loud like the couple, she would say about them, “They are so loud!” in Korean; in this way, the couple would not understand but she could complain secretly.

Concepts of Nation, Naturalization, and National Identity

Each participant’s concept of nation, nationality, and naturalization was different. Even though each participant has a strong sense of ethnic identity, each felt it to a different degree, and each of them thinks that the ethnicity and nationality relate to each other. For Yu Ja, holding North Korean nationality has caused difficulties in travelling to other countries. Even if she had wanted to go to South Korea where her ancestors came from, she would have needed to apply for a visa. Yu Ja said that people with North Korean nationality have to go to the South Korean embassy every time they travel to get a temporary travel certificate with all documents: statement of reason, application, registration of residence in Japan. Then the documents need to be reviewed, the applicants interviewed by the embassy officials, finally they need to go to the embassy again to pick up the travel certificate. Moreover, Yu Ja told me that some of her friends with North Korean nationality experienced oppressive interviews at the South Korean embassy which caused them trauma. Therefore, South Korea, for Yu Ja has been a country which she could never imagine being close with until diplomatic relations between North and South Korea developed at the historical summit meeting on July 15, 2000:

South Korea for me was a country close to me but far away from me. When I watched TV showing South Korean towns, I could understand everything; I could read advertising displays, I could understand what
people were saying. But I felt awkward…and distanced from South Korea. I never thought I wanted to go, nor that I would be able to go.

Now Yu Ja has friends from South Korea, so she feels closer to South Korea than before. Yu Ja also said not only people with North Korean nationality, but other foreign residents have restrictions on traveling from and returning to Japan:

[UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights] states that everyone has right to go back to their home. And the home doesn’t mean somewhere you have the nationality. Therefore, home for Zainichi people, in a larger context, includes Japan, North Korea, and South Korea. We have to apply for the permission asking the [Japanese] government for re-entry to the country where we reside. That system is breaking international law.

Thus, nation-state, for Yu Ja, is not something that she can rely on or take advantage of even though she is interested in politics in Korea and Japan:

For me, nation-state doesn’t have any meaning. I am in the situation where I am not sure where I belong. If I put it in a good way, I can belong anywhere; if I put it in a bad way, I don’t belong anywhere and no country would protect me…A nation is just a block of administrative services…However, I think many people’s ethnicity and nation-state matches, I assume about the nationality of 60, 70 % of people in the world match their country. [I tried to clarify what she meant.] For example, refugees from Afghanistan who had to leave their country…[or asylum seekers] are very small minorities who had to leave against their will rather than immigrants who planned to immigrate with some reason. So, most people match their nation, ethnicity, and their lives. But for me, nation doesn’t give me any advantages, rather disadvantages. In other words, it only trammels the Constitution and laws of the nation.

Yu Ja uses the term nation and nationality interchangeably here, but from this quote it seems that she thinks the Koreans who came to Japan, left their country against their will; moreover, they do not have the rights as residents in Japan or as Korean nationals, rather that has been restricting their rights. In addition, the rights of Zainichi Koreans were not
given but fought for by the Zainichi Koreans.

Mi Ja’s ideas about nation and nationality were different from Yu Ja’s. Mi Ja said she used to think that by holding Korean nationality, she could feel connected to Korea and that her South Korean nationality was the “evidence” of being Korean. However, now she thinks nationality and ethnicity are, and should be, in different categories. She said, “Nation is where you live. Ethnicity is about people’s features, culture, or customs, like a color…Nationality is like where you are located on a canvas that there are many colors [of ethnicity].” Moreover, Mi Ja thinks that nationality does not define her identity. Mi Ja said that she did not feel attached to a certain country as her own country:

I could not experience having a [country] about which I can feel patriotic… But for some people, for instance, living in France for generations of ancestors, having French nationality, they would have true patriotism, not just attachment to the place, but deeper feelings. The meaning of nationality, then, would just not be a place for some people… [Therefore unlike them] I could get American citizenship or French citizenship if I live there and it would be benefit for me. It would not change who I am no matter which nationality I would get…I wouldn’t want to be defined by nationality because it should be where you live.

Culturally, Mi Ja said she has identified as Korean, Japanese, and sometimes American, but those are part of the elements of her identity, not all. In terms of the concept of nation and nationality, it is a place where she resides and nothing more. This idea is distinctly different from Yu Ja’s, in which a nation-state should protect and give rights to its nationals, although she doesn’t feel she has hers.

Hong Ja had another idea about nation and nationality. Even though she doesn’t live in South Korea, holding South Korean nationality means that it is her country and where she belongs:
It’s like home. You have your own home and everyone goes home. It’s home you eventually rooted and return. My father often says…when I go abroad and if something happens, I should go to the embassy of South Korea…Eventually it’s your country that will protect you. So, it’s like home… It doesn’t mean necessarily you live there…. It’s family who live together in the same house. So, everyone is connected like one whole family. When I meet someone of my country [Koreans from Korea], I feel that way because I am Zainichi. If I were Japanese and I had all Japanese family members, I wouldn’t think that way. Because I live apart from [Korea], I think I feel that way and I want to.

For Hong Ja, nation is more than just a place and nationality is something she can relate to people of her country. Unlike Yu Ja, she believes that her country would protect her. This is also different from Mi Ja’s reflection; she said living in South Korea, she never felt she was South Korean. Because she holds South Korean nationality, she does not have to worry about visas and can stay as long as she wants; however, she has a lot of limitations because she is defined as a Korean living outside South Korea. In South Korea, each national has identification number which allows her to open a bank account, credit card account, or shop online in addition to having civil rights and obligations such as military service. Since the South Korean government gives different numbers for overseas Koreans, Mi Ja cannot do these things or be considered a citizen even though her husband is a South Korean citizen.

Soon Ja said she identifies as Korean, *Hangusaram* (한국 사람: hangusaran in Japanese pronunciation), and her country is Korea, but she doesn’t have any memory or merit because she was born and raised in Japan. Soon Ja said she was told by her uncle and aunt in South Korea that she was a Korean without country when she visited (or “returned to”) Korea:
[My uncle and aunt] said to me, “If a war broke out right now [between Korea and Japan], which side are you going take? You must be neutral,” and they said, “So you are not going to be accepted by both countries, Japan or Korea. If you came back to Korea, you are not going to be trusted because you are in-between.” I thought it was the reality, not the connection of blood.

Soon Ja remembers that she was upset and disappointed more than twenty years ago being told this by her uncle and aunt who knew about discrimination against Koreans in Japan. However, she could not deny that she was in-between both in Japan and Korea and she needed to give up on that situation. She talked about Japan as “other country,” therefore she needs to adopt it in order to live in Japan. She has had to live in Japan even though there was bullying and discrimination. Japan is the country where she is used to living and also has children who don’t belong anywhere either. Therefore, she said if her children don’t forget about their blood, they can choose how they want to live.

Soon Ja’s idea about nation is that it is where a person belongs, but she doesn’t feel she belongs anywhere and is detached from both Korea and Japan. Therefore, her South Korean nationality does not define her identity. Holding South Korean nationality has not connected her and the nation. Soon Ja also said that her duality is not always good:

I have duality, but I cannot say it is necessarily good…Thinking about what if something happened, what can my duality be good for? [I said: So it’s impossible for you to choose either side when you were told to.] No. We can’t choose. We just need to do whatever we were told to, but not that we have choice. We aren’t in the position, are we?

Soon Ja said that the second generation have had the hardest time not being able to belong to either Korea or Japan; moreover, they have not been in the position to choose.
Significantly, Soon Ja’s idea about not having a choice is linked to Hong Ja’s idea that nationality “is not something you can choose by birth. I don’t think it’s something you can say you like or not.”

In regards to naturalization, even though both Hong Ja and Soon Ja’s relatives have naturalized, their ideas about naturalization are slightly different. While Hong Ja still thinks that her nationality is related to her ethnic identity, Soon Ja thinks more flexibly about naturalization, unless people have no choice but naturalization because of their jobs, not forgetting about their ethnic background. Hong Ja said naturalizing “seems to erase the true self by one’s own hand and become a false self,” although naturalizing does not mean to change one’s identity completely because the connection of blood is strong. Moreover, Hong Ja said that changing nationality is like “disconnecting from [her] ancestors and families which was continued for a long time.” Therefore, naturalization is and should be the last resort, done only when there is no option. Hong Ja said that it is wrong to naturalize just because it would be easier. Hong Ja also said that someone should not naturalize just because his or her spouse is Japanese.

Yu Ja said that if someone, who knows about her ethnic identity like her and can clearly say “I am Korean no matter what my nationality is,” naturalizes for its convenience of Japanese nationality, that would be fine. In other words, naturalization should be based on an understanding that both identities are equally important:

[If] someone who grew up not knowing anything [about Korea] and hating to be Korean, with only negative thoughts about it, wants to naturalize, I would feel sad and I would hope that I could ask them some [critical] questions about it. Yeah, nothing can be acquired naturally, so if this person has to decide, becoming a Japanese citizen might be the best decision, but it is our responsibility to create an environment in which they can make a decision [with strong sense of Korean ethnicity]. At the same
time, it is a responsibility for Japanese education as well. Regarding the historical background, we should claim that [we can make equal decision] or we can live more conveniently without naturalizing.

Yu Ja said that only when they can make a choice standing on equal ground and naturalized people do not have to deny or be denied their identity, can they naturalize to Japanese. However, Yu Ja said that the naturalization system of Japan does not let them do so; moreover, the system is exclusionary, which is contradictory to the assimilation into Japanese society.

*Representation in the Media: Invisibility and Distorted Images of Zainichi Koreans*

All the participants felt that the Zainichi Koreans are not well represented in the media, either negatively or not at all, thus rendering them reprehensible or invisible. Hong Ja said she rarely hears about Zainichi Koreans in the media and only learned a little bit in school. Yu Ja also said that the Zainichi Koreans were treated as if they did not exist. Yu Ja said that people have negative images of Zainichi Korean people and organizations because of the media. She pointed out that one of the lines in the movie called *All Under the Moon* (月はどっちに出ている: *Tsuki wa dotchi ni dete iru*), “I don’t like the Koreans but I like you,” represents the general Japanese feelings about the Zainichi Koreans. Moreover, the movie about Zainichi Koreans called *Pacchigi* (パッチギ), made her concerned because the Zainichi Koreans used violence to solve the problem in the movie, which could give the audience a negative message about Zainichi Koreans. On other television programs such as in political debates, Yu Ja said, Zainichi Koreans are represented as the minority group which should be discriminated against which actually shows the prejudice of the Japanese.
Negative images not only were applied to Zainichi Koreans, but also South and North Korea even since the Korean boom. Hong Ja said she had been influenced by the negative images of North Korea she had seen in the media and thought of North Korea negatively until she actually talked to Zainichi Korean friends with North Korean nationality whom she met at the Young Korean Organization and studied the history of the division of Korean peninsula. Soon Ja expressed her anger and frustration toward the Japanese perceptions of South and North Korea:

I don’t understand... going to South Korea for their leisure is good but when talking about politics, they criticize South Korea... and they criticize especially North Korea because of the abduction issue [of Japanese nationals by the North Korean government]. They look down on North Korea... For me, they just contradict themselves... If they hate Korea that much, they shouldn’t go there at all. They shouldn’t have started the Korean boom.

*Hallyu* (한류: hanryu, in Japanese pronunciation), the Korean boom or the Korean wave, has changed the Japanese people’s perception of Korea and Korean culture more positively. Just being Korean, is taken as good, which is very different from before, Mi Ja said. Soon Ja also said only recently after the Korean boom, could she talk about her identity more openly.

Mi Ja said that she sometimes gets reactions from Japanese saying “I love this Korean drama, this actor or actress,” but she doesn’t watch Korean dramas. Even though it is a good thing people have a positive image of Korea, she cannot find any connections with those people who try to relate to her by using a Korean drama or some Korean expressions they learned through the drama. Mi Ja said that some Japanese people want to distinguish between Zainichi Koreans based on whether they self-identify as Zainichi
Chosenjin, associated with North Korea or Zainichi Kankokujin, associated with South Korea because there is a gap between the representation of North and South Korea. Thus, the fact that the two Koreas are perceived so differently by the Japanese influences the way the Zainichi Koreans are perceived as well.

**Gender Roles and Identity**

All participants grew up being taught the cultural concept that “women should respect men,” or “men are superior to women”—dansonjohi (男尊女卑) in Japanese. Soon Ja said, “Koreans are son, son, son.” She said men have been treated as privileged that much. Soon Ja said growing up, she used to say girls are not daughters (children). I asked her, “Then girls were what?” She said, “Girls were kept for birth canal,” and were kept to work while boys were worshiped. Even so, Soon Ja said she has passed on the idea and actually thinks and does things that way as a mother:

Naturally, I have kept thinking, “Oh, this is for [my son], and this is for [my daughter], it should be okay if hers were less than his.” [laughter] … Now my daughter is more considerate and devoted, but…still, I think about my son first…if something happens.

Soon Ja explained that this idea is the custom or tradition passed down from ancestors just like the blood. She shared the story about her son having his son after he had two daughters when he thought he could finally succeed in preserving and passing the family name from the past generation to the next. The family would cease to exist without male heir because only men can perform the actual ancestral ceremony, jesa. She said that her son has received the idea that boys are more valuable than girls from her. Soon Ja said that she wished she were a boy growing up, looking at how her parents raised her
brothers. She said that she used to think that if she were a boy, she could have done what
she wanted to do:

I was raised by being oppressed…[My parents would say,] I should give
up because I was a girl… I asked them why only boys, my brothers could
get what they wanted. They said boys have the future and they are family’s
guardian angels, so they need to be treated well, while girls will leave
when they marry.

As a wife of the first son of the family, Soon Ja said that she has kept the traditions and
customs. She said she has also taught her son’s wife who is Japanese about them. One
thing she taught her daughter-in-law, Soon Ja said, was to keep the first scoop of rice for
the husband, which she has done throughout her marriage. Soon Ja said that she wanted
to keep the traditions, especially jesa even though it is “heck of work.” Therefore, she
thinks that it is her job to persuade her daughter-in-law to like the custom and want to
keep it. I asked her if the persuasion is working, and she said that when they had jesa last
time and ate the special food, her daughter-in-law said “Mother, if we don’t prepare fully
enough, we won’t be able to eat this food. So we should keep doing this.” Soon Ja said
she was glad to hear that. If she prepared the jesa food fully without skipping anything,
her daughter-in-law would learn by watching her.

As Soon Ja described, jesa is one of the important cultural practices which many
Korean families in Japan still retain. Growing up as a Zainichi Korean woman, Mi Ja felt
it gave her a special feeling:

[Jesa was] something I could not share with other [Japanese] friends, but
only among Zainichi folks. It was special—movements or activities such
as bowing, and food—so I felt the special connection. In a different
culture, in different society, we did different things. It was a different
world I could share with my family and relatives. So I felt special.
Mi Ja also said, “I thought the men who were doing keunjeł [ 큰절: in Japanese pronunciation, kunchol, a big formal bow to the ancestors] were cool”…but later, she realized, “why did all the men just sit down and wait [for women preparing the food]?"

She remembers she was impressed one time when a Buddhist priest, who was Zainichi Korean, visited for her grandmother’s funeral and said when they have jesa ceremony, everyone should participate including the preparing the food because it is about appreciating their ancestors. After marrying a Christian husband from South Korea and converting to Christianity, Mi Ja said she wonders more about the concept of jesa although respecting the ancestors and elders is good and she wants to maintain the family gathering at jesa.

Hong Ja said although the rules of jesa, which say that only men can perform the ceremony are slowly changing, her family and her father are traditional, and thus are not going to change the rules which have been kept for generations, while she thinks that there shouldn’t be the difference of importance between men and women. Hong Ja also said that her father also thought that men should work outside and women should stay home. She rebelled about that idea when she was a student and said to her father that women should be treated equally.

In contrast to Mi Ja and Hong Ja, Yu Ja said that she did not think the rules of jesa should be changed. Significantly, although Yu Ja works at the organization where many Zainichi Koreans work and sometimes thinks that she is not valued equally compared to Zainichi Korean male workers, she said she has not felt a need for change. Rather she has given up to some extent and accepted the situation about the gender issue because her
focus has been more on Korean ethnic issues. Among my participants, Yu Ja has been the most active around Zainichi Korean issues and has been in the position which may have allowed her to advocate for Zainichi Korean women’s situation, but she has had to give that up in order to advocate Zainichi Korean situation in general. (It is ironic that Zainichi Korean women continue to be invisible even in their own communities.)

Soon Ja talked about the importance of having a son in the family to maintain the family name, while Mi Ja, growing up as the eldest daughter of three, in an “only daughters” household among other relatives, said she had felt pressure consciously or unconsciously:

I think both of my parents have had a hard time because they have only daughters and relatives would see us as a family without a boy. …I did not want to be seen like that. I realized that I felt that way later, but I tried so hard not to be seen that because I am a woman, I cannot do things…[“Such as,” I asked] such as, because women don’t have power to protect the family, women are unreliable, [or] not smart, in a sense. Men will work and support [the family] not only financially but also mentally. …Zainichi Korean women have lived like that…they have lived relying on her husbands. They have followed what their husbands say, whether it is good or not….That’s why my relatives looked at my family with pity. I really didn’t like that, as an eldest daughter. I did not want them to think my family will end because we are not good enough.

Mi Ja thinks because her parents knew that (or not), they let her and her sisters do anything they wanted instead of telling them not to do things because they were women. Mi Ja said, “I wanted to give [my relatives] second thoughts. I would not let them say we cannot do things because we are an all daughter family.” Therefore, Mi Ja said that studying abroad, going to the United States, entering a university and even a graduate school was motivated by a “negative force” to show her relatives, “See, I can do this.” After she got married, Mi Ja said she could let these pressures go. She used to think
marriage would make her life narrow looking at women around her, women who quit their jobs or gave up what they wanted to do. Now she has changed her thoughts about being a woman. Mi Ja said she began to think that she doesn’t have to show what she can do anymore:

I could have worked in the United States getting [working permit]. I could have enjoyed working there… Even though men and women [should be] equal, but I think men and women have different roles…and I am glad to have the role as a woman. What I could do as a woman, I thought, was to support my husband. If I work, generally, it would be seen productive… [However] I was using my strength, so I would be satisfied with that.

Mi Ja said by marriage she could liberate herself from the idea that because she and her family were not considered good enough, she had to show her strength, which she had been trying to do since she was in elementary school. Mi Ja said that she did not want her relatives to think she was going to get married just after her parents had given her so much. However, after she got married, she began to less sensitive about what others think. Being a housewife might be seen as unproductive or limiting her future or giving up what she wants to do; however, she feels she doesn’t have to think that way now, which made her free from the pressure. (In the conventional way, though, she has shown her relatives that she was good enough by marring a Korean man from South Korea, which the Zainichi Koreans look up to.) Mi Ja said she might work in the future, but first she is going to learn Korean more to become fluent enough to work in South Korea.

Mi Ja said she rather thinks that Zainichi Korean men are sometimes more rigid about career and marriage than women because they are raised by being told to support the family. Mi Ja talked about her male cousins who had to come back home to help their family business and find Zainichi Korean wives even though they had graduated from
universities and lived far away from their parents (one of them was dating a Japanese woman). Hong Ja also said that it is men who are going to maintain the family. She said, “Men’s family name is going to remain. If all men marry Japanese women, the family will end. So, I think men are feeling responsible more strongly than I do.” On the other hand, Yu Ja did not express this sympathy with Zainichi Korean men. Her older brother got married to a Zainichi Korean woman, but he lives away from his parents and her parents are not sure when he is coming back although they built a house for him near their place. Therefore, Yu Ja rather sympathized with her parents who, to be honest, want their son to come back at least for jesa. Soon Ja also mentioned that how much pressure her younger brother had to endure after their oldest brother died when she was in fifth grade. Soon Ja said she could not express how sad their parents were; “We were not children. We were not fed for about one month.” Soon Ja said because her younger brother had not been raised as the successor of the family, it was such a burden for him when he was in charge as an adult. Soon Ja said, “That is how much important men [or oldest sons] are.”

**Expectation and Prospect for the Future Generations**

As a daughter, mother, or grandmother, as a second generation, or a third generation, each woman had her thoughts and expectations about the past and future generations. Mi Ja said she has inherited Zainichi Korean women’s bright and cheerful character. On her wedding day, one of her aunts approached to her and said, “Marriage is about patience.” Mi Ja thought that was something that the aunt has learned through her marriage to survive as a Zainichi Korean woman. Not only her grandmother and mother,
but also other aunts have this strong spirit, especially first and second generation women who had to support their husbands, often drunk at home, in a strange country. Mi Ja said that these Zainichi Korean women all have the toughness, patience, and belief that things will be better sooner or later and they have passed it to her.

Soon Ja also said that her mother’s toughness and patience have been passed on to her. Soon Ja said she might be supportive of men, but sometimes her toughness is too strong. Soon Ja also said she has learned cooking and its rhythm from her mother and she wants to pass it to her daughter and daughter-in-law:

As well as music, the blood tells me [how to cook]…and I like that…It has rhythm, yeah, with the rhythm, the cooking make shape and form, I do this first, then I do that next, and then I do this, there is the way of my own.

Yu Ja and Hong Ja said that they have been influenced by their fathers more than their mothers. Yu Ja said that her father is a very thoughtful and hard-working person and she thinks she got that from her father. At the same time, Yu Ja thinks her mother raised her very freely and always welcomed her friends to her house and took care of them very well. Hong Ja said her father emphasized the importance of family and also the importance of respecting Korean culture. She thinks parents are influential and should be so to children. Therefore, if parents are not interested in maintaining the culture, the child would not think that would be important. Hong Ja respects her mother who always supported family and took care of other mothers in her neighborhood. Neither Yu Ja nor Hong Ja directly mentioned their mothers’ influence, but in regard to what they do for their job, supporting Zainichi Korean students and working as a nursery school teacher, it can be said that they have received their generosity from their mothers.
Soon Ja, a second generation who experienced bullying because of her ethnicity and was hesitant to write her nationality on her resume, said that she doesn’t want the future generation to experience discrimination; she said, “I want everyone to treat each other with one [equal] feeling. This can be said only by someone who was bullied, living in a foreign country.” Soon Ja doesn’t expect too much for the next generation which will become more diverse and mixed as it will be global. Soon Ja said that she only hopes the next generation live well:

I think it will be okay as long as they live ordinary lives no matter where they live. I’d be satisfied as long as they don’t forget that they are Korean, and as long as they don’t say they are Japanese… I don’t want them to say, “Which was I?” but I want them to say clearly “I was Korean,” and how and what happened to them and as a result [it] changed.

In terms of remembering who they are, Hong Ja also said she wants the future generation to like both Japan and Korea, but not to like Japan more than Korea:

I want them to like Korea more…because I do too. I don’t want them to like Japan more. I do want them to like both, but I want them to like Korea a little bit more [than Japan]… It doesn’t mean I want them to like Korea 100% and Japan 0%, but 50-50 is not good, well, it’s okay…But [Korea] shouldn’t be lower than Japan. At that point, they would become Japanese. Yeah, it shouldn’t be lower than Japan. Why? Because they are Korean.

Hong Ja said that even if they naturalize or marry Japanese, she wants the future generation to respect and maintain the Korean culture and not to “throw away” the culture.

In order to maintain the culture, Yu Ja said that she wants to create an environment in which the future generation can learn the culture when they are interested, and in which they can live as who they are; that is not offered enough now. Yu Ja also
pointed out that it is Japanese education’s responsibility to support Zainichi Korean students. Additionally, Yu Ja talked about her concerns that the third generation and younger Zainichi Koreans do not recognize the base which first and second generation have built or the importance of having a collective identity as a group to develop their situation more:

The first generation had a hard time and told the second generation not to show “the smell of Chosenjin [Korean]” in order to avoid discrimination. So, they told the second generation to become doctors or lawyers…[and] acquire skills even if they had to pretend to be Japanese…The discrimination [against Koreans] has eased…now, the second generation…became afford to send their children to college or ethnic Korean school which they didn’t receive…Third generation or forth generation are in the situation where they don’t realize discrimination although there is systematic discrimination…They are not going to be discriminated against even if they use Korean names…[T]hey take it for granted and forget that they have the base which the older generation has built. They have become individualists, while the second generation worked as a group to gain their rights of the Zainichi people.

Yu Ja said that the third and younger generations now can be Japanese if they pretend to be so, while the first and second generation had the “pain and grief…under their mind, so, no matter how much they pretend to be Japanese, sadly or not…at the end of the day, their blood tells that they are Korean.” Moreover, Yu Ja pointed out that the Zainichi Koreans as a group or community, have lost the ability and the organization to envision the future collectively because of their individualism. Many third generation do not associate with the organizations anymore because they are doubtful about them. Therefore, Yu Ja said she feels a vague fear that if they do not have the future vision, what they want to become and how, the Zainichi Korean will not exist in the future. Yu Ja worries that no one or very few people realize or take action about that. At the same time,
Yu Ja said she wants to end the division of the community, which has been divided and conflicted, which is not worthwhile. Yu Ja’s ideas about the Zainichi Korean community especially stand out as she thinks of Zainichi Korean identity (as a group) collectively because she interacts with younger generations who seem not to know the importance of recognizing their ethnic identity and the historical background.

Yu Ja said the Japanese also need to recognize their responsibility how they can support Zainichi Koreans and other minority groups including newly coming immigrants. Moreover, Yu Ja talked about the importance of realizing their responsibility for the Japanese:

[The future generation of the Japanese and Korean], as people who share common history with each other, they need to accept the [history] together …with that recognition, they should talk what they are going to do. I don’t think they should keep the idea of Japanese as victimizers and the Korean or [other] Asians as the victims. However, it is important to know the facts of what happened and when they do that, there is some responsibilities about what the Japanese nation and Japanese ethnics did for the Japanese individuals. More importantly, they have a responsibility not to repeat that again.

Yu Ja said that she would like to support them in any ways she can as old saying goes, “If you have money, give the money, if you have knowledge, give the knowledge,” so that more Zainichi Korean children can be glad about being born as Zainichi Koreans as she is and fewer people will not have to suffer because of the division of the community.

Mi Ja hopes the younger generation will live more freely and not to be bound by the ideas which limited the older generation’s lives. She said it does not mean that they should live without caring about their ethnicity or ethnic culture; rather she wants them to see their ethnic culture as an advantage. Mi Ja also wants future generations to be more
flexible to be able to change:

Now [the Zainichi Koreans] have created “Zainichi” culture. It was originally Korean culture when the first generation arrived…[but] culture changes as time changes…No culture stops changing. So, Zainichi culture is changing, and how it has been changing is by taking the good parts; it develops by going forward, not backward…I want the future generation to be flexible so that they can take the good parts and change it positively…Now I live in Korea, but Zainichi Koreans in Japan sometimes are not flexible enough. Before, people thought they were going back to Korea, but they are going to live in Japan… Before, people were looking back, where they came from…[or] what they have been done [by the Japanese]. But from now on, they should look forward, including culture and ethnicity…I want them to live like that.

Lastly, Hong Ja, who said she wants to give opportunities to her future children to learn the language and cultural background, expects them to have a more global point of view:

I want them to look at not only Korea and Japan, but also more countries in the world. Before, we were looking only at Korea, but now we can look both Japan and Korea. Next, we should look at [things] with broader view point. We should realize that there are so many different people by going various places and looking at a lot of things, and we should realize that we are part [of the world].

What my participants want to pass down to the future generation and what they expect the future generation to become was not only about the culture or cultural practices, but about the recognition of their identity as Zainichi Korean individually and collectively, liberation from what has bound women, and creation of broader future paths.
Japanese American Women in the United States

Name: Japanese Name, English Name

Katherine

All my participants had Japanese names, but pronounced differently, shortened, or the order of first and middle names switched. Two of the three participants, Mrs. T and Katherine were named under Japanese tradition in which parents, usually fathers, give part of their first names to the children, the same Chinese character and the same pronunciation. Significantly, in the case of both Mrs. T and Katherine, they were given different Chinese characters (for different reasons, which will be explained later) but the same pronunciation as their fathers’ names.

On the paternal side of Katherine’s family, there had been a long tradition of giving each child a part of the father’s name, but only Katherine’s father, the youngest of five sons (the other lived in Japan) maintained this tradition. Katherine’s father wanted to share his name with her, but he chose a different Chinese character for aki of Akiko, Katherine’s Japanese name, because she was born on the same day as one of the royal family of Japan. However, her father did give the same Chinese character and the pronunciation to her two younger brothers. Katherine’s parents gave her an English middle name, sounding very British, but not for her younger brothers.

Recently, Katherine had switched the order of her name from Akiko Katherine Fujikawa to Katherine Akiko Fujikawa because her name and her younger brothers’ were written similarly in English. This similarity has caused many government and credit card bureaus to mix up their information or credit card history. Even though Katherine used her Japanese name in school in the United States and still uses it with her mother and
relatives in Japan because “they feel closer,” she has been using her English name professionally for the last twenty years. When she studied abroad in Japan, she needed to earn extra money because of the high cost of living. Katherine tried to find a job teaching English, but found it difficult with her Japanese name:

[W]hat I discovered when I was teaching English was that, sometimes some people would question, like when I go to interviews…they would say to me…“Are you really American?” And I said, “Yes, I am.” And they would say, “How come your name is Akiko?” I said, “Well, I’m Japanese American.” And then after that, I thought, okay, I need to market myself differently, so that’s when I started to use Katherine professionally…I mean, I like Akiko, but as I said professionally…one has to be conscious of how one is perceived. And if I am presenting myself as an American to Japanese people, then, in some respect, it’s better to use Katherine.

Katherine had to start using her English name to demonstrate her authenticity as an American to Japanese employers. She also found out that when she worked for lawyers as an administrative assistant in the United States, her recruiter told her “definitely” to use Katherine because it sounds “little bit more [familiar], a little bit better.” Katherine also said some lawyers who have a stereotypical view of Asian women would not take her seriously when she used her Japanese name, Akiko.

As a bilingual Japanese American woman, Katherine had to find a balance when she worked for a Japanese company which had a branch in the San Francisco Bay Area and purchased products from American suppliers. Katherine was the coordinator between the two sides, therefore, she decided to use her English name:

[M]y client would be some young Japanese man in his twenties. And sometimes…I had to be frank with him. And, on the other hand, I had to deal with the producer of the products in [the United States]…Apparently there had been some misunderstandings because of the differences in the culture. And there was distrust. So, based on various [facts]…I definitely
thought in the situation, even with Japanese corporation…I thought it would be better for me to use Kate. In that way, with the producer of the product in [the Untitled States], they would see me as an American and they would trust me and they wouldn’t see me as an enemy…And, with Japan, on the other hand, I really thought it was important for me to use my American name because I wanted them to know that I’m not Japanese. I’m not a Japanese woman who’s going to be serving [them] tea. I’m not a Japanese woman who is just going to say yes, yes, yes. That I am going to have to make decisions for you, representing you, you are my client…of course I was very polite. But I thought it was still important for them to have an image that I’m an American woman. And they cannot treat me the way they treat Japanese women.

She felt using her English name allowed her to establish authority and give the Japanese men at the company “a full warning.” She knew that if she had used her Japanese name, she would have risked being treated as subservient, which could have affected the business.

Katherine chose to use her English name with Japanese Americans especially the Nisei, the second generation and the Sansei, third generation, who experienced the internment camps. One of her high school teachers, a Japanese American, born in an internment camp, told Katherine that after he and his family were released, his mother told him never to speak a word of Japanese. The teacher never used his Japanese name, but only his English name, which Katherine said was true of many other Japanese Americans who had been interned:

There [were] a lot of…Issei [first generation] and the second generation who came out of the camp and then they tried to erase their identity, Japanese American identity as much as possible because of the whole experience. There is that kind of stigma, you know. Japanese Americans, particularly second or third generation preferred to use English sounding names. Or if they use their Japanese names…they turn it into a nickname. For example… somebody’s name is Kazuhiko. Well, instead of, publicly, legally it might be Kazuhiko, but he’ll shorten it and use Kaz…which is a little bit more acceptable among Japanese Americans… So, in that way,
they can still keep their Japanese names, but they’ve Americanized [them].

Additionally, Katherine said that the internment camp experience “really did affect [Japanese Americans] in terms of how they viewed their identity and how they felt they were perceived.” However, immigrants who arrived after World War II felt differently because they did not experience the internment camp. Katherine felt that because her family represents post World War II immigration, with *kibei* (returnee) mother and first generation father, her parents did not have a problem giving her a Japanese name and American middle name, even though her mother had experienced internment camp.

Katherine was once told by a Japanese American educator that she might want to consider using her American name. She said that it was not a malicious remark, although there are some Japanese Americans who would say “How come you are not using your American name?” Katherine explained that what this person was really saying was that it would be more to her advantage to use her English name, especially if she wanted to be active in the Japanese American community. Katherine said using her Japanese name could also have political implications:

*[T]here’s that whole thing with Japanese Americans whether or my age group or above, most of them probably would take me more seriously or feel more kinship with me if I used Kate…sounds more friendly to them, whereas if I use Akiko with them, automatically, even before I say anything about my background, they are going to assume that I’m from Japan…For people in the twenties, for Japanese Americans, who [have] positive feelings about Japanese society and culture, and Japan as a country, doesn’t mean anything to them, you know [would be different]. It’s a nice name and they want to know more about me, but for [people] who [are] Japanese American and were told things about the Japanese internment experience, and how Japanese…were discriminated against because of their Japanese heritage, because of their Japanese names, they’re going to have that …negative connotation about having a Japanese name. So, there’s definitely difference with the generations.*
Katherine’s name was given to her by her parents although she has changed the order of it. Sometimes other ethnic Americans say to her “How come you are using your English name?... What’s your real name?” By using her English name, she is not “whitewashing” her identity; however, at the same time, she feels sorry for people who feel obligated to take English names when they naturalize and also for her students who feel obligated to use English names in order to fit in American school.

Mrs. T

Mrs. T’s father, who grew up in Japan, had an unusual name. It was so unusual that his teacher misread it. When her father corrected his teacher, he “got red with anger and said, ‘How dare you talk back to your teacher!’...[My father] felt very humiliated and...unprotected.” After Mrs. T was born, her father wanted to share his name with her but he did not want to use the same Chinese character for Yasu of Yasuye, Mrs. T’s Japanese name, because of his bad experience in school. Therefore, her father picked a different Chinese character which would never be misread. However, she said that the English spelling of her Japanese name is confusing:

Yasuye, should be Yasue. But...in my birth certificate, it is spelled Yasuye [in English]... [The midwife] was from Kyushu, and she went to the City Hall [to register my name and] she spelled my name with the Y...Y-A-S-U-Y-E, which is Kyushu pronunciation ...[My mother] made me a little chanchankō [ちゃんちゃんこ: cardigan] one time...and with that design pronounced like my own name.

Ironically, even though her father gave her a less confusing Chinese character, her name was often mispronounced because of the English spelling. Therefore, her teacher could not pronounce her name and when she saw it, “she would say Ya-s....”
Motoko

Motoko did not share part of her father’s name; however, she later discovered that she did share a name with her father’s sister. She guessed that she was probably named after her aunt. Motoko talked about how her name had been shortened, by others:

[Over here] they can’t pronounce Motoko… They say Mo-to-ko… First, they started to calling me, Mo-to. And then later on, as I got older, [my name] just got shorter and shorter. So, it ended up that everybody calls me Mo. So, that’s how it is.

Motoko even said that growing up, her uncle changed her and her sister’s name, “He called [my sister] Amy and he called me Alison…but, I went back to Motoko… My father always kept Motoko, so, I always kept that.” Motoko said when she introduces herself or writes her name, she always says or writes her name, Motoko, not the shortened Mo.

Contrary to Katherine’s observation of and experience with the use of Japanese names by Nisei, the second generation, both Nisei participants used their Japanese names and did not express any distress. I did not ask Motoko and Mrs. T whether or not they gave their children Japanese names. They did not mention that using Japanese names had affected their construction of identity in a negative way; however, this does not negate Katherine’s experience of meeting Japanese Americans who have only English first names. It is significant to note that Motoko and Mrs. T, the second generation, have used their Japanese names in the United States while Katherine, third generation only began to use her English name in Japan (and was suggested to use her English name by a second generation Japanese American man).
Growing up as Japanese American in American Schools and Society

School Experiences

Of the three participants, only Katherine had lived in Japantown and only until she was seven years old. However, all three of them grew up in San Francisco, but not in Japantown where many Japanese Americans lived during the 1920s, 1940s, and 1970s. Growing up, Mrs. T experienced anti-Japanese sentiment in elementary school, in the 1920s. She did not have “hakujin [白人: white] playmates because [of] anti-Jap campaign.” Her friends were Japanese Americans who went to the same Japanese after school program. However, in high school, when she was a reporter for the school newspaper, she made friends with white students, including the student body president, the judge of the student court, and other students who worked on the newspaper. Mrs. T did not associate with Japanese American students who lived in Japantown. The students of the “Japantown group” thought she was Chinese. Lunch time was a social time and “it was normal practice to discriminate against Asian[s], and they [Japanese Americans] did not include me, the Chinese girls included me.” Later, Mrs. T had a really hard time finding student housing when she entered a university, “It was almost impossible to find somebody to rent to a non-white student.” As a result, many Japanese American students had to commute to the school or work as servants or babysitters in a “surety house” in which the owner allowed them to live in exchange for work. However, Mrs. T was an exception, accepted at a dorm which favored upperclassmen and graduate students. After she entered a university, she made friends with more Japanese American students because she joined in the Japanese Student club:

[E]verybody was a stranger to each other. So, I had just as much chance as
anybody else because somebody came from Stockton, Sacramento, Fresno, Los Angeles, Seattle, and we don’t know each other. But we were all Nisei. And we all became friends. We all had the same starting point. And a lot of those girls from high school from Japantown, they never went to college…Only a few went to college from Japantown, the children that I met in Japanese language school, exchange *osenbei* [お煎餅: rice cracker] with my potato chips.

Motoko said there were only two other Asian families in the area where she lived, whose children were older than her. Her closest friends were mostly Italians or Spanish. When Motoko and her sister decided to start going to Buddhist church, she had contact with the Japanese Americans a little bit more. When I asked her how she liked being with Italian friends, Motoko said it never bothered her as a child. Moreover, it was rather hard when she went to a Buddhist church at first, “to feel comfortable among the Japanese because they are kind of more reserved,” Motoko added, “but it was nothing major…you fit in after a while.”

Motoko and her Chinese American husband met at a dance party which was thrown by a Japanese club when she was in high school. Before she met him, Motoko never hung around with any Chinese people and rarely went to Chinatown “because it used to be kind of scary.” However, after she met him, she got to know Chinese culture and learned that “the Chinese are more open compared to Japanese,” and then she felt comfortable in Chinatown and felt it was the “safest place in the city.”

Until she was seven years old, Katherine’s family lived in Japantown when the redevelopment of Western Addition in the early 1970s caused them and other residents, Japanese and African American to move to other neighborhoods. Later, she learned that the entire community was “betrayed” by political and business interests. When she was living in Japantown, she used to play with a neighborhood boy who was African
American. The child used to came over to her house and her mother taught Katherine and him a song. Katherine said her parents did not treat the African American family differently:

[U]nfortunately…many Japanese or Japanese Americans…do have prejudicial attitudes towards African Americans, but my family would always praise that family. There was never any discussion about their race being a factor and how they are as people. So…I grew up with the sense that just because someone [is] of the same ethnic background as me [it does] not mean that they are going to have the same values, and [does] not mean that there are going to be people of good character.

Katherine said that she and her brothers grew up with a strong sense of the Japanese heritage and culture, and with a “strong sense of pride,” which was not typical for Japanese Americans for her age group or Japanese immigrants who were much more westernized. For example, her father brought her and her brothers kimono and *hakama* (袴: another type of kimono, usually for boys or males). Her father would take family pictures, all in kimono, every year to send Christmas cards to Japan and the family would go to the Japanese consulate’s New Year’s party every year in kimono. Moreover, her parents had *minyo* (民謡: Japanese folk song troop) and her mother was a *shamisen* (三味線: Japanese classical three-string guitar) teacher. Katherine said they were fortunate to have opportunities to learn Japanese classical arts and doing things related to Japanese cultural rituals, but it was not always pleasant:

There were times when [I and my brothers] did not enjoy it, we were forced to participate, because it was my parents’ *minyo* troop. We were forced to learn some of these dances and participate in the Japanese American community’s cherry blossom parade. Sometimes there wasn’t, you know, was not convenient for us. We wanted to do something else.
Katherine and her brothers also went to Japanese School (after school program) everyday. She said she didn’t have much time to play, but she enjoyed reading about Murasaki Shikibu (Lady Murasaki), the first Japanese female novelist in the 10th century. Growing up, she related to the novelist who influenced her greatly because of her background. Therefore, Katherine said that Murasaki Shikibu became a role model, “what women can be.” Significantly, she exceeded her brother’s academic accomplishment (just as Katherine), and later wrote the classic novel, *the Tail of Genji*.

When Katherine was in middle school, it was hard for her to relate to the other Japanese American students who were “typically true third generation Americans” and also it was hard for them to relate to her, because their Nisei parents did not want to have anything to do with the Japanese culture. The other third generation Japanese American students did associate with each other, but she felt they were not proud of their heritage or culture. Therefore, her ability to speak Japanese and appreciate Japanese classical art did not connect her to other Japanese American students. For Katherine, the only people she could relate to were those whose parents came from Japan after World War II. One of the families closest to her family was that of a war bride and a Caucasian American whose children were half Japanese half American, “I think they definitely experienced discrimination from American society in general but also among the Japanese American community, but for me and my brothers, that wasn’t an issue.”

*Internment Camp Experiences*

Katherine’s mother was interned at Tule Lake; however, Katherine knew only a little bit about her mother’s experience. Even though Katherine talked about her
experiences with the third generation Japanese Americans whose parents were interned during WWII, she did not talk much about her mother’s experience. However, the fact that her mother was “wrongfully interned” influenced her identity as she grew up and became a teacher.

For Motoko, the internment experience did not have a big impact because she was about four years old when she and her family were interned at Topaz, Utah. For the same reason, her schooling was not disrupted, although “the only way is maybe, not getting the right education, probably I would have had.” Motoko further explained, “because when you [were] in [internment] camp, it’s just volunteer, you know, people from camp who probably had the education, or the older…it’s not structured school system like you would have had…if you weren’t interned.” When I asked about the experience at the internment camp as a four year old, starting kindergarten, she told me about what she used to do with her friends:

I remember starting kindergarten…I remember going to school a little bit. And I remember, I hate milk to this day, I hate milk. [laughter] Because we had to drink this…goat’s milk, you know…the teacher forced us to drink it…Other than that, I remember playing. I remember we would go up to the guard towers…when guards [weren’t] there…I remember the snow fights we used to have…I remember the sand storms that used to come…we would be standing there watching, and you could see coming. You know, the sand, because the wind is blowing, then, just before it hits us, we would all run into our houses…I remember stealing carrots…there’s one big building where everybody eats. And then behind they had all the supplies, you know, like, food and stuff.

Motoko said she was too young “to really know the hardship that everybody was going through.” Therefore, internment camp was “just another place we lived.” Motoko also described what adults used to do in the internment camp:
My father used to go out into the mountains, and would gather shells and look for fossils. He found some fossils out there—like dinosaur teeth or something. Um, and he used to go up into the mountains and get all these shells, like, little tiny shells. And he would bring it back to camp. A lot of the men used to go out. And they would bring it back in the camp and the ladies would sit around and made pins out of the shells. They used to glue them on to a little, may be board, and then paint them, used nail polish. So they used to make pins and stuff like that, just for recreation, I guess, something to do. [One lady] used to make all these shells and stuff, and she had this nail polish... And I remember I got into it one time... I painted my nails. And, oh, she got so mad at me. Because they want the polish, you know, to make the pins, not for your nails. I remember her getting really mad at me. [laughter]

Motoko remembered one man getting shot and killed because he got near the fence. He was told not to get close to the fence, but Motoko guessed he didn’t understand that. Motoko said not too many things like that happened but once in a while, “accidents” happened. Another thing Motoko remembers is that they were told to turn the lights off but her grandfather did not turn them off. Then the guards came banging on the door to tell them turn them off. They turned them off and sat there quietly until the guards went away. It seemed these experiences were not necessarily negative, she explained, “I guess when you are little, you don’t realize what’s happening. So, you don’t think much of it.” However, she spent a crucial three years, from four to seven, in an internment camp, and that is part her memory of childhood.

After Motoko and her family got out of the internment camp, they lived in a predominantly white area of San Francisco. Motoko had a close white friend, but sometimes she experienced discrimination or encountered “prejudiced people”:

When we came out from war, and being that... I lived in an area where [were] all Caucasians, I knew I was different. And, you got into a little bit prejudice here and there. But it’s never hurt me so much that it affects me.
Most of my friends...were very good to me. They [were] not ashamed to invite me into their homes. Their parents were always good to me...I had a Caucasian girl that became really friendly with me, but then there was others that come by, and they first [saw] me and they [got] scared, thinking, “oh!...she is the enemy!” you know, things like that. But, that was just, just right after the war...And of course, there are times when you run into prejudiced people. But, I don’t, I don’t let it bother me. I just rip upon that person as being very narrow-minded and naïve. Because basically on the whole, I think...most people that I run into and I meet have been good.

Mrs. T experienced the internment as an adult. As mentioned above, she experienced discrimination before WWII and was old enough to know that it was unfair and unjust. She said there was “extremely strong prejudice against the ‘Orientals,’” meaning the Chinese and Japanese, blaming them for many things that people were suffering from unemployment and depression, and loss of income. The word Jap was used in the headlines all the time in newspapers as the anti-Japanese sentiment grew in the 1930s. And then, Mrs. T said, “we had a great tragedy, Pearl Harbor,” which she still remembered very clearly and told me about what happened:

That was December 7th, and it was Sunday. San Francisco was enjoying sunshine, good weather... [M]y husband and I...intended to go for a ride that day out of the city for a short distance, and enjoyed the green scenery of the country side. So, we went to a...neighborhood gasoline station to buy a tank-full of gas, in order to picnic that afternoon. And we were very friendly with the manager of the gas station. So, whenever we went, he would come bouncing out and greet us by name, and chat a little while the gas was...filling up our tank. But that morning, we parked at the pumps, but...he remained in the glass house, the office, and, his back was turned against us. And he was facing the wall, where there was a wall telephone...he was engaged in conversation and did not turn around even to look at us...And, he finally hung up, and he turned around very slowly and he walked toward our car, in very slow measured steps, and with a serious face, no usual smile ...he said, “That was my wife on the telephone. And she was telling me that the radio is announcing Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese and our two countries are now at war.” And, my husband and I were both speechless and shocked. But my husband did say, “Oh, my
God. Japan has committed national suicide.”

Mrs. T and her husband cancelled the picnic and went back to their home located near her father, who was a widower at the time. They discussed what would happen to the Japanese and Japanese citizens in the United States. They wondered if they were going to be separated from her father and not only that, they didn’t have any idea what was going to happen:

[W]e were, very, very much concerned about what was going to happen to our business, about our future, about our property, about our safety…I think that was foremost in the minds of all of us, Japanese Americans on that day. [It] was unforgettable trauma in our lives.

After the attack of Pearl Harbor, “every day was torture” for Mrs. T and her family because they didn’t know what was going to happen to the Japanese living in the United States. The radio broadcast was very anti-Japanese; sidewalk reporters asked people prejudiced questions about the Japanese living in the United States, such as “Are they spies? Are they enemies? Are they dangerous?” Mrs. T said, “If [people] try to say something fair, the sidewalk reporter would shut them up or put in words to change their mind. And it was very, very frustrating to stay home and hear that.” Despite the contribution to society and the economy by Japanese immigrants including specialists, farmers, small business owners such as laundry, they were considered enemies:

Japanese doctors and special famous surgeons, innocent babies, six weeks old, just born, everybody was an enemy. Why? Little baby, couldn’t even walk, couldn’t even talk, considered enemy because of the ancestors. So, even one drop of Japanese blood, one grandparent of Japanese blood, they would be required to be locked up.
The Japanese immigrants and Japanese American citizens living in San Francisco were all bussed over to Tanforan Assembly Center, which used to be a horse race track, “terrible place to put people.” It consisted of elders, youngsters, children, and babies.

According to Mrs. T, the military was not ready to take care of a number of people:

There’s no special food or medication. The military was not ready to take care of women and children and babies…[people] who had diabetes and young girls who were maturing or middle aged women who were facing menopause, people with arthritis or rheumatism or heart disease, nothing. The military was not prepared to take care of such a diversified, vertical slice of people. And among the Japanese Americans, there were scholars and doctors and laborers and farmers and gardeners and janitors and grocery men and fishermen, anything you could think of…And they all got together and discussed what kind of skills were necessary to help each other and groups were organized and volunteers all stepped forward to keep everybody occupy. And also, first of all, to do what was necessary and set up imitation false community overnight, suddenly, by themselves without any help because the authorities were not experienced. You know, this never happened before in history. And food preferences of special race, racial background, the American military didn’t know what to do or what we needed or what we wanted…And three generations have to be sleep together in a small space…And then to do it where horses were living. Bathing facilities and toilet facilities [were] very, very bad.

Mrs. T also told me about a woman who went into labor in the horse barn. The internees took the barn door off its hinges and covered it with newspaper so she could deliver her baby in as close to a sterile environment as possible.

Mrs. T talked about her experience after WWII but she said the American interviewers either did not believe her or were too embarrassed:

When they would ask us about it, we would tell them, nobody would believe that it was so bad. So, no interview ever mentioned these things. That part of the tape was all taken and thrown away because even the people…who conducted the interview [were] so embarrassed and unbelieving at the horrible situation. The circumstances were so miserable it’s the beyond belief. What would you do with thousands and thousands
of girls in one place, who needed supplies every month? And there’s only horse stove? That’s only one problem. There [were] hundreds of problems...The food didn’t reach us. So we would have one inch pieces of string beans, maybe three or four pieces. They served with a teaspoon because the food never caught up…and not enough food was shipped to feed everybody. So, you [stood] in line about one block long to get your lunch. You had to stand so long and you were so hungry and you [would] just faint. So people were falling down in the line. Me too, I used to faint. So, it’s hard to believe what happened. You can’t make up these stories. We lived all this misery. But the Americans who interviewed us, it embarrassed them so much that they had to throw it away.

Mrs. T and Motoko’s family were both interned at Topaz. The military wanted them to be “self-sufficient” as much as possible and grow their own vegetables at Topaz, but their plan was not realistic:

But how long do you have to wait without eating after you plant the seeds? You have to get the seeds, you have to plant it, take care of them until they’re eatable…And who’s going to grow them enough to feed 8,000 people?

Mrs. T said that everybody helped each other, tried their best, and tried to get along. At Topaz, based on her previous experience, Mrs. T had two jobs, one as the English accent correction teacher for adult education and the other as the woman’s editor of the daily newspaper. Everybody had to work six days a week and nine hours a day, and said, “The government gave $12 and $16 a month. A month…everybody [works] and that’s all the money you got. If you were a doctor, you got $16. That’s professional.” When I asked her if it was enough, she shook her head.

Language: Growing Up in a Bilingual Home

Motoko did not learn Japanese formally, while Mrs. T and Katherine learned
Japanese by going to the “Japanese School,” a private after school program which teaches Japanese five days a week. However, all three participants learned Japanese from their parents. Mrs. T and Katherine they grew up only speaking Japanese until they started school. Therefore, Mrs. T remembers that her mother taught her English before she started school. Her mother bought the first reader for the first graders in elementary school of San Francisco, *The Little Red Hen*, at a book store in Japantown and read it to her. Mrs. T repeated exactly what her mother said in English with a strong Japanese accent and eventually memorized the whole book. However, because Mrs. T’s teacher could not understand what she was saying, the teacher took her out of the class and sent her to a speech class. Soon after she was sent to the speech class, Mrs. T learned to speak English and substituted her entire Japanese vocabulary for English in about a month. As mentioned above, for Mrs. T, who did not have close Caucasian friends in elementary school, Japanese School was a place to associate with students with the same background. Mrs. T had a good time in Japanese School, so she didn’t mind going there, “[N]obody goes to Japanese School to study. We just go to play…because in the grammar school…we are minority. So…when we go to the Japanese language school, that is when we really make friends.” The students in Japanese School talked to each other with mixed English and Japanese in the dialects of their parents’ hometowns. Mrs. T’s father sometimes corrected her English pronunciation learned from friends who spoke Japanese at home as she did. When her father came to the United States, he could speak English but nobody understood him because the English he learned in Japan was “inadequate.” Therefore, he studied English at a neighborhood church in San Francisco.

Mrs. T continued to learn Japanese in university and she still reads Japanese
papers. Although she is “far from being able to converse entirely Japanese,” she finds that she is able to express herself in Japanese after two days when she goes to Japan. Mrs. T wanted her children to be bilingual, so she tried to speak Japanese to her children and they spoke only Japanese until they were two or three years old. However, Mrs. T said, “it took only two weeks for them in English speaking environment of the nursery school to exchange every word of their vocabulary into English.” Now Mrs. T speaks English exclusively with her children.

Motoko, who spent three years of school in the internment camp where Japanese language education was not allowed, did not receive any formal Japanese language education. However, Motoko learned from her father because he spoke Japanese to her. It was difficult for her to answer him in Japanese, so she answered in English, although she still can understand Japanese generally. During the interviews, she said she is ashamed of not being able to speak Japanese fluently several times. Motoko said that she should know her “own language” and it is good to know Japanese because as she got older she is more involved in Japanese community organizations and Japanese Christian church, “now, we get Japanese speaking people coming to church, and I feel like I can’t talk to them because I don’t know enough, I can’t speak well enough.” To maintain the Christian church, they want more Japanese people to come:

Now we’re losing all the Isseis because they’re getting older and dying off, and, now it’s getting to be our turn…we’re losing a lot of the Niseis…I’m considered old person in the church, whereas, I was the younger one before. So, I think it’s good to know your own culture…I guess my grandkids have showed me…that I should know. And I wish that I had talked to my father more. But my father [didn’t instill] in us a lot of Japanese culture, just by bringing us up, things he’s known.
Motoko knows that because her father had to work to raise her, she grew up without realizing the importance of learning Japanese culture and language and perhaps the internment during the WWII was also a factor. Although when she speaks Japanese, she speaks very naturally and fluently, looking at her granddaughter who speaks more fluently than she does, she realized what she missed growing up. Motoko did not mention much about how the death of her mother when she was only two years old, may have influenced the construction of her identity.

As mentioned already, Katherine and her younger brothers grew up only speaking Japanese until they started school. Katherine’s father sent her and her younger brothers to Japanese school program five days a week from kindergarten to sixth grade. They were also sent to a Japanese summer school, so their summer time was very short. Significantly, Katherine and her brothers were told to speak polite Japanese at home, especially with their father, which was unusual even among Japanese children in Japan, she said. The Japanese School teachers were impressed by their politeness that they would always answer “hai (はい)” instead of “un (うん),” casual way of saying yes when they were asked questions.

Katherine said that being able to speak the language is important part of her cultural identity as a Japanese American, “fortunately, I was born and raised in San Francisco and at the time, there [were] are lot of schools that had Japanese curriculum, but say if today I were born…there aren’t as many opportunities in San Francisco.” Because she believes that it is easier to attain native level pronunciation when children are younger, she is glad that she has acquired fluency in Japanese. When I asked for further explanation, she emphasized the importance of acquiring native level
pronunciation especially because she is Japanese American. Katherine also mentioned how differently Japanese in Japan react to Japanese Americans compared to non-Asians:

[I asked: Is pronunciation important to you?]
Well, I think it is. I’m a language teacher. So…as a language teacher, pronunciation is definitely something that [I] encourage as soon as [possible] to learn…I mean, you’ve learned English. I think you tried to…work on your pronunciation, right?
[I said: Yes…but I think, well, I’m not sure I can say my opinion, but for me, pronunciation is not the most important thing.]
It’s not the most important thing. I do agree with that. But where I think I differ with you on this is that you are Japanese and you’re speaking English. Okay. In my case, I’m a Japanese American, my brother is Japanese American, [we look] Japanese because we are both of Japanese ancestry. And there is a double standard which exists. It’s different if someone who’s Caucasian with blond hair, blue eyes, or Hispanic, or African American…speak Japanese, and their pronunciation is not very good, still Japanese will accept it. But say for me, or my brother, when we speak Japanese, the Japanese people in general are much harsher, much more judgmental. Yes, yes. Yes. That’s something I’ve experienced... So, I’m fortunate in that I studied Japanese…I’m quite fluent. But there [have] been Japanese Americans like third generation, like Sansei, who’ve gone to Japan…because they didn’t know the language, or they really couldn’t attend or certain level of fluency especially with pronunciation, Japanese people treated them differently.

When Katherine took Japanese in junior high and high school, students were not divided into proficiency levels and the classes consisted of mostly third generation Japanese Americans, who were taking it because “they were being forced by their grandparents or their parents.” Therefore, these students gave the Japanese teacher a hard time; they didn’t listen to the teacher, or would talk back and be rude to the teacher. Katherine said, “If I really [wanted] to fit in, I should have pretended not know any Japanese, or I should have rebelled and given the Japanese teacher a hard time.” One of her classmates who used to attend the same Japanese after school program, did rebel against the teacher in order to fit in with his peers. Even though Katherine and the teacher
knew he was proficient in Japanese, he never showed it in class. Katherine, on the other hand, placed more value on learning than her peers. Therefore, she never became really friends with or part of the group of Sansei, third generation students. Katherine again mentioned that was because she did not grow up with the complex of Japanese American identity, wanting to erase her Japanese heritage. The student she became closest to was a daughter of a Nisei father and a Japanese mother from Japan, who accepted her unlike the other Sansei students and had different values from “the true third generation.”

Actually, because her father was strict and only Japanese was spoken at home, Katherine said her immediate younger brother rebelled against her father and refused to speak Japanese when she was in junior high and high school. Therefore, she had to be “an interpreter at the table.” Not only because of her father’s Spartan attitude but also being compared with her all the time especially in Japanese School, her brother stopped speaking Japanese and in the end he lost it. He studied it later again on his own after joining the US Army and realizing he should know the language because his army buddies asked him if he could speak Japanese or knew Japanese culture (Katherine said he still has slight accent although he speaks fluently).

_Concepts of National, Ethnic, and Cultural Identity_

Katherine, Motoko, and Mrs. T all self-identify as American nationals because they were born in the Untied States. There is no legal ambiguity in their status because unlike Japan, all who were born in the United States except children of diplomats are guaranteed citizenship. All three women identified their ethnicity as Japanese, used the
term “Japanese” when they spoke of cultural practices such as New Years or Japanese classical arts. The term “American” was also used more in a cultural context, but the women did not define very clearly what they meant by “American.”

Motoko feels that the United States is “my country. I’m proud of it. I’m glad I live here…The United States has its ups and downs, but I’m still proud of it.” For example, she volunteered to be the flag monitor in elementary school for the flag ceremony in which all students gathered in the yard and said the Pledge of Allegiance every morning. At the same time, Motoko still identifies herself as Japanese in terms of ethnicity:

I have always identified myself as a Japanese. Yeah. I always have. Even as a child. I always, you know, that’s me, what I am, I’ll say I’m Japanese…I don’t think there was a time when I felt like I wasn’t Japanese. Even when I’m around all the Caucasian people, I knew that I was Japanese. I knew that I was different from them…but my thinking…was the same as theirs. But…it was never really a big issue with me.

Motoko is able to integrate both of these into her identity. Yet it is too simple to say that she is ethnically Japanese and culturally American. To do so denies the influence of inherited Japanese culture on the formation of her identity.

Mrs. T said that she enjoyed growing up in the United States because “there are many opportunities here” and continued:

It’s a new country and the past hundred years have been very fast in evolution. Every ten years is great change. Many inventions and many opportunities that [brings] a new world…I think due to new opportunities here, anybody who tries hard enough and [is] very serious and sincere about making [a] great effort can get where they want. And even if you are not ambitious, if you are lucky, you can succeed.

Mrs. T said if she had grown up in Japan, she would have had to be reserved and there are
so many rules of duty, living and obligation that “actions are severely regulated.” At the same time, Mrs. T expressed her contentment with being Japanese because it gives her a sense of balance:

I’m glad that I’m Japanese American because I’m very proud of Japan, and the culture and the enlightenment and the delicacy of appreciation for beauty and nature. I think Japan may not have raw materials for export, but…Japan has brains and intelligence for export…I wish I were a part of it, I’m not. But I recognize it and very proud of it. I think I’m lucky to be Japanese American.

As a second generation Japanese American, Mrs. T has inherited two different countries. She feels comfortable when she is in Japan because “everybody seems to be Japanese” yet she feels how “un-Japanese” she is when she goes to Japan. She said, “Then I really feel that I’m not Japanese but I’m a product of American environment.” Mrs. T visited Japan when she was young and after she started a business she visited Japan many times.

Katherine said that the country she belongs to is “definitely the United States of America.” Yet, Katherine’s perception of being Japanese American was different from Mrs. T and Motoko, both of whom experienced internment. Katherine spoke of context as a factor in the way others identified her. Whether or not she was seen as an “American” depended on whom she talked to and were she was:

Among some other Americans, they may not see me as a citizen of this country. As fluent as my English is, despite my name, based on my appearance, they don’t see me as an American. I’ve gone to Minnesota before, I attended my friend’s wedding. And, someone commented, “Your English is so good.” I said, “Well, I was born and raised in San Francisco.” “But your English is still so good.”

Katherine said that Japan, on the other hand, is not her country because she was not born
in Japan. However, she is concerned about the country because it is where her father was from, her mother raised, and all her relatives reside. At the same time, Katherine grew up with strong sense of Japanese identity through language and cultural education. Moreover, living in Japan for two years of college, really gave her an appreciation of the four seasons:

I remember one day, opening up the Japanese paper *shoji* screens of the room where I was staying in my aunt and uncle’s on my father’s side...then I saw the flowers and that was really the first time I...felt excitement about spring and the beauty of flowers. And that’s something I think is definitely part of the Japanese sensibility, *kansei*.

Katherine also identifies herself as Japanese American; however, she doesn’t want to be limited by that definition. She said, “I see myself as a human being…growing up…I didn’t fit in with many of the Japanese Americans because of the generational difference… I ended up socializing [with] students…who accepted me for who I was.” Her close friends were, therefore, not necessarily Japanese Americans and she came to appreciate people of many different backgrounds. Katherine made a point of saying that her friendships were based on acceptance of her identity as an individual because she was not accepted by other Japanese American students. In that respect, she is unique among the participants in this study, the rest of whom strongly identified with their ethnic groups, although in high school, she made friends with someone who had strong sense of Japanese identity.

As for naturalization, Mrs. T’s parents and Motoko and Katherine’s fathers lived in the United States as permanent residents. Motoko said her father never naturalized after the law of immigration changed after World War II. Her father always had to have
his green card. Motoko doesn’t know why he never considered becoming an American citizen, but she guessed “maybe he didn’t want to go to school to learn... because you have to learn the things before you become a citizen.” Motoko’s father was always very proud when the prince of Japan came to San Francisco and went to see him because he had or felt strong ties with Japan.

Katherine said although her mother has dual citizenship because she was born in the United States but raised in Japan and both her parents were Japanese nationals, she never used her Japanese citizenship. Katherine’s father, on the other hand, stayed a Japanese citizen for his lifetime and he was proud of staying a Japanese national:

He was classified as a permanent resident. He had a green card. But there was something about the passport. I don’t know about now, but back in the days of my father, the Japanese passports were red. And they had this gold seal of the chrysanthemum, kiku (菊). He took great pride in that. So... yeah, I mean I think he’s fortunate in that he was able to live here as permanent resident and... with the exception of voting, pretty much [had] the same rights as U.S. citizens.

Even with (or because of) their permanent resident status, Motoko and Katherine felt that their fathers maintained a strong sense of national identity as Japanese.

Motoko feels like she grew up in two cultures, Japanese and American. With her Japanese born father, she learned Japanese ways such as being polite and also she “picked up on the Caucasian ways.” Even after she went to a Buddhist church, she felt conflicted especially at Christmas time:

I’m so used to celebrating Christmas...so you go to [Buddhist] church, and there’s nothing for Christmas. And you come home, and you have a Christmas tree and you got the presents all over the place, and you’re exchanging presents...so, that to me, is kind of conflicting, you know. So, I really felt more American then. So, it was strange when I go to Buddhist
church, and it’s a strange feeling, you know, because, it’s a Christian
country here and… Christmas was a big deal… So, things like that were
kind of strange to me.

Motoko said it doesn’t mean that she didn’t enjoy going to the Buddhist church or that
she was not familiar with the Buddhism. Her family and relatives were strong Buddhists,
but she didn’t feel she was really a Buddhist and thus started attending a Japanese
Christian church.

As an adult, Motoko pointed out her cultural identity as mixed with Japanese,
American, and Chinese because her husband is Chinese American. Motoko said since
Chinese New Year was coming soon after they got married in December, she had to learn
Chinese traditions which were “very, very new” to her. She asked her sister-in-law many
questions and found that Chinese traditions were very interesting. Motoko said she has
kept Chinese New Year traditions. Motoko laughed and said, “I got three cultures in me, I
guess.” Both Motoko’s sons married Chinese women, so the next generation’s sense of
cultural identity has been further complicated. In her two son’s cases, Motoko said they
identified more with Chinese cultural practices, her husband’s side. (Although she used
the term Chinese, she did not mention specifically any part of China.) Her older son is
interested in both Chinese and Japanese culture, while her younger son is interested in
Chinese culture and takes his children to the Chinese side’s cemetery to show them what
goes on although he is interested in Japanese culture as well. Her grandchildren wanted to
learn Japanese culture and language and her granddaughter speaks very fluent Japanese.
Motoko said, “I don’t know what the future holds. We’re going to be a really mixed up
race.”

Motoko and Mrs. T both mentioned the sense of sharing the same ethnicity as
other Japanese Americans. Even though Motoko has Caucasian friends, she associates
more with “Asians”—Chinese and Japanese friends. She doesn’t see her Caucasian
friends often, just once in a while. She would talk about her experiences in the internment
camp with other Nisei Japanese Americans, but not with her Caucasian friends:

[W]hen a Japanese meets another Japanese, the first thing they say is,
‘Which camp were you in?’...[O]f course now, it’s getting younger people,
so, you don’t ask that question anymore, but in my days, when you meet a
new person, [the Japanese] always say [that]. And that was always seems
to be the starter of the conversations... [M]y Caucasian friends don’t even
know about, you know, camp and everything. I don’t even think they knew
I was in there, in camp. Because I never talk about it, not with them...but
with Japanese people everybody know you were in camp. So, it’s a
common thing.

Mrs. T pointed out the internment camp experience does not necessarily connect
one Japanese American to another, but rather by sharing “the same variety of racial
background.” Mrs. T shared what one of her Japanese American friends who had worked
surrounded by Caucasians said:

[S]he told me, even on a first meeting...if you meet another Nisei, there’s
a warm kind of family feeling that you belong to the same clan, and you
feel relaxed and you know that you are accepting each other on equal
terms. And it’s different from meeting somebody of another race. She said,
“You feel like there’s a connection and relationship already when you
meet another Japanese American, another Nisei.” And we were talking
about each other that the moment you meet, when you think about the first
afternoon that you spent together becomes very precious and warm
memory because you’re both understanding each other already and you
don’t have to explain anything.

Mrs. T said, “I understand exactly what she means.” Her Japanese American friend had a
successful career but she didn’t realize “how badly she missed her own kind.” Moreover,
Mrs. T’s friend meets people whose interest and concerns are similar to her own so that
she doesn’t have to explain or make delineations of any kind.

Gender: Identity as a Woman

In contrast to the Zainichi Korean women I interviewed, the Japanese American women did not mention much about gender roles, such as cooking and keeping traditions, and raising children except that Motoko learned Japanese cooking from Issei (first generation) women at her church and also Chinese traditions from her sister-in-law. Growing up, not having a mother, Motoko had a family friend who taught her how to sew and she remembers making a dress. She also used to perm her hair and later, her daughter’s like Shirley Temple, a child star in the 1940s. Motoko raised her two sons by herself staying at home for nine years:

[A]fter I had my first child, I stayed home. And my husband was a breadwinner and we just lived off what he made…and I told my husband …“I will not have anybody else raise my kids.” Like a lot of people, they send [them] off to babysitter, and they don’t really get to enjoy their child. Whereas, I stayed home for nine years and I raised my kids. Once they started going to school, or they were little more independent, that’s when I went back to work.

Motoko said she would never be happy staying home, being a housewife, cleaning the house, cooking food, and raising her children, while her husband worked because it would make nothing to build her brain. Motoko thinks that women should be able to get out and see the world. Motoko enjoyed raising her children and growing up with them. After nine years, she started working part time, and then three years later, she worked full time, which was uncommon both in Japan and in the United States in the late 1960s.

Katherine, who took care of her father after he was diagnosed with cancer, was a
caretaker but not simply because she was a woman, Japanese American, or Asian. She said it had to do with language, because her father’s native language was Japanese, and her brothers were not as proficient in Japanese as she (and probably she had built stronger rapport with her father by being a translator at table since high school). Her mother was also relying on her in terms of interpreting for the doctor. Katherine also pointed out it had to do with her maturity level as well because she was the eldest sister and her younger brothers were not mature enough, although her immediate brother now takes care of her 83 year-old mother. Katherine’s father needed emotional support during chemotherapy as well. Moreover, at the same time, she had to take care of family business, but this was not related to her being a woman:

I think there is an assumption that a woman will be a good… caretaker, because women are encouraged to nurture. And there was a lot more to it than that. I had to do a lot more than just simply nurturing. I had to take care of the business. I had to interpret. I had to meet with social workers… I hesitate to have myself be simply defined in as…something that’s a common situation to Asian woman. I think there is more to it than that.

Even though there were many Japanese speaking nurses and doctors at hospitals, she was a family interpreter so that they didn’t have to rely on someone else and it was more comfortable for them.

All three women had good (strong) relationships with their fathers, and significantly, Mrs. T and Katherine knew their fathers wished they had been sons. Mrs. T’s father wanted to have a son, “as most fathers want a son.” She said, “I was a great disappointment when I was turned out to be a girl instead of a boy.” Because she and her younger sister were the only two children, when her son was born, her father loved his grandson and he would take his grandson everywhere with him, such as fishing. Growing
up, however, Mrs. T’s father taught her how to drive a car when she was sixteen years old and enjoyed teaching her, even though he often made remarks, such as “Even a girl could learn.” Mrs. T didn’t like the way he said “even a girl,” because that already put her “in an inferior position.” Moreover, when her father taught her how to work the Japanese abacus and she did not like it, he made a remark again:

[H]e was teaching me what the beads stood for. And...number one, I was not interested to be taught. Number two, I was not interested to learn how an abacus worked... [M]y father...bought electric adding machine...why bother to learn all about these beads you have to snap back and forth. And so, I was not a quick learner...he gave up in disgust. And...he never lost an opportunity to say, “Well, that’s a girl for you, no use teaching girls, they don’t learn quickly enough.”

Many Japanese parents don’t often praise their children only expecting them to do well and her father was not the exception. Her father was no exception. Once her father said to her with disgusted voice, “Omae wa baka ka [お前は馬鹿か: Are you dumb?].” She said, “Maybe that was when I failed to catch on to the workings of how to operate the bead counter... But I was shocked that he would use those words at me because I never considered myself slow or dumb.” However, Mrs. T thinks her father was liberal and progressive about women and their capacity to do whatever men could do, if it didn’t require physical strength. Her father taught her “when you don’t have the strength, you should use your brain.” He did not discourage her and her sister if they were curious about anything. At the same time, her father thought getting good grades in school was atarimae [当たり前: taken for granted]. Moreover, her father was disappointed when her younger sister didn’t get straight As on her report card, “One or two Bs, that was no good. It was expected to bring home all 100 percent [laughter].”
Both Mrs. T and Katherine’s mothers had received relatively higher level of education considering the times when girls’ education was not valued or even was considered a deficit in Japan. Mrs. T’s mother received secondary education because her family was affluent enough and also open-minded about women’s education. Katherine’s mother got into a girls’ school, jogakkan (女学館), where the students were only accepted by examination. Katherine’s mother took the examination with another girl, but only she got into the school. Katherine said, “My mom thought it was a mistake. So, she’s just pretty humble in terms of her abilities.” Katherine’s mother doesn’t really think of herself as equal to men or give herself enough credit, “She would say things like, ‘Oh, your father is much smarter than me’ or ‘Oh, you’re intelligent, you get that from your father.’ I would say, ‘No, I get that from both of you.’”

Katherine thinks that, however, her mother is resourceful. She talked about how her mother protected her and her brothers from a rattlesnake when they went camping by throwing rocks. She also thinks her mother has a lot of inner strength and she admires that. Katherine’s mother wouldn’t think of it herself and would say atarimae [taken for granted], of course, she would protect her children. Katherine pointed out that Japanese women’s inner strength, which had been developed in Japanese culture, does not fit the same images of strong American women:

I don’t know about Japanese women in general…[but] I’ve been told this …because of Japanese society…in terms of how [women] should act and how they should be subservient to men, women try in their behavior and in their mannerisms and the way they speak, try to be soft, try not to be too aggressive or too assertive. But that does not necessarily mean that they are [not] strong and [don’t]…have their own ideas and their own opinions. And I think people who are not familiar with Japanese society and Japanese culture, sometimes….they underestimate Japanese women. They assume that, oh, because a Japanese woman is very friendly or very soft,
they assume...that the Japanese women are pushovers...who can be easily fooled or taken advantage of... [N]o, they are...quite intelligent. They can be quite strong.

Katherine’s mother was sometimes “unusual” as a kibei Nisei woman because she adapted to American culture and society. For example, when Katherine went to kindergarten in the late 1960s, her mother dressed her in slacks. However, her Caucasian American teacher told her not to wear slacks but a skirt. Her mother thought it was fine for a girl to dress in slacks “based on what was happening...the whole emphasis of civil rights and equal rights.” Katherine respected her father because he encouraged her mother to start playing the shamisen (三味線), the Japanese three-string guitar. Her mother started when she was 40 years old and became a certified natori (名取), given the name by the headmaster, and therefore, able to teach. Katherine said that because of the hobby, her mother was able to have something to live for after her father passed away and that was “really genius on his part.” It is significant that she credits the genius to the father rather than her mother.

Like Mrs. T’s father, Katherine’s father also had high expectations for her and her brothers. Even though her father was strict and chauvinistic, he engaged in conversations with her. They talked about politics and history. However, her father would say he wished she would have been a boy. Katherine’s parents expected her to attain in academic excellence, not to get a good career but to be “a marriageable candidate.” Her father had mixed feelings about her excellence in academics, she said, “[H]e wanted me to excel academically, but the purpose was to be a good wife...at the same time, he was concerned that it would be my demerit.” Katherine thinks there are still some Japanese men and women who think that “women should not be too smart, or they should pretend they are
stupid in a company with men.” Katherine wanted to major in international relations as an undergraduate degree, but her parents forbade this and recommended that she major in business instead. Katherine said that they didn’t think international relations was a marketable degree and she wouldn’t be able to get a good job, “They didn’t envision me as somebody who was going to…work in the government using that degree… Their idea of a life for me…was very narrow.” Therefore, her father found it difficult to accept her intelligence:

I think he said out of pity…[T]he men of his generation would have a hard time accepting someone like me if I really developed my intelligence and other potential to the full extent and really tried to go head to head, toe to toe with men as well… I think he was concerned. So, I don’t think he didn’t say those things out of disdain, but I think it was more out of concern, about how I might be treated. But, it’s unfortunate thing is that [my parents] didn’t have [wide] enough circle to see that, you know, I could have developed those other areas [which] I really could have used and I would not suffer for it. They were just very set in their own views, I think.

Katherine’s parents were against her getting a Master’s degree but agreed to it because she was her father’s caretaker, even though later she had to leave school to take care of him. After her father passed away, Katherine told her mother that she wanted to go back and finish up her Master’s program. Her mother said, “Why can’t you just be satisfied…to go and try to just get a good job like a secretary?” Katherine had to explain that she wanted to pursue her professional and career goal:

I said, “Well, mom, you know, someone with my level of education, I’ve graduated from a decent four year university. I shouldn’t have to settle for just being a secretary, I can do more.” “Why do you have to do more,” is what she says, “Why can’t you just be a secretary and be okay with that?”…And she was talking about how my aunt, when I was living in Japan, had wanted to introduce me to someone who is with the gaimusho
(外務省), the Japanese foreign service. My mom said that she and my father had always a dream that I would marry a Japanese diplomat…when I was growing up…my parents had really emphasized cultural activities in addition to minyo (民謡)...I was forced to take Japanese classical dance, nihon buyo (日本舞踊). And I didn’t want to do it, but I was forced to it at age five…so that I could develop into a wife that suitable for hopefully somebody like a diplomat…My father never said anything to me…It was only after my father passed away…And I said to my mom…“I wouldn’t want to marry a diplomat, I would want to be the diplomat.”

Katherine explained her way of thinking about career was “American” and being raised by her mother who had “common perspectives” such as wearing slacks but “old fashioned values,” Katherine brought up with a “combination of the two” as a Japanese American woman. She was conscious of how she is Japanese (Asian) and American, and how she is seen by society. (It is important to note that one of her role models was Murasaki Shikibu, the first Japanese female novelist. And it makes sense thinking about how Katherine’s intelligence was not valued equally.)

Motoko’s father had the same expectations as Katherine’s mother expressed when she said “get a good job like a secretary.” Therefore, Motoko took a lot of classes in accounting and office work in high school because she and her sister figured that they were expected to work after high school. Motoko said, “[T]hat was always in [the] back of our minds.” Further, Motoko explained that because her father was a gardener, he did not make a lot of money. Even though her father could not help her brothers financially, he let them do what they wanted. Her oldest brother went join the Air Force because he wanted to learn how to fly. Her other brother was teaching music in schools, so he went to college and became a music teacher. However, her father implied what he expected of the girls and she and her sister picked it up. When her older sister was graduating from high school:
[When] she was going to graduate, my father would say, “Oh, good, you could help me then.”… So, it was kind of little things that he would say, that my sister and I would pick up on. So, we know…that he expected us to go to work and help him. And he let my brothers get through education. So…it was something that my sister and I just were expected, so, we thought that, maybe that was what we should do. And we knew that my father wasn’t just saying that. We knew that he needed help, because he can’t raise us…by himself all the time, four kids, it’s hard.

[I asked: Have you thought about going to college?] Um… I never regretted it, you know, but, as I grew older…I realize[d] that if I really want to get some place higher in my position, you know, yes, it would have been better if I had a college education. But however, I feel I was very fortunate…that I got much higher in my job than I ever expected.

When I asked her whether she would have gone to college if she was a man, she said, “Yes, probably…then maybe I would have…got a higher position…[B]oth of my brothers are doing things that they enjoy. But…I might have been a different field of work…compared to what I did.”

All the Japanese American women have been influenced by their fathers’ ideas about how women should be and that affected their choice of career especially in Motoko’s case. Katherine and Mrs. T mentioned that their mothers appreciated Japanese culture and art and both of them learned them. However, it is important to note that their appreciation of Japanese art was sometimes not considered as important in itself but rather as it means to becoming a suitable wife.

Expectations and Prospect for the Future Generations

All three women mentioned the changes in a Japanese American community. Katherine pointed out that unless the United States government changes its immigration policies to allow more immigrants to come from Japan, the population is not going to
grow significantly, rather it may shrink. She thinks that if the Japanese American community does not want to disappear, “it really has to embrace people who don’t fit the stereotype of the Japanese American…recent immigrants into their community. It has to embrace people who are part Japanese whether it would be half, or a quarter, or a 16th, or an 8th.” Moreover, Katherine pointed out that some people of Japanese descent identify themselves as “No-sei,” meaning no generation, because they don’t have voices in Japanese American community. On the other hand, Mrs. T mentioned about “Japanese blood,” she said, “I’m sorry that people of Japanese blood are disappearing from America, because 100% Japanese is going to disappear in another 50 years.” Motoko also mentioned that disappearance of Japanese culture, “I think a lot of culture is going to disappear…because they don’t deem in necessary. And there [are] so many…mixed marriages, so the culture gets lost, both sides…And, I’m part of that.”

Motoko wants her sons to keep interested in Japanese culture. Even though one of her sons is more interested in Chinese history, she is glad that he studied Japanese history as well. Motoko also wants their sons to retain the traditions especially Chinese New Year and Japanese New Year’s cooking, although she said, “I have to admit I’m partly to blame on that because I don’t know…how to cook a lot of [Japanese] food, but it’s something I like to see continue.” When I asked her if she was interested in teaching cooking her daughters-in-law, Motoko said, “I can’t say that I have done that…because they’ve never asked me.” She added even though she wants her to keep the traditions, she doesn’t tell them they have to. Motoko, however, thinks it’s important to keep family values. Motoko thinks too many families are so busy and they don’t have time to sit down and eat together, “it’s good to have everybody sit down…together as a family [and] eat
together…that’s…when you can converse with [family]…how was your day, what happened today… I think it’s important.” Another thing Motoko thinks important for her sons to keep in mind is to remember who they are:

Sometimes when they fight, I say, “You always remember that you’re brothers, because it’s just two of you. You have aunts and uncles and stuff, but you two are brothers.”…Even as they get married, they go their own ways... I say that always remember that you are brothers even though your lives are different now, maybe you don’t see each other that much now, but when something happens, you’ll always stay there for each other. I’d like to see that. That’s very important. [She was brimming with tears.]

In terms of preserving culture, Motoko said that the community centers are trying hard to maintain the culture. Even though according to Motoko, only three major Japantowns still exist, she wants to see the Japantowns continue. Moreover, Motoko thinks it is good to see new communities that have been created by an influx of new immigrants and cerebrating their own holidays, “You need the different nationalities, you need the different cultures to keep…the world going. If everybody is the same, it’s no fun…You [would] like to travel to other countries just to see what they have…I’d like to see that.” Mrs. T mentioned, however, that it has been difficult for her to teach the importance of retaining practices especially Buddhist rituals. Mrs. T had a long conversation with her children and grandchildren, who are third generation (Sansei) and fourth generation (Yonsei):

[I]f there is a memorial service, at the Nichirenshu [日蓮宗: one of the Japanese Buddhist sects] church, Sansei will say, “I’m not a member of Nichirenshu. I really don’t want to go and sit for forty five minutes while the taiko [太鼓: drums] and gong is being hit and the okyo [お経: sutra] is read.”…I said, “Well, you’re only thinking of our own comfort,” …I said, “Well, please go, to please me…I’m not born in Yamanashi, but my parents are. And for the sake of their memory, and in respect to my own
ancestors, I am attending. And I want you to support me by coming with me.” And they said, “Well, we’re only going because of you.” I said, “Whatever reason…” I said, “Go.” But…then, they say, “Well, you are forcing us, against our wishes. We are going only because we want to support you.”

Mrs. T said that kind of conversation occurred not only in her family but also others. Even though the younger generation would be glad to come to an event such as mochi pounding at Japantown, “the feeling of loyalty to ancestral memory is fading,” Mrs. T said. What Mrs. T pointed out may be universal to all ethnic groups or even in Japan and other countries. Since the older generation knows more of what has lost, they want to maintain and pass down what is left to the next generation, while the younger generation thinks their own comfort and does not realize the richness of their own heritage.

Therefore, the Nisei, second generation Japanese Americans have been trying to preserve what was passed down from the first generation, Issei, as Mrs. T described:

The Issei people really, really sacrificed, you know. But, the Nisei lived through a lot of suffering, historically... The evacuation, the loss of the family business, and... Issei growing more elderly and more helpless. And, the Nisei had to take care of a lot of funerals, and then the Sansei were growing up... I think the Nisei were sandwiched between two cultures, you know... A lot of historic happenings that affected everybody’s lives. I think the Nisei had played a very heroic role in the history of Japanese Americans. They had to... become the bridge between Japanese and America, and... the cultural preservation of Japanese high traditions... and yet, harmonious with the American independence and individual recognition, whereas the Japanese tradition is always... being a member of a group... And I think that the conflict transfers to Sansei and Yonsei. An example, Nisei feel that they owe a debt; they owe respect and obedience to tradition.

Mrs. T has been supporting the Japanese American organizations which try to maintain Japanese culture and connect Japanese Americans and Japan, because she has met some
Sansei who are not interested in preserving their ancestral origin:

When I say [to some Sansei], “What part of Japan did your ancestors come from?” they say, “Well, I understand it’s Hiroshima.” But, I said, “Have you been in Hiroshima?” and they say, “Oh, I don’t have any interest.” …So, I think that’s very sad. I think once they go to Japan, then they change their mind. So, I’m very happy to help people go to [Japan]. I donate, so that they can go. Because once they go to Japan, they, they [get] very enthusiastic and they encourage other people to go to Japan, too.

Motoko and Katherine also think that it is important for the younger generation to know their history. Although Motoko doesn’t want the internment to happen again to anybody, she wants the younger generation to know what happened, know their roots, and know their history:

It’s amazing how many people didn’t know what happened at Tanforan… When we were out there [for the commemoration event], people come and just [said], ‘What are you talking about? Tanforan is a shopping center.’ They had no idea what went on there.

Motoko added that she wants the younger generation to be aware of and fight for their rights if they see the same thing happening, whether it would be their “race or anybody else’s race.” Katherine also wants to preserve the awareness of the history for the next generation. She said it is important to know the historical background “why Japanese immigrated to countries outside Japan had to do with the state of Japan…and the idea of that there were more opportunities in other countries.” Also, it is important for the next generation to know the internment camp experience; even though or perhaps because she was not involved in it and was told only a little bit by her mother and grandparents. Additionally, Katherine wants them to know how the Japanese American communities are dying.
Like Motoko said, Katherine mentioned that she wants the next generation to practice New Years, which has a lot of connections to Asian culture because of the influence from China and Korea. Some Japanese customs or cultural practices make sense scientifically; for example, taking off the shoes keeps the house clean. Katherine sometimes explains those customs to her non-Asian students because she wants them to understand their fellow (Asian) students’ customs. Mrs. T also said, “I would like more fellow Americans to recognize…the wonderful heritage that the Japanese Americans have of their own background that they could share with [them].” (Moreover, Mrs. T said that she doesn’t want “the good things from Japan to disappear. The Japanese young people are making it disappear.” Motoko also pointed out that the Japanese in Japan idolize Americans but are prejudiced against Koreans.)

Katherine doesn’t want to pass on dansonjohi (男尊女卑), the idea that men are superior to women, to the next generation. She also doesn’t want to pass on the prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices towards other ethnic groups especially African Americans. Although there is tension among Japanese, Korean, and Chinese, third and fourth generations have less tension because there is more emphasis on Asian American identity. In terms of collective identity, Katherine also mentioned that this collective identity remains in the Japanese American community sometimes in a negative way, just as she experienced in junior high and high school in Japanese class, “I chose not to go with the group, whereas the other Japanese Americans, Sansei, they chose as a group not to learn Japanese…And they were exhibiting a Japanese cultural norm, which is to do things as a group.” However, she feels the attitude of the younger generation has been changing, looking at her students of Japanese heritage, some of them are a quarter,
others an eighth Japanese, “They are not going to give me a hard time to try to show off their classmates. They really want to learn [Japanese].”

Katherine said her mother’s empathy, compassion, and sympathy has been passed on to her. This has influenced her as a teacher and perhaps accounts for her passion and her determination to pass on her knowledge to the next generation. Katherine said, “I think it’s an obligation for me to really try to do whatever I can, in terms of human rights education and human rights.” As an educator and as a daughter of a father who was in the Japanese military (not only involved in war but also “robbed of his innocence”) and a mother who was wrongfully interned in the United States, Katherine feels that she has an obligation to humanity to try to do whatever she can so that young people are not placed in that situation again:

[As an educator, I do think it’s important that young people have different options and that if a country is going to have a military, that it be really limited to self-defense or peace keeping, but not the types of aggression that Japan and Italy and Germany engaged in, and certainly the United States engaged in…military aggression, prior to World War II, and Cuba, and other countries as well.]

What the Japanese American participants wanted to pass down to the next generation was not only the Japanese cultural practices but also cultural values, and moreover, learning from history and not to have the same experience as they did or their parents did.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study attempted to explore the construction of identity of Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women in Japan and the United States respectively by listening to their stories about being women and “minority.” In both contexts, their stories are examined in the light of larger theories on ideological hegemony, identity, and feminist thought. Chapter IV includes the findings from the large body of data gathered from interviews with the research participants. Most of the findings directly respond to the research questions included in Chapter I. Moreover, some of these findings emerged from commonly expressed sentiments not directly in response to the research questions, but to broader issues of identity development—the focal point of this study. In this chapter, I discuss the findings documented in chapter four by comparing the experiences of the two groups; the research questions are revisited below:

1. How do Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women construct their identity?
   a. How do they construct ethnic and national identity? Is the complexity of “double consciousness” of Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women reflected or practiced in their everyday lives?
   b. How do their interactions with people around them influence the construction of their identities?

2. How do culturally specific gender roles affect their construction of identity?

3. How are their ethnic and gender identities maintained and transmitted through
generations?

a. How have multigenerational Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women’s experiences been transmitted from one generation to the next?

b. What expectations do these women have for maintaining their cultural (ethnic) identities for future generation?

Adopting the oral history method allowed the sharing of stories in depth. The two series of dialogues with the participants brought out their memories of their family histories, school and postsecondary experiences, growing up as minority women, as Zainichi Korean or Japanese American.

Since I had two groups in this study, in this section, I compare the findings from the interviews with the two groups of women. While the experiences of all Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women may not be reflected in the stories of these seven women, their stories shed light on important, unique, social, cultural, and historical experiences that have deeply affected the construction of their identities. I discuss the findings from the interviews with the two groups using the following categories: family history, use of name, educational experiences, national, ethnic, and cultural identity, language, gender, and generational identity and their expectations for the next generation. What gives some of these women a sense of security about who they are? What make them comfortable or uncomfortable with who they are? Why is there a persistent lack in both groups of an authentic women’s voice? Finally, I will include the implications for education, recommendations for the future research, and the reflection of the researcher.
Family History: “That Is How My Mother’s Family Came”

Family history is important for all people, but especially for the descendents of immigrants. Knowing their ancestors’ diasporatic experiences, where they came from, how they came to the new land, what they have been through, helps them construct their identities. Some stories of the first generation might be forgotten, but other stories connect one generation to another. The degree of knowledge about family history differed for each participant because of the factors below:

1) Knowledge about one’s family history seemed to be connected to privilege, social class, or socioeconomic status, in the ancestors’ home country. For example, Mrs. T knew more details about her family background and history than anyone in either group because both parents’ families had high social and economic status; her paternal side was from samurai class and her maternal side had high socioeconomic status (owned a spinning mill for silk). Moreover, her parents had high educational levels because of their privileged background. Katherine also knew about her paternal family very well because they also were from samurai class. In the case of Motoko and Soon Ja, they knew where their parents came from, but they did not know anything further.

2) The stronger and the more physical connection with home country they had, the more knowledge they had about their family histories, which may be related to socioeconomic status. Mrs. T had constant contact with her relatives visiting from Japan growing up, which gave her opportunity to know her family background. Katherine often visited Japan growing up and had contact with her relatives in Japan. The connection with the
home country may have lost for some second generation and more third generation immittants. Even though Motoko has visited Japan, she has never been to Fukuoka, where her father is from. In the case of Zainichi Korean women, only Soon Ja has met her relatives in South Korea which was not a positive experience for her.

3) The retention of personal or family history is also connected to the degree of pain and suffering endured in transition from home to host country and experiences in the host country. In the case of Katherine, she learned how her mother came, not directly from her very much, but by reading books. In the case of Yu Ja, she did not know much about her family history and said her maternal grandmother seemed not to want to tell her about how she came to Japan, although because Yu Ja’s mother was interested in it, she was able to learn a little about her family history. For the third generation, their knowledge of family history was related to how much their parents were interested in it. However, the first generations’ negative experiences were also passed down to some extent. For example, Hong Ja’s grandmother talked about the hardships she endured when she came to Japan.

4) The knowledge of family history is also related to the loss of family members. Motoko did not know very much about her maternal family because her mother died when she was only two years old. In the case of Yu Ja, she did not know much about the paternal side of the family because both of her father’s parents had passed away before she was born.

5) The emotional experience and interaction with the first generation influences the construction of identity of second and third generation. For example, Mi Ja had an
emotional experience with her paternal grandmother when taking care of her. It was a painful experience, not only because she could not speak Korean to her and felt sorry about that, but also because she understood what her grandmother had been through, dying in another country away from home.

Name: “I Am What I Am”

All participants’ names reflected their identities. The variation and the use of personal names seemed connected to a few factors (four) in the case of the participants in this study:

1) Degree of forced assimilation and coercion is related to name and naming. In the case of Zainichi Koreans, Hong Ja and Soon Ja used their Japanese names in school and at work, both of which were the ethnic Japanese environment. Hong Ja said that because of using her Japanese name, she expressed how she was the same as other Japanese students. Soon Ja explained she was named Junko because she was born in Japan, and Soon Ja is the Korean pronunciation. As discussed in chapter two, the literature review, historically, the Koreans were forced (encouraged) to use Japanese names during the annexation era. Therefore, for most Zainichi Koreans who attended Japanese schools, using a Japanese name was necessary in order to assimilate into Japanese society, and thus, avoid discrimination and bullying. However, Soon Ja’s experience showed that using Japanese names could not prevent bullying. In the case of Japanese Americans, as well, Katherine made an important point about the negative feelings toward having a Japanese name among the Japanese American community because of the internment experience during WWII. Choosing an English first name was a crucial step in the process of assimilation
for the second generation Japanese Americans.

2) The influence of the dominant culture is related to use of names: identities were formed based on what was seen as acceptable by the dominant culture. The degree to which dominant culture allowed for negotiation of “double consciousness” was reflected in the use of names. In the case of Katherine, even though she used her Japanese (Akiko) name growing up in American schools, when she worked as an English teacher in Japan, she realized she had to “market” herself as American, by using her English name. Her English name was also preferred in American companies and the Japanese American community, as Katherine pointed out; at the same time, she still uses her Japanese name with her family and her relatives in Japan.

3) Resistance to the dominant forces is related to use of names. Mrs. T and Motoko kept their Japanese names because they wanted to retain their Japaneseness. Yu Ja, as well, who attended Korean ethnic schools and maintained a strong sense of ethnic identity as a Korean, has always used only her Korean name. Soon Ja and Hong Ja, in contrast to the members of Japanese American organizations, whose purpose was assimilation, used their Korean names in the Young Korean Organization, whose purpose was to foster cultural identity as Koreans.

4) The dynamics of naming are influenced by all three factors above. In the case of Mi Ja, using her Korean name read Japanese style (Yoshiko) in school reflected to some extent her assimilation; using her Korean name with Korean pronunciation (Mi Ja) reflected her resistance, not only to the dominant Japanese culture in Japan, but also the dominant Korean society in South Korea. She has negotiated her identity as a Zainichi
Korean who was born and raised in Japan. Now she uses both Yoshiko and Mi Ja, reflecting the dynamic of her identity, a combination of assimilation, resistance, and negotiation.

**Educational Experiences**

Educational experiences impacted the construction of identity. Schools have functioned in different ways depending on the degree of otherness each participant experienced:

1) Schools function as transmitters of the dominant culture. Each participant who attended public schools in Japan or the United States experienced degrees of success or difficulty depending on their socioeconomic status, self-confidence, and academic aptitude. For example, Mrs. T did not have playmates in grammar school because of her ethnicity; she was sent to the speech class because of her accent. However, she learned English very quickly and by the time she went to high school, she had made friends with white and Chinese students. Despite the experience of the internment during WWII, Motoko made friends with non-Japanese such as Italian Americans because she lived in predominantly white neighborhood. Soon Ja tried not to stand out because of her ethnicity and lost her motivation to study as a result of bullying at school. Hong Ja, using her Japanese name, emphasized how she grew up “the same” as other Japanese students.

2) Schools also function as proponents of “secure identity.” Especially for Yu Ja, attending Korean ethnic schools gave her “back up” not only by becoming bilingual but also by developing a strong sense of identity as Korean; therefore, she never experienced
“denial of identity.” In the case of Mi Ja, who used her Korean name in Japanese schools expressed a sense of security by being different. Because she never hid her identity and her parents told her to be proud of being Korean, she did not have to worry about telling her identity to her friends or having her identity revealed.

3) “It’s all right, we are all the same”—Japanese schools don’t recognize diversity.

While Hong Ja expressed a relief that after she talked about her identity in class, she was not excluded, by being told “It’s all right,” Mi Ja felt her classmates missed the point, when they said “It’s okay.” Even though their teachers encouraged the participants to talk about their identity in class, they could not address the issue so that the ethnic Japanese students could fully understand the status of Zainichi Koreans. Mi Ja even felt that she was shut down when she wanted to talk about her struggles as Zainichi Korean to her Japanese friends.

4) After school programs and community organizations influence the development of ethnic identity. In the case of Mrs. T, Japanese School was the place that she made friends with other Japanese American students. Moreover, Katherine said that even though she was forced to go to the Japanese School by her parents, she was able to keep her proficiency in Japanese and that gave her not only a strong sense of Japanese identity, but also a strong connection with her parents, especially her father. Hong Ja also pointed out the importance of belonging to a Young Korean Organization where she had started to learn the Korean language and culture. In the case of Motoko, she could not go to after school program because of the war and also because she was the daughter of a single parent. However, after she grew up, she became involved in the Japanese American
organizations.

5) Studying abroad complicates the sense of ethnic or cultural identity. In the case of Mi Ja, studying abroad in the United States shook her identity. Meeting with students from South Korea and being told she was not Korean, she struggled with her Korean identity. Later, she realized that she is both Korean and Japanese.

Language: “I Should Know My Own Language”

Language was another important element of my participants’ identities for a few reasons:

1) For second generation, the heritage language is the language in which they spoke to and heard their parents. Mrs. T grew up speaking only Japanese to her parents. Soon Ja grew up listening to her parents speaking Korean; therefore, she could understand Korean almost perfectly. Even though she thought she was not fluent enough to teach Korean to her children, she still used Korean expressions with them and other second generation Zainichi Korean friends, which she had learned from her parents.

2) Historical context influences the development of linguistic identity. Moreover, it sometimes gives people a sense of shame. Particularly in the case of Motoko, Japanese language education was prohibited while she was interned. Even though she grew up with her father speaking to her in Japanese and she could understand Japanese generally, she felt ashamed not being fluent enough. Katherine’s experience with other third generation Japanese American students also reflected their parents’ internment experience and the sense of shame that they had internalized. For Zainichi Koreans, historically, Korean
language education was prohibited and is not now supported by the Japanese government. Hong Ja internalized a sense of shame for her lack of fluency in Korean and strongly felt a connection between her ethnic and linguistic identity; therefore, being fully Korean required fluency in Korean for her.

3) The attitudes towards accent differed even among bilinguals. For Katherine, gaining native level pronunciation in Japanese was important especially when she talked to the Japanese from Japan. Because of her ethnicity, she felt she was expected to speak Japanese fluently with native accent; otherwise, they (the Japanese) would judge more harshly than a non-Japanese. For Yu Ja, on the other hand, the Korean language, especially that which is taught at Korean ethnic schools, is a symbol of the fight against exclusion and oppression and as such Zainichi Koreans should be proud of it.

4) The notion of *urimal* (우리말), our language, exists for both Zainichi Koreans and Japanese Americans, meaning heritage language for each group. However, the heritage language can be viewed as the in-between language. In the case of Mi Ja, Korean was not her *urimal*, but Japanese was because it was the language she grew up speaking with her parents. She defined Korean language as in-between because she grew up using some Korean expressions and remembering her grandmother speaking Korean dialect mixed with Japanese. Her experience in the United States and in South Korea made her change the notion of *urimal* as she realized that her identity was both Korean and Japanese.

*National, Ethnic, and Cultural Identity*

Having Korean nationality in Japan means being Other—not only culturally or
ethnically, but also legally. Even though Mi Ja had a strong sense of security as a Korean, she expressed negative feelings when she filled out the foreign registration form. Japanese Americans, on the other hand, have no question about national identity because they are entitled to American citizenship. Therefore, the Japanese American participants did not mention “American identity” as nationality, rather cultural identity. National, ethnic, and cultural identity was interrelated; however, depending on their perceptions:

1) Ethnicity equals cultural identity, equals nationality. Particularly in the case of Yu Ja, her ethnic, cultural, and national identity was Korean. All the factors, having only Korean name, having attended Korean ethnic schools, being fluent in Korean, learning Korean folk dance at school, and being involved in the Korean student organizations, have fostered her strong Korean identity. At the same time, the inconvenience she felt every time she traveled abroad because of her North Korean nationality reminded her who she was.

2) Nationality matters because it connects to ethnic identity. In the case of Hong Ja, she emphasized the importance of holding South Korean nationality because it connected to her ethnic identity. Because naturalization system in Japan does not recognize their ethnicity, naturalizing means erasing their identities, especially for someone who used her Japanese name like Hong Ja. Moreover, nationality means more when you have fought for it. Because Zainichi Koreans have fought for against fingerprinting, nationality requirements, and other social restrictions on their lives and careers, holding Korean nationality means to carry on a history that they are proud of.

3) Nationality does not matter because someone’s identity should not be defined by
nationality. The sense of flexibility about nationality challenges the traditional notion of
nation-state defined by borders. In the case of Mi Ja, she explained that she could
naturalize anywhere. However, she continued that it does not mean that people can forget
about their ethnic identity or their heritage culture.

4) A sense of statelessness was expressed by Zainichi Koreans. Soon Ja felt that she was
neither accepted nor protected by Japan or Korea. Yu Ja also expressed her feeling that
she did not belong to any country. In the case of Mi Ja, her sense of national identity
could be understood as flexible or transcultural, but at the same time, it showed her sense
of statelessness, of not having full rights and protection in either Japan or South Korea.

5) Ethnic identity should not define who you are. In the case of Katherine, she did not
necessarily want to be identified as Japanese American; rather she wanted to be seen as a
human being. Because she was not accepted by the majority of Japanese American
students when she was in school, she associated with another Japanese Americans who
had strong sense of Japanese identity.

6) Cultural identity examines not only “double consciousness” but also multiple
consciousness. For example, Hong Ja expressed she felt her identity was half Japanese
because she was born and raised in Japan, although she has strong ethnic (Korean)
identity. In case of Motoko, who also had a strong ethnic identity as Japanese, she grew
up “picking up” her father’s Japanese way and her friends’ (Caucasian) “American” way.
She grew up feeling uncomfortable at her Buddhist church and had inner conflict at
Christmas time. By learning “Chinese traditions,” which her husband, a Chinese
American, practiced, she realized that she had three cultures.
7) Shared empathy for co-ethnics (douhouisiki: 同朋意識) is also a significant element in the construction of identity. If the participants met other Zainichi Koreans in one case, or Japanese Americans in another, they felt empathy that they could share their struggles without explaining everything, which gave them a sense of belonging and security within their respective groups. This sense of shared empathy was especially important for those who grew up or worked surrounded by the dominant group because this shared sense gave them a sense of security and support. Hong Ja, Yu Ja, and Soon Ja belonged to a Young Korean Organization; Motoko, Mrs. T, and Katherine were part of Japanese American Organizations. Mi Ja mentioned she felt a connection with Koreans Overseas no matter where they were from, probably due to the perspective gained by studying abroad in the United States and now living in South Korea as a “foreign resident” Korean. Moreover, Katherine mentioned that she related to those who had similar experiences, growing up with strong sense of Japanese identity.

Gender and Identity

The idea that men are considered superior to women (dansonjohi: 男尊女卑) influenced the construction of identity of the Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women. Even though it was reflected differently in each group, the women not only internalized the idea but also were part of the perpetuation of patriarchy:

1) The idea of dansonjohi was embedded in cultural practices and rituals for the Zainichi Korean women. For the Zainichi Koreans, jesu was an important ancestral ritual which was traditionally only performed by men; therefore, necessary to maintain the family
name. Women’s role to prepare food at the *jesa* ceremony was not considered as important as men’s. In the case of Mi Ja, she expressed the special feeling that she could have a different and unique space or experience with her relatives growing up; however, later she realized that women always had the harder task preparing for *jesa*. In the case of Soon Ja, on the other hand, she emphasized the importance of having a son in the family to maintain the *jesa* ceremony. Moreover, she continued the practices such as saving the first scoop of rice for her husband and taught her Japanese daughter-in-law that as well, even though she realized she was passing down the idea of *dansonjohi*.

2) The idea of *dansonjohi* was transferred or internalized through interactions with the fathers, especially about educational and professional career expectations for Japanese American women. Mrs. T’s father remarked that “girls don’t learn quickly enough” or “even a girl can learn how to drive a car.” Motoko internalized her father’s expectation for her to work (as a secretary) after she graduated from high school. Katherine’s case was more complex because she had a strong connection with her father and so strongly identified with him. Therefore, it was even more crucial to excel in academic and cultural education such as Japanese classical dance to become a suitable woman.

3) Internalized sexism led the women to admire their fathers more than their mothers. For example, Soon Ja described her mother as uneducated and her father as educated. Even though her father often gambled and was drunk at home, she accepted her mother’s support of him, even when she asked Soon Ja to understand him. In the case of Katherine, who felt that her mother “does not giver her enough credit,” Katherine was not able to see her mother’s success in playing the *shamisen*, but only her father’s genius in encouraging
her to play the instrument. Katherine did not recognize the importance her mother’s becoming a natori (master) of shamisen which she started playing after age 40 possibly, because Katherine plays the shamisen as well or because they are both women.

4) Internalized sexism makes it hard for women to change the situation within their groups for themselves and their daughters. Even though Yu Ja felt the sexism at school or work was unjust, she did not (or could not) say or do anything to change the system. Moreover, while recognizing this injustice, she said that the gender issue was not her priority but decided to make “ethnic issues” her priority.

5) The women had critical points of view and also expressed resistance. For example, Motoko said that women should be able to go see the world. In the case of Mi Ja, she didn’t practice jesa anymore because she married a Korean from South Korea, who is a Christian. In the case of Katherine, she isolated herself from the subservient women’s image by using her English name when she worked for a Japanese company.

**Generation to Generation: “Remember Who You Are”**

The expectations for future generations of the Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women reflected each participant’s own experiences and identity:

1) The women wanted future generations to preserve ethnic identity and heritage culture. Mrs. T mentioned how much she wanted her children and grandchildren to maintain the cultural rituals and how hard it was to persuade them because the loyalty to ancestral memory was fading. Soon Ja also mentioned that her job was to pass down the cultural practices and cooking to the next generation.
2) The women wanted future generations to preserve the ethnic community. Yu Ja talked about her fear that Zainichi Korean organizations were falling apart and not being able to unite Zainichi Koreans as a community. Motoko also mentioned that she wanted the Japanese American community to keep alive and the community organizations had an important role in preserving culture.

3) Expanding the definition of ethnic identity is necessary. Katherine mentioned that the Japanese American communities need to expand the definition of Japanese American and include people of Japanese descent who didn’t fit the old definition or identified themselves as “No-sei” in order to give them voices in the Japanese American community.

4) The women wanted future generations to learn their history. Motoko, whose husband is Chinese American, and Soon Ja, whose son married a Japanese woman, said they wanted future generations to remember who they are. Their individual histories might be difficult to pass on and be remembered as mentioned above; however, the participants wanted to continue to teach their history as a collective memory. Yu Ja pointed out that learning the history together with the dominant group was also important to envision the future together.

5) The women did not want to pass the idea of dansonjohi, that men are considered to be superior to women. Mi Ja and Katherine both said they didn’t want to pass it down, because that would limit their descendents’ way of life just as it had limited their own.

6) The third generation women had more openness for future generations. Mi Ja and
Hong Ja wanted future generations to be more globally minded and forward looking. Yu Ja’s idea was specific to providing facilities which would give opportunities for the next generation to learn about their culture.

Implications for Equity in Education

The dialogues with the participants have revealed the potential implications for equity in education:

1) Historical context of immigration and oppression in a dominant society should be included in the curriculum. Students need to understand how history shapes people’s identities. For Japanese schools, therefore, the history of the annexation of Korea and discrimination against the Koreans and Zainichi Koreans, based on ethnicity and nationality, should be learned. Moreover, students need to understand how the Japanese naturalization system and nationality restrictions influence the lives of the Zainichi Koreans and the construction of identity for them. For American schools, historical context of the exclusion and discrimination of Japanese Americans and the internment during WWII should be learned in school. Students need to understand how their experiences influenced the construction of identity.

2) Schools should support oral history. All participants emphasized the importance of knowing their roots, their ethnic background, and their own history. Teachers can encourage the students of Zainichi Korean or Japanese American to listen to the experiences of their family members and share the stories in class. Moreover, schools can invite community organization members to share their stories in class. Teachers can
encourage the students of the dominant group to understand deeply the history of immigration and oppression, and thus unlearn hegemony.

3) Diaspora education is also needed in schools. It allows minority students to have international and global perspectives not only for the students of immigrant descent, but also the students of the dominant groups. This also provides opportunity for students in Japanese schools to learn the changing face of Japan and at the same time, unlearn the myth of homogeneity in Japan. It provides opportunity for students in American schools to learn the dynamics of immigrant more globally and unlearn the myth of heterogeneity in the United States.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research had a limited number of participants in a limited time. Further research can be done with more participants over a longer time. I had only one second generation Zainichi Korean woman and a limited age range. Therefore, future research should include more second generation women with a greater variety of age. All Zainichi Korean women had North or South Korean nationality in this study; therefore, further research should include women who are naturalized. Research on identity can be broadened by including Zainichi Korean women who have studied abroad in Korea as well as other countries. In terms of educational experiences, future research should include more women who went to Korean ethnic schools.

I interviewed only one third generation Japanese American woman who self-identified as close to second generation. Therefore, future research should include more third generation women. Including fourth or fifth generation will add more age
range and depth to the research. Moreover, further research can be done on women who self-identify as “No-sei” or women who have multiethnic backgrounds. Since the number of international and interethnic marriages is increasing among both Japanese Americans and Zainichi Koreans, the influence of multiethnic heritage on the construction of identity should be studied.

In this study, some participants did not recognize their mothers’ experiences, achievements, or influences as much as they did their fathers’. Further research on their perspectives on gender is needed. At the same time, how Zainichi Korean and Japanese American men have perceived the idea of dansonjohi should be researched.

Comparative and/or international studies can also be done on ethnic-based community organizations (such as Japanese American organizations) in different countries and how these organizations influence the construction of identity. More comparative research also can be done on different groups’ construction of identity, such as Zainichi Korean and Korean American women or Japanese American and Japanese Brazilian women. Further comparative studies can expand on the complexities of identity through diasporatic experiences of these groups.

Finally, I would like to continue this study as a participatory oral history project in which the participants will be my co-researchers. This would enable my participants to steer the research agenda to areas meaningful for them, allowing us to collaboratively create authentic understandings of women’s identities in the context of Japan, the United States, and the experiences of migration. We would think together about what to ask other participants—the co-researcher’s mothers, grandmothers, or women to whom they relate.
Reflection of the Researcher

I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to meet the women who participated in my research. These women opened their minds and told me their personal experiences and thoughts. I would like to express my gratitude again to all the intelligent and compassionate women in this study. I learned from them many things, not only as a researcher, but also as a Japanese woman. I felt responsible as Japanese, for example, when Soon Ja said she was not accepted in Japan or Korea and when Yu Ja said the Japanese should have their own vision of how they are going to deal with the naturalization of Zainichi Koreans. I also felt defensive when Katherine talked about Japanese men treating women as subservient as a Japanese woman who would not serve tea for men. However, later, I realized that is how she felt and it is still true to some extent in Japanese companies and also homes. I also have a responsibility to educate Japanese men and women to unlearn sexism.

From the very beginning of the process of this study till the end, my teachers, my friends, and my participants asked me why I was doing this research, why I wanted to research two groups, why I was interested in the specific two groups of women. I, too, have had to think over and over again, why I was doing this research. Throughout the process, I had to think back on all the experiences I have had, which became part of the process of self-discovery for me as well. Completing this study does not mean I learned enough. I am still learning and I will continue to learn from Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women, as a Japanese woman. It is a life-long learning praxis as an educator to learn together with fellow Japanese about our responsibility collectively and individually. As a future educator, I also have a responsibility to support Zainichi Korean
and Japanese American students and their communities. Moreover, my responsibility as a future educator is to bring voices of the women and equity to education. I would like to see future generations maintain the good parts of Japanese culture as the women expected to do in this study, and moreover, I would like to see future generations to respect all people’s culture and heritage. I would like to be part of that process.
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APPENDIX A
LIST OF QUESTIONS

Basic Information

a. What is your name?

b. How old are you?

c. What generation are you?

d. Where is your birth place and where did you grow up?

e. What is your occupation?

Research question 1. How do Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women construct their identity?

a. How do they construct their ethnic and national identity? Is the complexity of “double consciousness” of Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women reflected or practiced in their everyday lives?

b. How do their interactions with people around them influence the construction of identity?

1. Name

a. Tell me about your name.

b. Do you know who named you and what your name means?

c. How do you like your name?

d. In what situations do you like or dislike your name?
2. Family Background

a. Tell me about your family background. Do you know when and how your ancestors came to Japan/ the United States?
b. Tell me about your family history. Do you know anything about your great-grand parents? For example, do you know anything about your great-grand father?
c. Tell me about your grandparents if you remember.
d. What are the things you remember the most clearly about your grandparents?
e. What was your mother like when you were growing up?
f. What was your father like when you were growing up?
g. What did you like to do with your mother/father? For example, did you make something together?
   i. What are the things you liked to do with your relatives?
   ii. Who is the closest in your family with you?
h. What was it like when you were growing up?
i. What are the family values or principles (which could be unique) at your home?
j. How have those values affected you as you grew older?

3. Ethnic Identity

a. How do you define a nation-state (kuni) or a country? What does it mean to you?
b. What do you think about nationality naturalization?
c. How would you describe yourself in terms of ethnicity and nationality?
d. Do you remember when you identified that you are the ethnicity (Korean/Japanese)? Do you remember how you felt about it?

e. If you do, when do you find you are the ethnicity (Korean/Japanese) and when do you find you are the nationality (Japanese/American)?


4. Language and Culture

a. Did you learn Korean/Japanese when you were young? If so, when did you start?

b. What are the expressions of Korean/Japanese you learned first? Who did you learn from?

c. How did you like or not like learning Korean/Japanese?

d. What kind of Korean/Japanese expressions do you still use at home?

e. What does it mean knowing (or not knowing) Korean/Japanese to you?

f. What are the things you remember to do related to Korean culture (for Korean Japanese participants) or Japanese culture (for Japanese American participants) with your family? How did you enjoy it? What did you like the most?

g. What are the customs or practices from Korea/Japan you still do at your home?

5. Relationship with others

a. Who are you closest to in your family?

b. Who were your friends in school?
c. Who are your friends now?
d. What are the things you still remember clearly at school? (with friends or teachers)
e. How do you feel when you talk about your ethnicity with your friends who don’t share the same ethnic background?
f. How do you change or not change the way you communicate depending on who you are talking to (regarding ethnicity)?
g. What do you think about how your ethnicity is represented in the media?

Research question 2. How do culturally specific gender roles affect the construction of identities?

1. Gender Roles
   a. What was it like to be a Korean Japanese/Japanese American woman growing up?
   b. How were you regarded and treated as a daughter compared to your brother(s)/other sister(s)?
   c. What are the things your parents taught about gender roles?
   d. What are roles do you think that women have?
   e. How different it would be if you were a Korean Japanese/Japanese American man?
   f. How different it is for men and women when decision making regarding career, marriage, and so on?
Research question 3. How are the ethnic and gender identity maintained and transmitted through generations?

a. How have multigenerational Zainichi Korean and Japanese American women’s experiences been transmitted from one generation to the next?

b. What expectations do they have for maintaining their cultural (ethnic) identities for the future generations?

1. To the Next Generation

a. What are the things you have succeeded from your mother or grandmother?

b. What are the things you want to retain or preserve for the next generation?

c. How do you want to do it? How are you doing for that?

d. What are the things don’t you want to pass on to the next generation?

e. What are the things you want your daughters (if you have or would have) to do to maintain the culture, and what are the things you want them to avoid?

f. What do you see in the next generation? What do you expect them to do/be/become?

i. Please say anything you want to add.
APPENDIX B

Table
Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Pilot/ZK</th>
<th>ZK</th>
<th>ZK</th>
<th>ZK</th>
<th>JA</th>
<th>JA</th>
<th>JA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mi Ja Park</td>
<td>Hong Ja Cho</td>
<td>Yu Ja Song</td>
<td>Soon Ja Chu</td>
<td>Motoko Liu</td>
<td>Mrs. T (Yasuye)</td>
<td>Katherine Akiko Fujikawa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Third (Close to second)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Place</td>
<td>Shiga</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>Kyoto</td>
<td>Kyoto, but raised mostly in Shiga</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Nursery school teacher</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Middle and high school teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ZK= Zainichi Korean
JA= Japanese American
July 28, 2007

When Yu Ja introduced a potential participant at the restaurant:

It didn’t go well today at all. I was told to ask something, I couldn’t do that during she was doing something. I am sorry for Yu Ja but I was noticing I was being passive and all the bad things of my personality were coming up. I might be able to say I was just used to doing that kind of interview, but I felt frustrated about myself. To be honest, I was also very conscious about what Yu Ja was thinking about me. To me she is a perfect person, so I thought too much trying to be so. I was nervous.

I don’t know if there will be this kind of things or not, but I was glad that I could experience that awkwardness today. I would be nervous and I would feel I am tried, but I learned how important it is to be open to ask questions. It might happen in the future, being tried as Japanese. I want to be sincere if this happens.

It is hard to be conscious being Japanese and as a researcher all the time. I don’t know if I am going to live thinking so, but it could mean that I really didn’t think about what it means to be Japanese. I have learned the pain and grief to live as Japanese and a researcher through this research. How am I going to face this? I don’t know the answer now, but finding out how is my goal. And I want to remember this.

February 22, 2008

Choosing my dissertation topic about Korean women in Japan and Japanese American women in the US, it has really been about finding out who I am and what my
responsibilities are as a Japanese woman/future educator. I really want to say, sometimes, there shouldn't be a wall between us Japanese and them Koreans. But there is, there is in society, there is in institutions, there is in our minds. Ultimately "we" Japanese have to face the little racist guy in our mind. We have to recognize it. We have to recognize there is inequity. Yeah, yeah, we are all human beings. Yeah, yeah, your friend is Korean, your son's wife is Korean, but it doesn't mean you are really facing it, willing to talk about it or engage in making some actions. Throughout the process of my dissertation, I really thought about why I was interested in this topic. Was I different from other many Japanese? Did I grow up differently? I really didn't think so. But I remember some little things that made me think why. Why didn't adults want to talk about certain topic? It was not only about Koreans, it was also about disabled people, homelessness, burakumin, Ainu, gays, lesbians, transgender, war (especially what the Japanese military did)...they didn't want to talk about it. So I knew we shouldn't talk about it. I knew there wouldn't be any space for that. I knew I had to be quiet even if I wondered why. Maybe I was just lucky to be able to come back to the questions, but that means I have to be really open and ready to engage in knowing about myself, my family, and our history. And that hurts sometimes....

March 8, 2008

Email to Jackie:

Thinking about this whole process of my dissertation, and I am writing this to you to clear my thoughts (and also this could be personal), I've wanted to dedicate my dissertation to my mother. Both my parents have been supportive but it was my mother
who really has encouraged me to continue my education. It was my mother who didn't tell me even when she had a heart attack because she did not to make me worry about her. My mother really wanted me to keep going on higher education because she had to give up going to college because her parents didn't let her. My grandmother said they couldn't send her to college because they couldn't send her older brothers, my uncles, even to high school. "So how could we send her to college?" my grandmother said. I think it was because of her gender (and class) as well. Because she had to give up her education, she let me do anything I wanted to do. I believe she is an intelligent woman even though she didn't go to college. Therefore, I don't like the word "educated" or "not educated," because a person is "educated" doesn't mean he or she is smart, and vice versa. My parents didn't emphasize education and my mother did not pressure on me to study hard. I remember once I asked her how far she thought I would continue the education, she said she thought I would go up till junior college... I know, she didn't expect me very much, rather expected my brother. That's another gender thing, but I'm sure she is glad that I did continue this far. So...that's why I want to dedicate my dissertation to my mother.