

Japan's War Orphans and New Overseas Chinese: History, Identification
and (Multi)ethnicity

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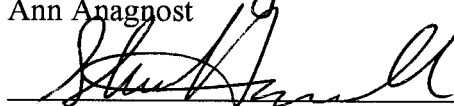
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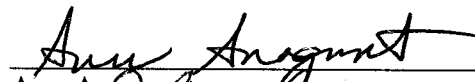
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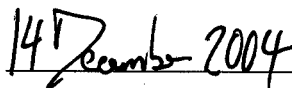


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Abstract

Japan's War Orphans and New Overseas Chinese: History, Identification and
(Multi)ethnicity

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Japanese “war orphans” are people of Japanese parentage who were stranded in China as children following the end of World War Two. This dissertation discusses war orphans in terms of their historical circumstances in China, their belated “repatriation” to Japan, and the difficulties of their post-resettlement lives there. Throughout this historical trajectory, the experiences of the war orphans suggest the ways in which Sino-Japanese ethnicity and history are configured and contested. This dynamic can be observed in war orphan political activism over the terms of their official identification, in Japanese volunteer efforts on behalf of the war orphans and other immigrants, in the education of war orphan children and grandchildren in Japanese schools, and in the relationship between war orphans and other recent migrants from China (so-called “New Overseas Chinese”).

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Finally, I thank Sonja and Devon for teaching me what family can mean.

Dedication

To my teachers

Chapter 1: Introducing the War Orphans

On January 29th 2001, a small delegation of elderly Japanese war orphans and their supporters met in Tokyo with the secretaries of several Japanese Diet members.. The delegation presented a series of personal testimonies to convey the suffering that they had experienced due to their long-delayed postwar repatriation from China and the anxiety and anger they felt at facing welfare dependency following their return to Japan. After presenting their grievances to the lawmakers' staff members, the delegation was unexpectedly invited to discuss their concerns in person with an influential senior Diet member. This Diet member received the delegation in his office and listened intently as the war orphans voiced their concerns through a translator. When they finished, the Diet member mentioned his own connection with the war. "Actually, I was born in China too," he informed us as we chatted over tea. "In Tenshin [Tianjin]. I was two years old at the war's end, and was fortunate to have been able to return quickly to Japan. I could have easily shared the same fate as you."

The war orphans reacted warmly to this expression of empathy and the Diet member's promise of support. After the Diet member left, there was an excited conversation in Chinese. "You see," one war orphan exclaimed to another as we walked down the steps to leave the Diet meeting chambers, "if we had returned then too, we might have also ended up as Diet members!"

The English expression "war orphans" refers to people of Japanese parentage who were stranded in China as children at the end of World War II. The Japanese expressions that are officially and colloquially used to identify these people translate literally as "remaining orphans" (*zanryū koji*), "remaining Japanese" (*zanryū hōjin*) or "repatriates from China" (*Chūgoku kikokusha*).¹ As I will show, conflict over the appropriateness of

¹ "Repatriate" is used here in place of the alternative rendering of "returnee" because the meaning of the original term *kikoku* (C: *guiguo*) is specific in referring to a return to one's [originating] country. Also potentially confusing is the fact that in English language scholarship on Japan the term "returnees" is conventionally used to refer to *kikokushijo*, or literally, "repatriate boys and girls" – children of Japanese

these Japanese terms is just one example of the controversy concerning the proper “identification” of the war orphans and their descendants. The terms and conditions under which war orphans and other repatriates have been identified in the post-war period suggest the ways in which the ethnic categories of “Japanese” and “Chinese” are constructed, maintained and contested in Japan, particularly with recourse to “blood” descent and historical suffering.

The conventional account of the orphans’ abandonment opens on August 9, 1945, the day that the Soviet Union’s military forces crossed into northeast China and mounted a devastating attack on the colonial Japanese puppet state of *Manshūkoku* (Manchuria). The popular and official tendency to begin with this date avoids explaining that the state had actively promoted Manchuria’s colonization for many years prior to this time. By the time of the Russian attack more than a million and a half Japanese nationals – soldiers, colonial settlers and their families -- were in the region.² Having placed them there, however, the government then effectively abandoned them when the Russians attacked. The day after the initial assault, the Japanese Army was ordered to fall back and defend Japan’s interests in Korea, leaving tens of thousands of unprotected Japanese colonists to flee and fend for themselves. In the initial fighting with Russian forces some 60,000 Japanese are recorded to have died, but more than three times as many -- mostly non-combatants such as women, children and the elderly – subsequently perished under the horrific conditions of the retreat and the long delay that preceded group repatriations to Japan.³ During this chaotic period, several thousand Japanese infants and children were

expatriate workers who return to Japan after some significant residence abroad. In Chinese, the war orphans are discussed as either *yiliu gu'er* (the most common expression in Mainland China) or *canliu gu'er* (the Chinese pronunciation of the Japanese term *zanryū koji*, more common in Japan).

² The history of Japanese colonialism in China is outside the scope of the present discussion but this history – and particularly the state-sponsored settlement of Manchuria – is repeatedly cited by Japanese activists and scholars as evidence of the Japanese government’s responsibility for the war orphans’ suffering. For example, Fujinuma (1998, 236) writes that an “accurate recognition” of this history is “essential” when considering the responsibility of subsequent Japanese governments for this migration. For the history of Manchurian colonization in English and Japanese, respectively, see Young (1999) and Araragi (2000).

³ Although Japan surrendered less than a week later on August 15th, group repatriations did not begin until some nine months later in May of 1946. One reason for this prolonged delay was the ongoing domestic struggle between the Chinese Nationalists and Communists. In the interval, most Japanese were confined in prison camps where disease and starvation were rampant. Fujinuma (1998, 236) quotes a Ministry of Health and Welfare document (*Hikiage to engo 30nen no ayumi*) as saying that some 60,000 died in the

taken in by Chinese and ethnic Korean households. The circumstances of these Japanese “orphans” (J: *koji*; C: *gu'er*) varied: some had indeed lost their parents to violence or sickness, others had simply become separated from their parents in the confused retreat; still others were given to local families for safekeeping by parents who feared for their health or safety. Although some of these infants and children were subsequently included in the succession of mass repatriations that followed, when the 1958 cessation of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations⁴ put an end to organized repatriations, an estimated ten thousand or so Japanese still remained in China (Araragi, 2000, 25).

Among the hundreds of thousands of unrepatriated Japanese whose postwar fate “is a neglected chapter among the countless epic tragedies of World War II,”⁵ thousands of these Japanese orphans remained unrepatriated and unacknowledged by Japan’s government for decades. They grew up as the foster children of Chinese families, often in rural areas of China’s northeast, far from what remained of their Japanese natal families. There most went on to marry Chinese spouses, have children and pursue a living in China. Some orphans knew of their Japanese parentage and many suffered persecution as a result, particularly during the various political movements of the 1950s and 60s. But others grew up entirely unaware of their Japanese parentage until late in life, often only at the death of a foster parent. Even those war orphans who knew of (and cherished) their Japanese parentage retained little if anything in the way of Japanese socialization or language skills: in their speech and behavior, war orphans were indistinguishable from the ethnic Han Chinese (or occasionally Korean Chinese) by and around whom they were raised.

Despite the orphans’ unfamiliarity with Japanese language and culture, many of those that were aware of their Japanese background strongly identified themselves as

initial combat with Russian forces and some 185,000 died thereafter (presumably from non-combat related causes). Araragi (2000, 25) writes that some 80,000 of the approximately 270,000 “Manchurian Immigrants” died, and this was 45% of the total Japanese deaths in Manchuria.

⁴ With the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, repatriation activities ceased temporarily. Repatriation restarted in 1952 with PRC cooperation, but broke off again in 1958. This final break in diplomatic relations was precipitated by an incident at a Chinese stamp exhibition in Nagasaki during which a Japanese youth dragged down a Chinese flag. China protested and Japanese Prime Minister (and former war criminal) Kishi made a statement that emphasized friendship with Taiwan and refusal to recognize Communist China (Fujinuma 1998, 237).

⁵ Dower (1999, 50).

Japanese and hoped to eventually “return” to Japan to seek their parents and blood relatives.⁶ After the 1958 break in Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations, however, few had any choice but to remain in China for almost a quarter of a century, and often longer.

Following the resumption of diplomatic relations in 1972, Japanese volunteers and influential sympathizers pressured the Japanese government to pursue and support the identification of these orphans, and to provide state-funded repatriation of those that wished to resettle in Japan. Largely as a result of such efforts, nearly 3000 adult war orphans have “returned” to Japan, usually accompanied or followed by members of their Chinese families.⁷ The first waves of state-sponsored repatriation in the 1980s were heavily publicized and attracted nationwide attention and sympathy. But the terms and conduct of resettlement quickly led to more than two decades of conflicts between orphan supporters and the Japanese government, in which the recent lawsuit is the latest development.

Despite the efforts of volunteers and the gradual expansion of state assistance, orphans and their Chinese families have encountered enormous difficulties adjusting to Japan. In particular, limited or nonexistent Japanese language skills have put both adults and children at a severe disadvantage, the former in Japan’s job market and the latter in Japan’s schools.⁸ Since most orphans were over 50 by the time they were finally able to return to Japan, even those who immediately began working had too little time to qualify for a full national pension at retirement. As a result most orphans have no alternative but

⁶ Many of the foster families hid the Japanese identities of their adopted children, often for their own protection. Many orphans were mere infants when they were abandoned and did not know of their true parentage until they were grown adults.

⁷ The website for the quasi-governmental Chinese Repatriate Resettlement Promotion Center (<http://www.kikokusha-center.or.jp>) gives recent (30 November 2004) statistics from Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare that record 2,795 war orphans, 2,481 of whom are resettled in Japan. Of the 313 orphans that remain in China, nearly two thirds have been specifically “identified” (*hanmei*) with respect to their Japanese families but have chosen to stay in China. (Chūgoku kikokusha teichaku sokushin sentā 2004). As Fujinuma (1998, 234) has noted, the government does not keep a tally of the orphans that have returned with private means, nor does the government possess accurate statistics on the number of family members that accompany each orphan. The government data cited above record a total of 20,050 “repatriates,” composed of the 2,481 orphans and their family members. However, Fujinuma and others estimate that the total number of Chinese relations that have accompanied or followed the war orphans to Japan is likely closer to 100,000.

⁸ Some 60% of orphans 65 and under are dependent on welfare and nearly all live in public housing projects. According to the data compiled by one Japanese researcher, the children and grandchildren of war orphans have a high school matriculation rate that is approximately half the national average (Kaji 2000).

to depend upon state welfare in their old age, despite the restrictions and social stigma that welfare recipients suffer in Japan.

War orphans engendered widespread sympathy and support largely due to their characterization as ethnically Japanese (by virtue of their parentage) and their intimate association with the history of Japanese suffering in Manchuria. For many Japanese, the biological fact of Japanese descent is the basis for a wide range of conscious and unconscious assumptions about a person's linguistic abilities and character, such as the belief that a person of Japanese descent will speak and act "Japanese" like oneself. This type of "identification" is predictably heightened in the case of Japanese veterans and former colonists who experienced the historical moment of the orphans' abandonment and who later formed the core of war orphan advocacy.

The Japanese government's administrative category of "war orphans" (*zanryū koji*) exemplifies yet another form of identification, one premised on Japanese parentage and tied to special visa terms, state-funded travel and training, and preferential access to housing and education. In this formulation, ethnicity is in a complex relationship with citizenship.

War orphans themselves display varied and complex identifications with Japanese ethnicity, depending upon such circumstances as the age at which they were orphaned, their treatment growing up in China, their experience of Japan and their Japanese relatives, and the terms under which they have been "identified" as Chinese or Japanese in both cultural contexts.

Because practices of ethnic identification have been at once so varied and yet so deeply felt and consequential, they have been so hotly contested in the drawn-out process of war orphan repatriation. Thus the subject of ethnicity constitutes a natural focus for an understanding of the war orphans' circumstances and their interaction with (other) Japanese.

Identifying ethnicity

What is meant by "ethnicity"? From the outset, we should acknowledge that "ethnicity" as a category of analysis suffers from at least two shortcomings. In the first

place, it is an imperfect translation of the varied terms that Chinese, Japanese, and others use to discuss the idea of ethnic identity. Furthermore, even in English there is considerable disagreement among social scientists as to how ethnicity ought to be defined. The sociologist author of a widely cited recent study on ethnicity in Japan devotes a mere paragraph to discussing the term's definition, and simply asserts that "there is no getting around the essentially ambiguous definition of nation or ethnicity."⁹

This has not stopped scholars from trying. By way of imposing some order on the debate, histories and overviews of "ethnicity" as an analytical concept often mention the term's recent provenance in the social sciences and the distinction in interpretive emphasis between "instrumentalists" and "primordialists." In the concept's modern history, an initial stress upon static definitions of ethnic identity has yielded to a more productive concern with process. As Takezawa (1995, 14) writes in her study of Japanese-American ethnicity and redress, the notion of primordial attachment "does not explain well how ethnicity persists and is maintained as social conditions change." The following chapters examine this diverse *process* of ethnic identification—its terms, emotions and outcomes—in a particular trajectory of historical circumstances.

Our knowledge of how ethnic identification "works" has been significantly enriched by Keyes (1981), who improves upon Barth and Geertz by making an important distinction in the relative importance of various "primordial" markers of ethnicity. Keyes argues persuasively for the unique influence of descent (among a multiplicity of other imagined and corporeal distinctions) in the process of identifying a person's ethnicity. This can also be viewed as a partial answer to Takezawa's concern for process, since descent is "by nature" reproduced across and through generations. Takezawa's own work explicitly affirms the importance of another of Keyes' insights, the shared perception of ancestral suffering as a means of building the solidarity of an ethnic group. In the ethnic identifications of "Japanese" and "Chinese" that are profiled in the following pages, a particular temporal touchstone of suffering—represented variously by the Sino-Japanese conflict of 1931-45 and its aftermath—is also a compelling experience and metaphor in this ethnic sense.

⁹ Lie (2001, 3). He then goes on to write a book on ethnicity in Japan, perhaps in an attempt at a definition.

Keyes' approach is productively refined in a critique by Williams (1989), and since Williams' approach to ethnicity guides my own, her points are worth discussing in some detail. Williams (402) views the creation of ethnicity as "the product of combined scientific, lay and political classification[s]" that are linked with one another, and she posits the explication of these linkages as the goal of analysis. Referring to the political-economic dynamics of ethnic identification, Williams faults Keyes for excluding from his analysis "the ideological creation of the ethnic group as a conceptual category that pre- and post-exists the formation of any particular ethnic group. The establishment of such a category is a fundamental feature of a nation building process within which the putative creation of homogeneity out of a reality of heterogeneity is an ideologically defined goal." (428) In Japan, the production of such categories (which are literally policed) is part of the "memory of the state" discussed in the following chapter, and the crux of conflict over war orphan citizenship. Keyes' emphasis on descent is borne out in the fact that both ethnic membership and citizenship are largely assigned in Japan by *jus sanguinus*. Williams suggests a refinement to Keyes' approach by stressing the influence of nationalist categories, and clarifying the terms under which ethnic identification ought to be theorized: "The ethnic aspect of identity formation...must be understood in relation to the *societal* production of enduring categorical distinctions and not simply in terms of *individuals* adopting and 'shedding' particular manifestations of those categorical identities" (428, emphasis mine). In the following pages I attempt to chart the tensions between the social production and individual adoption of ethnic categories. In conflicts over identification, one can see how such categories are produced at the nexus of unequal influences.

Indeed, Williams urges us to remember the ever-present inequalities among the "agents" in determining how identification is structured. "Nor are individuals equally empowered to opt out of the labeling process, to become the invisible against which others' visibility is measured. The illusion" that they are equal "fades when we ask whether those who identify themselves with a particular ethnic identity could also successfully claim no ethnic identification." (420) Attention to such hierarchies of influence is another guiding concern of the analyses in the following chapters.

Despite the foregoing refinements to our theoretical and methodological orientations, it must be conceded that much of the dynamism and reach of ethnic identification remain beyond the researcher's grasp. One cannot fully comprehend or convey the imaginative associations that are suggested by the encounter that begins this chapter. As ethnographers and researchers we seize, then, upon verbal fragments, revealing snippets of behavior and the material manifestations of ideology in influential "categories" of personhood that are tied to resources and privileges, such as citizenship.

Research methodology

The fieldwork data presented in the following chapters is drawn primarily from my research residence in Japan between September 1999 and February 2001. Before embarking on dissertation fieldwork in Yokohama, Japan, I spent almost a year in mainland China and Taiwan doing archival and interview research on recent Chinese residence in, and migration to, Japan.

During the Japan phase of my dissertation research I was affiliated with Kanagawa University through the person of my Japanese advisor, Professor Ōsato Hiroaki. About a month after my arrival Professor Ōsato introduced me to a former student of his, Hayakawa Hideki (profiled in Chapter 3) who was running a Japanese language class for immigrant children and families. The class was held in an enormous low-income public housing project that was isolated in a remote corner of the Yokohama suburbs. Over the next seventeen months I frequently volunteered as a teacher in Hayakawa's class, and I spoke with the immigrant children and parents that attended. My initial fieldwork goal had been a vague desire to research new Chinese migrants in Japan, but my exploratory research on the diverse types of "Chinese in Japan," including interviews with illegal laborers, college students and the long-established "old" Overseas Chinese (*rō kakyō*), convinced me that the best I could do was to pick a focus from among that variety. At that point I was also discovering that most of the "Chinese"

children and parents who came to Hayakawa's language class were in some way connected with the war orphans and their celebrated repatriation. As a consequence, I began to focus my research and interviewing efforts upon understanding the war orphans' situation, their past, their grievances, their present struggles, and their motivations. Through Hayakawa I was introduced to the Manchurian veteran and volunteer Sugawara Kōsuke and the political activities of his war orphan advocacy and teaching organization in Yokohama (also profiled in Chapter 3). I spent a great deal of time interviewing Sugawara about the history of volunteer advocacy on behalf of the war orphans, and I attended meetings and engaged in signature gathering activities in conjunction with the war orphans' petition for improved old age security provisions. Soon after my departure this activist group led protest marches on the Diet building and ultimately initiated the unprecedented compensation lawsuit that is discussed in Chapter 2.

I conducted a total of 46 interviews with war orphans and their families, about half of which were arranged through Sugawara's introduction or under his auspices. Japanese volunteers and officials were interviewed in Japanese, war orphans and their relatives were interviewed using Mandarin Chinese (with a handful of exceptions among younger repatriates, with whom Japanese was used). The average interview was approximately one and a half hours in length. They were unstructured, but their guiding concerns are evident in the interviews of war orphans and volunteers presented in Chapters 3 and 4. Broadly, these include an interest in the orphans' memories of their past life in China, their motivations for coming to Japan and their experience of Japan following their return. Within these broader discussions I was particularly interested in how my interviewees participated in, and reacted against, practices of ethnic identification.

In addition to utilizing an open-ended question format, the conversations were open to participation from other family members, who were often present because interviews were frequently conducted at the homes of war orphans (or their children) in conjunction with a meal. Much of the most revealing discussion was indeed conducted during such meals and other informal contexts that are imperfectly inscribed in my notes and memory. For example, my informal contacts with three of the individuals discussed

in the following pages—Hayakawa, Sugawara, and Ōkubo Akio—were considerably longer than the space of an interview. These experiences informed my choice of research emphases and my interpretation of the recorded data.

In sum, my choice of methodology was guided by the same pursuit of qualitative data that Takezawa (1995) assesses and eloquently justifies in her own study of ethnic identity:

“Questions that will bring out ethnography are more suitable than those designed to test a single hypothesis. Moreover, open-ended questions permit the anthropologist to observe the subject not just as an isolated individual but as linked to family, friends, and other people in the community...ethnic identity is a matter not of quantity but of quality, especially since feelings that shape ethnic identity, such as pain, shame, pride, and joy, are not measurable in figures. In addition, it is possible to learn how and why ethnicity is transformed only through qualitative research.”

My discussion of ethnic identification among Japanese volunteers, war orphans and their families, and recent Chinese immigrants sought the terms of this identification: how they are expressed, imposed and changed. The qualitative research method that Takezawa describes proved the most effective and evocative means of doing so.

In the following chapter (Chapter 2), I discuss the “memory of the state” as a powerful mediator of ethnic identification, and the imaginary reconstructions of the wartime past that have been influential in shaping Japanese public opinion and notions of “responsibility” for the war’s losses. In Chapter 3 I introduce the experiences and opinions of Japanese volunteers that have been involved in war orphan assistance, including their reflections upon ethnic categorizations and their views of Japanese suffering and responsibility. In Chapter 4 I present two extended interviews with war orphans to suggest the complexity of ethnic identification and the difficulty of generalizing about the circumstances and motivations of individuals that nevertheless share the official categorization of “war orphans.” Chapter 5 analyzes the importance of

language learning to “repatriate youth,” discusses the connection between native-language (i.e. Chinese) learning and ethnic identification, and concludes with a focus on Ōkubo Akio’s creative assertion of multiethnicity. Chapter 6 treats recent Chinese immigrants in Japan and their discourse on war orphan ethnicity and their own “Chineseness” with reference to historical precedent as well as economic motivation. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of Japanese “identity” and a reflection on the proper conduct of ethnography.

Chapter 2: Japan's "War Orphans" and the Loss of the Past

"Every year, the pensions that are issued to surviving war veterans amount to an astonishing sum of money. They are divided into grades depending upon rank and years of service, and the higher the grade, the bigger the pension. This group includes war criminals that participated in all aspects of the war; the highest officers were the biggest war criminals and murderers, and as a result of their actions Japan suffered limitless misfortune. They also forced people in places like China and Southeast Asia to endure unspeakable disasters...Even these perpetrators of cruelties are given pensions, and they are the biggest pensions! By contrast, although the thousands of war orphans who suffered in the war did decades of penance in China for such war criminals, the present government treats [war orphan] victims like foreign refugees." -- From an essay by a Japanese war orphan accompanying 100,000 signatures and a petition concerning old-age security that were presented to Japan's Diet in 2001.

In December of 2002, the largest war-related compensation suit in Japan's history was brought against the Japanese government. Yet despite its historic proportions, it has attracted far less notice than the highly publicized war compensation claims of the 1990s: suits by former sex slaves (so-called "comfort women"),¹¹ forced laborers, and former soldiers who also filed claims in Tokyo's District Court.¹² However, unlike these better-known suits by foreign nationals, the plaintiffs in this recent landmark suit are not foreigners but Japanese: 637 war orphans who are each seeking 33 million yen in compensation.¹³ Among their grievances, the war orphans cite the Japanese government's failure to repatriate them immediately after the war, and its subsequent failure to properly see to their resettlement and care when repatriation was finally carried

¹¹ I use the official term "comfort women" (*ianfu*) with the caution that it is a government euphemism disguising the real horror and trauma of an organized system of sexual slavery maintained by the Japanese state for its soldiers in Asia.

¹² See Won Soon Park (1997, 123) for a list of suits in the 90s and the preference for the Tokyo District Court. She notes that the average time for resolution is one decade.

¹³ See The Japan Times Online, December 21, 2002, "War orphans sue state for leaving them in China," <http://www.japantimes.com/cgi-bin/getarticle.p15?nn20021221a2.html>; accessed October 15th, 2004.

out many decades later. Less than two years after the suit was filed, a nationwide movement has resulted in over twenty related war orphan compensation suits in district courts from Japan's northern island of Hokkaido to the southern island of Kyushu. The number of war orphan plaintiffs in these suits against the Japanese government now totals approximately 75% of all war orphans living in Japan.¹⁴

As the quote that begins this chapter suggests, one of the central issues behind this recent war orphan activism has been the government's responsibility for the war orphans' old age security (*rōgo hoshō*). Although war orphan advocates were relatively successful in winning public sympathy and some political support in the 1980s, their concerns have recently faded from the public's attention. This is in large part due to the inexorable passing of Japan's wartime generation, which provided the war orphans with many of their strongest advocates and sympathizers. With the average age of the orphans themselves near 60, many feel that if policy change is not forthcoming they must try to use the courts to secure a lump compensation. However, they likely face a long wait before their case is resolved, and then not necessarily to their advantage.¹⁵

As Japan's government comes under increasing domestic and international pressure to acknowledge and compensate the victims of Japanese aggression during the Asia Pacific War (1931-1945), the war orphans illustrate the contentious ways in which the memories—and victims—of the war have been popularly re-presented and officially identified in postwar Japan. In particular, the ways in which the war orphans have been bureaucratically identified provide concrete examples of the means by which the postwar state has circumscribed its responsibility for the war. Against this attempt, the haunting physical re-appearance of the war's victims—such as the “comfort women” and the war orphans—has helped to remind Japanese of the (corpo)reality of the war's traumas. Yet the re-examination of history that these victims have encouraged has largely failed to translate into adequate state compensation for their losses. With the imminent passage of

¹⁴ See “*Zanryū koji no 75% ga genkoku ni: arata ni 126nin ga teiso.*” Kyodo News. <http://headlines.yahoo.co.jp/hl?a=20041004-000085-kyodo-soci>; accessed October 15, 2004. On October 4th, 2004, the occasion of the most recent suit in the Tokyo District Court, plaintiffs presented the government with a petition signed by 400,000 Japanese supporters throughout the country, and then carried out a demonstration near the Japanese Diet.

¹⁵ See Park (1997).

the wartime generation, the recent spate of lawsuits by war orphans and others are final attempts at eliciting apologies and/or material compensation before the plaintiffs' deaths enforce silence once again.

War's Remembrance and "Postwar Settlement" (*sengo shori*)

Partly for generational reasons, the past two decades have showcased a marked increase in international attention to memories of World War Two.¹⁶ Some of this attention has been contentious, even in victor nations such as the United States where the conflict is broadly perceived to have been a "good war."¹⁷ However, Japan is arguably singular in the intensity and frequency of recent conflicts concerning the war's conduct, commemoration and compensation.

Domestic conflicts over the war's interpretation have existed in Japan throughout the entire postwar period, but the tradition of formal protest against the Japanese government can be dated to Ienaga Saburo's 1965 textbook lawsuit over government censorship.¹⁸ Ienaga's criticisms began to attract wider attention in the 1980s when there were international diplomatic protests and popular anger over three interrelated issues: representations of the war in Japanese textbooks, official visits to honor Japanese war dead and inflammatory statements about the war made by Japanese officials.¹⁹ Since the first "comfort women" lawsuit in 1991, war atrocities have been the subject of dozens of compensation lawsuits against the Japanese government.²⁰ The war orphan compensation claim is the latest in this series, though it is unusual both in the size of the claim and the fact that the plaintiffs are Japanese victims of the war.

Why has Japan's task of "postwar settlement" (*sengo shori*) remained so unsettled? Many of the wartime events and actions that have recently provoked such outrage have in fact been familiar to thousands of Japanese who witnessed or engaged in

¹⁶ See Trefalt (2001) and Fujitani (2001) for lists of English language sources. These include war-based media projects, journalistic reports, state commemorations, etc.

¹⁷ See for example Braw (1997), Hein and Selden (1997, 2000) and Yoneyama (1999).

¹⁸ See for example Nozaki and Inokichi (2000).

¹⁹ See Whiting (1989) for a detailed examination of these protests from Chinese perspectives.

²⁰ These protests and lawsuits have in turn fed a longstanding but growing Japanese revisionism that attempts to deny or downplay Japanese wartime atrocities. See for example McCormack (2000).

them first hand. Thus many studies of postwar Japanese attitudes towards the war use terms like “amnesia” to discuss the loss and suppression of the war’s traumas, particularly those traumas inflicted upon Japan’s victims.²¹ How else to explain why so many well-known atrocities went publicly unacknowledged for so long? But “amnesia” is just a metaphor encompassing selective silence (on the part of those who experienced or inflicted the war’s suffering) and ignorance (in those who did not); the question that analysts of Japanese “amnesia” are really asking is how and why this silence was enabled and maintained over the past half century of postwar Japanese history.

In this regard, Japan’s situation differs strikingly from postwar Germany, to which it is often compared.²² The contrast was particularly stark during the immediate postwar period, when a widespread silence among Japanese that had experienced the war endured for more than two decades. This reticence went largely unquestioned by not only the Japanese government (which was complicit in avoiding the past) but also younger Japanese. In an essay on postwar Japanese popular memory, historian Carol Gluck (1993, 69) describes this silence by noting that

“the Great Empire of Japan vanished from utterance, even in negative mention. Unlike postimperial Europe, Japanese public discourse admitted no attachment or loss, no ruefulness or remorse. It was a feat of contrary prestidigitation, suddenly to make nothing out of something, rhetorically to forget the war and forget the empire.”

²¹ The general tenor of such critiques is suggested by the somewhat sensational title of one recent example: *Japan’s War Memories: Amnesia or concealment?* (Hicks 1998). In fact, many Japanese have recently grown quite vocal about the war and their memories of it, and many Western works on Japanese war memories and atrocities draw upon pioneering scholarship by Japanese researchers and activists. Hicks, for example, draws heavily on Yoshida (1995). Other examples of Japanese scholarship and activism include Ienaga Saburo’s famous textbook lawsuits and the works of Yoshimi Yoshiaki (1995) and Yuki Tanaka (1996, 2002) on the “comfort women” issue, among others. Tanaka (2002, 2-3) situates his own scholarship as a response to the silence of his father and uncles – all officers in wartime Manchuria – concerning Japanese atrocities, but notes that these silences were selective and their motivations were unclear. It should be emphasized that many of these critics also document postwar U.S. complicity in covering up Japanese war crimes and helping the Japanese emperor avoid responsibility for the war.

²² Notably in Buruma (1994).

²⁵ See for example Braw (1997). Yoneyama (1999) also discusses recent attempts to “tame the memoryscape” and “brighten” Hiroshima.

As Gluck notes later (85) in the same essay, this silence went largely unquestioned by subsequent generations of Japanese.

“The German question ‘What did you do during the war father?’ [was not] asked of the personal memory of the older generation in Japan. It was as if the prewar past had been so aggressively and tidily addressed in 1945 that it resisted review, debate, and the moral complexities of historicization in subsequent postwar years.”

If Japanese silence was voluntary, Japan’s Asian victims had little choice. Particularly during the early postwar period, Japanese were insulated from the grievances and memories of foreign victims by Cold War geopolitics, the priorities of the U.S. Occupation forces and the state-to-state settlement of reparations through treaty agreements. These treaty agreements would later serve as the core of the Japanese government’s defense against compensation claims by foreign nationals.

Amidst this general silence regarding Japanese aggression and colonialism, some war experiences nevertheless became foci for commemoration and discussion. This was true of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and (to a lesser extent) Nagasaki, but many of the bombs’ actual victims maintained voluntary or coerced silences.²⁵ With this widely shared unwillingness or inability to discuss first-hand experiences of the war, the need to express the suffering associated with Japan’s defeat and loss was often satisfied obliquely. Yoshikuni Igarashi’s (2000) study of Japanese war memories between 1945 and 1970 shows how the war’s unresolved traumas periodically reappeared in Japanese popular culture and memory as metaphorical “bodies of memory,” proxies for the real but unacknowledged suffering.²⁶ But even these pale reflections gradually diminished in intensity with the passage of time and Japan’s growing postwar affluence, to the point

²⁶ Igarashi focuses on a variety of bodies (such as those of Godzilla and the ethnic Korean wrestler Rikidozan) and bodily practices (such as the hygienic practices implemented by Occupation authorities in the immediate postwar period) to show how memories of trauma and loss were suppressed and obliquely embodied.

where, as Igarashi notes (17) “despite the efforts to represent loss within the prosperity of the late 1960s Japanese society steadily erased the process of forgetting by positing the loss as the basis of the narrative of Japan’s postwar growth.”²⁷

Beginning soon thereafter in the 1970s, however, this forgetting and erasure began to be reversed by several factors. The 1972 re-establishment of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations encouraged a flow of contact that soon confronted Japanese with actual “bodies of memory,” living testimonies to the suffering inflicted by Japanese on Asian populations. Changed political relations between Japan, the Peoples Republic of China and South Korea brought Japanese and their former colonial victims and enemies into much greater contact with one another. One aspect of this contact has been the vivid return of suffering bodies to the Japanese public eye, both through the activism and research of Japanese citizens as well as the actual presence of foreign war victims in Japan.

Although there has never been one consensual “public memory” of the war at any point in Japan’s postwar history, the 1970s fractured it further by ushering in a growing proliferation of public perspectives on the war from those (foreigners and Japanese) who had directly experienced it. One of the early dramatic and influential examples of this discussion was a 1971 work (Honda 1971) that introduced the Japanese public to the testimonies of Chinese survivors and witnesses of the Nanjing Massacre. The author Honda Katsuichi, a journalist with the national Asahi newspaper, wrote *Travels in China* (*Chūgoku no tabi*) as a series of newspaper articles, which then became the first in a series of books discussing the Nanjing Massacre. The growing opportunities for contact with China after 1972 accelerated the Japanese discussions of war memories, particularly among those who had been abroad in Manchuria. Japanese visitors to China both

²⁷ Ivy (1995, 15) also writes of how the economic miracle “allowed the manic overcoming of the war’s trauma through the displacement of memories in the routines of overwork.”

³⁰ Hammond (1997) details the historically close relationship between the ministry and the military (and hence veterans and bereaved) and provides an overview of the museum’s planning and execution. She also discusses the conflicts over official observances in Japan on August 15. She notes however that other groups of bereaved have recently emerged, embracing different interpretations of the war.

continued Honda's translation of Chinese perspectives and contributed their own reminiscences upon revisiting their former colonial homes.

It was in this context that the war orphan issue rose to public prominence in the early 1980s and catalyzed a wide-ranging discussion of the war and Japan's colonial experience in Manchuria. Since that time the war has received growing attention among Japanese academics and news media, particularly regarding the lawsuits and claims of state responsibility for wartime atrocities.

Despite this open discussion and vigorous debate, Japan has remained the object of international censure because of the government's continued refusal to pay compensation to Japan's wartime victims. This refusal has been justified with reference to the postwar treaties that legally settled compensation claims between Japan and the countries that suffered Japanese wartime aggression.

By contrast, the Japanese government has spent (and continues to spend) an enormous amount of money "compensating" Japanese veterans and the war bereaved. There is a well-known relationship of mutual assistance between members of the Japanese government (especially the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare), veterans groups, and societies of the bereaved. During the lengthy postwar dominance of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party and its conservative core, this relationship has generally translated into consistent blocs of political support. The influence of veterans groups has encouraged official support for memorializations of Japanese sacrifice in the form of events and institutions that often downplay or deny the sacrifices Japanese exacted from other Asians (not to mention the atrocities). Partly for this reason, participation by Japanese politicians in the official and unofficial memorialization of Japanese war dead has been a highly charged international issue for more than two decades. The recent planning and construction of a state-funded war museum also exposed the intimate relationship between the Association of Bereaved Families and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare while providing a concrete example of the ways in which a specific vision of the war has received government support.³⁰ For the postwar government, there is an obvious logic to celebrating sacrifices for the state. In the words of former Prime Minister Nakasone, whose unprecedented visits to Yasukuni Shrine sparked the first

international protests in 1982: “It is fitting that people express their gratitude to the nation’s martyrs, else who would offer his life for his country?”³¹

Like the bereaved group and Japanese military veterans, Japan’s “war orphans” have close ties to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and are the beneficiary of funds and social services that flow through it. Both groups are eligible for government dispensations by virtue of being Japanese and suffering losses in the war. The personal war memories of both groups have been widely discussed in Japanese society. Yet the war’s consequences—and suffering—have been quite different for each. And the level and nature of government compensation dramatically differ. Thus it may seem natural that in contrast to the bereaved group’s coziness with the conservative center of Japan’s government, war orphans and their supporters have engaged in nearly three decades of conflict with both bureaucrats and ruling party politicians over appropriate assistance and compensation.

Like the compensation claims made by foreign victims of the war, the war orphan claims explicitly insist on Japanese state responsibility. Unlike foreign claimants, war orphans and their supporters have seen many of their demands gradually met (albeit reluctantly) by the Japanese government. This is among the factors that forestalled the use of litigation despite more than two decades of activism. Litigation has come as a last resort for the war orphans, but in using the courts they join a growing group of other claimants that are trying to force a reassessment of the war before they die. Unlike suits by foreign nationals, the Japanese government cannot use treaty settlements as a pretext for ignoring war orphan claims.

In this chapter I discuss how war orphans made a sensational and widely publicized return to 1980s Japan as “bodies of memory” that viscerally linked Japanese to the war’s past and catalyzed widespread debate about the war and state responsibility. In examining their treatment at the hands of the Japanese government, I then trace the function of Japan’s “memory of the state,” a cumulative record and process of official

³¹ As quoted in Field (1993, 136). Field profiles a Japanese widow who unsuccessfully protests state involvement in the enshrinement of her husband, a former soldier.

acts, legislation, and ethnic identification that has functioned to circumscribe Japanese political responsibility for the war and police the boundaries of Japaneseness.

“Bodies of Memory” and the Re-presentation of War Orphan Experience

In their Introduction, the editors of a recent volume on “perilous memories” of the Asia-Pacific War(s) illustrate “the often precarious nature of memory” by citing the experience of one Japanese contributor, an activist named Ishihara Masaie:

“Growing up in Okinawa, he had been constantly exposed in his everyday actions to the sight of people bearing deep physical scars on their bodies. Yet the pervasive silence in postwar Okinawa about the horrors of the war prevented Ishihara and others from making any meaningful association between what they saw and the Battle of Okinawa. It was this gap between the common sight of scars etched onto survivors’ bodies and positive historical knowledge, or more precisely, the lack thereof, that drove Ishihara and others in their decades-long efforts to fill the memory void.”³²

The memory void between physical bodies and historical knowledge was also a driving force behind the intense popular and media attention that was lavished on the war orphans. In the case of the war orphans, the void was not merely the circumstances surrounding their abandonment, it was first and foremost the compelling mystery of their Japanese parentage. In the absence of more detailed descriptors, the bodies of the orphans were intimately described in terms of uniquely identifying birthmarks, scars or other physical features, and their blood was tested for evidence of their provenance. In this concerted attempt to identify the orphans and their Japanese families, the nationwide circulation of orphan photographs and fragmentary personal histories resulted in widespread discussion of the war and Japan’s colonial experience in Manchuria.

³² Fujitani (2001). For a compelling account of younger Okinawans recovering the wartime past, see Field (1993).

Although these discussions could be critical of the Japanese government, the “Manchurian boom” that the orphans precipitated focused on Japanese (rather than Asian) suffering and rarely questioned Japanese civilian complicity in colonialism.³³ And while the memories and testimonies of the orphans themselves were often translated and presented in great detail, the “historical knowledge” that others provided to contextualize orphan experiences could reduce orphans to mediums through which the memories and perspectives of other Japanese were powerfully evoked.

In addition to the war orphans, hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers remained unaccounted for decades after the war’s end, leaving equal numbers of Japanese families in limbo. “The chaos of these numbers,” writes Japan historian John Dower, “—hundreds of thousands of soldiers, sailors and civilians simply disappearing overseas—suggests how essentially meaningless the formal dating of ‘war’s end’ was for many Japanese. Year after year, wives, children, and parents waited for kin to return, often learning...that they had been bereaved all the while; or, even worse, never learning anything at all.”³⁴ Over the following decade and a half, a number of Japanese citizens made individual or collective efforts to locate and repatriate relatives that had been stranded in China. For their part, some orphans in China also strove to return to Japan or make contact with their families there. Most of these initiatives were unsuccessful. However, the 1972 resumption of diplomatic ties led to greatly enhanced opportunities for contact. In August of 1974, one Japanese volunteer group³⁵ contacted Japan’s nationally-circulated Asahi newspaper with a collection of letters and photographs from Japanese seeking lost relatives in China, as well as from Japanese orphans in China seeking their families in Japan. The subsequent serial publication of these letters and photos sparked nationwide popular interest and sympathy, lending impetus to a mounting

³³ See Gluck (1993, 84) and Yoneyama (1999, 11).

³⁴ Dower (1999, 52).

³⁵ Kawai (2000, 6). The organization’s name was *Nicchū yūkōte wo tsunagu kai*. See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of the volunteers.

citizen effort to persuade the “passive” Japanese government to assist in the location and repatriation of orphans and other Japanese remaining in China.³⁶

Although pressured into taking a more active role, the government’s Ministry of Health and Welfare³⁷ at first largely limited its involvement to working with civilian volunteer groups in order to locate, identify and publicize individuals in China that claimed to be Japanese orphans.³⁸ But sustained pressure from journalists, volunteer organizations, veterans groups and sympathetic politicians and bureaucrats led the Japanese government in 1980 to take more active measures for repatriation.

The most visible consequence of this new stance was the 1981 initiation of state-funded “Relative-seeking visits to Japan” (*Hōnichi nikushin sagashi chōsa*). These visits took groups of individuals that the government had certified as “war orphans” and brought them to Japan for short visits. The goal was to provide opportunities for direct contact between the war orphans and Japanese seeking relatives lost in China.³⁹ In conjunction with each of these visits, the national print- and television media cooperated by widely circulating information on the visiting war orphans, including their photographs (both as children and as adults) and such clues as could be gleaned regarding their Japanese parentage. These might include the circumstances under which they were orphaned or separated from their families, what was remembered of their Japanese family (their names, number of siblings, the occupations of their parents, circumstances of their deaths), any identifying physical characteristics, how they came to be aware of their Japanese parentage, and so forth. In the vast majority of cases these clues were fragmentary at best. Few orphans were old enough in 1945 to have clear memories of

³⁶ These articles were serialized as “Records of the separated” (*Ikihanareta mono no kiroku*) beginning on August 15th, the anniversary of Japan’s surrender. Beginning the next year, 1975, and continuing to 1981, the MHW conducted nine formal surveys of the identities of war orphans (*Nihonjin koji no mimoto chōsa*), the last six in conjunction with civilian groups. The results were widely publicized with the cooperation of Japan’s major newspapers. The characterization of the Japanese government as “passive” [*shōkyokuteki*] is from Kawai (2000, 6).

³⁷ This ministry became the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in 2000.

³⁸ Beginning in 1973 the Japanese government also began issuing travel subsidies and documents for Japanese who had remained in China but wished to return to Japan, primarily for temporary visits. Fujinuma, 254-5.

³⁹ The government officially announced the termination of such visits in 2000 with the 33rd such group. However, they have continued on a much smaller scale.

their family, much less their names. Over three decades had passed since the end of the war and many Chinese foster families had concealed the Japanese parentage of their adopted children and destroyed what evidence may have existed of this background, often for the child's own protection. After all, Japanese had been the hated enemy, and some orphans who were known to be Japanese suffered discrimination and even persecution. This was a particular concern of both orphans and their foster families during China's Cultural Revolution (1966-77).

Fragmentary though they may have been, these photographs and bits of information were disseminated nationwide and avidly followed by many Japanese, particularly "those who had experienced Manchuria" (*Manshū taikensha*).⁴⁰ As one Japanese researcher who worked closely with Manchurian veterans described it, "on each occasion of the war orphan group visits to Japan you devoured the newspaper and television, because you think that maybe they will be there, those abandoned children you saw when you were being repatriated from the refugee flight."⁴¹ One prominent war orphan advocate, a retired Asahi journalist who had served in Manchuria with the military police, spoke similarly of his connection to the war orphan issue. In the hasty retreat from the advancing Soviet troops, he witnessed the abandonment of his fellow Japanese but did nothing to help. With the reappearance of the war orphans he felt a responsibility to belatedly extend that assistance.

Motivated by their shared experiences in China, former Manchurian veterans and colonists formed the core of war orphan advocacy. Some had acquired positions of influence after the war, notably as journalists and politicians, and their support for the war orphans often arose from a profound empathy. Supporters of the war orphans spanned the length of the ideological spectrum, from liberal journalists at the Asahi newspaper to arch-nationalistic conservative politicians. To this day, the gradual—some would say reluctant—development of governmental programs and policies to facilitate

⁴⁰ It is worth noting that the term uses the Japanese term for "experience" (*taiken*) that explicitly denotes bodily experience.

⁴¹ Araragi (2000, 21)

war orphan repatriation and resettlement may be largely attributed to the ideologically diverse influence and activism of these people on behalf of the war orphans.

Many Japanese who had experienced colonial Manchuria felt a direct and often intimate connection with the war orphans, but accounts of the war orphans also elicited the interest and sympathy of many Japanese in the subsequent generation. Most of these Japanese had heard little about the war from their parents, and the history and experiences of the war orphans could provide a type of surrogate satisfaction of their curiosity. This curiosity also contributed to the popularity of a best-selling “historical novel” (*rekishi shōsetsu*) of war orphan experience entitled *Child of the Vast Land* (*Daichi no ko*).⁴²

In contrast to its enormous popularity with a general Japanese audience,⁴³ the book and drama elicited strong condemnation from many war orphans and their supporters. Over one hundred people participated in the formation of a group for “the rectification of errors in the NHK drama *Child of the Vast Land*,” sending letters of protest to the head of NHK demanding a reconsideration of the drama’s content and a cessation of its rebroadcast.⁴⁴ Many complained that the success of the war orphan protagonist was highly unrealistic and grossly misrepresented the prejudice and adversities that many war orphans faced in Chinese society. In their protest letter to NHK, the group laid out three objections. First, they argue that most of the Japanese watching the program assume that it expresses the reality of war orphans’ experience when in fact it offers a warped version of the same. Second, while the author Yamazaki Toyoko has insisted the book is a work of fiction, she also writes in the book that “the protagonist and others were created by tying together the experiences of many orphans met over four years of research in China, and the book’s events are all things that actually occurred.” The NHK drama’s confusion of fiction and nonfiction misleads the viewers, they write. Finally, the protestors claim, neither book nor drama touches upon the fundamental issue

⁴⁴ The information in this paragraph concerning the group’s formation, concerns and contact with NHK are drawn from Sugawara (1998, 249-53)

of the orphans' historical origins or discusses the Japanese government's flawed policies toward the orphans. Although the group behind this protest made similar complaints during two subsequent meetings with the drama's chief producer, *Child of the Vast Land*'s periodic rebroadcast has continued.

Privately, however, many orphans will concede that the book and drama eloquently evoke certain aspects of the orphan experience, such as the affectionate relationship between the Chinese foster parents and their adopted child. One son of a war orphan, who despite some reservations uses the drama as teaching material in some of his high school classes, defends his choice by noting the drama's effectiveness in eliciting and maintaining the viewer's interest in a complex and tragic subject. This is no easy feat when the viewers are young students for whom the war is so abstract as to be irrelevant.

For if orphan experiences were variously appropriated and re-presented in ways that aroused sympathy but often frustrated the orphans themselves, there were also those in whom the orphan experience aroused no sympathy at all. Even at the high point of popular attention in the 1980s, many young Japanese had little sense of why the orphans' situation should be so affecting, and some even mocked the "teary reunions" (*namida no saikai*) that became almost a cliché in television coverage of the relative-seeking tours.⁴⁵

Moreover, despite the intense interest and compassion that the orphans' pasts aroused in many older Japanese, far fewer showed an interest in the present-day circumstances of orphans struggling to adapt to Japanese society. As one Japanese researcher put it, "as soon as the tears of emotion dried, Japanese society forgot them once again. With respect to those orphans who found their relatives and those who did not, few people know what their lives are like after 'relative-seeking.'"⁴⁶ There was a certain degree of disillusionment among many sympathizers (and many orphans) when repatriation and resettlement did not proceed as smoothly and amicably as the "teary reunions" might suggest. The difficulties that many orphans encountered after their resettlement in Japan attracted less media interest than retrospectives about their pasts in

⁴⁵ At a dissertation writing workshop in 2001, a young Japanese scholar told me how he and his friends lampooned the "teary reunions" in a spoof of Japanese television news that they performed at a high school culture festival (*bunkasai*) in the 1980s.

⁴⁶ Araragi (2000, 2).

China, but the former could be equally tragic.⁴⁷ Divorce, chronic joblessness, dependence upon state welfare, juvenile delinquency among the children of orphan families, petty crime, suicide...these issues rarely received public comment save for brief newspaper mentions (“War orphan kills self, children”) and some attention during relative seeking tours (whose plummeting rates of successful reunions also contributed to a drop in public interest).

When orphan-related issues once again received broad public exposure in the late 1990s, it was through the sensationalized criminal world of Hase Seishū’s bestselling novel (then popular film), *Sleepless Town* (*Fuyajō*), in which two of the main characters are the children of war orphans.⁴⁸ Hase describes the bullying one endured in Japanese schools as a precursor to a later life of pathologically violent crime, an image undoubtedly inspired by a spate of media reports on petty crime and motorcycle gang violence involving the children of war orphans. Some biethnic children and grandchildren of war orphans have consciously worked against this image and used television, newspapers, and their own publications in order to give a more balanced sense of war orphan experiences.⁴⁹ Yet there is no avoiding the problems and the failures: Hindsight shows that neither the war orphans nor most Japanese were prepared for the complexity of resettling and integrating so many families from a foreign culture, let alone teaching them enough Japanese to function in Japan’s schools and larger society.

As the quote that opens this chapter argues, war orphans may not warrant the treatment given to foreign refugees. But they have indeed experienced many of the same dislocations and challenges that have faced other recent foreign migrants to Japan. Since a large number of orphans preceded the dramatic late 1980s and early 1990s expansion in migration from countries such as Brazil and China, in many ways they were a test case and a lesson concerning the challenges that subsequently larger waves of migrants

⁴⁷ Two exceptions to this are journalists that publish in, and work for, the Asahi newspaper (such as Ōkubo Maki, Sakamoto Tatsuhiko and Sugawara Kōsuke) and *Shūkan Kinyōbi* (Weekly Friday). For academic studies of orphan readjustment (and many other orphan-related issues), see essays in Araragi (2000).

⁴⁸ Hase (1996). The author’s name is a pseudonym.

⁴⁹ These efforts are typified by Ōkubo Akio’s writings, both for Japanese publications and his own magazine *Hokushin*. See Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of Ōkubo and Hase’s book.

encountered – and will continue to encounter -- in Japan.⁵⁰ For example, studies on the Japanese language learning and scholastic performance of children from war orphan families have been central to the reshaping of JSL (Japanese as a Second Language) teaching and the institutional and curricular transformation of Japanese public schools in response to immigration. However, the growing number of migrants from other backgrounds has made the war orphan connection increasingly irrelevant, and the children and grandchildren of war orphans largely receive the same treatment as other migrants from China and immigrant children in general. Geographically dispersed and superficially indistinguishable from other Japanese or other migrants from China, the special historical background of the war orphans and their descendants is increasingly “invisible.”⁵²

Thus the historical frame and the dramatic narrative through which the Japanese public has experienced the war orphans are bounded by both an unexamined colonial past and an invisible (and ongoing) immigrant present. Although this limited perspective has been repeatedly challenged by activists and some journalists who have sought to draw greater attention to state responsibility and the difficulties of resettlement, the smaller tragedies of the orphans’ present day experience in Japan has not provided a new narrative capable of compelling the same level of interest and sympathy. In this spiral down into invisibility, with the average orphan aged around 60 years old, the current court case is a last gasp attempt to win state compensation before the bases for their grievances are completely forgotten.

Japan’s “Memory of the State” and the Circumscription of Responsibility

In his discussion of social deviance and state control in *fin de siècle* France, Matt Matsuda (1996) describes the function of what he calls “the memory of the state”: “not ‘memory’ as a series of sponsored commemorations, collective ideologies or historical

⁵⁰ See Chapters 5 and 6 for discussions of repatriates within these migratory trends.

⁵² See Araragi’s introductory essay in Araragi (2000) for a discussion of the invisibility of the war orphans and their status as “pariahs.”

patrimonies, but as a series of documents, practices and institutions... what Max Weber would refer to as the ‘domination through knowledge, specifically rational,’ which characterized modern bureaucratic organizations.” To construct this memory, the state engages in an exhaustive and highly specialized accumulation of documents and data, “ultimately collapsing the distinction between ‘identity’ and ‘identification.’”⁵³

By focusing upon the ways in which (official) “identities” are explicitly established and maintained by the state, Matsuda rescues the concept of identity from its misuse as an analytical category⁵⁴ and draws our attention to the manifold social effects that follow from these practices of *identification*. In the case of Japan’s war orphans (itself a category of explicitly state-defined identity), their treatment at the hands of the Japanese government shows how postwar Japan’s state memory of the war has functioned to define (and erase) the war’s victims, and thereby largely avoid responsibility for their care.

Some feel that the government’s evasion of responsibility is evident in the very term that is used to officially identify the orphans: *zanryū koji*, or “remaining orphan.” They argue that the use of the verb *zanryū* (“to remain”) suggests that the orphans voluntarily stayed in China, whereas orphans and their Japanese supporters emphasize the impossibility of returning under the chaotic circumstances immediately after the war.⁵⁵

Among the Japanese that remained (or were detained) in China long after the war’s end, war orphans are officially defined as Japanese in China that were under 13 years old on the day of the Soviet incursion.⁵⁶ Those who were older on this date are generally referred to as “remaining women” (*zanryū fujin*), since most males over 13 were

⁵³ Matsuda (1996, 121-3)

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the “abuse” of identity as an analytical category, see Brubaker and Cooper (2000).

⁵⁵ For cases against the use of “remaining,” see for example Araragi (2000, 13), Ide (1991), and Ōkubo (1996). This official use of misleading terminology to impute volition or complicity and thereby elide responsibility has an analogous counterpart in the official term for “comfort women,” *jūgun ianfu*. See Yoshimi (1995, 39). Note however that there were a number of Japanese adults that did choose to remain in China for various reasons following the war. (See Fujinuma [1998, 248].)

⁵⁶ The Japanese government entity that has been primarily responsible for the “identification,” repatriation and resettlement of the war orphans is the Office for Measures Concerning Chinese Orphans (*Chūgoku koji nado taisaku shitsu*, a bureaucratic unit within Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. Their website has a variety of statistical information and survey data on the war orphans, their present circumstances, and the state programs that have been developed to assist them.

either killed or taken captive and sent to Siberia.⁵⁷ The somewhat arbitrary age-based distinction between the two categories reflected an (incorrect) official assumption that the “remaining women” were capable of joining the postwar repatriation to Japan but stayed in China by choice. As a consequence, “remaining women” were initially denied much of the relocation assistance that was extended to war orphans.

These official categories were later creations, however. The government’s first definition of unrepatriated Japanese occurred much earlier, as an act of destruction rather than creation. Following the government’s failure to repatriate all of its citizens and the rupture in Sino-Japanese relations that ended state-sponsored repatriations in 1958, the state’s first official inscription of these “unreturned” was their attempted erasure through a unilateral declaration of their death. In an article entitled “‘The Motherland’ and ‘the Abandoned,’” a Japanese journalist discusses this “death declaration” (*shibō senkoku*) as the second of three “abandonments” suffered by the war orphans, preceded by their abandonment in China and followed by their abandonment after repatriation to Japan.⁵⁸ The death declarations began in 1959, the year after the break in diplomatic relations, in the form of a “Law on special measures regarding the unreturned” (*Mikikansha ni kan suru tokubetsu sochihō*). Despite a lack of concrete evidence to that effect, and the likely presence of information to the contrary,⁵⁹ the law unilaterally pronounced as deceased some 33,000 Japanese that had yet to return to Japan from the war. As a result, approximately 13,600 people had their family records eliminated.⁶⁰ As Sakamoto notes, this directive was carried out by having local branches of the government seek out “survivors” of the missing individuals in order to elicit their acquiescence in the procedure. The measure included state handling of the legal procedures to legally identify the person as dead, and the payment of a 30,000 yen funeral fee and a 3,000 yen solatium. “Remaining women” suffered harsher treatment: they were unilaterally struck from the

⁵⁷ There were 3727 fujin/hōjin at the end of 2001. Japanese language reference materials on *fujin* include Tokitsu (2000).

⁵⁸ Sakamoto (2000). This article includes an excellent history and explanation of the activism preceding the recent litigation.

⁵⁹ See Sugawara (1998, 246) for a discussion of how the government likely knew from the testimonies of other repatriates that some 3,000 Japanese orphans were being raised in Chinese households in Northeast China.

⁶⁰ See Fujinuma (1998, 237).

register of the “unreturned” by the Ministry of Health and Welfare.⁶¹ As we will see, the official absence of a family registration that resulted from being pronounced “dead” could later be used by the state as a pretext for denying war orphans their citizenship and hence their right to residence in Japan.

From the very beginning of state-funded relative-seeking visits in 1981, the Japanese government’s official definition of the war orphans and their “identities” was the source of conflicts between the government, on the one hand, and war orphans and their advocates on the other. In the first place, it is important to emphasize that official designation as a “war orphan” did not automatically entail or confer Japanese citizenship. This was true no matter how compelling the evidence of a person’s Japanese background or birth. Without proof of parentage in the form of a blood test that unambiguously anchored an individual to a living relative and their family registration (*koseki-sho*), a central constituent of Japanese state memory, the state would not acknowledge that individual as a Japanese citizen.⁶²

The state’s insistence upon a proven family connection (and hence a family registration that would in turn entail citizenship) illustrates the limitations of DNA testing. These tests cannot distinguish “Japaneseness” versus “Chineseness”; they are in that sense a perfect illustration of the biological fallacy of “race” (a point that seems to have gone unremarked). Such tests can, however, firmly establish descent. The ability to use such DNA testing to match orphans with their relatives can be viewed as a prime justification for the relative-seeking visits in the first place, since these tours allowed orphans to come to Japan and undergo testing with potential Japanese family members. However, dependence on this procedure also enforced a very small temporal window of opportunity within which orphans could prove their Japanese identity. With DNA-established descent and family records as the stringent criteria for administering official assistance and recognition, many orphans with excellent evidence of their Japanese

⁶¹ See Sakamoto (2000, 281) and Sugawara (1998, 246).

⁶² In other words, the presence or absence of a person’s record in the family registration determined citizenship.

origins⁶³ were nevertheless unable to prove them because they failed to achieve a blood test match with anyone in Japan during their brief visit.

While the mass media celebrated the early family-seeking group visits for their high rate of success in reuniting war orphans with their Japanese families, even the most successful tour (the second one, in 1982, in which 75% of the participants were ultimately matched with their Japanese families) still left a substantial minority of government-certified war orphans who *by definition* were “Japanese,” but who failed to qualify for government repatriation assistance because they could not be *specifically* tied to a particular family registration (and hence citizenship).

Two subcategories thus immediately developed: “identified” (*mimoto hanmei*) and “unidentified” (*mimoto mihanmei*) war orphans. Given the restrictive conditions for official identification as a Japanese (citizen), “unidentified” war orphans quickly became the majority. In the absence of evidence linking such people to state memory in the form of the family registration, the Japanese government summarily refused such people permission to stay in Japan and threatened them with deportation to China once their short-term visas expired. The protests of orphans and the efforts of their supporters in Japan eventually forced the government to revise its policy and conditionally allow “unidentified” orphans the right to reside permanently in Japan.⁶⁴ Despite this tacit acknowledgment of the orphans’ Japaneseness, however, the Japanese state has paradoxically persisted in its refusal to remember their Japanese citizenship.⁶⁵ This not only denies such war orphans the various legal rights that citizenship conveys, it also amounts to their continued exclusion from state memory.

In contrast to the “unidentified” war orphans, many of the “identified” war orphans faced a different administrative obstacle that nevertheless had identical

⁶³ Other forms of evidence included official Chinese documents specifying Japanese identity, the testimony of neighbors, members of the orphans adoptive family, and other orphans, as well as physical scars and material possessions that accompanied the orphan when he or she was adopted.

⁶⁴ In 1984 a joint Sino-Japanese government declaration gave the orphans the right to “permanent return” (*ejū kikoku*) provided that they had a Japanese guarantor.

⁶⁵ In the face of government intransigence, war orphan supporters have been successful in taking the orphans’ evidence of their Japanese identity (including official Chinese documents) to local Japanese family courts and using a relatively simple Japanese legal procedure called “*shūseki*” ([re]placement of family registration) to (re)acquire Japanese citizenship for these war orphans. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of this history.

repercussions. “Identified” war orphans were those whose parents had been concretely established (based on blood tests and other evidence). Most had been registered as Japanese at birth and were therefore Japanese citizens. However, the vast majority of “identified” war orphans had long since been expunged from the official Japanese family registration records by the aforementioned “death declaration” of 1955. In the absence of an existing family registration and current citizenship, the Japanese Justice Ministry’s Immigration Section initially required that the Japanese relations of “identified” orphans serve as official “guarantors” (*hoshōnin*) in order to grant the orphan in question permanent residency. Otherwise they – like the unidentified orphans – would be refused the right to stay in Japan.

Contrary to the widespread images of teary reunions between war orphans and their families, many Japanese relatives of identified war orphans proved reluctant to serve as guarantors for the return of their long-lost children and siblings. The reasons vary, and include fears over inheritance, conflicts with other family members, and a natural absence of affection between people who are family in name only. But even in situations where there were strong affective bonds and a desire to help, many Japanese relations were simply incapable of resolving the manifold difficulties that were entailed by resettlement. Given the fact that the Japanese war orphans (and of course their families) are culturally Chinese, one would expect such difficulties. But the widespread assumption of, and emphasis upon, the orphans’ *Japanese* identities tended to obscure just how different they actually were. Prior to their return to Japan war orphans spoke little if any Japanese and were almost wholly unfamiliar with Japanese society. Most came from rural areas of China where life was dramatically different from what they would experience in Japan. Moreover, particularly during the 1970s and early 1980s there was little in the way of post-return government assistance: following the orphans’ “return” to Japan, virtually all of the burden of resettlement was placed on Japanese family members and such volunteer assistance as was available. However, before the 1990s, postwar Japan had experienced very little foreign immigration and lacked administrative infrastructure or assistance to ease the linguistic and cultural challenges that war orphans and their families faced in learning Japanese, finding work and housing and adjusting their school-age children to

the demanding Japanese educational system. The lack of public assistance was particularly acute precisely in the rural areas of Japan where many of the families of the war orphans lived.

Because many families balked at assuming such onerous responsibilities, a growing number of identified Japanese orphans faced deportation. Following protests by orphans and their supporters, however, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and Ministry of Justice were ultimately persuaded to change this policy in 1989 in order to allow “identified” orphans the right to permanent return independent of wishes of their Japanese families.⁶⁶

To this day, however, the Ministry of Justice’s position has been that the orphans lost their Japanese citizenship and the state refuses to “remember” their existence. “Unidentified” war orphans who wish to regain their citizenship must therefore pursue legal proceedings to procure themselves a new family registration. Beginning belatedly in 1995, the Ministry of Health and Welfare began to provide financial assistance for these legal procedures through a third party. Despite repeated calls for direct government assistance in the citizenship recovery efforts, the Ministry of Health and Welfare cited “non-interference in civil suits” as a justification for avoiding direct responsibility.

As the examples of both “identified” and “unidentified” war orphans suggest, the government’s identification of the war orphans has employed a category of state memory (in the form of the family registration) to either deny responsibility for the war orphans’ care—in the case of “unidentified” orphans—or shift it onto the shoulders of the “identified” orphan’s Japanese family. This has been true despite the steady expansion in government assistance measures that has occurred over the past two decades. In fact, most of these developments in the provision of government assistance have been the direct result of volunteer activism and self-funded initiatives on the war orphans’ behalf.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ *Zanryū fujin* had to wait even longer for this provision, which was only awarded in 1991.

⁶⁷ For a description of government assistance, which now spans several ministries but which is primarily coordinated and managed by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, see the MHLW’s website. As one Japanese researcher notes, however, all of the government measures to repatriate the orphans and reunite them with their families have been established in the form of official “notifications” (*tsūchi* or *tsūtatsu*) that

In 1993, the Japanese media gave widespread attention to the protests by 12 Japanese “remaining women” (*zanryū fujin*) who could not find guarantors and were therefore being forced to return to China. This dramatic illustration of the consequences of the government’s rejection of responsibility precipitated a political initiative in Japan’s Diet that would legally establish the government’s duty to care for Japanese that were left in China. The following year saw the promulgation of the “Law concerning the promotion of smooth repatriation for Japanese remaining in China and the assistance for self-sufficiency following their permanent repatriation.”⁶⁸ The Law’s establishment constituted the first official legal acknowledgment that the orphans were “the responsibility of the state (and others)” (*kuni nado no sekimu*).⁶⁹ However, the law failed to specify concretely what state responsibility entailed, and it did not broach the subject of compensation. It has thus remained largely symbolic.

Although critics of the Law have fixated upon the absence of concrete compensatory measures, the Law’s greater weakness is its silence regarding the *justification* for the government’s responsibility. This justification would presumably include the historical context of the war orphans’ suffering and tie it to past actions by the Japanese government, such as state-led colonization, aggression against China, the unwarranted destruction of family registrations and so forth. One can guess why no rationale is forthcoming: such an explicit statement (an admission of state responsibility for the war, for example) would, like the offer of compensation, invite a host of other claims on the same basis.

do not have any legal weight. (Fujinuma 1998, 237) Non-governmental (volunteer) assistance initiatives that subsequently won government support include the establishment of “resettlement promotion centers” (*teichaku sokushin sentā*), the centerpiece of the government’s program of resettlement assistance. Fujinuma notes that the first one was established by volunteer efforts (and money) in Osaka in 1982, with the government following its example exactly one year later (Fujinuma 1998, 259). In 1982 civilian efforts also forced the government to resume the “Relative seeking visits” after they were halted over the issue of compensation to Chinese foster families of the orphans.

⁶⁸ *Chūgoku zanryū koji nado no enkatsu na kikoku no sokushin oyobi ejū kikokugo no jiritsu no shien ni kan suru hōritsu*. (1994)

⁶⁹ As Fujinuma (1998, 238) points out, prior to this time the state’s posture towards the orphans was fundamentally one that treated their problems as “private/individual matters” that ought to be handled by the orphans and their Japanese families; failing this, the state would do what it could to help to the extent it was needed.

One might reasonably ask why the present state's acknowledgment of past state actions necessarily implies responsibility, despite the fact that this connection is widely assumed by both compensation claimants and the government itself. In response to this question, one activist notes that there is a "continuity" (*keizokusei*) that connects present and past governments. But what is this continuity? Why cannot the present government simply disavow its connection with the actions of the Japan's prewar and wartime governments? To the extent that the membership of Japan's present government differs from those of the past, this seems to be a perfectly logical, if ethically unpersuasive, defense.

In fact, there has been a great deal of continuity between prewar and postwar members of the government. But this is secondary to the fact that the present government partially derives its legitimacy by publicly remembering the past: by publicly enshrining, memorializing, documenting and acknowledging the Japanese wartime sacrifices and suffering, the state sets an example encouraging future sacrifices by the people. Norma Field has noted that "the most active Japanese victimizers/victims have been ritually honored, and a segment of them munificently paid...[I]f it has protected many Japanese from having to confront the meaninglessness of the war deaths of loved ones, it has also deprived them of government acknowledgement of responsibility as a concomitant to acknowledging responsibility for their own roles."⁷⁰ The state has paid out enormous sums of money to veterans and their families, people that constituted a core conservative constituency for the Liberal Democratic Party in its lengthy period of uninterrupted postwar rule. In fact, war orphan activists often point to the state's generous "compensation" of veterans by way of illustrating the absence of compensation for the orphans.

This discrepancy illustrates the fact that the state's acknowledgment of its continuity with the past is *on its own terms*, not only in the sense that the state chooses the proper *objects* of memory, but also because it defines the proper *medium* of that memory. This medium is none other than the official documents that Matsuda discusses as the Memory of the State. By thus defining and circumscribing—literally, bounding

⁷⁰ Field (1997, 22).

through the practice of inscription—what can be properly considered memory (and hence grounds for responsibility), the state has been on relatively secure ground. This is in part because there was systematic and widespread destruction of incriminating documents at the end of World War Two.⁷¹ When incriminating documents have been produced, the state has had recourse to other documents, legal agreements establishing the limits to compensation with foreign governments and their citizens.

The government's response to the first comfort women lawsuit is illustrative in this regard. In 1990, the Japanese government initially denied that the state was involved in the establishment and management of military brothels. This denial was devastatingly refuted by scholar and activist Yoshimi Yoshiaki's discovery of the state's own documents proving government involvement. In keeping with its affirmation of the legitimacy of state memory (even when this memory faults the government itself), the government swiftly acknowledged government involvement in the practice and produced a partial apology. However, the government has steadfastly rejected individual claims for compensation on the basis of international law and the postwar settlement of compensation claims.

It is no surprise that this insistence upon written documents as the standard for historical veracity is a position widely shared among Japanese revisionists, exemplified by University of Tokyo professor Fujioka Nobukatsu.⁷² As one scholar of the "comfort women" issue puts it, "this is the essence of Fujioka's 'Free History' – Japanese people should be free to think whatever they want in the absence of written documents providing definitive evidence."⁷³ The revisionists' insistence upon written proof and their support for a feel-good history that avoids "masochistic" depictions of Japanese war atrocities are both reflected in their virulent denunciations of "comfort women" testimony.

By contrast, the war orphan compensation issue shows that even when the government's responsibility is legally established—as it was with the 1994 law—the

⁷¹ Suzanne O'Brien makes this point with regard to the comfort women issue in her "Translator's Introduction" to Yoshimi (1995, 12).

⁷² Discussions of the revisionists are found in much of the scholarship on postwar Japanese memory and wartime atrocities. See for example Hein and Selden (2000).

⁷³ O'Brien in Yoshimi (1995, 12).

terms of compensation may be left unresolved. Hence the ongoing demands for changes to the government's current provision of assistance. But when is compensation enough? How does one quantify suffering? How does one use other recipients of compensation as benchmarks? The history of war orphan repatriation demonstrates how the answers to such questions have both synchronically varied and shifted over time as people have tried to make sense of the costs of suffering. Even among the war orphans there is no unanimity on the extent of government responsibility, partly because there is no unanimity of war orphan experience. Despite the attempts to fix them as a homogenous bureaucratic category or object of popular knowledge, their experiences have been extraordinarily diverse and resist such easy generalizations.

The Loss of the Past

By way of rejecting war orphan demands for a special pension system, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare official in charge of war orphan affairs explained in a newspaper interview with the conservative *Sankei Shinbun* that “the people who returned from China are not the only victims [of the war]. To a greater or lesser extent, Japanese citizens have each been victimized in some form by the war. The difference between war orphans and the Japanese who were in Japan is that orphans were unable to return from China for a long time.”⁷⁴

As the foregoing has shown, Japan's government has been complicit in the (sometimes literal) enshrinement of Japanese wartime suffering, and has provided extraordinary sums of compensation to certain groups of “victims” in Japanese society while avoiding even a formal apology to non-Japanese that suffered in the war. Under these circumstances, the celebrated return of the war orphans has been criticized for failing to force a confrontation with the war and for feeding a sense of Japanese victimhood that excludes or occludes the suffering of foreign victims. This criticism is partially warranted. War orphan claims against the state are made explicitly on the basis

⁷⁴ The article, entitled “*Tokubetsu nenkin kangaezu*,” appeared on page 29 of the December 1st, 2000 *Sankei Shinbun*. The official also said that rather than a special pension system for war orphans, what was needed was a “reform in consciousness” to eliminate the stigma associated with welfare dependency.

of their Japaneseness and the government's responsibility to its "nationals" (*kokumin*) that were victims of the war. And some war orphan activists are not in complete sympathy with the compensation claims of foreigners. One activist told me that he could understand why the 1994 law establishing state responsibility did not specify concrete compensation for the orphans, because if the state had set such a precedent the claims from foreign victims would be "endless" (*kiri ga nai*). But much like the re-examination of Okinawan suffering during the war, war orphan activism has fractured the artificial solidarity of Japanese suffering and demonstrated how its internal contradictions have been bureaucratically managed by the postwar Japanese government.

As one orphan expressed this distinction, "It's not to say that we orphans are the only victims of the war. At the time there were victims in Japan as well. But: the two are totally different. We were left in a foreign country. No matter where you are or how bad you have it, if you are left in Japan its your own country, your home. In your home everything is familiar, if you strive you will rise. We were left abroad; no matter how hard we tried we couldn't rise. We were looked at as foreigners. It's *not* the same!"⁷⁵

Though it may be one-sided, the acknowledgment and contemplation of Japanese suffering at least resists the total erasure of the war's traumas. Igarashi has even argued that a visceral sense of Japanese wartime suffering (and its postwar sanitization and silencing) may help Japanese to empathize with the suffering of others: "To contemplate Japan's past through the disturbing images of other Asian bodies, one must simultaneously examine how postwar Japan managed to cleanse the 'dirt' from the surface of *Japanese* bodies and dissociate itself from its war memories. In the social and cultural space where bodily pain is absent, others' pain becomes at best abstract, and at worst unimaginable."⁷⁶

It is difficult to say whether the war orphans have stirred sympathy for foreign suffering. As I have suggested above, even their own suffering has largely been lost in the shuffle of fictional, journalistic and bureaucratic re-presentations and public interest's restless shift. Regardless of the trial's outcome or their image in the public eye, the

⁷⁵ Ikeda interview, 10/19/2000. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁶ Igarashi (2000, 210). My emphasis.

suffering of the war orphans is destined to become an abstraction with their eventual deaths. When the loss of their bodies transmutes lived memories and experiences into the dry precipitates of history, then questions of responsibility will be academic, and the task of maintaining the urgency of this loss will fall to other sufferers.

Chapter 3: Japanese Volunteers and the War Orphans

Soon after arriving in Yokohama, Japan for fieldwork, I chanced upon a late-night local news documentary that profiled a massive low-income public housing project (*danchi*) on the outskirts of Yokohama. There the presence of a large population of “foreign” residents from China and Indochina⁷⁷ had occasioned resentment among the native Japanese and protests from the Japanese-dominated residents’ council (*jichikai*).⁷⁸ The large immigrant population in the *danchi* had also drawn a group of young Japanese volunteers, who taught Japanese to the immigrant adults and assisted the children with their schoolwork. Volunteers also spent time with the immigrants outside of the classroom, organizing and joining them in extracurricular activities such as the creation and sale of Chinese dumplings and Vietnamese spring rolls during the annual *danchi* festival.

Not many days after seeing this television documentary, my host institution advisor⁷⁹ invited me to a meal with a former student of his, Hayakawa Hideki, who turned out to be the organizer of the very group profiled in the program. It was a

⁷⁷ The “Chinese” presence is, for the most part, a “repatriate” (*kikokusha*) presence, comprised of war orphans, their spouses, their children and their families. Therefore it includes a substantial number of people who are actually Japanese citizens. The resident council’s figures reported 167 “China-related” households and 134 Vietnamese households in 1999. The large Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian presence is due to the proximity of the Indochinese Relocation Center that was active, until recently, nearby. From early on, the Japanese government has used the preferential provision of low income housing to solve the need for housing among both the refugees (which Japan reluctantly agreed to host in the 70s) and, soon thereafter, the war orphans. See Gunji (1981) for the housing (and educational) crunch already emerging among repatriates in the late 1970s.

⁷⁸ The English-language research on Latin American Nikkei also includes descriptions of conflicts with local Japanese in other housing complexes, where the former may constitute an even higher percentage of the residents. In this case, the *danchi* resident’s council (entirely composed of “native” Japanese) made a formal appeal to the local government to cease placing so many non-Japanese in their complex. Their argument cited limited resources that were overstressed by trying to accommodate so many foreigners. They complained about the time and resource demands on local elementary and middle schools, particularly the need to do remedial Japanese as a Second Language instruction and also communicate effectively with the parents of such children. The local kindergarten was depicted as especially overwhelmed, though no stage of education seemed particularly conflict-ridden. As elsewhere, however, high school matriculation rates for the foreign residents were significantly below the national average. The organizers of the volunteer group that I worked with partnered with some local educators to conduct review classes and counseling for high school exams, and application to special admissions categories in local high schools that were for foreign and/or repatriate students. See Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of repatriate students.

⁷⁹ Professor Ōsato Hiroaki of Kanagawa University.

felicitous introduction. Over the next year and a half I spent a great deal of time with Hayakawa and his volunteer group in that very *danchi*. There he had worked for the last six years, largely unpaid, living with his resignedly supportive parents and scraping together financing for his education and counseling work with grants and one-time awards. Hayakawa had been a Chinese major at Kanagawa University but, by his own admission, never learned much Chinese. While working with him I never noticed him use Chinese or favor his Chinese students over the other immigrant children and adults: he was uniformly welcoming to all the immigrants he and his group served. In fact, after first volunteering with a college “circle” (*sākuru*)⁸⁰ nominally devoted to assisting only Chinese “repatriates,” he and most of the group soon formed a new group to serve all needy immigrants in the *danchi*, regardless of ethnicity or background.

The prefectural low-income housing complex where he worked (and I conducted my fieldwork) sprawls across the boundary dividing two cities in Kanagawa Prefecture: the small town of Yamato and the megalopolis of Yokohama, Japan’s second largest municipality. Lying on the distant margin of Yokohama’s municipal nexus, the *danchi* is even peripheral to local hubs of transportation and employment. The inconvenience of the *danchi*’s location made the land an inexpensive purchase for the government during the 1970s, when the complex was built in several stages. At present, a total of 79 high-rise buildings house some 3500 households, approximately 10% of which are occupied by immigrant families that hail primarily from Indochina and the PRC. Despite the huge population, the housing blocks are served by a meager handful of stores and two small eateries in and adjacent to the vast complex grounds. The complex is surrounded by scattered small manufacturing enterprises, modest homes and expansive stretches of cultivated fields, both dry and paddy. The closest railway station, with its larger selection of stores and amenities (such as banks and a post office) is an hour away by bus. One can walk the distance to the train station in about the same amount of time it takes the bus, cutting through back roads and skirting the fields that, while redolent of compost, offer the unusual pleasures of expansive green prospects and a sparse population, with an

⁸⁰ A common configuration for college group activities, which in Japan can consume a great deal of time and energy (often to the exclusion of actual schoolwork).

occasional vista of distant Mt. Fuji. During the day, the sky occasionally rumbles suddenly with the distant thunder of a US fighter jet from a nearby base. At night, the darkness of the rural areas surrounding the serried ranks of housing blocks is profound, and some Japanese volunteers who come to work with foreign children at the *danchi* speak only half jokingly of ghosts in the inky, windswept fields.

Though isolated from their Japanese surroundings, many in the *danchi* are nevertheless linked to the world beyond Japan: Hayakawa noted the large number of satellite TV dishes as an indication of the large population of foreigners, many of whom subscribed to cable TV and newspapers in their native languages in the so-called “ethnic media” that was proliferating in Japan.

Language was often the biggest problem for both the children and the adults among these migrants, and the need for Japanese instruction was not fully met by the (nevertheless well-intentioned) local schools and state-funded instructional opportunities. Although the local ward government held twice-weekly native-language assistance “corners” (*kōnā*) in Chinese and Vietnamese, the times were inconvenient for most harried adult immigrants, who juggled parenting with exhausting low-wage, menial work. Some business could be handled by telephone, but a trip to the ward office was several hundred yen and a couple hours of their time that they could ill afford to spare. Children, with their quicker grasp of the language, often acted as intermediaries, a burden that weighed on their schoolwork. Local educators provided some supplementary instruction to school age children but this did not help the adults. Into this need for remedial instruction stepped the volunteers, who first appeared in the *danchi* in that area in the mid-1990s.

When I went to observe Hayakawa’s group he had been volunteering in the *danchi* for nearly 6 years, building relations with local immigrant families, the Japanese-dominated residents’ councils, local educators and ward officials. He was also active in a nationwide network of foreigner-related volunteer groups, connected by the internet and sustained by a multitude of local conferences, workshops and festivals. Through Hayakawa and his class, I not only met many of the *kikokusha*-connected residents in the *danchi*, I was also introduced to the key war orphan-related activists in that area, two of

whom are discussed below. While many among Hayakawa's shifting cast of ten or so regular college-age volunteers came sporadically and left at the pre-graduation job search (if not earlier), there was a core handful that came frequently to meet with the same student(s). The commitment of these volunteers to their students often outlasted graduation and continued with employment. Although some volunteers were drawn to the task by their formal studies in teaching JSL, most are not formally trained for the task. Some have an interest in the native languages or cultures of their students, but few have non-Japanese linguistic proficiency in languages other than English. It is thus difficult to measure the academic outcomes of their volunteer teaching, but the class' provision of one-to-one advice and assistance, as well as affirmation and "a place to be" (*ibasho*) for the restless younger immigrants was widely appreciated among the local residents I met.

Hayakawa and his group (and Okada, below, who worked in the same *danchi*) provided just one of several opportunities for assistance available to foreigners in the *danchi*. Like many urban areas in Japan⁸¹, most volunteer associations in the Yokohama area are strictly local⁸² efforts whose members are largely drawn from those groups of Japanese with the means and the leisure. Housewives, retirees and college students, in roughly that order, appear to be the most numerous participants in volunteer and "NPO" (non-profit organization) services for immigrants. Catholic churches and their parishioners have also been involved, particularly with the Vietnamese immigrants.

What distinguished Hayakawa and Okada and their young volunteers from the administrative assistance and the language teaching provided by housewife-dominated volunteer groups was the fact that the former came to the *danchi* to give assistance, while

⁸¹ See Takezawa (2002) for an illuminating description of Kobe's recent changes as an example of how the ideology and more importantly the practice of "multicultural coexistence" -- the concomitant volunteer efforts, schooling issues and cultural engagements -- have worked out in another large metropolitan area of Japan. There are many similarities, but the differences in numerical representation between Nikkei Brazilians in Kobe public schools (if they are in school at all -- she suggests many if not most are not) and Chinese and Vietnamese in the *danchi*-area schools are also significant.

⁸² The "Brave Hawks" (*Yūyōkai*) mentioned below are unusual in being a trans-local effort with separate branches and "circles" in colleges and an administrative center. Once veterans associations constituted a nationwide volunteer network on behalf of the war orphans, but this has deteriorated with the loss of membership, the war orphan fade from public attention, and the lack of common purpose or motivation regarding the war orphans' treatment.

the alternatives were at least a bus and maybe an additional train ride away.⁸³ The willingness to bear the time and cost of transportation, and the ability to secure nearby places for teaching, made Hayakawa and Okada's classes much more accessible for their students. This was important for middle-aged repatriates and other immigrants juggling parenting and menial jobs with long hours, but it was absolutely decisive for young immigrant children, who could not be expected to leave the isolated *danchi* on a bus, especially at night. Moreover, Hayakawa and Okada focused on the teaching of language, which many researchers on repatriates and other migrants agree is the biggest problem for new arrivals to Japan.⁸⁴

However, even as he was serving the unmet needs of the local immigrant families, Hayakawa himself was perpetually strapped for cash, juggling part-time work at the post office with his volunteer activities and living at his parents.⁸⁵ During the time that I was there, Hayakawa was successful in reorganizing the group as a membership-based "NPO" (non-profit organization)⁸⁶ and he was finally able to rent a room near the *danchi* as an office. But his financial resources remain precarious, and his willingness to endure this uncertainty testifies to a strong commitment to his students and his work.

* * *

In the absence (or denial) of government support and help from schools, Japanese volunteers have played crucial roles in assisting the resettlement and integration of foreigners in Japanese society.⁸⁷ There are as yet few academic analyses⁸⁸ of Japanese

⁸³ At the prefectural resident center (*kenmin sentā*) in downtown Yokohama, for example. Machida and Zhao's (2000, 144) survey shows the crucial importance of proximity in assistance.

⁸⁴ For example, Machida and Zhao (2000, 145).

⁸⁵ This fragile resource base is a problem that plagues many Japanese NPOs. See Tamura (2003, 176).

⁸⁶ The group's formal name is Tabunka Kyōsei Machizukuri Kōbō (Atelier for Multicultural Coexistence Community Building).

⁸⁷ See for example Sellek (2001) and Takezawa (2002). Many volunteers also work in partnership with, or are supported by, local schools and governments. Sellek (2001, 228) writes that "initially, much has depended on the willingness of local governments and NGOs to develop effective measures and mechanisms to incorporate foreign residents into society." See Sellek's discussion of local involvement on pp. 201-2

⁸⁸ Notable recent exceptions include Stevens (1997) and LeBlanc (1999). Carolyn Stevens' study of Yokohama's Kotobukichō day laborers discusses the Christian and non-Christian voluntary groups serving them. Robin M. LeBlanc notes the paucity of Japanese volunteer studies in her nuanced treatment of a particular type of volunteer – the housewife – and the division between volunteering and political activity. See her Chapter 4 and especially pp. 97-100. As LeBlanc notes, figures are contradictory concerning the

voluntary association and volunteers (*borantia*), but a recent Japanese scholarly study of NPO development cites a wealth of survey and statistical data to underline their recent provenance, rapid proliferation, and growing significance in governance (particularly concerning foreign migrants).⁸⁹ While the study suggests the financial fragility of volunteer funding, there nevertheless appears to be a steady if not growing interest in “volunteer” work amidst immigrants, and local efforts are becoming much more highly integrated through national networks.

A salient exception to this trend is the state of war orphan voluntary activism, which has waned with the loss of its core constituency, the war veterans. It has been many years since it attracted the public and volunteer interest described in the 1981 book *War Orphans from/in China (Chūgoku Zanryū Koji)*, written by Manchurian veteran and pioneering volunteer Gunji Hiko.⁹⁰ Noting the general interest the mass media had fostered covering the remarkable results of the spring, 1981 relative-seeking tour (in which the relatives of almost half the war orphan participants were successfully identified [*hanmei*]), he expresses happiness that now “there are people among those visiting China for tourism who know about the orphans and offer their cooperation in the work of clarifying identities, and the number of volunteers (*borantia*) is growing.”⁹¹

At that time, the government would only fund orphans to come over to Japan if they had proved their Japanese citizenship, so in order to identify a person who could not be present, volunteer groups depended heavily on letters, records of the missing, and the small number of individuals and groups that were going to Japan and could meet personally with such claimants. Gunji regrets the government’s initial, unjustified relegation of the war orphan issue to a “consular matter,” but lauds the recent intervention of national politicians whose questioning elevated the repatriation of the war orphans to a

gender of volunteers, but most sources show a much higher rate of participation for women than men, and growth in numbers of participants through the 1980s.

⁸⁹ Tamura (2003). This statistics cited in Tamura’s study support LeBlanc’s characterization of volunteer activity as largely constituted by female “homemakers.” Although it also mentions retirees as a significant source of volunteers, there is no mention of college students.

⁹⁰ Gunji was an influential advisor in the administration of Kōan Province (now Inner Mongolia) who later became the director of the Kōan Association for former colonists from that region, and he led in the creation of national volunteer networks for linking orphans and relatives. He served as founding member and a president of the Zenkyō (see below) before his death.

⁹¹ Gunji (1981, 39-40).

“diplomatic level” and catalyzed government-led surveys and cooperation in both Japan and China.⁹² As Gunji’s comment suggests, volunteers in the 1980s enjoyed a broad political spectrum of highly placed support, mainly from people who had spent time in Manchuria and were at the peak of their seniority. As a result, perhaps, Gunji’s criticism of the government is remarkably mild and consists largely of polite suggestions, at a time when the government’s involvement was appallingly negligent by 2001 standards.⁹³

Gunji is unambiguous about the fact that the responsibility for repatriating the war orphans rests with the Japanese nation (39), and he criticizes both the military’s “forced cheap purchase” of cultivated land for colonists (which bred resentment among the local Chinese) and military’s subsequent abandonment of the colonists to these resentful locals and the invading Russians. As a result of these actions, he says, the colonists accounted for more than half the Japanese deaths in China, though they composed just 14% of the total number of Japanese there (56). However, one searches in vain for any expressions of remorse about Gunji’s own role in Manchuria. We are also told little about his motives for volunteering. But his commitment was considerable: as a result of his efforts, Gunji had personally contributed to the identification of nearly 100 orphans. The majority of the book is consumed with biographical information and many photographs of as-yet unidentified war orphan claimants, categorized under the old Japanese place names for Manchuria. To be sure, there are ominous signs of the problems to come: the book details the reluctance of many Japanese relatives to serve as guarantors (*mimoto hikukenin*) for their long-lost kin. But the overall tone is hopeful and encouraging, befitting a time that just preceded the mid-80s high point in war orphan identification and public concern.

⁹² Gunji writes that one unfortunate outcome of this state involvement was apparently a decision in China to thereafter regard the matter as a state issue, and to regard civilian groups looking for orphans as “spies.” He points out that such investigative work is crucial to prove the Japanese identities of people whose true past may have been hidden all their lives, even from themselves. This naturally implies a notion of Japaneseness that is based squarely on biological descent.

⁹³ See however Gunji’s discussion of the official prejudice against self-funded repatriates and women, and his criticism of government research and state-sponsored Japanese language teaching (which originally consisted of state-issued textbook, tapes, and tape recorder!). Gunji had himself amassed a huge database of missing Japanese, and his speculative calculations of the number of surviving refugees were surprisingly accurate.

Fast-forward some twenty years, and consider a recent interview profile of G, a 76-year old former Manchurian colonist who works as a government-paid lifestyle guidance official (*seikatsu shidōin*) for war orphans.⁹⁴ Following four hard years stranded in Manchuria after Japan's defeat, G was repatriated in 1949 and has been assisting "remainders" (*zanryūsha*) ever since. Like Gunji and his fellow volunteers, G's "association of fellow settlers" (*takuyūkai*) in Shiga Prefecture was active prior to the 1972 restoration of Sino-Japanese diplomatic ties, compiling statistics and seeking information on those that had been left in Manchuria. In 1973, when the first war orphans began to be returned to Shiga Prefecture, the prefectural government entrusted the selection of state-funded lifestyle guidance officials to G's settler group, and they have had a monopoly on this work ever since.⁹⁵

In the intervening two decades between Gunji and G's accounts, public interest and rates of orphan identification peaked and began a long decline. Volunteers turned increasingly to address the unforeseen complexities of resettlement, which were compounded by the increasing average age of those orphans that did return. Back in 1981 when the orphans were on average between 40-50 years old, Gunji criticized the apparently anomalous example of a war orphan who depended on welfare (*seikatsu hogo*) for several years before deciding to return to China. By the late 90s, however, almost all of the war orphans were dependent on state welfare.

The situation in 2001 was also a far cry from the initial expectations of the Japanese government (and many volunteers) that family members would take a major role in resettling the returning orphans. Gunji's outrage at Japanese family members who

⁹⁴ Asakura (2000). See also Machida and Zhao (2000, 142) for a description of the *seikatsu shidōin* system. They note that many of these guidance officials are elderly, and though "enthusiastic" and "knowledgeable," they are increasingly physically limited. Like Sugawara (below), G was a member of the Patriotic Youth.

⁹⁵ The interviewer, Asakura Mika, a thirty-two year old doctoral candidate in Chinese educational history at Hiroshima University and also a native of Shiga, is critical of this monopoly and faults the prefectural government for depending on the settler association. As she notes, however, unless the state broadens the provision of guidance officials beyond the current criteria that restrict their services to a dwindling number of state-sponsored repatriates, the program will soon end by default anyway. The state has nominally restricted the provision of guidance officials to state-sponsored (*kokuhī*) repatriates who have been back less than three years, but many areas have expanded this provision to encompass self-funded (*shihi*) repatriates, the children of war orphans, and/or those who have been back longer than three years. See Asakura, 164.

would not serve as guarantors for their war orphan kin is only distantly echoed in G's matter-of-fact discussion of family members who see war orphans as a "burden" or a potential competitor for family inheritances and therefore refuse to be guarantors for them.⁹⁶ Reflecting the need for surrogates, G has in fact served as a guarantor for more repatriate families (26) than anyone else in Japan.⁹⁷

In contrast to the ebb in war orphans, there has been a steady growth in the number of "called over" (*yobiyose*) family members, primarily the children of the war orphans and their families. Although they have special immigration advantages through their family connections with war orphans, such migrants are self-financed and hence officially ineligible for government support (though organizations such as G's often extend voluntary support). G criticizes the "poor quality" of these *yobiyose* family members, expressing dissatisfaction with their perceived focus on making money and ingratitude for volunteer assistance, and describing them as "Chinese" in disparaging terms.⁹⁸ The interviewer's analysis of G's attitude is noteworthy. She argues that the real complaint guidance officials like G have with the *yobiyose* is not a cultural difference but a generational one: these younger repatriates have no direct experience or appreciation of the historical events (namely, postwar suffering) that the volunteers share with the war orphans and that motivate them to engage in uncompensated assistance activities.

Like Gunji, G's motivation is highly particularistic and unapologetic concerning the war's non-Japanese victims. The interviewer mentions that although G has no "sense of atonement" (*shōzai ishiki*), he curtly dismisses as one-sided criticism that he had ignored the question of "war responsibility" (*sensō sekinin*) and simply engaged in assisting his "comrades" (*dōhō*): "My energetic involvement in assisting remainers [*zanryūsha*] comes from wanting to do something for those friends [*nakama*] that suffered like me at the end of the war."⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Asakura (2000, 166-7)

⁹⁷ Asakura (2000, 166)

⁹⁸ Asakura (2000, 167-9)

⁹⁹ Asakura (2000, 165). G mentions that there are people in his Youth Brigade cohort who think that the war is "the past" (*kakō*) and are suspicious of his enthusiastic engagement in assistance activities (which most of them have ignored). In response to their question about whether he is doing it to atone for, or

Given this intensely personal motivation, it is not surprising that G has an “extremely cold” opinion of potential successors and refuses to relinquish the task of helping orphans to younger Japanese who “don’t understand the true need for assistance.”¹⁰⁰ The interviewer concludes by reflecting on the consequent problem of successorship in Shiga Prefecture (where no other group possess comparable experience), and the need for other types of volunteers with different motivations that can fill the places that G and his comrades will inevitably vacate.¹⁰¹

Because the Japanese government has consistently resisted taking responsibility for identifying, repatriating and caring for the war orphans, and because the state’s preferred surrogate – the orphans’ own families – have been unable (or unwilling) to meet the need, a variety of volunteers have played a crucial role throughout this lengthy and complex process. Until very recently, non-orphan Japanese have accounted for virtually all of the assistance and advocacy on behalf of the war orphans.¹⁰² The earliest, most numerous and most influential of these Japanese “volunteers” (*borantia*) were people like G and Gunji, “people who had experienced Manchuria” (*Manshū taikensha*). Initially motivated by the desire to find and assist their own children or the children of their fellow settlement group members, the early volunteers eventually broadened their aim to encompass the repatriation and resettlement of all orphans. When news reports and fictionalized accounts of the plight of the orphans garnered nationwide sympathy in the 1980s, some Japanese with no personal experience of Manchuria also joined in these efforts, especially as volunteer teachers of Japanese.¹⁰³ In the 1990s, these volunteers

expiate, some past wrong, however, G is adamant that he is simply motivated by the need for mutual assistance among those who were in Manchuria at that time.

¹⁰⁰ Asakura (2000, 171)

¹⁰¹ Asakura points out that in Kanagawa Prefecture there are repatriates who have served as guidance officers, and in Shiga there are repatriates who engage in assistance as translators. But she argues that a system in which repatriates help other repatriates is not sufficiently “open” to the rest of Japanese society.

¹⁰² But see the previous footnote. Beginning in the 1990s, some orphans have engaged in individual appeals and protests directed at the government, but there has been little organized activity. There are two salient exceptions, an association run by Shima in Tokyo and the group of war orphans which Sugawara Kōsuke helped organize in 2000, the *Yōfubō Shaon no kai*. Both of these groups – and particularly the latter – were active during 2000-1 in gathering petition signatures, meeting with members of the government, and eventually marching in protest to seek special measures for old age security (*rōgo hoshō*).

¹⁰³ A significant number of these later “converts” were housewives whose children were grown and therefore had the time to devote to such activities. Based on my informal discussions with such volunteers,

began to include college students, most of whom assisted by teaching Japanese language to war orphans and their growing number of Chinese family members. Over the past three decades, the motivations for volunteer involvement have broadened from the highly specific connections of kinship and shared personal experience to rather more abstract notions of sympathy and historical responsibility. Recently, younger volunteers (like Hayakawa, above) may come into contact with war orphans and their Chinese families only through their interest in teaching Japanese to non-native speakers and assisting migrants of all backgrounds with life in Japan. This chapter's discussion of volunteer backgrounds, motivations, and opinions suggest the difficulties and implications of this major shift.

Manchurian "Veteran" Volunteers

In her oft-cited and influential essay on postwar Japanese history, "The Past in the Present," historian Carol Gluck (1993, 77) mentions the shift from "silence to remembrance" in the personal memories of Japanese who had

"responded to the imperial call to settle the 'new world' in Manchuria in the 1930s and were repatriated after the war to a homeland in which they felt themselves to be, and were sometimes treated as, unwelcome strangers. Their traumatic personal experiences under Soviet invasion in 1945 were occluded at home by the defeat and the mythic postwar new beginning. The nation, which had roused them to do the work of empire, now repudiated the entire endeavor, leaving their personal pasts beside the postwar point. Despite documentary and literary expression, it was not until the 1970s that individual Manchurian memoirs began to flood into public view."

many of these women were themselves the children of people who had been in Manchuria, and most had read and been inspired by Yamazaki Toyoko's best-selling novel *Daichi no ko*.

¹⁰⁵ Guelcher makes this point more explicitly in his dissertation on Japanese agricultural colonists (1999, 221).

Gluck stresses, however, that these reconstructions of the past were highly selective, “with their strong tones of Japanese suffering and their still-held silences on the terrible harm that empire had done to others.”

It is no coincidence that the surge in these reminiscences coincided with the reopening of mainland China following the resumption of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations in 1972, and gathered strength with the sensational discovery of thousands of Japanese war orphans that had remained in China for nearly three decades. As Gluck notes, “A ‘Manchurian boom’ occurred in the late 1980s, and the Japanese orphaned during the war returned from China to tear-jerking televised encounters with the families they had never known. But,” she stresses, “this transposition of the China War—and its Japanese victims—to home soil did not intend, nor did it provide, any confrontation with the wartime past.”(85)

Gluck accurately identifies the emphasis in these memories upon Japanese as victims (*giseisha*, or *higaisha*) rather than victimizers (*kagaisha*), but her sweeping dismissal of their significance is an unwarranted exaggeration. In the first place, the sensational return of the war orphans was both a product of, and a stimulus to, confrontations with the wartime past. It was the passionate activism of Manchurian veterans that ultimately forced the Japanese government to initiate relative-seeking and repatriation programs. As Gluck implies, moreover, the sympathetic attention to the war orphans was also a dramatic catalyst in the move from silence to narrative “remembrance” of the war.¹⁰⁵ Thus the essence of Gluck’s misrepresentation lies in her treatment of the war memories as themselves “past,” rather than “present” in the minds of active subjects. By acknowledging the insistent “presence” of these pasts, we can see that the very move Gluck identifies from “silence to remembrance” involved an unprecedented intention to confront the past, albeit in a “selective” manner. Not only did Japanese confront their own personal pasts, the media attention that surrounded the physical return of the war orphans graphically confronted a younger Japanese public with images and details of the wartime past that were no less true for being partial.

By stressing the insignificance of these memories and diminishing their dynamism, Gluck misses the ways in which they could intend and provide confrontations

with both the past *and* the present through linkages with the war's legacy and responsibilities. She fails to mention that the sufferings they experienced in Manchuria left many former colonists with intense feelings of anger and betrayal directed at their own government and the Kwantung Army (*Kantōgun*) in particular.¹⁰⁶ As a consequence, the memories of suffering (both experienced and witnessed) in Manchuria could serve as a powerful impetus to not only confront the past, but to confront the present government as the direct inheritor of that past and its legacy of responsibility. This was certainly the case for many of those Japanese whose experiences in Manchuria served as a motivation and a rationale for engaging in volunteer efforts on behalf of the war orphans.

Sugawara Kōsuke

In 1938, Sugawara Kōsuke was a thirteen-year-old student when Ishiwara Kanji, architect of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria¹⁰⁷, came to speak to the graduating class of his school in Yamagata Prefecture to solicit volunteers for Manchuria's colonization: "He said, 'Japan doesn't have enough to eat, there are no good jobs in the rural areas, the economy is bad. We have created this country of Manchuria [*Manshūkoku kono kuni wo tsukutta*], this vast land, so if young people like you go to Manchuria, develop it [*kaitaku shite*], cultivate that wasteland [*are no hara*] and increase the food supply, Manchuria will become a splendid country and it will be a great help to the Japanese economy.'" Sugawara was impressed by the promise that each volunteer would be unconditionally granted a huge piece of land¹⁰⁸, and he remembers being completely absorbed by the stirring images and music of the film that depicted colonists chasing off "bandits" (*tōzoku*) and establishing farms. He laughs when recalling his ignorance; he was one of only two volunteers among 45 graduates.

Confronted with his family's opposition, he applied without their knowledge and was accepted into the Patriotic Youth Corps for the Development of Manchuria and

¹⁰⁶ See Guelcher (1999, 223).

¹⁰⁷ For readings on the Japanese colonization of Manchuria, see Araragi (1994) and Young (1999) for overviews in Japanese and English, respectively.

¹⁰⁸ 20 *chō*, with one *chō* the equivalent of 2.45 acres.

Mongolia (*Manmō kaitaku seishōnen giyūgun*).¹⁰⁹ The Patriotic Youths were ostensibly a volunteer force of 16- to 19-year-olds that would supplement the dwindling number of Japanese willing to serve as agricultural colonists. But like many adult male colonists, they were largely diverted to military activities. Thus when Sugawara went to Manchuria the following year, at age 14, intending to study and practice agriculture, he was soon transferred to the frontier with the Soviet Union and set to work building fortifications. But he managed to secure a transfer to another colonist group near Qiqiha'er, where his superior, the head instructor of the agricultural section, emphasized study of the local Chinese language and customs and arranged for Sugawara to live with a Chinese family and learn Chinese. This language ability led to a second transfer, this time to a school for military police (*kenpei*) in Shinkyō (Changchun) as young Japanese males were increasingly removed from agricultural operations and pressed into military service in preparation for a Soviet invasion.

When the Soviet invasion finally came six months after his entrance in the school, Sugawara was among the soldiers and military police that commandeered trains to spirit away family members of high ranking military officers and Manchurian railway officials to the safety of Korea. He remembers how the train was forced to abandon other Japanese refugees in their haste and singular mission, and acknowledges that in doing so, he also had a role in producing the war orphans.¹¹⁰

Following their return to Japan, Sugawara and several other members of the military police had made a pact to apologize for the defeat by committing suicide in front of the Imperial Palace the day after officially surrendering their arms. However, after postponing the attempt when only half the group showed up, they were dissuaded by none other than Ishiwara Kanji, who they met at the Imperial Hotel where many former servicemen were temporarily staying following Japan's surrender. Ishiwara convinced them to abandon their plans for suicide and remain alive to rebuild Japan. Sugawara then

¹⁰⁹ See Guelcher (1999, 74-5) for the circumstances surrounding the formation of this group and its function in Manchuria. Guelcher's study also draws upon interviews with several former Patriotic Youths members.

¹¹⁰ See Guelcher (1999, 244-5) on the military's use of trains and the forcible removal of other Japanese from such trains.

returned to his home in Yamagata and scraped by harvesting wood for charcoal and selling rice on the black market. Jobs were very scarce, and although he sought employment as a police officer, Sugawara's background in the military police meant he was legally forbidden public employment.¹¹¹ He continued to work odd jobs until he won a national speech contest held by the Yomiuri News, and his skills at oratory landed him work with political campaigns as a paid speaker. When he was released from the public employment ban in 1949, he was able to assume work as a journalist for the regional Shōnai Nippō newspaper. In 1953, Sugawara was recruited by the national Asahi News (*Asahi Shinbun*), where he worked as a journalist until his retirement in 1987.¹¹²

Sugawara began volunteering in the war orphan assistance efforts as a result of his activities as an investigative journalist during the 1980s, when he was employed in the Asahi News' Tokyo headquarters. He was aware of the existence of the war orphans much earlier, largely through the national press coverage that they were receiving in his own paper. Beginning in August of 1974, the Asahi News began publishing a series entitled "Records of Separated Survivors" (*Ikihanareta mono no kiroku*) that drew upon letters and photographs from war orphans and those seeking them. These letters and photographs were provided by a volunteer organization headed by Yamamoto Jishō of Nagano Prefecture, who would later help to form a national war orphan assistance organization that Sugawara joined and eventually led.¹¹³ In these early efforts to publicize the existence and circumstances of the war orphans, Sugawara singles out the contributions of his fellow Asahi journalist Morimoto, who had been a middle school student in the Manchurian city of Jamusi at the end of the war. Morimoto was one of the first to write of the existence of the war orphans when it was discovered in the late 1970s that over 2000 letters from people claiming to be children of Japanese had accumulated at

¹¹¹ This measure was the *Kōshoku tsuihōrei*.

¹¹² Sugawara was posted in several locations around Japan including Hokkaido, where he did background research for a book on Japan's indigenous people, the Ainu. Near the end of his career he also did research in Yokohama's Chinatown for a book on Overseas Chinese.

¹¹³ See Chūgoku zanryū koji no kokuseki shutoku wo shien suru kai (2000, 6). In response to popular pressure at the publication of these letters and photos, the government initiated a similar "Public Survey" (*Kōkai Chōsa*) in 1975 that widely distributed the photographs and background information of Japanese war orphans throughout Japan's national media. But the Ministry of Health and Welfare waited until 1981 before finally funding the first relative-seeking tour to bring war orphans to Japan.

the Japanese embassy in Beijing and had been stored – unread and untranslated – in a locker there. Morimoto asked a Chinese-speaking woman who worked at the Embassy to translate the letters, and he subsequently wrote a number of articles on the war orphan presence in China that were instrumental in bringing the war orphan issue to a wide audience. When Sugawara read an article on war orphan repatriation written by the abovementioned activist Gunji Hiko in the late 1970s, he was motivated to interview Gunji by a sense of responsibility stemming from his own military police background in Manchuria. It was to Morimoto that he turned for an introduction.

Morimoto's introduction initiated Sugawara's close association with Gunji and, through him, a nationwide network of volunteer organizations that were pressuring the Japanese government to identify, return and resettle the war orphans. This network – the “National Council on the Chinese War Orphan Issue” (*Chūgoku Zanryū Koji Mondai Zenkoku Kyōgikai*, or *Zenkyō*) -- was formed in 1979 and was largely composed of former colonists and veterans that were originally organized around specific Manchurian affiliations based on location (such as the Dairen Association [*Dairenkai*]), military service, company affiliation (such as the various of groups based on the South Manchurian Railway, or *Mantetsu*), or settlement group (*kaitakudan*). At its peak it included some 200 different groups.

After attending a meeting of this organization, the members pointed out Sugawara's own background as both a member of the military police and an agricultural colonist in Manchuria, and convinced him to assist them. Thereafter, he divided his time between journalistic coverage and volunteer assistance. Sugawara defines his early role as that of an “underling” [*shitappa*] below the three founding members of *Zenkyō*¹¹⁴, but his writings (including many articles in the Asahi News and two books on the war

¹¹⁴ These three leaders were the aforementioned Yamamoto Jisho, Sakaguchi Ryō, a former official with the South Manchurian Railway, and Gunji Hiko, the former vice-governor of Inner Mongolia. These three merged their respective organizations into *Zenkyō* and served as the first three leaders of that organization, each serving a term of three years. Another important early activist whose organization sought and publicized information on surviving war orphans was Yamamura Fumiko; she was repatriated from Manchuria in 1946 and formed the *Reido no kai* (Frozen Earth Association) in the early 1970s.

orphans) were instrumental in publicizing and promoting the volunteers' cause.¹¹⁵ His 1986 book, "Children of the Illusory Nation, Manchuria: War Orphans Living History"¹¹⁶ detailed the historical background of the war orphan situation and incorporated a sustained critique of the government's posture. Following his retirement in 1987 Sugawara became even more active, and served as the 5th head of the Zenkyō. However, according to Sugawara he "destroyed" (*tsubushita*) the organization because of his intense and unrelenting conflicts with the Ministry of Health and Welfare (Kōseishō), particularly over issue of how to pay for citizenship acquisition for war orphans.

After leaving Zenkyō, in 1989 Sugawara created his own organization in Yokohama with the intention of supplementing the government's four-month resettlement course with a further 8 months of language training and employment assistance.¹¹⁷ Ironically, his program was later emulated by the Ministry, which received funding from the Japanese Diet to establish 21 such "self-sufficiency centers" (*jiritsu sentā*) around the country, with one in Yokohama. Despite Sugawara's assistance in securing the funding, he was not given the directorship of the Yokohama center because of his conflicts with the Ministry, and the two centers now co-exist.

Due to his age and increasing physical infirmity, Sugawara has sought to shift the burden of activism to others, particularly the war orphans themselves. This hope was partially realized when in 2000 he facilitated the creation of an organization entirely composed of war orphans that was devoted to pressuring the government to provide special measures for the orphans' old age security. Nevertheless, he has continued to play a central and decisive role in the activities of both this organization and his own association. Once, when describing the failure of volunteers to pull together, Sugawara complained to me that his association had become a "one-man" (*wan man*) operation, with him at the center and the others cooperating: "My back is injured and I can't move

¹¹⁵ The assistance his writing garnered for Jō Mei's repatriation and citizenship acquisition is just one concrete example of this. See Chapter 4.

¹¹⁶ (*Manshūkoku maboroshi no kuni no kodomotachi: Rekishi wo ikiru zanryū koji*)

¹¹⁷ The organization's formal name is the Kanagawa Chinese Repatriate Welfare and Support Association (Kanagawa Chūgoku Kikokusha Fukushi Engo Kyōkai). It continued the activities of the Kanagawa Chinese Orphan Liaison Group (Kanagawa Chūgoku Koji Renrakuai), which was founded in 1981 and later initiated the eight month settlement and language assistance program. The association receives funding from private individuals as well as government sources. See Sugawara (1998, 272-3).

around that easily, so I tell everyone to take responsibility and do it themselves, but they don't want to do it themselves. 'If it's just helping out [*otetsudai*], I'll do it,' they say. When I tell them to take responsibility for doing things, they refuse...I don't want to make it a 'one-man' operation but that's the way it becomes."¹¹⁸

Responsibility is obviously a key theme in all war orphan activism, both individual responsibility and the responsibility of the state. Closely interconnected with the determination and assumption of responsibility is the process of reflection (*hansei*) on the past. At the core of Sugawara's activism – and that of many volunteers working on behalf of the war orphans – is a sentiment that mixes feelings of personal responsibility with the deep conviction that the present Japanese government is responsible for the thorough repatriation and care of the war orphans. This sentiment is in direct conflict with the posture of the government, which has preferred to see these issues as “individual/private matters” (*kojin no mondai*) that are ultimately the responsibility of the individuals in question and their families. Although volunteers and sympathetic lawmakers have succeeded in legally establishing the return of the war orphans as “the country's responsibility” (*kuni no sekimu*), that law makes no financial provisions for this enormously complex and expensive effort. Much of the funding for war orphan repatriation activities comes not from direct government appropriations (which would imply an acknowledgment of responsibility), but in the form of an “assistance fund” (*engo kikin*) established by the government and supplemented by private sources. As Sugawara points out, this is analogous to the non-governmental fund established for “comfort women” compensation, and amounts to an evasion of the government's responsibility.¹¹⁹

When we were discussing the Japanese government's efforts to limit the various claims for compensation connected with the war¹²⁰, I asked Sugawara to what extent the state should be responsible for the war orphans. “Put simply, until they become

¹¹⁸ Sugawara, 3/10/2000

¹¹⁹ Sugawara, 3/9/2000

¹²⁰ Sugawara was told that despite the support of more than 200 Diet members, the lack of explicit financial provisions in the law establishing government responsibility for the orphans reflected the government's fear that doing so would open the door to the many other war-related claimants, such as those by Taiwanese and Koreans that served in the Japanese military, former comfort women, and so forth.

Japanese,” he replied. As Japanese, he says, they have a right (*kenri*) to the knowledge provided in Japan’s nine years of compulsory education, and the state has the duty (*gimu*), which is enshrined in the postwar Constitution, to educate them. But it is the issue of *legally* becoming Japanese through the possession of Japanese citizenship that has been the greatest source of contention between Sugawara and the Japanese government. As noted above, Sugawara was particularly incensed by the government refusal to directly procure citizenship for the war orphans whose family origins remain unknown. The Japanese government has consistently refused to involve itself in the legal proceedings necessary to secure Japanese citizenship for returning war orphans that were either unidentified or had been reported as dead. The substantial legal costs for these proceedings were initially raised by volunteers and were later provided by private sector contributions. Sugawara protested that the costs of citizenship acquisition should be borne by the state: “after they return home the state should give them citizenship, because it was the state that went to war.”¹²¹

Once, after Sugawara reiterated his claim that the responsibility for the war orphans lay with the state that prosecuted the war, I asked his reason for assigning responsibility to the present government for actions that took place in the past. He responded simply that there was “continuity” (*keizokusei*) in the Japanese government from then until now. I noted that there are people who say that Japanese only emphasize their role as victims and minimize their role as victimizers, and he quickly concurred: “Absolutely. Particularly with the Nanjing Massacre. And the comfort women.”¹²² So, I continued, you say that the state is responsible, but aren’t individual people also at fault? He began somewhat evasively, wondering aloud how highly educated people could make such foolish decisions: “I didn’t study at all, just did what I was told and went to Manchuria, but why did well-educated people engage in a war like that? I wonder. But,”

¹²¹ Sugawara 3/10/2000. Sugawara’s (1998) book *Please give me Japanese citizenship* (*Nihon no kokuseki wo kudasai*) uses translated excerpts from over 2000 letters written by war orphans to him and his association in order to argue the need for citizenship acquisition.

¹²² Sugawara’s senior colleague at the Asahi News, Honda Katusichi, wrote an early expose of Japanese atrocities during the war. Infuriated at hearing politicians in the Diet deny the existence of the comfort women, Sugawara himself wrote a book entitled *Young Soldiers and the Comfort Women* (*Shōnenhei to Jūgun Ianfu*) assembling testimony from former soldiers about their “encounters” with comfort women during the war. The book includes Sugawara’s own experiences under a pseudonym.

he continued, “to blame the citizens [*kokumin*] who put them in power is a democratic idea -- at the time they didn’t elect people democratically.” But people cooperated, I insisted. “If you didn’t cooperate you would be a traitor [*hikokumin*]. They’d throw you in jail. And they only gave you enough knowledge to cooperate.” He mentioned how people were given a militaristic education that taught that their country was divine, centered on the emperor. They were taught to sacrifice themselves for the emperor, he said, as if their lives were “as light as a feather” (*kōmō no karuki ni*), and people like him went to Manchuria ready to do so. So, he asked rhetorically, “when they deceive the people like that, send them off to war without giving them any knowledge, and then, when those people’s children become orphans, leave all the responsibility to volunteers – isn’t that wrong?”¹²³

But Sugawara could also be quite critical of former colonists like himself. During one of my interviews with Sugawara at his home we were chatting and leafing through a commemorative book published by the settler group with which he had been affiliated in Manchuria. Scanning the black and white photographs of young men posing with hoes against the broad expanse of the Manchurian plains, he abruptly changed the topic: “I’ve been talking a lot today but I’m not really speaking the truth. By the truth I mean, well, we went to Manchuria during that war of invasion [*shinryaku sensō*], stole other people’s land and cultivated it, right? We did -- it definitely happened, the fact that we threw out the Chinese, colonized it ourselves, cultivated it ourselves. They don’t really reflect [*hansei*] on that,” he said, indicating the commemorative album. Why do you think that is, I asked. “Well, we were taught that we would create a new country through proper harmony between the five races in Manchuria [*Manshū gozoku kyōwa*]. ‘What’s wrong with that? We didn’t go to war. We didn’t want to take other people’s land.’ They say, ‘we went with the goal of cultivating some land and making it yield lots of grain, but there’s nothing wrong with that.’ But when you say: That’s why you went, but what was it actually like? Well, then there are lots of problems. They don’t reflect on that.” He continued that although he himself was not an intellectual, his work as a journalist for the Asahi News required a certain level of knowledge and awareness. Yet in spite of the

¹²³ Sugawara, 5/29/00

efforts he had made over 30 years of journalism to educate himself, he was still rendered speechless with fear when he happened to come face to face with the Japanese emperor during an assignment. “To deny [the divinity of] the emperor and yet be so nervous that you can’t speak in his presence – that’s education, for sure. All the way from the time I was small, I grew up being taught that the emperor was a god. So that feeling has survived all this time. And although I’ve tried to be a skilled journalist engaged in the so-called dawn of this postwar democratic nation of Japan, while as an abstract idea (*kannenteki ni*) I understood what a problem the invasion of Manchuria and the Sino-Japanese War was, what the Russo-Japanese War and the first Sino-Japanese War [Nisshin Sensō] were like, and the fact that Japan followed the example of Europe and America and invaded China, still -- I didn’t understand it concretely [*gutaiteki ni*]. And they don’t teach it in [Japanese] schools.”¹²⁴

Although Sugawara blames his own education for instilling complicity with the Japanese imperial project, he is also critical of the postwar educational and social climate of “liberalism” (*jiyūshugi*) for undermining volunteers’ commitment and cohesiveness. He once told me that the biggest problem volunteers have faced in dealing with the war orphan issue is the repeated failure to “unite” (*danketsu suru*). He blames this on “postwar education” and its emphasis on freedom, which he views as simply “willfulness” (*katte*) and “selfishness” (*wagamama*), though he presumably prefers them to the tragic prewar consequences of unquestioned obedience.¹²⁵

Interestingly, it seems that the very qualities of loyalty and mutual responsibility that strengthened Japan’s colonial enterprise also motivated and facilitated the organizational efforts of former colonists and other Manchurian veterans in their activism against the state in the postwar period. However, Sugawara pointed out that experience in Manchuria does not automatically make one a good volunteer. “Even among the people with Manchurian experience, when it comes to things like policies for war orphan self-sufficiency people’s opinions diverge.” There are people who feel like the orphans need

¹²⁴ Sugawara 3/9/00. He went on to say that it was his contact with overseas Chinese in Japan (while researching his book *Japan’s Overseas Chinese* [Nihon no Kakyō] in the 1980s) that finally awakened him to the reality of Japan’s past aggression against China.

¹²⁵ Sugawara 3/10/00.

to be cared for and do their best to help them but refuse to involve themselves in pressuring the government or trying to shape policy. “Then there are people who have no Manchurian experience who carefully study the history of the war, study Sino-Japanese relations and agree with people like me that this has to be done as part of the government’s postwar settlement [*seifu no sengo shori*].” But he concludes that while there are many people who are willing to assist the war orphans with their everyday concerns, by donating washing machines to them or teaching them Japanese, for example, very few – even within his own organization -- are willing to join him in fighting the government.¹²⁶

Nakai Naohito

When Nakai Naohito was 15 years old, he left a broken home and enrolled in a vocational school for communications (telegraphy) in Osaka. After one year of study, he departed for Manchuria in 1942 at age 16. “I didn’t know the world; I didn’t know anything. I had had a primary school education and I only saw things as an extension of that. The company was important, and one had to do what the company officials said. ‘You’re doing it for your company, you’re doing it for Japan’ – that’s the education I had.” When the war ended he was 18 and living in the Northeast Chinese city of Shenyang. “There were lots of settler groups in that area, parents of the war orphans...mostly poor farmers from Yamagata, Gifu, Nagano and Niigata prefectures. They went in groups after being told that they would receive land in China. And then the Soviets came. In my opinion, it was the Soviet’s entrance that produced the orphans at the end of the war.” Following the Soviet invasion, Nakai spent three months assisting Japanese refugees – mostly the surviving women, children, and elderly since the men had been taken to Siberia as captives – before he too was seized and taken to Siberia. There he survived a horrific five years of hard labor before being repatriated. During the half century of the postwar period, the “hell” that he witnessed assisting the refugees and watching his comrades die in Siberia remained burned into his mind, and his desire to assist both endured. After returning from Siberia he spent three years as a volunteer

¹²⁶ Sugawara, 5/29/00

working to make sure that all the captives were repatriated, and then – like many veterans – he became consumed with the day-to-day demands of his own life.

During the war's aftermath he had heard talk of Japanese children that had remained in China, but it wasn't until the 1970s and the resumption of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations that people began going to China in search of their own family members and discovering the presence of war orphans there. Though preoccupied with his work, Nakai followed the developments in the relative-seeking efforts and the volunteer activism through the papers and television: "Even though I had been wrapped up in my work since returning from Siberia, there was the connection with that time fifty years before – Ah! There *are* orphans after all! ...I knew about it, but it was beginning in 1994 when I thought, OK, now I'm retired so I should do something. But I didn't know where or how to begin. I wasn't a member of a volunteer group. I couldn't tell from the papers. So I wrote a letter directly to the Ministry of Health and Welfare!" he laughed. The Ministry informed him of an upcoming gathering in Osaka (not far from his home in Kyoto) to meet with the 25th relative-seeking tour of war orphans. There he met more than 200 other elderly people, some of whom had been active for 10 years, writing letters, welcoming the orphans and serving as guarantors. But nobody knew what the situation was in China, and he felt that was "insufficient."¹²⁷

Nakai describes himself and these other volunteers as part of the tiny percentage of Japanese who are consumed only with the past. "When you're 70 or 80 you don't have hopes of making money or advancing in the world. There's just a responsibility towards the past. Individuals also have a responsibility for things the state isn't taking care of." At the same time, he also began studying Chinese. "When I retired, I thought about my life; rather than finish out my life amusing myself, I wanted to do something useful. And judging from my life experiences, I felt I ought to work with the orphans."

When considering what he could do to help the war orphans, he felt that assisting the war orphans out of pity, without an understanding of their situation in China,

¹²⁷ This is not entirely accurate; many volunteers did go to China early on, as Gunji's account cited above notes, and the profile of G, the guidance official, mentions that their settler association had sponsored eight fact-finding trips to China for "local surveys" (*genchi chōsa*) on orphan identities. See Asakura (2000).

risked being patronizing. So he resolved to go to China, visit the homes of the war orphans, express gratitude to their foster parents as a representative of the Japanese, and try to understand their circumstances. His method has been to make contact with the war orphans when they first come to Japan on the relative-seeking tours, and then to correspond with them after they return to China and begin contemplating a permanent move to Japan. “I tell them, I’m not a government official. I don’t have any connection to volunteers, either. ‘See me as a pretend sibling, a pretend relative,’ I say. Only one in twenty has relatives [in Japan]. Even if they come back, it’s already been fifty years so there’s no possibility of meeting their relatives. ‘If I will do, let’s be pretend siblings.’ That’s how the letters start...I tell them the things the government doesn’t talk about or show them. And then I go. And I’m welcomed, wherever I go. When they first come to Japan there’s big parties and hundreds of people, so they don’t remember, but when an old man by himself comes to their house [in China] carrying a backpack, it’s intense [*kyōretsu*].” Those that decide to return to Japan then come to the resettlement center at Tokorozawa, where their guarantor (*mimoto hikiukenin*) is decided; for 30 of the 50 orphans with whom Nakai has been associated, that marked the end of their relationship. “They get the impression that their guarantor has a higher status and more money than Mr. Nakai,” he laughs. “They’re Chinese after all.”¹²⁸ And there are lots of good [*zenryō na*] people among the guarantors. The elderly ones. But then when they become aware of the customs of that Chinese person they get angry and say that on no account will they take care of the orphan.” He insists that this happens about half of the time, and then he would do what he could to help.

In 1997, after visiting individuals in China who claimed to be war orphans but had not been officially identified as such, Nakai began pressuring the government to collect information on such people. Apparently government representatives went to China the following two years on fact-finding missions. In 2000, citing the high costs and

¹²⁸ It was common among Japanese volunteers to accept the cultural Chineseness of the war orphans and their repatriate families, and they might therefore sometimes refer to them as “Chinese” when discussing their behavior or cultural background. But the same volunteers also insisted upon the war orphan’s qualifications as “Japanese” and hence deserving of state assistance and acceptance as citizens. Takezawa (2002) notes a similarly widespread identification among Japanese volunteers and educators of Nikkei as foreigners (*gaikokujin*).

low rate of matches in recent relative-seeking tours, the government announced the end of these state-sponsored tours in favor of a China-based effort to identify the several hundred war orphans still estimated to remain there. Nakai acknowledges the rationale behind this shift, but he and other volunteers stress the need for oversight and worry that this move will enable the government to act covertly and avoid volunteer input. Moreover, the effective erasure of the most visible reminder of the war orphans' existence will reduce the already waning public interest in their plight to "zero."

Like Sugawara, Nakai notes the absence of any young successors to the volunteers of his generation who experienced the war and Manchuria. He notes the need to appeal to such people and form connections based on the recognition of the "humanitarian" and "social welfare"; he mentions that since Japan has become a wealthy country Japanese have participated in overseas assistance to refugees in foreign countries and so forth, but there's also a need to think about the issues that remain from Japan's own past. However, he disparages the contemporary understandings of "democracy" that give rise to irresponsibility and the desire for others – and particularly the government – to take care of things. He draws a sharp contrast between the attitudes of young and old volunteers involved in social welfare, opining that while the elderly are focused on the existence of the problem itself, younger volunteers are motivated by abstract notions of "universal love" (*hakuai*) and superficial self-improvement. As a result, he feels, young people lack the will/conviction (*shinnen*) and the willingness to sacrifice oneself that is characteristic of elderly volunteers. He acknowledges that these latter characteristics (and the lack of a "modern education") were directly connected to the single-minded sense of mission and obedience to authority that enabled Japanese militarism and the suicide pilots (*tokkōtai*) in particular. But there is a need for people who, though uneducated, are "stubborn" (*ganko*) and "pure" (*junsui*). Using the analogy of a razor and a hatchet (*nata*), Nakai summarized the differences between "modern young people full of knowledge and ideas" and old volunteers like himself who only have a primary school education: while a razor is sharp, it is easily broken, and once broken it is unusable. A hatchet, though dull, is sturdy.

Describing his upcoming trip to China, Nakai mentioned that it was going to be a busy one. In addition to his round of war orphan-related house calls, his Chinese translator of five years has started a Japanese language school in the Northeast Chinese city of Jilin, and Nakai has been active donating class materials and teaching time: “It’s Sino-Japanese exchange that’s completely separate from the orphans. In the end, that’s what is going to grow. If the orphan issue is no longer a problem, I’ll teach beginning Japanese to the young people over there.”

Okada Tsuyako and the Sino-Japanese Friendship Brave Hawks Society (Nicchū Yūkō Yūyōkai)¹²⁹

Although most of the volunteers assisting the war orphans are retirees or professional housewives (*sengyō shufu*), they also include a small number of college students, many of whom become involved in teaching Japanese to war orphans and their Chinese family members through activity “circles” (*sākuru*) which they join as first-year students. For the most part, such groups are not explicitly directed toward war orphan assistance, but are more commonly focused on the teaching of Japanese as a second language (JSL) or the study of China. As such, volunteers may have little knowledge or interest in the specific historical circumstances of the war orphans. One important exception is a national organization called the Brave Hawks Society (Yūyōkai), which is based in Tokyo but has affiliated chapters in a number of colleges and is specifically focused on “Sino-Japanese friendship, anti-war pacifism, and Chinese repatriate assistance.” College student members of the Brave Hawks were responsible for establishing the first Japanese language class for repatriates in the danchi where Hayakawa worked, and Hayakawa himself was a member of that group before splitting off to form his own organization. The original Brave Hawks group eventually shrank to a single member, who nevertheless remained tirelessly active and deeply appreciated by the repatriate families she taught and assisted. Like Hayakawa, Okada had rejected the typical post-graduate employment path preferred by her parents and stayed with her

¹²⁹ The following interview was conducted on February 15th, 2001.

parents in order to focus on her volunteer assistance, which she supplemented with part-time work.

I met with Okada in a meeting room in the local elementary school, where she was preparing for a Japanese language class for some of the children and grandchildren of war orphans that lived in the area.¹³⁰ The term “Japanese language class,” a translation of the *Nihongo kyōshitsu* title that was applied to a broad variety of volunteer language assistance, meant in practice everything from basic greetings to assistance preparing for the Japanese portion of the high school entrance exam. New orphan-related families continued to appear with little Japanese proficiency and the long-term students required increasingly sophisticated assistance.

I asked Okada about the circumstances of her involvement with the Brave Hawks, which began when she was a first-year student at Meiji Gakuin University nearly seven years earlier. She said she began casually (*karui kimochi de*) with a mix of motivations that are common to many first-time student volunteers: she knew she wanted to be a volunteer, thought teaching Japanese was appealing, and had some interest in China. She saw a poster for the group and thought she would give it a try with a friend.

“At the very beginning, they weren’t doing [Japanese language] classes like this. They did home visits [to repatriates]...for the first six months I wasn’t doing much direct assistance work, just participating in meetings, study sessions and so forth. But that half year was significant.” How so? I asked. “I didn’t know anything about the Chinese repatriate issue...I wasn’t really interested in social issues when I joined the group, I just thought teaching Japanese seemed interesting and I wanted to try volunteering. But Yūyōkai is a group that really emphasizes properly studying just what kind of people you are helping before you help them.” In their study sessions, the group’s older members taught the new students how the Chinese repatriate problem was a war-related issue and that the repatriates were victims of the war (*sensō no higaisha*) who were returning to Japan and facing a variety of problems in the process. That was the first that she had

¹³⁰ The teaching activities of Hayakawa and Okada depend upon the provision of rooms by, respectively, the local residents council (which administers access to the danchi “meeting hall” [*shūkaijō*]) and the local school, which have some “multipurpose” meeting facilities.

heard of the war orphans. Later she was taken to visit some repatriates, and she became increasingly enthusiastic and committed. After this initial half year of study, just when she was wondering how she could “make a contribution” (*kōken*), there were plans made to start a Japanese language school for repatriates and their families that were concentrated in a large public housing project on the outskirts of Yokohama. An older member of the group had reported that the need there could not be satisfied just with home visits, so volunteers from the Yūyōkai affiliates at Meiji Gakuin University and Kanagawa University began going there to teach. During the subsequent two and half years, the number of students constantly varied, with new students showing up and former students dropping out due to conflicts with work and other reasons. Although the class was ostensibly intended to teach Japanese, volunteers would also be asked to assist with a variety of other issues that required Japanese proficiency, from conflicts with employers to traffic accidents to immigration procedures for war orphan family members.

After about two years, however, the group grew increasingly split over the relationship between the school “circles” and the central administration of the Yūyōkai. In Okada’s view, the college groups were “branches” (*shibu*) that were created under the auspices of that central organization. As such, they ought to follow the policy directives that would periodically be issued by the Yūyōkai main office (*honkyoku*). Other members felt differently: they did not consider themselves members of Yūyōkai, and they wanted to do their volunteer work independently. In specific, the majority of the group’s members wanted to expand the focus of their Japanese teaching to encompass not only war orphans and their relations but also other immigrants (particularly Vietnamese), of which there were many in that area. In the face of this sentiment, Okada broke with the group and continued the Yūyōkai’s mission on her own by establishing a new language class in a neighboring housing development that also has a large war orphan population. To her parents’ frustration, she decided to remain with Yūyōkai following graduation rather than pursue more traditional employment. This extraordinary step is quite rare among college volunteers, most of which quit their activities to concentrate on the job search many months before graduation.

I asked Okada how she felt about the government's responsibility for the war orphans. "Well, if you trace the history, those people arrived in China as a result of the nation's policies, and moreover, it's often said that at the time of the defeat the Japanese military fled first, leaving the civilians behind. I think that's actually a fact. So there's that double responsibility. In addition, right after the war it would have been fine if they had returned them [to Japan], but relations between the Chinese and Japanese governments were poor and ultimately they had to wait until the resumption of Sino-Japanese relations in 1972. But by 1972 they had families and children and were already settled in China." I mentioned the possibility that since these things took place long ago, the present Japanese administration might not be responsible.

"I think that's absurd [*okashii*]! It's the same Japanese government, just different people. It's connected all the way [*zutto tsunagatte iru*]. I think that saying otherwise is just wrong; moreover, from the perspective of an average citizen it's precisely the same government [*masa ni onaji seifu*], and I think they definitely wouldn't agree. That's just the government's excuse. I also think that the repatriates feel that way too. That the government won't assist them, that they are clearly treated like foreigners even though they are Japanese, that they are viewed as 'bothersome' [*yakkai*]. I hear those opinions a lot."

I mentioned to Okada a recent statement by the government official in charge of war orphan affairs, who responded to war orphan requests for special assistance by saying that war orphans were not the only victims (*higaisha*) of the war; all Japanese were victims, so the orphans are not entitled to special treatment.

"I'm sure that there are other victims, but it isn't really an issue of how much one has suffered: the government should compensate all of them." She pointed out how, in lieu of providing special measures for the orphans' old age security, the government has encouraged them to take advantage of welfare (*seikatsu hogo*) as a means of supporting themselves¹³¹: "I think it's wrong to use welfare to take care of the situation, and force orphans to live on the bare minimum necessary for existence." She said that Yūyōkai had

¹³¹ Despite the widespread stigma attached to welfare in Japan, the official mentioned earlier has justified the government's reliance on welfare by insisting that "welfare is not shameful [*haji*]."

written up a petition to that effect in conjunction with the broad movement to agitate for war orphans' old age security during 2000-1, but differences of opinion between various advocacy groups ultimately led each group to submit separate requests. She also feels that, ideally, war orphans will organize and press their own case, with Japanese volunteers to assist them. But the reality is that they are not in a position to do so.

Conclusion: Atoshimatsu and other Volunteers

The resettlement of the war orphans and their families has proved to be a lengthy and complex process, and many scholars and activists note the continuing need for expanded language and employment assistance as well as the emergence of pressing new needs, such as old age security for the orphans and assistance to *yobiyose* family members. The imminent departure of the Manchurian veterans leaves such issues unsettled. Without their pressure, the government may well be less inclined to implement any administrative reforms to expand their existing assistance. As Hayakawa's example has shown, many of these needs may be met by NPOs and volunteers that are unconcerned with the specific historical circumstances of the orphan cause. What, in this event, is lost?

Reflecting on the falling profile of the war orphans in the Japanese public's consciousness, Sugawara mentioned the contrast with the fervor of the 1980s: "Now it's like, 'are you *still* doing war orphan stuff?' People living around [my neighborhood] say things like 'you *still* haven't resolved the war orphan problem?' They don't have a clue. Japanese are relatively forgetful [*wasureppoi*]. 'Easily aroused, quick to cool down.' [*Nesshin yasuku, sameyasui*]¹³² ... Japanese *know* that it was a war of invasion [*shinryaku sensō*]. They know it, but they won't go and say 'that was wrong; let's apologize.' They say, 'come on already, how long are going to keep bringing up ancient history?' That's the trend these days." This failure to properly reflect upon the war and warn against similar transgressions in the present, he continued, is what has made people like the

¹³² Nakai also used this exact phrase to describe Japanese volunteers. When I asked Sugawara why people's interest had "cooled," he mused that for one thing, the war orphans are so "wretched" (*mijime*) that people don't really feel like coming into contact with them.

revisionist historian Fujioka and the *manga* author Kobayashi Yoshinori such a problem.¹³³

During one of our interviews, I asked Sugawara if there were any young people who could pick up the volunteer efforts initiated by the original Zenkyō volunteers, whose surviving leaders were in their 70s. He replied flatly that there weren't any such young people. "But, you know, in ten years the *issei* [first generation, i.e. war orphans] will be dead, right? Or maybe twenty years. In twenty years that will be about the end of the *issei*. And the *nisei* [second generation, i.e. the children of the war orphans] will become independent [*jiritsu suru*]. At the very least they'll be able to run their own lives. So I think it will just remain as a record [*kiroku*] that 'this thing happened' [*kō iu koto ga atta n da*]; there won't be much left of the problems themselves." (3/10)

When accounts of the past are no longer related and embodied but rendered as a personal or impersonal "record" (*kiroku*) of experiences and events, we lose both an important means of interrogating that past as well as a sense of its immediacy and relevance. The physical presence of "people who experienced Manchuria" (*Manshū taikensha*) – and the war orphans in particular – possesses a unique ability to serve as physical bulwarks against what Lisa Yoneyama, in her writings on atomic bomb memories, describes as the "larger Japanese postmodern experience: commodification of knowledge, image over substance, trivialization of history."¹³⁴ As younger generations of Japanese volunteers take the places of their elderly forerunners, they may find that this visceral connection with the past is irreplaceable.

¹³³ Sugawara, 3/10/00. Fujioka, a revisionist historian, and Kobayashi are leading figures in the Rekishi Kyoukasho Tsukurukai, whose members decry "masochistic" portrayals of the past and advocate textbooks that instill ethno-nationalistic pride. See Hein and Selden (2000) for more discussion.

¹³⁴ Yoneyama (1999)

Chapter 4: Re-presenting War Orphan Narratives

The accounts of war orphan suffering that were presented in Japanese books and newspapers during the 1980s and 90s compelled the imagination and sympathy of a wide Japanese public and thereby helped to generate support for the war orphans' identification and repatriation. However, since most orphans did not speak Japanese, their stories were generally translated, edited or excerpted, and then re-presented to this public by (usually Japanese) intermediaries whose particular agendas determined what and how much of the original was retained. In many cases, even such fragmentary, indirect narratives were lacking: Although much has been written concerning the circumstances of a few orphans (such as those of "Jō Mei", below), most of the orphans have been presented to the broad Japanese public largely through thumbnail summaries of their physical features and war-related circumstances, supplemented perhaps by a photograph. Of course, even these thumbnail sketches can be deeply evocative and moving, particularly for those whose personal memories of Manchuria supply a vivid context of associations and experiences to the briefest of signifiers (a colonial place name, a fateful date).

In a sense, however, the concise suggestiveness of the orphan biographies only underlines their fragility. Stripped of distracting personal detail, they were easily appropriated by the powerful imaginary frameworks of the former colonists, who tended to place the orphans within a specifically Japanese experience. No wonder, then, that so many former colonists and orphan family members ultimately found it so difficult to reconcile themselves to the overwhelmingly Chinese reality of the orphans' actual lives.

If orphans' experiences were therefore vulnerable to appropriation by the imaginations of former colonists, the most influential appropriation of such experiences was in the form of a "historical novel" (*rekishi shōsetsu*) entitled *Daichi no ko* (Child of the Vast Land). The author, a well-known popular fiction writer named Yamazaki Toyoko, conducted a large number of interviews with various war orphans in Japan and China and then reworked them to fashion a melodramatic narrative of the postwar period

focusing on one orphan's experience. Though the book became a national best seller and was subsequently adapted as a television drama series on the Japanese state network (NHK)¹³⁵, it elicited strong protests from some war orphans and their supporters, who felt that Yamazaki's book was misleading.¹³⁶

Nevertheless, there was also a grudging embrace of at least parts of book by those orphans and second-generation repatriates who had read it. Ōkubo Akio, the self-described "Youth of Japanese Descent from China" profiled in Chapter 5, taught Chinese repatriate students in public schools while he was working on his doctorate, and he admits to using the television drama version in his classes with them. He justified it by saying that there is so little else to choose from in terms of video documentaries or profiles of the war orphans, and the story – though unrepresentative – still compels interest and compassion.

However, although the drama has been re-broadcast on state television a number of times since its debut, both book and movie are relics of an earlier period in the 80s and early 90s that was characterized by widespread public interest in, and compassion for, the war orphans' history and present circumstances. No comparable interest exists now, and the rare orphans that surface in the popular press frequently do so in a negative context of criminality or loss. There is little romance and much suffering, which is reduced to banality in its journalistic re-presentation.

But the public discourse on war orphans now also features far greater involvement on the part of the orphans themselves. There are several orphans and second-generation repatriates that have had editorials or articles published in mainstream Japanese newspapers, and a few orphan activists are prolific contributors to the Chinese press in Japan. Many orphans submitted lengthy Japanese- and Chinese-language appeals to politicians during the recent lobbying and activism on behalf of special old-age security provisions for orphans. But it is precisely the *silence* of so many orphans – particularly orphans who have returned within the last ten years or so – that emphasizes how state-

¹³⁵ The popularity of the book encouraged Yamazaki to write an autobiographical spin-off concerning the book's writing entitled *Daichi no ko to watashi* (*Child of the Vast Land and I*).

¹³⁶ See the appendix of Sugawara (1998) for the specific complaints. Sugawara's group has sent protest letters each time the drama is rebroadcast.

imposed categories on the one hand and strategic essentialism on the other can each mask considerable diversity and disagreement among the “war orphans.”

“Jō Mei” and Ikeda Sumie

Among all of the war orphans that have returned to Japan since 1972, perhaps the most widely publicized case was that of a woman known as “Jō Mei”.¹³⁷ In May of 1980, she was one of a large number of orphans that gathered to meet with Japanese volunteer and journalist Sugawara Kōsuke when he visited the Northeast Chinese city of Mudanjiang on a fact-finding mission. Soon after returning to Japan, Sugawara wrote an article on “Jō Mei” for his paper, the national daily Asahi News. Upon reading the article, a man in Japan’s northern island of Hokkaido was convinced from the description that Jō Mei was his daughter. In order to establish her identity, however, the local court required a blood test¹³⁸, and the man paid for Jō Mei to come to Japan with her three young children in July of 1981. Tragically, however, the blood test proved the Japanese man was not her parent, and Jō Mei faced a mandatory return to China before the expiration of her tourist visa. At the time, only “identified” (*hanmei*) war orphans – those with known relatives – were permitted to return to Japan on permanent residence visas.

In response to Jō Mei’s predicament, Sugawara, former Youth Brigade member Chino Seiji and the veteran volunteer Gunji Hiko formed the “Jō Mei Support Association” (*Jō Mei wo shien suru kai*). Sugawara and other journalists also wrote newspaper articles on Jō Mei’s dilemma, and after reading one such article in December, the Tokyo lawyer Kawai Hiroyuki contacted the group and offered his assistance.¹³⁹ In 1978, Kawai had been successful in using the Tokyo Family Court to secure Japanese citizenship for another “unidentified” (*mihanmei*) war orphan by using a legal procedure

¹³⁷ This is the Japanese pronunciation of the characters of her Chinese name, Xu Ming (徐明).

¹³⁸ Jō Mei had done a simple blood test in China that showed her to be the same blood type as the man. But the court required a more rigorous test that would confirm their family relationship.

¹³⁹ Kawai was born in the Manchurian colonial capital of “Shinkyō” (now Changchun) in 1944, and was repatriated in 1946. The common feeling among many Manchurian repatriates that “I too could have become an orphan” reportedly also explains Kawai’s desire to offer assistance. See *Chūgoku zanryū koji no kokuseki shutoku wo shien suru kai* (hereafter, “Chūgoku koji kai”) (2000, 30). Also see p. 19 for a similar sentiment expressed by a caseworker for the Tokyo Family Court. I also heard an identical expression used by a Japanese Diet member that met with war orphan activists in 2001.

called *shūseki* (“assumption of [family] registration”), which was designed to create or amend a Japanese family registration (*koseki*).¹⁴⁰ The possession of a registration then automatically entailed Japanese citizenship.

Though little-known and rarely used, the creation of a registration using *shūseki* was a relatively simple and straightforward procedure, and it had the added advantage of being under the jurisdiction of local Family Courts (*katei saibansho*), which were considered to be “sympathetic.”¹⁴¹ Kawai took on Jō Mei’s case and in May of 1982 he was successful in persuading the Tokyo Family Court to acknowledge that she was Japanese and establish her registration. Because “unidentified” war orphans do not know their “true” Japanese names, they must create a Japanese name upon registration. Many choose to incorporate characters from their Chinese names and/or use the names (or characters from the names) of Japanese volunteers that have assisted them.¹⁴² Jō Mei took the name of “Imamura Akiko”; “Imamura” was the name of her Japanese translator at the time, and “Aki” was the Japanese pronunciation of her Chinese first name (Ming; 明).

Following this landmark ruling, the *shūseki* procedure (often supported by such documents) has been extensively employed by volunteers to secure citizenship for both war orphans in China as well as those in Japan.¹⁴³ For her part, the newly (re)named Imamura began working for Kawai’s Sakura Law Office in 1987 assisting with translation and other duties related to the hundreds of *shūseki* cases that followed her own.

¹⁴⁰ All Japanese citizens have a family registration, which is generally established upon their birth. The *shūseki* procedure was intended to rectify delays or oversights in this registration. It was first used to “acquire” citizenship for an orphan in 1976. In that case, which was heard by the Iida branch of the Nagano Family Court, the orphan was still in China.

¹⁴¹ The alternative procedure for establishing a registration was to take legal action against the government using a procedure called *kokuseki kakunin* (registration confirmation); this was judged to be far more demanding and time-consuming and was therefore avoided. *Chūgoku koji kai* (2000, 32).

¹⁴² See Sugawara (1998) for a discussion of this practice among orphans he has assisted.

¹⁴³ One group, the “Chinese war orphan nationality acquisition support group” (*Chūgoku zanryūkoji no kokuseki shutoku wo shien suru kai*) which Chino and Kawai formed in 1984, has since successfully procured citizenship for more than one thousand war orphans using this method. The government began providing indirect financial assistance for these activities in 1986, but has refused to take a direct role in securing citizenship for war orphans, citing “state interference in civil affairs.” Moreover, to this day, the Ministry of Justice requires all “unidentified” orphans – even those who have successfully acquired citizenship through *shūseki* -- to register as foreigners (*gaikokujin tōroku*) out of a concern that this group may also include some foreigners (i.e. non-Japanese). One lawyer who has worked on hundreds of *shūseki* applications describes this “state irresponsibility” as “irrational ‘pure-bloodism’ and Puritanism” (*gōri naki junketsushugi, keppekishugi*). See *Chūgoku koji kai* (2000, 13-4).

Her work brought her into constant contact with other war orphans and Japanese seeking lost relatives, particularly during the periodic relative-seeking tours that brought orphans to Japan to search for their relatives. It was in 1994, during one of these tour visits, that Imamura bumped into a Japanese woman who turned out to be her biological sister. At the age of 50, “Jō Mei” finally discovered her biological family and the name she had been given at birth: Ikeda Sumie.¹⁴⁴

I was acquainted with Ikeda’s story through my conversations with Sugawara Kōsuke (see Chapter 3), and he arranged for me to interview her at Kawai’s law office in Tokyo where she continues to work. When I arrived at the sleek reception area for the firm’s office, Ikeda greeted me warmly and ushered me into a small conference room where we chatted over cups of green tea. I was struck by her calm poise, her warmth and sincerity, and the unaffected smile that rarely left her face even after our interview had stretched to two hours.¹⁴⁵ At the very beginning of our talk, we switched by mutual agreement from Japanese to Chinese (which Ikeda spoke with a Northeastern inflection common to many of my two dozen orphan interviewees) and the shift in language seemed to relax the formality of our surroundings and lend a casualness, even intimacy, to our discussion. Initially, it was clear from her practiced delivery that she had been interviewed about her background many times before. But over the course of the following two hours this “narration” began to alternate with more spontaneous passages in response to my questions and her own reflections.

Ikeda was born in the city of Mudanjiang in 1944, the youngest of five children in the family of a Japanese soldier. She was just 10 months old at the war’s end when her mother, too weak to produce milk while fleeing the advance of the Soviet army with Ikeda’s four older siblings, chose to entrust her infant daughter to the care of a Chinese family rather than let her die of starvation. This first foster family already had children,

¹⁴⁴ Once again a blood test was used to verify her identity, although it was a much more thorough blood analysis than simple blood-type (A, B, O, etc.) test that she took back in 1981. Because of the imprecision of the latter type of test (which resulted in many erroneous matches), volunteers pressured the Ministry of Health and Welfare to adopt a more rigorous method of testing. Though the MHW eventually adopted the use of such a test on a limited basis, it has resisted calls for widespread testing to facilitate relative matching because of the time and expense involved. *Chūgoku koji kai* (2000, 9-10, 32).

¹⁴⁵ The interview took place on October 19, 2000. The interview transcript stretches to 60 pages.

so Ikeda was subsequently passed to a childless couple surnamed Xu, who lived on the outskirts of Mudanjiang. Life was pretty good, she said. Her foster father earned a good income as a merchant and her mother doted on her and dressed her in immaculate white clothes. But Ikeda's earliest memories were of being teased as a Japanese.

"When I went out, other kids would call me 'little Japanese! Little Japanese!' [*'xiao riben renr, xiao riben renr'*]. Everyone around knew I was Japanese." She asked her (foster) mother what the other children meant, but her mother told her not to listen to them. She wanted to play with the other kids but they refused: "If you want to play you have to crawl over here, like a dog...if the little Japanese devil wants to play, she has to crawl like a dog." Though she was afraid of soiling her clean white clothes, her desire to play with the other kids was stronger. When her mother saw her dirty clothes and heard what had happened, she took Ikeda to the homes of the other children and spoke with their parents, who told their children not to bully her. After that she was able to play with them without being teased. "This is my clearest memory of when I was young. It was when I was 4 or 5, before I started school."

Ikeda started school at age 6, and she remembers that her teacher was very good to her. At one point the teacher took Ikeda with her when she went to the hospital to pick up some medicine. When people at the hospital asked the teacher if Ikeda was her child, Ikeda overheard her reply (jokingly) that yes, Ikeda was "the Japanese child that I got" (*wo yao de Riben haizi*). Ikeda was confused: first the children called her a little Japanese devil, then the teacher said she was Japanese, "but my mother said that was nonsense. I didn't know what to make of it."

When she was 8 years old, officers of the Chinese Public Security Bureau (PSB; *Gong'an ju*) suddenly showed up at their house. "As soon as they came to my house I thought, 'why are they coming to my house?' I was afraid. When they came I was in the house with my mom. The officer said Go outside, I have some business with your mother. So I went out. But kids are curious: why did they come? What are they saying? So I crept closer and closer to the door and listened to what they were saying inside. And I heard the PSB person say 'Your child is a Japanese child. Now you can send her back to

Japan.’¹⁴⁶...He wanted to make me go. Then I heard my mom say ‘No she isn’t! No she isn’t! She’s mine. I gave birth to her. She’s not Japanese.’ Then I heard the PSB man say ‘We’ve already investigated it, we knew a long time ago. Everyone around here knows. You never gave birth to a child, your family doesn’t even have children [*genben meiyou haizi*]. At your age -- you’re 40, almost 50 years old! How could you have a child?’ He scolded her. Then my mom said ‘No! She isn’t! She *is* mine!’ [*jiushi wode*] At this point...it seemed like they were bullying [*qifu*] my mom. I opened the door, jumped into the room, and hugged my mother, crying. Don’t bully my mom! Don’t bully my mom! We just held each other and cried. The PSB person looked at the two of us, both hurt, both crying. So he just left...Then it was really clear to me that I was Japanese. If I wasn’t Japanese, why would the PSB have to come and say I was Japanese?”

“But even though I knew, I was really afraid,” she continued. Because when the schoolteacher would take the class to go see patriotic movies about the war, “my classmates all knew I was Japanese. So when the kids saw those Japanese devils killing and burning they would say ‘you little Japanese! Overthrow [*dadao*] the Japanese devils!’ Some spit in my face. They were kids,” she said. “You can forgive them for hating the Japanese, because the Japanese hurt the Chinese, right? But *I* hadn’t done anything bad. So...they would spit on me and later I wouldn’t even dare watch the movies. They all sat and watched and I just huddled on the floor.”

After a number of these painful experiences, Ikeda ceased to acknowledge that she was Japanese. “I knew in my heart [*xinlitou mingbai*]. But I would still say that I was Chinese, not Japanese. Why? Because all the things I saw in those movies were awful things. Japanese did terrible things. I didn’t want to be a bad person. So I thought, I’m not Japanese. I’m not that bad.” Still, she thought often about Japan, even though as an 8-year old she had no idea of what Japan was like. When she went to school she would look at the map: “There’s Japan! I’m from there! My home is there. It [the country] was tiny.

¹⁴⁶ The Japanese government-organized repatriation of Japanese nationals from Manchuria was delayed until May of 1946, and was repeatedly interrupted before ceasing entirely in May of 1958. After one lengthy interruption following the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, official repatriation was formally restarted with the cooperation of the PRC government in 1953 under the provisions of the Beijing Agreement. It is probable that this development was behind the visit of the PSB officer to Ikeda’s home.

But it was in the east; that's where the sun rises. It must be nice, because that's where the sun comes from....but why are the people there so bad?"

She went home and asked her mother: "Mom, what are Japanese people like? Are they all as bad as those people in the movies?" She said no; there are good people and bad people in Japan. Just like China. "But that was just what my mom said. I still didn't believe her. Then I asked the neighbors, people who were older. Lots of them told me that Japanese aren't all that bad. So, I felt a little better [*anxin*]."

"When I was 13 the PSB people came again. That was 1958¹⁴⁷...The first time I didn't go home, in 1953. Because I didn't acknowledge [*buchengren*] that I was Japanese. My mom didn't either. Plus I was so young, I didn't have any relatives; who would I look for if I went back? So I didn't. But they came again in 1958. At 13, I still couldn't go if there wasn't anyone there [in Japan]. Later they [the PSB people] told me that if I didn't want to go back to Japan then when I turned 18 I should go to the PSB and take Chinese citizenship. Later, for other reasons, I didn't dare do that, so I didn't take Chinese citizenship."¹⁴⁸

As Ikeda grew older, the bullying gradually ceased and she got on well with her schoolmates. But no matter where she went -- whether she changed schools or moved house -- her Japanese identity was known to those around her. "After I grew older, I gradually became aware that I wasn't Chinese after all. But I had grown up in China; I was no different from the Chinese...I thought, The people who raised me are Chinese. What I ate and drank, the air I breathed -- all that was Chinese. So I didn't feel like I was any different from the Chinese. For my part, I really like China. If you were to ask me which country I like better, China or Japan, I don't make any distinctions or have any preferences -- I love both...both are my homeland [*muguo*]."

¹⁴⁷ See footnote 4.

¹⁴⁸ This decision was to prove fateful, since the assumption of Chinese citizenship would have jeopardized Ikeda's subsequent appeal for Japanese registration. Despite the efforts of most Chinese foster parents to hide their children's Japanese identities, in many cases their Japanese backgrounds were known to the local authorities, and documentation of their identity as "Japanese orphans" was included in their official "file" (*dang an*). During her *shūseki* court case, Ikeda's lawyer Kawai was able to use these official documents and a testimony of their authenticity from the Chinese embassy to persuade the judge of Ikeda's Japanese identity. The same type of documents also proved decisive in many subsequent *shūseki* cases, though their reliability came to be increasingly questioned.

“But although I knew I was Japanese, when I was in China, when I was young, I had no opportunity to look for my relatives. Because Japan and China were enemy countries. There was no chance to write letters. Even among us orphans, nobody dared contact one another.” Were there other orphans around you? I asked. “There were some. I knew that, but I didn’t dare contact them...if we were to contact one another, that might cause us trouble in the future. They might say we were organizing a ‘reactionary group’ [*fandong jituan*] or something. So we never got in touch. I would know that [such-and-such] person was Japanese, that she was a Japanese *obaasan* [J: grandmother; older woman¹⁴⁹], but we never contacted one another. But I knew that I was Japanese. And I wondered – how could I not wonder? Who is my mother? Who is my father? What are my older brother and sisters like? Who is in my family? I wondered about all of this...I longed for [*xiangnian*] my own homeland, I longed for my own relatives. I *really* longed for them. If I was busy, I couldn’t pay attention. But if I wasn’t busy and had a little time, I would think about my background [*shenshi*]...What’s my real name? When was I really born? Why does everyone have parents and I don’t?”

After graduating from middle school and completing a three-year teacher’s training school, in 1962 Ikeda was placed in an extremely remote, forested region as an elementary school teacher. She drew this assignment because her Japanese background meant she was given the least desirable opening, far from the urban centers where most graduates wanted to work. Ironically, the isolation helped insulate her from the persecution that some orphans experienced during the subsequent Cultural Revolution. Still, “during the Cultural Revolution I was terrified. Because I was Japanese...I was extra cautious about everything I did.” She was enthusiastic and diligent in her work, and was recognized as an “outstanding teacher” (*youxiu jiaoshi*). Eventually, she decided to apply for membership in the Communist Party and, with the unanimous support of the local Party members, her application was forwarded to the regional Party headquarters. But when the list of new Party members was announced, her name was absent. When this

¹⁴⁹ Although our interview was entirely conducted in Chinese, there were a handful of points when Ikeda used a Japanese term for emphasis or when the term had specific overtones in Japanese, such as the “bullying” (J: *ijime*) to which she later refers.

experience was repeated two more times, the indignant local Party Secretary took the once-a-week train to the city in order to inquire why Ikeda could not become a Party member when she was such an exemplary worker. Happily expectant, Ikeda went to meet the Secretary at the train station upon his return from the Party office. But his attitude was cold: “Don’t you know what country you’re from? What do you think you’re doing applying to be in the Party?” Ikeda’s file (*dang’an*) was not held in the remote area where she worked, so the people there did not know that she was Japanese. When the local Secretary went to protest Ikeda’s repeated rejection for Party membership, he himself came in for criticism. This experience was a terrible blow to Ikeda, who had made extraordinary efforts to help her students and ensure that they succeeded.

In 1969, Ikeda married. I asked her if her husband knew at the time that she was Japanese. He did, she said, and though others warned him against marrying her, he didn’t care. Moreover, they were living in that remote area and she had a teaching position, so there didn’t seem to be any “obstacles” (*zhang’ai*). Ikeda continued to work hard at her job, and eventually her diligence was rewarded when her work unit (*danwei*) sent her to continue her studies at a two-year teacher’s vocational school in the city of Mudanjiang. When she was busy she would focus on her work, but as soon as she had a free moment, or when she was unhappy, she would wonder “Why am I Japanese? Why was I left here? Why didn’t my parents bring me back with them?” And she would feel resentful. She envied her colleagues with siblings; during school vacations they would visit their families while Ikeda was left by herself, “terribly lonely.” “I often wondered When will I be able to find my home? When will I be able to find out who my “own” [*qinshen*; i.e. biological] parents are? I thought about these things constantly. That’s not to say that my Chinese foster parents were bad to me...My Chinese foster mother was extremely good, as kindhearted as a Bodhisattva. It’s just that all along I was thinking about my background [*shenshi*], wanting to know what it actually was.”

Ikeda continued hoping for an answer to her questions until, in 1972, Japan and China abruptly re-established diplomatic ties. During our interview she struggled for the words to describe her elation upon hearing the news: “I was beside myself. Everything vanished. All of a sudden ‘I saw the sky’ [*jiandao tian le*]...I was so happy, so happy. All

along I had been thinking I was Japanese and nothing would work out: I couldn't join the Party, couldn't move up. Other people constantly said I was Japanese, so I always felt that I was lower than others. Even if you try harder, you feel you're not as good as them. So when China and Japan established friendly relations, I was so happy...I cried tears of happiness. I couldn't sleep at night...Ah, [I thought,] Japanese aren't the enemy any more...now I'm not the enemy."

Ikeda's lengthy depression began to lift and she began to feel happier. "My heart was like a flower that had bloomed. Now I can be like other people [I thought], with an equal status." Because of the positive change in Sino-Japanese relations, she also decided to begin looking for her Japanese relatives. But at first she didn't know how. She didn't want to ask her foster mother, who was then quite old, because she feared hurting her feelings. They hadn't spoken of Japan since she was young. Instead, she decided to ask a good friend of her foster mother's. "When I was young she had once told me, 'I know all about you. I'll tell you about it after you grow up.'" So Ikeda went to this woman, Mrs. Wang, and asked her to make good on her long-ago promise. Wang then described to Ikeda how she had been present when Ikeda's real mother gave her as an infant to the Li family. The Li family already had children and didn't want another, but Wang told them to temporarily care for the infant while she spoke with her friend Xu, who did not have children and would definitely want the baby. Wang then took Ikeda to Xu's home, where she was raised.

After telling Ikeda this, Wang offered to take her to see the Li family. "She said, 'When your mother first gave you to the Li family, your mother, your family – even though they were refugees – had lots of money. Your mother gave [Li] lots of things. Maybe there's something related to your background [*shenshi*].'" But when they went to the original home of the Li family, they had moved and nobody knew where they had gone.

Ikeda remembered that there was another war orphan who lived next to her school when she was little. "I knew [he was Japanese] because he was 5 years older than I was. He was extremely patriotic, patriotic about Japan. So I didn't dare go near him. My impression was that he was very reactionary. Because he loved Japan, right? Japan was

imperialist.” She said that officials from the PSB would occasionally shadow him when he went out, to see if he was going to meet with other Japanese or “do something bad” (*zuo huaishi*). “Then all of a sudden, one day when I was a third-year middle school student, he came looking for me and ‘gave me a political lesson’ [*gei wo shang zengzhi ke*]. He said, ‘We’re both Japanese. Our ancestors [*zuxian*] are Japanese. We ought to love Japan.’ *Aiyou!* He scared me so badly...I was just a middle school student...I said ‘Don’t tell me! I don’t know! I’m not Japanese! I don’t know!’ He said ‘Everyone knows you are Japanese. You *are* Japanese.’ *Aiyou*, how could he be like this?! I told him he was crazy. To talk like that in China at that time. Then I just said ‘This is no good, I’m leaving’ and rushed off. He returned to Japan very early, in 1970, before the re-establishment of diplomatic relations...his father was a military officer. He remembered riding his father’s horse at age 5, and he remembered his name, last name and first name. So he searched for his father.” Did he find him? I asked. “Yes, he found him before 1970. Then in 1970 he returned to Japan via Hong Kong.”

In an ironic twist nearly a decade later, this person’s testimony to Ikeda’s Japanese parentage would be used in her *shūseki* court case. At the time, however, Ikeda simply knew that the man was Japanese and had returned to Japan, so she contacted his Chinese foster mother, who gave her his Japanese address. She wrote him asking for help and he passed the letter to his father, a legislator in Japan’s Aichi Prefecture. The father’s secretary sent the letter to the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare. As a result, Ikeda said, when the MHW finally began searching for relatives in 1980, she was the first on the list.

However, until 1980 only orphans who could concretely identify their Japanese relatives were eligible for state-funded repatriation. So in 1974 Ikeda herself began doing research. It was difficult – in 1973 she moved to the suburbs of Mudanjiang, but she was still very busy with her work and there were no obvious sources of information. Depending on word of mouth, she and another nearby Japanese orphan surnamed Chino¹⁵⁰ would seek out other Japanese in the area, sometimes riding hours in trains,

¹⁵⁰ This woman, Chino Keiko, also eventually returned to Japan and Sugawara Kōsuke served as her guarantor. When Ikeda was looking for information on her relatives, an old Japanese woman introduced her

often carrying her infant daughter. Some Japanese orphans wouldn't dare meet them; given the frequent changes in China's postwar political climate, they were afraid that things could change again and they would be punished. But she and Chino were not afraid, she said. They met constantly and would visit anyone's house, pursuing any and all leads that might provide them with information on how to find their relatives. In order to facilitate her contact with other Japanese, Ikeda begged a classmate to help her transfer to a job within the Mudanjiang city limits. It came at a cost: the new job, as a cashier for a grain dispensary, was entirely different from the teaching career to which she had devoted her life.

Ikeda continued her search until the day in 1980 when Sugawara Kōsuke came to Mudanjiang with a group of former Japanese colonists. Though the Japanese group had applied to come to China under the official title of "agricultural delegation," the local Chinese authorities were apparently quite obliging and helpful in the Japanese party's request to meet with war orphans in the area. The evening of that day, Ikeda was at the bank depositing the day's receipts when there was a phone call for her from her work unit. Receiving a phone call was itself a shock (most homes didn't have phones) but the message was even more startling: The PSB had notified her work unit that a Japanese delegation was looking for her, and she was to report to the Beishan Hotel in one hour to meet with them. Surprised and delighted at the thought that perhaps her relatives had come to find her, she quickly finished depositing the money and raced home to change her clothes. At the hotel she waited with 7 or 8 others until a group of older Japanese men, including Sugawara, came in and spoke with them through an interpreter. Ikeda was a little disappointed that her relatives were not among them, but the experience was still very moving. It was the first time that she had met "people from her homeland." But with seven or eight people and just one interpreter, she had very little time to explain her circumstances. After the meeting was over, she returned home and wrote a letter to Sugawara, whose name she remembered. In it she described her background, her present

to Chino thinking that they might be sisters, but upon meeting it was clear that they were not. Nevertheless they were both orphans looking for their Japanese families and they became close companions in this search.

circumstances, and her desire to find her family. The next day she ran to the train station just as the train carrying the Japanese delegation was beginning to roll out of the station. Stretching her arm through the window, she handed Sugawara the letter and begged him to help her find her family.

As noted above, upon his return Sugawara wrote an article about Ikeda for the Asahi News. Thinking that Ikeda might be his daughter, a man in Hokkaido contacted her and asked her to send him more information, including photographs and the results of a simple blood-type test. When the blood type turned out to match his, he became convinced that Ikeda was his daughter. After he completed the necessary paperwork for a six-month “relative visit” (*tanqin*) visa, Ikeda came to Japan with her three children, aged 6, 9 and 11.

After some confusion¹⁵¹, Ikeda and her children traveled with this man from Tokyo to his home on Japan’s northern island of Hokkaido. There they passed three relatively pleasant months confidently awaiting the positive results of the more comprehensive blood test. The man’s wife, who was not aware that her husband had had a child by a previous relationship, was initially cool to Ikeda and her children. But she gradually warmed as Ikeda’s exerted herself to learn Japanese (she spoke none to begin with) and help out in the house by cooking and cleaning.

All this changed when the news came back that the blood test was negative. The man began drinking heavily; when he was drunk he would yell at Ikeda and her children and throw their things around the room. He refused to let them eat. Though his wife would feed them when he was gone, and secretly pass them food when he was home, Ikeda was devastated, and her children were terrified.

Unable to speak Japanese and nearly penniless, Ikeda was nevertheless determined to stay in Japan, and feared that if she were to return to China she might never get another chance to come back. However, though she pleaded with local Japanese

¹⁵¹ In Mudanjiang, Ikeda had sold all of the possessions she could to scrape together some money for gifts, new clothes, and pocket money for the trip. Because of the expense, she decided to forgo sending a telegram to her “father” informing him of her impending arrival, and as a result he was not there to meet her when she arrived in Japan. Through good luck and the assistance of a Chinese family she met at Japan’s Narita airport, she and her “father” were united a few days after her arrival.

officials to acknowledge the Chinese government's documentation of her Japanese identity, she was curtly rebuffed. It was a period of intense misery for her: "I didn't need to wash my face; every day I washed it with tears." Deeply depressed and facing imminent forced repatriation, she decided to commit suicide. After preparing final letters to friends and family, however, the sleeping faces of her children stayed her hand: "Suddenly I thought, 'how could I be so stupid? If I were to die, what would happen to these three children? I'm an orphan, but wouldn't these three children be even more pitiful?...If I died, who would take care of them?' So for my children's sake, I couldn't die," she explained.

Ikeda then turned to Sugawara for assistance once again.¹⁵² Through his help, she was able to leave Hokkaido and come to Tokyo, where after many months of difficulties and visa extensions, her *shūseki* case was finally won and she was re-instated as a Japanese citizen.¹⁵³ After a year's stay in temporary repatriate housing, Ikeda and her family¹⁵⁴ settled into an apartment in a Tokyo public housing project. There they have spent the last 17 years.

Ikeda's children all entered Japanese public schools, but progressed very slowly and were repeatedly held back. They were also bullied (J: *ijimerareta*) for being "Chinese." Ikeda explained that when they were in China, she and her children were teased as being "little Japanese" (*xiao Riben ren*), but in Japan people called them all Chinese. "There are still people who call me 'Chinese.' The people who know me all know that I am Japanese. But if it is someone who doesn't know me, they immediately say 'you're Chinese,'" she laughed. Do your children feel that they are Japanese, I asked. "My daughter says she is 'half and half' [*yibanr, yibanr*]...My two younger sons, maybe they think they are Japanese. Because the youngest one was so young when he came; he can't even speak Chinese. He never learned...the middle one can speak a little but not much." Like so many immigrant families, Ikeda and her husband would speak Chinese in the home and address their children in Chinese, but their children respond in Japanese.

¹⁵² Ikeda expressed profound gratitude for Sugawara's assistance ("From beginning to end...Sugawara was my salvation.") and deep respect for his volunteer efforts on behalf of the war orphans like herself.

¹⁵³ Ikeda's children took Japanese citizenship in 1987.

¹⁵⁴ Ikeda's husband joined her two years after she arrived in Japan.

Outside the home, they were constantly with Japanese and lacked any reinforcement to learn Chinese. Ikeda herself felt it was important that they learn Chinese and tried to teach them and make them speak it. But only her daughter showed an interest and engaged in self-study, reading Chinese newspapers and books. None studied it formally. Of the three children, two graduated from high school and the third attended a two-year vocational school thereafter, but none continued to college (a choice they apparently now regret.) Upon joining her in Japan two years after Ikeda's own arrival, Ikeda's husband studied a year of Japanese and then completed a year of professional training in electronics (his field of work in China) before taking a job with an electrical appliance company. He just recently left the company and began working for himself.

At first Ikeda did not have a job, but she soon enrolled in a training course to learn how to make clothes. It was extremely hard work, and she had to make far greater efforts than the rest of the class simply because of the language barrier ("I had to study ten hours for every one they studied.") One day she severely burned herself on an iron but feared falling behind and so kept working. As a result the wound became infected and she nearly died. Upon completing the class, she interviewed with prospective employers but was uniformly rejected because of her poor Japanese language skills. Then her former teacher suggested she learn film developing. Working days and studying nights, she completed a 6-month course only to be refused employment once again. This time, not only were her language skills an impediment, but the entire field was becoming computerized and the skills she had learned were being rendered obsolete!

After a brief, unsuccessful stint working on commission as a door-to-door life insurance salesperson, in 1987 Ikeda turned for assistance to Kawai, the lawyer who had handled her *shūseki* case. Kawai first employed her in the office doing custodial work, then employed her part-time (*J:arubaito*) handling materials related to the many *shūseki* cases that followed her own. After two years of this, she asked if she might be hired as a full employee in order to qualify for the Japanese state pension. This request was granted, and she has worked there ever since.

"I've seen all the materials for these thousand-plus people," she said, indicating the *shūseki* cases handled by Kawai's office, "so [I know that] orphans have really

suffered. Because our losses due to the war are so great...Japanese say, ‘Oh, you orphans are always saying you’re victims [*xishengzhe*], *we* were also victims then.’ But you can’t treat [war orphans and other Japanese] in the same way. At the time, if you Japanese hadn’t invaded China, would we have been left there? It’s you Japanese that were in the wrong. You invaded...committed atrocities and did terrible things, and because you left it on the heads of us, those of the next generation in China, [*fangzai women xia yidai de shenshang*] people bullied us...Now they just say, ‘We’ll *let* you come back.’ We *ought to* have the right to come back! Your country isn’t doing us a favor.” Referring to the Japanese veterans of the war, (who receive substantial veterans benefits) she said that orphans should receive the same benefits. “Because now no matter how hard we work, when we return we are already 40 or 50. We can’t speak the language. If I work like this until I’m 60, my state pension is just 67500 yen (per month.) The state should think about this... We come back to Japan: ‘Work! Work!’ [they say.] But they don’t arrange it for us. They make us look on our own. We’re this old, we can’t speak the language – where are we going to look? When we are on welfare, they say it’s like we are taking the blood and sweat of the working people. Well we don’t have work; if we don’t take welfare how are we going to live? Why doesn’t the state take the initiative to find us work?”

So you think the Japanese government is responsible...I began. “Right,” she interrupted. “Absolutely the Japanese government is responsible. If you didn’t invade [China], would we be able to go there ourselves? The Japanese government always says ‘That’s the past!’ But the reality is that we’re all living. Your war is the past, but don’t we still bear the scars [*henji*] that you left?” I asked her if she thought the government’s posture had changed over the past 17 years, and she asserted that it had become increasingly cold. She was particularly critical of the government’s failure to take care of the citizenship issue, leaving it instead to lawyers and intermediaries.¹⁵⁵ She felt similarly about popular sentiment: “People don’t support us and they don’t care [*bu guanxin*]. It

¹⁵⁵ She noted that it wasn’t until 1996 (a decade and a half after her own case) that the Ministry of Health and Welfare began indirectly providing 150,000 yen per person to finance citizenship acquisition. Prior to that, the money was raised in the form of gifts by individuals, private companies and institutions.

seems like now they feel as if it's an annoyance, a burden. At the very beginning it was like a novelty [*xinxianwu*], and everyone cared."

I asked Ikeda about *Child of a Vast Land*, which she has read. "I thought parts of the book -- the part about the Cultural Revolution, that was pretty realistic [*shiji*]. But after that I thought it was a little too 'sweet,' the way she wrote it." She said the movie was terrible -- not even as realistic as the book, and seemingly watered down out of fear of damaging bilateral relations.

We discussed the orphans in terms of their "quality" (*suzhi*). In terms of educational background, she said, almost all are from the countryside and 60% have a middle school education or below. Only a handful are college graduates. Are there any other differences? I asked. She replied that most of the people who came earlier aren't willing to have contact with those who came later, perhaps because they feel that those who came later don't understand how desperately hard their lives were, how difficult it was for them to achieve what they did. "Then there are also those individuals who look down on the people who came later. They feel like their own situation is fine, and they don't respect the late repatriates. Then there are those good-hearted people who help the latecomers, but there aren't many of those. Most of the people fall in the middle between these two extremes."

Ikeda cherishes a great fondness for the pre-Cultural Revolution China and described it at length in glowing terms: "No country in the world could compare to it." "There were no bad people." She lauded it for its civility (no cursing), mutual assistance, safety (no locked doors) and educational system ("middle school graduates had a better education than the later high school and college graduates"). "When I taught, before the Cultural Revolution, our style of teaching was very diligent: if you didn't understand, I would make you to understand no matter what, even if it meant sacrificing everything I had." However, "China definitely changed after the Cultural Revolution." Referring to her colleagues and students at the school where she used to teach, she said that "suddenly, people who had just yesterday been good friends became enemies. People shunned each other, were afraid of each other: 'You be careful, and I'll be careful.' With everyone

being so careful, people became more distant... Who can you trust? Who is telling the truth and who is lying?"

Ikeda compared this post-Cultural Revolution attitude to Japan. She mentioned how in Japan, people don't give up their seats on the train to the elderly or physically infirm. But she drew a key distinction when she also complained that "when Japanese talk, it's like you can't figure out what they are thinking [*haoxiang cai bu tou ta shi zemme xiang de*]. It seems like in China, people speak extremely frankly [*Zhongguo shuo hua feichang tanshuai*]."

Do you ever miss China? I asked towards the end of our interview. "I miss it, I really do," she replied. "I've also felt at times – times like when I didn't have work – that it would be great if I could return to China and live there... Because Chinese are really warm [*qinjie*], and they are able to communicate with one another. If I have trouble, I don't need to say so – a person who sees that will help me. But Japanese, if you have trouble they won't even look at you [*Keshi Ribenren, ni you le kunnan, ta chou ta lian chou ye bu chou le*]."

I asked Ikeda about the discovery of her true [*zhenzheng*] older sister. Four years ago you found your true... I began. "My true family. My true older sister, older brother, younger sister." What was that feeling like? "At the time it was so... you could say that the hope of my life had at last been realized. My goal [after returning to Japan] was to not impose on anyone: I'll work, and I don't need anyone to take care of me. But all my life I've wondered, where did I come from? I wanted to know my own identity [*shenfen*]. So when I found out at last I was really happy. Because my whole life, I haven't asked any favors [*meiyou suo qiu*] – I just wanted to know this one thing about myself. So after I found out I was really happy. But, after all [*bijing*]," she continued, "we didn't grow up together. Although we have the same parents, the same blood relationship [*xuetong*], there's still no feelings to speak of [*meiyou ganqing lai jiang*]." Your parents are both deceased? I asked. "Both deceased. But as far as feelings are concerned, if we had grown up together and were together every day, maybe then there would be feelings. I hadn't seen them for over fifty years. Where would the feelings come from [*na lai de ganqing a*]?" Aren't most orphans like you? I asked. For some fifty years they haven't seen their

siblings, parents and so forth. But still, the feelings... “Are there,” she affirmed. “There are some... But what I mean to say is, there’s not the feeling people have when they really grow up together. There’s no way that there could be absolutely *no* feelings. After all, they are family. But the feelings aren’t deep. You could put it that way. Not deep. To say there aren’t any – that’s not realistic either [*zhei ye bu qiehe shiji*].”

How did you find your relatives? I asked. She asked me if I had seen the special feature on her on the popular Japanese television program “Unbelievable” (*Anberiberaburu*), hosted by the famous actor/entertainer Beat Takeshi.¹⁵⁶ I had not, so she explained. During each relative-seeking tour’s routine visit to Tokyo’s Yoyogi Cenyer, Kawai’s law office would give a presentation on the procedure for obtaining citizenship, and Ikeda would do the translation.¹⁵⁷ After the presentation, Ikeda would often stay around in the hopes of maybe bumping into a family member. But after 15 years, she had given up hope. She still stayed around, however, because people would often ask her to translate. There were other translators that were employed to assist the war orphans and the elderly Japanese seeking long-lost relatives, but Ikeda did it voluntarily.

On that particular day, after doing her translation, Ikeda went downstairs to eat at a coffee shop. While she was eating and watching the orphans through the window, a Japanese woman who had heard Ikeda translate came up and asked (in Japanese) if she could join Ikeda at the table. After Ikeda invited her to sit down, she praised Ikeda’s Chinese skills. When Ikeda explained that Chinese was her first language, the woman, surprised, asked why. Ikeda explained that she was also a war orphan. Then they began to chat about their backgrounds. The woman had been repatriated early on but was looking for her younger sister. Ikeda explained her own work as a translator for the law office and offered to do what she could to help the woman. The woman thanked her and then asked Ikeda where she had returned from. Hearing that she was from Heilongjiang Province, she said that her sister had been left in that province. Where in Heilongjiang? “I said

¹⁵⁶ The segment featuring Ikeda aired in February of 1997.

¹⁵⁷ Since the late 1980s, the Japanese government (MHW) has requested that Kawai’s office give presentations on citizenship acquisition to relative-seeking tours and at the Tokorozawa Resettlement Center.

‘Mudanjiang’ and she said ‘My sister was left in Mudanjiang!’ I said, ‘I know a lot of orphans in Mudanjiang, so I might just know your sister.’ We were just chatting like this. She said, ‘Do you know Zhiyin Elementary School?’ I said yes I know it – I graduated from Zhiyin Elementary. Then she asked, ‘Is your house close to the school?’ and I replied that it was very close. ‘Where?’ she asked. So I drew her a map.”

After identifying the house, Ikeda explained that although her Chinese surname was Xu, she had been left with a family surnamed Li. “‘My little sister was left with a family named Li!’ she said...then she asked me what I remembered of my family. I said, ‘I don’t have any memories. I just know that my oldest sister was 8, the other sister was 6, my mom was 32 or 33, she was carrying me, and I was just a couple months old.’ *Aiyō!* She stood right up from the table. She stood up and went to find my other older sister, calling out ‘Come over! Come over!’

‘I think you’re our sister!’ she said.”

Despite the striking match in background details, Ikeda was cautious. She did not want to repeat her earlier traumatic experience of mistaken identity, and she had no concrete proof. Ikeda suggested they talk to the people in her law office, who in turn suggested that she contact the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The MHW agreed to carry out a thorough blood screen of all three women to see if they were related. Usually such a test takes 3 months, at most 6 months. In her case, according to Ikeda, they spent 17 months and 5 days doing DNA analysis in order to rule out any ambiguity. The test proved conclusively that the three were in fact sisters. “I found them at last. In Chinese, they say, ‘skill can’t compare to a person who is determined.’ [*gongfu bu fu you xin ren*; 功夫不負有心人] Unlike many orphans, Ikeda and her family maintain contact with one another, though all her siblings live far from Tokyo. Three years after Ikeda’s father was taken as a captive to Siberia, he returned to Japan and her parents had another child, Ikeda’s younger sister. “They are all pretty good to me [*dou dui wo bijiao hao*],” she said.

When I asked about her biggest concerns for the future, Ikeda first mentioned her children. Her greatest regret, she said, is that none of her children fulfilled her wish that they “achieve scholastically” [*you xueye*]. But there’s nothing she can do about that; now they are grown and can take care of themselves. Now she needs to think of her old age:

“The world nowadays isn’t like China in the past, when your children took care of you in your old age.” You need to make preparations in advance for yourself. If Sugawara’s campaign to secure special old age provisions for the war orphans succeeds, she said, that would be the best outcome. If not, she and her husband have no choice but to live on her small pension of 67000 yen a month. “I don’t know if that is enough to live on; if we can work, we will work. We’ll do what we can. Otherwise we will give our children trouble.” They have also contemplated the possibility of returning to China, but they aren’t sure. “Because we don’t know if the Chinese government will even take us [*shou*].” Like many spouses of war orphans, her husband hasn’t taken Japanese citizenship. But the fact that she has Japanese citizenship could cause them trouble should she wish to return to China. “At this point, everything is unsettled [*bu’an*]. Our old age is also unsettled. Can I live on 60 thousand some yen? Our rent is more than 70 thousand! It isn’t even enough to pay the rent.”

We discussed the recent announcement that the Ministry of Health and Welfare was discontinuing the sponsorship of relative-seeking tours to Japan in favor of conducting background research in China and certifying orphans there. I mentioned that despite this announcement, the tours had continued, and she agreed that they would probably continue for at least 2 or 3 more years. She mentioned that her law office had bumped into the MHW research team in China while doing their own research there in July (2000). She said that the MHW’s argument is that recently there have been lots of fake orphans with forged documents, and it has become impossible to distinguish true orphans just on the basis of documentation. So they feel the need to meet directly with people in China before certifying them as orphans and allowing them to come to Japan. Although the tours have continued, the number of participants has dropped and their visit has been shortened. Although the biographical information on the participants had been published in the papers, there has been no response. Nevertheless, she emphasized that it was the Japanese government’s responsibility to make sure that every last orphan remaining in China had a chance to return to Japan if they wished.

Wrapping up the interview, I asked her why she and members of Kawai’s law office went to China recently. She said that it was the first time that they had gone to

China to collect information. This time they were dealing with an unprecedented case, a woman named Ma who had been certified by the Ministry of Health and Welfare as an orphan, but had then been denied citizenship by the Japanese courts. Although lower courts had denied citizenship to a handful of MHW-certified orphans in the past, these decisions had all been overturned in the higher courts. However, Ma's rejection had been upheld by the Higher Court in the city of Osaka, where (not coincidentally, perhaps) concern over large numbers of "fake orphans" is focused.

Before meeting with Ikeda, I had read of Ma's case in the newspapers.¹⁵⁸ In 1988, at the age of 42, Ma Xiuying was told by her ailing Chinese foster mother that she was in fact a Japanese War Orphan. According to her foster mother, Ma was adopted in Beijing almost immediately after her birth in 1946. Her foster mother further informed her that Ma's biological father was a member of the Japanese military police (*kenpeitai*) named Kobayashi, and gave her the names of three of his fellow officers. The following year Ma contacted the Japanese embassy in Beijing seeking assistance in finding her Japanese family. The embassy forwarded her information to Japan's Ministry of Health and Welfare, which circulated it throughout Japan. Ma's case was effectively dropped after her information elicited no response from Japan's local governments.

Ma wrote again in 1994 asking the Japanese government to hurry and officially recognize her as a War Orphan. Two months later her foster mother died. In 1996, on the strength of her foster brother's testimony and official Chinese documents affirming her status as a Japanese foster child, Ma was officially recognized as a Japanese War Orphan by the Japanese and Chinese governments. The same year she went to Japan with a relative-seeking group but failed to find any relations. In 1998 she moved to Osaka under a Permanent Resident (*eiजू*) visa and initiated family registration (*shūseki*) procedures in the municipal family court. However, the family court in Osaka rejected her application. Her subsequent appeal to the Osaka High Court was dismissed, and a final appeal to Japan's Supreme Court was rejected in January of 2000. Ma thus became the first

¹⁵⁸ The information on Ma's background and court cases is taken from an article on page 37 of the 7 March 2000 Asahi Shinbun newspaper. Ma's case was also profiled in a number of Japan's Chinese language newspapers.

example of an individual who, though officially recognized as a Japanese War Orphan by one organ of the Japanese government (the Ministry of Health and Welfare, MHW), was denied Japanese citizenship by another (the Ministry of Justice).

The head of the MHW's bureau for orphan measures responded to this outcome by saying that "the MHW has certified [nintei] orphans on the basis of sufficient investigation. This sort of result is disappointing."

Ma was denied registration by the Osaka Family Court because "it was unclear whether her parents were Japanese." The court supported its ruling by noting that Ma's Chinese registration showed her to be a member of the majority Han Chinese nationality, with a birthplace in Beijing. The ruling also cited the fact that Ma had no memory of ever being teased (*ijimerareta*) as a Japanese. However, members of Japanese organizations that have assisted orphans in registering suggest that Ma's Chinese registration as a Han was precisely the result of an effort by her foster parents to shield her from the discrimination that many other war orphans faced.

Although Ma was unique in being the first orphan to be refused registration, in other respects Ma's circumstances were common to many orphans. Just babies at the time when they were orphaned, many have no memory of their biological parents and little but the testimony of their foster parents as evidence of their Japanese descent. As in Ma's case, many foster parents hid their foster children's origins to avoid discrimination. Some even moved several times to avoid detection. During the Cultural Revolution and other xenophobic political movements that convulsed China during the 1950s and 60s, what physical evidence of Japanese parentage might remain was often destroyed for similar reasons. Even following the easing of political activity and the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations in the 1970s, some elderly foster parents continued to hide their children's Japanese parentage for fear that the orphan would then abandon them in order to go to Japan. In fact, many orphans who knew of their Japanese parentage delayed return to Japan in order to care for foster parents.

After my interview with Ikeda in November, I followed Ma's story through the newspapers. In December, I learned that "volunteers" working on Ma's case (indicating

Ikeda and her co-workers) had met with the head of the Beijing Public Security Bureau and collected documents from the MHW that had originally been used in support of her certification as a War Orphan. On the basis of this new evidence, they successfully re-applied to the Tokyo Family Court and in December of 2000 Ma was finally registered as the Japanese citizen Kobayashi Sakurako.¹⁵⁹

Matsui Tomio

I met Matsui while attending a Japanese New Year's (*o-shōgatsu*) party held by Sugawara's Yokohama war orphan assistance association. Unlike most of my war orphan interviewees, Matsui is unaffiliated with Sugawara and lives in Tokyo, not Yokohama. Matsui was at the party at the invitation of his guarantor (*hoshōnin*), a former Japanese soldier and Siberian captive who was the vice-chairman of a Tokyo-based war orphan assistance organization. Though Matsui's guarantor was strongly supportive of the campaign by Sugawara and others to pressure the Japanese government on the issue of orphan old age security, Matsui himself was ambivalent. In this respect he differed from the majority of the "earlier returnees" (*xian hui lai de*) like Ikeda and expressed a sentiment that was instead widely shared by the "later returnees," (*hou hui lai de*) among whom he counted himself, having returned less than four years before we met. Matsui impressed me as being candid and thoughtful, and I was happy to follow up on his generous invitation to visit his home and talk further.

I ended up going twice for long visits to speak (in Chinese – he spoke little Japanese) and eat with Matsui and members of his family. Both times Matsui met me at the train station, which was situated within a multi-story shopping mall. As we walked back to his small three-room apartment home in a small municipal housing complex, the vibrant urban surroundings -- jammed with stores and businesses and replete with both opportunities for work and amenities for daily life -- offered a stark contrast to the peripheral suburban housing developments where most of the Yokohama war orphans lived. Like many recent repatriates, Matsui did not work and was content to live off state welfare payments in a subsidized municipal housing apartment. He and his wife watched

¹⁵⁹ See the 5 December 2000 Yomiuri Shinbun newspaper, p.2.

Chinese satellite TV and read Chinese-language papers published in Japan, and their social interaction was largely confined to other repatriates and Japanese volunteers.

During one of our discussions, I asked Matsui about his background and the circumstances under which he was orphaned. Matsui began by explaining how he ended up in Manchuria. Long after the fact, he was told that his family in Japan consisted of seven people: two grandparents, his parents, him and an older and younger sister. During the war, Japanese military officials came to his family's home near Osaka and for some reason compelled his mother to leave with them. She then went to China but later returned to get Matsui and bring her back there with her. "Around 1942 or 43, when I was probably about 4 or 5, my mother took me from Japan to China. That time isn't very clear because I was so young, but I remember riding a boat." Departing Japan he remembers being impressed by the passengers' reactions to the sight of spiked balls floating in the water, part of what he now assumes to have been a floating minefield. He remembers arriving at a port that night (probably Korea), boarding a train with his mother and a group of other Japanese women, and later disembarking and then walking with his mother over a short bridge and through a city.

Matsui had arrived in Tumen, a small city (of about 20 or 30 thousand people at the time) in Jilin Province on the border with Korea. In 1998, Matsui revisited this place before returning to Japan and discovered that the bridge and the Japanese-style building where his mother had worked still stood. He remembers that the place was named the "Shōwa Inn" (Zhaohe Luguan), "an authentically Japanese-style inn. All the people were women, with one man, probably the manager." Matsui shared a single room with his mother, while the other women slept four to a room.

His memories of the next two years are fragmentary. Matsui remembers the kindness of the male innkeeper, a tree flowering in the courtyard, some sort of Japanese celebration that he witnessed on the street in front of the hotel. Then one day the bombing and machine-gun strafing began. The manager of the hotel dug a makeshift bomb shelter in the kitchen, where they all sought shelter and plugged the opening with blankets. One night several days later, Matsui recalls, his mother suddenly began packing their things to leave. "I was almost seven then. I carried a backpack, a little book bag, and in the book

bag—I remember clearly—was half a rice ball [*fantuan*]. My mother stuffed lots of clothes into a sheet, tied it up and put it on her back. All the Japanese fleeing the city carried stuff like that.” They and the rest of the hotel’s employees left the hotel and joined a throng of people fleeing the city under the cover of darkness. Matsui and his mother were soon separated from the others in the crush of people, which was headed out of the city and into the nearby hills. “We walked a long, long time. Then just before dawn we arrived at a grove of trees, very dense...after arriving at these dark woods, it was as if people realized that they had arrived at their destination. So everyone rested there. But cooking food was strictly forbidden,” because they didn’t want to risk the smoke exposing their hiding place. He and his mother subsided on the rice ball he had brought “and probably 4 or 5 days later we didn’t have anything left to eat.” Others hadn’t eaten for days, and were preparing to return to the city. There was a big discussion among the refugees: people said that the Red Army had entered the city and the Japanese army was gone, and they speculated about what the Soviets would do to them if they found them. “But some people had no food, and had no choice but to walk back. Later, we went back too.”

Matsui and his mother returned to the hotel, which was situated in one of the city’s major “developed areas” (*kaifa qu*) and surrounded by other Japanese-run stores and hotels. All of the stores were looted and stripped of their contents and valuables, right down to their doors and windows. “At this point we had no choice; we didn’t have any food, so we started to beg. We went other places looking for food but found nothing. There were too many people [begging]. Lots of Japanese.” Tumen was situated on one of the major transportation arteries running from Soviet Siberia into China, and its strategic importance accounted for the large presence of Japanese military there. Matsui heard later that the fighting between Japanese and Soviet troops in the area had been intense, with many casualties.

“Since there wasn’t anyone to take care of the rotting [corpses] left by the war, infectious diseases started spreading. The infections were serious – if one in four survived he was lucky...Both my mother and I were infected. It was severe, like being on the

verge of death. One cause was the contamination of our surroundings, the other was the food we ate. Most of the things we picked up, or were given...they weren't very clean."

One day, Matsui and his mother went to a large factory outside the city that had been abandoned by the Japanese and was now occupied by Chinese. There was a Chinese man who wanted to take them in there, but instead they decided to seek refuge in the city's Railway Hospital (Tielu Yiyuan) with some several hundred other Japanese. "Most were women and children. There were no men." Though the hospital grounds were large, the numbers grew and the unsanitary crowding spread disease. Matsui's mother decided to leave and return to the factory outside the city, where the man they had met earlier took them in.

"My mother remarried with that man, and we lived with his Chinese family. But it wasn't a month, maybe twenty days later, I went to bed one night and the next morning I woke up and tried to wake my mother to make breakfast. But she wouldn't get up. We slept in the same bed, so I shook her, but she didn't move. I realized she was dead." The infection had killed her. Matsui remembers that the man who had taken them in was deeply anguished by his mother's death. The grieving man gathered some friends and made a coffin using wood from the factory, then carried Matsui's mother up in the hills for burial.

After his mother's death, Matsui was determined to leave and return to the hotel, a place he associated with home. Upon his departure, the Chinese man gave Matsui some food and a yellow wool blanket that was his mother's. Matsui walked for three days, and when he reached the city he found Soviet troops everywhere. He remembers a scene of machine-gun toting Soviet troops guarding a large group of Japanese POWs in front of the Tumen railway station. The POWs were building something in the square; Matsui thinks it was one of the many memorials (*jinianbei*) the Soviets erected after "liberating" Manchuria. He recognized the POWs as Japanese and he approached them, but was turned back by the Russian guards. Walking on by the train station, he remembers a plane flying by on a bombing run and a Chinese man pulling him off the street and into a restaurant for safety. Seemingly recognizing that Matsui was an orphan, the man urged

Matsui to stay with him. He and his wife were evidently childless and had already taken in another child, a Korean girl a year older than Matsui. Matsui did stay for a day or two but then left after a quarrel with the Korean adoptee.

Setting out again, it turned out that the hotel where his mother had worked was not far away. Matsui was delighted when he found it. There he also found an old Japanese woman who had done cleaning in the hotel. When Matsui arrived she was pumping water, tending the fire for the *kang* (a heated sleeping platform common in China's northeast) and boiling something to eat over the fire in a metal Japanese army helmet. "I was so happy to see her I ran up and hugged her. I said, my mom is gone... At the time, when my mom died, I didn't feel like crying. But when I was older and understood what death meant, aiya, it became painful to remember." The older Japanese woman took Matsui in, and they began to beg for food together.

One day while begging they came to the house of a woman surnamed Xu. Xu's husband had died many years ago when she was only 28, leaving her to support four boys and two girls as a seamstress. When Matsui met her Xu was around 50 years old, and she was living with her youngest daughter, her 25-year-old fourth son and his wife. The son, who Matsui would come to address as "Fourth Uncle" (*sishu*), had been exposed to Japanese colonial education and spoke Japanese. Childless after a year or two of marriage, the man negotiated with the old Japanese woman and arranged with her to take Matsui in as his son. The old woman then left Matsui with this Chinese family, admonishing him to stay put there and behave. She said she would try to return if she survived. When she left she took with her a small quantity of grain given by the Xu family; Matsui subsequently bore a record of this exchange in the two characters of his Chinese given name.¹⁶⁰

Matsui was not unhappy at his new home. He survived his illness, which his Xu "Grandmother" (*zumu*) treated with painful folk remedies. There was food to eat and a place to sleep, and he learned Chinese quickly with the help of his Japanese-speaking "Uncle." He started school at age eight and a half, and though he initially fought with

¹⁶⁰ Matsui's Chinese given name is Dousheng: "dou" (which means 10 liters) and "sheng" (which means one liter) both refer to the amount of grain that was given to the Japanese woman.

kids who teased him as a “little Japanese kid” or a “little beggar,” this teasing gradually faded as he grew older.

At one point, his routine was abruptly interrupted by the return of the old Japanese woman. “All of a sudden one day the old Japanese woman came looking for me. She was returning to Japan now that the Japanese government had organized repatriation, and she wanted to take me. But the Xu family refused to let me go and wouldn’t let me meet with her...the old woman told me from outside the window that she wanted to take me back, but she couldn’t get in. I understood her, but there was nothing I could do. Later she left, and I never saw her again.” This was the first of several missed opportunities.

In his elementary school, Matsui met many Japanese children whose mothers had remarried to Chinese men. He spent a great deal of time at the home of one such child whose mother had known his own mother. In 1953, when there was another large repatriation of Japanese remaining in China, this family agreed to take Matsui back to Japan with them. However, the Xu family’s permission was required and once again they refused to let him go.

Matsui continued with his elementary schooling, which he received free because one of the older Xu sons had fought with the Chinese Liberation Army (*Jiefang Jun*) and therefore his relatives received special benefits. But the free schooling ended after elementary, and after one year of middle school Matsui quit to find work.

Throughout this time there had been successive waves of Japanese repatriation, and yet another chance for return presented itself to Matsui in the form of a local Japanese couple, doctors who had run a private clinic in Tumen before the war. Like many skilled Japanese in Manchuria, they were “retained” by the new Chinese government for their technical expertise, and set to work training Chinese doctors. Around 1955 or 56, they were told that they could return to Japan, and Matsui agreed to go with them. But despite his own express desire to return, again the Xu family refused to let him go. Later, he received one letter from the doctors upon their return to Japan, in which they urged him to come join them. But that was the last he heard. “Now, later on, I think back and really regret this...If I had returned then, who knows what my situation would be like now?” he muses.

“After that there weren’t any more people telling me to go back to Japan...they had all gone back.” For the next forty years, Matsui worked at a variety of factory manufacturing jobs, eventually attaining managerial status, married and raised a family in China. His Japanese identity was no secret from his wife (who he married in 1966), but when he left his home in Tumen to search for work in the city of Mudanjiang, a friend’s connections with the police enabled him to initially hide his Japanese identity by registering as a Han Chinese. Matsui had actually sought to formally change his registration to that of a Chinese, but there was no response to his inquiries and he eventually gave up. Matsui’s Japanese identity was eventually known to his employers, but he escaped persecution during the Cultural Revolution by being “prudent” and careful to avoid attracting people’s attention.

After the resumption of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations in 1972, Matsui continued as before, focusing on his life in China and deferring any plans for Japan until later. In 1985 (unbeknownst to Matsui) his elder sister visited Shanghai with a tour group, and while there she made inquiries about him through official channels. This information reached him several years later when a PSB officer suddenly showed up at his workplace. The PSB official asked Matsui why he had never expressed an interest in returning to Japan, and Matsui replied that he hadn’t given it much thought. At that point in time Matsui was satisfied with his life in China, where he had become a Communist Party member¹⁶¹ and held a high-ranking leadership position in his work unit. Like many other orphans that returned in the 1990s, Matsui decided to wait until his retirement in China before moving forward with any plans to go to Japan. He knew from the experience of other war orphans that he would probably have to accept a life on welfare once he arrived, and he wanted to work as long as he was able. But he saw advantages for his children in living in Japan, and he felt a strong affective connection to Japan as the place where he belonged. In the interval, he refrained from pursuing any contact with his purported Japanese relations because he didn’t want to invite “hassles” (*mafan*) from the police.

¹⁶¹ Matsui was vague concerning the circumstances of his Party membership. He said it was “both simple and quite complicated” and had been accomplished through the “personal authority” (*ren de quanli*) of certain people in power.

In 1994, nearing retirement, Matsui tried to contact the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare but received no response and gave up. A year later he learned the proper contact address via some other returning orphans and succeeded in contacting the MHW. Why did you decide to go back to Japan, I asked. “It seems to be connected to my blood relation [*xuetong guanxi*].” Though he was quite young when he was orphaned and a long time had elapsed since then, “I always had this perspective. This perspective can’t be changed. Namely, that my country isn’t there. My country is here. Because my original background [*ben shenshi*] is Japanese [lit., “Yamato people”: *Dahe minzu*].” Like most war orphans, Matsui seems to have a strong affective sense of his Japaneseness that is usually explained (if one asks) with reference on blood descent. There is no way to definitively unpack how this “Japaneseness” might be *felt*, but it is clear that it varies from person to person. We can imagine, for example, how Matsui’s vivid memories of his mother and a brief “Japanese” boyhood might distinguish his own feelings of identification from those felt by Ikeda.

Matsui’s official identification as a Japanese was clear – he was registered as a Japanese in China and his original Japanese name was accurately recorded in the form of his childhood signature. So he did not have any difficulty being designated as an orphan by the Japanese government. In 1996 he came with his wife to Japan on a state-sponsored relative-seeking tour. As was customary before and during each tour, the tour participants’ background information and photographs were widely circulated in the national papers and broadcast on the television. Matsui’s older sister recognized him from this profile and sought him out during the tour’s stop in Osaka. There they met after more than a half-century in a reunion Matsui characterized as “warm” (*qinjie*) but also – on the contrary -- “perfunctory” (*fuyan*). Matsui explained that his plans to return to Japan were made without any consideration for his Japanese relations, since he didn’t expect to find them. Nor did he expect them to find or acknowledge him. For her part, Matsui’s older sister counseled them through a translator to think hard before deciding to come back and stay in Japan. “Their opinion was that if China was fine, I ought to stay there.” Matsui showed me the letters his older sister had written him after their meeting reiterating her concerns and urging him to reconsider coming to Japan.

Perhaps they worried that you would be a burden, I ventured. “Maybe so. Because these people have no idea what sort of assistance measures their government takes. So they feel that if we come back it will be a huge burden...Maybe that’s it. So they didn’t really approve of me coming back.” But you still wanted to come back, I asked. “I had made up my mind before even meeting them. Whether you acknowledge [*chengren*] me or not, I am still going to return to my homeland. I didn’t return when I was young. Now I’m old; if I don’t return to my homeland now there won’t be any more chances.”

Do you have any contact with your Japanese relatives? I asked. “Very little,” he responded. He and his wife visited his sister’s family once to pay his respects at their family grave, but after that their contact has been confined to the occasional letter and the exchange of simple New Year’s gifts. “They wrote saying they wanted to come and see us. They were supposed to come last year, but they didn’t come.” Do you want to introduce your children to them? I asked. “They [his sister and her family] haven’t expressed an interest in that, or a desire for closer relations. Our sibling relationship isn’t even that close. There would be no point to my introducing the second and third generation – no point at all. If there were, [my Japanese relatives] would have taken the initiative to bring that up.”

“Still,” he continued, “having met [my older sister] I’d also really like to talk with her about the impressions I recall from when I was small, the things that happened in our childhood – but I don’t have the language to express it. When I went and visited them, my sister even called together a bunch of people that were my friends when I was little. Together we used broken Japanese conversation and writing to communicate simply with one another.” But his memories of Japan are faint, and the Japan he knew has changed dramatically. Modern buildings have long since replaced the thatched roof farmhouse and rice paddies he can vaguely discern in the memories of his distant childhood.

When Matsui informed his relatives that he had found a guarantor in Tokyo, “they never said ‘you don’t need him – come back to Osaka.’ They didn’t say that. Even if they really were to say that I still wouldn’t go.” Matsui had already decided he wanted to go to Tokyo, the nation’s capital, where he believed that the “conditions and environment”

were better. He now feels vindicated in his choice, and mentions that his children are very happy there.

Researchers, volunteers and orphans themselves have reflected upon the urban (and predominantly Tokyo) residential preference among war orphans. The Japanese government initially tried to return identified war orphans to the homes of their biological families -- which were often situated in the less urbanized, agricultural regions from which many of the Manchurian colonists were originally drawn -- as part of an effort to assume as little responsibility as possible for the orphans' care. But due to the lack of welfare services and work opportunities (and sometimes also due to the presence of orphan-family incompatibilities), many war orphans shifted their residence to the metropolises of Tokyo and Osaka. Because of the limited public housing in Tokyo, the government has also sought to disperse the more numerous "unidentified" war orphans, with similarly limited success: war orphans continue to overwhelmingly prefer urban centers like Tokyo.¹⁶²

My conversations with Matsui suggested that many of the differences dividing the orphans arise from the timing of their return. Like many recent repatriates, Matsui had returned to Japan after retirement in China, and he is resigned to a life supported (and restricted) by welfare. At the beginning of one interview, we were flipping through Matsui's Japanese language homework. Matsui was making an effort to learn Japanese, but he confessed it was difficult -- his memory was poor, progress was slow, the Japanese class was over an hour away, and he and his wife had no opportunities to speak Japanese with anyone but the teacher. "People like us aren't able to interact with Japanese, and we don't go out and try to," he said. When he needs to make himself understood in a public place or at the ward office, he says that he uses a combination of spoken vocabulary words and written Chinese characters. "For people like us who have been in Japan for three or four years, writing is our sole method [*weiyi de shouduan*] of going outside and

¹⁶² In the case of unidentified war orphans, the Tokyo/urban preference is largely due to the lack of work opportunities and the paucity of social welfare and educational assistance in the "regions" (*chiho*). "Identified" war orphans may also have distant or difficult relationships with their Japanese families. Some have suggested that the Chinese rural background of many war orphans also explains the desire to be placed in a city, since Chinese residential registrations (*hukou*) have in the past been quite difficult to change.

interacting, of being able to express our meaning and wishes.” This makeshift means of communication still resulted in misunderstandings, but Matsui expressed great satisfaction at the way he has been treated in administrative offices and stores.

Although many war orphans and their family members claim to have experienced forms of discrimination in the work place, Matsui had never worked in Japan and did not report any encounters with prejudice. In his limited contacts with Japanese, he says it is easier to just pass as someone who “came from China.” “Most Japanese have no idea what the words ‘war orphan’ [*canliu gu'er*] mean. They just know that there were people there during the war, but they don’t know what happened afterwards. And they don’t make an effort to understand these things.” I asked him if he thought the term “war orphan” (literally, “remaining orphan”) was appropriate, and he noted in his response that this had been debated in the Chinese-language papers and amongst the war orphan assistance organizations with which he was familiar. Though many oppose it, he has no problem with it. But he emphasized that the opposition to the term was part and parcel of an attempt by some war orphans to “improve their economic benefits.”

Our conversation then turned to the economic situation of the war orphans and their families. Matsui mentioned the debate among orphans over the deep disparities between war orphan children that are state-funded and those that are self-funded. Although he was well informed about the rationale behind the ongoing activism, and though he felt sympathy for the orphans that had arrived earlier and worked but now faced meager pensions, Matsui told me that “my opinion is still that the current policy is essentially fine.” He admits that some things could be changed a little, but he stressed that no country could be expected to take care of all of the problems of the past, and anyway the people in the current administration are different from those in the past; their “way of thinking” (*siwei fangshi*) is “completely different” from that of fifty years ago.

Matsui doesn’t feel he has any right to make demands on the government for special welfare provisions. “Coming back just three years ago, we don’t have the opportunity to go and work...so I’ve never expressed the desire” for special benefits. Even among those who “returned early,” he points out that there are those who feel that marching, gathering signatures and getting involved in protest activities is “wasting their

time,” and there are others who think that staying on welfare is just fine. However, Matsui said that despite the widespread satisfaction among recently arrived orphans – virtually all of whom are on welfare -- most orphans still support the efforts of volunteer organizations and other orphans to pressure the government for special old-age benefits. Matsui said it’s important to unite in these efforts even if one’s own interests are not at stake, but noted correctly that despite the tacit support of most war orphans, the various organizations have a difficult time achieving solidarity.¹⁶³

Responding to Sugawara’s efforts to win the extension of special provisions (such as state-funded repatriation) to the all children and grandchildren of war orphans, Matsui noted that although their interests are at stake, the children of war orphans are too busy to participate in political activism. Of Matsui’s four children, two were eligible for state-funded repatriation with Matsui and his wife: his youngest son (because he was under 20 at the time, and was hence considered a dependent) and his younger daughter and her family (because orphans over 55 years old can now be accompanied by one child and their family at state expense).¹⁶⁴ If the political activism were to succeed, then his other two children and their families would also be eligible for state-funded “return.” But he maintains that the cost would be too great. “There’s lots of people in my situation; some orphan families include 4, 5, 6, 8 people – each family has at least one child, some two. Rural families may have three children; two is normal...in the case of orphans over 60, their grandchildren are all already married. It’s impossible to demand that the Japanese government bear this burden.”

Matsui continued his defense of Japan by saying that Japan alone among the world’s nations has “taken [admirably] great actions” (*zuo de hen wei da*) in returning its citizens from abroad. As counter-examples, he pointed to the Chinese state’s impotence during the massacre of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, and the refusal of the former Soviet Union to assist Russian refugees in China. In the case of Japan, by contrast, “as long as

¹⁶³ This a complaint made by many war orphans and activists. Matsui quoted Sun Yat-sen’s famous metaphor for the Chinese inability to organize, comparing them to “a basin of loose sand” (*yipen san sha*). He said that despite Tokyo’s size, with its large population of orphans and numerous orphan organizations, the orphans there are dispersed and aren’t as cohesive as those in Yokohama.

¹⁶⁴ His older son is in the US and his daughter is planning to come over.

you are one of its citizens [*guomin*], Japan will protect you. I don't think any other countries can compare with this." A bit taken aback, I mentioned that more than half a century after the war's end volunteers estimate that there are still approximately 300 war orphans in China wishing to return to Japan. "It's a long process," he admitted, but it's a complicated issue to resolve.

You seem pretty satisfied with the Japanese government's treatment of the orphans, I ventured. Matsui equivocated: "The standard of living for war orphans is at the lowest level [*zui diceng*] of Japanese society. That standard is too low. For the most part, we are fine continuing to live like this. But we hope that we can have a slightly higher standard of living. So I'm also willing to go with [the protestors] to the Japanese Diet and march and so on." But how can you justify asking the Japanese government to improve your treatment, I asked, playing devil's advocate. "Because though we are old when we return, we still want to work, even if we're already 50, 55, 60. But Japanese factories and enterprises won't take us. They treat us like foreigners because our language is different. Our language is different because the former Japanese imperialist government placed us in a foreign country, and we never had a chance to learn. Plus we don't have any savings, since China is a poor country. So when we come back we need to depend upon the government to solve our problems. Because this is a problem left over from the government of the past, and the new government needs to take responsibility." But didn't you just say the two governments were different, I asked. "Yes, there are things that you can't ask the present government to completely resolve or consider. But practical problems, the issue of our ability to eat, a small improvement in our treatment – these can be considered. I'm not saying 'our present apartment is too small, give us one with four rooms' – that's unrealistic."

We discussed the situation of Matsui's younger son, who was about to graduate from a one-year vocational course.¹⁶⁵ Matsui was very optimistic about his son's possibilities. "In Japan there are two requirements: the first is Japanese citizenship, the other is youth...as long as you are young and healthy there are lots of opportunities for

¹⁶⁵ Although entrance is highly competitive, government vocational training schools (*shokugyō kunrenkō*) allot a small number of places for war orphans and their relatives.

work.” He downplayed the importance of Japanese proficiency. “For some jobs, you only need a little Japanese...some jobs, you go the whole day without speaking. In some production jobs, speaking just wastes time!” And young people learn the language quickly: “after a year or two they learn to express themselves.”

His younger daughter’s situation was more complicated, but common to many of the “second generation” families. She and her husband had come to Japan and were currently renting a small apartment in Yokohama, where they both worked. However, they had left their three-year-old son in China in the care of the father’s family. The father, who Matsui described as a “real Chinese” (*zhenzheng de Zhongguo minzu*), felt that if their son were to come to Japan and spend a long time among Japanese people without studying Chinese language or culture, it would create problems when they eventually returned to China and put him in school there.

Matsui’s eldest daughter, her husband, and their young daughter had arrived in Japan just six months before my visits, and they were just about to move to an apartment of their own. The daughter had already found work in a Japanese department store, and according to Matsui things had gone smoothly for them largely because she had taken Japanese citizenship.

It became apparent that Matsui had been unusually thorough and meticulous about planning his return to Japan. During the relative-seeking tour in which he participated before moving his family to Japan, he had done a great deal of research. “I wasn’t like those people who come back [on the tour], are happy with just a quick look, and then come back and live in Japan just like that. Most people are like that; they think that Japan and everything about it is wonderful. That after they come back, the government will take care of everything, solve their problems. The fact is, the government takes care of everything on the relative-seeking tour, but then later after you take up residence in Japan you have to take care of everything by yourself.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ As part of his preparations for moving to Japan, Matsui had arranged for his son and one son-in-law to get driver’s licenses in China, which they were able to convert into Japanese driver’s licenses upon their arrival in Japan. The son-in-law now makes good money as driver for a Japanese company. He also encouraged his wife to study hair cutting, which they could rely on for income in an emergency.

Our discussion was interrupted by the arrival of Matsui's granddaughter, who had just started school in Japan. Already, she preferred to speak in Japanese: "she protests when we speak in Chinese," said Matsui. "She says Chinese is different from what her [Japanese] friends speak." Matsui is confident that she will remain in Japan ("if you proposed taking her back to China she would refuse") and unconcerned about her ability to learn Chinese language and culture. But Matsui says he is unsure about his grandson in China. "His father doesn't intend to live permanently in Japan...he hopes to make a bunch of money and then go back to live in China." However, Matsui insisted that his daughter would not go back, and she would bring the son to Japan and raise him alone if necessary.

With these conflicts in mind, I asked Matsui about the eventual marriage plans of his youngest son, who was 24. "The sole best option would be for him to marry the daughter of a war orphan that had returned to Japan." This would be simplest since such a person wouldn't have relatives in China to complicate things. What about a Japanese spouse, I asked. He shook his head. "It seems like Japanese people's way of thinking, lifestyle, et cetera – in all kinds of ways they don't mesh [*bu hepai*]." Some open-minded people may be willing to marry a Japanese person thinking that if it doesn't work out they will just divorce. But they are the exception. "Everyone wants a Chinese repatriate's child for a spouse. Their second choice, if that doesn't work out, is to go back to China where they once lived and find one."

Conclusion

I am listening to the beginning of the tape of my very first interview with Matsui. In the background I hear Matsui's older daughter and seven-year-old granddaughter come in the apartment door. "*Tadaima!*" (We're home!) they say in Japanese, to which Matsui's wife gives the formulaic reply: "*Okaeri nasai!*" (Welcome back!) Matsui's granddaughter slides back the fusuma door and comes in to joins us in the tatami-floored room where we are seated cross-legged around a low table.

Matsui is telling me that he was seven years old in 1945 when the war ended. Seven years old! I exclaim. Then you must remember it clearly. "My age," he begins, and

then on the tape I can hear his gravelly, cigarette-scarred voice suddenly soften as he indicates his granddaughter, “was about the same as this little girl’s. So it made a pretty deep impression. Because it was a shocking experience – before, you live at home with all kinds of conveniences and then later, suddenly, one morning you have nothing, no home, and you have to go out and beg food. That’s a real sudden change, so it made a big impression.”

I try to imagine that little girl in the horrific circumstances he describes. What is she thinking as her grandfather says this? Is it possible for any of us know what he really experienced? Much less describe it to others?

Chapter 5: Repatriate Youth and Multiethnic Japan(ese)

It's high time that Youth of Japanese Descent from China dispense with their fixation on the question "Am I Japanese? Or Chinese?" Because... determining one's existence in this "either-or" fashion is no longer possible or meaningful...[They] have shed the oppositional framework of "Japanese" and "Chinese," one that relies for its constitution on essentialist distinctions with the Other. At the same time, conversely, they destabilize and demolish this framework: they are an "in-between" presence whose hybridity renders the differences between the two sides equivocal. – Ōkubo Akio, "Aidentiti kuraishisu wo koete" (Overcoming the identity crisis) (2000, 343)

Immigrants around the world engage in a process of first learning and then negotiating the linguistic terms of their difference. It has been observed that language works in two ways to construct difference: it is both a marker of difference and a tool for its expression (Harrell 2001). It can also be a tool for rendering difference invisible, as when one "passes" by using perfect foreign speech. And the sheer absence of linguistic markers for the expression of particular types of difference can contribute to the imposition of social and economic limits and ideological silences, or boundaries to thought. With respect to immigrant children in Japan, many researchers and educators in Japan (cf. Ō 1998) value both the retention of a child's "native language" and the acquisition of Japanese as key to a child's academic success and ethnic "identity." Despite this broadly shared emphasis, there are clear structural obstacles to the effective learning of either language: the lack of communication between the aforementioned parties, the sojourner mentality of many immigrant parents, and the scarcity of native-language education opportunities are among the most important.

¹⁶⁸ Notable exceptions to this are the sociological surveys profiling the lives of foreigners from Asia living in areas of Tokyo that were carried out by Okuda Michio and Tajima Junko (1993, 1995) and Tajima (1998).

Moreover, immigrant children often find that fluency in Japanese is not sufficient to redress of the terms under which they are negatively identified as different. Certainly, Japanese proficiency enables the psychic satisfaction – so important amidst the stresses of migration and culture shock – of empowering one to communicate one’s difference, whether that difference is felt in individual or ethnic terms. But the ability to speak does not by itself ensure a willingness to listen. The cultivation of a willingness to listen to, and value, immigrant difference is one of the most difficult transformations among the people of a host society, and Japan is no exception.

In the first section of this chapter, I present an overview of the statistics and growing body of research on immigrant children in Japanese schools and give special attention to the situation of repatriate youth, the children and grandchildren of war orphans. These school-age children accompany their parents to Japan under a variety of circumstances, but most commonly as the beneficiary of special visa arrangements due to their kin connection with war orphans. In the following section, I reference my interviews with repatriate parents in my fieldwork area in order to demonstrate the conflicts and difficulties of language learning and the linguistic coexistence of Japanese and Chinese in immigrant homes. In this discussion, I give great importance to the issue of language acquisition and retention as a key factor in both academic success and ethnic identification. In the final section, I continue my focus upon language by discussing the language of multiethnicity in Japan, and illustrate novel “expressions” of Sino-Japanese multiethnicity by profiling a particular repatriate individual, Ōkubo Akio. Throughout, I am concerned with the ways in which repatriate and other immigrant children learn and redefine the terms of their ethnic identification.

Immigrant and Repatriate Youth in Japanese Schools: Overview and Research

Since the 1980s, Japanese society has faced the growing challenge of accommodating large numbers of foreign migrants. One of the most complex arenas in which this accommodation is being tested is the public school classroom. Because of the numbers of such students have been small, researchers in Japan have until recently focused their discussion of migration upon such issues as migrant labor and crime. By

contrast, Japanese teachers on the “front lines” of this development—particularly those in schools with high percentages of immigrant students—have been experimenting with methods for enhancing academic performance and language acquisition. From an initial emphasis on assimilation and the erasure of ethnic difference, many educators are now advocating and implementing a host of measures to accommodate and even encourage ethnic and linguistic difference. In the case of many repatriate youth, however, these efforts to encourage ethnic (Chinese) identification do not always please the children’s war orphan (grand)parents, who may wish their child to be regarded as Japanese (Ō 1998). The ostensibly objective “either/or” form of ethnic categorization may also fail to accurately reflect the complex subjective identifications of the students themselves. And many parents of returnee youth express frustration with a more fundamental issue: the very structure and intent of Japanese elementary and junior high school education with its recent de-emphasis on homework and rote learning.

Over the past decade and a half, Japanese academics, policymakers and popular journalists have contributed to a vigorous discussion of immigration and its impact on Japan’s present and future society. Given the importance of migrant workers to Japan’s economy and the potential impact of their growing numbers on Japanese society, the focus of this outpouring of research, opinion and policy has been migrant labor in all of its various forms, skilled and unskilled, legal and illicit. Because most of Japan’s postwar migrants have in fact been working-age adults, it is hardly surprising that throughout the 1990s, postwar migration to Japan was largely discussed in terms of migrant labor.¹⁶⁸ Japanese scholarship on immigration of the early 1990s, such as Komai Hiroshi’s seminal *Migrant Workers in Japan* (1993, 1995), often entirely ignores the education of foreign children. Although Japanese educators, JSL (Japanese as a Second Language) teachers and local volunteers had, since at least the late 1980s, been addressing the issue in a variety of ways including conferences and Japanese-language journal articles (in the JSL journal *Nihongo Kyōiku*, for example), by the mid-90s the number of foreign children requiring remedial Japanese language instruction began to be

treated in mainstream Japanese studies of migration to Japan¹⁶⁹ and, soon thereafter, in English-language studies as well.¹⁷⁰ Yet the academic preoccupation with adult workers and the widespread preference for temporary labor that is repeatedly expressed in Japanese popular discussions of immigration have often disguised the reality of increasing permanent settlement, and the growing numbers of immigrant children in Japanese public schools.

The sources of the two largest groups of recent adult migrants to Japan are the People's Republic of China (where repatriate-related migrants account for a large percentage of this movement) and Brazil (from which the bulk of Japan's resident Latin American Nikkei hail). Chinese migrants were the first to show substantial growth, as the mid-1980s saw political reforms in the PRC that liberalized study and travel abroad. However, many (if not most) of the Chinese "students" that poured into Japan in the late eighties were coming to work, responding to dramatic wage differentials and an acute need for unskilled workers in the Japanese economy. The major 1990 revision to Japan's immigration law, the "Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act," tried to stem the increase in illegal labor and instead meet the growing need for unskilled laborers by granting people of Japanese descent (*Nikkeijin*) residing outside Japan special "long-term resident" visas that conferred the right to stay in Japan for three years, with the option of unrestricted renewal.¹⁷¹ The response to this change was immediate and dramatic among Latin Americans of Japanese descent: nearly 85,000 Brazilians of Japanese descent came to Japan the following year. During the decade of the 90s, the number of Latin Americans in Japan grew from several thousand to over a quarter of a million, mostly ethnic Japanese hailing from Brazil and Peru.

Although both the Japanese government and the majority of labor migrants themselves may initially desire just temporary migration, the reality is that many of these "sojourner" migrants and their children end up as "settlers" in their host country of

¹⁶⁹ Such as Komai Hiroshi (1999, 173-4) and Miyajima and Kajita (1996). See Ikegami (1998) for an excellent bibliography of sources on JSL for foreign children, including journal articles and conference presentations.

¹⁷⁰ See Mori (1997) and Sellek (2001).

¹⁷¹ Sellek (2001, 222-4). This regularized a trend that had already been occurring on a much smaller scale.

Japan.¹⁷² If Japan's government has been slow to acknowledge this trend, many local educators, civic officials and NPOs are reacting to these changing circumstances and formulating ad hoc measures to accommodate immigrant families and their school-age children, many of whom lack proficiency in the Japanese language. These initiatives vary widely from region to region, reflecting both a lack of central coordination and the divergent needs and constituencies of specific locales. But they are also knit together by formal and informal networks of teachers and volunteers, particularly those involved in teaching JSL (Japanese as a Second Language). These efforts have recently been complemented by individual and group research projects that are focused on the special needs and difficulties of "newcomer" children.

Following the dramatic increase in foreign residents due to the revision of Japan's immigration laws in 1990, the Japanese government in 1991 began a statistical survey on the number of foreign students in Japanese schools that require "guidance" in Japanese. In the absence of other measures¹⁷³, this survey has become a keenly anticipated and oft-quoted index, and the ritual rehearsal of the most recent data is a fixture in papers and presentations on foreign students in Japanese schools. The survey was conducted every other year until 2000, when it began to be conducted yearly (perhaps a sign of increased government concern). The most recent figures (for 2002) identify 18,734 children needing Japanese guidance, down just slightly from the record numbers the previous year.¹⁷⁴ Students are identified by native tongue rather than nationality, with Portuguese speakers (mostly Nikkei children) composing some 36% of the total, or 6,770 children, and Chinese language speakers (mostly war orphan-related) accounting for about 28%, or 5,178 children. Although statistics show that a growing percentage of needy children are

¹⁷² This trend has been most clearly documented in studies of Japanese-Brazilian *dekasegi* (migrant workers). See for example Tsuda (1999).

¹⁷³ The continued insufficiency of information concerning children needing assistance is highlighted by the fact that these government figures remain the only source of nationwide survey statistics (Komai 1999, 180).

¹⁷⁴ The detailed results of the 2002 survey are available online:
http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/15/02/030220.htm

receiving some form of language assistance, some 2,750 children needing guidance -- almost 15% of the total number -- went unassisted in 2002.¹⁷⁵

Reflecting upon the developments since the initiation of the government survey in 1991, one 1998 study (Ikegami 1998) describes three trends: 1) increase (*zōka*), 2) diversification (*tayōka*) and 3) dispersion (*bunsanka*), and concludes that “the presence of foreign children in Japan’s regions or schools has grown to be no longer in any way ‘unusual.’”(132) The tiny dip in the 2002 numbers notwithstanding, these three trends remain generally valid today.

The present discussion of children needing remedial Japanese instruction has antecedents that stretch back to the immediate postwar period. In her recent English-language overview of the current situation concerning the education of foreign children, Sellek (2001) points out that the present discussion of foreign children in Japanese has precedents in the lengthy postwar debate concerning the ethnic education of Japan’s sizable Korean minority, and the linguistic difficulties faced by *kikokushijo*, Japanese youth who had returned to Japanese schools after lengthy sojourns abroad with their expatriate families. What is different now is the sheer number of children needing remedial instruction in the Japanese language (Sellek 2001, 197-8). Sellek traces the growing number of foreign children in Japanese schools to four sources: “mainly...the knock-on effect of the introduction of *Nikkeijin* in order to alleviate labour shortages in Japan, but...also...children of settled Indo-Chinese political refugees, the children of Japanese orphans left in China, and those accompanying foreign parents who, in order to earn a living in Japan, have changed their statuses of residence from foreign students and pre-college students to those permitting employment.”(198) As I will later discuss, the current generation attending Japanese schools corresponds to the grandchildren of the war orphans. However, her characterization is otherwise accurate.

One Japanese study dates the presence of “newcomer” children in Japanese schools back to the children that accompanied repatriated war orphans and “remaining

¹⁷⁵ By way of comparison, there were 3535 such children in the survey for Heisei 9 (1997), approximately twenty percent of the total number.

women” (*zanryū fujin*), and began to enter Japanese schools as early as the 1970s.¹⁷⁶

State policies on family reunification first concentrated such repatriates and their children in predominantly rural areas such as Nagano Prefecture, from which the military and colonist families of these repatriates originated (and where the surviving Japanese relatives—upon whom the government sought to shift responsibility for resettlement—resided). In addition to the scarcity of employment and contact with other Chinese, such rural areas had virtually nothing in the way of administrative infrastructure to ease the transition of these new migrants, and repatriate children in rural public schools had little in the way of specialized assistance. It is therefore understandable that this initial resettlement was often quickly followed by a shift to urban areas such as Tokyo, Osaka and Yokohama, which increasingly became the foci of concentrated resettlement mediated by kinship networks composed of war orphans and their Chinese families who had migrated earlier.¹⁷⁷

Over the past decade and a half, some broad trends have been discerned in the reception and acclimation of immigrant children in Japanese schools. In the scholarly assessments of the situation, these trends are usually discussed in negative terms, as problems remaining to be solved by some form of intervention (usually governmental.) Some of the discussions have a polemical tone, while many are linked to the ongoing concerns of Japan’s Korean minority and the issue of “multicultural education” (*tabunka kyōiku*), often in the context of a broader Japanese formulation of multiculturalism: “multicultural co-existence” (*tabunka kyōsei*).

Komai Hiroshi’s (1999) representative assessment of the situation begins by quoting the aforementioned government survey and the rapid rise in children needing remedial Japanese instruction. He notes that although many countermeasures are listed in the report, the number of local schools and administrations that are implementing such measures barely rose while the number of students in need more than doubled. Komai

¹⁷⁶ Ikegami (1998) also mentions that developments in teaching Japanese as a Second Language (JSL) were also catalyzed in the 1980s by substantial numbers of *kikokushijo* (“returned youth” of Japanese who were sent to work abroad during Japanese economic expansion in the late 70s and 1980s) that needed assistance in readjusting to Japanese schools upon their return to Japan.

¹⁷⁷ See Iiida’s (1990) description of chain migration to the cities (and Tokyo in particular) despite government efforts to resettle repatriates outside urban areas.

closes by stressing that the challenge in addressing this situation is compounded by the fact that the children needing assistance are so dispersed and diverse, with almost 45% of the schools in the 1997 survey reporting just one child in need, and almost four fifths having just five or fewer. The lack of concentration necessitates a much greater allocation of resources.¹⁷⁸

In summing up the situation of these foreign children, Komai quotes the conclusions of a research team that in 1994 investigated the situations of 29 students of various foreign nationalities, incorporating detailed interviews with the students and their peers and teachers, as well as analyses of pedagogical experiences and policies concerning foreign children at selected Japanese schools. Their study found that the danger of dropping out was high, due largely to the lack of Japanese language skills. Though proficiency in the language requires several years, writes Komai, this is difficult because of the temporary residence plans of many parents. Given the trial-and-error stage of JSL instruction, the burden on individual educators is immense. The difficulty in learning Japanese is further intensified by the tendency of foreign children to either gather in ethnic groups, where possible, or be excluded and isolated from their Japanese classmates. The resulting downward spiral in academic skills often prevents them from passing the high school entrance exams (though special entrance categories have begun to be implemented subsequent to this study). A final problem is the frequent tendency for foreign students to forget their native language as they learn Japanese. To prevent this, Komai writes, “there is a need for an organized response to ensure the students’ right [*kenri*]” to learn their native languages (173-4).

A 1997 overview of JSL education for foreigners¹⁷⁹ notes that while progress is being made in establishing a system for accommodating foreign children in need of Japanese language instruction, several serious issues remain, including 1) disparities in the provision of such assistance from region to region and school to school, 2) the need to examine the content and method of JSL instruction, 3) the need to link JSL pedagogy to the standard school curriculum, 4) the need to encourage linkages between schools,

¹⁷⁸ The percentages remain roughly the same in the most recent survey (2002).

¹⁷⁹ Quoted in Ikegami (1998, 133).

student's families and the local region in order to provide the proper learning environment, and 5) the need to promote basic research and accumulate basic materials in order to construct a "framework."

In addition to the trends noted above, Ikegami (1998, 133) points out the growing importance of guidance in, and the maintenance of, foreign students' native language (*bogo shidō* and *bogo hoji*, respectively). This is a major shift from the longstanding treatment of permanent migrants such as the repatriates and Indochinese refugees, an approach that stressed assimilation and Japanese language proficiency while ignoring or even deliberately suppressing native (i.e. non-Japanese) language ability.¹⁸⁰

Fortunately, these broad-brush approaches are complemented by more focused research – often done by graduate students organized in a research team under a guiding professor or two – that treat small samples of immigrant children and yield more detailed information about their learning situations, their subjective experiences of stress and pleasure, and their relationships with their families.¹⁸¹ The recent increase in such close-grained studies dates from the mid-1990s, when the sudden jump in the number of foreigners (and Japanese Brazilians in particular¹⁸²) due to Japan's economic growth and immigration revisions began to be felt and studied in the schools and communities. There is virtually no research in English on war orphans and very little on Chinese immigrants (see the following chapter), so the scarcity of work on the education of those groups is

¹⁸⁰ The new emphasis on the preservation and use of students' native languages is especially indebted to the bilingualism scholarship of the British researcher Cummins (see for example Cummins and Swain 1986). Ikegami outlines the importance of this approach (1998, 137-9).

¹⁸¹ An excellent example of the work of such research teams on immigrant education and language learning is the team of mostly graduate students led by Shimizu Kōkichi, an Assistant Professor of Tokyo University's Graduate Department of Education. One of their foci has been the data-rich evaluation of language-learning assistance to immigrant children both inside Japanese public schools and outside of them, in Japanese language classes or native-language classes (*Nihongo kyōshitsu* and *bogo kyōshitsu*, respectively.) The Rikkyō University sociology professor Miyajima Takashi has also overseen extensive research on immigrant laborers and students.

¹⁸² As this would suggest, there is a great deal of ethnographic information in English and Japanese on the situation of Japanese-Brazilians, though in English only a small portion of it focuses explicitly on children's education. Ninomiya (2002) is a fine exception written by a professor of law at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil. Takezawa (2002) also includes some discussion.

understandable.¹⁸³ But as the following section shows, there exists a substantial amount of Japanese research of war orphan education that dates back to before the 1990s. Recently, this research has been enriched by extended “ethnographic” accounts.

Repatriate Youth in Japanese Schools

In the development of JSL methodology and content for foreign immigrants to Japan, repatriates have played an especially early and important role. Although the phenomenon of foreign children in Japanese schools has only recently become the widespread focus of scholarly research, the circumstances of repatriate children have been systematically studied since the late 1980s. This is due to at least three factors: first, repatriate migration began much earlier than the other main sources of immigrant children (primarily Indochinese refugees and the children of Nikkei labor migrants); second, War Orphans were a mass media *cause célèbre* (particularly in the 1980s) that drew attention to the diverse problems and needs experienced by foreign migrants to Japan; and third (and most importantly) the semi-governmental Chinese Repatriate Resettlement Center (*Chūgoku Kikokusha Teichaku Sokushin Sentā*) that was established in Tokorozawa in 1983 quickly became a key site for the development and publication of pedagogical research on the teaching of Japanese and other subjects to repatriate and immigrant children.¹⁸⁴ Unrelated to the Center’s activities, second- and third-generation repatriates were also among the foci of the serial data collection efforts on immigrants led by Komai Hiroshi at Tsukuba University (1998).

In the past five years or so, this Center-led scholarship and independent survey-based research has been complemented by a number of more focused projects, among which the ethnographic approaches of Fujii and Tabuchi (2001) and Kaji (2000) that are considered below are particularly noteworthy. In addition to these academic works, there

¹⁸³ The brief overview of ethnic Chinese and war orphan education by Maher (1995) is an important exception. Ng (2003) also gives a brief description of an ethnic Chinese school in Kobe (not a typical learning environment among Chinese immigrant students, since most attend public schools.)

¹⁸⁴ The work of Ikegami that is cited above is an example of the research conducted by Center professionals, who also engage in extensive outreach with Japanese teachers throughout Japan. The “handbooks” (*kiyō*) published by the Center are also a major forum for pedagogical research on repatriates. The former head of the Tokorozawa Center contributed to an early multidisciplinary study of repatriate adjustment (Ebata 1996).

are many non-scholarly publications on the repatriate experience in Japan that anecdotally reference the experience of repatriate children in Japanese schools.

In response to this research and pressure from volunteers and repatriate advocates, the Japanese government's Ministry of Education has gradually developed various measures to assist repatriate students. These include 1) the nomination of "cooperating schools" (*kyōryokukō*) for such students and the provision of extra instructors to these schools, 2) the dispatch of "guidance cooperators" (*shidō kyōryokusha*) to assist with remedial instruction, and 3) the compilation and distribution of teaching aids (*hojo kyōzai*) and guidance materials. Ikegami (1998) notes that these measures are now widely applied to the situations and schools of non-repatriate immigrant students (134).

Reflecting an increasing acknowledgment of the unique linguistic difficulties facing recent immigrant students, a growing number of high schools and colleges have also altered their entrance exam formats and established special entrance "categories" (*waku*) for qualifying repatriate and/or recent immigrant applicants. These *waku* generally endorse admissions criteria that are more lenient than those confronted by native Japanese students. However, Ikegami stresses that these measures are still insufficient, and significant disparities exist in the local provision and implementation of ostensibly national and regional assistance programs. Moreover, the definition of "need" for JSL assistance lacks a standard. Thus, she writes, under the existing situation in which public assistance cannot be said to be reaching its intended recipients, "there is a great dependence upon the individual efforts of each school, each teacher, or each helper. In particular, the assistance of volunteer groups and individuals plays a major role." In an earlier (1994) work, Ikegami presents a "survey" (*gaikan*) of the situation of the repatriates: "1) they are coming, not 'returning' to Japan, and as such are in the position of immigrants, 2) as a result of the Chinese school system, when deciding what grade to transfer them to there are situations in which they do not match the Japanese school age, 3) there are regional disparities in the system for incorporating such students, 4) students experience "friction" (*atsureki*) as a result of the differences between Japanese and Chinese school cultures, 5) the parents of these children are also in the process of learning Japanese and adapting to the foreign culture of Japan, 6) native language

development and its relationship to CALP (Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency) need to be considered, and 7) native language preservation and its relationship to identity (*aidentiti*) need to be considered. Ikegami notes that many of these circumstances are shared with other immigrant children¹⁸⁵, but repatriates differ in at least three respects: first, the permanency of their migration means that advancing through school is more important for them than for children of temporary migrants who plan to return to their home country; second, depending upon their age upon arrival and their subsequent development, a repatriate's native language can switch from Chinese to Japanese; and third, the position of the parents is particularly important for repatriate children...[for its role in] native language preservation and its relationship to identity.”(140)

New Research Directions: Two Recent Studies on Repatriate Youth

When educators begin invoking squishy concepts like “identity” one might suspect that there is fertile ground for anthropological investigation. But Japanese “anthropologists” have conventionally focused their research on societies outside of Japan, and that hallmark of anthropological research – the ethnography – is rare in the studies of foreign children in Japan. The two disciplines from which most Japanese scholarly work on immigrant students spring, sociology (*shakaigaku*) and education (*kyōikugaku*), have traditionally relied heavily on questionnaire approaches and mass survey methods. There has been a distinct emphasis on discerning gross trends and less of a concern with close-grained, in-depth portraits of a small number of subjects. Perhaps this is because such intimate portraits often require months and even years of trust-building and sharing to paint. They do not always lend themselves neatly to the hard-pressed Japanese graduate student's busy agenda, much less the lifestyle of an eminent professor.

Given the scarcity of such works, two recent examples are especially worthy of discussion. Both come from cities in the Kansai area, Nara and Kyoto. After Tokyo, Osaka, the Kansai region's largest city, has received the highest number of repatriate-

¹⁸⁵ For a comparison with the Japanese Brazilian educational experience, see Ninomiya (2002).

related immigrants. It has also been the focus of investigations, arrests, detentions and expulsions of so-called “fake orphans,” Chinese who have migrated to Japan through fabricated connections with war orphans. The crackdown was fresh when I was doing fieldwork in 1999 and interviewed a government official with the department that handles orphan affairs (a subsection of the department that deals with issues concerning Japanese veterans) He began our interview by offering me a photocopy of a recent news article detailing the discovery of hundreds of such “fake orphans,” and repeatedly referred to the issue. Fallout from the subsequent crackdown came in many forms, including the forced splitting of families and the detention of young Chinese who had spent years in Japanese schools and were likely to fare poorly in Chinese schools if they were forced to return. The Osaka and greater Kansai area has a long-entrenched tradition of civic and civil rights activism surrounding the rights of resident Koreans and the *dōwa* (often known as “*burakumin*”), or outcastes. Thus there were already networks and institutions devoted to civil rights when the cause of foreign immigrants – and by extension, foreign children – began to emerge in the 1980s.

Research on immigrants and immigrant education often occurs in conjunction with volunteer efforts, and is occasionally accompanied by some form of advocacy. Thus it is not unusual that the primary author of the first study (Fujii) came into contact with repatriate children through his local volunteer activities. Nor that the second study’s author, Kaji, has been active in publicizing the plight of young Chinese detainees and working for their release.

Completed in 2001, “Third generation repatriate students from China: an ethnography [*esunogurafii*] of four children,”¹⁸⁶ is a study authored by the graduate student Fujii Kenta and his supervising professor Tabuchi Isō, both of the Nara University of Education’s Department of Social Studies Education. In their introductory discussion of existing research and pedagogy, the authors begin by noting that the twin goals in teaching repatriates have heretofore been thorough instruction in Japanese and improvement in their academic abilities. However, they continue, “the formation of their

¹⁸⁶ Also available in pdf form on Tokorozawa Center website: <http://www.kikokusha-center.or.jp/resource/ronbun/kakuron/22/naradai.htm>

ethnic identity (*aidentiti*) and their positive attitudes concerning things like their background and China are important themes at their developmental stage...[yet] we know little of their lifeworld.” They go on to suggest that, in comparison with the situation of other migrant children, repatriate children have been little studied outside the context of the Center’s research. It is probably safe to say that all migrant children have been understudied, but the authors themselves reference a number of non-Center studies. In one study that Fujii and Tabuchi quote, Suzuki surveyed repatriate children on the subject of “identity” (*aidentiti*) and adaptation to a foreign cultural environment. He found that conflicts arose from the pressures on these children to simultaneously assimilate into Japanese society and maintain their Chinese identity. He further suggested that discriminatory Japanese views of Asians were behind this problem.

Fujii and Tabuchi also reference the social psychology study by Ebata et al. (1996) that traced a group of repatriate families through periodic surveys over a five year span. They paraphrase Ebata’s summary of the two major influences on the families as “trouble between children and their parents concerning the motivations for return (to Japan)” and “differences in adaptation according to age.” Thus, children have trouble communicating with their parents on both a linguistic and an emotional level.

In addressing these issues and the needs of such children, Fujii and Tabuchi argue, researchers have employed a variety of methods, but most of the existing research on repatriate children takes a “macro” perspective that relies on standardized survey data for its conclusions and suggestions. They position their own effort as a contribution to that small number of works that document “each individual’s micro, inner world from the child’s perspective.” They have chosen the ethnography form of research because it suits this purpose well, and catches things that drop out of quantitative surveys.

Their study focuses on four “Third Generation Repatriates from China” (*chūgoku kikokusha sansei*) that graduate student author Fujii met during approximately two years as a volunteer with “Nara Family and Friends,” a mutual study group for Japanese and foreign residents of Japan. Over time, through “a natural form of participant-observation,” he came to know these four individuals in and out of the classroom,

compiling fieldnotes and some thirty tapes of interviews that included the parents and teachers of the children.

The four “children” consist of two pairs of siblings: two brothers and a brother and sister, all aged between 13-16. The younger three came to Japan five years ago and the eldest, the 16-year-old girl, came three years ago. Most were put back at least a year in their studies, a common practice. Their reason for being Japan came first and foremost from their association with their shared maternal grandmother, who was a repatriated Japanese “remaining woman” (*zanryū fujin*). This official designation is a somewhat arbitrary distinction with the category of war orphans (*zanryū koji*, literally “remaining orphans”) that is based on the child’s age at war’s end: the former were 13 and above and the latter were younger. Since most of the older children that survived and evaded capture were women that married Chinese (most older boys having died after conscription and/or capture by Russian troops), this category (which was extremely meaningful in terms of eligibility for benefits, etc.) was initially called “remaining women.” Her various descendants and in-laws that had come to Japan through their relationship with her numbered around 30, all living in the same area.¹⁸⁷

The authors begin with the standard chronological approach to the children’s backgrounds that begins with their circumstances in rural Northeast China. Following their arrival in Japan, it goes year by year through the circumstances of their Japanese language learning and adjustment to Japanese schools, and makes liberal use of verbatim interview excerpts. The interview transcriptions, which fluently preserve the colloquial expressions and (Japanese) Kansai regional dialect in the children’s speech, animate these accounts. Otherwise they are somewhat arid chronologies, with revealing anecdotes in places. The authors follow these histories with a series of seven “education issues” that can be seen in the children’s “lifeworlds.” Their issues are presented with supporting quotes from the interviews, and conclude with proscriptions for addressing the problem (that vary in value).

¹⁸⁷ Two studies have estimated that an average of 20 Chinese family members ultimately come to Japan in connection with each individual returning war orphan or “remaining woman.”

The first issue is the fact that the children's coming to Japan had nothing to do with their own desire. Their parents decided to come for financial motivations, their grandmother because it was a return to her homeland. The second issue concerns the students' discomfort with many Japanese customs and values, "materialism" being one prominent example. The authors urge readers to "bend a sympathetic ear" to the concerns of students who are wrestling with the stresses of a new culture. The third issue they raise is the "discommunication" (sic) between schools and students' families. They begin their lengthy discussion of this point by noting that parents' employment is one cause of problems in repatriate families. Lacking language skills, even those considered skilled workers in China are generally demoted to menial labor in which they likely work long, hard hours and may suffer the abuse of their coworkers. These work stresses, compounded by financial stresses, make for an explosive mix. A few highly publicized events have contributed to an exaggerated image of the divorces, suicides and even murders that occasionally occur in hard-pressed repatriate families. But the stresses are undeniable. As the authors go on to discuss, there are a host of problems that emerge from the linguistic gulf between busy, non-Japanese speaking elders and their Japanese-proficient children. The filtering and censorship of important school-related information is just one salient example. It is also not hard to imagine the warped family dynamics resulting from the parents' linguistic dependency on their children, a frequent phenomenon in repatriate families with school-age children. The authors advocate the establishment of a window at the local educational administration for providing information to such parents (presumably in their native language). This is in fact occurring in many ward offices serving areas with large immigrant populations, with information windows open on a once a week or so basis for major language groups. The fourth issue is "discommunication [sic] with parents." They note the different patterns of development in language learning: parents, tired from heavy labor, cease studying Japanese in their limited free time and remain stuck at a rudimentary level, in stark contrast to their rapidly proficient children, who speak Japanese constantly. The authors note the potential for "discommunication" in the simultaneous loss of Chinese skills in the children and failure to acquire Japanese skills in the parent, effectively handicapping

the parent's role as a model. They strongly feel that there is a need for assistance in native language study for communication purposes and for the proper establishment of the children's "identity." But they acknowledge the practical difficulties (time, money, personnel) facing schools wishing to provide Chinese language training. They therefore urge schools to establish a "place of their own" (*ibasho*) for repatriate children, a place for them to gather and ease their isolation, speak Chinese together, talk about China and so forth.¹⁸⁸

Their fifth issue is "ambivalent identity." They mention a simple but extraordinary technique used by one of the children's teachers to integrate him into the class. Every morning he would lead a "morning Chinese class" for his primary school peers. Though the children hardly achieved proficiency in Chinese, they enjoyed it as a kind of game, and it elicited their curiosity in China and in him as a person. The authors see this as a way of resolving any ambiguity the children may feel about their ethnic identity. They contrast this boy with another who has little apparent interest in his Chinese identity or language skills, and conclude that it is the existence of positive support from those around the child is decisive. A strong identity can help the child resist assimilative forces and even help him to know Japanese culture better. They urge teachers to pay more attention to these children caught between two cultures, to their unseen labors: they refer to the example of one middle school girl whose time for homework is stolen from a heavy regimen of family chores for her hardworking parents.

The authors note that identity is created in the intersection between self and other, and in this case the others are Japanese children. Through studying China, they argue, these children have a chance to relativize their own cultural beliefs, acknowledge the variety of value systems and prepare themselves for their roles in an internationalized society of the future. With their sixth issue, "a supportive class environment and two-way learning," the authors return once again to the striking success of the teacher who established a "morning Chinese class." Contrasting that example with another child who had no such opportunity, they stress the importance of such measures to elicit both

¹⁸⁸ This sentiment – the importance of an *ibasho* for foreign children living in the area – was repeatedly expressed by the volunteer Hayakawa profiled in Chapter 3

respect for, and knowledge about, China in Japanese children. Finally, the authors list Japanese language issues as a concern, citing the importance of trained, specialized teachers who have sustained contact with the children and the need to target pedagogy to students' differing levels. They also make an emphatic distinction between proficiency in "language of everyday life" (*seikatsu gengo*) and the "language of learning" (*gakushū gengo*), and the absolute necessity of both. Acquisition of the former can often disguise failure to acquire the latter, leading to problems not only in coursework but in abstract thinking as well.

In closing, the authors discuss their choice of an "ethnographic" perspective, its advantages for close-grained analysis, the need for a lengthy period in order to establish a rapport, the challenge of editing such delicate and precious material and the shifting nature of "truth" in separate accounts of the same event – all issues familiar to an anthropologist. Despite these difficulties, the finished work is an impressive achievement, and a rare instance of sustained contact between researcher and subject(s) in studies of foreign children.

Let us consider another excellent recent ethnography that addresses another major issue which goes virtually unmentioned in the previous ethnography: high school admission. Fujii and Tabuchi's four children had yet to face this crucial hurdle, but it deserves much more scrutiny. Fortunately, volunteers in many areas (including my own fieldwork site) have worked to provide systematic assistance to foreign students preparing for this hurdle, including information on schools offering special admissions categories and criteria for qualified foreign and immigrant children. Kaji Itaru's research gives a stark sense of the enduring seriousness of this crucial problem.

Kaji Itaru received his Ph.D. from Kyoto University's Department of Education, specializing in sociology of education. Like the authors of the first work, he first came into contact with repatriate children through volunteer work with a local Japanese language class beginning in 1994. He subsequently worked as a translator and a *seikatsu shidōin* (welfare worker) for local government organs concerned with welfare and education. From about the end of 1997, his rather large apartment became an unofficial hotel and gathering place for local repatriate kids, with often 4 or 5 staying over for

nights at a time. In 1998 he began working with repatriate students in Japanese public high schools, and his knowledge of repatriate issues was further enriched by the experiences of many other teachers. Given the author's intent to base his study on such a diverse and lengthy background with repatriate education, one has great expectations for the work.

The title of Kaji's work is ambitious in scope: "Repatriate students from China and high school admission: Language, culture, ethnicity, class." But his investigation of these themes is actually less important and provocative than the statistics on high school admission with which he begins the paper. Based on government statistics, he writes, only 53% of repatriate junior high school students proceed to high school, and only 43% finish high school. Though he acknowledges that the imprecision of the data collection implies a margin of error, the contrast with the situation of Japanese students is stark: some 94% of Japanese junior high school students proceed to high school, and 87.6% finish. In order to explain this disparity, Kaji sets out to describe the process whereby repatriates develop into either high schoolers or dropouts.

He begins with two assumptions. First, he asserts that repatriates do not have a level playing field in Japanese schools. Second, he emphasizes that there is a wide variety in the backgrounds and characteristics of the repatriates attending Japanese schools. His own essay will define three types of repatriates (apparently not an oversimplification of the diversity he is emphasizing...), but before moving to his "types" he closes his introduction with two caveats. First, he resists calling the lengthy and varied personal experience upon which the essay draws "fieldwork," because it was not perceived as such by himself or his interlocutors at the time. This neatly avoids the question of how important fieldwork standards are to research. More ominously, he states flatly that he will avoid any concrete "episodes" because he wants to be careful with what he publicizes concerning people with whom he wishes to be friends for life.

While this concern is understandable, it means that the ensuing discussion takes on a highly schematic and abstract tone when describing his "three types" of repatriate

student.¹⁸⁹ His eminently valid concerns are thus enervated by their lack of concrete context. Fortunately, however, each section is closed by an extended excerpt of repatriate writing or speech: the first is an essay by an “intellectual youth” concerning her aspirations, the next a retrospective on the troubles faced by a boy who eventually became a member of the violent repatriate gang named the Dragons, and the final excerpt is taken from an interview transcript in which a high school repatriate girl who Kaji evidently classes as “semilingual” discusses her failure to learn Chinese at home, her inability to read much of what is written in Japanese magazines, and the anxiety that prevented her from talking in Chinese to other students from China (for fear her own carefully hidden Chinese identity would be discovered).

This final interview transcript makes for a compelling conclusion, especially because it demonstrates the same attention to linguistic nuance that makes the Fujii work come alive. Ultimately, however, the article’s strongest point is its role in publicizing the scandal of dropouts among repatriates. In my own research site dropouts were also a problem; many students were daunted by, or incapable of surmounting, the difficulties of high school (not to mention college) entrance exams, a circumstance compounded by a desire to make money as soon as possible. To assist immigrant students in exam preparation and high school choice, volunteers and some local teachers offered guidance and classes. There were also a number of special admissions categories (*waku*) in local high schools and colleges, though far short of demand. Scholars have also noted the wide variability in the nationwide provision of such high school and college entrance categories. For example, repatriates who naturalize as Japanese citizens are rendered ineligible for those categories for “foreigners,” though the concerns are indistinguishable.

The Challenges of Linguistic Co-existence

The children introduced in both of these papers confront problems in high school entrance, language learning and retention common to repatriate children I met at my own fieldwork site, where the provision of effective Japanese (and native) language learning

¹⁸⁹ Ōkubo, the second-generation repatriate profiled below and a co-contributor to the important volume in which Kaji’s essay is published, also found the categories to be artificial.

was a pressing and oft-debated concern. But both “ethnographies” have some experiential and analytical blind spots. The text makes it clear that the authors of the first study are not proficient in Chinese. This is a surprisingly common problem in Japanese studies of repatriates and Chinese immigrants (some might say in most Japanese studies of immigrants). Lacking language proficiency, many Japanese researchers consequently focus on Japanese-proficient children and Japanese volunteers and teachers. Lack of facility with immigrants’ native languages limits ready and full access to parents’ perspectives in particular. Though these researchers join others (cf. Ikegami, for example) and many Japanese educators in stressing the importance of the parents’ role in their children’s schooling, there is little information in either study on what the children’s parents are thinking.¹⁹⁰

My own fieldwork experience bears out many of the points made by the aforementioned Japanese researchers concerning language acquisition. In my fieldsite, the large number of immigrant children in the local schools was atypical, yet also a “model case” (*moderu kēsu*) in the eyes of many Japanese researchers and local volunteers who viewed it as a testing ground for future wide-scale integration. As a result, despite its isolation, the site plays frequent host to Japanese professors and graduate students that descend upon the volunteer groups and their charges in pursuit of (mostly short-term) “fieldwork” (*fuirudowāku*). Living among the local residents was impossible, in any event: since it was a low-income housing development with income-based residence restrictions, even volunteers did not live in the local “community.” My own activity and research at the housing development encompassed about a year and a half of volunteering with Hayakawa’s Japanese language class interspersed with informal contacts and interviews with repatriate families in that and other public housing developments in the area.

Both volunteers and scholars were drawn to the housing projects in that area because of the large number of immigrant children that resided there. The two largest groups of such immigrants are Indochinese (mostly Vietnamese) and Chinese from the

¹⁹⁰ Some Japanese researchers use translators to overcome such shortcomings. I once served as a Japanese-Chinese translator for a Japanese graduate researcher interviewing a repatriate family.

PRC. An estimated 177 Chinese households¹⁹¹ lived in the *danchi* upon which my fieldwork was focused, but the number is probably significantly higher since figures are determined by nationality and many war orphan relations have naturalized (i.e. taken Japanese citizenship.) Both groups of foreigners owe their presence in the *danchi* to special government policies, and the increase in foreigners is said to have occurred in two stages. First came a large influx of Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian refugees during the 1980s. Japan's agreement in the late 1970s to host refugees displaced by the Vietnam war led to the establishment of Indochinese refugee resettlement centers around the country, one of which was located near the *danchi*. Following their stay at the center (which opened in 1980 and was closed the year before I arrived (1998)), Indochinese families began moving into the *danchi* under preferential selection criteria for the public housing lottery. The second influx began after 1988 and continues to this day. It was composed initially of Vietnamese and war orphan-related Chinese, but after the 1990 immigration law revisions, the numbers of Nikkei from South America have also been growing.

In addition to the preferential treatment given to applications by war orphan relatives and Indochinese refugees, a snowball dynamic has become established whereby foreigners already in the *danchi* make it a magnet for other migrants, mostly family relations. Like the children of war orphans in other areas of Japan, many of the married sons and daughters of war orphans, so-called "second-generation repatriates" (J: *kikokusha nisei*; C: *guiguo zhe er dai*), came with, or were joined by, school age children. These "repatriate youth" (*kikokusha seinen*)¹⁹² account for the majority of "Chinese" recorded in local schools, where they form the largest or second largest grouping of immigrant students. Unlike most other areas in Japan, the numbers of immigrant children in local primary and junior high schools are proportionally quite high. In the primary school closest to the *danchi*, one in four students is non-Japanese -- an extraordinarily high percentage. The numbers are smaller in the other local primary school and the

¹⁹¹ According to Li (2/8/01).

¹⁹² Also referred to as "repatriate pupils," (lit., "repatriate student children" [*kikokusha jidō seito*]) in official, and occasionally academic, parlance.

closest junior high, averaging between 10-15%, but an increase appears inevitable: in 2000 some 80% of the children in the *danchi*'s kindergarten were "non-Japanese." A small percentage of the some 18,800 JSL students nationwide, but—as one might imagine—quite a transformation in the individual schools, where an all-Japanese staff is increasingly engaged in contact with immigrant parents and children with whom they often have great trouble communicating and coordinating their children's activities.

Educators and ward officials have scrambled to accommodate the consequent sharp increase in the need for Japanese as a Second Language (JSL) instruction, written and oral translation, supplementary tutoring and native language (i.e. Mandarin Chinese and Vietnamese) assistance. There are advice services in Vietnamese and (Mandarin) Chinese at the local ward office, but they are during the normal government office hours when most parents are working. There is also the inconvenience and bus fare involved in any trip from the isolated *danchi*. So many immigrant residents had more contact with volunteer groups led by people like Okada and Hayakawa in Chapter 3, who used space in the housing development's meeting halls (Hayakawa) and primary school (Okada.) Many repatriates, especially those who returned on government money (J: *kokushi*; C: *guofei*), were in some way connected with Sugawara's (also introduced in Chapter 3) Yokohama-based office: some were taking classes offered by his office, others just using it as a source of occasional consultation, many were linked by participation in the activism that Sugawara was organizing to pressure political leaders. The Kanagawa prefectural-level and Yokohama city-level governments were also involved in offering a variety of other native-language consultation or learning opportunities, and by comparison with most other large cities in Japan, the local residents were relatively well-provided with volunteer-led Japanese language learning opportunities.

As far as Japanese-language learning was concerned, the biggest obstacle to attendance was not scarcity of teachers but more likely the low-wage, dual income demands of long hours at exhausting jobs and children needing care. Children had more time to study but were not able to travel far from home, particularly at night when they were free take advantage of it, so services located within the *danchi* were particularly important. In any event, there was no (free) service close to the *danchi* that offered native

language instruction; the Chinese schools in Yokohama are tuition-based private ventures, a luxury few can afford. Like most areas of Japan, the supply of native-language teaching lags far behind demand.

I first learned of the *danchi* from a television feature that focused on the foreigners in the area and somewhat sensationally documented the conflicts between foreigners and Japanese residents.¹⁹³ But the local schools reported little inter-ethnic conflict. Volunteers and local teachers attributed this lack of discrimination and bullying to the sheer numbers of immigrant children, which somewhat paradoxically made immigrants seem less “exceptional.” Many repatriate children spoke of their enjoyment at school, despite their linguistic limitations and their generally poor performance on standardized exams that required Japanese language proficiency. As Ikegami says, “there are not a few cases in which children who in their native country were thought to be receiving an appropriate education and could be expected to make appropriate progress came to Japan and, though eventually capable of enjoying their time in Japanese primary schools (*“tanoshiku” seikatsu dekiru*), did not acquire academic ability (*gakuryoku*) commensurate with their grade (*gakunen*).” (1998, 137)

Though the Japanese speaking proficiency of elementary-age repatriate youth generally shows rapid improvement, this development masks deeper difficulties with written and “academic” Japanese that may elude the attention of repatriate parents (who have no basis for judging Japanese proficiency) and even educators. Repatriate parents often express frustration at their inability to help their children with their schoolwork, but their greatest discontent is reserved for what many view as the “over-slack” (*tai song*) atmosphere of the Japanese schools.

Having expected a rigorous regimen equaling or exceeding the strict discipline of Chinese schools, many parents are shocked by how much their children seem to “play” at school. By way of example, they critically cite the scarcity of homework by comparison with Chinese schools at the same level. I have been told by many repatriate parents of school age children that their children’s enhanced education and learning opportunities

¹⁹³ Similar conflicts have occurred in other areas with large immigrant populations. Sellek (2001, 227) notes how nikkeijin have concentrated and caused “cultural conflicts.”

were one reason for coming to Japan. Yet it is common among these children of war orphans to express a hesitancy to commit to life in Japan, if not an outright plan to return to China. How do these contradictory imperatives affect their children? Most parents I spoke with did not have more than a high school education and placed great importance on their children's academic achievement; at least two parents scrimped and saved to buy their children computers with the thought that it would help them in this endeavor.

Li-kun¹⁹⁴ was a quirky, bookish 14 year old who lived in a *danchi* apartment with his parents, attended the local middle school, and occasionally dropped in to the language class I volunteered with. Li and his family came to the *danchi* from northeast China's Heilongjiang Province about a year before my research began (1998), joining a number of other relatives in the area who owed their presence to Li's maternal grandmother, a Japanese war orphan. Li's maternal uncle had preceded them and convinced them to come, saying it was "easier [to make a living] in Japan." (*Riben haoguo yixie*) Li's parents, a mother aged 40 and father aged 44, were farmers in China. But his father was a high school graduate, unusual in that rural area, and Li himself had been attending a local "key school" (*zhongdian xuexiao*) as a result of his academic performance. Li's father related how his son's teacher pleaded with them to leave the boy in school while they went abroad to Japan. The teacher argued that taking Li abroad would seriously impact his studying. "It's had a major influence," the father now admits. But at the time they couldn't bear to leave their only child so far away, and they decided to take him. Twenty days after they arrived in Japan, Li's mother found work in a food processing plant and was employed full-time; her hours now are even longer, as the company has cut the workforce. Li's father also quickly found work, and he is now employed as a night watchman at an electrical parts manufacturing plant. None of the family has taken Japanese citizenship, as Li's parents have preferred to retain the option of returning easily to China.

Three months after their arrival, Li was hit by a car and luckily suffered only a broken arm and other injuries. Soon thereafter, his parents scraped together the money to

¹⁹⁴ This is how Japanese volunteers and teachers referred to Li (a pseudonym), with the suffix "kun" to mark him as a young boy.

buy him a computer, but they don't want to get him an internet hookup because they are worried about the effect it might have on his studies.

Like many repatriate parents, Li's are concerned about their children's academic performance, but haven't the (Japanese) linguistic skills to assess that performance for themselves. What they see is their son doing no homework: "I've never seen him do his homework," said his father, who is at home most of the day since he works at night. "At home he just watches cartoons on TV." His mother agreed that when Li came home from school he just turned on the TV. According to Li, this was because he didn't have any homework in any classes besides English. Li's parents, who were accustomed to assisting (*fudao*) their son with his homework, now had no homework to help with and no way to assess their son's progress in that crucial precondition of academic success in Japan, Japanese language ability. They expressed their concerns to Li's teacher at the semi-annual parent-teacher conference (with the assistance of a translator), but the parents assured them that he was making good progress. Perhaps this was because Li – who was a second year high school student in China – was placed three years back in a second-year middle school class when he came to Japan.¹⁹⁵

The circumstances of Li's schooling are radically different from what his parents were used to back in China, where "there was a lot of pressure. Kids would do their homework until ten at night," said his father approvingly. Now it is Li's mother who sometimes works until 10 at night doing overtime shifts at the food processing plant, where she had recently acquired a severe work-related skin inflammation that had left both arms swollen and painful. It is menial, silent labor that does not demand (or cultivate) Japanese proficiency. "I haven't studied a day of Japanese" Li's mother told me ruefully. "I want to, but I just don't have time." Without Japanese skills, they can only communicate their concerns to Li's teachers during a handful of parent-teacher conferences when a translator is present. At home, they never see their son study; they are concerned about the all-important upcoming high school entrance exams but they

¹⁹⁵ This type of adjustment is common in order to facilitate assimilation and accommodate poor language skills, but the large (3 year) shift in Li's case was probably an attempt to position him to take the high school entrance exams (since high school entrance is competitive in Japan and he could not simply be "placed" in a public high school.)

have no sense of his level, since their Japanese is rudimentary. They repeatedly mention the widespread feeling among Chinese immigrants that “Japanese schools are too relaxed,” but they want to support him as far as he is able to go in Japanese schools, and they are willing that he work in Japan once his studies are completed. By contrast, Li’s parents are not concerned about his Chinese language skills because he “loves reading” and avidly consumes Chinese books and comics.

Li affirms but seems unfazed by his parents’ assessment of his education. “China is better for studying,” he told a Japanese researcher and I flatly, using the Japanese that he preferred when speaking outside his family. “In Japanese schools, you can get by without studying.” Li admits to poor grades, which he occasionally keeps from his parents. And he was not confident of his chances on the impending high school entrance exam (though he was ultimately rescued by a special entrance category at a local high school.) Nevertheless, he nurtured the dream of becoming a translator, and, contra his parents’ original goals, he planned to make his home in Japan.

Clearly, many volunteers, local educators and repatriate parents are committed to, and often working for, immigrant children’s academic success. What is missing? The volunteer Hayakawa often bemoaned the lack of coordination between the three parties concerning the children that they all interacted with.¹⁹⁶ The obstacles to this network of contacts were both linguistic (between Japanese and Chinese) and institutional (between volunteers and the schools, as mediated by the local “board of education” [*kyōiku iinkai*]). Though such linkages are difficult to establish, it has been accomplished successfully in other areas, notably Kawasaki city.

Secondly, there is the lack of Chinese language learning opportunities. Both repatriate “ethnographies” discussed above stress the importance of native (meaning in the repatriates’ case, Chinese) language learning, an emphasis that is widely echoed among teachers, researchers and volunteers working with repatriate youth. Yet the question of *how* repatriate children are to learn (or be taught) Chinese goes largely unanswered. In my interviews with parents of school age repatriate children, I was often

¹⁹⁶ Ninomiya (2002) identifies a similar problem in the education of Japanese Brazilians.

told that Chinese acquisition or retention would naturally occur in the home. A number of parents, by contrast, stressed the acquisition of Japanese first, reflecting an understandable concern that their children not face the same linguistic handicaps that have crippled their own advancement in Japanese society, and reflecting an awareness of the importance of Japanese skills to academic success and social acceptance.

Finally, there is the importance of recognizing in children everywhere the need to be accepted as a full member of their peer group. Japanese schooling (and socialization in general) lays particular stress on the importance of belonging. The immigrant child's rejection of difference – unless it is valued with the larger (Japanese) group – is a natural result. I found that after an initial brief period of transition following immigration, school-age repatriate children almost universally preferred to speak in Japanese, and would frequently respond to their parents' Chinese by using Japanese both in public *and* in private situations. In private, this seems to reflect a greater proficiency and ease in the Japanese language. In public, it often reflects a fear of standing out and seeming “foreign” – one of the main engines driving their acquisition of Japanese. One parent spelled this out clearly. She knew that her 11- and 14-year-old daughters avoided speaking Chinese in public because they were afraid of embarrassment (*pa diulian*). The education researcher Ōta has observed that the only foreign language Japanese pupils value is English.¹⁹⁷ One means of addressing this lack of interest and/or respect is the example that the first ethnography's authors repeatedly, and justifiably, reference: the “morning Chinese class.” The goal is to encourage other “Japanese” students to value ethnic and linguistic difference. Moreover, inculcating in Japanese students a sense of the Chinese language's value surely improves the repatriate child's own desire to study it. One might also take the radical (but quite logical) step of offering more Chinese language classes in Japanese public schools. After all, given the stature of Sino-Japanese cultural, economic and geo-political relations, there is unquestionably a need for more Chinese-proficient Japanese. This too would publicly acknowledge the language's value and encourage its study.

¹⁹⁷ Ōta (1996). Ōta notes the difficulty this poses for the learning of non-English foreign languages.

One young repatriate has succeeded in attaining both fluency in Japanese and Chinese and academic success as a university professor, and he has been exploring the ways in which language can be used to express and redefine the terms of his multilingual, multiethnic identification.

“Youth of Japanese Descent from China” and the Terms of Multiethnicity

Despite abundant evidence to the contrary, Japanese society is still widely misrepresented as monoethnic “not just by scholars of Japan and the Japanese themselves but also by virtually everyone else,” as sociologist John Lie puts it in his recent study *Multiethnic Japan*.¹⁹⁸ In the past decade, however, this “monoethnic myth”¹⁹⁹ has been increasingly undermined by an expanding body of English-language scholarship that emphatically testifies to Japan’s ethnic plurality.²⁰⁰ The best examples of this research include both vivid portraits of minority lives in present-day Japan and compelling analyses of interethnic relations throughout Japanese history, and they are a welcome enhancement to our understanding of contemporary Japan and its ethnic diversity. Many of these works also serve the further purpose of introducing the ideas and scholarship of prominent Japanese writers on minorities, multiethnicity and migration to a non-Japanese audience.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Lie (2001, 1). One concrete illustration of the persistent erasure of minorities within Japan is mentioned in Aoki (2000). Although ethnic Koreans constitute Japan’s largest single minority group, on p.165 Aoki notes that Japanese social studies textbooks for 1996 contained only one mention of Koreans in contemporary Japan: “This omission – or neglect – renders the existing ethnic plurality invisible, as if with the end of colonial relations, Koreans ceased to exist in Japan, and Koreans lived in Japan in the past but not at present.”

¹⁹⁹ Murphy-Shigematsu (1993).

²⁰⁰ Among the many recent books and articles that discuss Japan’s minorities, Lie (2001) is an excellent book-length overview of Japanese multiethnicity. Among works on individual ethnic groups, the largest single focus of recent social science scholarship is on Japan’s “newcomers” (*nyūkamā*) are the *nikkei* (ethnic Japanese) Brazilians who began arriving in large numbers after 1990. On Nikkei, see for example Linger (2001), Roth (2002), Takeyuki Tsuda’s many articles, and Sellek (1997).

²⁰¹ These include Amino Yoshihiko, Komai Hiroshi, Oguma Eiji and Tanaka Hiroshi. However, some scholars have called for a fuller engagement with the work of other Japan-based writers, including the many minorities in Japan who have long been engaged in research, writing and sometimes activism on minority issues. In her review of Lie’s book, for example, Tessa Morris-Suzuki (2002, 234) notes that Lie’s criticisms of Japanese scholars who “reiterate the ideology of monoethnic Japan”...hardly do justice to the many Japan-based scholars (...some Japanese and some *zainichi* Korean or Chinese) who have contributed to recent debates on the subject” of multiethnicity. Morris-Suzuki mentions several such scholars in her review.

Given this wealth of new research on Japan's multiethnic society, it is all the more surprising that so little has been written about Japan's multiethnic *individuals*, those Japanese citizens who are of bi- or multi-ethnic descent. By excluding multiethnics from consideration, much of the new scholarship on Japan's minorities tacitly replaces the fantasy of a homogenous Japan with a new fiction, that of internally homogenous, mutually exclusive ethnic groups. In fact, intermarriage across Japan's ethnic groups has been pervasive for several decades now, with the recent growth in immigrants only serving to accelerate what was already an established trend. Although such intermarriage does not automatically result in children who are self-consciously multiethnic, there is unquestionably a growing self-consciousness regarding ethnicity among people of mixed descent in Japan.

This echoes the experience of many societies around the world, particularly those that experience substantial immigration and intermarriage such as Britain and the U.S. In particular, writing, research and grassroots activities based on multiethnicity have enjoyed a recent proliferation in the United States.²⁰² Due primarily to the as-yet small number of minorities in Japan, the same vigor has yet to emerge in Japan, but a number of scholars²⁰³ and writers – many of whom are themselves multiethnic -- are beginning to at least define the issues and create a language for their discussion. One frequent focus of such writings is indeed the “language of ethnicity”: how language has been used to stigmatize or erase ethnic plurality, and how it may be used to positively reinscribe ethnic difference.

It is a commonplace observation that the increased juxtaposition of ethno-linguistic groups -- particularly via the jarring experience of migration -- frequently accentuates inter-ethnic divisions and conflicts. This has been true of Japan as well, particularly in the context of a recessionary economy.²⁰⁴ Under these tense circumstances,

²⁰² This includes scholarly discussions as well as organization of hapa/multiethnic clubs at some U.S. colleges.

²⁰³ In some cases, the American and Japanese discussions of multiethnicity directly overlap: one 2002 collection of academic work on Asian-American multiethnicity includes a paper on Amerasians in Japan by a prominent Japan-based scholar of multiethnicity, Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu.

²⁰⁴ Because of the scarcity of overt acts of violence or discrimination against immigrants and minorities, Lie characterizes Japanese as “passive racists.” (2001, 175). As Morris-Suzuki notes in her 2002 review,

some suggest that multiethnic individuals may be particularly effective in bridging divisiveness.²⁰⁵ However, multiethnics are at least as likely to be targets of discrimination as they are agents of change. Indeed, the threat of prejudice has persuaded many multiethnics in Japan to downplay or conceal their mixed ancestry. Thus, despite a growing mainstream Japanese interest in minority issues and “multicultural coexistence” (*tabunka kyōsei*), multiethnicity is often either stigmatized or not spoken of at all. Under these circumstances, Japanese writers on multiethnicity resemble writers on ethnic discrimination in other nations: they must often both critique a received vocabulary of epithets and images as well as invent a new set of appropriate “terms” for multiethnicity’s exploration and expression. For those scholars who are themselves multiethnic, this project has an added dimension of intimacy and immediacy.

As one scholar of multiethnicity notes, there remain few structural (e.g. legal or political) forms of discrimination against minorities and multiethnics in Japan: rather, “the problems that still exist for multiethnic people are mostly problems related to the ideology of being Japanese.”²⁰⁶ As a number of researchers have noted, the Japanese language is both a vehicle for this ideology as well as one of its essential foundations; it is the “major sustaining myth of Japanese society,” as linguist Roy Miller put it.²⁰⁷ In light of language’s importance, below I profile the writings and experience of one Japanese multiethnic – a self-proclaimed “Youth of Japanese Descent from China” (*Chūgoku nichiei seinen*) -- in order to query the centrality of language to the definition of multiethnicity on contemporary Japan. Okubo Akio (Dong Xiaoming), a young Japanese professor of mixed (Yamato) Japanese²⁰⁸ and (Han) Chinese descent, has written extensively on multiethnic identity and language and the “identity crises” that

however, “...in Japan, as in Europe, North America, and many other parts of the world, the rapid changes and social uncertainties that accompany globalization create a climate in which xenophobic sentiments can readily thrive. It takes, I suspect, only a small shift in mood to turn ‘passive racism’ active.”

²⁰⁵ Murphy-Shigematsu (2000, 214).

²⁰⁶ Murphy-Shigematsu, (SOP, 19)

²⁰⁷ From Miller (1982). Quote is from Lie (2001, 185).

²⁰⁸ “Japanese” is here used to refer to citizenship and Yamato Japanese refers to ethnicity. Murphy-Shigematsu (1993, 76) notes that “‘Japanese’ should be used to mean the people of Japan, as defined in the constitution by citizenship and without regard to ethnicity or race. At present, the use of ‘Japanese’ as a racial label denies the citizenship of those who are not majority Yamato Japanese.”

multiethnics²⁰⁹ like himself may face in Japan. His creative responses to the challenges of multiethnicity suggest the difficulties of “multicultural coexistence” for both individual multiethnics and Japanese society as a whole. First, however, a brief discussion of the dimensions and definitions of multiethnicity in contemporary Japan will help to frame his individual perspective.

Multiethnic Japanese: Intermarriage and Ethnicity

It is difficult to get an accurate sense of the size of Japan’s multiethnic population because Japanese government statistics only track “international marriages” (*kokusai kekkon*) between citizens of Japan and those of other nations. There is ample evidence of inter-ethnic mixing throughout Japanese history, despite varying degrees of popular and official discrimination.²¹⁰ In the postwar period, interethnic marriage has been common practice among Japan’s Korean and Chinese populations for at least the past several decades. In fact, recent studies have found that more than two-thirds of Japan’s ethnic Koreans and Chinese marry individuals outside their ethnic groups.²¹¹ Part of the reason for this is the relatively thorough assimilation that has been experienced by these minorities (now in their fourth or later generation of residence).

The influx of new migrants presents a more complicated picture, but it is one that unambiguously points to an increase in inter-ethnic mixing. Japanese government statistics show that international marriages are growing, fueled in part by a steady increase in “arranged marriages” between Japanese men and women from places such as

²⁰⁹ “Multiethnic,” it should be noted, is merely a “term of convenience” that loosely refers to a wide variety of divergent individual circumstances. Murphy-Shigematsu (2000, 198). As Murphy-Shigematsu warns, “grouping all persons who are ethnically mixed denies individual difference as well as choice. The construction of such an artificial category also ignores the heterogeneous origins of majority Japanese and therefore indirectly reinforces the myth of their racial purity.” In the following discussion I use the term multiethnic to imply (but not define) people who are identified, or identify themselves, as being of ethnically mixed ancestry. Like many analysts of such issues in Japan, I am interested not in positing some reified *identity* but rather in exploring practices of *identification*: “processes of attribution, inclusion and exclusion, all of which are determined by historical context.” (Weiner 1997, xii)

²¹⁰ See Denoon et al. for several articles on the heterogeneous origins of Yamato Japanese. Yamato Japanese have subsequently mixed and intermarried with all of the various ethnic groups that have lived in Japan, most pervasively with Ainu and Okinawan-Ryukyuan minorities, but also including Chinese, Koreans and even Europeans as early as the seventeenth century.

²¹¹ Lie (2001) notes that by the early 1980s more than two thirds of ethnic Chinese and Koreans in Japan married outside of their ethnic groups.

the Philippines and, increasingly, China.²¹² Since government statistics are only kept on marriages between Japanese citizens and their foreign spouses, they do not reflect the growing marriages between Japanese citizens of different ethnicities. We can therefore assume that the number of interethnic marriages – and hence, multiethnic children – is considerably higher. Despite their growing numbers, however, many bi- and multiethnic children continue to de-emphasize or hide their mixed descent.

The enduring reluctance to discuss ethnic hybridity and difference largely reflects the discrimination meted out to those not seen as “Japanese” ethno-nationals (*Nihonjin*). Like analogous concepts in all cultures, Japanese notions of race and ethnicity are ambiguous, ascriptive, social constructs rather than biological givens.²¹³ Or as one specialist on Japanese multiethnicity puts it, “there is a non-racial, non-ethnic legal distinction between Japanese and non-Japanese. All other differentiations are personal or social and may or may not be considered discriminatory.”²¹⁴ Needless to say, their subjective nature rarely limits the ability of ethnic categories to powerfully shape people’s feelings, actions and beliefs. During Japan’s postwar period, there has been an enormous effort to establish and maintain a belief in an ethnically homogeneous Japan. While this notion remains compelling for many if not most Japanese, it is one that is increasingly at odds with the social reality.

This is largely due to the semantic pretensions of “Japaneseness.” Japanese are seen to widely assume that a Japanese person (*Nihonjin*) belongs to both a specific biological descent as well as to a specific cultural group (*minzoku*). “Most Japanese people,” writes Lie, “conflate the potentially discrete categories of nation, ethnicity and race,” and “the category of peoplehood” that results “is permanent and homogeneous. In the dominant way of thinking, nationals share descent; others are foreigners forever.”²¹⁵ A person who confounds these deeply rooted expectations of symmetry between Japanese ethnicity and Japanese nationality (such as a Japanese American or a Japanese

²¹² Although most “international” marriages are still between Japanese and resident Koreans who are highly acculturated but hold different nationality.

²¹³ See for example Weiner (1997, xii), Lie (2001, 2-4) Murphy-Shigematsu, “Identities,” pp. 197-9.

²¹⁴ Murphy-Shigematsu (2000, 198).

²¹⁵ Lie (2001, 145).

national of mixed- or non-Yamato ethnicity) is a “conceptual anomaly” that may elicit reactions of shock and even anger.²¹⁶

Below I consider how such invidious distinctions are both established and perpetuated in one area, that of language. As Tessa Morris-Suzuki concludes in her discussion of race and ethnicity in Japanese history,

“in the end what matters is perhaps not so much whether the logic of belonging and exclusion, superiority, and inferiority is based on notions of biology, culture, or progress. It is, rather, the way in which vocabularies are developed to carve up the world into ‘them’ and ‘us’ and the way that those vocabularies become the bearers of unexamined images where genetic, historical, political and cultural symbolism can be almost inextricably superimposed upon one another.”²¹⁷

Over the course of Japan’s postwar history, language has played a key role in the compression and concatenation of such images; it is now a key site for their disintegration.

Discrimination and the Terms of Multiethnicity

One of the few scholars to specifically treat the issue of multiethnicity in Japan is the psychologist Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, and his writings deal at length with issues of both language and discrimination, particularly related to mixed ethnics and American-Japanese Amerasians in particular.²¹⁸

In discussing the connection between language and ethnic difference, Murphy-Shigematsu notes the need for Japanese expressions that resist the conflation of ethnicity and nationality through their explicit and simultaneous assertion of Japanese citizenship and non-Yamato Japanese ethnicity. “By using multiple identity labels we acknowledge

²¹⁶ See for example Kondo (1990, 11-14). The Japanese American Kondo uses the term to refer to the consternation created in Japan by her Japanese appearance and ethnicity but American citizenship and cultural background; the negative reactions were triggered by linguistic slips that belied her foreignness. But note that her fieldwork was conducted in the late 1970s and early 80s: given the subsequent increase in immigration (particularly of Japanese-Brazilians) and rising awareness of ethnic diversity within Japan, Japanese are probably less fazed by such examples today.

²¹⁷ Morris-Suzuki (1998, 108-9)

²¹⁸ See Murphy-Shigematsu (1993, 2000, 2001).

minority Japanese the right to assert their ancestry while maintaining full recognition of their status as Japanese citizens.”²¹⁹ The paucity of terms reflecting individual multiethnicity and the distinction between nationality/citizenship and ethnic descent is of course both a cause and a consequence of widespread inattention to such differences. And while the growing acknowledgement of ethnic complexity has prompted innovation in its linguistic expression, the Japanese vocabulary for such difference remains “impoverished.”²²⁰

Murphy-Shigematsu has given considerable attention to the evolving vocabulary that is used to refer to people of mixed ethnicity.²²¹ In his formulation, the postwar history of terms used to describe mixed ethnicity (and particularly that of Amerasians) may be seen in an historical succession, beginning in the immediate postwar period with the term *ainoko*, a word that “literally means a ‘child of mixture’ and is considered derogatory, evoking images of poverty, illegitimacy, racial impurity, prejudice and discrimination. It is used for animals as well as for any kind of ethnically mixed person.”²²² This was gradually replaced by the “more neutral term” of *konketusji* (mixed blood child), which was subsequently joined by the English loanword *hāfu* (half) and, in a recent reaction, *daburu* (double). It is not simply a trajectory of progressive improvement, however. Of *daburu* he notes that “the term most commonly advocated today is also a blood term and is therefore problematic.”²²³ In any case, as he points out, *daburu* is rarely used as a self-identifying label. He further notes the irony in a term that expresses need for discriminated mixed ethnics to assert superiority over others. Finally, he says, it “denies personal choice about the meaning of ethnicity by implying that people of mixed ancestries are supposed to value and express their ethnicities, when many people prefer to find their identity in other ways.”(214)

²¹⁹ Murphy-Shigematsu (1993, 76-7).

²²⁰ Lie (2001, 146).

²²¹ See Murphy-Shigematsu (2000, 2001). Lie also briefly discusses this vocabulary (p. 145?).

²²² Murphy-Shigematsu (2001).

²²³ See also Murphy-Shigematsu (2000, 211-12). Use of terms *hāfu* and *kuōta* (for someone of ¼ Jpnse ancestry) is like the archaic US “quadroon” etc: they define Japanese on the basis of blood: “Being Japanese in this social sense is based rigidly on a biological standard of purity and pollution in the same sense as racial boundaries.”

Indeed, the obvious corollary is that the terms he discusses also subsume the (historical/geographical/linguistic/biological) specificity of any ethnic “identity” that a person might want to express. It is thus that recently popular expressions of ethnic or cultural difference are those that do incorporate such elements: *Nikkei Burajirujin* (Brazilian of Japanese descent), *Korian* (“Korean”), and so forth. However, the further difficulty of expressing plural descent (with analogs of Thaiger Woods’ famous “Cablinasian,” for example) often leaves the speaker few options.

Given the stigma that has for various reasons often been applied to children of mixed ethnicity in Japan, a number of the new terms have evolved out of, or in conjunction with, efforts to both raise and rehabilitate the profile of Japan’s minorities and mixed ethnics. These new terms have been proposed because they are believed to be more accurate, of course, but they are often also a conscious response to the need for a new conceptual start that is free from the older terms’ baggage of negative associations. As Murphy-Shigematsu shows, the pejorative quality of the terms that were used to describe Amerasians in Japan was reinforced by the negative characterization of mixed ethnics in Japan’s popular media. Although mixed ethnics and the issue of mixed ethnicity have in fact received little media attention, the attention has often focused on them as a “problem.” This is particularly true in the case of the Amerasians that Murphy-Shigematsu discusses, who were stereotyped as leading “fast and loose lives” linked to the confusion in their genes. However, while “children fathered and abandoned by American servicemen have attracted some public attention as a social problem...the existence of far greater numbers, such as those of Korean and Japanese ancestry, has been largely unnoticed.”²²⁴

One sensational exception to this lack of attention occurred in the early 1990s, when there was a brief fixation on crimes committed by members of the “Dragons,” a motorcycle gang of mixed Sino-Japanese youth.²²⁵ They were given special prominence not only for their unusual violence, but also because they were the immigrant children or

²²⁴ Murphy-Shigematsu (2000, 197).

²²⁵ The name “Dragons” itself is a linguistic hybrid: it is written with three Chinese characters whose Japanese pronunciation (*do-ra-ken*) approximates the English word “dragon.”

grandchildren of the celebrated war orphans. War orphans and their school-age children faced both official pressures to assimilate and be “Japanese” and, by contrast, a common (and often pejorative) characterization as “Chinese” by Japanese co-workers, peers and casual acquaintances. These conflicting pressures could be a profound source of alienation and psychological stress, particularly for school-age repatriate children. Several commentators have identified these pressures as one factor behind the anti-social behavior of some repatriate youth, like the “Dragons” gang members.²²⁶ Many of these school age children found little help in learning Japanese language or adjusting to Japanese schools; many were bullied as well.

In response to the post-“return” plight of the War Orphans and their families, the media focus upon the repatriates has gradually turned from joyful reunions to grittier stories of frustration, failure, impoverishment, crime, family breakup and even suicide. As before, however, the situation of the repatriates has been largely discussed and defined by Japanese intermediaries: advocates, bureaucrats, teachers, volunteers, concerned journalists and others besides the repatriates themselves. In large part this is due to the fact that most war orphans remain unable to express themselves fluently in Japanese.

However, in the past decade some young repatriates have begun to intervene in these debates and redefine the significance and potential of their Sino-Japanese multiethnicity. Not surprisingly, language – or more precisely, the Chinese and Japanese languages – figure centrally in these discussions and in the experience of biethnic “identity.”

Ōkubo Akio’s “Identity Crisis” and Response

In his writings and lectures on the “identity crisis” of Sino-Japanese youth like himself, professor Ōkubo Akio describes this crisis as a sense of alienation (*sogaikan*) from both “Chinese” and “Japanese” ethnic groups, a lack of belonging that is intimately associated with linguistic competence. Ōkubo’s own alienation was experienced as a

²²⁶ Ōkubo, who personally knew some of the Dragon gang members, makes this point in his article (2000, 333).

vertiginous linguistic rootlessness, in which both his first and second languages felt stunted and insufficient and neither felt “native.” Similar linguistic “handicaps” (*handi*) and related psychic strains are experienced by many immigrant children, particularly adolescents; while their adverse effects are well documented, their successful resolution is not. Ōkubo’s example suggests how language proficiency and mixed ethnicity may be experienced as inextricably interrelated, and how language can be used to creatively and affirmatively redefine multiethnicity and “overcome” the identity crisis.

Ōkubo was born in the northeast Chinese province of Heilongjiang, where his Japanese father had been orphaned at the end of the Second World War. Like many war orphans and their children, Ōkubo’s “Japaneseness” exposed him as a child to discrimination in China, just as his “Chineseness” would later be a pretext for his prejudicial treatment in Japan. He first came to Japan in 1981 for a year’s stay at age 13, then “returned” for good in 1985 at age 17 with his family. Like many repatriate families, he had grown up in a poor rural area of China and had no Japanese skills and little knowledge of Japan. Although he had been a high-achieving student at a “key” (*zhongdian*) high school in China, in Japan he was compelled to immediately begin work to help support his family. He continued his studies in night school and gradually became proficient in the Japanese language, but remained unable to compete with native Japanese citizens in the demanding college entrance exam. In 1987 he wrote the head of Japan’s Ministry of Education to ask why there was not a preferential college entrance category for repatriates from China like himself, when there already existed such a category for Japanese “returnee children” (*kikoku shijo*) who had spent considerable time abroad due to a parent’s work circumstances.²²⁷ In 1989, he was part of the initial group of Chinese repatriates to win entrance to college under just such a preferential category, which had first been established at Japan’s Niigata University in 1988.²²⁸ It was there, while writing

²²⁷ To his great surprise, he received a letter from the Minister in response, explaining that the discrepancy was due to the longer history of “returnee children” in Japan, while “repatriates” from China were a relatively new phenomenon.

²²⁸ When asked about affirmative action for people like him, he says that it is justified: he has no hope of competing against Japanese for university spots, but his problem is not his educational background (*xueli*) but a temporary weakness in language skills. He says all immigrants should have this preferential treatment, and points to Japanese “returnee kids” (*kikoku shijo*) who also have these special admissions categories.

his senior thesis, that he experienced an “identity crisis,” a debilitating double insufficiency in both the Chinese and Japanese languages that rendered him “semilingual” and seemed to deny him qualifications for membership in either ethnic group.

Ōkubo’s initial response to this existential predicament – one that he argues is widely shared among repatriates and other “border crossers” (*ekkyōsha*) -- was to resist categorization in either ethnic group and instead make fluency in both languages his lifelong goal. He then began to use different media and languages to unpack and express this crisis and his hybrid identity. As a doctoral student he also began to put his ideas into practice, working in Japanese public schools to help multiethnic repatriates from China adjust to the Japanese curriculum while maintaining their competency in Chinese. Although he has written and spoken widely about his experiences, Ōkubo’s most thorough discussion of multiethnicity is contained in his essay entitled “Overcoming the identity crisis: seeking the identity of ‘Youth of Japanese Descent from China’” (*Aidentiti kuraishisu o koete: ‘Chūgoku nichiei seinen’ to iu aidentiti wo motomete*).²²⁹ Ōkubo begins by noting that most war orphan children – whom he calls “Repatriate youth from China” (*Chūgoku kikoku seinen*) -- are excluded as outsiders (*bugaisha*) both in China and Japan. While this exclusion is partially ideological (based on Chinese and Japanese notions of racial purity, for example), it is also the consequence of the linguistic difficulties that these youth face upon immigration from China to Japan. In his discussion of these difficulties (pp. 330-2), Ōkubo carefully notes the distinction between “internal language” (*naiteki gengo*) – the language most intimately tied to abstract contemplation and expression – and “external language” (*gaiteki gengo*), to which everyday spoken Japanese belongs. After migration to Japan, their break with the Chinese linguistic environment and the exclusive emphasis upon their acquisition of spoken Japanese prevents many repatriate youth from achieving fluency in either internal language. This dual incapacity leaves them in a state of crisis, without a secure linguistic basis upon which to found their sense of ethnic belonging.

²²⁹ Ōkubo (2000).

In addition to these linguistic difficulties, writes Ōkubo, repatriate youth often experience the dual pressures of prejudice and psychological “overload.”(333) While the consequences of prejudice against repatriate youth have been touched upon in the mass media (specifically, in connection to the Dragons motorcycle gang members), Ōkubo stresses that this is “just the tip of the iceberg”: the psychological trauma experienced by many repatriate youth has never seen the light of print. In order to convey a more complex sense of this trauma, Ōkubo then cites liberally from *Hokushin* (C: *Beichen*, E: *Polaris*), a multilingual literary journal that he began editing and publishing with a group of repatriate youth in 1996. The stories, essays and poetry in the journal vary in language from Chinese to Japanese to experimental creolizations of the two languages. While this journal has been ambitiously discussed as a “renaissance” in repatriate literature that inspires comparisons to the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s,²³⁰ it is not necessary to agree with this analysis in order to appreciate *Hokushin*’s importance as a simultaneous expression and affirmation of repatriate experience and bilinguality. Although its circulation of around three hundred subscribers and its use of both Chinese and Japanese insure a relatively small readership, the mere presence of a forum and an audience is of extraordinary importance to the sustenance of their multilingual ideal.

Indeed, it was in the founding issue of this journal that Ōkubo first advanced the concept of “Youth of Japanese Descent from China” (*Chūgoku nichiei seinen*), the discussion of which concludes his essay on identity crisis. Having analyzed the three aspects that have heretofore negatively shaped repatriate youth “identity” -- their historical background, cultural background, and personal experience -- Ōkubo proposes the establishment of this new category of identity as both a clear rejection of earlier terminology and a conscious attempt to start afresh with a positive spin on the circumstances and potential of repatriate youth.²³¹

²³⁰ See Jiang (2000).

²³¹ Ōkubo has also used this terminological strategy in an attempt to replace the Japanese expression for war orphans (*zanryū koji*, literally “remaining orphan”), which he and others find inappropriate and misleading. His argument for its replacement by *Nikkei Chūgokujin* (Chinese of Japanese descent) was published in the national Asahi newspaper alongside a counter-argument by a prominent Japanese advocate for the war orphans (Asahi shinbun, morning edition, 9/5/1997).

After a brief critique of the existing terminology that has been applied to repatriate youth, Ōkubo moves to a consideration of their significance and future potential. For the former, he argues that the mere existence of ‘Youth of Japanese Descent from China’ is of great significance as a powerful challenge to the framework of the modern Japanese nation-state, with its stiff (*kōchoku*), unitary (*tan’itsuteki*) equation of “race = ethnic group = language = culture = state.”(341) As for their future potential, he submits that their experience and skills in two cultures and languages enable them to be “creators of new culture” in the same fashion as other “border crossers” that transcend national and regional cultures, such as the advocates of Creole literature and thought (342).

In the following section concerning the methodology whereby “Youth of Japanese Descent from China” can be constructed as a new identity, Ōkubo demonstrates the central role of language to this entire project. He first continues his project of linguistic rectification by advancing the term/concept of *haiburiditi* (hybridity) as a replacement for the notion of *kongōsei* (mixed/compound nature) and its negative interpretation in the dominant, essentialist discourse. This is not merely a semantic substitution; it is also the mobilization of terminology to explicitly link the situation of repatriate youth to the anti-discriminatory political strategies of ethnic minorities around the world (342).

He then goes on to stress at length the necessity of striving for linguistic and cultural proficiency in both Chinese and Japanese in order to escape “semilingual” status, overcome the crisis of identity, and win entrance to Japanese society (344-5). In doing so, the “Sino-Japanese bilingual/biculturalist” also satisfies a necessary condition for the creation of unique cultural products that cannot be derived from a single language group. Ōkubo then once again raises the example of Creole literature only to emphasize the importance of transcending it, and offers the ongoing linguistic experimentation of *Hokushin* as an example. Using that journal as a forum, he writes, he and his associates are engaged in the development of a “Sino-Japanese hybrid language”(*Nicchū kongōgo*) that does not stop at the level of simple communication (such as pidgin) or the passive acceptance of pidgin as a mother tongue (in the case of Creole); rather, it is a “liminal language” (*kyōkai gengo*) that is created through active, conscious hybridization (346). It

is also a language that implicitly requires the unusual possession of advanced proficiency in both Chinese and Japanese to both create and appreciate.

Of course, strictly speaking it is not just the readership and authorship of Ōkubo's multilingual literary journal that are limited but the boundaries of his proposed "category of peoplehood" as well, to use Lie's locution. While the concept of "Youth of Japanese Descent from China" usefully decomposes the simplistic opposition of Japanese vs. Chinese, its redeployment of both terms creates a highly specific and restrictive membership whose criteria (namely, youth) will ultimately exclude even Ōkubo himself. Ōkubo is naturally aware of this; for him, the creation of such an ephemeral concept has value as an exercise in speaking for himself and encouraging others to do the same in the face of discrimination. His invocation of "identity," while insisting upon its minute specificity as to historical and cultural background and personal experience, therefore resists establishing a permanent analytical category.²³² As Ōkubo notes in the conclusion to his essay, "'identity' is not a solitary, stable, unchangeable thing; it is also diasporic and hybrid. That was the discovery of 'Youth of Japanese Descent from China,' who are endowed with both the hybridity of being at once Chinese and Japanese, and, at the same time, the diasporic quality of being neither 'perfect' (*kanzen na*) Chinese nor 'perfect' Japanese." (349)

Beyond the Language of Ethnic Difference

It is clear that Ōkubo's sense of hybrid identity and his practice of self-expression are both closely intertwined with his bilingualism. He is hardly alone in emphasizing an intimate connection between language and ethnic identity: like immigrants and multiethnics in other societies, many among Japan's mixed and minority populations see language skills as crucially linked to ethnic identity, and they are actively concerned with the preservation or cultivation of non-Japanese language skills. Japan's Chinese and North Korean schools and Ainu language classes are among the systematic efforts to do just this. There are also many non-minority Japanese educators that are strongly in

²³² Not all writers on identity in Japan – and particularly the "*aidientiti*" of minorities – resist this urge, to the detriment of their analyses. See Lie's article on identity in Ryang (2000).

support of native language retention for immigrant children, for reasons of “identity” as well as pedagogy. We can conclude by reflecting upon the potential for such a linguistic coexistence, as well as its limitations.

Judging from the experiences of Japan’s longstanding resident populations of Chinese and Koreans, those mixed and minority children who attend Japanese schools largely fail to acquire, retain or improve non-Japanese language proficiency. Even those placed in separate ethnic schools (*minzoku gakkō*) achieve mixed results.²³³ Individual circumstances obviously vary, but one common cause of linguistic assimilation to the Japanese standard is the way in which, aside from English, foreign (i.e. non-Japanese) language skills are widely seen as irrelevant or worse – marking the user as an alien.²³⁴ To some extent this is a problem that can be addressed by shifts in curriculum and pedagogical method. But it is also linked to the larger and more amorphous question of “image”: the imaginary valence of multilinguality and ethnic difference.

Ethnic images are indeed being used to market language learning. One recent example is the popular young actor Kaneshiro Takeshi, who is of mixed Japanese and (Taiwanese) Chinese parentage. In 1999 Kaneshiro, who is well known to be fluent in three languages, was the charismatic public face for Japan’s national chain of GEOS foreign language schools. That same year, he was flourishing his command of both Chinese and Japanese in the hit film *Fuyajō* in which he played the romantic leading role of a small-time criminal (also of Taiwanese-Japanese descent) embroiled in Chinese gang violence over the turf of Tokyo’s Kabukichō entertainment district.²³⁵

While there is a temptation to seize upon the prominence of mixed and minority athletes and entertainers as an index of waning discrimination, it is not clear to what degree (if at all) the popularity of famous individuals actually ameliorates the situation of other ethnic minorities. Murphy-Shigematsu comment on the fashionable image of the (white) Amerasian *hāfu* broadly applies to other minorities and multiethnics in Japan as

²³³ See Ryang’s discussion of this issue in her book on North Koreans in Japan (.).

²³⁴ Efird (2000).

²³⁵ The film is based on the best-selling 1996 novel of the same name that won the 18th Yoshikawa Eiji new novelist award. In a tribute to his love for Hong Kong films, the book’s author constructed his nom de plume, Hase Seishu, by reversing the Chinese characters in the name of a famous Hong Kong actor, Zhou Xingchi.

well: “whether denigrating or worshipping [they are] vulnerable to depiction as different, making it difficult for them to be treated as individuals or as ordinary Japanese. In a society in which being different can be a sin punishable by ostracism, the visible distinction of many *haafu* [sic] can be the cause of bullying and rejection.”²³⁶

The film version of *Fuyajō* makes this difference doubly clear. In the first place, although the movie is replete with hybrid and minority characters, Yamato Japanese are conspicuous in their absence – despite the plot’s setting in the heart of Tokyo.²³⁷ The “sleepless town” inhabited by the Chinese and mixed Sino-Japanese principals is thus a world set apart from “normal,” everyday Japanese life. Moreover, despite Kaneshiro’s charisma and popular appeal, he and all of the other major “ethnic” characters in the film play the roles of criminals or deviants.

The most disturbing (and disturbed) character in this rogue’s gallery is Fu Chun, a violent psychopath who, like Okubo, is the bilingual immigrant child of a war orphan. Fu Chun is almost surely modeled after the aforementioned “Dragons” gang members, and his characterization in the novel, while fictional, reveals a nuanced sensitivity to the dynamics of ethnic prejudice faced by many war orphans in real life.

In a brief outburst about his past, Fu Chun’s describes a downward spiral that begins with relentless bullying at the hands of his Japanese classmates. “‘If you’re Japanese why can’t you speak Japanese?’ ‘Why do you stink?’” they taunt him.²³⁸ After being expelled for fighting with his tormentors, Fu Chun’s war orphan mother scolds him for causing trouble after they have gone to so much effort to return to Japan. “My ma didn’t have a clue. Here she was saying this when she herself was being given the cold shoulder by her relatives, and couldn’t get work because she couldn’t speak decent Japanese!” Unwilling to hurt his mother, however, Fu Chun assiduously studies Japanese and enrolls in a new school where he pleads with the administrators to hide his Chinese background. But despite his hidden identity and perfect Japanese, the new school brings a different kind of torment, that of invisibility: far from teasing him, his classmates (some

²³⁶ Murphy-Shigematsu (2000, 213).

²³⁷ Thanks to Taiwanese anthropologist Zhu Huizhen for this insight.

²³⁸ All quotes taken from Hase (1996, 39-40).

of whom are themselves immigrants) completely ignore him. One day, in desperation, he suddenly asks a fellow student “how would you like to go and see China?” The student, annoyed and uninterested, just gives Fu Chun an irritated glance and immediately returns his attention to his schoolwork. At this, something “snaps” in Fu Chun, and he brutally beats the student with a metal chair. His next step is the reformatory, and thence to the streets for a brief living (and swift death) by violence.

There are no easy lessons here. But Fu Chun’s example suggests that encouraging acceptance of multiethnic difference in Japan is not simply a question of eliminating discrimination, asserting ethnic difference or creating a new category of Japanese identity that embraces diverse ethnic backgrounds. It is also a question of articulating one’s *individual* difference in a way that elicits the interest and engagement of others. It is perhaps in this sense that we can best appreciate the importance of Okubo’s experiments in creative self-expression, and the limits of his notion of hybridity.²³⁹

But the example of Fu Chun’s failure should not suggest the irrelevance of linguistic fluency: the problem of acceptance is even more acute when one lacks the ability to articulate at all. Before they can change the terms of their difference, repatriates and other immigrants must learn how to make themselves understood, and this means learning Japanese. Our concern for the value of “ethnic identity” should not blind us to the role language competence plays in a more general sense of self-worth. In this connection, Ikegami (1998, 142-3) quotes one repatriate student’s wrenching feelings of incompetence and worthlessness over the inability to be understood. “When I had just arrived in Japan, the fact that I couldn’t understand Japanese was painful, but even more painful was the fact that the people around me thought that because I was incapable of Japanese I was incapable of anything.”

²³⁹ See Dirlik (2002) for a recent critique of hybridity. Dirlik rephrases the familiar argument that hybridity risks being as essentialist as what it seeks to replace, and urges scholars to both rigorously *historicize* and geographically *place* identifications of difference.

Chapter 6: Repatriates and Patriots: War Orphans and Japan's "New Overseas Chinese"

At a recent meeting of a major international conference on overseas Chinese, a Chinese professor at a Japanese university presented a paper defining the "newness" of the so-called "New Overseas Chinese" (C: *xin huaqiao*).²⁴⁰ They are new in four senses, he argues. First, in the spatial sense of originating from, and immigrating to, a wider range of places than the largely southern Chinese origins and predominantly Southeast Asian destinations of earlier Chinese migrants. Second, in the "cultural" sense of possessing higher educational backgrounds and technical skills than the "old" overseas Chinese. Third, in the economic sense implied by the [rather dubious] "fact" that "most" of these new migrants are "investor immigrants" who emigrate with "capital," and their capital is being invested in new types of businesses led by IT and high technology ventures. Finally, in the ideological sense: these new immigrants have brought with them a "rise" (*gaozhang*) in overseas Chinese ethno-nationalism (*Zhongguo minzuzhuyi*). He goes on to describe how the mainland-oriented New Overseas Chinese in Japan are an example of this trend, gradually replacing the Taiwan-oriented "Old Overseas Chinese" (C: *lao huaqiao*) there as the "mainstream" of overseas Chinese society.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Liao Chi-yang, "Xinhuaqiao—Shemme shi xinde? Shemme shi jiude?" ("Xinhuaqiao": What is the new? What is the old?)[sic]. Presented at the Fifth Conference for the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas, 10-14 May, 2004 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Papers are available online at <http://www.nias.ku.dk/issco5/panels.htm>. The Chinese terms *xinhuaqiao* and *xinhuaren* and their Japanese equivalents (*shinkakyō* and *shinkajin*, respectively) are commonly used in Chinese studies of Chinese in Japan to label "new" (often defined as post-1972, or post-1978 "Reform and Opening") immigrants from the mainland and distinguish them from Japan's longstanding population of ethnic Chinese, the majority of which originally came from Taiwan. Japanese scholars such as Tajima, Okuda and Komai seem to prefer the more general term "newcomer" (*nyūkama*). Tajima, for example, sees newcomers as those coming after 1980 and explicitly distinguishes Chinese "newcomers" from *xin huaqiao* ("who have the permanent residential status visa"), as well as from the "old overseas Chinese" on the basis of the former's "educational credentials." (See Tajima 2003; 68, 69)

²⁴¹ The opposition of mainland newcomers to Taiwanese "old overseas Chinese," though largely true in a geographic sense, is misleading in the sense that Liao uses it (to describe political allegiance), since the pre-1980s Chinese community was also bitterly divided by political affiliation following the establishment of the PRC in 1949. This division resulted in the bifurcation of Yokohama's Chinese school, for example. Members of Yokohama's Chinese community point to the cooperative reconstruction of Yokohama Chinatown's *Kanteibyō* (*Guandi Miao*) as a symbol of recent reconciliation, but the schools remain separate.

This stock characterization of recent Chinese migrants to Japan and elsewhere is perhaps most striking for what it ignores. In addition to the absence of other types of legal Chinese migrants (such as Chinese spouses of foreign nationals, students, “trainees,” and the family members of other legal migrants – such as war orphans) is the glaring omission of Chinese *illegal* migrants, though they have been given far greater attention in many of the host nations, including Japan. Yet the above (highly self-referential) formulation of *xin huaqiao* dominates the discussion of recent Chinese migrants among Chinese in Japan. In many ways it echoes the increasing state-level valorization of the “New Migrant” (C: *xin yimin*) in the discourse and policy of the People’s Republic of China (hereafter abbreviated PRC).²⁴² It may also reflect the biases of influential scholarship on overseas Chinese in other regions. In Japan, where much of the scholarship on new Chinese migrants is in fact carried out by such migrants, the focus on successful elites and skilled legal migrants is also often a conscious reaction to Japanese media depictions of Chinese criminality, including reports of the aforementioned illegal migration (C: *toudu*) and the criminal “snakehead” (C: *shetou*; J: *jatō*, *sunēkuheddo*) networks that facilitate this flow.²⁴³ It is an image that is furthermore deeply connected to a historical consciousness of earlier migration, and an acute sensitivity to the Sino-Japanese conflicts of the last century. This historical consciousness arises from both the significance of the two Sino-Japanese wars to contemporary Chinese ethno-nationalism,²⁴⁴ as well as the historical precedent of Chinese students and revolutionaries in Japan around the beginning of the 20th century. Since Chinese relations of the war orphans compose a large portion of these recent migrants, and given the fact that the war orphans themselves are intimately associated with the history of Sino-

²⁴² See Cheng (1999, in Chinese) and Nyiri (2002a, in English) for detailed discussions of this shift in policy and, in Nyiri’s article in particular, discourse. However, Nyiri argues that there is also a Chinese pop cultural “lowbrow narrative” of this “new migrant” as “often educated, clever, ambitious, unscrupulous and poor,” exemplified by Cao Guilin’s 1991 hit novel (and subsequent serial dramatization) *Beijingren zai Niuyue* (A Beijinger in New York). (221) Incidentally, the success of that drama inspired the 1995 Sino-Japanese co-production *Shanghairen zai Dongjing*, with the theme of Shanghai students in Tokyo. The 25 1-hr episodes were broadcast in China in 1995-6 and got high ratings. (see Iwabuchi 2003, 112, 225 n. 14)

²⁴³ See for example Zha (2002)

²⁴⁴ See Yang (2002, 16-7)

Japanese conflict (as well as the potential for cooperation and reconciliation²⁴⁵), this chapter investigates how war orphans and their “Chinese” descendants and in-laws are situated vis-à-vis these attempts to construct a specific “ethnic character” -- the new overseas Chinese in Japan as the historically conscious scholar-patriot.

Repatriates and the New Overseas Chinese

Throughout the process of repatriation and resettlement, the “Japanese identities”²⁴⁶ of the war orphans (and, to a lesser degree, their descendants) have been the primary focus of the Japanese public, the Japanese volunteers and bureaucrats involved in state-sponsored resettlement, and even the war orphans themselves.²⁴⁷ It is therefore understandable that Japanese discussions rarely consider the war orphan presence in conjunction with the phenomenon of recent Chinese migration to Japan. For the same reasons, Japanese and Chinese analyses of the striking post-1980s increase in PRC migrants to Japan generally give the war orphans only passing mention at best. This is unfortunate, however, because neither development can be fully understood in isolation from the other.

In terms of the war orphans’ significance to Chinese migration, though the war orphans in Japan number only a few thousand, their accompanying Chinese family members are estimated to total more than 100,000 – almost a quarter of the total number of Chinese presently residing in Japan. In fact, Japanese government statistics on region of origin for Chinese in Japan clearly demonstrate a substantial overrepresentation of

²⁴⁵ This point is made by Yang (2002) in his discussion of the history problem. He notes that the Chinese stories of the experiences of Japanese war orphans “that lived with Chinese families (often as Chinese) till the 1970s...tended to emphasize the decency of common people.”(25) Although Japanese representations of war orphan experiences, such as the best-selling book *Daichi no ko*, share this theme, they also frequently mention experiences of prejudice and the suffering endured by some war orphans during Cultural Revolution.

²⁴⁶ The implied nature of the war orphans’ Japanese “identity” varies widely depending upon who is asserting it, but it ranges from the strictly juridical, *jus sanguinis* sense of Japanese birth and hence citizenship to the more subjective qualities of possessing or expressing elements of a putative Japanese character or culture.

²⁴⁷ The tendency to view the war orphans’ mixed-ethnic descendants as Japanese (rather than Chinese) is compounded by the terminology used to describe them: such terms as “second-generation repatriate” (*kikokusha nise*) and even “second-generation Japanese war orphan” (*Nihon zanryū koji nise*) are common and elide the Chinese cultural background (and often citizenship) of these younger migrants.

Chinese from the three provinces of northeastern China (C: *dongbei sansheng*) from which nearly all war orphans and their families come. Migrants from this region account for more than a third of all Chinese in Japan, and their rates of increase are several times higher than the rates for China's other regions.²⁴⁸ As Tajima (2003) notes, most of the Chinese people from these three provinces are "Japanese war orphans and their family dependents."²⁴⁹ The dramatic growth in migrants from former Manchuria demonstrates the chain migration pattern of family members joining earlier immigrants. Due to their family connections with war orphans, many such migrants find it easier to acquire Japanese citizenship or residence visas, the possession of which in turn heightens the likelihood that they or their children will become permanent residents of Japan.

If the exclusion of the war orphans thus impoverishes any analysis of Japan's resident Chinese, the converse is also true. The widespread initial failure of Japanese volunteers, officials, and private citizens to accept the cultural and linguistic Chineseness of the war orphans and their descendants (collectively designated as *kikokusha*, or "repatriates") directly resulted in widespread misunderstanding and suffering during the repatriates' migration and resettlement. Although their citizenship or visa categories may distinguish them from other recent Chinese migrants to Japan, the repatriates confront many of the same challenges in securing employment, social welfare benefits, schooling and housing. Given their Chinese cultural background²⁵⁰ (including use of the Chinese language as well as upbringing and education in China) many repatriates – with the

²⁴⁸ For most of the 20th century, Japan's population of overseas Chinese was unique among the world's overseas Chinese communities in that it was largely composed of migrants from Taiwan. The remainder came mostly from the southern Chinese provinces of Fujian and Guangdong. During the 1980s, however, the new surge in migrants from the mainland was led by Chinese from Shanghai, which in 1994 replaced Taiwan as the origin of the largest group of Japan's Chinese. However, 2003 statistics showed that Shanghai had slipped to second after Liaoning, with Heilongjiang and Jilin following. Moreover, while immigrants from Shanghai grew just 5.7% between 2002-3, those from Liaoning jumped 19%, Jilin 18.4% and Heilongjiang 13.4%. (Source: "Zai ri Zhongguoren: Dongbei Sansheng he Shanghai ren zui duo," <http://www.51ielts.com> 2003-8-22).

²⁴⁹ Tajima (2003, 71). Tajima also includes an English-language breakdown of regional origins from 1969-2001. It is also likely that the large Japanese overseas investment in Dalian and other areas of these northeastern provinces has had some role in this increase.

²⁵⁰ I should note that I also interviewed one war orphan that was raised in a Korean family and hence speaks Korean as her first language (though she speaks fluent Mandarin as well). The northeast is also home to China's largest concentration of ethnic Koreans.

crucial exception of most war orphans²⁵¹ – identify themselves as Chinese. This is of course also true of the Chinese spouses and in-laws of these repatriates.

While the overwhelming majority of war orphans and their spouses settle in Japan with the notion of staying indefinitely, most of their descendants and their families arrive – like many migrant Chinese students and workers – with less definite intentions. If, in a classic migratory pattern, many of these erstwhile Chinese sojourners eventually become settlers²⁵², this extended residence may only strengthen their desire to give structure and sense to their lives in Japan by articulating a notion of ethnic Chinese identity for themselves and instilling the same (or some variation of that) in their children.²⁵³ In the process, these evolving notions of “Chineseness” emerge and circulate in public and private narratives that define the experience of being an overseas Chinese in Japan. These narratives take a wide variety of forms, from casual speech to autobiographical essays, journalistic reportage, television documentaries and dramas, and scholarly books and essays. The vast majority of this discussion takes place in the Chinese language. In this respect, the situation of recent Chinese migrants to Japan is not unusual: Chinese-language narratives of migrant experience – both academic and popular -- are common to many of the nations to which mainland Chinese have migrated since the 1980s. This is particularly true in the countries where, as in Japan, vibrant Chinese-language media have taken root. What is unusual about Japan is the rapidity and extent to which recent Chinese migrants, most of whom first came to Japan as students, have engaged in

²⁵¹ In response to a direct question, all but one of the war orphans with whom I have spoken will say that they are “Japanese.” But this response -- like so many ethnic labels -- is context dependent; as one quoted passage in this chapter suggests, many of them also occasionally refer to themselves as “Chinese” when speaking in Chinese or talking with other Chinese, particularly when drawing a contrast with (other) Japanese. As Tajima (2003, 76) writes, “The Chinese I met during my research identify themselves differently according to where they are. A man may sometimes feel he is Japanese, sometimes Chinese, and sometimes a Shanghai person. Such a feeling of multi-identity is not difficult to understand.”

²⁵² Tajima (2003, 73-4) gives diachronic documentation of this “residing-to-settling migration process” among the Chinese newcomers in her surveys.

²⁵³ The education of Chinese migrant children is correctly identified as a key arbiter of the settlement process as well as the evolution of ethnic consciousness. Many scholars of overseas Chinese in Japan have drawn attention to this issue, including Zhu (1996) and Tajima (2003). Tajima asserts that “the main problem for [new overseas Chinese] is their children’s education.” (76-7) See Ng (2003) for an English-language study of one overseas Chinese school.

producing scholarly, “authoritative” *Japanese-language* works on not only recent Chinese migrants themselves but also on the pre-1972 population of Chinese in Japan.²⁵⁴

In Chinese- and Japanese-language writings by migrant Chinese since the 1990s, there has been an effort to define the role and characteristics of these new migrants by referencing a specific sensitivity to the Sino-Japanese past and a particular patriotic orientation towards present-day China. In the process, the figure of the “New Overseas Chinese” has emerged as an “ethnic character” that is consciously contrasted against other images of migrant Chinese that circulate in both China and Japan.

Ethnic Character

As Harrell (2001, 33) has noted, “one way to speak of ethnic identity is as a series of languages of communication about group membership and group relationships.” He notes that there are at least two ways in which languages “communicate ethnicity.” The first way is the use of one set of symbols (such as a language or a set of symbolic objects) rather than another commensurate set. The second way in which languages communicate ethnicity is by explicitly talking about it. This occurs in casual speech, in scholarly discussions of a given ethnic group’s history, and in state discourses of ethnic identity.⁽³⁵⁾ Harrell is careful to point out that “ideas of nationhood and identity maintain their salience only insofar as they are framed in categories relevant to the lives of participants. Communicative acts [of ethnic definition and ritual display] do not create ethnicity in the causal sense. The thing communicated about must have some importance for the communicative act to have meaning in the first place.”⁽³³⁾ Which immediately raises the question of how the thing communicated about gets relevance or importance. While we cannot answer this in the particular, we can certainly inquire under what types of circumstances articulations of ethnicity generally become important. One answer, as Harrell’s own field site and other writings²⁵⁵ suggest, is a circumstance characterized by direct “encounters” between identifiably different groups in which the designation of

²⁵⁴ Some of this scholarship on both recent migrants and established Chinese communities in Japan has recently appeared in English as well: see Zha (2002) and Wang (2003), respectively.

²⁵⁵ See Harrell’s (1995, 28) discussion of “ethnic consciousness.”

group membership confers or denies material and/or psychological benefits. Since this designation of group membership is often itself a communicative act (Harrell gives the example of census categories), it follows that such communicative acts – while not the direct *cause* of ethnicity – may be instrumental (so to speak) in assigning or altering ethnicity's relevance.²⁵⁶

The constituent elements of such communicative acts obviously vary in specificity and complexity, with the aforementioned census category constituting a relatively crude form of representation. While the differential access to, or allocation of, material resources often occurs according to such blunt criteria, lengthy and intense contact (and usually conflict) between identifiable groups tends to encourage more elaborate, nuanced, and even self-contradictory portraits of ethnic difference (and hence, identity). Under such circumstances, fragmentary markers of ethnic identity and difference may be stitched together in coherent narratives that feature (and “flesh out”) a cast of stock *characters* for narratives of “Us” and “Them.” Or to return to Harrell's schema, the communicative acts that convey ethnicity take shape as coherent narratives of (ethnicized, and often idealized) personhood.

Following Liu (2002) and others,²⁵⁷ I focus my anthropological analysis on such narratives and especially the characters that are deployed within them because, like Liu, I am persuaded that “an analysis of the narrative structure as a historical form of social existence...provides a real possibility for understanding the mode of existence itself.”(21) In other words, “what we are and what we want to be are determined in the stories that we are able to tell about ourselves/Ourselves.”(ix) Characters, as defined by Liu, are essential to such stories, though it is “not the characters themselves but the relations between and among them that define the narrative structure.”(28)

Liu's innovative ethnographic account of the self-representations of Chinese entrepreneurs in the southern Chinese port city of Beihai is a “genealogy of the self in

²⁵⁶ Note that this is not a circular argument: it is an effort to move our analytical attention away from the unanswerable (at least in any objective or absolute sense) question of what is ethnic identity, and refocus it upon the question of how the communicative acts in question (attempt to) convey and create significance.

²⁵⁷ Liu derives his theoretical orientation and treatment of character from Alasdair MacIntyre's 1984 book *After Virtue*, and in his emphasis on narrative he follows David Carr.

contemporary China,” which is in the midst of a “moral earthquake.”(ix) Amidst these dislocations, he sees the “representation of self—understood in a broad sense as the search for an answer to the question *What is good (life)?*” as constituting and being constituted by “an ethical space in which our condition of possibility of being as such dwells.”(ix) He concludes that “in today’s China, there is a great difficulty in answering the question ‘What am I to do?’ or ‘What am I doing?’ because the question ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’ cannot be answered.”(183)

Although my analysis of ethnic character in the narrative self-representations of Chinese in Japan is derived from Liu and relies upon the experience of disjuncture, it arrives at a different conclusion by insisting upon a spatial and relational specificity: namely, the spatial context of Japan and the relational subtext of Sino-Japanese history and culture. While Liu’s analysis stresses the insignificance of history to his Chinese subjects’ narratives of selfhood in Beihai, I argue that the past – namely, the past century of Sino-Japanese relations -- is a significant component of such narratives among Chinese in Japan. Moreover, in Japan the daily encounter with Japanese on the one hand, and the presence of distinctly “Other” Chinese (the “Old Overseas Chinese,” Chinese illegal migrants and criminals, and war orphans) on the other, also lend a relational clarity of ethnic place, if not purpose, to the ethnic character of the “New Overseas Chinese.” In doing so, Chinese students and commentators on present-day Japan echo the experience of the Chinese Japanologists nearly a century before: as one study of Republican China puts it, “the Japan hands...set out to study the Japanese, but ended up gazing at their own reflection.”(Reinhold, p. xxiv) This is certainly true today as well.

If the temporal disjuncture with the (meaningful, moral) past has left Liu’s Beihai entrepreneurs without a firm epistemological footing, the socio-spatial disjuncture experienced by migrant Chinese in Japan seemingly reinvigorates the relevance of that past. This is largely due to the specificity of the Sino-Japanese past, and its enduring lack of resolution in Japan. For more than a century, members these two societies have deployed (and augmented) a massive repertoire of symbolic resources in an ongoing effort to define themselves in relation to the other, often motivated by situations of

extreme conflict.²⁵⁸ This complex history of exchange and conflict is reflected in the importance of what historian Akira Iriye has called the “cultural dimension” of Sino-Japanese relations, which he views as “particularly pertinent not only because of [China and Japan’s] historical cultural (religious, literary, artistic) ties, but also because of the modern experiences involving their encounter which have so often been notable because of lack of understanding, condescension, brutality, and prejudice. Power and economic connections may come and go, but these cultural ties, or lack thereof, may be more enduring.”²⁵⁹

Among these “modern experiences,” one can single out the events surrounding Japan’s invasion of China during 1931-45 as a focus of enduring contention. Since the early 1980s, Japanese commemorations and historical representations concerning the war (and particularly the Nanjing Massacre) have been lightning rods for Chinese protest and a key source of conflict at both the official and popular levels of Sino-Japanese relations.²⁶⁰ In perhaps the best discussion of this chronic conflict, Daqing Yang (2002) writes that this “history problem” has had “an immense impact on Chinese perceptions of present-day Japan.”(13) Downplaying the significance of the Chinese government’s role in fostering such perceptions, he writes that “what we now witness in China is a society-wide phenomenon highlighting the Japanese aggression in China and China’s War of Resistance. Public media such as feature films, TV and magazines are saturated with stories about the war and Japanese atrocities. Not all of the above-mentioned developments were ordered from above, even if the government may be said to have fostered the overall atmosphere.”(16-7)

Keyes’ (1983) discussion of ethnicity draws our attention to the important role of (shared) historical suffering in the constitution of ethnic solidarity. We may assume that

²⁵⁸ As one might expect of neighboring countries with a long history of exchange, these symbolic resources have also been mobilized to emphasize identity as well as difference. One common example is the reference to *tongwen* (“same language/civilization” [J: *dōbun*], which was often paired with *tongzhong* – “same race” [J: *dōshu*]), which Qing literati used to refer to the affinity between the two cultures (as in *tongwen zhi guo*).

²⁵⁹ Iriye (1996; 46-59, 57). The essays in Iriye (1980) are a useful introduction to Sino-Japanese relations in the century between the late 1800s and 1979.

²⁶⁰ Whiting (1989) details Chinese perspectives on controversies over Japanese textbooks and ministerial visits to Yasukuni Shrine during the 1980s. See also Ijiri (1996) for a discussion of post-1972 Sino-Japanese conflict and Rose’s (1998) book-length study of the textbook controversies.

the past suffering of Chinese during the Japanese invasion and occupation serves a similar function in contemporary Chinese ethno-nationalism. Moreover, the conflict and duress occasioned by the experience of migration and prejudice finds an easy analogy in past experiences of (ethno-national) suffering, and both arguably augment a sense of internal homogeneity when discussing the “Chinese” experience in Japan.

Finally, there is the emphasis upon patriotism to which Liao alludes in the excerpt that begins this chapter. Yang treats the connection between Chinese patriotism and the Sino-Japanese conflict as obvious: “it is common wisdom that patriotism – often in the form of anti-Japanese-nationalism [sic] – is intrinsically linked to the government’s legitimacy in China. This should not be too much of a shock, since the post-1949 Chinese national anthem has its origin in the war against the Japanese invasion.”(17) In the discourse surrounding the character of the “new overseas Chinese”, patriotism is invoked through allusions to the Chinese revolutionaries and patriots that came to study in Japan following the first Sino-Japanese conflict, as well as through reference to the aforementioned conflicts over historical representations and observances, particularly in the form of Japanese history textbooks and official visits to Yasukuni Shrine. Reflecting changes in PRC official discourse on overseas Chinese, this patriotism is also deliberately linked to the decision by many migrants to remain in Japan and postpone their return to China. In a sense, one may view this element of patriotism as the moral component of the character of the new overseas Chinese.

Representing Recent Chinese Migrants to Japan: Academic studies by Overseas Chinese Students and Scholars

At the time of the 1972 normalization of Sino-Japanese political relations, Japan’s Chinese population totaled about 47, 000. This was approximately the same as the total two decades earlier, around the end of World War II. In fact, Japan’s postwar population of resident Chinese hovered between 40 and 50 thousand people until the late 1980s, with little Chinese immigration and virtually none from the mainland. Since the late 80s, however, Japan’s Chinese population has rapidly grown almost ninefold to nearly

425,000, and now constitutes Japan's largest new foreign [i.e. non-citizen] presence.²⁶¹ Almost a quarter of the foreign citizens in Japan are Chinese, and that percentage has been growing steadily since the 1990s. What is perhaps most striking about the demographic changes since the 1980s, however, is the number of Chinese who have come to Japan for study. Over 60% of foreign students in Japan are Chinese.²⁶² As Cheng (2002) notes in his comparison of mainland Chinese students in Japan and Europe, studying abroad has been the most popular means of emigration from China since the 1970s, and thousands of former students have acquired legal residence in Japan after securing post-graduate employment there or marrying a Japanese national.

Scholarship on recent Chinese migrants has lagged behind these demographic developments. Until 2002, the sole English-language treatment of overseas Chinese in Japan devoted less than four pages to the postwar area.²⁶³ Until the 1990s, Japanese-language scholarship on Chinese in Japan also tended to ignore the recent migrants and instead largely focused on the longstanding Chinese communities that were centered on Japan's Chinatowns.²⁶⁴ Beginning in the 1990s, however, a number of Japanese

²⁶¹ Figures for foreign resident Chinese in this and the following footnote are for 2003 (Ministry of Justice 2004). The following discussion of "new," post-1972 migrants is exclusively concerned with the mainland migrants that form the vast majority of "Chinese" that have recently migrated to Japan. However, Japanese official stats conventionally elide distinctions between Taiwan, Hong Kong and the mainland and group all three under "China" (J: Chūgoku).

²⁶² Rough growth in numbers between 1999 and 2003 in the three visa categories in which Chinese compose the majority nationality are as follows: overseas students (*ryūgakusei*) 32,300 to 73,800; trainees (*kenshūsei*) 15,600 to 27,000; and pre-college students (*shūgakusei*) 20,000 to 35,500. A large part of the overall growth in Chinese foreign residents between 1999's 272,230 and 2003's 424,282 came from a more than doubling in the number of Chinese "Permanent Residents" (*Eijūsha*) from roughly 31,600 to 70,600.

²⁶³ Vasishth (1997). The author's regrettable characterization of the Chinese in Japan as a "model minority" is premised on the latter's "affluence." Confusingly, however, she also notes that this conceptualization "obscures a history of exclusion and exploitation, while the lack of scholarly interest in the Chinese community can be taken as a further manifestation of this marginalization." (108) This characterization would also likely be incomprehensible to most contemporary Japanese, given the Japanese media's more than decade-long preoccupation with the criminality of recent Chinese migrants. Most of the other works available in English are largely re-presentations of scholarship that was originally written in Chinese (Cheng 2003; Zha 2002) or Japanese (Tajima 2003). One exception, Friman (2002), narrowly confines his discussion to illegal Chinese migrants but relies entirely on archival sources and uses no Chinese sources. Tajima's article, which is based on a decade of research in Tokyo (see the Japanese sources below), is the best English-language study summary of the situation of Chinese "newcomers," as she terms them.

²⁶⁴ A substantial portion of the scholarship on these Chinese communities has in fact been carried out by ethnic Chinese scholars who grew up in Japan. These include the writings of Yokohama native Chen Tian-shi of the Institute of Ethnology and Professor Chin Raikō of Kobe Commercial U (Kōbe Shōka Daigaku),

sociologists began including discussions of Chinese migrants in more general studies of recent immigrants.²⁶⁵ With the notable exception of Tajima Junko, surprisingly few Japanese scholars have written on new Chinese migrants.²⁶⁶

By contrast, the early 1990s witnessed a growing number of recent Chinese migrants -- many of whom had first come to Japan as students -- writing and publishing on overseas Chinese in Japan and elsewhere. This work initially focused upon the so-called “old” overseas Chinese,²⁶⁷ but the focus soon shifted to encompass recent migrants. In scholarly writings, the most widely published and influential exponent has been Zhu Huiling, who graduated from Guangzhou’s Foreign Language University in 1982 and took a position working for the Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau. Zhu first came to Japan in 1990 and earned a Master’s degree from Kyoto’s Rikkyō University in 1993 with a thesis that focused on the “reconstruction of identity” among the longstanding overseas Chinese community.²⁶⁸ Zhu then returned to China and wrote a series of articles and books on overseas Chinese in Japan (1995a,b; 1996; 1999; 2003) that established the dichotomization of “old” and “new” and cast the new migrants (and particularly the students among them) in valorized terms that are echoed in most subsequent scholarship, such as the example mentioned above. Zhu has returned to the Bureau of Overseas Chinese Affairs and now serves as its Division Head. While this suggests some connection between scholarship and PRC policy, one should not leap to conclusions

who graduated from Chinese schools in Yokohama and Kobe, respectively, as well as Professor Yu Chung-Hsun of Asia University (whose writings include scholarship on overseas Chinese outside of Japan as well).

²⁶⁵ Beginning in the early 1990s, a number of Japanese sociologists studying recent immigrants to Japan included discussions of recent Chinese migrants and particularly the new concentrations of Chinese settlement in Tokyo, where the majority of the new migrants reside. Particularly noteworthy among these more general works on migration are the Tokyo-focused sociological surveys of Asian migrants led by Okuda Michihiro and Tajima Junko and their student assistants. Okuda and Tajima and their teams of student researchers examined two areas in Tokyo that, due to the concentration of language schools, labor opportunities in local entertainment and service industries and the availability of relatively cheap housing, have become loci of Asian migrant work and residence since the late 1980s. Their profiles of Asians in Ikebukuro (1991) and Shinjuku (1992) include approximately 150 interviews in each area, and Chinese (combining mainlanders and Taiwanese) are the most numerous in both surveys.

²⁶⁶ Aside from Tajima’s work, Tsuboya (2002) gives a rather schematic sociological discussion of the “meaning of overseas study” for recent Chinese students in Japan.

²⁶⁷ For example, Ka Hō (Guo Fang] (1999). Guo’s book focuses upon the longstanding Chinese population of Kobe and examines marriage choices among “old” Chinese in Japan, who she defines as those coming before the 1972 resumption of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations. See also Wang Wei’s discussion of ethnic festivals and Japan’s Chinatowns (2001; 2003).

²⁶⁸ The full title of the thesis is *Zainichi Kakyō ni okeru aidentiti no saikōchiku*.

about the direction or extent of such influence. Nevertheless, it has probably given her work a greater authority and wider readership among other Chinese.

Other recent Chinese migrants to Japan have accounted for a large number of popular books in Japanese on topics spanning Sino-Japanese relations, popular Sinology, overseas Chinese, and Chinese crime. Among these are three prolific journalists: Shanghai native Mo Bangfu (who claims to have created the term “Shinkakyō” [J: “New Overseas Chinese”] in 1992);²⁶⁹ Qingdao native Kong Jian, a lineal descendant of Confucius whose essayistic takes on Confucianism and such topics as the cultural differences between Chinese and Japanese have become bestsellers in Japan;²⁷⁰ and Hunan native Duan Yuezhong, who has been the premier chronicler of overseas Chinese activities in Japan and the history of the overseas Chinese media there.

Although the former two are more familiar to Japanese audiences, Duan may be better known to other Chinese in both Japan and China for his extensive writings on Chinese in Japan and the Japan-based Chinese-language print and electronic media. In addition to his scholarship on the history of Japan’s Chinese newspapers, for which he received a Ph.D. from Niigata University, Duan has been a key figure in documenting the activities, experiences and publications of Chinese working in Japan, particularly those who, like himself, originally came as students.

Formerly a journalist at the China Youth Daily, Duan first came to Japan in 1991 and soon began writing articles for both Chinese and Japanese papers on issues related to Chinese in Japan. Like many overseas Chinese scholars, Duan has been highly sensitive to depictions of Chinese criminal activity in the Japanese media and has devoted a great deal of effort to combating this image and drawing attention to the achievements of

²⁶⁹ See Mo (1995), p. 1, where Mo also defines the term as Chinese who first emigrated following the “reform and opening” policies and have a “tendency” to take up permanent residence abroad. Mo’s extended treatment of *shinkakyō* (in an eponymous book published in 1993) focuses on recent Chinese migrants to Eastern Europe. Another book (1995) presents views of Japan held by individual Chinese living in Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China.

²⁷⁰ With provocative titles such as *Nihonjin wa eien ni Chūgokujin wo rikai dekinai* (The Japanese will never understand the Chinese, 1996), which was issued by the major Japanese publisher Kodansha and reportedly went through more than ten reprints in the first year after its publication, selling more than 100,000 copies by 1998 (Duan 1998, p. 234). Among his many other books, see also Kong (1997a,b; 1998) for similar works.

successful scholars and professionals.²⁷¹ He has also worked to publish and promote efforts by Japan-based Chinese scholars to combat Japanese textbook revisionism, and his writings reveal him to be a staunch patriot.²⁷²

Among Duan's various projects²⁷³ to showcase successful, well-educated Chinese in Japan, perhaps the most ambitious is a remarkable 785-page Chinese-language collection of short "autobiographies" (C: *zishu*) written by 104 mainland Chinese who came to study in Japan during the 1980s and early 90s and (for the most part) now reside there.²⁷⁴ Many of the book's essays were subsequently published in Japanese translation. Although nearly all of the narratives include accounts of "starting from zero" and suffering the hardships of cramped quarters, sleep deprivation and menial, low-wage, part-time labor immediately following arrival in Japan, they nevertheless deliberately present a varied sampling of the "positive side" (*zhengmian*) of Chinese experience in Japan through individual success stories. Many of the essays refer to the earlier era of Chinese overseas study in Japan,²⁷⁵ which Duan describes in his Afterword as "political overseas study" (*zhengzhi liuxue*) in contrast to the present-day "economic overseas study" (*jingji liuxue*). However, Duan notes that the goal of these students remains the

²⁷¹ See for example Duan (1998, p. 91).

²⁷² For example, Duan helped published a Japanese-language book by Chinese scholars in Japan attacking the revisionist textbook produced by the controversial Tsukurukai (*Tsukurukai no rekishi kyōkasho wo kiru: zainichi Chūgokujin gakusha no shiten kara*. Tokyo: Nihon Kyōhoshsha, 2001).

²⁷³ Duan's first major publishing project in Japan was the compilation of a serial Japanese-language "databook" detailing the scholarly and business activities of Chinese professionals in Japan (J: *Zainichi Chūgokujin Daizen*; "The Databook of Chinese in Japan"). The first of these was published as a slender 98-page volume in 1997 and it has since grown to several hundred pages in length. He has also assiduously collected the Japanese-language publications of current and former overseas Chinese students in Japan in a "Chinese Overseas Student Library," (*Zhongguo Liuxuesheng Wenku*) which now holds more than 500 publications. In addition, he maintains a weekly electronic newsmagazine detailing the activities concerning overseas (mainland) Chinese in Japan, *Riben Qiaobao* (Japan Overseas Chinese News). Duan's Chinese language essays, many of which originally appeared in Japan's Chinese-language press, are collected in *Liuxue Fusang* (1998).

²⁷⁴ Duan (1998a). The book's title, *Fuji dongying xie chunqiu: Zai Ri Zhongguoren zishu* (Writing about study in Japan: Autobiographies of Chinese in Japan), uses one of the two poetic names for Japan (Dongying) that was common amongst 19th century Chinese intellectuals. The other, Fusang, is used in the title of Duan's essay collection, *Liuxue Fusang*. While conducting preliminary research for my dissertation project in Beijing in 1998, this book was strongly recommended to me by the Chinese researcher Wang Jin, who had recently received his Master's degree from Japan's Kanagawa University for his thesis on Chinese professionals in Japan.

²⁷⁵ These take the form of either explicit references to historical figures who studied in Japan (such as Lu Xun or Sun Zhongshan) or the use of Chinese expressions that allude to this era (such as the poetic names for Japan mentioned above).

same: to “study Japan and revitalize China” (*xuexi Riben, zhenxing Zhongguo*). The book’s essays – like Duan’s other data-collection efforts on recent Chinese migrants to Japan – are overtly intended as at once authentically subjective (hence the emphasis on unretouched “autobiography”) and historically objective (hence their intended use as “archival materials” (*ziliao*) for future generations). As Duan notes, “history forever respects facts” (*lishi yongyuan zunzhong shishi*).

The desire to present a positive view of Chinese in Japan, the consciousness of historical precedent, and the assertion of a devout patriotism are clearly evident in the book’s introductory essay, which was written by Jiang Feng, the editor of *Dongfang Shibao* (Eastern Times), a Chinese-language newspaper in Japan. Because it is an excellent overview of the book’s content and tone, it is worth quoting at length.

Jiang begins the body of his essay by making explicit reference to the students who came to Japan to “study the enemy” after the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5 [*Jiawu Zhongri zhanzheng*]. “History creates people,” he states flatly, noting the importance of those specific historical circumstances in producing group after group of influential “revolutionaries, politicians, soldiers and thinkers” (he mentions Jiang Jieshi and Zhou Enlai in particular). Turning to the modern era, he notes that many commentators have contrasted the numbers of scientists that have emerged from the ranks of overseas Chinese students in the West [*Oumei*] with their paucity among Chinese that studied in Japan. This has led to the popular description of Chinese studying in the West as being “gilded” [*dujin*] or “silvered” [*duyin*] whereas those studying in Japan are merely “copper-plated” [*dutong*].²⁷⁶ He notes that, superficially, this indeed seems to be the case, but only by looking at history can one discern the truth.

Following this deliberate association with the past, he is also careful to make a distinction: “Although Chinese who come to Japan to study are still moved to seek the true [way] of saving their country [*jiuguo*], it is no longer the [way] of overthrowing the Chinese regime [*zhengquan*]; it is to seek the ‘prescription’ [*yaofang*] for stimulating the development of Chinese society and especially the development of the economy.” As such, he continues, some of these Chinese remain in Japan, and some return to China.

²⁷⁶ See Cheng (2002, 63) for a similar description of this hierarchical perception.

“Those returning wish to immediately contribute to their country, and those remaining are also contributing to their country. With regard to the issue of ‘returning’ or ‘remaining,’ the nation, government and policymakers have already engaged in many vacillations and repeated debates.” Today, he writes, the authorities have at last understood that the students who remain and do not return are “imperceptibly” (*wuxingzhong*) helping the ancestral land (*zuguo*) spin a broad, human “Chinese net.” Now, wherever groups of Chinese politicians or businessmen go, there are always young Chinese to welcome them, and these Chinese are past study abroad students. “Perhaps because of this, you can see that the long-promoted policy that students studying abroad ought to ‘return home [to China] and serve’ (*huiguo fuwu*) has already quietly become ‘serve the country’ (*weiguo fuwu*).” History, he writes, will prove that this has ignited immeasurable passion and new productivity.²⁷⁷

Jiang then moves to the oft-repeated contrast between the “old” and “new” Chinese in Japan in order to emphasize the superiority of the latter group. “It’s true: a ‘New [ethnic] Chinese Social Stratum’ [*xin huaren jieceng*] is just now arising abroad, and a ‘New [ethnic] Chinese Community’ [*xin huaren shequ*] is just now taking shape. By comparison with the Old Overseas Chinese [*lao huaqiao*] who made an itinerant living [*chuangdang*] by means of the ‘three blades’ (the cook’s cleaver [*caidao*], tailor’s scissors [*jiandao*] and barber’s shears [*tifa dao*]), we see that the ‘New [Ethnic] Chinese’ still lacks abundant capital for development, lacks a firm foundation, [and] lacks a stable relationship with the local society. But, at the same time, we also see that the education, the skills, the domestic ‘*guanxi*’ (especially the high-level *guanxi*), [and] the advantage of age [*nianling youshi*] possessed by the ‘New [ethnic] Chinese’ – all these are things to which the Old Overseas Chinese cannot compare, but rather yearn to acquire.”

After revisiting his earlier parallel between past and present Chinese students in Japan and describing the current students as “civilian ambassadors” (*minjian dashi*),

²⁷⁷ The debate over whether one should return or remain is mentioned in several of the book’s essays. As Nyiri (2002a,b) has illustrated, overseas Chinese are enjoying increasing favor in the official discourse and policies of the PRC government, which is making greater attempts to integrate overseas Chinese within domestic networks. Cheng (2002) describes the “dilemma” of returning vs. remaining and notes the gradual change in both students and official attitudes.

Jiang refers to the hardships mentioned in the autobiographies but cautions the reader to avoid comparing these accounts to the tribulations that characterize the genres of “laborer literature” (*dagong wenxue*) and “overseas student literature” (*liuxuesheng wenxue*). He emphasizes that this is because the authors of these biographies have already achieved success and won a place in society: “Not only do they have Japanese yen in their hands, they possess the skills to further their professions, and have a sentimental attachment [*juanlian*] to the old country [*guguo*] and a sincere love [*zhiai*] for the motherland [*zuguo*].”

Following this characterization of the contributors’ material success and patriotism, Jiang positions these narratives as a response to the negative image of Chinese in Japan fostered by the media.²⁷⁸ Mentioning his work as an editor and writer in Japan, he observes that “whether due to the influence of the biased publicity [*pianjian xuanchuan*] of Japanese society’s news media or due to their individual ‘quality’ [*geren suzhi*], some Chinese-language newspapers take a passive/negative [*xiaoji*] attitude towards positive news [*zhengmian baodao*] concerning Chinese in Japan and, conversely, are fond of reporting on the dark side [*yin’anmian*] of Chinese in Japan...[This] causes some Chinese and Japanese news media to also treat these sort of reports as the ‘mainstream’ of Chinese in Japan, and to make a fuss over them all over again.” In a sentence that restates a major overarching motivation for the collection itself, Jiang writes that these autobiographies should now be an “answer” (*da’an*) to such biases.

While it would be unfair and misleading to reduce the diverse and highly personal material contained within these 104 autobiographies to a single simplistic pattern, there is nevertheless a recurring concern with certain themes that resonates through many of them.

²⁷⁸ There are a number of reasons why Chinese crimes are featured so prominently in the Japanese media. First and foremost is the oft-cited fact that crimes by Chinese are markedly increasing year by year. National Police Agency figures show 14,660 foreigners were picked up for crimes in 2001, a record high. More Chinese -- 5,879 -- were arrested than any other nationality. (Mainichi Shimbun, June 8, 2002) What is frequently ignored, however, is that this increase is to be expected since the number of new Chinese migrants (who make up the largest number of new migrants) is also rapidly increasing. Moreover, studies have shown that the Japanese media is far more likely to report crimes by foreigners than those by Japanese. (See Nara University professor Mabuchi’s 2002 study). Finally, some types of crimes committed by Chinese in Japan lend themselves to sensationalization. These include offenses linked to organized criminal activity (such as human smuggling and “theft rings”) and murders, particularly those linked to “gangs.”

These include the suffering-to-success narrative, the references to Sino-Japanese history, and the testimonies to patriotism, which, taken together, cohere as the socially respectable, historically conscious, morally motivated (i.e. patriotic) character of the “New Overseas Chinese” – the diametric opposite of the materialistic, uneducated, amoral criminal character against which the collection is explicitly opposed.

How do war orphans and their families, who have numerically composed such a significant portion of recent Chinese migration to Japan, fit within this ideological dichotomization of overseas Chinese into educated elites and criminals? The answer is only implicit in Duan’s book. There are few, if any, educated elites among the war orphans in Japan.²⁷⁹ Most war orphans hail from poor rural areas and farming backgrounds, and only a small percentage enjoyed access to secondary, much less post-secondary, schooling before “returning” to Japan.²⁸⁰ Once in Japan, this lack of scholastic preparation and the war orphans’ relatively advanced age would have made higher education difficult even without the rigors of resettlement and the widely-stressed imperative to begin work immediately. Higher education was thus an unattainable luxury for most war orphans, who nevertheless often express the hope that their accompanying children and grandchildren will be the beneficiaries of expanded educational opportunities in their adopted home. Many children of war orphans have in fact graduated from Japanese universities (often with the help of special entrance provisions unavailable to their war orphan parents) and a handful have continued to post-graduate study.

However, in a pattern reminiscent of the dilemma faced by Duan and other Chinese scholars, success stories such as these have been overshadowed by the Japanese media’s attention to crimes committed by war orphans and their children. In particular, the phenomenon of so-called “fake orphans” (*gisei koji*) was widely reported in the Japanese media during the late 1990s.²⁸¹ The media’s focus on criminality has been

²⁷⁹ However, one war orphan who has chosen to remain in China, Li Ben, is a professor at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. He is reportedly the model for the protagonist in the best-selling Japanese novel and television series *Daichi no ko*, the content of which he strenuously repudiates.

²⁸⁰ This lack of learning opportunities also encouraged many orphans to seek better learning opportunities for their children in Japan.

²⁸¹ When I went to interview a Japanese bureaucrat in the government office responsible for war orphan repatriation and welfare, he began our meeting by handing me a photocopied news article from the

reflected in Japanese popular culture (such as the best-selling book *Fuyajō*; see Chapter 3) and has reverberated in Japan's Chinese-language press as well, where one must turn for evidence of the war orphan's image among Chinese in Japan.

This vibrant Chinese-language press is created and consumed by a broad "virtual community" spanning the geographically dispersed Chinese population in Japan.²⁸² Subscriptions to Chinese-language newspapers (which are often bundled with Chinese satellite TV offers) were common in the war orphan homes I visited for my interviews, and many war orphans and their family members have contributed essays and editorials to major publications like the Chinese Review Weekly (C: *Zhongwen Daobao*), which claims a circulation of 80,000 and is available in Tokyo convenience stores and subway kiosks.²⁸³ While the news coverage is sometimes uneven, the essays, editorials and letters from readers showcase a wide variety of often conflicting perspectives representing the range of Chinese in Japan, from white-collar tech workers to scholars employed at Japanese universities to language-school students, housewives and even illegal laborers. Their letters and essays are a rich source of information on migrant Chinese experience in Japan, and the frequent juxtaposition of sharply conflicting opinions suggests a relative freedom from editorial intervention or censorship (however, criticism of the PRC government is usually muted, and the mainland sympathies and backgrounds of most of these papers' staff members are evident in the journalistic treatments of Taiwan-related issues).

Japanese press discussing the widespread document fraud which led to thousands of Chinese being admitted entry and residence in Japan under the guise of war orphans and their family members. This phenomenon, which was focused on the city of Osaka and led to the subsequent rejection of over a thousand new such applications and the detention and repatriation of many "fake orphans" and their family members, is briefly discussed in Friman (2002, 22-3). However, Friman's account drastically overrepresents the number of "war orphans" by conflating under that term both war orphans and their family members.

²⁸² See Duan (1998b, 1-18) for a concise Chinese-language discussion of the history and current (as of 1998) circumstances of Chinese media in Japan. Beginning with the establishment of the Foreign Student News (C: *Liuxuesheng xinwen*; J: *Ryūgakusei shinbun*) in 1988, the number and variety of Chinese-language publications in Japan have dramatically expanded. There are now about 30 such publications, the largest of which is *Zhongwen Daobao*, mentioned below.

²⁸³ See "Competition up among Chinese Media in Japan" in NSK (Nihon Shinbun Kyokai) News Bulletin Online, Sep. 2002 (<http://www.pressnet.or.jp/newsb/0209b.html>). The article notes that there are also several satellite channels offering Chinese programming and a Chinese language radio station is in the offing. *Zhongwen Daobao* also has a sophisticated online edition: www.chubun.com.

In addition to occasional news reports on the war orphans, reader commentaries in Japan's Chinese language press suggest the ways in which war orphans and their families are viewed by many Chinese migrants. One essay that is especially illuminating in this respect was published in 1999 in the "Reader's Plaza" (*Duzhe Guangchang*) of one of the widest circulating Chinese/Japanese language papers, the Foreign Student News (C: *Liuxuesheng xinwen*). It was sent to the paper in response to an earlier "Reader's Plaza" submission on war orphans entitled "Crow Eulogy" (*Wuya lizan*), which was penned by the friend of an elderly war orphan woman.²⁸⁴ At the beginning of the essay, this war orphan bemoans the fact that she and her husband are both already 60, and their illnesses prevent them from working. "Yet the Japanese person living next door reproaches us: 'you obtain without working [*bu lao er huo*], receiving welfare money [*shenghuo baohu jin*]; it's like a crow on top of a garbage pile – it irritates people [*rang ren taoyan*].' It hurt us so badly to hear that!" she laments.

In the lyrical, moving essay that follows, the sympathetic author then expands on this analogy to crows, discussing a Chinese children's story in which crows play a heroic role, and classical literary references in which crows appear in a positive light. He then moves to enumerate the many reasons why he feels war orphans are "beautiful," including their time-ravaged faces and bodies, their strength in adversity, their bravery in "shouldering the heavy burden/responsibility of history" (*chengshou lishi zhongdan*) and their heartfelt joy at returning to their motherland (Japan). He closes by noting in response to the Japanese neighbor's criticisms that "if you leaf through [*fanyue*] history, then you will understand the orphans; if you possess a grain of conscience, then you will cherish and protect all living things."

One month after this essay appeared, a Chinese reader identifying himself as "Wen Gui" responded with an essay entitled "The Crow's Instinct" (*Wuya de benneng*)²⁸⁵. He begins by noting that he found the original essay both moving and thought-provoking.

²⁸⁴ Inoue Masao, "Wuya zanli: xiangfei canliu gu'er." *Liuxuesheng xinwen* (1/15/1999), p. 19. The author's Japanese name but highly literary Chinese writing style suggests that he is someone who was raised and educated in China but is now a Japanese citizen. It is not clear if he himself is a war orphan or the descendant of one, though either possibility is quite conceivable. The photograph accompanying the article appears to depict a crowd of Japanese waving at an arriving group of relative-seeking war orphans.

²⁸⁵ Wen Gui, "Wuya de benneng: Zai xiangfei canliu gu'er." *Liuxuesheng Xinwen* (2/15/1999), p. 18.

“After coming to Japan,” he writes, “[I] met a photographer friend, elder brother Z.²⁸⁶ It wasn’t long thereafter before he asked me straightaway: ‘Are you a war orphan? If you are, I’m telling you – I hate war orphans more than anyone!’”

As the author explains:

“Z feels that war orphans are the most wretched ‘marginal people’ [*bianyuanren*] and the greatest irritation to Japanese and Chinese. They have concentrated the shortcomings of both Chinese and Japanese in a single body... Z continued by giving me an example: there was a ‘second-generation war orphan’ [*canliu gu’er ershi*] who had come back from the Chinese countryside, and who stole his Japanese neighbor’s underwear. He stole 5 or 6 pairs at once and was discovered. His mother (a real war orphan) berated the Chinese translator who was assisting in the investigation: ‘You are Chinese; why instead of helping us Chinese do you help the Japanese devils [*Riben guizi*]?’ Z says that war orphans are the saddest group of people on earth; not only are they not accepted by Japanese [as Japanese], but in their own hearts they don’t identify with Japan.”

“I didn’t take Z’s sincere warning to heart. As a result, later on I really was cheated by a certain war orphan. That war orphan used a real Japanese name, but spoke virtually no Japanese. The method he used to cheat me was, rather, completely Chinese farmer-style [*wanquan Zhongguo nongmin shi de*] cunning. After that, lots of high-status people [*you shenfen de ren*] warned me: By all means avoid contact with war orphans, most of them are from the Chinese countryside, and their cultural breeding is terrible [*wenhua xiuyang tai cha*].”

“Gradually, I also began to harbor a desire to distance myself from ‘crows’ out of dislike. Everything I say is the absolute, straightforward truth, without any of Mr. Inoue’s elegant diction. My feelings may also similar to the sentiments of many Chinese in Japan.”

²⁸⁶ This is written “Z di” (“little brother Z”); I abbreviate it to “Z” hereafter.

“But one day, a random event made my locked-up heart [*fengsuo de xin*] open wide to crows, and made me joyfully shout: I love you, crows!”

Wen Gui goes on to describe the exact time on November 5th 1998 when, while watching an NHK news broadcast, the sound of pure, Dongbei-accented Chinese caught his attention: it was a live interview with members of a visiting group of relative-seeking war orphans, in which members of the group were expressing their joy at returning at last to their motherland (*zuguo*). Wen was especially moved by the words of one aged woman, who appeared to be from the Chinese countryside. He quotes her as tearfully saying how happy she was to return to her homeland and see how much it had developed. But she laments that “this day has, for me, come too late!” Wen himself is moved to tears upon hearing this, and he rushes outside to walk and reflect upon this. Wen observes that the pain of leaving one’s homeland and family are not unique to war orphans, but are shared by many people, including overseas Chinese and Chinese students abroad. He notes that although war orphans’ pain also includes elements of the war, most of the foster parents of the war orphans viewed them as their own children, and many war orphans did not know of their Japanese parentage until late in life. By then, “living for a long time in China had already fundamentally assimilated their consciousness, and all of their words and actions were 100 percent Sinified [*tamen de yi yan yi xing bai fenzhi bai de Zhongguohua le*].” But when they discover their true origins and become aware of how developed their homeland has become, Wen continues, they are moved to return – and bring over their children and grandchildren -- by the sincere desire to lead a better life. “The war orphans’ move to shift their homes to [their] utterly unknown and hard-hearted [*wanquan mosheng he lengku*] homeland of Japan is so that they, and especially their children, can lead a better life.” Wen recalls the words of the interviewee quoted earlier who despaired at arriving too late to enjoy her homeland’s prosperity, and writes that it is this truthfulness – the desire to enjoy a better material life -- which is so virtuous and beautiful. He comments that there have been Chinese reports of a few war orphans who remained unmoved by money and remained in China; but the reason why “more than 90% are eager to return to Japan” is because of their homeland’s “economic might.” Wen

pointedly observes that “it isn’t because they don’t love their homeland that over 90% of overseas Chinese [*haiwai Huaqiao, Huaren*] aren’t eager to return to settle and live in their homeland. This is a fact. Returning to settle and live in one’s homeland and loving one’s homeland are two separate things; otherwise, China wouldn’t have so many patriotic overseas Chinese.”

It is this true expression of an instinct (*benneng*) for a better (material) life that Wen finds so beautiful. But he stresses that it is this desire – and not patriotism – that moves war orphans to return to Japan. He gives the example of ethnic Koreans that were lured by patriotic propaganda to “return” to North Korea, only to be disappointed. “To speak of patriotism to war orphans is complete deceitfulness; to say that Chinese living overseas do not love their country is, similarly, a lie; the Chinese [*Huaren*] gushing abroad – including myself -- are actually the same as the war orphans. Actually, we are all crows! The instinct of crows has nothing to do with political slogans. Crows’ truth, virtue and beauty lie in their expression of human beings’ true nature – a yearning for an economically abundant life.” Wen then asks, If the war orphans’ “second homeland of China” (*di er zuguo Zhongguo*) were economically strong without compare, and their first homeland was like China, just beginning to develop, “would the crows not love their first homeland in the same way as patriotic overseas Chinese?! In fact, to understand the crows is to understand Overseas Chinese, to understand human nature.” Wen closes by affirming that if, in the 21st century, his own homeland of China’s were to become economically mighty and democratic, then the crows returning home will grow more and more numerous. “I don’t dare to speak for others, but I can guarantee that I too am just a crow looking to lead a more prosperous [*fuyu*] life, it’s as simple as can be. Crows love life, I love crows!”

While superficially an affirmation of the war orphans and their motivation for returning to Japan, this essay also uses war orphans as a foil in order to comment more directly on the author’s experience and (by extension) the experience of (new) overseas Chinese. This is similar to the ways in which both Japanese and old overseas Chinese are used to clarify the role and characteristics of the new migrants, but here the key distinction revolves around patriotism. It is important to note that while Wen affirms the

natural universality of the desire for a materially better life, he is careful to emphasize that this in no way diminishes his patriotism.

For the Chinese relations of war orphans, their kinship proximity to Japanese may intensify the pressure to emphasize their love for their homeland. In an essay in the largest Chinese paper written in the same year as the foregoing two examples, the son-in-law of a war orphan writes a sentimental paean to his home in the Northeast province of Heilongjiang and describes the suffering of his family under Japanese occupation.²⁸⁷ In a dense literary prose style that is also liberally sprinkled with Chinese colloquialisms unique to that region (the text even includes explanatory footnotes for other Chinese readers) the author details his grandfather's status as a "hero" (*yingxiong*) in the fight against the Japanese, who he repeatedly refers to with variations of the common epithet "little Japanese devils" (*xiao Riben guizi*). He notes the painful irony in his marrying the daughter of a Japanese orphan and coming to "the land under the rising sun flag, where all day [I] work and live among a mass of little devils. Fate really toys with people; having lived for a long time [now] with little chance of return, who wouldn't long for the old country, who wouldn't miss their hometown and families?!" The poignancy of the author's predicament is familiar to many in-laws of war orphan families that have chosen to come to Japan, leaving their own blood relations behind in China. However, the author is not as forthcoming as Wen Gui about his motivations in accompanying his wife to Japan in the first place. While, contra Wen's generalization, the motivations of the war orphans themselves vary, my conversations with war orphan children and their families reveal a widely shared desire to capitalize on the war orphans' ethnic (Japanese) connections to take advantage of Japan's perceived economic and educational opportunities. These are very much the same motivations that "Wen Gui" ascribes to Chinese migrants in general.

²⁸⁷ Zhang You, "Wo de jia zai Dongbei Songhuajiang shang." *Zhongwen Daobao*, No. 303 (11/18/1999), p. 22

Conclusion

In the concluding chapter of his ethnography, titled “Memories of the Future,” Liu Xin reflects upon the apparent memory loss of his central interlocutor, the businessman Haihun: “I believe Haihun’s loss of memory was indeed a sign of the disappearance of any sense of yesterday-ness in everyday business life, which is oriented entirely towards the present.”(180) Liu juxtaposes this insensitivity to the past with the example of PRC president Jiang Zemin’s attitude towards history during the latter’s visit to Japan in the autumn of 1998.²⁸⁸ Liu notes that Jiang’s insistence on an official Japanese apology for past wrongs signifies “a particular historical sentiment [that] prioritizes the significance of the past by saying that one must not forget history. By correctly understanding what happened in the past, China and Japan may be able to develop a good future relationship.”²⁸⁹(180) Liu points out that “This is only the tip of a huge iceberg of difference” in Japanese and Chinese perspectives, which led to repeated misunderstanding between the two. Borrowing Joseph R. Leveson’s distinction between “historically (really) significant” and “(merely) historically significant,” Liu then explains this Sino-Japanese difference by arguing that “the history of war and violence was merely *historically* significant (a dead subject for the here and now) for the Japanese officials, but for Jiang it was really historically *significant* (the point of departure for any understanding of the present and the future).”(181, italics in original) Liu asks rhetorically what his purpose is in making this juxtaposition: “It is quite clear that, in terms of relations of oneself to the past, Haihun’s case is closer to the Japanese officials’ indifference to history. In other words, Jiang’s historical sensitivity was perhaps more distant from Haihun than was the Japanese one, *although this does not mean that that Haihun would not when necessary take up the official stance against the Japanese invasion of China.*”(182, emphasis mine)

²⁸⁸ For additional commentary on Jiang’s visit in the context of the “history problem,” see Yang (2002).

²⁸⁹ The vocabulary Liu uses is a colloquial transposition of several Chinese expressions that are ubiquitous in Sino-Japanese debates over the wartime past and its representation in textbooks. These include the expression “correct view of history” (*zhengque de lishi renshi*) and the oft-repeated *Qian shi bu wang, hou shi zhi shi* (History, if not forgotten is a guide for the future.)

We will return to the question of what Liu means by “when necessary,” but to begin with, we must note that with these examples Liu is conflating two different “histories” and socio-cultural contexts, since his discussion of Haihun (in China) focuses on that person’s amnesia regarding his personal, immediate past, whereas the discussion of Jiang and the Japanese officials (in Japan) focuses on a different mode of memory which refers to an implicitly shared, historical past. This slippage occurs because Liu’s ultimate goal is to highlight a contrast between two divergent (Chinese) perspectives on the latter mode of memory and History *in China*. Thus: “*in today’s China* [emphasis mine], what is taken as really historically *significant* in the official world is considered as merely *historically* significant in the Beihai business world. As a result, all of the official slogans and ideologies were turned into jokes, often sexual ones.”(182)

Rather than quibble about Liu’s collapse of temporal modes, I want to emphasize that the geographical context of Japan is of crucial importance here. As I have tried to show in some of the foregoing examples, the sense of ethnic identity propounded by many recent Chinese migrants to Japan is strongly colored by overt references to patriotism and Sino-Japanese history. In my experience with Chinese in Japan, such references have not been joking, much less sexual. They are deadly serious and apparently quite spontaneous, but they often eerily echo the harsh nationalist rhetoric that pervades official discussions of Japanese war atrocities. Surely the state’s role in constraining public discourse and the content of education is to varying degrees reflected in their views. Yang, by contrast, explicitly downplays the state’s role in explicating the motivations for recurring conflicts over the Sino-Japanese “history problem.” “By making state manipulation the main culprit,” he writes, “the China-plays-the-history-card interpretation tends to give Beijing too much credit, for better or worse. It does not explain that often overseas Chinese were more adamant in condemning Japanese militarism and raising issues of reparations [and] it does not explain the activism of Chinese residents in Japan.”²⁹⁰ It is possible that Yang is underestimating the state’s

²⁹⁰ Yang (2002, 21). Yang also refers to an article by the aforementioned Mo Bangfu discussing anti-Japanese activism in Japan and China: Mo Bangfu “Nihon no sensō sekinin Chūgoku de susumu kenkyū no ‘shinchōryū,’” in *Ronza*, May 2000, pp. 146-51.

significance. Or he may downplay it in an attempt to reinforce the image of overseas Chinese scholars (like himself) as free thinkers, unfettered by state hegemony.

The point here is that however one assigns the influence, Japan has a special place in the patriotic narrative of modern China. Upon this foundation of associations, the idealized ethnic character of the historically conscious, patriotic “New Overseas Chinese” is constructed with reference to socio-cultural encounters experienced by Chinese *in* Japan. These include exposure to Japanese prejudice in daily life, consciousness of the widespread image of Chinese criminality, and the need to justify extended overseas residence to oneself and other Chinese (but not, typically, to the Chinese authorities).

This brings us back to the question of when it becomes “necessary” for Haihun to “take up the official stance against the Japanese invasion.” Let there be no ambiguity: the visceral indignation felt by many mainland Chinese concerning the atrocities of the 1931-45 Anti-Japanese War should not be mistaken for a pose that is coolly assumed for personal expediency “when necessary.” This is particularly true in the context of overseas residence in Japan, where examples from Sino-Japanese history and the past experiences of Chinese students in Japan serve as symbolic resources to explain, justify, and ennoble the experiences of Chinese there today.

In closing, however, it is important to view the character of the New Overseas Chinese in transnational terms, as did the scholar with whom this chapter begins. It is important to regard not as an authentic representation of a widespread, transnational ethnic experience, but because it is being widely propounded as such (in this case by a Chinese scholar at an international forum on overseas Chinese.) Although he points to the connection with patriotism, what this Chinese scholar only begins to note is the fact that such transnational constructions – ideas of a particular type of Chinese *diaspora* – erases certain social inequalities and thereby contributes to an socio-economic agenda that may perpetuate these same inequalities. Thus we must ask who “profits” from this harmonization of ethno-nationalistic ideals and materialistic imperatives. As Dirlik (2002, 102-3) has pointed out in his critique of “diaspora,”

“Chinese populations are no less divided by class, gender, ethnic and place differences than other populations. Not the least among those

differences are differences of place and history...[B]oth from a political and an economic perspective, some diasporic Chinese obviously are of greater use than others, and in turn they benefit from the erasure of differences among Chinese, which enables them to speak for all Chinese. Reconceptualization of Chinese populations in terms of diaspora, in other words, serves economic and political class interests.”

It is easier to identify the Chinese economic and political class interests served than it is to see who profits in Japan from the idea of the New Overseas Chinese. It is widely reported that (implicitly, Japanese business) “needs, but” (implicitly, Japanese society) “resists, immigration.”²⁹¹ Does Japanese business need Chinese scholar-patriots? Or does it need the cheap unskilled labor that is criminalized, and therefore rendered more pliant? What are the common interests of Chinese and Japanese economic elites?

Ultimately, we should expect Chinese in Japan to diversify the ways in which they identify and justify their place in their adopted society, and their common cause with specific interests among the ethnic Japanese majority that surrounds them. Although diasporic constructions of Chinese identity may be useful in forming professional associations and drawing social distinctions among Chinese in Japan, the larger question for the future will be the terms under which new Chinese immigrants situate themselves as citizens within Japanese society. In the future, we can expect to see diasporic rhetoric complemented by solidarities of place and history,²⁹² as Chinese immigrants come increasingly to share in, and remember, the spaces and times of their hosts.

²⁹¹ “Insular Japan Needs, but Resists, Immigration,” by Howard W. French in *The New York Times*, National Edition, pp. A1, A3 (7/24/2003).

²⁹² An example of how new solidarities of place and history (shared historical experience) can emerge is offered by the example of post-earthquake Kobe. See Takezawa (2002) for example.

Chapter 7: Beyond Ethnicity to...Advocacy?

In the end we ask the point of beginning. Why write ethnography?²⁹³ Is it primarily a means of social analysis? Or is social change a proper goal of ethnographic fieldwork and writing? Ought we as anthropologists – in our professional capacity – define our work to encourage or even mandate some type of advocacy or activism? These are questions I increasingly ask myself as I define anthropology for the undergraduates that I teach and the scholarly audience that I address in my writing. Even without an explicit agenda or imperative to do so, many cultural anthropologists have a sense that we change society by encouraging tolerance. It is assumed that we do this by evenhandedly documenting diversity, and by recording the inequality that so often accompanies difference. This effort supposedly undergirds what some regard as anthropology's greatest contribution to tolerance, the idea of cultural relativism. Strictly speaking, of course, cultural relativism is in practice a self-contradiction that only makes the question of advocacy all the more pressing: what are the values (if any) that should guide our inquiry?

The answer is, though accuracy is valued (and verisimilitude is tolerated) in our research and writing, we are not taught to value activism. Let us ask, then, whether accuracy or activism is best served by adopting the same categories whose contents we critique, the categories of culture, ethnicity and identity. Do we need these categories in order to make moral determinations about justice? Do we need them in order to instill and maintain our values? More pressingly, perhaps, are they useful or counterproductive in undoing the harm that has been wrought in their names? As Japan, the United States and other countries tout the virtues of multiculturalism or multiethnicity, the example of colonial Manchuria reminds us of how similar categories can also create and reinforce invidious mutual exclusions.²⁹⁴ Dirlik's (2002) trenchant critique of both diaspora and hybridity is just one recent testimony to the risk of perpetuating and

²⁹³This discussion does not touch upon the obvious corollary of *how* to "do" ethnographic research and write-up, questions to which my graduate education provided few explicit answers. But perhaps this is partly a laudable reflection of anthropology's chronic openness to the legitimacy of variety...

²⁹⁴ See Tamanai (2000) and Young (1999) for discussion of Manchurian racial classification.

justifying the very inequalities that we seek to challenge and qualify by uncritically retaining the categories in which such distinctions were originally cast.

While focusing my inquiry upon “ethnicity,” therefore, I have hoped to move beyond it. I bear in mind that although the people discussed in the preceding pages may be identified (and identify others) in distinctively ethnic terms, what moves them and moves us most deeply in their stories and experiences is not “ethnicity,” but justice and injustice, suffering, loss, being understood and accepted. “Ethnicity” cannot contain all these sentiments and detail. Thus it is appropriate that we move beyond it, and the example of another misused category—that of “identity”—suggests the motivation and means for doing so.

Japanese Identity and Identification

The experiences of the war orphans might appear to present a natural opportunity for anthropological reflection upon the definition of Japanese “identity.” Of Japanese descent but culturally Chinese, war orphans pose a paradox for conventional Japanese definitions of Japaneseness that rest upon an implicit (and often explicit) equivalency between blood and culture. Yet rather than engage in a re-definition of Japanese (or Chinese) “identity,” I have chosen instead to focus upon the *practices of identification* that structure the lives of not only war orphans but their families, the Japanese volunteers that assist them, and the “New Overseas Chinese” who, like the war orphans and their families, have recently migrated from People’s Republic of China to Japan. My primary justification for doing so is the fact that practices of identification are far better suited to rigorous historical and discursive analysis than the inexorably shifting pseudo-category of “identity.” However, if I do not *begin* with the concept of identity, identity’s enduring appeal in both anthropology and studies of Japan persuades me to conclude by contextualizing the war orphans within these trends.

Anthropology seems smitten with the notion of (cultural) identity, and in Japan — where studies of Japanese uniqueness are popular reading -- this predilection finds a sympathetic object. Ruth Benedict’s famous wartime study of Japanese identity, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, has sold far more copies in Japanese translation than it

has in the English-language original. In fact, sociological surveys of Japan's postwar society often mention the solipsistic fascination with Japanese uniqueness and homogeneity that is exemplified in this discursive and literary genre, which is known as *Nihonjinron*, or "discussions of Japanese(ness)."²⁹⁵ This preoccupation – which has been discussed using terms such as "civil religion"²⁹⁶ and "cultural nationalism"²⁹⁷ – may be seen as a reaction to both the traumas and the triumphs of Japan's 20th century history, namely the cataclysmic experience of defeat and occupation during World War II and the spectacular economic growth Japan that followed. Indeed, Japan's extraordinary postwar economic growth has long served as the preeminent justification for defining Japanese uniqueness.²⁹⁸ Belief in this "civil religion" necessitates a leap of faith, and the flourishing postwar economy (which also flattened out prewar class divisions) provided the springboard. American writings seeking to explain this economic transformation often invoked the notion of Japanese identity or, in one book's phrasing, *The Japanese Mind*.²⁹⁹

As we might expect, there has been a feedback loop between these convergent preoccupations, and both Japanese and non-Japanese scholars have drawn attention to the danger of this dynamic. In a recent essay, the Japanese anthropologist Aoki Tamotsu has publicly called upon non-Japanese social scientists avoid complicity in these "Japanese uniqueness" notions and work harder to debunk them.³⁰⁰ Interestingly, Aoki praises Ruth Benedict as exemplary in this regard, citing her insistence upon cultural relativism.³⁰¹ Whether or not one agrees with him, Aoki's plea suggests that the idea of a bio-cultural

²⁹⁵ See for example Hendry (2003, 19) and Sugimoto (2003, 2-4). Comprehensive analyses of *Nihonjinron* include Befu (2001), Dale (1984) and Yoshino (1992) in English and Aoki (1990) in Japanese.

²⁹⁶ Befu (1993, 127)

²⁹⁷ Yoshino (1992)

²⁹⁸ Befu writes that it was in the late 1960s, following a postwar decade or two of "depressed soul-searching" (124) that "the majority of *Nihonjinron* literature began to discuss the unique characteristics of Japan as its strength, the basis of its economic success." (1993, 125).

²⁹⁹ Christopher (1984).

³⁰⁰ See Aoki (1990) for a discussion of the significance of Benedict's work on Japan.

³⁰¹ The fact that, as Geertz (1998) points out in *Works and Lives*, Benedict's analysis is fundamentally essentializing just goes to prove the danger of using culture (or ethnicity, or "identity") as an analytical unit to begin with.

Japanese essence remains tenaciously entrenched nearly six decades after Benedict's book was published.

As a social phenomenon *Nihonjinron* is thus the product of specific historical and economic circumstances, but as an explanatory paradigm it is fundamentally ahistorical, since it describes an unchanging, homogeneous ethno-national essence that is rooted in a primordial past. Lie, Oguma and others have amply demonstrated that this construction of Japanese homogeneity occludes the historical fact of Japanese imperialism and the real diversity³⁰² of Japanese society before, during and after the war. But such revelations do not in and of themselves pose a challenge to orthodox notions of ethnic Japanese uniqueness and uniformity. This is partially due to the small numbers of Japan's minority populations, and their lack of political clout. Harumi Befu, perhaps the most incisive and prolific analyst of *Nihonjinron*, notes that "because the ethnic Japanese are not only numerically but politically dominant, they are able to impose their ethnic primordiality as the official identity of the nation."³⁰³ Moreover, ethnic Japanese encounters with "foreigners" in Japan may only reinforce feelings of *intraethnic* uniformity and the need for a framework to explain these feelings.

Befu's use of "ethnic primordiality" refers of course to Clifford Geertz's famous 1963 articulation of "primordial sentiments," which Befu rephrases as "the symbolic importance accorded to language, religion, 'community,' 'shared blood,' 'common history,' and 'shared tradition' in defining the ethnic group and establishing the identity of its members."³⁰⁴ As Befu notes, in the Japanese case this takes the form of an "isomorphism of geography, race, language and culture" in which "an implicit genetic determinism" leaves Japanese "incredulous" when a person of Japanese descent does not demonstrate the same thinking, behavior or language proficiency of a Japanese born and raised in Japan.³⁰⁵ Anthropologist Dorinne Kondo described this attitude in the

³⁰² Here I refer to diversity in not just ethnic background (i.e. putative descent) but diversity in language, social beliefs and practices and socio-economic stratification as well.

³⁰³ Befu (1993, 129)

³⁰⁴ Befu (1993, 128). The Geertz essay to which he refers is "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States." In Geertz, ed. (1963) *Old Societies and New States*. New York: Free Press

³⁰⁵ Befu (1993, 115-116)

Introduction to her 1990 ethnography *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourse of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*:

“As Japanese American, I created a conceptual dilemma for the Japanese I encountered. For them I was a living oxymoron, someone who was both Japanese and not Japanese. Their puzzlement was all the greater since most Japanese people I knew seemed to adhere to an eminently biological definition of Japaneseness. Race, language and culture and intertwined, so much so that any challenge to this conceptual schema—a white person who speaks flawlessly idiomatic and unaccented Japanese, or a person of Japanese ancestry who cannot—meets with what generously could be described as unpleasant reactions...Japanese Americans and others of Japanese ancestry born overseas are faced with exasperation and disbelief. How can someone who is racially Japanese lack ‘cultural competence’? During my first few months in Tokyo, many tried to resolve this paradox by asking which of my parents was ‘really’ American. Indeed, it is a minor miracle that those first months did not lead to an acute case of agoraphobia, for I knew that once I set foot outside the door, someone somewhere (a taxi driver? A salesperson? A bank clerk?) would greet one of my linguistic mistakes with an astonished ‘Eh?’ I became all too familiar with the series of expressions that would flicker over those faces: bewilderment, incredulity, embarrassment, even anger, at having to deal with this odd person who looked Japanese and therefore human, but who must be retarded, deranged, or—equally undesirable in Japanese eyes—Chinese or Korean.”

As Kondo’s experience³⁰⁶ suggests, the greatest threats to *Nihonjinron* orthodoxy may come not from beyond the boundaries of Japaneseness but from within, in the form

³⁰⁶ Note her assumptions about how Japanese “view” Koreans and Chinese. The reactions that Kondo describes might be less extreme now, approximately two decades of immigration later.

of individuals and groups that are at once seemingly “Japanese” in appearance and kinship or descent terms, yet demonstrably “Other” in cultural terms (language, values, behavior and so forth.)

Encounters with such “Other Japanese” have markedly increased over the past three decades of Japanese “internationalization” (*kokusaika*), during which large numbers of Japanese have gone abroad for work and leisure and the number of immigrants to Japan has also shown a dramatic increase. In one sense, internationalization has been a catalyst for the development and (often government-led) propagation of *Nihonjinron* ideology. For example, Befu writes that “as Japan internationalizes, accepting foreigners and adapting foreign culture to Japanese soil on the one hand and on the other going abroad and establishing Japanese economic investments overseas, Japanese increasingly become aware of the need to define themselves and their culture.”³⁰⁷ In another sense, however, internationalization has increasingly confronted citizens of Japan with “Other Japanese” that confound such definitions.³⁰⁸

Yoshino (1992) has used British sociologist Sandra Wallman’s concept of “boundary dissonance” to explain how certain types of Japanese have unsettled the framework of Japan’s “cultural nationalism.” Yoshino specifically refers to *kikoku shijo*, or “returnee youth,” young Japanese that have spent time abroad and consequently differ in behavior and linguistic proficiency from their Japanese classmates. Other sources of dissonance can be readily identified. In particular, the large-scale labor migration of Latin American *Nikkeijin* (people of Japanese descent) to Japan since 1990 has provided a vivid object lesson in the heterogeneity of people claiming Japanese descent. Takezawa suggests that the increased presence and visibility of culturally diverse people of Japanese descent such as the Japanese Brazilians, “blurred a boundary once believed fixed an essential, the boundary between ‘Japanese’ and ‘non-Japanese.’” The growing identification of Nikkei as foreigners (*gaikokujin*) “demonstrates that the ideology of

³⁰⁷ Befu (1993, 120)

³⁰⁸ As Harrell notes, Befu himself is in this category, having been born in the US but partially educated in Japan.

sharing the same ‘blood’ is losing its importance in determining how Japanese people determine ‘Japaneseness’ and perceive difference.” (Takezawa 2002, 326)

A number of scholars have suggested that I use Latin American Nikkei as a useful comparison with the war orphans, since both are identified as people of Japanese descent. But as Takezawa’s quote shows, descent appears to be growing less compelling as an indice of solidarity, though its legal significance (in determining citizenship, inheritance, and so forth) endures. Indeed, the situations of Nikkei Brazilians and war orphans are strikingly different in many significant respects.³⁰⁹ That said, both vividly embody the disjuncture between culture and descent. Will their example encourage greater numbers of Japanese to think beyond the *Nihonjinron* model of Japanese identity as a stereotype? Or will it merely provoke a redrawing of the orthodox category?

In either event, the foregoing discussion is not primarily intended as yet another testimony to the heterogeneity of Japanese society or “identity.” Instead, I have sought to highlight and historicize the *terms* of ethnic identification, its conditions and its language. For it is the terms under which war orphans and their children are (or are not) identified as Japanese—the prerequisites, perquisites and terminological distinctions—that seem to make the differences. Moreover, in contrast to “identity,” which is too vague and contingent to serve as a robust category of analysis, practices of identification can be unpacked and historically contextualized to reveal the sources of their explanatory power and the objective effects of their categorical method. In the case of the war orphans, the terms under which they have been identified as Japanese have a profound and to some

³⁰⁹ There is first and foremost the circumstance of being orphaned, in a country aggrieved with one’s own country of birth, no less. Then there are the cultural differences one might expect of people raised in such different environments as urban Brazil and rural Northeastern China. They are distributed in different areas of Japan, with Latin American Nikkei in large manufacturing centers outside of Tokyo, Osaka and Yokohama where the majority of war orphans are concentrated. Unlike war orphans and their families, most Japanese Brazilians are well educated and leave good paying white-collar jobs to come to Japan and work. Unlike Latin American Nikkei, a large percentage of war orphans (and to a lesser extent, their children’s families) live in low-income housing. What Nikkei Brazilians and war orphans broadly share (in addition to Japanese descent and its concomitant administrative perks) are their circumstances as immigrants to a foreign culture that Latin American Nikkei have the most similarity to war orphans and their families. These shared issues include the difficult educational circumstances of their children in Japanese schools, language difficulties, and the intended short stay that grows into the repeatedly deferred return, a pattern shared by many Latin American labor migrants as well as the families of many war orphan children, who may initially plan just a short stay for economic reasons.

extent quantifiable effect upon their lives. Among many possible outcomes, these terms of identification can make the objective difference between either full enfranchisement as a Japanese citizen and state-supported residence in Japan, or the effective inability to even set foot in the country.

However, to write exclusively of visa categories, welfare benefits, passports and citizenship would overlook how identification can also make the subjective difference between satisfaction and despair. Similarly, privileging concrete categories of analysis and theoretical constructs risks the erasure of nuances and divergences that don't neatly fit the model. How does the anthropologist balance these concerns for both analytical rigor and fidelity to the material?

A comparison of two very recent ethnographies of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan illustrates two responses to this question. Daniel T. Linger's *No One Home: Brazilian Selves Remade in Japan* is, in the words of its author, a "person-centered ethnography" that identifies its informants through the use of extensive excerpts from interview transcripts that are largely unaccompanied by analysis or social contextualization.³¹⁰ By contrast, Takeyuki Tsuda's *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants in Japan* might be characterized as a "theory-centered" ethnography in which succinct representations of interview material are illustrative accessories to the author's theoretically informed analytical framework. In a review of Linger's book that was published in the *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Tsuda faults Linger for "insufficient interpretive, analytical and theoretical engagement." As Tsuda acknowledges, Linger's method of presenting his data (which Tsuda characterizes as "raw and undigested") is in fact a deliberate and well-intentioned attempt to preserve the "unique specificity and complexity of people and events in favor of generalizations and mechanistic explanations." Tsuda suggests that this is irresponsible: "Some might say Linger has chosen to abandon his professional obligation as an anthropologist to analyze and interpret field data." Reflecting upon Linger's resolve to emphasize the irreducible specificity of his informants, Tsuda wonders "whether anyone, besides narrow specialists

³¹⁰ See Linger (2001)

studying Japanese Brazilian return migrants, would find a book that primarily contains such detailed interviews with this or that individual to be very interesting.”

Whether one agrees with Tsuda or not, the issues he raises are valid concerns for any ethnographer. To his list of concerns, however, I would add the crucial question of appropriation. Of course any use of interview material might be construed as an appropriation of the informant’s voice to some theoretical or rhetorical end. However, the intimacy and poignancy of war orphan experience requires special caution for the ethnographer and others who seek to speak for them. The controversy over the “historical novel” *Child of the Vast Land* demonstrates how deeply war orphans can be affected by a perceived misrepresentation.

Anthropology and/as Advocacy

It is common for fieldworkers to feel an indebtedness to their informants and a desire to somehow reciprocate the gift of their thoughts and time. Perhaps this encourages anthropologists to be more receptive to advocacy on their informants’ behalf. Some have argued that research and advocacy can be mutually reinforcing. The anthropologist David Maybury-Lewis, founder of the indigenous culture advocacy organization Cultural Survival, has written of the inherent harmony between the exercise of anthropology and an engagement in advocacy.

“Anthropologists used to see themselves as lone scientists who dissected exotic cultures and presented the truth of their systems to a scholarly audience. They now know that they are not alone in their work, that the truth of another culture is never monolithic, that better and better approximations to it emerge from rigorous analysis and vigorous debate, in which the members of the cultures studied increasingly participate. Anthropologists used to think that advocacy was ‘unscientific’ and would undermine their scholarly credibility. Many of us now believe that it is precisely the most rigorous anthropological analysis which impels us toward advocacy and provides us with the tools to engage in it...this type

of advocacy is intimately related to what I consider to be perhaps the most important impulse behind anthropology itself—the interest in social theory and moral philosophy. Boas and Durkheim...did not devote themselves to their professions just to do science [:]...they practiced, as Boas once put it, ‘science in the service of a higher tolerance.’”³¹¹

For citizens of a country in which volunteer activity is still relatively limited and advocacy among scholars is rare, it is remarkable how many Japanese scholars of war orphan issues have been involved in advocacy and volunteer activities. The Japanese historian Araragi Shinzo, editor of a fine compilation of scholarship on war orphans and their families, notes how nearly all of the academic contributors in his volume had encountered the war orphans and other repatriates through volunteering, and this contact constituted the motivation for their research. He describes these volunteer/scholars as “practitioners” and enumerates their contacts with war orphans as including teaching in Japanese language schools and working in local administration as a guidance counselor (*seikatsu shidōin*). In speaking of his own involvement in volunteering on the war orphans’ behalf, he describes it as almost compelled by the nature of the fieldwork. Doing research on war orphans is full of difficulties, he stresses, noting the scarcity of research thus far. In particular, the language barrier and the hectic schedules of the war orphans make interviewing difficult.

“Moreover, [the scarcity of research] is probably also because even if one took it up as a research topic, the problems were so ‘raw’ [*namanamashii*] ...that continuing the research involved too many difficulties. In the presence of repatriates from China who were busy with their problem-filled existence in Japan, a researcher either volunteered or left the field. I’ve been interrogated before as to whether I was ‘an ally [*mikata*] (who will help resolve our problems), or an enemy.’ In the presence of these people, who were desperate to resolve the urgent problems in their daily

³¹¹ Maybury-Lewis (1993, 23).

lives, it was exceedingly difficult to do an ‘insensitive’ [*mushinkei na*] questionnaire survey...”(Araragi 2000, 6).

Araragi is just one among a number of Japanese researchers who have conducted research in conjunction with volunteer activities (Chapter 5 introduces others.) It does not diminish the commitment or service of such scholars to note that war orphans are situated in a nexus of social services that often includes non-governmental volunteer groups engaged in language teaching or other forms of assistance. The activities of these groups—in the form of Japanese language classes in particular—serve as many Japanese people’s first encounter with war orphans and their families. These groups offer Japanese researchers a relatively convenient means of meeting with war orphans and conducting research on them, a method shared by Japanese researchers (and graduate students in particular) that wish to study other immigrant groups. War orphans differ from other immigrant groups, however, in the amount of political activism that surrounds their concerns (though an increasingly smaller number of war orphans and Japanese are inclined to participate in such activism.)

Although my fieldwork included volunteering at language classes and participating in political activities such as signature gathering events, I doubt such brief interventions did much to change the status quo. They changed me; they showed me that it was possible and even desirable to combine a form of direct assistance with my research. But they still leave me deeply indebted to the people that gave me their time and shared their experiences. Now, an ocean away, I have some stories and data to construct an interpretation that my informants and most Japanese cannot and will not read. Under these circumstances, can ethnography involve reciprocity, or advocacy? Can it serve the people that made it possible? If not material change, is there a satisfaction that can be effected through inscription, a solace in print for people who have suffered such profound erasure? Or is this too a case of mistaken identity, another mis-apprehension and -representation of lives beyond my grasp?

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