

**Active Older Adults in Contemporary Japan**  
**- Navigating Family Relationships and Independence**

現代日本の元気な高齢者  
— 家族との関わり様式と自分の世界とのバランス

**A dissertation presented**  
**by**  
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**to**  
**Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies**  
**in candidacy for the degree of**  
**Doctor of Philosophy**  
**in the subject of**  
**International Studies**

**Waseda University**  
**Tokyo, Japan**  
**June 2013**

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## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the informants who I have given of their time to share their life stories with me. They have made this dissertation possible and they have also inspired me with their insights and personal strength to live such an active life.

Next I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Glenda S. Roberts of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies for her four years of tutelage, support and encouragement. I would also like to thank the other members of my examining committee, Associate Professor Gracia Liu-Farrer of Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Ruth Campbell, MSW, of the University of Tokyo, Institute of Gerontology, and Associate Professor Yumi Hashizume of University of Tsukuba, Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, for their critique, advice, support and encouragement.

I am also grateful to all my friends who helped in introducing informants to me. I would like to make special mention of two of them, Mrs. Mitsuru Kobayashi and Ms. Dukin Lim, for opening so many doors for me. Last but not least, I would like to thank all my friends and family who have helped me in many ways during the writing of this dissertation and their kind encouragement that has spurred me on to the very last minute.

## Abstract

The term “Aged Society” (*kōreishakai*) invokes more negative images than positive images in Japan. Images include a pension system unable to cope with such a large aged population, demented elderly and suffering family caregivers, and abandoned elderly and lonely deaths. On the other hand, Japan has a large number of centenarians who attract the attention of scientists and researchers who want to investigate the secret to a long life. Although many older people do not like to be called “elderly” (*kōreisha*), when one enquires the elderly person’s age, he or she often answers with pride, giving the image that he or she has done well to live to such an old age. This results in contradicting and ambivalent feelings towards the elderly in Japan.

In the past, studies of the elderly have focused on the period near the end of life when care is needed by them. As life expectancy of the Japanese continued to rise, so has the disease-free life expectancy. The Japanese elderly can expect to live more than seventy years without impairment, and not requiring care (Cabinet Office, 2012). The elderly have traditionally depended on family for their later years. Hashimoto (1996) found that the Japanese adopted a “protective” approach in the care of its elderly. They assumed the elderly to be needy and it was the responsibility of the younger generation to pay back care as an obligation. Since this research and numerous others, Japan established the Long Term Care Insurance system in 2000 with the objective of supporting the elderly to be independent. Now with the system in operation for more than ten years, has the elderly person in Japan become independent and has the family changed its protective approach towards the elderly?

This research seeks to understand how active elderly people or “active older adults” maintain an independent lifestyle, how independent of the family are they and what they expect of the future. It is based on a sample of thirty-five urban older adults aged 60 to 85 who are active (*genki*), that is, not requiring any formal or informal care and eleven younger adults aged 30 to 59 who have parents meeting these conditions.

A qualitative research methodology, using semi-structured interviews was conducted from June 2009 to December 2010. The interviews covered questions formulated around the Active Aging framework established by the World Health Organization. The questions focused on daily lifestyles, family structure and relationships with their children, and expectations of the future. For the children, questions were focused on their parents, covering the same areas.

Results found that the older adults were financially independent and led active lifestyles that involved both work and leisure activities. All of them were working hard to maintain both their physical and mental health in order not to be a burden to others. Although they had a vibrant social network, especially in the case of the women, only a few would actually want to depend on their friends or neighbors in case of need. Many also said that they would not want to put the burden of care upon their children. They preferred to handle everything by themselves, perhaps with the support of services available through the Long Term Care Insurance.

The older adults have therefore taken a strong stand towards their own independence. In fact some of the older adults demanded independence of their unmarried children as well and asked them to move out of their homes around the mid-twenties. However, other older adults continued to allow their children to live at home and yet others had to deal with problems faced by their already married children who had returned home. Therefore, even though the older adults desired independence and worked hard to maintain it, some of them had to navigate around children who continued to be dependent. It was also found that both parents and children were reticent in expressing their feelings, possibly causing the older adult to decide not to depend on their children in later life.

This generation of older adults has shown strong determination to be independent and they have shown their adaptation and resilience to navigate the intricate family relationships to maintain their own independence, their own world to craft a better later life for themselves. As they grow older, they will need to adjust to physical and mental changes but with adaptations and support of family, they can continue to age actively.

### **Technical Note**

The modified Hepburn method is used in the Romanization of Japanese words. Macrons are used to depict long vowels, except in cases where common Japanese words have already been adopted into English, such as Tokyo.

All names in this dissertation are pseudonyms to preserve anonymity.

Japanese names are given in the order of last name followed by first name. I use the last name for reference with exceptions in cases where I discuss different members of the same family in which case I use their first name throughout since they share the same family name. The names are suffixed with “*san*” as a polite form of address to the older person. It is equivalent to Mr. or Mrs.

The ages of the informants and their family members are provided in brackets next to their names to enable the reader to get a clearer context of the circumstances surrounding the informants.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

The term “Aged Society” (*kōreishakai*) invokes more negative images than positive images in Japan. Images that come straight to the mind include a pension system that may not be able to cope with such a large aged population, demented elderly and suffering family caregivers, inadequate public care services, and abandoned elderly and lonely deaths, among others. On the other hand, Japan has a large number of centenarians with the longest living ranked among the top in the world. These centenarians attract the attention of scientists and researchers who want to investigate the secret to a long life. Although many older people do not like to be called “elderly” (*kōreisha*), when one enquires the elderly person’s age, he or she often answers with pride, giving the image that he or she has done well to live to such an old age.

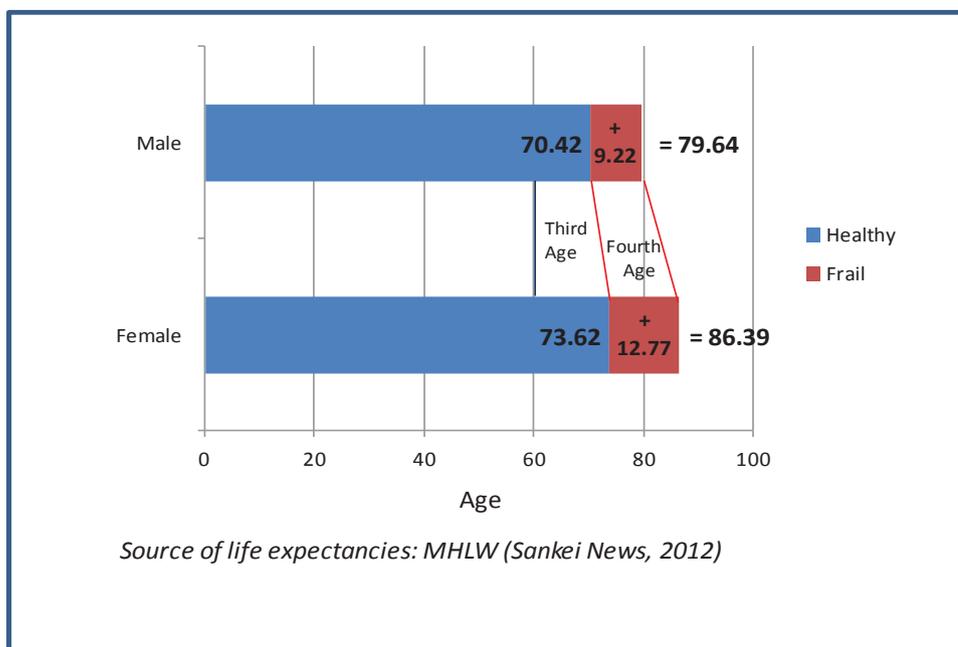
These contradictory and ambivalent feelings about getting old and about being elderly are often invoked selectively depending on the situation at hand and also depending on news events popularized by the media at that time. Towards the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, the media was rife with news of “missing centenarians”, “dying alone” and “society without ties” (*muenshakai*), when it was discovered that pensions have continued to be paid to some elderly who could not be found or were already dead for many years. The fact that insufficient procedures to report death could be a matter to be looked into was not taken up so much by the media than the sensationalization of the “cold and unfeeling” society that Japan is. This long media run was abruptly interrupted by the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011. The plight of the elderly who could not escape the tsunami because of their physical limitations was viewed with sympathy as it was a natural disaster and not “man-made” by family or society. Positive images were also invoked as many older people showed their resilience to survive with what was available on top of helping with rescue and volunteer activities after the disaster. The buzzword changed from “society without ties” (*muenshakai*) to “bonds of love” (*kizuna*).

Amidst this confusion of images of the elderly, what is the real, down to earth situation of the elderly population in Japan? Unfortunately, it would be impossible to have a full understanding of the

situation because Japan has an elderly population that totals thirty million, the highest in the world. Moreover, as scholars have found out, the elderly population is not homogeneous at all. Unlike the early stages in life, like infancy and childhood, the later stages of life are much more varied and diversified as the elderly have gone through different life courses for sixty years and more. It will, therefore, be difficult to generalize about the elderly even if we divide the elderly population up by social class, or economic status, or cohort. Nonetheless, it would be possible to take a small bite at a time and look at a small portion of the elderly population.

In June 2012, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (hereinafter referred to as MHLW) announced that the disease free life expectancy for men in Japan has increased to 70.42 years and for women, 73.62 years (Sankei News, 2012, June 1). That is to say, Japanese elderly can expect to live a life without impairment, not requiring care and not being bedridden for more than 70 years, which is again, among the highest in the world. With life expectancy of Japanese men at 79.64 years and women at 86.39 years (Cabinet Office, 2012), the gaps from disease free life expectancy are 9.22 years and 12.77 years respectively. This difference signifies the “unhealthy” or frail period. If this period increases, it means costs of caregiving and medical expenses would increase but conversely, if this gap can be shortened, it would mean an increase in the quality of life for the elderly, as well as a lightening of the burden of caregiving and medical costs. The various life expectancies are illustrated in the following figure (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Total Life Expectancy and Disease Free Life Expectancy



Research in the U.S.A. found that today’s 70-year-olds are comparable to 65-year-olds who lived thirty years ago. This suggests that in the past thirty years or so, same-aged older people in developed countries have gained approximately five “good” years of life. They have fewer physical disabilities that affect their competence in everyday functioning than earlier cohorts of the same age (Baltes and Smith, 2003, p.126). The HSBC’s Future of Retirement Survey in 2007 of twenty-one countries that included Japan found that “those in their 60s and 70s are healthier, happier and fitter than before” and in terms of how they feel and what they are capable of, “70 can be said to be the new 50” (HSBC, 2007).

Carr and Komp (2011) used the concept of third age to signify “the period of healthy retirement in later years” (p. 4). The concept of third age and fourth age have been discussed by scholars before (for example, Baltes and Smith, 2003; Oda, 2003). “Third-agers” are those who stay active and productive in their healthy later years after retirement. They are contrasted against “Fourth-agers” who have become physically frail and need support from others. Carr and Komp emphasized the importance of properly understanding the lived experience of older individuals who presumably enjoy the phase of the third age,

as well as those who are not able to do so. It is important to understand how the “Third agers” maintain this state and how they are able to move forward into later life. Therefore, I have selected this part of the elderly population for my research.

Out of this third age population, I have decided not to find any specific community as my field site. There are active elderly participating in community activities like senior clubs, senior universities or just community organized classes. However, I believe that there are many more elderly who may not actively participate in such community activities. Yet, they are healthy, active and independent in their own ways. As they are healthy and do not cost the state much money in caregiving and medical costs, they may not receive attention from the state and even from their family and friends. Therefore, I am looking for elderly persons who are living mundane, ordinary lives (*heibon na seikatsu*). They may not achieve great things but in their own small ways, continue to contribute to their families and society. In order to reach these elderly, I adopted the snow-ball sampling method and used semi-structured interviews to understand the life stories of the informants. I will describe the methodology of my research later in this chapter.

The objectives of my research are to understand:

- (1) how these older adults maintain an active and independent lifestyle,
- (2) how independent of the family are they, and
- (3) what they expect of their future.

### **Definitions and Scope of the Study**

For the rest of this dissertation, I will use the term “older adult” instead of “elderly” to refer to the older population aged 60 years and older. To be labeled as “elderly” or “*kōreisha*” in Japanese is not something that Japanese older adults like. In my initial version of a research brochure to be given to informants, I used the term “mid-autumn” (*chūshū*) and one of my informants told me that it was a term that should never be used. Instead, she advised me to use “*iki iki ikiteiru*” which means “living vibrantly”. I revised the research brochure to use the term “senior” for the older adult and titled it “Vitality of the

Senior Generation” (*shinia sedai no katsuryoku*) (See Appendix B). As it turned out, I managed to gather more informants with the second version of the brochure. In keeping with academic writing in the field of Gerontology, I use the term “older adult” in this dissertation to refer to the elderly person. However, when governmental systems or documents or scholar works are referred to, the word “elderly” will be retained to preserve the original texts referenced.

The age of 65 is most commonly used in surveys and research projects as the cut-off point for the aged population (for example, United Nations, Cabinet Office of Japan). However, there is no single definition used world-wide and the age of 60 is also often found in publications (for example, World Health Organization). For this research, I have chosen the age of 60 as a cut-off point for definition as an older adult because traditionally in Japan (and in Asia) the sixtieth birthday is a major milestone in acquiring “senior” status and is known as *kanreki* in Japanese. The sixtieth year is when the East Asian zodiacal signs complete one full cycle (Plath, 1975). According to Linhart (2008), the age limit of sixty was instituted in the new civil code of 1897. It was the age:

at which a person was allowed to retire without giving special reasons such as illness for early retirement. The idea of *kanreki*, a kind of rebirth at sixty, when the sexagenary year cycle which began with one’s birth is completed, might be behind the new importance given to age 60 as a watershed. ...Consequently the concept of social old age was from then on clearly bound to chronological age: people over the age of 60 were considered to be elderly. (p. 126)

Adopting the definition used by Shanas (1979), “family” is defined as a group of individuals to whom they are related by blood or marriage, whereas “household” includes people who are living together under the same roof and may or may not be part of a family as defined (p. 4-5). Household (*setai*) is officially defined in Japan as a group of people sharing a kitchen (Rebick and Takenaka, 2006, p.4). Both

family and household are not static as each may increase or decrease over time, for example, decrease of family caused by death or increase caused by birth or marriage. Household or co-residence will also change over time through death, or marriage or other events, like going off to college.

In addition, I focus on “active” older adults (*genki na kōreisha*) in this research. “Active” can be translated to “*genki na*” in Japanese whereas “healthy” is “*kenkō na*” which has a connotation of being certified with a clean bill of health medically. As I did not include any medical assessment for my informants, I use “active older adults” in this dissertation to mean those who “do not require any formal or informal care services”. They are not institutionalized but are living in the community. Informants may have chronic diseases like high blood pressure or may have suffered some medical crisis and undergone some operations previously but there are no physical impairments that limit their mobility at this point in time.

I will use the term “third age” to refer to the period of their lives from retirement to the point where they require formal or informal care services on a regular basis. Once they required formal or informal care services on a regular basis, they enter into their “fourth age”, the period of frailty.

I have also targeted informants living in urban areas. Using snow-ball sampling, I recruited informants living in the Tokyo Metropolis (23 special wards and Western Tokyo or Tama Area) and Kanagawa prefecture (including the cities of Yokohama and Yokosuka) and one city in Tochigi prefecture.

Further, I have also recruited informants who are younger than 60 and have parents who are active and at least 60 years old. I refer to them as “adult children” or “child generation” in this dissertation.

### **Previous Studies related to the Older Adult**

Literature relevant to the study of older adults is multi-disciplinary. It broadly includes literature from the fields of gerontology, anthropology, sociology and demographic studies. In this research, I have also included literature in Japanese studies and I have referenced literature in both English and Japanese.

Previous ethnographic studies of the older adult and his or her family in Japan have focused on

specific research field sites. The following studies related to family structures and arrangement for care, inter-generational re-engagement, spatial living in neighborhoods, social participation, and the myth of “family collapse”.

*Family structures and arrangement for care*

Takie Lebra’s study of Japanese women in the 1970s in a seaside city she called Shimizu had a chapter dedicated to the later years, defined as from middle-age onwards (Lebra, 1984). The traditional stem family system (*ie*)<sup>1</sup> was still prevalent and co-residence was high. On residential arrangements, she found that

children’s postmarital residence pattern indicates some change from that of the mothers.

No longer is it taken for granted that the successor son and his wife come to live with his parents upon marriage. The parents tend to allow the young couple to enjoy their ‘honeymoon’ by themselves. (p. 262)

A more important determinant is the location of the son’s work which is usually in an urban center. Nonetheless, this is a temporary arrangement. “As the parents become aged and the mother is widowed, the two generations tend to draw together”. Seventeen out of thirty-two cases in her sample were co-residential, with the mother’s age being sixty or over. Out of the remaining fifteen, some anticipate co-living sometime in the future and some have children living nearby and only three chose to live alone (Lebra, 1984, p. 262-263).

In the early 1980s, sociologist Akiko Hashimoto did a comparative study of older adults in Japan’s Westside Odawara and America’s West Haven (Hashimoto, 1996). She presented an account of how culture impacted a society’s patterns of support for the older adult. She concluded that Americans adopt a

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<sup>1</sup> See explanation in Chapter 2.

“contingency” approach in which the older adult seeks help when the need arises. In contrast, the Japanese first assumes the older adults to be needy and believes it is the responsibility of the younger generation to pay back care as an obligation. She called this the “protective” approach. She also predicted that “the fundamental nature of the social contract in these societies is unlikely to change dramatically in the foreseeable future” (p. 192).

John Traphagan (2000) studied the rural hamlet of Jonai in Iwate prefecture in the mid-1990s. As most of the younger generation has left the hamlet for the city, the older adults here “form an integrated community of consociates with well-established ties based upon interdependence and a history of long-term co-residence” (p. 46). Since their children are far away, they largely associate with their peers and help each other out when needed. Unlike Hashimoto’s findings that urban Japanese opt for security via family, Traphagan’s rural example here shows that older adults follow an American-like contingency approach. Further, age grading is seen here as an integral part of the society. Older adults have been seen to resist the label of “elderly” by postponing entrance into the Old People’s Club. Traphagan also explained the various meanings of words related to senility in Japan. Dementia is *chihō* and Alzheimer’s disease is *arutsuhaimā* while *boke* is an additional category of senility that is usually distinguished from the pathological conditions of Alzheimer’s Disease and dementia. He argued that *boke*<sup>2</sup> is not only a condition of mental and physical decline but also a moral concept.

The moral content of *boke* is tied to an individual’s social responsibility to be an active, contributing member of society by taking care of one’s physical and mental health to avoid situations that burden others, and to return the obligations one incurs through relationships of interdependence with others. (p.4)

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<sup>2</sup> The term has been changed to *ninchishō* which is now in popular and professional use.

### *Inter-generational re-engagement*

Also in the mid-1990s, Leng Leng Thang conducted ethnographic research in an age-integrated facility Kotoen in Tokyo that brings together the old and young generations within a single institutional setting (Thang, 2001). There has been a lot of concern by scholars and the state about the question of changing household composition and the continual decrease of coresidence was thought to represent the demise of the traditional family. Kotoen was established with state funding and housed a nursing home for fifty elderly residents and a day nursery for eighty children. Thang explored the theme of reengagement of the two generations, specifically looking at the two main ideals of *daikazoku* (large extended family) and *fureai* (contact or being “in touch”). She revealed new possibilities of social bonds and relationships outside the family but at the same time also highlighted gaps between the ideals behind the establishment of the facility, and reality.

### *Spatial living in neighborhoods*

On the premise that how people organize spatial living enables understanding of how they construct social relationships, Anemone Platz (2011) studied couples on the verge of retirement in Tokyo and Kanazawa in 2006. She classified neighborhoods into “old” and “new” where “old neighborhoods” are inhabited by people who have lived there most of their lives and “new neighborhoods” are inhabited by people who are newcomers to the place. She found that residents have roots in the old neighborhoods and have a high degree of neighborhood involvement. There were also three-generation families living in double households or very close by and this was seen as the ideal form of living. New neighborhoods offered contrasting features and separate forms of living and housing were common. She also found that husbands had “to negotiate his space within the house after retirement in the new neighborhoods, while there was no question that this space exists for him in the old ones” (p. 266).

### *Social participation*

As for research into activities that older adults are participating in, Lynn Nakano studied community volunteers in Yokohama in the second half of the 1990s (Nakano, 2005). Volunteers tended to be “middle-aged housewives and men past retirement age, groups with relatively low labor-force participation rate” (p. 2). Some volunteers for eldercare did it with the purpose of building relationships with recipients while others hoped to create a system of mutual assistance from which they might benefit in their own old age. Recipients on the other hand, believed that their willingness to participate in voluntary programs made volunteering possible in Japan. By accepting help, they were able to live with dignity and some saw themselves as consumers of services, rather than as weak and dependent elderly.

Moore (2007) studied middle-class housewives in their fifties and sixties who were pursuing learning activities. She argued that these women use learning activities as a vehicle to “mobilize” themselves out of the states of domesticity, and as a medium to forge relationships with institutions and people beyond their families. The women claimed that they have earned the right to immerse themselves in practices of self-cultivation.

Takahashi, Tokoro and Hatano (2011) tested the Selection, Optimization and Compensation model proposed by Baltes and Baltes<sup>3</sup> on a group of elderly amateur photographers in Nagano Prefecture over a four-year period. In addition to semi-structured interviews, the participants were also assessed on various scales for their psychological well-being, subjective evaluation of their health, subjective life-satisfaction, depression and self-esteem. The researchers found that once the participants joined the group, they became very much involved and the longer they practiced, the more competent they became. Their sense of life satisfaction was also strengthened. They also found evidences that with the onset of physical ailments, most participants were able to select and optimize their options and compensate their losses, thus achieving successful aging.

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<sup>3</sup> See next section.

*Myth of “family collapse”*

Way back in 1979, Ethel Shanas called the widely-held belief that in contemporary American society old people are alienated from their families, particularly from their children, a social myth. Evidence to support this belief has been sparse. Nonetheless, this myth “has guided much of social gerontological research about the elderly for the last 30 years” (Shanas, 1979, p. 3). Each time evidence has been presented that old people are not alienated from their families, new adherents of the myth rise up. She maintained that

in contemporary American society, old people are not rejected by their families nor are they alienated from their children. Further, where old people have no children, a principle of family substitution seems to operate and brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces often fulfill the roles and assume the obligations of children. The truly isolated old person, despite his or her prominence in the media, is a rarity in the United States. (p. 3-4)

She argued that the myth is fed by

an underlying belief that somehow several generations living under the same roof makes for happiness for older household members, and that the separation of the generations into separate households makes for unhappiness on the part of the older generation. (p. 5)

Indeed, what she said is also true of Japan for these past few decades. The “collapse” of the traditional family system (*ie*), or even the postwar family has been highlighted by many scholars (for example, Ochiai, 1997). Even as life expectancy extends and older adults and their adult children adapt to changing environment and circumstances, the belief that the family has “collapsed” remains in the minds of many.

The topics covered in this dissertation extend over a wide range because of the varied life course of the older adults. Previous studies relating to each topic (for example, retirement) will be covered in the individual chapters and sections.

### **Aging Theories**

In this section, I explain in brief the main theories that have been used over the past decades in the attempt to understand aging.

#### *Successful Aging*

In 1984, supported by the MacArthur Network on Successful Aging, John Rowe and Robert Kahn, defined successful aging as including three main components: low probability of disease and disease-related disability, high cognitive and physical functional capacity, and active engagement with life. All three components must be present to signify successful aging (Rowe and Kahn, 1997). Low probability of disease refers not only to absence or presence of disease itself but also to the risk factors for disease. Physical and cognitive capacities are potential for activity. Active engagement is concerned with interpersonal relations and productive activity. Interpersonal relations involve contacts and transactions with others, exchange of information, emotional support, and direct assistance. An activity is productive if it creates societal value, whether or not it is reimbursed. Thus, a person who cares for a disabled family member or works as a volunteer is being productive. On health risks, they maintain that firstly, not only intrinsic factors but also extrinsic environmental factors, like lifestyle play a very important role in determining risk for disease. Secondly, with advancing age, the relative contribution of genetic factors decreases while the forces of nongenetic factors increase. Thirdly, usual aging characteristics are modifiable.

They also maintained that older people would move “in and out of success” as they experience

acute episodes of stressful life events, like accident or injury or illness or bereavement. They propose the concept of resilience to describe the rapidity and completeness with which people recover from such episodes and return to meeting the criteria of success.

In Rowe and Kahn's model, all three components overlap to fully represent successful aging. In reality, very few people are able to fulfill all three components. This model has been criticized for the emphasis on "success" endorsing a "fortunate elite" and neglect or even blame those less fortunate. In the last fifty years, a lot of research has been concentrated on the term "successful aging". "Yet after 50 years of research and discussion, there is still significant amount of ambiguity on the definition and application of the mechanisms of successful aging" (Martin et. al, 2012).

### *Active Aging*

The World Health Organization (WHO) has the objective of maintaining health, social involvement and enhancing quality of life. It defined Active Aging as "the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age" (WHO, 2002, p.12). It applies to both individuals and population groups.

Active ageing allows people to realize their potential for physical, social, and mental well-being throughout the life course and to participate in society, while providing them with adequate protection, security and care when they need it. (WHO, 2002, p.12)

The word "active" refers to continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs, not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in the labor force. Older people who retire from work, ill or live with disabilities can remain active contributors to their families, peers,

communities and nations. Active ageing aims to extend healthy life expectancy and quality of life for all people as they age. “Health” refers to physical, mental and social well being as expressed in the WHO definition of health. Maintaining autonomy and independence for the older people is a key goal in the policy framework for active ageing. Ageing takes place within the context of friends, work associates, neighbors and family members. This is why interdependence as well as intergenerational solidarity are important tenets of active ageing. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has also adopted this concept in its policies on the employment of older people. In Britain, Walker (2002) expanded the concept with seven principles of active ageing that included emphasis on prevention, promotion of social participation and empowerment of the older adult, and maintenance of intergenerational solidarity.

The Western concepts of active aging have been referred to in various forms by scholars in Japan. Maeda (2008) reviewed active aging studies in Japan, and found that many studies explored the conditions required to encourage active aging in later life. In the field of social medicine and public health, attention was on health maintenance, social participation and “healthy life expectancy”. In social gerontology, studies centered on “successful aging” and “quality of life”. In sociology, various Japanese scholars called attention to the necessity to change the image of the elderly. Funatsu (2003) argued that the strong negative image of aging caused older people to try to avoid aging (especially in situations like being bedridden or senile) so rather than avoiding the issue, older people should re-construct their self-identity by “deriving meaning from the past and reinterpreting the present”. He also emphasized the “coexistence of dependence and independence, rather than excessive dependence” (p.52). Other scholars emphasized maintaining, restoring or creating roles, moving away from a “dependent” image (Kaneko, 1998) and moving away from the traditional image of “mellow, retired people” (Morioka, 2000). Morioka (2000) believed that the change to active life has already been established among the elderly in Japan.

### *Third Age in Japan*

Oda (2003) also discussed the concept of “third age” (*sādoeiji*). Dividing the life course into four stages, the third age stretches from age 40 or 50 to the time when people find it difficult to live an independent life. It is a period of achievement, accomplishment and fulfillment, as opposed to the fourth age which is characterized by dependence, senile deterioration and death. He called the first stage from birth as a period of being dependent, immature and nurtured and the second age, a period of independence, work, child-raising and saving. He de-emphasized retirement as a turning point and considered the third age as a second period of growth following the second age. As we have seen earlier, Carr and Komp (2011) defined “third age” as starting from retirement whereas Oda emphasized continuity from the second age and more specifically, starting from peak achievement in the second age.

### *Selective Optimization with Compensation*

The Selection, Optimization, and Compensation Model (SOC) is a psychological model of life-span development proposed by Baltes and Baltes (1990). It is based on the assumption that any process of development involves selection of and selective changes in adaptive capacity. As the individual ages, he or she recognizes that not all opportunities can be pursued so they select appropriate goals or possible outcomes. They organize their lives around the achievement of these goals and outcomes through optimization of channeling of their efforts toward their goals, as well as compensating for their deficiencies or losses by using available tools and resources, including the help of others.

### *Theory of Gerotranscendence*

Tornstam (1997) developed the Theory of Gerotranscendence in the 1990s. In gist, “gerotranscendence is a shift in meta-perspective, from a materialistic and pragmatic view of the world to a more cosmic and transcendent one, normally accompanied by an increase in life satisfaction” (p.143). The theory assumes that the self of the individual is gradually changing and developing and therefore, is

not constant and ageless. One dimension found in his empirical studies is that the older person has decreasing interest to participate in certain social and personal relationships. He argued that interpreted in the traditional perspective, this can be regarded as negative disengagement from society. However, his informants interpret this behavior as a part of a positive developmental change related to the importance of social relationships. They shed the company and activities that lack content, and they become more selective, preferring literature or music or a few friends. It is not because of lack of possibilities, but of choice (p.151). Further, the individual reaches a fundamental acceptance of the life lived, implying more of a forward or outward direction, including a qualitative redefinition of reality (p.153). This theory has been used especially in the study of the old-old and the centenarians. Research in this area is currently receiving attention in Japan (for example, Nakagawa et al., 2011; Masui et al., 2010).

### *Intergenerational Solidarity*

Bengtson and Roberts (1991) developed the Intergenerational Solidarity model that conceptualized “intergenerational family solidarity as a multifaceted, multidimensional construct reflected in six distinct elements of parent-child interaction: affection, association, consensus, resource sharing, the strength of familism norms, and the opportunity structure for parent-child interaction” (p.856). This model has directed much research in the past twenty years. Associational solidarity is defined as the frequency and patterns of interaction in various types of activities in which family members engage (for example, face-to-face, telephone, mail, recreation, special occasions). Affectual solidarity is the type and degree of positive sentiments held about family members, and the degree of reciprocity of these sentiments. Consensual solidarity is the degree of agreement on values, attitudes and beliefs among family members. Functional solidarity is measured by the degree of helping and exchanges of resources (including financial, physical and emotional exchanges of assistance). Normative solidarity is the strength of commitment to performance of familial roles and to meeting familial obligations (for example, family and intergenerational roles, filial obligations). Structural solidarity is the opportunity structure for

intergenerational relationship reflected in number, type, and geographic proximity of family member (for example, residential proximity, number of family members, health of family members).

This theory was later criticized as lacking conflict and emotional discordance elements in the relationships. Another line of research has focused on isolation, caregiver stress, family problems, conflict, and abuse. Luescher and Pillemer (1998) proposed that relationships between the generations in families are structured such that they generate various types of ambivalence. They used the term “intergenerational ambivalence” ,

to designate contradictions in relationship between parents and adult offspring that cannot be reconciled. The concept has two dimensions: (a) contradictions at the level of social structure, evidenced in institutional resources and requirements, such as statuses, roles, and norms and (b) contradictions at the subjective level, in terms of cognitions, emotions, and motivations. (p. 416)

This led Bengtson et al. (2002) to revise their model to include conflict in the formulation in 2002. Researchers found that adult children were more likely to feel ambivalent towards older parents to whom they were providing extensive support and who were in declining health. It was suggested that parental dependence and role-reversal caused fixed feelings in the relationships. Ambivalence was also found to predict poorer quality of life in the elderly, though the effects were marginal relative to the adverse influence of poor health and low economic resources.

### **Conceptual Framework**

To understand about the lives of older adults in Japan today, I base my analysis on the Active Aging framework, looking into their continuing participation in social, economic, cultural and civic affairs; their contributions to their families; their continuing efforts to maintain physical and mental health and their

efforts to maintain independence (WHO, 2002). It is important to note that the goal of the Long Term Care Insurance system in Japan is to enable the elderly to maintain their dignity and independence (*jiritsu shien*) (MHLW, 2011).

Independence means that the older adult is able to go about his daily affairs without the assistance of any one in the family or any service provider. Related to independence is the concept of “not being a burden to others” (*meiwaku kakenai*). This is taught in Japanese education from a young age. “not being a burden to others” implies then that one tries to depend on oneself. It is an attitude that supports independence.

Another concept that is relevant is the concept of occupying the proper place or *bun* in Japanese. *bun* can be translated into status and role and Lebra (1976) argued that while status is occupied, role is carried out. An individual has a fractional place in society and contributes to the society. The individual cannot be self-reliant but must be inter-dependent on other *bun*-holders. Every individual is supposed to be a *bun*-holder and “this makes his life meaningful” (p. 68). Lebra explained further,

Japanese feel that everybody ought to have a *bun* and that if anyone happens to be *bun*-less something must be wrong with society. ...If everyone holds a *bun*, then it follows that, given the above-mentioned interdependence among *bun*-holders, no one is expendable; everyone can claim his social significance. Having a *bun* or a place presupposes that one belongs to a social group. (p.68)

I will use five elements from Bengtson et al.(2002)’s Intergenerational Solidarity model to guide my analysis of the multi-facets of the older adults’ family. The five elements are geographic proximity (structural solidarity), contacts (associational solidarity), exchanges (functional solidarity), emotional closeness (affectual solidarity) and expectations of care (normative solidarity). However, I will not propose any inter-relational dependency between the elements but only use the elements to represent

various facets of the families.

After understanding how the older adults negotiate aging in their current lifestyles and having looked at how family features in their lives, I will examine their motivations or *ikigai* in Japanese. Mathews (1996) described *ikigai* as that which makes life worth living. He contrasted *ikigai* for Japanese and Americans as follows:

The Japanese thought about *ikigai* in terms of their personal dreams in conjunction with or in contradiction to the obligations of family and work; the Americans thought about their lives in terms of the pursuit of self-fulfillment, tempered by love for and a sense of responsibility toward family and community. (p. 42)

### **Significance of research**

This research will contribute towards a deeper understanding of the lives of older adults in the third age who are still healthy and independent. The lessons we can learn from them will help us to understand what factors can contribute to a longer healthy period and a shorter frail period. It will also provide insight into what independence means in the Japanese context and how far it can carry the older adults into the future. At the same time, the results of this study will offer a clearer understanding of family relationships of these older adults and what they expect of care and how they prepare for later life. This study will also highlight the changes to expect for future generations of older adults. As issues of the aged society become widely understood, men and women are getting ready much earlier in the life course for a higher quality later life. The results of this study will help towards this preparation.

## **Methodology**

I adopted a qualitative research methodology in this research. The use of qualitative methodologies allows for the subjective meanings and interpretations to be revealed in a way that is often not possible through quantitative approaches (George, 1990, p.199). In addition, I conducted participant observation at a language class attended by some of my informants as well as a trip for overseas students organized by some of my informants in September 2010. I have also had casual conversations with many young, working adults regarding their family situations and their views about the aged society as I taught them English in my part-time job.

### *Access to Informants*

Informants were recruited through snowball sampling. I selected this method because I wanted to reach older adults who may not be active in the community. Older adults who are active in community activities can be reached by selecting community centers or clubs as research fields. Older adults who are not active can only be reached if they are introduced by somebody they know well. In this way, working without a specific field posed its special challenges.

Sampling in the early stages of the research showed that the older adult does not trust strangers and without a go-between, the older adult is not willing to agree and open up to an interview about his or her life. My initial access to informants was very difficult. From June 2009 to January 2010, I had access to 5 informants only. A description of my contact with one informant will illustrate the apprehension that the informant had in talking to a stranger about her life. I was given the contact of Mori Emiko by one of my friends. I telephoned Mori-san to fix the meeting time and place. She was friendly on the phone and made all the necessary arrangements about the meeting place. She also said she would wear a kimono so that it would be easy for me to identify her. However, in the afternoon of the same day, my friend contacted me to say that Mori-san has telephoned her and requested that she be at the meeting as well. Upon some persuasion, Mori-san agreed that my friend can leave after introducing us. We met as arranged on the day

and we walked together to Mori-san's apartment. My friend took leave after that. As I was very careful about making Mori-san comfortable, I spent a lot more time chatting with her before starting the formal interview. As Mori-san has said, she wore her kimono on that day and later she told me that she only wore the kimono on special occasions.

In the case of Yoshida Aiko, the friend who introduced us came together with his wife and we met Yoshida-san at the café where I had the interview. After introducing us, my friend and his wife went to sit at the other end of the café while I conducted the interview with her. My friend told me that he and Yoshida-san are very good friends and as Yoshida-san was a bit worried about the interview, he had decided to stay with us, at least in the same café. After the interview, all four of us went out together to have lunch. With the knowledge that my friend and his wife were waiting for us, I felt some pressure to finish the interview as soon as I could.

From April 2010 onwards, I was able to gather more informants through two key contacts. One of them introduced me to eight participants in a language class at a community center in the west of Tokyo. The other key contact introduced me to many of her sports club friends. Some informants were recruited after I attended an Oversea Students Trip to Mount Fuji organized by a community center. Other informants were introduced by informants I had already interviewed. Although I had no control over the socio-economic status of the informants, the final sample demonstrated a good variety in terms of gender mix and location variability but an unexpected consistency in socio-economic status.

#### *Human Subject Research Protocol*

In the research brochure given to the informants (Appendix B), a privacy statement has been included to assure them that their personal data will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. It also states that information will not be disclosed, shared, distributed or sold under any circumstances and the information will only be used for the purpose of this dissertation and any subsequent academic publications.

In addition, before I started each interview, I told them verbally that this was a research that I was doing for my doctoral degree at Waseda University and that their personal privacy will be protected at all times. I also said that if they had any questions that they did not wish to answer, it was alright not to answer them. The exact statements in both English and Japanese were printed at the beginning of my copy of Interview Questions (see copy in Appendix D). The informants were then asked whether it was alright to proceed and upon receiving their consent, I proceeded with the interviews.

### *Interviews*

Semi-structured interviews lasting generally from one and a half hours to two hours were conducted. Six of the interviews were conducted at the side of the tennis courts while a few rounds of tennis were going on. In view of the circumstances, I omitted the questions on lifestyle and concentrated on the family aspects, covering each interview in less than thirty minutes. In all cases, informal conversations tended to continue after the formal interviews. Interviews were conducted mainly in Japanese, with the exception of one in English in the parent generation and a few in the child generation. Interviews were conducted in a number of places, ranging from the informants' homes to cafes to the tennis court.

The interviews were audio recorded with one exception. I spent a total of five hours with Hirakawa Junko but I was not able to audio record the interview. Hirakawa-san was the mother of one of my friends who was living overseas. I telephoned Hirakawa-san to make the appointment and I went to her apartment. This was the second time that I was meeting her as I have met her before when my friend was back home for a visit. She was very friendly and we chatted about many things. Even though I had asked for her consent to use the voice recorder, every time I was about to activate the voice recorder, Hirakawa-san would do something, like get me something to eat or drink, or show me a book. I detected that she did not like to be voice recorded and so I proceeded with the interview just by taking notes. She was happy with that and we could cover all my interview questions. All in all, we had tea, lunch and she also showed me how to make some traditional Japanese dishes for dinner.

### *Surprises*

During the fieldwork, I encountered a few surprises. I had two informants whom I expected to interview for the parent generation but they turned out to be less than 60 years old. I would ask each informant to fill in his or her personal particulars (Appendix C) at the start of the interview. While these two informants were filling out the forms, I discovered that they were less than 60 years old and therefore, I had to quickly switch to the set of questions (Appendix D) for the child generation. The first time that it happened, I was really unprepared and struggled a little before recovering enough to manage the situation.

Another surprise was two informants turning up together when I was expecting one only. One of my key contacts had made the arrangements with this informant and informed me of the time and place. In the meantime, the informant had decided to bring her close friend along since they were going to do something together after that. I wanted to conduct the interviews one at a time but they wanted to be interviewed together, saying that they had no secrets from each other. I conducted the interviews one after another in the presence of the second informant.

### *Analysis and triangulation of data*

I followed the anthropological approach of deriving meaning inductively from the data. In the analysis of data, all informants were identified by code numbers and given pseudonyms. Interviews were transcribed by me from Japanese to English using my notes and voice-recording. On completion of each transcript, I ran through the transcript and added comments based on my observations. Comments were grouped together according to themes, firstly determined by topics interviewed (for example, parental role), and new themes were created along the way if they appeared more than two times (for example, happiest period of their lives). Themes were derived inductively from the data. Comments grouping by themes could be revised as new transcripts were analyzed. Related literature was then researched and references made to the themes.

In many of the cases, I had the opportunity to meet with the informants for only one time. The

interview itself was, therefore, the most crucial time to assess whether the informant was telling the truth (referred to often in Japanese literature as *honne*) or telling me a story that was impressive to outsiders (referred to often as *tatemae*). There was only one case among all my interviews where I did not feel comfortable that the informant was telling me the truth. This was the case of Maeda Junmi that we will read about in the following chapters. The reason for this was that she was sitting stiffly upright throughout the interview. Even though I attempted to make small talk to lighten up the situation, she did not relax in her posture. It was this situation that prompted me to seek out her son and interview him as well. Therefore, even though I interviewed both mother and son, I actually interviewed the son six months after the mother. As it turned out, Junmi-san's story checked out completely with what her son told me.<sup>4</sup>

My interview questions were also designed such that one topic could be asked from two different perspectives. For example, the older adult's role in the family can be compared against relationships and exchanges with children. In another example, the older adult's *ikigai* can be checked against their advice to other older adults because these are the things that they deem important.

In other situations during the interview, when I found gaps in the answers given to me, I would ask questions from other angles to triangulate the facts. An example was how I managed to get to the bottom of Nogiwa Yoshiko's story about her *hikikomori* daughter (see Chapter 4).

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

I have divided my dissertation into seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the images of and perceptions about older adults in Japan, reviews previous research in this area, explains study objectives, and introduces the conceptual framework and the methodology adopted for this study. Chapter 2 sets the scene by providing background information on Japan as an aged society, the current social systems and a historical overview of the economy and the family system of Japan. The topics introduced are particularly

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<sup>4</sup> In this case, a recent development was that Junmi-san had decided to study English to facilitate her future travels. I was approached to offer her tuition which I accepted. We are now on very friendly and relaxed terms.

relevant to the older adults in my study because they have been born from the late 1920s to the postwar period so they have lived through a lot of changes within Japan over the past six to eight decades. Chapter 3 describes the older adults' entry into the third age at retirement and how they make adaptations that included continuation of work or the pursuit of various types of leisure. It will also explore the types of social networks that the older adults have. Chapter 4 describes the structure of the older adults' family and examines the ways that older adults seek independence within the family. Chapter 5 looks at the anxieties that the older adults have regarding the future. It will also examine the plans for future care and the motivations (*ikigai*) that will carry them into the future. Chapter 6 introduces the adult child generation in terms of their current living arrangements, their expectations in caring for their parents in future and the anxieties that they feel. Chapter 7 reviews the findings and conclusions on the research objectives. Limitations of the research and suggestions for future research are given here.

## Chapter 2 Setting the Scene

This chapter sets the scene for us to understand the findings from this research. It serves as a reference on current and historical backgrounds when we read other chapters in this dissertation. The historical topics are relevant because the oldest older adults were born in the late 1920s and the youngest in the 1940s. They got married and brought up their children and have gone through many experiences, including World War II (hereinafter known as the War), that would affect their lifestyles, attitudes and values about life today. The chapter is organized into five parts, namely Japan's state of aging, overview of changes to the economy over the years, social security systems, overview of the evolution of work and family systems, and a general profile of the Japanese elderly.

### Japan's State of Aging

This section explains the evolution of Japan into an aging society and describes the current composition and projections of different segments of the population in fifty years' time. This will provide the context to place my sample of older adults within the larger population.

#### *Unprecedented Speed of Aging*

In 1970, the 65-years-and-older population (known as 'aged population' hereinafter) in Japan was only 7 percent of the total population but in just 24 years, in 1994 it has doubled to 14 percent. In 2005, with the aged population at 20.1 percent, Japan has reached the top of the chart, surpassing all other countries in the world. As at 2011, the aged population has increased to 23.3 percent. Compared to Europe, the highest aged population were in Italy and Germany (both at 20.4 percent) followed by Sweden (18.2 percent) and Spain (17.0 percent) (Cabinet Office, 2012). The U.S.A. had an aged population of 13.1 percent in 2010 (United Nations).

Comparing the time taken to go from 7 percent to 14 percent, France took 115 years, Sweden 85

years, and Germany 40 years whereas Japan only took 24 years. Therefore, Japan's speed and magnitude of aging is unprecedented in the world (Cabinet Office, 2012). In future, other Asian countries aging at high speed include South Korea and Singapore. South Korea and Singapore reached 7 percent in 2000. South Korea is projected to reach 14 percent around 2016, a total of 16 years and Singapore around 2018, a total of 18 years (United Nations), surpassing Japan's record of 24 years.

### *Projections of Aged Population*

In 2011, the aged population in Japan was 29.75 million, which was 23.3 percent of the total population of 127.80 million. The projection to 2060 is 39.9 percent out of a total population of 86.74 million. Japan is projected to depopulate with the current low fertility rate of 1.39 (Cabinet Office, 2012<sup>5</sup>). In comparison, the other two speedily aging Asian countries, South Korea and Singapore will reach 33.6 percent and 32.6 percent respectively in 2060. The aged population percentage and ranking of the top countries that are projected to exceed 20 percent by 2060 are shown in Table 2.1 (based on data extracted from the United Nations World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision). As can be seen from the table, Japan will continue to occupy the top position for the next fifty years.

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<sup>5</sup> The population figures published by the Cabinet Office of Japan differ slightly from that published by the United Nations. The Cabinet Office figures are used in this dissertation except where comparison is made with other countries when the United Nations figures are used in order to ensure consistency of comparison.

**Table 2.1 Percentage of Aged Population – Ranking in 2010 and 2060**

Country	2010		Country	2060	
	Percent	Rank		Percent	Rank
Japan*	22.7	1	Japan*	35.1	1
Italy	20.4	2	South Korea	33.6	2
Germany	20.4	2	Singapore	32.6	3
Sweden	18.2	4	Spain	31.9	4
Spain	17.0	5	Italy	31.4	5
France	16.8	6	Germany	30.1	6
U.K.	16.6	7	China	29.5	7
Canada	14.1	8	Thailand	27.1	8
U.S.A.	13.1	9	Sweden	26.2	9
South Korea	11.1	10	Canada	25.8	10
Singapore	9.0	11	U.K.	25.1	11
Thailand	8.9	12	France	25.0	12
China	8.2	13	U.S.A.	21.9	13

*Source: United Nations: World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision*

*\* The percentages for Japan projected by United Nations differ from that reported by the Cabinet Office of Japan. The U.N. figures are used in this table for consistency of comparison.*

### *Composition of Aged Population*

Japan's total population as at October 2011 was 127.80 million, a decline from the previous year's 128.06 million. Out of this total population, the "productive" population, officially defined as the group from ages 15 to 64, was 63.6 percent. However, in reality, the "productive" population was higher because Japan has high labor participation rates among older adults, especially among the self-employed. The rates for older men who worked as of 2007 were 73.0 percent for age 60-64 years, 50.0 percent for 65-69 years, 33.4 percent for 70-74 years and 18.0 percent for 75 years and older. Business starters (executives of companies who started their present business by themselves) accounted for 9.0 percent of all persons engaged in work and the ratio increased with age, starting from 12.5 percent for 60-64 years and peaking at 37.1 percent for 75 years and older. Although the labor participation rates among older women were lower than that of older men, the rates were still high. The rates for women who worked as of 2007 were 43.5 percent for age 60-64 years, 28.1 percent for 65-69 years, 17.7 percent for 70-74 years and 6.7 percent for 75 years and older (Statistics Bureau, 2007, p. 3, 41). (See Table 2.2)

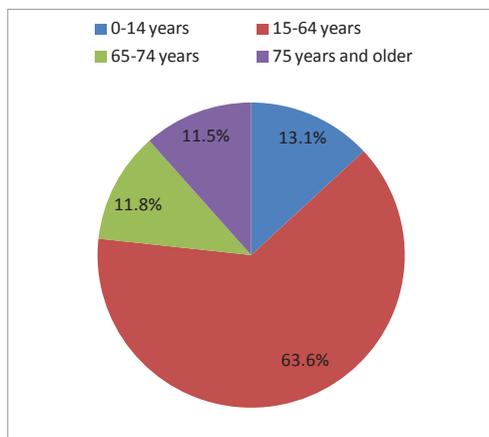
The “dependent” populations, consisting of the very young (0 to 14 years old), the young-old (65 to 74 years old) and the old-old (75 years and older) constitute the remaining 36.4 percent of the total population (see Figure 2.1 and Table 2.3).

**Table 2.2 Labor Participation Rates for Older Adults**

Age Group	Male	Female
60-64	73.0%	43.5%
65-69	50.0%	28.1%
70-74	33.4%	17.7%
75 and older	18.0%	6.7%

*Source: Statistics Bureau, Employment Status Survey (2007)*

**Figure 2.1 Population Composition of Japan as at October 2011 (in Percentages)**



*Source: Compiled from White Paper on Aging Society 2012 (Cabinet Office 2012)*

**Table 2.3 Population Composition of Japan as at October 2011**

	<i>%Total Pop</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>M:F*</i>
<b>65 years and older</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>29.75m</b>	<b>12.68m</b>	<b>11.07m</b>	<b>74.3</b>
<b>65-74 years old</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>15.04m</b>	<b>7.09m</b>	<b>7.95m</b>	<b>89.2</b>
<b>75 years and older</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>14.71m</b>	<b>5.59m</b>	<b>9.12m</b>	<b>61.3</b>
<b>15-64 years old</b>	<b>63.6%</b>	<b>81.34m</b>	<b>40.95m</b>	<b>40.39m</b>	<b>101.4</b>
<b>0-14 years old</b>	<b>13.1%</b>	<b>16.71m</b>	<b>8.55m</b>	<b>8.15m</b>	<b>104.9</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>127.80m</b>	<b>62.18m</b>	<b>65.62m</b>	<b>94.8</b>
<i>Note : * Number of Males to 100 Females</i>					
<i>Source: White Paper on Aging Society 2012 Japanese Version</i>					
<i>(Population figures as at October 1, 2011)</i>					

Table 2.3 also shows that the aged population is nearly equally divided between the young-old (*zenki kōreisha*) and the old-old (*kōki kōreisha*). However, the male to female ratio decreases significantly in the old-old category with women outliving men as age progresses. In fact, life expectancy at age 65, was 18.88 years for male and 23.97 years for female in 2009 and this is projected to increase to 22.09 years and 27.31 years respectively by the year 2055 (NIPSS, 2011). Therefore, an older adult at age 65 is expected to live for around 20 years or more with female outliving male by about 5 years.

#### *Factors that contributed to the Growth of the Aged Society*

As seen above, the aging of a society is measured as a percentage of the aged population over the total population. In the case of Japan, the increase in the aged population is the result of two baby booms, longer life expectancy and lower mortality. However, the other contributor to the equation is a shrinking total population, brought on by a long period of low fertility. Let us look at each of the factors in detail.

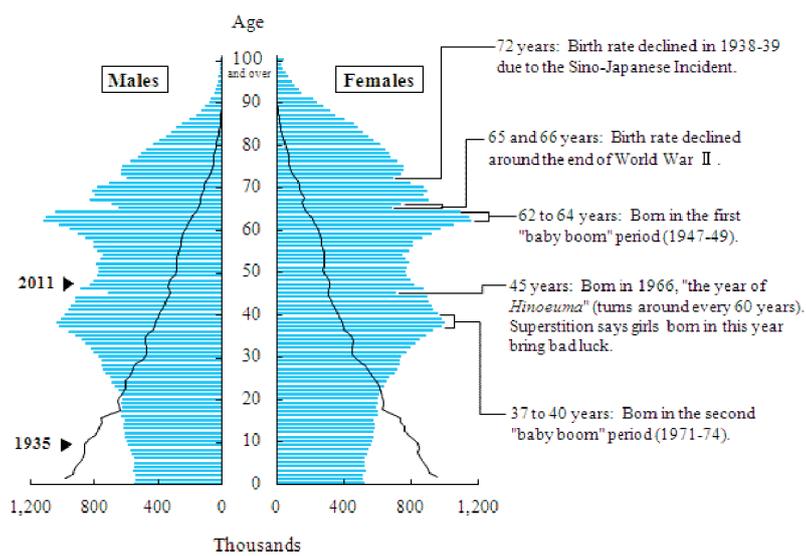
#### Baby Boomers(*dankai no sedai*)

In the United States, the Baby Boomer generation was born between 1946 and 1964. However, in Japan, there are two generations of Baby Boomers. The “senior” generation (*dankai shinia*) of 8.06

million was born between 1947 and 1949 and the “junior” generation (*dankai junia*) of 8.16 million was born between 1971 and 1974. The following diagram (Figure 2.2) published by the Statistics Bureau (2012) shows very clearly the impact of the two baby boomer generations on the population pyramid.

**Figure 2.2 Population Pyramid**

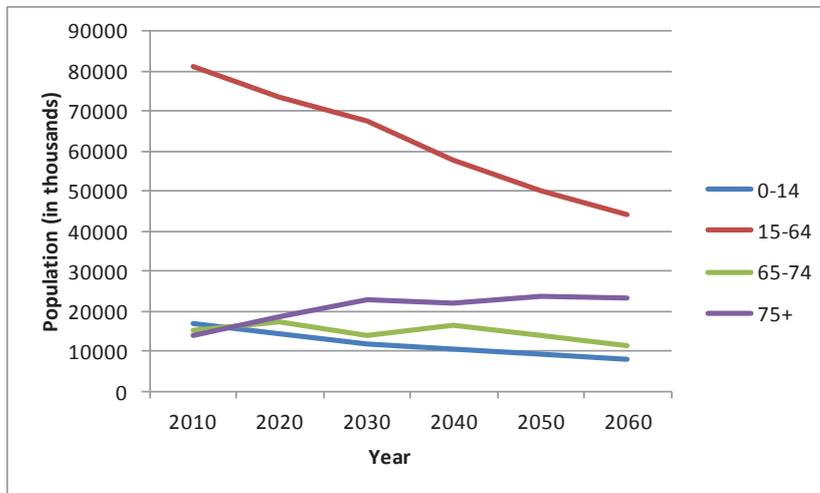
**Population Pyramid**



Source: Statistics Bureau, MIC.

Figure 2.3 shows the projected trend of growth from 2010 to 2060 of the four segments of the population, namely, the very young (0-14 years old), the productive or working-age population (15-64 years old), the young-old (65-74 years old) and the old-old (75 years and older). The old-old population is projected to increase while the young-old population shows a slight “M” curve because of the two Baby Boomer generations. On the other hand, the working-age population will go on a steep decline and the very young population will show a gradual decline based on continued low fertility.

**Figure 2.3 Trend of population changes by age group – 2010 to 2060**



*Source: Compiled from United Nations: World Population Prospects – The 2010 Revision (United Nations)*

#### Longer Life Expectancy and Low Mortality

In 1947, male life expectancy in Japan was only 50 years and female life expectancy was 54 years. In 1950, soon after War, per capital gross domestic product was roughly international \$3400, which is similar to India today (Ikeda et al., 2011). It has increased by approximately ten times since. Life expectancy in 1970 was 69.31 years for men and 74.66 years for women, but it has climbed to 79.64 and 86.39 respectively in 2010 (Cabinet Office, 2012). What has contributed to the health of the population in such a short time?

According to Ikeda et al., (2011), most of the increase in longevity in Japan in the past 60 years happened during 1950-65. Life expectancy at birth increased by 10.1 years in men and 11.9 years in women during this period. Lower mortality rates in children younger than five years was achieved through enhanced education and increasing literacy of mothers, with the provision of free compulsory education. There was also control of intestinal or respiratory infections and vaccine-preventable diseases. A 95 percent reduction in the number of deaths from tuberculosis in adults (aged 15-59 years) also contributed to the increase in longevity. The free treatment for tuberculosis started in 1952 resulted in a decrease of the

incidence of tuberculosis at a yearly rate of 11% between 1961 and 1977.

Reductions in mortality rate were also a result of increasing investment in the public health sector, water supply coverage and key interventions for maternal and child health. Moreover, the sustained increase in life expectancy at birth after the mid-1960s was largely attributable to reduced mortality rates for non-communicable diseases, like cancer and ischemic heart disease. The government has continued to make improvements in public health. Since 2008, the government has made it obligatory for people aged 40 to 74 years to have an annual check-up and health education intervention that is focused on the prevention of metabolic syndrome<sup>6</sup> and its resultant chronic diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes.

In summary, general health levels have improved tremendously after the War, contributing to longer life expectancy and low mortality.

### Low Fertility

The Total Fertility Rate in Japan was 2.22 in 1956 but went on a downward trend from 1.91 in 1975 to 1.46 in 1993 and bottomed out at 1.26 in 2005. It climbed slightly in 2010 to 1.39 (Cabinet Office, 2012). The rate is much lower than the population replacement rate of about 2.1 which means that Japan's population is shrinking.

According to Rosenbluth (2007), low fertility has been said to bring on economic problems such as insufficient workers to pay taxes and social security premiums, and a shrinking consumer market. Another worry is the geopolitical implications of a smaller size nation. On the other hand, lower population density can, with productivity gains, increase per capita income and quality of life and environmental health. Moreover, population size has not had very close connection to national peace and security. Therefore, economic problems associated with lower fertility could be overstated. Instead, Rosenbluth and her colleagues (2007) argued that low fertility is in fact, an indirect measure of female welfare as it reflects

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<sup>6</sup> A combination of medical disorders that may lead to cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Common criteria of measurement include body-mass-index (BMI) and waist circumference.

constraints on female labor market participation. They hypothesized that

fertility tends to be depressed where vested interest impede female access to the workforce, and higher where easy labor market accessibility and childcare support make it easier for women to balance family and career. Contrary to the possibility that women discouraged from the labor market will go home and have babies, women may instead expend more effort – forgoing children in the process- to get in the door, climb the promotion ladders, and struggle against glass ceilings. (p.4)

The issue of low fertility is of grave concern to the government and there have been many studies in this area. This issue is outside the scope of my research.

#### *Dependency Ratios*

The Dependency Ratio is often used to measure the level of support burden that the productive population or working-age population (15 to 64 years old) has to provide to the dependent population, that is either the very-young (0 to 14 years old) or the elderly (65 years and older) or both combined. The dependency ratio is calculated by dividing the dependent population over the working-age population.

In the Japan Cabinet Office' Aging Society White Paper published annually, the dependency ratio is indicated as the number of working-age persons who support one elderly person. In 1950, one elderly person was supported by 10 working-age persons. By 2010, this dependency ratio has reduced to 2.6 working-age persons. The projection to 2060 is one elderly person to 1.2 working-age persons (Cabinet Office, 2012). The young dependency ratio was 20.6 (that is, 4.9 working-age persons supporting one young person under 15 years old) in 2010 and projected to decrease to 17.9 (5.6 working-age persons supporting one young person) in 2060 because of the decline of both the young population (from 16.8 million in 2010 to 7.9 million in 2060) and the working-age population (from 81.7 million to 44.2 million

in the same period). Combining both the young dependent population and the aged population, the Total Dependency Ratio was 45.0 (2.22 working-age persons supporting one dependent person) in 2010 and is projected to increase to 54.6 (1.83 working-age persons to one dependent person) in 2060. The projections were based on medium fertility and medium mortality (NIPSS, 2011).

Impact of the change in the dependency ratio is felt most in the pension system because Japan has a “pay-as-you-go” pension system. The contributors to the pension fund at any point in time are the working-age population at that point in time and the benefactors of the fund are the retirees at that point in time. Stated very simply, in the years to come, there will be a decreasing number of contributors against an increasing number of benefactors. Although the rates and rules of contribution and benefit withdrawals can be adjusted by the state in an attempt to balance out the funds, the pension system has faced many problems that included loss of records, default on contributions and fraudulent withdrawals. These will be elaborated in a later section in this chapter.

The trend of change in the various dependency ratios for the countries with high aged population by 2060 is shown in the following table (Table 2.4).

**Table 2.4 Comparative Trend of Dependency Ratios**

Country	2010			Country	2060		
	Young	Elderly	Total		Young	Elderly	Total
Japan*	21	35	56	Japan*	27	69	96
South Korea	23	15	38	South Korea	27	64	91
Singapore	24	12	36	Singapore	27	61	88
Spain	22	25	47	Spain	27	60	87
Italy	21	31	52	Italy	27	58	86
Germany	20	31	51	Germany	29	56	85
China	27	11	38	China	24	52	76
Thailand	29	13	42	Thailand	25	46	71
Sweden	25	28	53	Sweden	31	46	77
Canada	24	20	44	Canada	29	45	74
U.K.	26	25	51	U.K.	30	44	73
France	28	26	54	France	30	44	74
U.S.A.	30	20	50	U.S.A.	31	37	68

Source: United Nations: World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision

\* The percentages for Japan projected by United Nations differ from that reported by the Cabinet Office of Japan and the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

The U.N. figures are used in this table for consistency of comparison.

The elderly dependency ratio has shown an increasing trend for all the countries in the table. In the case of Japan, its working-age population started to decline after 2000. Some of the other countries will not see a decline until ten to twenty years later. Other countries like the U.S.A., France, the United Kingdom, and Canada will continue to see an increasing trend for its working-age population, resulting in only a small increase in its young dependency ratios.

### *Regional differences*

It is also important to understand that Japan has great regional differences in terms of aged population and related characteristics like living arrangements. For example, in some areas devastated by the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake, one in three persons was aged 65 years and above (Muramatsu and Akiyama, 2011). According to the Cabinet Office (2012), the prefecture with the highest aged population is Akita (29.7 percent) and the lowest is Okinawa (17.3 percent). All across the country, the aged population will be on an upward trend, with Akita reaching 41.0 percent, and Okinawa 27.7 percent by 2035. Tokyo's current figure is 20.6 percent and it is projected to increase to 30.7 percent by the year 2035.

### **Overview of Changes to the Economy**

This section describes the changes to the economy since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, thus providing the background to the evolution of the family system in Japan. It also describes the economy after the War, a period in which the older adults in my sample grew up in. The economic changes affect work patterns and family changes that will be described in the following sections.

During the Tokugawa (Edo) period (1603-1868) the economy of Japan was primarily agriculture-based and even as late as 1870, more than 70 percent of the workforce was engaged in agriculture. A large proportion of the population received schooling in the *terakoya* system, which was

schools usually run by priests or samurai that subsequently formed the basis of the modern school system from the Meiji era. This enhanced a positive attitude to the acquisition of knowledge and the concept of compulsory and universal education became acceptable. Generally, Tokugawa Japan was considered a feudal society (Pilat, 1994).

In the Meiji period (1868-1912), the government made sweeping reforms which led to the start of an era of modern economic growth. One common currency, the yen was introduced in 1871 and the Bank of Japan was founded in 1885. The government promoted industrialization to provide new occupations for the great number of samurai who lost their traditional function. From 1885 onwards, economic growth transformed the agricultural society to one dominated by industry and services. One characteristic of this period was the emergence of the dual structure of the economy consisting of firstly a modern large-scale industrial sector with relatively high wages, high capital intensity, large numbers of skilled works and high productivity levels, and on the other hand, an agriculture and the more traditional small-scale industrial sector, with lower wages, lower capital intensity, lower educational levels and lower productivity levels (Pilat, 1994, p.11-13).

Japan was able to benefit from the effects of the First World War (1914-1918) and expanded its share of the Indian and Chinese markets in textiles and also expanded its activities in shipping and the fabrication of ammunitions. The government was able to pay off a large portion of the debt accumulated so far. However, the war disrupted the cost and price system and at the beginning of the 1920s, the country suffered a depression.

In the interwar period (1914-1938), the *zaibatsu* emerged. These were manufacturing conglomerate with strong connections with banks and trading companies. Small industrial establishments became closely linked to the *zaibatsu* through subcontracting work. In the second half of the interwar years, the *zaibatsu* had become a major political factor influencing the government (Pilat, 1994).

During the war, firms set up organizations to promote industrial safety, rationing and so on and these organizations became the forerunners of the postwar company trade unions. Some elements of the system, such as lifetime employment and seniority wages were shaped from this time and became of great importance in the postwar period.

The disbanding of the *zaibatsu* and large trading companies during the Allied occupation (1945-1952) encouraged competition within the economy. The wartime company unions turned into the new trade unions after the war. Japan met with restrictive trade policies after the War from most European countries and also lost its markets in China, Taiwan and Korea. As a result it took the economy up to 1952 to reach the prewar GDP level (Pilat, 1994, p.15).

After the War, the economic recovery was slow with food and energy shortages especially in the first two years. By the end of the Korean War (1950-53), Japan was firmly on its path of rapid growth. During this period of high growth, from the 1950s to 1973, agriculture's share of total employment dropped from 44 percent in 1953 to 16 percent in 1973. Manufacturing's share recovered to its prewar level of less than 30 percent by 1973 but has been on the decline since as the economy slowly turned into a service economy. By 1990, almost 70 percent of the total workforce was engaged in services (Pilat, 1994, p.21-22). During the 1960s, the economy grew at over 10 percent per annum. It became the economy with the second largest GDP in the world in 1967 (Statistics Bureau, 2012). In October 1973, the first oil crisis triggered high inflation and Japan's growth slowed to less than 4 percent annually, but this was still high compared to the performance of other industrialized countries at that time (Pilat, 1994, p. 47). By the end of the 1980s, the economy was stable and unemployment was low. Stock and land prices continued to rise rapidly. As excessive funds flowed into the stock and real estate markets, it caused abnormal increases in capital asset values, resulting in an economic bubble. Economic growth peaked at 5.6 percent in the fiscal year 1990 (Izuhara, 2000, p.11). At the beginning of 1990, stock prices plummeted, followed by sharp declines in land prices. This was the collapse of the bubble economy resulting in a major economic recession. The bursting of the bubble was followed by the decade-long Heisei recession, which was also

referred to as “The Lost Decade”. The recession resulted in many firms replacing a large part of their workforce with temporary workers who had little job security and few benefits. “The recession has stripped many salarymen of their “three treasures” of lifetime employment, the seniority system of promotion and company unionism, leaving them with the cold discourse and harsh realities of economic ‘restructuring’” (Roberson and Suzuki 2003:7,9).

The economy began a moderate recovery in 1999 but with the global decline in Information Technology demands from mid-2000, the economy again entered into a downturn in 2001. Recovery was in sight from 2002 but in 2007 and 2008, with the global financial crisis resulting from the subprime mortgage loan problems and the Lehman Brothers’ collapse, the situation worsened. There was recovery after that but with the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, Japan fell into an economic slump and a worsening fiscal position. As of June 2012, the economy still remained in a grave condition but was moderately recovering through the demand for the reconstruction of the earthquake (Statistics Bureau, 2012).

### **Social Security Systems in Japan**

The social security system is the main source of income and support to the older adults in Japan. This section traces the development and explains the pension system, the health system, and the long term care system.

#### *Development from Meiji Period*

Before the Meiji period (1868-1912), the source of social assistance in Japan was in charity-oriented communal activities for the poor. Between the Meiji period and War, some measures to assist the poor (Indigent Person’s Relief Regulation of 1884, Poor Relief Law of 1929) and social insurance (Health Insurance Act of 1927, National Health Insurance Act of 1938, Labor Pension Insurance Act of 1941) were introduced, although they were inadequate compared to the present systems (NIPSS,

2011).

After the War, measures to assist the needy, to improve nutrition and to prevent infectious diseases were implemented. During the period of rapid economic growth in the 1960s, public pension and health insurance were expanded to cover all citizens. The Act on Social Welfare Service for Elderly and the Maternal and Child Welfare Act were also enacted. Since the 1990s, pension and health insurance system reforms were implemented and the Long Term Care Insurance system was introduced in 2000 (NIPSS, 2011).

The social security schemes that are relevant to the older adults are mainly, the public pension system, health insurance, and the long-term care insurance. Administration of the systems is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW). The prefectures provide public services as regional local government units. The municipalities (cities, towns and villages) are basic local government units to provide public services to the residents. Service providers of social security, such as hospitals and clinics for health care, day-care centers and institutions for the elderly long-term care, rehabilitation centers and support centers for the disabled, can be both public and private.

The three systems relevant to older adults are described in the following sections.

### *Pension System*

The Japanese pension system is multi-tiered, with the first tier being Basic Pension (*kiso nenkin*) which provides a flat rate pension that is not income-related. All residents aged 20 to 60 years old are eligible for this scheme. The eligibility to receive pension benefits requires a minimum of twenty-five years of premium payment and forty years of enrolment.

The second tier, the Employees' Pension Insurance (*kōsei nenkin hoken*) is income-related in both premium and benefits and is mandatory to all firms with more than five employees. Premium is shared by employers and employees, at a fixed percentage of salary (7.5 percent for employee and 7.5 percent for employer). The same rate also applies for spouses who do not make more than 1.3 million yen a year.

For employees, the Basic Pension and Employees Pension Insurance are jointly operated and a single contribution rate covers contribution for both schemes. At the average monthly salary of subscribers of 312,813 yen, the premium payable by employees will be 23,461 yen. The average monthly benefit is 155,345 yen, starting at age 65 (NIPSS, 2011).

The Basic Pension for the self-employed, farmers and other non-employed is known as the National Pension (*kokumin nenkin*). The average premium contribution is 14,410 yen<sup>7</sup> per month and the average monthly benefits is 53,936 yen, starting at age 65 (All figures in this section are as of 2008, as provided by NIPSS, 2011, p.20-21). For the self-employed, the premium is paid by the insured only and is a flat rate for all.

The National Pension and the Employees Pension Insurance are operated by the government and are known as public pensions. Widows get an average of 55,442 yen per month under the Basic Pension and 88,874 yen under Employees' Pension Insurance which is calculated at three-quarters of old age pension for their spouse. Therefore, as an average before any optional third tier pension, an older adult at 65 years old can expect to get 209,281 yen per month and a widow can expect to get 144,316 yen per month in pension benefits. According to NIPSS (2011), more than 60 percent of elderly households depend entirely on public pensions benefits for income. There are 64.89 millions of subscribers to Basic Pension, and 24.11 million of current pension recipients. For the Employees' Pension Insurance, there are 34.44 million subscribers and 23.65 million current pension recipients.

The third tier is an optional scheme and are occupational pensions run by private firms or the government. The premiums differ from scheme to scheme but they are mostly paid by the employers.

The Employees' Pension Fund was streamlined and the Defined-Benefit (DB) Corporate Pension (2001) and Defined Contribution (DC) Plan (2002) were established. Firms are converting their DB schemes to DC schemes because future payments are related to the investment performance of funds rather than the current system where future payments are fixed at the beginning.

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<sup>7</sup> Changed to 15,100 yen in 2010.

The National Pension and the Employees' Pension Insurance are facing difficulties in securing enough funds to meet the future burden of pension benefits. Major reforms were made in 2004 to combat the rapid aging of the population, low rate of economic growth and near-zero interest rates. Reforms included cutting back of future benefits, raising of premiums and raising the pensionable age from 60 to 65.

NIPSS (2011) noted that a growing number of eligible and required persons have not paid the premium in full to the National Pension. Many firms are also facing difficulties in paying the employer share of the premiums because of the continuing recession. Some firms have even dissolved their Employees' Pension Insurance and made their employees subscribe to the National Pension so that they do not need to pay the employer's share of the premium. With the "M" curve pattern<sup>8</sup> of women's employment, women are unable to put in the required duration of forty years for premium payment and therefore, do not qualify for the full benefits. Further, many women return to the workforce on a part-time basis and since the Employees Pension Fund does not include part-time workers, many women adjust their working hours to maintain their income below the 1.3 million yen per year level in order to qualify for spouse pension.

The pension system had its fair share of scandals in recent years. In 2007, the Cabinet Office reported the loss of 50 million pension records. The Times reported that

through what appears to be a combination of decades of sloppy bookkeeping and grand-scale bureaucratic incompetence, the details of 50 million Japanese pension files have gone missing.... about 20 million people cannot legally be linked with the money that they have toiled their whole lives to receive. (The Times, UK, 2007)

In July 2010, news broke that the mummified body of the supposedly oldest person in town, aged

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<sup>8</sup> See the following sections.

111 had been found in Adachi Ward in Tokyo. This triggered a search by city and ward officials to trace the centenarians in their records (NHK, 2010). Subsequently, a total of 234,354 centenarians were reported missing in 2010 (Bloomberg News, 4 August 2010). The cause was attributed to the family of the deceased who did not report the death with the intention to continue receiving the deceased's pension. The children or grandchildren of some of these cases were subsequently prosecuted for fraud.

### *Health System*

There is universal coverage over the population through public health insurance schemes. There are three types of such schemes – occupation-based and region-based for those below 75 years old and a separate scheme for those 75 years and older. Occupation-based schemes are formed by different types of firms, depending on their size or professions and they cover employees and their dependents. Those not covered under occupation-based schemes are covered by the National Health Insurance, which is a region-based health scheme managed by the municipals (NIPSS, 2011). There are more than 5,000 different programs according to employer or residence (Ikegami and Campbell, 2004).

The public health insurance schemes are financed by premiums, subsidies from the government and co-payments from patients. For occupation-based schemes, premiums are shared equally by employers and employees. For the National Health Insurance, premium differs among insurers (the municipal governments) and is usually levied based on income, property and number of insured in the household.

The co-payment rate is 30 percent for public health insurance excluding the elderly and children below school age. Payment is made every time a visit to a medical institution is made. The co-payment rate for children below school age is 20 percent. A Medical Care System for Elderly in the Latter Stage of Life (*kōki kōreisha iryō seido*) was implemented in 2008 for those aged 75 or older. This system requires elderly who are aged 75 and older to pay premiums, including those non-working dependents under the former system. The co-payment rate for those who earn the same level of income as the working generation is 30 percent whereas all the other elderly pay 10 percent. However, because of criticism that it

is age discrimination, a new medical system for the elderly is currently being designed to replace the above system (NIPSS, 2011).

Ikegami and Campbell (2004) suggested that by international standards of access, cost, and fairness, health policy in Japan has been quite successful.

#### *Long Term Care Insurance (LTCI) System (kaigo hoken seido)*

The Long Term Care Insurance system, established in 2000, covers all Japanese people aged 65 and over (Category I) regardless of income level and family situation. It is also applicable to those who are 40 to 64 years old (Category II) if they have disabilities caused by health-related conditions associated with aging (for example, cerebrovascular strokes or early onset of dementia). This social insurance scheme is a “pay-as-you-go” scheme financed by a combination of general revenue from taxes, insurance premiums and co-payments of 10 percent from LTCI users. The municipality collects the premium which is deducted from pensions for Category I, and for Category II, additional premium is added to the health insurance premium (NIPSS, 2011).

The LTCI covers preventive services and nursing care services. Preventive services are introduced with the revision of the Long Term Care Insurance Act in 2005 with the aim to prevent an increase in severity among those certified as requiring support. Types of nursing care include both in-home and community-based services and institution based services. The main types of in-home services are home-helper service, bathing and toileting service, nursing service, rehabilitation service and home-care management counseling service. It also includes respite care such as day-care services, medical day-care services, and short stays in facilities. The LTCI can also be used to supplement cost of renting or purchasing special equipment and devices (wheelchairs and adjustable beds) and minor home renovations (hand-rail installations and step removals).

Institutional care facilities are divided into three types (a) nursing home for people without severe medical or mental problems (*kaigo rōjin fukushi shisetsu*), known as welfare facilities, (b) skilled nursing

home for people who need medical attention (*kaigo rōjin hoken shisetsu*), known as health care facilities, and (c) nursing home for people with dementia and other chronic illnesses (*kaigo ryōyō gata iryō shisetsu*), known as sanatorium-type care facilities. There are also quasi institutional facilities like group homes.

The revision of the law in 2005 also established “community-based care services” such as small-sized multifunctional in-home care and daily life care in communal living for elderly with dementia (NIPSS, 2011).

The older adult has to apply to his insurer (his municipal government) in order to use the LTCL. Upon application, a municipal government official makes an on-site home visit and using a standardized 85-item questionnaire, obtains information to assess the person’s physical and mental health status. The data is analyzed by a specialized computer program to generate scores to classify the applicant into seven levels of dependency. There are two lighter levels classified as “support required” (*yō shien*) and five heavier levels classified as “care required” (*yō kaigo*). The applicant may also be rejected if his needs are lower than the lightest level above. The computer-generated scores are assessed together with the physician’s report and the visit report taken by the assessor during the home visit. Applicants are informed of the decision within thirty days of application and may appeal for a re-evaluation at the prefectural level if necessary. Those certified as “support required” can only use in-home services but those certified as “care required” can use both in-home and institution services. The payouts are dependent on the level of support or care assessed. The user is free to choose the type of nursing care service or service provider, either publicly or privately managed (Yong and Saito, 2012).

A certified care manager is then assigned to help develop an appropriate care plan in consultation with family members and to coordinate the use of services. The care manager is also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the care plan.

There is no cash payout. The levels of care classification determine the monetary amount of services that can be received at each level. At the support level, the elderly can expect a monthly payout of 61,500 yen of home-based services. At the care level, the monthly payout ranges from 165,800 yen to

358,300 yen (Yong and Saito, 2012). Any costs exceeding the entitled amounts must be paid by the elderly.

The LTCI is financed by premiums, public expenditure and co-payment by users. The municipality can determine the rate of premium for the insured of Category I. This was estimated as 4,160 yen per month on average for the financial year 2009-2011. Co-payment of services is 10 percent of cost, and for those in a hospital or institution, the users have to bear food expenses and residence expenses (utilities) (NIPSS, 2011).

According to NIPSS (2011), there are a number of issues that will be discussed in the next revision of the system. “The long-term care insurance system initially aimed to support the independent living of the elderly, and even if the elderly entered a state that required nursing care, it aimed to develop an environment where the elderly could receive treatment in the community with which they were familiar.” (p.39). For this purpose the 2005 revision established community-based care services and regional comprehensive support centers. However, the target has not been achieved because of the non-availability of proper service providers in their familiar community, or lack of collaboration between medical institutions, care facilities and in-home service providers, and insufficient number of elderly-friendly housing. The next revision aims to establish a regional comprehensive care system that can provide seamless services in medical care, nursing care, prevention, housing and livelihood support in the daily living area of the elderly (NIPSS, 2011).

In the vision published by the MHLW (2012), the Community General Support Center (*chiiki hōkatsu shien sentā*), home medical care coordination center (*zaitaku iryō renkei kyoten*) and care managers will play the central coordination role between medical care and long term care. The emphasis is for the elderly to remain in their homes or service housing for the elderly (*kea tsuki kōreisha jūtaku*) and rely on long term care in the form of group homes or multifunctional small facilities or day services.

## Overview of the Evolution of Work and the Family System

In this section, an overview of how the family system and the work system evolved in Japan since the Meiji period is described. It will provide a clearer understanding of what are some of the traditional aspects of work and family life so that recent changes will become clearer as we read the following chapters.

### *Traditional Stem Family (ie)*

Many scholars (for example, Lebra, 1984, Long, 1987, Imamura, 2009) have written about the traditional stem family (*ie*) in Japan so I will only briefly summarize the key points here. During the Tokugawa period, a rigidly structured Confucian class system of samurai, farmer, artisan, merchant, and other lowly classes were instituted. Family structure was largely a matter of local governance. Approval of marriage alliances were required for high-ranking samurai but for the commoner, mate selection, family size, and succession were of little concern as long as taxes were paid and public order maintained (Long, 1987).

In the Meiji era, the class system of the Tokugawa period was abolished. A national standard was created with the modified *ie* as model. The household head was given absolute authority to decide matters of marriage and divorce of his dependents. Primogeniture, limiting single heir inheritance to the eldest son, became the rule of succession (Long, 1987).

The *ie* consists of succeeding generations of married couples, and is ideally a self-sustaining and self-perpetuating unit. It is based on patrilineal descent, patriarchal authority, and patrilocal residence. The practice of primogeniture gives status to sons over daughters and firstborns over others. One child in the family, mostly the eldest son is responsible for continuing the family line. As the eldest son marries, he brings his bride into the house, and they become responsible for care of his parents and also inherit everything belonging to the house. If a male heir does not exist, the *yōshi* system allows families to adopt

a son or son-in-law (Lebra, 1984, p. 20-21). Marriage is a union of households decided by the heads of the *ie*. The successor of the house also inherits care of the ancestors and the family grave. If the successor has siblings, they will set up their own families and cannot be part of the inheritance. Siblings of the successor have to find alternative work and many move to the cities and start up their own nuclear families. They have no responsibilities for care of the parents since they are not part of the inheritance. The women in the *ie* are subordinate to men and the young bride of the male heir was “the lowest member of the *ie* under the training thumb of her mother-in-law; expected to be up first and go to bed last, to work hard and produce heirs” (Imamura, 2009, p.77).

The *ie* system was abolished as a legal unit by the new Civil Code during the Allied Occupation. The new Civil Code removed the legal basis of the *ie*, guaranteeing the rights (if not the practice) of sexual equality, equal inheritance by all children, and freedom of marital and occupational choice (Long, 1987). The assets of the family are now required to be equally divided among all the children and all the children are responsible for care of the parents.

Although the *ie* system has been legally abolished, its tradition has remained in some areas, especially in the arts, like famous ikebana masters. Izuhara (2000) said that “many traditional features of society still remain prominent in areas such as family businesses, occupational welfare, family and community-based support” (p.12).

### *Postwar Family and Work*

The “ideal” postwar family form consists of a salary-earning husband (salaryman), his wife (a full-time housewife) and their children. However, Imamura (2009) tells us that the salaryman family was numerically a minority as other family types continued to center around an heir for the farm, fishing or small business household. The vast majority of Japanese were farmers, artisans, and merchants whose wives perform an economically productive role, leaving the children in the care of grandparents or the older children. The ideal of an at-home mother seems to have begun with the emergence of the large firm

sector where the head of each family had to commute to a factory or corporate office and earn money for his family. Patterns of marriage and divorce also varied with geographic regions.

### The Salaryman

Vogel (1963) traced the roots of the salaryman to the Tokugawa period when military functions of the samurai withered and they became administrators working for the clan government. “With the abolition of the samurai class distinctions in early Meiji, many ex-samurai became white-collar workers in government offices and government-sponsored industry” (p. 5). He described the emergence of a “new middle class” consisting of white-collar employees of the large business corporations and government bureaucracies as opposed to the “old middle class” consisting of small independent businessmen or landowners. Since the employee’s income is guaranteed in the form of a regular salary, he has come to be known as the salaryman (*sarari man*). At that time, this word was not used to include “all who receive a salary, but only white-collar workers in the large bureaucracy of a business firm or government office” (p. 5). A job as a salaryman is coveted because he receives a higher pay (than one who works in a small enterprise) and regular wages and has regular hours with time off. His promotion is automatically based on seniority and skill and he belongs to a large, stable organization and the firm is committed to him for life.

### The Housewife

The salaryman is able to dedicate his life to his employer, working long hours, because he has a wife who stays home to look after the house and brings up his children (*sengyō-shufu*). As Ochiai (1997) explained,

...in the Meiji Period (1868-1912) only civil servants and the upper ranks of company

employees earned enough for their wives to stay at home. By mid-Taisho<sup>9</sup>, however, the incomes of both office and factory workers were steadily increasing and in the early years of the Showa Period (1926-1989), civil servants, teachers, office workers, and factory workers had all attained the necessary income level. (33)

The trend for women in the post-war period then, was to work until they got married at a marriageable age (*tekireiki*) of between 22 and 25 years old (Lebra, 1984, p.78). After marriage, they became full-time housewives and had families of two or three children (Ochiai, 1997, p.55). Marriage is “a key stage which the Japanese believe everyone must go through. Everyone must, because marriage is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for making one an adult (*ichininmae*) and a human being in the full sense of the term” (Lebra, 1984, p.78). Entry into marriage constitutes a Japanese woman’s primary commitment, or her “lifetime employment” (*shūshin koyō*). If a woman reaches the age of twenty-five without marrying, stakeholders such as parents, former teachers, employers, and friends typically assume the responsibility of introducing her to suitable partners (Lebra, 1984). Women have to marry “on schedule” otherwise like unsold Christmas cakes, they cannot be got rid of (Brinton, 1992, p.79-80). After the War,

...the value system now in ascendant said that it was better to “do nothing” during the day – better, that is, to devote oneself to housework and child rearing. In the postwar period, the state of being a housewife became so strongly normative that it was practically synonymous with womanhood. (Ochiai, 1997, p. 35)

Helena Lopata (as cited in Imamura, 1987, p. 12), said “the role set of the housewife, regardless of her other activities, encompasses being a wife to her husband, taking charge of the housekeeping tasks,

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<sup>9</sup> The Taisho period is from 1912 to 1925.

and bearing the main responsibility for child care”. “In particular, the urban, salaryman husband is depicted as leaving home early and coming back late. He expects the housework to be done and does not wish to be bothered by tasks around the home. The wife’s duty is “to see that he can rest for the next day’s work” (p. 13).

The Japanese wife is responsible for many duties in the household, including upholding the honor of the husband and home. “The husband’s untidy appearance, as much as the children’s will be blamed on the wife’s negligence” (Lebra, 1984, p.154). She has to maintain an honorable appearance in front of the world which includes relatives, neighbors, employers, employees, colleagues, customers and the community. She has to fulfill social obligations (*giri*) with regard to gift-giving for occasions, various ritual occasions (e.g. birth, marriage, funeral), festivals and special occasions. “The wife, as a reputation manager, must be well informed of to whom the family owes what kind of *giri*” (p. 155).

While the cohorts born up to 1915 tended to have an average of four to five children, the cohorts born after 1921 had an average of around two children (Ochiai, 1997, p.41). A woman’s self-identity is associated with her attainment of full adulthood through motherhood. “If marriage is a major step toward *ichininmae*, motherhood fulfills it. Maturity comes with confidence based on a newly acquired sense of power, strength, or bravery” (Lebra, 1984, p.164).

Motherhood captures the depth of complexity inherent in a woman’s self-fulfillment. On the one hand, it is mothering itself that constitutes *ikigai* [life’s worth] for her; it is the child’s growth and achievement that fulfills her life goal. On the other hand, it is as a mother that she loses her autonomy, enslaved by the tyranny of her child, who seeks her attention and care insatiably: motherhood is thus identical to sacrifice and selflessness. (Lebra, 1984, p.216)

## Work Patterns

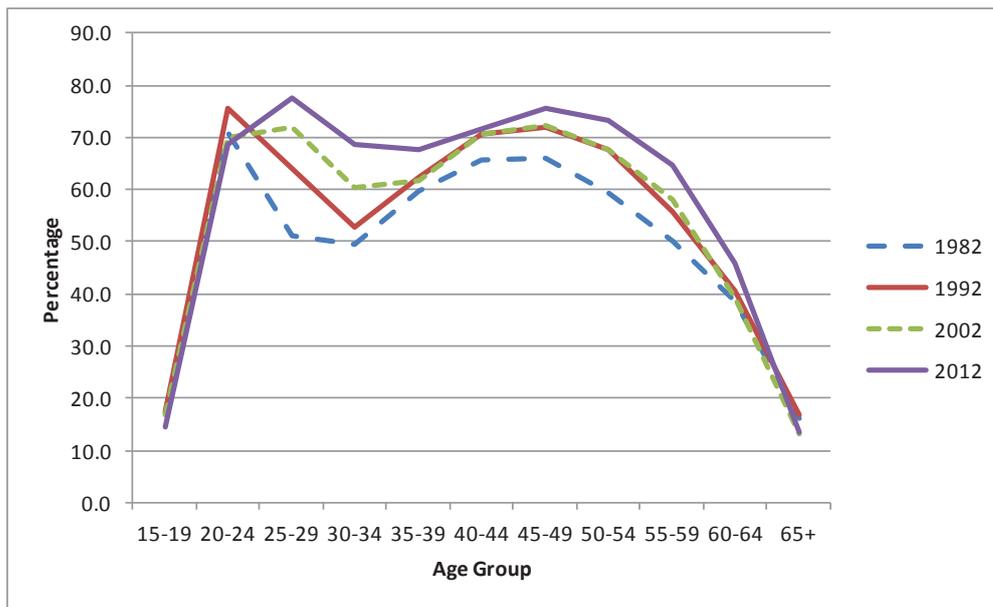
From an image of economic security and social status in the late 1950s to early 1960s, the image of the salaryman has since turned to be one who works long hours, goes out drinking with his fellow workers or clients after work and plays golf with them on weekends, and rarely spends much time at home with his wife and children in the 1990s (Roberson and Suzuki, 2003, p. 1). Iwao (1993) noted that

men have become increasingly chained to the institutions they have set up, as epitomized by the corporate security blanket, namely, long-term employment and the promotional ladder determined by seniority. Their wives, on the other hand, once chained to home and hearth, have been set free by the development of home and other consumer conveniences, and now their energies are being absorbed by a waiting labor market and a broad range of culturally enriching activities. Not only can they work outside the home but they have great freedom to decide how, where, and under what terms they will work. In this reversal of freedoms, the female side of society has become extremely diversified while the male side, trapped by inertia and peer pressure, has become more homogenous. (p. 6)

The “good wife, wise mother” (*ryōsai kenbo*) ideology “has been important in influencing the definition and construction of women’s work, paid and unpaid, in relation to the family” (Broadbent, 2003, p. 5). Women have always been treated as an auxiliary workforce to be activated or disbanded to support gaps or ease excesses in the workforce, with priority given to men. The high economic growth of the 1960s saw employers – particularly those from the manufacturing sector – actively recruiting married women, as an alternative labor supply to sustain industrial growth as the previous sources of labor – young people – were choosing to remain at school. The widespread view of paid employment for married women was that it was secondary to their roles as wife and mother and their part-time income was simply a supplement to the household budget (p. 7).

The employment pattern for women, therefore, resembles an “M” shaped curve (Ochiai, 1997, p.10-11). Figure 2.4 below shows the female labor force participation rate by age group for four different years in the past three decades.

Figure 2.4 Female Labor Force Participation Rate



*Source: Compiled from Statistics Bureau, Historical data on Labor Force and Labor Force Participation Rate by Age (five-year group) for Whole Japan*

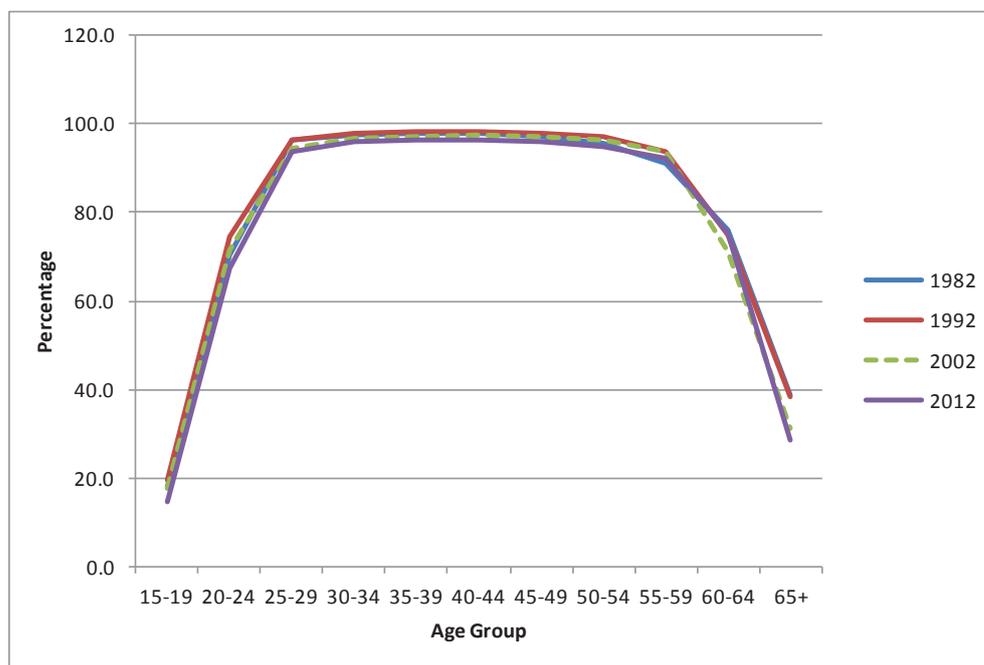
The figure shows that consistently over thirty years, there has been a drop in labor force participation from ages 25 to 34. The trough has shifted over the years from the 25-29 group to the 30-34 group, reflecting later marriages in recent years. The trough has also become shallower in recent years as more women continued to work after marriage and childbirth. Generally, labor force participation has also increased over the years, as the line graphs of latter years have shifted upwards.

The graph of Japanese women’s labor force attachment over the course of their life cycle

forms an M shape. M-curves show the dip in employment for women with small children, which, as Brinton (1989, 2001) and others have shown, is notoriously steep in Japan's case. Moreover, the second "hump" is not only lower, but also qualitatively inferior to the first, because many of the women reentering the job market after a break of some years take part-time work with lower wages, benefits, and job security than for full-time jobs (Rosenbluth, 2007, p. 13)

In comparison, the Male labor force participation graph (Figure 2.5) is in an inverted U shape with minimal changes over the years. The participation rate for males is generally in the 90 percent region, with the first peak around 25-29 years. It remains stable until ages 55-59 before it starts to decline.

Figure 2.5 Male Labor Force Participation Rate



Source: Compiled from Statistics Bureau, *Historical data on Labor Force and Labor Force Participation Rate by Age (five-year group) for Whole Japan*

## Retirement

In the past, Japanese men retired from around age 55 onwards depending on company policies but the latest regulations have raised it to 65. However, pension payments only started at age 60 so the men were forced to find alternative income sources. The Act for Promoting Employment of Middle-aged and Older Persons was enacted in 1971 to provide a regulation for setting targets on the percentage of middle-aged and older employees of age 45 and over in each job category. The system of setting targets in each job category was abolished in 1976. Employers were then obligated to meet the uniform target of six percent or more as a percentage of older employees of ages between 60 and 65 among all employees.

In 1986, the Act for Promoting Employment of Middle-aged and Older Persons was amended and became the Act on Stabilization of Employment of Older Persons. Employers are obligated to make an effort to set the mandatory retirement age at 60, in addition to the target on the percentage of older workers. In subsequent amendments, the mandatory retirement age of 60 became an obligation in 1994 and in 1998, it became illegal to set the mandatory retirement age at below 60. From April 2006, employers are additionally obligated to introduce measures for continued employment of employees beyond the age of 60.

In the review of the public pension system of 1994, it was decided that the pensionable age for Basic Pension would be raised in stages from 60 starting in 2001. The ages will be raised as follows: 61 years old in 2001, 62 in 2004, 63 in 2007, 64 in 2010 and 65 in 2013. In review of the public pension system in 2000, it was decided that the pensionable age for the employees' Earnings-related component would be raised in stages from 60 starting in 2013. The ages will be raised as follows: 61 in 2013, 62 in 2016, 63 in 2019, 64 in 2022 and 65 in 2025. Women's pensionable age will be raised five years behind this schedule. (Fujimoto, 2008)

## Widowhood

Since women generally have longer life expectancy, they eventually enter into widowhood. The

image of a widow in society is usually that of a vulnerable and weak person who needs to be taken care of. However, with the extension of life expectancy without disease, the picture has changed. Lebra (1984) said that the later years is

a stage when a woman, freed from the burden of childrearing, can enjoy autonomy, obtain power and leadership in and out of the household, begin to have her past hardship and energy investment repaid, taste a sense of accomplishment and *ikigai*, and develop a retrospective insight and wisdom on life.(p. 253)

### **General Profile of the Japanese Elderly**

In the following sections, I will describe the general profile of the elderly as revealed by government statistics and surveys. This will provide the background to understanding some aspects of the Japanese elderly that may be common in the general population.

The Japanese government publishes an annual “Aging Society White Paper” and numerous ministries conduct regular statistical surveys and public opinion surveys regarding the aged society. The profile includes the types of households that the elderly live in, the prevalence of co-residence, finances and home ownership, health status and use of the Long Term Care Insurance (LTCI). This profile of the elderly provides a backdrop for details of my sample of older adults in the next few chapters.

#### *Households*

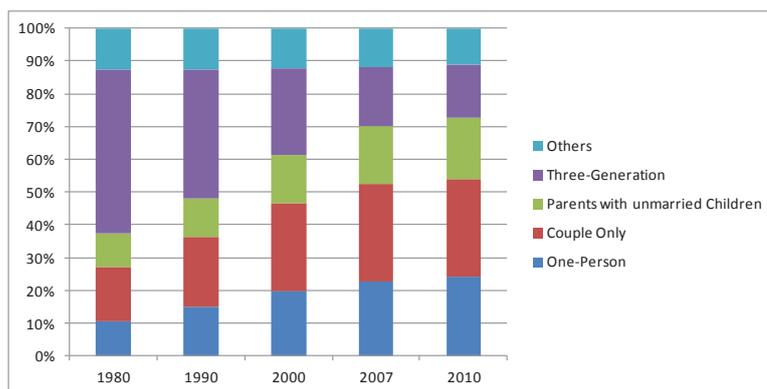
##### Trends of Types of Households

In 2010, there were 2.071 million elderly households that constituted 42.6 percent of total households (Cabinet Office 2012). An “elderly” household is defined as one whose household head is a person 65 years old or older. “Average” household is used to mean all types of households, regardless of the age of the household head. Government statistics classify households into four main categories –

one-person or single household in which there is only person in that household; couple-only in which there are two persons who form a married couple; couple with unmarried children, in which a married couple live with an unmarried child or children; and three-generation in which a couple (generation 2) live with their children (generation 3) and their parents (generation 1), forming three generations in the same household.

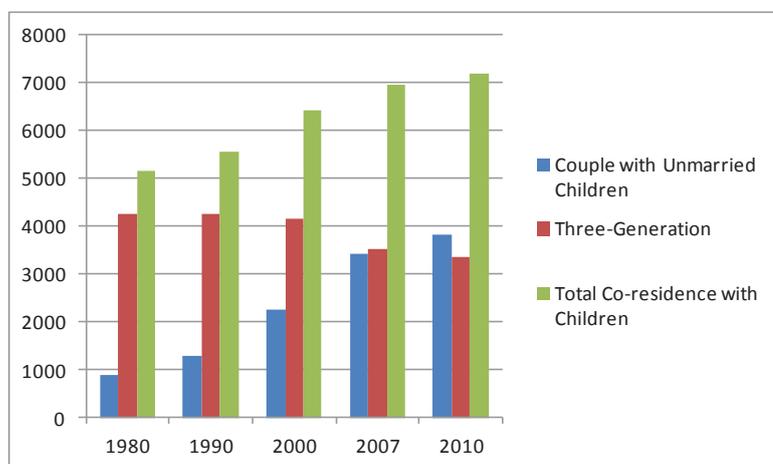
Figure 2.6 shows the trend of change of type of elderly households. The trend from 1980 to 2010 has been decreasing for three-generation households and increasing for the other types. By 2010, couple-only households were about 30 percent and together with one-person households, exceeded 50 percent of the total. However, when we compare the actual number of households in which a child is resident – that is, combining couple with unmarried children and three-generation – we find that the number is actually increasing over the years (Figure 2.7). This suggests that although older adults living with a married child and his or her family have been declining, older adults living with an unmarried child have been increasing. The latter is indicative of late marriages of the children that bring about a delayed departure from the natal home. Adding up coresidence with married or unmarried children, the prevalence of older adults living with children is still on an increasing trend.

Figure 2.6 Trend of Change of Types of Elderly Households



Source: Compiled from *Aging Society White Paper 2012 (Japanese version)*, Cabinet Office (2012)

Figure 2.7 Households (in thousands) with Co-resident Children



Source: Compiled from *Aging Society White Paper 2012 (Japanese version)*, Cabinet Office (2012)

Further, the number of elderly households is projected to increase, with the highest increase in one-person households. In 2010, the number of one-person households occupied by male elderly was 1.39 million and female elderly, 3.41 million (Cabinet Office, 2012).

### Co-residence

Co-residence is found to be lowest between the late sixties to the early seventies. From the late seventies, co-residence rate increases with age. The elderly tend to avoid living together with their children and aspire to be independent while they are healthy, but there is also an apparently increasing number of people who choose to live with their children during their later years. Males show a higher percentage of co-residence from the late fifties onwards whereas females show higher co-residence from the seventies onwards. The increase in “co-residing again” in the later years is due to factors such as changes in health and marital status. It was also found that among elderly living with their children, 56.1 percent live with their sons while 26.2 percent live with their daughters (Nishioka et. al, 2012a).

Regionally, North-east Japan and the coastal area around the Sea of Japan have mostly

three-generation households. On the other hand, there are mostly One-person households in Tokyo, Kochi prefecture and Okinawa prefecture while the rest of Japan has mainly Couple-only households (Cabinet Office, 2012).

Nonetheless, compared to the rest of the world, the number of multigenerational households in Japan is still higher than the West. Ogawa et al. (2006) cited the 2001 International Survey of Lifestyles and Attitudes of the Elderly where the proportion of the elderly at ages 60 and over living in three-generation households was only 2 per cent in the United States, 1 per cent in Germany, virtually 0 per cent in Sweden, but 22 per cent in Japan.

#### *Finances and Home Ownership*

The average annual income for an elderly person was 1.979 million in 2009 which was not much lower than the average person of 2.073 million. The sources of income were 70.2 percent from pensions, followed by 17.3 percent from working income. The percentage of elderly households that depends 80 to 100 percent on pensions was 63.5 percent (Cabinet Office, 2012). In other words, the average elderly person depended mostly on pension as his or her source of income.

Annual expenditure was 1.29 million for an elderly household compared to the average household of 1.20 million (Cabinet Office, 2012). In the Elderly's Financial Consciousness Survey conducted by the Cabinet Office in 2011 (Cabinet Office, 2011), the priority for spending for persons 60 years and older was for health maintenance, medical, and long term care expense. This was 42.8 percent of total expenditure, followed by travel (38.2 percent) and expenditure for children and grandchildren (33.4 percent).

The amount of savings owned by the elderly increased with age, with ages 60-69 at the highest, followed by 70 years and older. In a survey of households consisting of two persons, savings for 65 years and older was 2.26 million yen, which was much higher compared to the average household of 1.66 million yen. The objectives for the savings were given as preparation for illness and long term care (62.3

percent) and maintaining lifestyle (20.0 percent). Loan holdings peaked in the 40s age group and decreased as age increases.

In the thirties age group, home ownership was 52 percent of total households in that age group. Home ownership increased to 86.7 percent for the fifties age group, 91.3 percent for the sixties age group and 91.8 percent for the 70-plus age group (Cabinet Office, 2012). Using 11,355 responses from the 2009 Comprehensive Survey of the Living Conditions of People on Health and Welfare, Nishioka et. al (2012a) found that the majority (69.9 percent) lives in owned detached houses, 12.9 percent in rented apartment or houses, 8.2 percent in owned condominiums, and 4.2 percent in public housing.

#### *Health status*

In a survey in 2010, the number of older adults 65 years and older who reported subjective symptoms (*jikakushōjō*) was 471.1 out of 1000 persons, which was close to fifty percent. However on whether their daily activities were affected, it was only 209 persons out of 1000 persons. Generally, health status is above average (Cabinet Office, 2012).

The top cause for hospitalization was cerebrovascular disease (*nōkekkanshikkan*), followed by cancer. The top illness for outpatient cases was hypertension (*koketsuatsuseishikkan*) and spinal disorders (*sekichūshōgai*). The main causes of death were cancer, heart disease (*shinshikkan*) and pneumonia (*haien*) which in total constituted about 60 percent of all deaths. Compared to 1951 when most deaths occurred in the home (82.5 percent), in 2010 most deaths occurred in the hospital (77.9 percent) with only 12.6 percent in the home (Cabinet Office, 2012).

#### *Long Term Care*

The latest 2012 January (Cabinet Office, 2012) figures of those who use Long Term Care Insurance (LTCI) (*kaigo hoken*) were 4.228 million, out of which 28.4 percent was male and 71.6 percent was female. Out of this total, 21.4 percent was under two sub-categories of “Support Required” and the

remainder was under five levels of “Care Required”. Under the Support categories, 99.3 percent were used for in-home services out of which 6.9 percent were used for out-of-home community service. Under the Care categories, 67.2 percent was for in-home service, 8.5 percent for community service and the remainder 24.3 percent for facility service. The higher the care level needed, the higher usage of facility whereas the lower level the care level, the more in-home service was used. The main causes for necessity of care were cerebrovascular diseases (21.5 percent), dementia (15.3 percent), senility (13.7 percent), and arthritic diseases (10.9 percent). For male, cerebrovascular disease was exceptionally high at 32.9 percent.

About 60 percent of the main care-givers were co-resident, with spouse at 25.7 percent, child at 20.9 percent, child’s spouse 15.2 percent, parents 0.3 percent, and other relatives at 2.0 percent. Other than these, non-resident relatives constituted 9.8 percent, service provider 13.3 percent, others 0.7 percent, and unknown 12.1 percent. The gender of the care-givers was male 30.6 percent, and female 69.4 percent. Moreover, 64.9 percent of male care-givers were 60 years and older and 61.0 percent female care-givers were 60 years and older. This is a phenomenon that has come to be known as “old-old caregiving” (*rōrōkaigo*) where the care-givers themselves are already old.

The most preferred place to receive care was their homes for male 50.7 percent, and female 35.1 percent. Other than their homes, the following preferences were care homes (*kaigo rojin fukushi shisetsu*) - male 17.0 percent, female 19.5 percent; hospital and other medical facilities - male 13.6 percent, female 19.6 percent; *kaigo rojin hoken shisetsu* - male 9.9 percent, female 12.7 percent. Generally, female elderly showed more openness to the use of facilities outside the home than male elderly.

For their final days, most male and female elderly’s preference was to remain in their homes (54.6 percent), followed by the hospital or other medical facility (26.4 percent). The reasons given for difficulty of remaining in the home for their final days were first, being a burden to the family care-giver (80 percent), and next, if the illness were to take a sudden turn for the worse, there was anxiety over the inability of the care-givers to handle the situation (more than 50 percent).

### *Vulnerability to crime against the elderly*

In recent years, the Japanese elderly has also shown vulnerability in being victims to crime. Although elder abuse has been committed in many countries across the world, one type of crime has been peculiar to Japan – the elderly have been cheated of large sums of money by criminals who pretended to be their children or grandchildren in trouble. These crimes are commonly known as bank transfer frauds (*furikome-sagi*)<sup>10</sup>. The Tokyo Metropolitan Police identified four types of bank transfer frauds out of which two types are mainly associated with the older adult. The first of these is the “It’s me (*ore-ore sagi*)” fraud. The fraudster would call up a victim and claim to be the son and ask for an immediate transfer of money to get him out of trouble. There were 6,430 cases involving 145 oku-yen<sup>11</sup> in 2007, out of which 90 percent involved an older adult. The second type is the “refund (*kanpu-sagi*)” fraud in which a fraudster claiming to be an “official” would contact the victim in the guise of giving some refund over tax or insurance and ask for the victim’s bank account details. Again, 90 percent of such cases involved older adults and a total of 2,571 cases (29 oku-yen) were reported in 2007. (National Police Agency website, 2010)

Although the number of bank transfer fraud cases has diminished from 225,095 cases in 2002 to 137,882 cases in 2010, the proportion that involved elderly people has been on a steady increase. In 2011, there were 4,656 cases of *ore-ore sagi*, an increase of 5.4 percent over the last year. Added to this, surrendering of one’s cash card to fake relatives or police resulting in withdrawals from ATMs amounted to 17-oku yen. In total, the amount was 127 oku-yen. In the transfer frauds in 2011, 78.6 percent involved people 60 years and older and out of *ore-ore sagi*, this age group constituted 89.1 percent. (Cabinet Office, 2012). These frauds were often committed by groups of criminals who systematically contacted the elderly in lists that they have laid their hands on. Similar crimes are now surfacing in other countries in Asia.

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<sup>10</sup> The term “*furikome-sagi*” is used by the Metropolitan Police Department whereas the term “*furikomi-sagi*” is often used in the media. “*furikome*” is in the imperative form.

<sup>11</sup> 1 oku-yen is 100 million yen.

## **Summary**

Japan has aged at an unprecedented speed since the 1970s and is at the forefront of the world in facing the issues arising out of a very large proportion of elderly in its population. It has taken steps in the past four decades through government policies and social security systems to attempt to address the issues. The development of the aged society occurs in the midst of a culture unique to Japan in terms of its family system and its work culture that has evolved out of its history. The culture is changing in reaction to social forces and the culture is also changing because the older adults themselves have acted to make a better, later life for themselves as we will see in the following chapters.

### Chapter 3 Lifestyles in the Third Age

The image of the older adult has traditionally been one of a weak person who is dependent on others. Old folk tales like “*Obasuteyama*”, novels like “The Hateful Age” and “The Twilight Years” have all added to the image of the older adult as one who is no longer of use and deserves to be abandoned, or one who is causing trouble to the family as they become old and childlike again. Right around the early 1970s when Japan’s aged population reached seven percent of the total population, Ariyoshi Sawako’s novel “The Twilight Years” (*kōkotsu no hito*) became a best-seller, selling a million copies within six months. The novel portrayed the decline and dotage of an 84-year-old man, and his family’s struggle to keep him alive (Ariyoshi 1972). “The story’s popularity is but one indication that Japanese in the 1970s have awakened to a new concern over the “social pollution” of old age in an affluent society” (Plath, 1973).

Sagaza (1999) believed that Japanese society has a stereotype image of the older adult and this image cannot be changed easily because of the mythology (*shinwa*) about the older adult. Indeed, before Ariyoshi’s novel, Niwa Fumio (1948) in *The Hateful Age* (*iyagarase no nenrei*) painted an ugly picture of the old lady Ume who did nothing every day but asked for food or made a mess of the house. Both of the older adults in these two stories were lacking in health and dependent on their children. The third, and perhaps most famous story is “Mountain of the Deserted Crone” or “*Obasuteyama*” (*narayama bushikō*) (Fukasawa, 1964). In this case, the old lady Orin was 69 years old and still healthy. It was the custom of the village for older adults at age 70 to go to the mountain and die. In Japan, the filial ethic was counterposed by another theme which suggested that when elders became burdensome they had an obligation to leave this world. Juniors might even assist them in doing so. This is the image of *obasute* (deserting granny), which is used as the theme in stories and dramas dating from the sixth century down to the present (Plath 1973). All these helped to put together an image of the elderly as being dependent and a burden to their family.

However, Sagaza (1999) said that as we look around in Japan today, the number of elderly who are independent financially and active in work and community, is increasing. In fact, their active images are a

model for the younger generation. Of course, the fact remains that the burden of care-giving on society and the issue of support of the elderly are not reduced but yet the elderly is transiting into a better image or higher status in society. He believed that the new lifestyles of the elderly will demonstrate that they are not the weak, useless and dependent elderly image that we have seen in the past. Sodei (2004) said that today, the words “ageless” and “successful aging” are used to describe the elderly who are youthfully active and financially well-off. Yet, concerns over care-giving and crimes against the elderly emphasize the image that they are the root of society’s burdens and by their own strength, they cannot survive. Both scholars painted two sides to the image of the elderly.

In this chapter, I will start to clarify the image of the older adult by looking at their current lifestyle in the third age. I will describe the older adult’s transition into retirement and the third age and how some men and women coped with this life event. Many men continue to choose work as an option after retirement. The older adults’ daily routines are also described and as they move on into a time of leisure, the numerous leisure activities undertaken are examined in detail. Their social participation is also analyzed through the types of friends they have and the older adults’ dependency, if any, on them.

Before moving on further, I will first describe the characteristics of my sample of informants.

### **Characteristics of Informants**

My sample consisted of fourteen men and twenty-one women who were 60 years and older and another six men and five women below 60 years old but who had parents who were at least 60 years old. The older generation (hereinafter parent generation)’s ages ranged from 60 to 85 years old, with average age at 70. They had been married for a long time, from twenty-eight years to sixty years. All except one of them had children, with the average number of children being two. The younger generation (hereinafter child generation)’s ages ranged from 30 to 59. They had been married from one year to thirty-eight years. Only those in their thirties did not have children at the time of the interview. One couple in their fifties and another woman in her fifties were already grandparents at the time of the interview. The informants’

details on age, educational level, years married, number of children, and so on are consolidated in the lists in Appendix A.

### *Educational Level*

The educational levels of the informants were as shown in Table 3.1. In the parent generation, the majority had education above middle school that indicated their middle-class level. Also, the men had generally higher education than the women. In the child generation, other than two women in their fifties who had junior college and high school education the rest had university and graduate school education, further supporting that my sample is of middle-class level.

**Table 3.1 Educational Levels of Informants**

<i>Parent Generation</i>						
	60s cohort		70s cohort		80s cohort	
Educational Level	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
University	4	1	2		2	1
Women's Junior College *		3		2		1
High School	2	3	4	5		3
Middle School		1				
Nil **		1				
	6	9	6	7	2	5
* known as <i>tandai</i> in Japanese						
** This case was due to unusual family circumstances, and not financial reasons.						
<i>Child Generation</i>						
	30s cohort		40s cohort		50s cohort	
Educational Level	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Graduate School	3	1			1	1
University			1		1	1
Women's Junior College *						1
High School						1
	3	1	1	0	2	4

## Finances

The annual income distribution of my sample is given in Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1 (parent generation). In the parent generation, most of the lower income groups belonged to women. These women were reporting their individual pensions as many of them worked before they got married. For higher income categories from four to ten million, many of the informants were still working and therefore receiving monthly salary. The group “couples” consisted of husband and wife being interviewed together and so the income reported was total household income. Income sources were mainly pensions and income from work. None of my informants indicated any other sources of income.

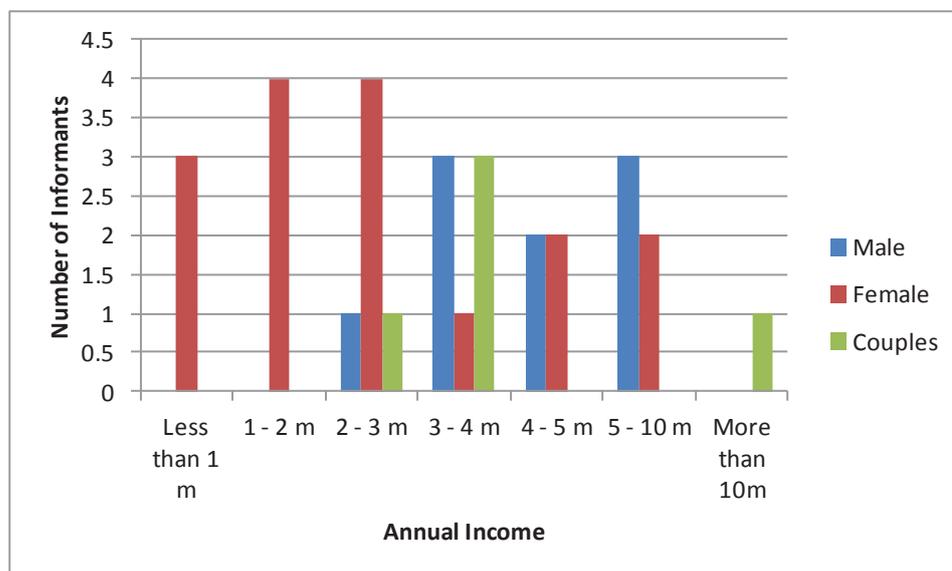
The average annual income level for adults 65 years and older in Japan was 1.98 million in 2011 (Cabinet Office, 2012) so the majority of my informants were above the national average. Considering the fact that many in the low-income categories were women and they were not reporting household income, we could expect them to move higher up the income bracket.

In the child generation, the three women in the lowest income level of less than 1 million were full-time housewives in their fifties. The woman in the income level 1 to 3 million was in her fifties, and she was doing a part-time job. The rest were all working full-time jobs.

Table 3.2 Annual Income Distribution

<i>Parent Generation</i>			
Annual Income	Male	Female	Couples
Less than 1 m		3	
1 - 2 m		4	
2 - 3 m	1	4	1
3 - 4 m	3	1	3
4 - 5 m	2	2	
5 - 10 m	3	2	
More than 10m	0	0	1
	9	16	10
<i>Child Generation</i>			
Annual Income	Male	Female	
Less than 1 m		3	
1 - 3 m		1	
3 - 5 m	2		
5 - 10 m	2	1	
10 - 30 m	2		
	6	5	

Figure 3.1 Annual Income Distribution (parent generation)



The Cabinet Office (2012) reported that as age increases, savings and the rate of home ownership increases. Only two of my informants were living in rental property. The rest were all living in homes that they owned.

Judging from their education levels, home ownership and income levels, it will not be wrong to deduce that my informants are in the middle class to upper-middle class. They are comfortable financially (*yutori ga aru*).

### Health

The majority of the older adults did not have any illness or physical impairments. A few had some health issues, for example, Sugawara-san (85) had suffered a stroke previously and required the use of a walking stick. Fujiwara-san (80) had some problems with her heart and knees but these had not stopped her from moving around independently. There were just a few informants who had chronic diseases like high blood pressure and mild diabetes. The taking of health supplements was not popular either. Kojima-san (80), who was a widow, said that she had not been to a doctor for a long time. She did not take

any medicine or supplements. I was fortunate to have a number of meals with her so I was witness to her extremely healthy appetite. She also walked very fast for an 80-year-old.

### *Living Arrangement*

The living arrangements of the informants are shown in Table 3.3. Further analysis of the living arrangements will be provided in the next chapter.

**Table 3.3 Living Arrangements**

<i>Parent Generation</i>							
Age Group	One Person	Couple Only	Couple with unmarried children	Couple with Parents	Three Generation	Others	Total
60s	1 (F, div)*	11	3	1			16
70s	1 (F, wid)*	8	2			1 (F, div)*	12
80s	2 (F, wid)*	2			3		7
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Note: *(female, divorced or widowed)</i>							
<i>Child Generation</i>							
50s		1	2	1	2		6
40s					1		1
30s		4					4
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>

### **The Retirement Transition**

The older adults' third age starts at retirement according to Carr and Komp (2011). For my older adult informants born between 1925 and 1950, the men entered corporate employment as salarymen and most of the women became full-time housewives upon their marriage. At the time of the interview, some of the men had already retired from work for a long time while others had just retired recently. There were also others who had continued working to this day. In the case of the women, the majority was full-time

housewives and for those who worked, one had retired recently while another was going to retire in the near future.

Retirement for the individual means “withdrawal from one’s business or occupation either to enjoy more leisure or freedom or to cope with health problems” (Atchley, 1982, p. 263). Retirement can be discussed from two different perspectives – either the individual or society. At the societal level, retirement policies affect the size and composition of the labor force. Policies are formulated through the interplay of many stakeholders, including management, labor and government<sup>12</sup>. In this dissertation, I am only looking at the individual perspective of retirement, specifically at how the older adults experienced retirement as a life event and how they carried on into later life after retirement.

Maddox (1970) said that retirement for men is “a rite of passage”, “marking the transition between productive maturity and the non-productivity associated with old age”. He added that “retirement means many different things to many different people”. Successful adaptation is dependent on the personal biographies of the individuals as well as the social contexts into which they retire. Maddox’s basic assumption was that work was men’s “central life task and interest” (p. 14-15). He said:

Historically, a man’s job has been not only his source of income but also a personal and social anchorage point. Work has considerable significance both for the emergence and maintenance of a satisfactory self-identification and for the experience of adequate social interaction with family and peers. Everett Hughes summarized the point this way: “A man’s job is his price tag and his calling card.” Retirement alters a man’s price tag and requires a new calling card. (p. 15)

Although Maddox was writing in the Western context, the situation is also true in Japan.

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<sup>12</sup> For a detailed description of retirement as a social institution in the U.S.A., see Atchley 1982.

Commenting on the Japanese salaryman, Dasgupta (2013)<sup>13</sup> said that “it was through work that a man’s sense of self-worth and societal esteem was determined” (p. 37). Sparks (1975) said that

if one asks a skilled American worker what he does for a living, he might answer that he is, say, a welder. His Japanese counterpart, on the other hand, would be more likely to answer the name of his company, without reference to his job classification: “a Mitsubishi man” or “a Sony employee”, for example.” He said that a Japanese worker will probably consider his group affiliation (his company, where he works) more important than his current task assignment. His role and his self “dissolve into” (*tokekomu*) one. The Japanese salaryman does not have a lot of experience as an individual. Therefore, when he is removed from the group context, he finds it difficult as he loses both his role and his self. (p. 65-66)

Even today, I was surprised to find that not only do many young Japanese workers not carry a title or position in their business cards, some also are not aware of their own title or position. It is typical for them to introduce themselves as So-and-so from a certain department in the company. A title is usually given only when they get promoted to managerial level in their career. This supports what Sparks said above regarding the Japanese worker’s group affiliation and his lack of experience as an individual with specific skills in a certain occupation.

Focusing on changes in identity, Berger (2006) explored these changes during the older worker’s job search process in the greater Toronto area. Once the men perceived that they had been labeled “old” by others, they began to define themselves as “old” and became susceptible to identity degradation. However, the majority of the men was able to successfully negotiate more positive identities by taking advantage of much needed social support, attending older worker programs, changing their identities, maintaining some

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<sup>13</sup> This book has a publication date of 2013 even though it was released in 2012.

of their key roles and altering their overall mental outlook.

According to Maeda (2005), from the 1970s to the 1980s, the image of retirement in Japan was generally negative, implying that retirement led to loneliness and boredom. After the economic crisis in the 1990s, there were significant changes in the employment and retirement of workers. Through three waves of data, 1991, 1996 and 2001, he investigated the patterns of post-retirement careers, the attitudes and images of retirement and the orientation to post-retirement careers. Although there was an increase in the number of workers who thought retirement meant an increase in economic hardship, there was an increasing number who thought retirement meant more free time and being able to regain oneself and also being able to start a new life. Therefore, the image of retirement had changed from one of loneliness and boredom to one of a new life.

Okamoto (2008) examined factors associated with productive activities of the elderly, measuring productive activities in three domains: paid work, unpaid work at home (such as housework and care provided to family), and unpaid work outside the home (such as support provided to relatives, friends or neighbors and volunteer work). Results showed that men were more likely to engage in paid work than women, and men were less likely to perform unpaid work at home. Also age was negatively associated with paid work.

In summary, retirement is a significant event for the individual male worker because his job is the source of his identity. Particularly in the case of Japan, the individual male worker's identity is associated with his social group, the company that he works in for thirty to forty years, so retirement causes him to lose this identity. Adaptation has been found to be possible over time, especially if appropriate support, for example, from family, is available. The situation is illustrated in the following section with the real life experiences of three of my informants.

### *Immediately after Retirement*

Okayama Koichi was a 69-year-old man who worked as a salaryman in a publishing company. He

retired at the early age of 50 in 1990, right around the time that the economic bubble in Japan burst. The company that he worked for was in bad shape at that time, so he had a rather traumatic retirement experience. He was heavily involved in the negotiations with management for compensation for the workers to be laid off. He was exhausted by the time that he retired. He said,

I did not know what to do (*bōtto suru*) for almost six months. I was just loitering around the house. My wife got worried (*shinpai*) and prodded me to find something to do. On her insistence, I started looking at the community newspapers. I found a course on protection of the environment which sounded interesting to me so I decided to join the class. During the course, I went to various sites for field studies. After the course, I decided to volunteer at a farm which was one of the sites that I visited. I chose this farm because it was near my house. I helped with the planting, weeding and harvesting of the vegetables. In return for my work, I received vegetables. After starting this volunteering, I became interested in other things and eventually I joined other classes.

After this, he took a part-time job at a supermarket through the Silver Human Resource Center (*shirubā jinzai sentā*). The job involved working two to three days a week from six o'clock to ten o'clock in the morning. He helped to open the door and bring in the boxes that had been delivered overnight. As he used a forklift to carry the boxes, he said it was not hard work. At eight o'clock, the store workers would put the goods on the shelves and then he disposed of the boxes. He did this work in rotation with three other people from the Silver Center, so that was why he only worked two to three days a week. He had been doing this for five years.

The Silver Human Resource Centers (SHRC) is a nation-wide program established in 1980 and housed under the MHLW to provide older adults with opportunities for paid work on a part-time, temporary basis in their locales. The members are aged 60 and over (Roberts, 1996). Since Okayama-san

retired at age 50, he could not join the SHRC immediately but had to wait until he turned 60.

Tachi Ryosuke was 67 years old and retired from work at 65. He worked in a management position in a labor related organization. Although officially retired, he now had his own management consulting firm and he also held positions as director or chairman in various organizations. In the early days of his retirement, he felt some conflict in his feelings as he narrated below:

After forty-three years of working and focusing on work only, I suddenly have so much time on my hands. The awareness of leisure time, what to do with it – I am still not used to it sometimes. Once I went to play golf with my friends. As it was morning rush hour, the station was full of working people commuting to work. It was an unusual feeling as I went in the opposite direction (out of the city) to the mainstream of working people. As I turned back to look at them, I felt a sense of guilt that I was going to relax in a game of golf while they had to go to work. However, I only felt this in the beginning of my retirement. Now I don't feel it anymore.

He had adjusted to a tight schedule of leisure and work, the latter taking up about three days a week. He segregated his work days into the middle of the week. He went to Tokyo between twelve to fourteen days in a month to fulfill his duties in the various organizations that he was involved in as director or chairman, or to work on his own consultancy business. He kept his working days to less than five hours a day. The rest of the days were taken up by leisure, with activities like golf, lectures and seminars, and exhibitions or concerts. If he was not out of the house, he would work on sorting out his documents, writing emails, as well as gardening, reading, watching TV or listening to music. He also travelled frequently with his wife, both locally and overseas.

While loss of the work role was traumatic for Okayama-san, Tachi-san prepared early for a second job after retirement. Berger (2006) found in her studies in Canada that her participants subjectively maintained the work role by referring to themselves as someone in their particular occupation (for

example, accountant, health care practitioner, and so on). Here, Tachi-san removed himself from being a XYZ company man and identified himself as a consultant. His identity was no longer tied to the company that he worked for but was linked to his skills and experience as a management expert.

In addition, I propose that other factors have come into play in generating different retirement experiences. The first factor is the period in which the retirement took place. Okayama-san retired in 1990, at a time of economic crisis in Japan. Japan enjoyed rapid economic growth from the 1960s but at the beginning of the 1990s, the economic bubble collapsed and the country went into recession. Therefore, at the time of his retirement and immediately after that, the whole Japanese economy was going through turmoil. Most of the other retirements did not happen during major economic turmoil. Hence, Okayama-san's retirement could have been more traumatic because of the uncertainty of the economy.

The second factor is the life stage at which the men were in when they retired. When Okayama-san retired, his eldest son was just preparing for his university examination and his other two children were still at school. He felt insecure without a job as he worried about his children's education expenses. In fact, he told his eldest son that he had better not be a "*rōnin*"<sup>14</sup>, the only request he has ever made of his son. For Tachi-san, his children were already in their thirties and working when he retired.

I also suggest that another important factor is the concept of a proper place (*bun*) in Japan, as explained in Chapter 1. A Japanese man gets his place in society through the company that he works for. When he retires, he loses his place (*bun*) in society. Okayama-san's case fitted this scenario as he could not find a place (*bun*) in society after his retirement. He took more than six months to move on with his new, retired life. As for Tachi-san, he prepared in advance for the loss of role in the company that he worked for by seeking multiple jobs and responsibilities in other companies to create a new place (*bun*) for himself.

Let us now take a look at the retirement experience of a female informant. Kitada Shinobu was 64 years old and retired from her work six months ago. Her husband was 70 years old and they had been

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<sup>14</sup> "*rōnin*" is a term used to describe students who failed entry into a first-class university and took another year to study and try again at the same university (Lebra, 1976, p. 75).

married for forty years. They had one son, 39 years old, married and living nearby. Kitada-san was all excited at the interview to talk about her life now. After graduating from university, she worked for two years before she got married at age 24. She started working part-time (*pāto*) in after-school care (*gakudō hoiku*)<sup>15</sup> after her son turned 17 and she had been doing this for twenty-two years. She said:

I have not watched much TV before because of my work but now I can watch Korean dramas twice a day – from 12 noon to 1 p.m. and then from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Before retirement, I was really looking forward to retiring (*tanoshimi deshita*). Actually, I wanted to retire at 60 but it was extended to 62, therefore I was waiting for it in much anticipation. Just before my retirement, I bought a big TV as I have not watched much TV before.

Regarding retirement, Kitada-san mentioned the word “*tanoshii*” (interesting, fun) many times. She was bubbling with excitement about her current state and when she was describing her TV, she was beaming and she used her hands to demonstrate how big the TV was. Her leisure activities included water gymnastics once a week, sewing clothes occasionally, reading the newspapers, bird-watching, looking at flowers, walking, travelling. She also did brain training exercises to prevent dementia (*boke nai yōni*). Besides Korean drama, she was also interested in Korean food and travel in Korea.

Kitada-san was not alone in this interest. Imamura Ayako<sup>16</sup> was 65 years old and scheduled to retire from her full-time sales job in the month following the interview. Even while working, she had immersed herself in *Hanryu*<sup>17</sup> and had become a fan of the famous Korean actor “Yong-sama” (Bae Yong Joon) as well as other young boy bands from Korea. In my follow-up after her retirement, I found that she had also bought a large TV so that she could enjoy Korean dramas.

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<sup>15</sup> After-school care is mandatory childcare for elementary school children (between ages 7 to 12) with both parents working during the day. A number of classrooms are designated for after-school care where these students could stay while waiting for their parents to pick them up after their work.

<sup>16</sup> Imamura-san belonged to the group taking Korean language classes but Kitada-san was not related to the group.

<sup>17</sup> The popular Korean Wave described later in this chapter.

For the full-time housewife who does not work for any organization, does she experience retirement in similar ways? Let us look at the case of 63-year-old Yamamoto Maki. She was a full-time housewife and served as care-giver to her in-laws while they were still alive. Her care-giver duties were finished when her widowed mother-in-law passed away but the funeral and memorial rites took up a lot of her time. From three years ago when all the rites were finally completed, she had been learning to fill the time void that had arisen in her daily life. She said “I am still getting used to it and have not found something that will engage me to fill this void yet”. In other words, she had to get used to leisure as Tachi-san had shared of his experience earlier.

In the two cases of working women above, both of them stopped work after their marriage and became full-time housewives. Kitada-san went back to a part-time job when her son was 17 and Imamura-san went to work full-time when her youngest son was 18. Both women were representative of Japanese women’s “M-curve” work pattern as described in Chapter 2. Imamura-san admitted that she went to work because she wanted to get out of the house during the day as her parents-in-law were living with her. Kitada-san worked for twenty-two years and Imamura-san would have worked for seventeen years by the time she retired. Both of them did not express any sentiments or regrets about leaving their jobs but instead they looked forward to a time of leisure when they would be able to do the things that they like.

The case of Yamamoto-san demonstrated that the retirement event could also be experienced by full-time housewives if they had been occupied with giving eldercare to parents or parents-in-law and the people they gave care to passed on. As the full-time caregivers did not have time to develop their own hobbies and interests before, when their caregiving duties were eventually finished, they were at a loss as to what to do with their free time.

Studies have found that nowadays, retirement does not necessarily mean a final exit from the workforce as many older adults continue working. Moen, Sweet and Swisher (2005) in their study in New York found that by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century,

retirement was a scripted and clearly demarcated status transition, especially for men who spent most of their adulthood in full-time, uninterrupted employment, before moving to full-time “leisure”. By contrast, retirement today no longer necessarily means a final exit from the workforce, as growing numbers of people take on post-retirement jobs (p. 242).

The prevalence of older adults in Japan who work after the stipulated retirement age is high, as described earlier in Chapter 2. In the following section, we take a look at the older adults in my sample who worked passed their retirement age, either in full-time or part-time positions.

### Work in the Third Age

The following table (Table 3.4) shows the work status of my informants, broken down into age group and gender.

Table 3.4 Work Status of Informants

Age Group	Men			Women		
	Work FT	Work PT	No Work	Work FT	Work PT	No Work
60s	2	1	3	4	0	5
70s	2	0	4	1	1	5
80s	0	1	1	0	1	4
Total	4	2	8	5	2	14
<i>Note: FT: Full-time, PT:Part-time</i>						

I have classified those who owned businesses as working full-time because regardless of the number of hours worked, they were committed to their businesses. For example, 73-year-old Nakamura-san said “I will never retire because it is my own business.”

### *The Men*

Six men out of a total of fourteen men in my sample continued to work beyond the stipulated retirement age. Tatsuda Tsunehiko was 66 years old and continued to hold a full-time job. He enjoyed the adrenalin that he got from his high-pressured work at an education institution. He said that even if he stopped work at this company, he would look for other jobs to fill his time. Maruyama Koji was 63 years old and retired when he was 53. However, he had found another job in the construction industry and worked on a part-time basis. He wanted to work for as long as he was healthy. He said it was not for money but because he had time on his hands. He said work was interesting (*tanoshii*).

The other four men, Tachi Ryosuke (67), Minami Takuya (70), Nakamura Akira (73), and Ueno Kenji (84), all ran their own businesses. Nakamura Akira considered himself as "not retired" because he owned a business. He was also very active in a community club, serving in the committee together with his wife. He said there were so many things to do that he did not have much free time. Ueno Kenji was 84 years old and only retired when he was 78 years old. He owned a medical clinic and had handed over the clinic to his son. However, he still went to the clinic twice a week to work half a day in the mornings, seeing his regular patients. He was also heavily involved in charity work and fund-raising.

### *The Women*

Referring to Table 3.4 above, three of the women who were working on a full-time basis were employed by companies while two were owners of their businesses. Suzuki Tomoko, a 70-year-old divorcee, continued to work in her beauty and health related company. She was deeply committed to enhancing the lives of her clients and she intended to continue for as long as she was able. Maeda Junmi was 64 years old and ran her own elderly care service business. Her plan was to hand over her business to her third son upon her retirement the following year. Her son was already working there and knew the business very well. Nonetheless, Maeda-san was rather worried as to whether the business could run without her. Therefore, last year, she took a long holiday in Europe to test out the situation. The business

ran well without her and so she was planning to retire at 65. When I asked her what she wanted to do after her retirement, she said she would like to study some more about care services, and perhaps go and find out more about it overseas. In a follow-up after the interview, I found that she had indeed retired but she still went regularly to the office, so much so that she would have arguments with her son over the operations.

For the women who were employed, one of them, Imamura-san (introduced in an earlier section), was due to retire in the near future and was looking forward to a time of leisure. The other two were still in their early sixties. Yoshida Aiko (60) worked as a manager in a care service company<sup>18</sup> and was not due to retire until five years later. The other, Kimura Yoko (60), was a divorcee who hoped to continue working beyond the retirement age because she had a daughter who was still in school. She was involved in childcare work.

For the part-timers, Aida Romi was a 70-year-old housewife who worked with Suzuki-san in the beauty and health business. Kojima-san (80) worked part-time at a clinic. She admitted that she could not perform a lot of useful tasks but was just helping out here and there. Besides the above women, the rest of the female informants were not involved and were not seeking out work to fill their time.

For both men and women, it appeared that when it came to one's own business, retirement did not really mean a detachment or disengagement from it. Even though Ueno-san and Maeda-san had retired, they continued to go to the clinic or office on a regular basis, albeit at a lower frequency.

### *Support of Spouses*

For the older adults who were still working full-time, their spouses provided them with support on a daily basis. In the case of Tatsuda-san, his wife continued in her traditional gender role while in the case of the women, their husbands had departed from their traditional gender roles.

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<sup>18</sup> Both Maeda-san and Yoshida-san were in the elderly care service industry but they had no relation to each other and worked for different companies.

Tatsuda Tsunehiko (66) worked in a full-time job at a training organization. He and his wife (64) lived with their only son (30) who was not married yet. On working days, Tatsuda-san commuted for about one hour from his home in the west of Tokyo to his office in downtown Tokyo. He described a typical day,

I get up at around 4:30 a.m., take breakfast and get on the train before 6:00 a.m. to arrive at the station near the office just after 7:00 a.m. Then I spend about 45 minutes at a café looking at the day's schedule or doing some creative reading in a wide range of subjects, from business to cross-cultural to security. After that I go to the office, open up the office and check my mails. This is the best time for me because I can spend a quiet one and a half hour to two hours working with no interruptions. Once the rest of the people come in, it is demanding and stressful as there are so many classes to be staffed. I recruit teachers, conduct interviews and match teachers to course requirements. I could be staffing up to thirty classes at one time during peak periods.

I head for home between 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. After reaching home, I take my dinner, rest for about fifteen minutes before going for a 1.5-hour to 2-hour walk. After the walk, I check my mails, watch the news, do some creative thinking. I go to bed around midnight.

Tatsuda-san usually ate dinner at home that had been prepared by his wife. It was a scenario in which his wife would prepare dinner for him daily and if he had any dinner appointments, he would call his wife to tell her that he would not be back for dinner. As we will see in the next chapter, his wife also prepared dinner for their only son and she would wait up for him if he had to work late. Tatsuda-san did not do any housework around the house. It was typical of him to continue his work at home during the weekends, especially during peak periods when he had to staff a lot of training courses.

Yoshida Aiko (60) lived with her retired husband (62) and their third son. They had three sons but the eldest son had died of a road accident. He would be 28 years old if still alive and her other sons were 27 and 25 years old. Yoshida-san was a manager, working full-time in a care service company. Every morning after Yoshida-san got up, she made coffee and put it at the altar<sup>19</sup> of her eldest son. Then she went to work. She usually arrived at the office one hour before start time in order to finish off any left-over work from the day before. As her company practiced “no overtime”, she could leave the office around 5:15 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. and reached home by 6:00 p.m. Before the “no overtime” policy, she used to work until 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. and sometimes even to midnight. If she did not take work home, she would go for a walk (*sanpo*) with her husband. Sometimes, she might attend seminars together with her husband or she might have dinner with friends. On a typical day at home, her husband prepared the dinner. Her husband was working in office administration and extended his work beyond the retirement age of 55 for another five years. Now that he had retired and since Yoshida-san was still working, her husband cooked the meals. According to Yoshida-san, he liked doing it and he did it very well.

Imamura Ayako (65) worked a full-time job in sales service. She woke up at 7:00 a.m. every day and worked from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. After work, she would stop by the supermarket to buy food for dinner, did housework after dinner and slept around 12 midnight. During the weekend, she would clean the house (*sōji*) and her grandchild would come and play, so there was a lot of shopping that she had to do. Imamura-san’s husband had retired about five years ago and that was the time that his father, who was living with them, started to require care, so her husband provided the care. He was the eldest son. He also helped with about half of the housework and cooked the meals when she was working. When he was younger (about twenty years ago), he was sent to other cities to work alone (*tanshinfunin*), so Imamura-san prepared all the food and froze them for him to take with him every two weeks when he came home. She also prepared instructions for him on how to unfreeze and make them ready to eat. On his

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<sup>19</sup> The ritual of daily offerings has been described by Smith (1974) as follows: Daily offerings are made at the memorial tablets in the household altar; and one may converse with the dead at any time simply by addressing his tablet or by going to this grave and speaking to his spirit there.

second assignment about ten years later, he was able to prepare the food himself and Imamura-san only taught him how to cook and freeze rice. Now he prepared the meals at home for his father and for themselves. He also did a lot of things around the house, like gardening and making bookshelves.

The three cases above showed us that while the traditional role of the wife being responsible for housework and meal preparations was still maintained in the case of Tatsuda-san, the situation was different in the case of the two older women who were still working. Their husbands had taken on what was thought to be women's roles – caregiving, housework and meal preparation – thus, lightening the burden on their wives when they got home from a full day's work. The husbands also appeared to like what they did. The husbands were able to do so because they had already retired but most important of all, they had shown adaptability in learning the tasks and a willingness to do these tasks.

### **Couples and Gender Roles**

In the following section, we will examine the daily routines of four cases of older adults and their spouses. The first two cases are about Okayama Koichi (69), a former salaryman and Yamamoto Maki (63), a full-time housewife. The third case is about the Nakamura couple, who always did everything together, as seen by their friends. The last case describes Nogiwa Yoshiko (72) who did not have a good relationship with her husband. In all these cases, there was little evidence of changes in the traditional gender roles.

Okayama Koichi was a 69-year-old former salaryman who lived with his 64-year-old wife in a couple-only household. They had been married for forty years and had two sons (39, 32) and one daughter (37). Their eldest son and eldest daughter were married but their youngest son was still unmarried. All of them lived nearby. Okayama-san described his typical day as follows:

In the morning, I listen to radio Korean lessons and watch the morning NHK serial drama at 8:00 a.m. I eat breakfast with my wife at 8:30 a.m. When my wife is doing

housework, I read the newspapers and watch TV. We have lunch at 11:00 a.m. After lunch I watch TV until 1:00 p.m. or study Korean or read books. At 4:00 p.m. I go for a walk. Usually my wife leaves at the same time but she takes a separate route and goes somewhere else. Dinner is at 6:00 p.m., after which I watch TV with my wife. I go to my own room at 11:00 p.m. and read. I sleep at midnight.

Okayama-san's wife did not work but volunteered in helping elderly who lived alone. She visited them once a month. Besides this, she also did French embroidery.

Yamamoto Maki was a 63-year-old full-time housewife. She and her husband (67) lived in a Japanese style house. They had two daughters (35, 34) who were married and one son (27) who was still unmarried. Their younger daughter lived far away but the other two children lived nearby. Yamamoto-san's husband was still working in his own painting business. She described her typical day to me:

After getting up in the morning, I make tea and serve the ancestors and gods at the altars in the living room. I then make breakfast and after my husband leaves for work, I do the daily cleaning for about two hours. Then I go out and buy food to prepare lunch. My husband comes home for lunch. After lunch, he goes back to work and I am free to meet friends or shop or do some other activities. In the afternoon, I go out again to buy food to make dinner. We don't like to eat frozen food so we have always gone out to buy fresh food for the two meals. We have done this for all these years. Dinner is around 6:00 p.m. and after dinner, I clean up around 7:30 p.m. and usually just sit and watch TV with my husband until it is time for bed.

Yamamoto-san had been following this routine of shopping for food twice a day ever since she married into the family. Her husband came home for lunch every day.

Nakamura Akira was 73 years old and his wife Yuki-san was 70 years old. They had been married for forty-eight years. Akira-san ran his own business while Yuki-san was a full-time housewife. They had two sons, aged 44 and 39 years. The eldest son was married and lived overseas. Their second son was married with three children and lived nearby. On a typical day, they both got up at 6:30 a.m. Akira-san's room was on the first floor and Yuki-san's was on the second floor. She boiled water and prepared breakfast. They ate breakfast, which was usually bread, while watching TV together. At 8:30 a.m. she did housework and he read the newspapers. Then he worked on his computer. Their schedule usually revolved around clubs that they volunteered with. They spent the day preparing for club activities or read. They usually went for an one-hour four-kilometer walk (*sanpo*) together. They walked and talked. After that, they prepared lunch and went about their club business. At night, they had dinner, took a bath (*ofuro*) and watched TV if they were free. They had TVs on both floors. Akira-san liked to watch baseball and since it was noisy, Yuki-san preferred to watch TV by herself in her own room. They also watched sports and news. If it was a Korean drama, they watched it together. They said that as they were involved in more than one club, they did not have much free time.

Nogiwa Yoshiko was 72 years old, married and lived with her husband (73) and her second daughter (38). Her eldest daughter (40) lived by herself nearby. Both daughters were not married. Her daily routine would start with reading pamphlets about sale items at the supermarkets. These pamphlets were distributed with the daily newspapers. She had a simple breakfast, "using whatever is available", for example, rice, miso soup and cabbage. She ate breakfast with her second daughter and after that they left the food on the table and her husband would eat by himself. According to her, they never ate together (*zettai ni tabenai*). After breakfast, and up to 10:00 a.m. at the earliest, she did various housework around the house and also did warm-up calisthenics (*rajio taisō*) for ten minutes in her own room. Her husband had joined the local old people's club (*rōjinkai*) so he volunteered as a traffic warden for school children near their home. Nogiwa-san said her husband did not do much other than watching TV. She said they never did anything together because they were always fighting. They did not talk much and even when

watching TV together, there was no conversation or comments about the program between the two of them.

The daily routine described above clearly pointed to a continuity of gender roles in the home. The wives continued their roles, especially in the morning routines of preparing breakfast, doing laundry and housework. In the case of Yamamoto-san, she was also responsible for serving the ancestors every morning. While the wives did the housework, the husbands read the newspapers or watched TV or started on their work or hobbies. The husbands did not help in any housework. Some routines had been followed for many years, just like in the case of Yamamoto-san who went out shopping for food twice a day. The roles were also followed despite a non-communicative and bad relationship, like in the case of Nogiwa-san. Despite all her complaints, she continued to prepare her husband's share of food.

Further, we can see that while some couples did everything together, like in the case of the Nakamura couple, others, like Okayama-san respected his wife's independence to pursue her own interests that were different from his. I found this to be prevalent in my sample. Although the older adults allowed their spouse to be independent, the presence of a spouse contributed positively to the maintenance of health as they could spur each other on. Kitada-san told me that she and her husband were working very hard to maintain their health. They encouraged each other in the training of their bodies so that they would not become sick. In this aspect, couples have an advantage over older adults who lived alone. None of the older adults who lived alone mentioned any regular exercise routines like the couples did.

It was also common to find older couples having their own separate rooms. One factor that contributed to this was the fact that their children's rooms had become available after the children left the house. A number of my informants lived in big houses with many rooms, suitable when the children were younger and lived at home. Another factor was the couple's different interests, for example, in TV programs. Nakamura Yuki complained that the TV was noisy when her husband watched his favorite TV programs so they reached the solution of having two TVs, one in each of their own rooms. One of my casual informants in his forties, described how different living patterns caused stress for him and his wife.

They lived in the same room, so when he came back late from work, his wife was already sleeping. He had to step over her to get to his side of the bed so he disturbed her in her sleep. In the morning, she got up early to prepare breakfast while he was still sleeping and therefore, she disturbed his sleep this time. He said his greatest wish was to have his own room when the children move out.

The daily routines described above took up a part of the day for the older adults. With time on their hands, many had found activities to occupy themselves and activities to train their bodies and minds. We shall look at their leisure time in the following sections.

### **Leisure in the Third Age**

According to Takahashi, Tokoro and Hatano (2011), many older adults eagerly look for self-actualizing activities after retirement. One of the most popular of such activities is the practice of some art form, like photography, painting, ceramics, calligraphy, haiku (one form of Japanese poetry) or flower arrangement. Participants usually belong to a group or a class where they can meet other participants as well as a tutor (p. 18-19).

Moore and Campbell (2009), in their study of older adults who were studying and practicing the traditional arts of Noh and calligraphy, found that the “traditional arts present opportunities for senior citizens to attain maturity” (p.247). The communities of learning are places where the “senior citizens can find a role and meet others with similar life experiences” (p.246). Most important of all, it offers an avenue for them to “work against becoming stereotypical older persons who are prone to selfishness, inflexibility and arrogance or whose emotions become blunt with time” (p.244). Despite this, a government survey in 2006 has found that participation in the traditional arts is fairly low, with a possible deterrent being the high costs to practice them. On the other hand, the most popular activities were gardening, reading, carpentry (for men) (p.226-227).

In a survey (Cabinet Office, 2008) of group activities of those 60 years and older in 2008, about 59.2 percent participated in some kind of group activities, an increase over ten years ago. The types of

activities were health and sports 30.5 percent, community activities 24.4 percent, hobbies 20.2 percent, and improvement of living environment 10.6 percent. In the case of learning activities (*gakushū katsudō*), the participation rate was lower at 17.4 percent. Types of learning activities included classes organized by cultural center or other private organizations 7.6 percent, and lectures organized by public organizations or universities 4.8 percent. Desired courses of the 60-69 year old group were health or sports, health related law, medicine, nutrition, jogging, swimming and so on at 60.9 percent. For the 70-year-old group, hobbies were highest at 57.2 percent that included music, art, flower arrangement (*kado*), dance (*buyo*), and calligraphy.

My informants cited a wide range of hobbies and interests as their leisure activities. They ranged from some art forms like painting, calligraphy, Japanese paper (*washi*) art, and haiku to sports, music, language learning, computer classes, and cooking classes to hobbies that they can do alone, like sewing, gardening and reading. I always made it a point to ask about their spouse's leisure activities as well to get a bigger picture of older adults in general. I also asked how they started with certain activities with the view to understanding the social systems and networks available to them. I used the term "hobbies and interests" (*shumi*) in my interviews and in the following sections where I describe a few of these activities, I use "leisure activities", "hobbies" and "interests" interchangeably with no intention to distinguish between them.

### *Keeping Fit*

Keeping fit was on the list of activities for every one of my informants. They were all extremely concerned about maintaining their health, both physically and mentally. Some of them participated in games like tennis where they needed a partner to play the game with. Ten out of my total number of forty-six informants played tennis and they were introduced to me through connections within this circle. Usually, the older adults, by joining one group got to know of connections to other groups and hence, were able to extend their network over time. They played at different places, including courts run by the

municipals or cities. Since games like tennis required partners, many older adults without the interest or the connections turned to solitary exercises, with walking being the most popular. The previous section showed us that Okayama-san and his wife, and the Nakamura couple took regular walks on a daily basis. Aso Satoru (73) walked in the morning and in the evening for “less than ten kilometers”. He had been doing this for ten years now and he said, “if I don’t walk, I don’t feel well”. Tatsuda-san walked after dinner for one-and-a-half hours to two hours, about six times a week.

### *Language Learning and the Korean Wave*

The second biggest group (seven out of the total of forty-six informants) within my sample was those learning the Korean language at a community center in the west of Tokyo. I wanted to know what triggered these seven informants to be interested in this language. I found that they had diverse motivations related to this activity.

Okayama-san (69) listened to Korean lessons on the radio every morning and on Wednesdays, he attended a Korean class at the community center. In addition, twice a month on Friday mornings, he went to his Korean teacher’s house in the neighborhood to do group study. On why he became interested in the Korean language, he said,

I was born in Chosun (North Korea). My family hometown was in Western Japan but my father traveled frequently to Chosun and Taiwan and I was born when the family was in Chosun. I was there until after the War. I was curious about the country that I was born in so I have been to South Korea many times, earlier on with the company union while I was still working and later on with my wife after my retirement. As most of these were packaged tours, I did not find any necessity to learn the language. However, in a trip to Cheju Island with my wife in 1994, I had great difficulties because it was not a packaged tour. So I decided to study the language. My wife did not want to study the language with

me and preferred to rely on me on trips.

Aso Satoru (73) started learning the Korean language about seven years ago. He went to the Osaka Expo and because of the crowd, went into the Korean pavilion by chance which he later found interesting. He thought learning Chinese was difficult but Hangu<sup>20</sup> was easier.

For the Nakamuras, their eldest son studied at a university in South Korea. He then continued to work there. On one occasion, Yuki-san (70) tried to telephone her son but could not communicate with the other end of the line. They decided to study the language, although Akira-san (73) was not very active in earlier years because of his busy work schedule. Their son eventually married a Korean woman and continued to live in South Korea. Despite their attempts to overcome the language barrier, communication with this son and his family had been very infrequent.

Imamura Ayako (65) liked Korean dramas and was a big fan of Bae Yong Jun, known as Yong-sama<sup>21</sup> by his fans. She was a member of his fan club and watched all types of dramas that were starred by him. She also went to watch Korean pop bands, like *Tōhōshinki*, a popular five-member boy band. She liked travelling in Korea and went there two to three times a year, so she found knowing the language helpful.

Sakuma Reiko (71) liked to travel alone and had been to South Korea for more than ten times. She liked everything Korean and her Korean language proficiency was at the advanced level. She could not give any reason why she started on Korean learning but she was deeply immersed in reading the Korean newspapers every day, watched Korean drama and when she travelled in Korea, she went to watch movies at the local cinemas. It was interesting that she did not believe in taking photographs or writing journals about her travels. She said, “It is all here – in my mind and in my heart”.

Takeda Takako (57) went to South Korea for a holiday in the 1990s. She found it very different

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<sup>20</sup> Hangu refers specifically to the Korean alphabet system, whereas I use “Korean language” to include both the alphabet system (for reading and writing skills) and the other language skills, like speaking and listening.

<sup>21</sup> “-sama” is a honorific form of “-san”, in addressing a person in Japanese.

from English-speaking countries. Around the time of her menopause (*kōnenki*), she wanted to try something new. This coincided with the boom of the Korean Wave (*hanryu*) so she started taking classes. She said she really wanted to learn to read the Korean alphabets (Hangul), rather than speak the language. She said, maybe when she turned 60, she would start to learn English.

Besides these informants who were taking Korean language classes, some of my other informants who had no connections with this community center were also interested in Korean dramas. For example, in an earlier section, I explained that Kitada-san (64) bought a big TV upon her retirement so that she could watch Korean dramas. In fact, recently, Tatsuda-san (66), a busy working man, had also started watching Korean dramas. This widespread interest in anything Korean is known as the Korean Wave<sup>22</sup>.

For my informant, Mori Emiko<sup>23</sup> (74), the drama became popular around the time when her husband passed away. She said that she watched the drama repetitively, crying her heart out every time. The theme of the drama was about the hero and heroine loving each other but not being able to stay together. The story, somehow, fitted her needs for emotional release over the loss of her husband. After she had finished grieving, and having put the DVD away for a long time, she said, “I watched it again after a long while but I cannot understand why I liked such a boring (*tsumaranai*) drama at that time.” In discussions with Kitada-san and Kimura-san, the reason why Korean dramas were interesting to them was not clear but they said they liked the way the family stayed together and it “reminded them of Japan many years ago when family was still strong”. It was also possible that they liked the emotional aspects as the Korean men were more comfortable in expressing their emotions than their Japanese counterparts.

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<sup>22</sup> The 2002 FIFA World Cup first started the friendly mood towards Korea in Japan (Mori, 2008, p.129). The popular Korean romance melodrama, “Winter Sonata” was first broadcasted by NHK BS (a satellite channel of NHK – Japan Broadcasting Corporation) in 2003. It gained popularity gradually, spurred on by a visit by the main actor, Bae Yong Jun on 3 April 2004. About 5000 fans, mostly middle-age women gathered to welcome him at the airport. Winter Sonata and the Yong-sama phenomenon drew great attention as a new boom (Mori, 2008, p.130). The phenomena gave visibility to an older audience (between 30 and 70 years) as well as creating new cultural practices, like fan meetings, tours and studies of the Korean language and culture. “The number of Japanese who traveled to Korea in 2004 recorded a growth of 35.5 percent compared to the previous year” (Hirata, 2008, p.143). The reasons why the fans liked Korean drama or the actors were not clear. Some fans liked the character that Bae Yong Jun acted as while others liked Bae Yong Jun, the actor. Some fans did not like the drama in the beginning but gradually grew to like it. Many fans watched it repetitively.

<sup>23</sup> She had no connections to the Korean lesson group above.

As we have seen in the above cases, some of the informants studied Korean because of some connections to Korea, like being born there or having a child there. Others, like Aso-san and Takeda-san, chanced upon it and considering it to be easier than other languages, picked it up. The others were hit, somehow or the other, by the Korean Wave.

Language courses are available through nongovernmental organizations or private organizations and are usually held at city facilities such as “culture centers”. The culture centers hold regular exhibitions, mini-concerts and numerous types of classes, so members of the public could obtain information about available courses easily. The Korean classes cost an average of 1,500 yen per one-hour lesson. These are said to be cheaper than English classes which could cost an average of 2,000 yen per lesson.

#### *Traditional Arts*

Only a small number of my informants were involved in the traditional arts as a hobby. Aso-san’s favorite hobby was calligraphy (*shodō*) which he said he had been doing for ten years. In fact, his wife was introduced to him by his calligraphy teacher so actually he had started on the hobby in his thirties. He shared this hobby with his wife. He only started on acrylic (*akuriru*) painting six years ago. He had done solo exhibitions of his paintings before.

Fujiwara Ikuko (80)’s passion was in Japanese paper art (*washi-hare*). She had also held solo exhibitions of her forty art pieces before. She had practiced this for more than thirty years. She described one of her art pieces as a peacock with three thousand hearts. She had also done a special piece for her daughter’s wedding. I asked whether she wanted to teach the art but she said she just wanted to be a craftswoman (*shokunin*). She did not like to be a teacher as she had already taught Ikebana (flower arrangement) in a hotel for ten years.

Tatsuda-san wrote haiku in English. He was born in America to Japanese parents so he spoke Japanese but he could not read or write Japanese. He had a personal, on-going project to walk the entire route undertaken by Basho Matsuo, a 17<sup>th</sup> century (Edo period) haiku poet. Basho walked a total of 2,400

kilometers in 156 days in northeastern Honshu. He then compiled his poetic diary into *The Narrow Road to the Interior* (*Oku no Hosomichi*). Now during holidays, Tatsuda-san went to certain stations along Basho's route and walked the route, achieving up to about forty kilometers for each trip. He liked this activity because he had solitary time to think about many things. He also showed me a journal that he was keeping on his trips. He met with a group for haiku regularly.

Ueno Mariko (81) did Japanese traditional dance (*shinnihon buyō*). She went to her younger sister's house to practice and once a year, they performed at nursing homes. They danced and also sang songs that the nursing home residents liked. She said she always felt grateful that she was still healthy after visiting the nursing homes.

These informants had been involved with their arts for a very long time. I also noticed that for Aso-san and Fujiwara-san, they were involved in a number of art forms. It is possible that as they moved around in the arts circle, they connected with other art forms over time and expanded their interests. The informants were proud of their arts. Fujiwara-san brought small pieces and also postcards of bigger pieces to show me during the interview. Aso-san told me about his exhibition and how the final turnout of visitors was ten times what he had expected.

### *Volunteering*

Volunteering in various forms was undertaken by some of my informants and their spouses. It ranged from environmental related activities to help offered to the underprivileged. These were the ways that the older adults contributed to society in their own small ways.

On Saturday mornings, Okayama-san volunteered at an organic farm doing weeding and harvesting. He received vegetables in return for his volunteer work. He found the farm after taking up a course on the environment run by the local community. The course included lectures on river preservation and organic farming and also site visits (*kengaku*). After finishing the course, he chose an organic farm near his home to which he could travel by his bicycle. He had been doing this for eight years. He used to do this

volunteering twice a week but he found that he was getting too many vegetables in return for his services so he had now cut it down to once a week. He said he will continue to do this until he dies.

Okayama-san's wife (64) volunteered in helping elderly people who lived alone. She had been doing this for five to six years. She visited them once a month and wrote a report to the local authorities for purposes of the Long Term Care Insurance. As Okayama-san explained, this was an activity that a city in the west of Tokyo had initiated and the role that his wife played was called *hōmon-in*, which meant someone who visits and checks on. Aso-san's wife (63) volunteered by reading books to the disabled. She had done this for twenty to thirty years, only taking leave during the time that her mother was sick. Until her mother passed away last year, she visited the home that her mother was in five times a week. Fujiwara-san's husband (86) was a volunteer for the disabled. He helped them at the pool where they exercised three times a week. He used to work in banking and finally retired at 70 and started volunteering soon after. He was very active and obtained certification for his volunteering. He also helped out at the community reception, preparing schedules on the computer.

Sakuma Reiko (71) volunteered as a Japanese teacher for two foreign adults and taught them for four hours a week. She also coordinated a Japanese prep school for migrant children, attended meetings, made announcements, and did other planning and organizing tasks for the classes. Every month, she had to write up reports on each child to report to the Ministry of Education. As the teachers were volunteers, she did not trust them to make good reports so she had to make corrections all the time. She said she "almost live here" (in the city community center) and had only one day off in a week.

The informants and their spouses described here were committed to helping those in need. The most amazing fact that I found from the stories was the length of time that they had been doing this. A number of them started doing volunteering right after their retirement and intended to continue as long as they were able.

### *Connecting to the Young and Different Cultures*

Four of my informants were involved in a group that organized annual holiday trips for international students studying in the Tokyo area. I did participant observation by joining their trip in September 2010 so I will describe the trip in detail here. The informants who were involved in the organization were Sakuma Reiko (71), the Nakamuras (73 and 70) and Sakai Yutaka (59). Besides them, the organizing committee also included Kimura Yoko (60) who was a qualified first-aider, and an officer in the ward office and his wife. Two other ward office staff were also asked to help out with the administration. The group called themselves “International Students Exchange Fellowship” (*Ryūgakusei Kōryukai*). The two-day fellowship was a comprehensive trip that covered Mt. Fuji, Atami, Hakkone, Gotemba and Kanagawa Prefecture’s Asahi Beer Factory. From mountain to ocean, scenery to factory tour, hot spring to outlet shopping, the trip included everything that the students could ask for in such a short time. The price that each student had to pay was only 10,000 yen, with an overnight stay at Atami, and all meals included.

The committee had been doing this for many years and the preparation towards the event started with a food bazaar at the community center about a month before the trip. The committee members and the ladies they could get together, cooked and sold food to raise funds. A lot of planning and organizing went into the event because the committee’s objective was to make it affordable for students. I asked Sakai-san why he wanted to do this. He said the objective was for the students to have a feeling of homeliness connecting with older adults. As the students were far away from their homeland, they probably felt lonely so this was what a few of them thought they could contribute to society. The older adults were also interested in learning more about culture from other countries.

The students who participated in that trip came from a total of eight countries – China, India, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Iraq and Myanmar. There were lots of opportunities to communicate with one another throughout the trip. Travelling was by bus and after departing early in the morning from Tokyo, the group reached Mt. Fuji Fifth Station (I shall refer to this as Station from now on) before lunchtime. Those interested hiked up Mt. Fuji while the others went around sightseeing at the

Station. Many of the older adults hiked up the mountain, including Nakamura-san who was 73 years old and Sakuma-san who was 71 years old. The rest of the older ladies sat around the Station and chatted. Lunch was lunchboxes (*bento*) brought along in the bus. Considering the logistics, the committee members must have had a really early start in the day to load the lunchboxes. I had the chance to chat with the older ladies and conversation centered around the objective of letting the students have fun. They also told me how they used to make the lunchboxes themselves in the past but in recent years they decided to buy them. Cost was always in the conversation.

After all members of the party had descended from the peak and had their lunch, the group went off to Atami. The hotel was pretty and clean and the rooms were shared four to five people to a room. The room list was already prepared in advance so the distribution of room keys was extremely efficient. The hotel included a hot spring bath (*onsen*). The highlight of the day was the dinner. Everyone went up to the stage in turn. The committee was the first to go up to introduce themselves. This was followed by each country in turn, with the students introducing something about their country. The committee members spread themselves out among the tables to stimulate communications. All in all, I was really impressed by the slick organization. After dinner, informal groups formed and I joined one that consisted of a few committee members and a number of students in one of the rooms. The older adults had a lot of interest in the students' culture, current living condition and their aspirations for the future. It could be seen that they tried their best to encourage the students.

The following day, the group moved off to Hakone, stopping at Gotemba for lunch. In the afternoon, the group visited the Asahi Beer Factory in Kanagawa where they could have free beer for an hour. The group was dropped off in Tokyo in the late evening. One of the students told the committee, "You are like grandfathers and grandmothers (*ojiisan and obāsan*) to us". The committee laughed, saying that they did not want to be called grandfathers and grandmothers. In those two days, I witnessed unhindered communications between the younger and older generations.

The committee of older adults had been organizing such trips on an annual basis for many years. It

involved a lot of hard work and at times when their fund raising did not bring them enough funds, the committee members actually contributed money to make up the difference. They seemed to be motivated by exchanges with younger people and learning about different cultures.

### *Reading*

Reading is a common hobby for the Japanese. One can see lots of heads buried in books on the trains in and around Tokyo. My informants naturally mentioned reading as one of their hobbies. I would like to highlight here one of my informants, Mori Emiko (74). Mori-san was savoring her easy-going (*nonbiri*) lifestyle now. She liked period novels in the Edo periods. She said that when she read such books, she started to understand about history. She went to a total of five different libraries around her ward, travelling on the free bus pass for the elderly. Reading was her favorite pastime and she could read until the early morning. At any one time, she could have up to ten library books on hand, having borrowed up to two to three books from each library.

The point that I would like to highlight here is that Mori-san did not have a lot of friends and she did not participate in any groups. The reason she did not have a lot of friends was that she did not find any necessity to seek them out. Therefore, instead of joining groups, she found the one hobby that she could do alone. I will come back to this point again in the following sections when we look at the older adults' social network.

We have seen in the above sections the wide variety of hobbies and interests that my informants engaged in. The reasons and triggers for the activities also varied greatly. Some hobbies were started a long time ago while others were picked up more recently. Some activities were group activities whereas others were solitary activities. The more active informants were usually involved in more than one activity so it was possible that their participation in one activity connected them to certain social networks that subsequently led them to other social networks and other activities. If the older adult did not participate in

any social network, they were not able to expand their connections to other activities.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, “Active Ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (WHO, 2002). In Walker (2002)’s seven principles of active ageing, he emphasized that “activity in later life is not limited to paid employment or production activity but consist of “all meaningful pursuits” that contribute to older people themselves, their families and local communities, and the well-being of society in a broader sense”.

As we can see from the activities of the older adults in my sample, they were engaging in various activities that included work and leisure. While work could be seen to be contributing to the economy of the country, we had also seen the desire to pass on skills to younger generations (Tachi-san), and to contribute to the health and beauty of clients (Suzuki-san). Besides work, the numerous types of leisure activities that the older adults engaged in, were meaningful to them and in some cases to society. For example, there were hobbies related to the arts that contributed to self-actualization of the participants and volunteering contributed to society. In general, the activities enabled the older adults to engage in activities that draws them out into the community. Most important of all, by remaining active in various activities, they had a sense of well-being.

However, we also noticed that not all of them participated in the community as older adults like Mori-san went to the library alone and did reading at home by herself. In order to understand their leisure life better, we need to look at the social networks of the older adults.

### **Social Networks**

Scholars have shown that although family members are important aspects of the social networks of the older adult, friendships are also important and strongly related to well-being (Antonucci, 1990). While family links have a strong obligatory component, friendships are optional. People use different standards to judge these relationships.

Whereas family are supposed to perform in times of need, friends are not so obligated and are, therefore, particularly appreciated when optional support is provided. For family, not providing expected support is viewed negatively, and provision of expected support is considered merely appropriate. On the other hand, support from friends might be seen as exceptional, but lack of support would not necessarily be viewed negatively. (Antonucci, 1990, p.215)

In the literature, the terms “social network” and “social support” have both been used to talk about social relationships. Thomese et.al (2005) provides some explanation on the differences. “‘Social networks’ refers to the availability of relationships in terms of opportunities and constraints in the relationship structure (e.g. size, stability)... ‘Social support’ indicates the helpful content of relationships (e.g. type, quantity)” (p.463). I found that social support in terms of instrumental support was not yet significant in my informants’ social networks. The main reason is that my informants are healthy and active and therefore, do not require instrumental support at this point in their lives. Therefore, in this section, I will not focus on social support but instead, I will describe my informants’ social network; their perceptions of the functions of friends and the potential for support, including both instrumental and emotional support; the importance or otherwise of neighborhood networks; and alumni or old boy/old girl associations.

In Japan, research on social network and social participation has received increasing attention in recent years. Yabe et al. (2002) studied the formation of social relationships of older men living in Tokyo’s Sugunami ward in 1998. Out of 754 older men aged between 60 and 79, they found that 39.8 percent of relationships were formed in the workplace. Coming in second at 20.5 percent was school whereas kinship, (siblings and relatives) was third at 12.9 percent. Hobbies (*shumi*) was next at 10.4 percent but neighborhood and neighborhood associations and/or social activities (*chonaikai ya shakai katsudo*) were

low at 6.4 percent and 5.3 percent respectively. It was also found that further development of the relationship after initial acquaintance was observed in about half of the subjects. The study indicated that multiple social contexts were important for development of social relationships, for example, the trigger for the relationship could be the workplace but a common interest in some hobby would promote the continuation and development of this relationship.

In a qualitative research, Omori (2005) investigated the characteristics of close social relationships between thirteen older women (aged 65 to 79) and non-family members in three different cities – a ward in Tokyo, a bed town<sup>24</sup> in Chiba and a rural town in Ibaraki. She found that the women felt that they were losing their place in the family (*ibasho wo ushinau*), losing their will to live (*ikiru iyoku ga useru*) and not knowing what lies ahead as they age (*jibun no oisaki ga wakaranai*). By building relationships with others in their own age group, it helped to let the women find their place to be themselves and increased their will to live. They offered mutual care interactions on a daily basis but they were also careful to maintain an appropriate distance between each other in order to prevent intrusion into each other's lives.

#### *Large or Small Social Network?*

To the question of how many friends they had, my informants gave answers ranging from two or three to simply “a lot”. Friends may be from school, the workplace, sports circles, hobby clubs, and in the case of women, parent-teacher associations (PTA) from the time their children were in school.

I always asked my informants to comment on their spouses' friends as well when we talked about social network. Regardless of the gender of my informant, the answer had been consistent in that women have more friends than men. In the words of Ueno Mariko (81), “friends are for eating, travelling and complaining about husbands (*waruguchi suru*)”. Most of my female informants met with their friends frequently, from once a month to a few times a year. They might meet for a meal or they might go travelling together. Most of them had friends from different sources, starting firstly at elementary school,

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<sup>24</sup> A bed town or commuter town is usually in the suburbs of metropolitan cities. The residents usually travel to the city to work and the bed town is said to be a place where the residents go back just to sleep.

then junior high school , then high school, then university, then workplace, then PTA, then hobby clubs or sports circles. Even if they met with one group once a year, they had enough friends to keep them busy for the whole year. Men, on the other hand, made most of their friends at the workplace. While some informants said they still had friends from the workplace, many men cut off their workplace friends after retirement. Okayama-san said that men had less friends because “men live by their name-cards [meaning business cards]. They are company men (*kaisha ningen*). It is difficult to make friends after retirement.” Maeda-san (64) commented about her husband who was also 64 years old and still working in the academic field: “When my husband retires, he will have no more friends. He will never meet his colleagues after retirement.” Some older men started to make new friends after retirement, mainly from their hobby circles or sports circles (*supōtsu nakama*) or fishing circle (*tsuri nakama*). Considering the number of years that the older women had spent building up their social network, these older men had a lot of catching up to do.

Only one male informant said he had expanded his social network. As explained in an earlier section, Tachi-san started his own management consulting company after his retirement. He was happy making a lot of new friends in the course of his new work. At the same time, he said, “after retirement, my friends from the workplace become friends who play together. In fact, there is more contact now.” He also highlighted that he had more relatives now, because his son got married and his son’s in-laws had been added to his social network. He also said that his cousins who had hardly stayed in touch, had now started making more frequent contacts with him. He attributed all these to the extra time he had now and the “active power of seniors” (*shinia katsuryoku*).

Yamamoto-san also mentioned the expansion of her social network through relatives. She already had thirty odd relatives, including her siblings and her husband’s siblings. The network had been further expanded by her children’s in-laws. She said that they got along very well, especially because they had children around the same age-group.

It is difficult to draw any conclusions on the factors that contribute to the size of the social network.

Instead of pursuing this line of investigation, I sought an understanding of what friends were to my informants.

### *Function of Friends*

Tatsuda-san first said to me that he had very, very few close friends. He explained that, best friends are those who can lend emotional support when you are down or when you have trouble, they are always there. So, as a result, the closest friends that I really had in life are my family – my mum and dad are the two best friends that I ever had. Basically because I have let them down so many times but at the end of the day, they are always there. That's a real friend. Other friends can't do that and you won't expect them to do that.... Aside from my parents, my wife is probably one of the best friends I have, even though we don't get along (laughs).

One could perhaps argue that this was not friendship but family but in Tatsuda-san's mind, this was the function of friends. Imamura-san (65) said that the role of friends was emotional support (*kokoro no sasae*). "There should never be any monetary exchange, even though they may help each other." Tsuji Mieko (68) said friends should help each other, giving sometimes emotional support, sometimes practical support. Emotional support appeared very important in the function of friends.

I asked my informants whom they turned to for emotional support. Sakuma-san said, if there is any problem, I will not discuss with my husband. I will discuss with another group (of friends). I am well (*genki*) now because I have many groups, so I can have a change of mood (*kibun tenkan*). It is essential to have somebody to talk to and somebody to praise you.

Sakuma-san's strategy was to have different groups or different circles where she could air her problems about one group that was not connected to the group that she was consulting with.

On the other hand, Yamamoto-san said she would not consult with friends if she had any trouble. She would consult with her husband. She also confided with her sister who also lived in Tokyo. I pressed her for the reason why she consulted with her husband and not her friends. She said, "because it is a matter of two persons (*futari no koto*) and not my own business".

As for practical or instrumental support, particularly related to the need for care during frailty, the answers fell into two groups. One group did not believe they could rely on friends. Okayama-san said that he was not sure that he could depend on friends. Romi-san and Kitada-san, both said they would not rely or depend on friends. Aso-san would also not rely on friends.

The other group believed that they could depend on friends. Both Kimura-san (60) and Maejima-san (80) said they would depend on friends. Actually, Kimura-san and Maejima-san and one other lady who was not an informant, formed a tight threesome friendship. They had worked together for a very long time and had deep commitments to each other. They also lived within short driving distance of each other. Kimura-san was a divorcee, Maejima-san was a widow and the other friend was with her husband. Kimura-san said to me that in case of any trouble, she could depend on her two friends because she believed that they would help her. Maejima-san said "If I need help, I will call Yoko (Kimura-san) first, then my second son (who lives nearby), then my daughter." Maejima-san had good relationships with her son and daughter and yet her first call for help would be her close friend, Kimura Yoko. Kimura-san had emphasized to me many times that she and Maejima-san and the other friends had known each other for a long time. She visited Maejima-san frequently and often brought foodstuff for her. Kimura-san also sat through my whole interview with Maejima-san because they said they know everything about each other. Among the women, I also found the same thing said to me by Suzuki-san and Romi-san. They had been friends since school days and they "knew everything about each other". This appeared to be the way some female friendships were.

Sakai-san (59)<sup>25</sup> would also ask his friends for help. He thought it was necessary to make a lot of friends. He said, “Even if one is sick and not able to move, if there are friends, friends will come to you”. He lamented that in contemporary Japan, there were not enough connections. He said one should communicate with as many people as possible (*iroiro na hito to konmyunikēshon suru*). Sakai-san was one of the leaders who organized the annual exchange trip for international students mentioned earlier. He also ran his own business that was established in partnership with a number of his friends.

The opinions stated here were varied and did not appear to have any gender bias. Some older adults were closer to their family while others were closer to their friends. Some had confidence in depending on friends while others did not.

One type of social network common in Japan is the old boys/old girls network usually called *dōsōkai* in Japanese. I will explain this in the next section.

#### *Alumni and OB/OG Associations (dōsōkai)*

When I first started my fieldwork, I was surprised by the frequent mention of alumni associations or old boy/old girl associations (*dōsōkai*) by my informants. It was even more surprising for me that my informants remained active in alumni associations that went as far back as elementary school. Tachi-san said that he had an increasing number of *dōsōkai* to attend since his retirement. It was like a tour of meetings, with an elementary school *dōsōkai* meeting in one month, a middle school *dōsōkai* meeting in the next and a high school *dōsōkai* meeting in the following month. He said that he was really busy with all the meetings that went on for the whole year. He said he enjoyed the expanding circle of friends and it was comfortable to have “pure” communications with childhood friends.

However, some informants said they did not want to attend *dōsōkais*. Sakuma-san said that she did not want to go to such meetings because they cost money. Maejima-san (80) did not go because she

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<sup>25</sup> An informant in the child generation.

liked to mix with young people and not people who were her age. Fujiwara-san disliked *dōsōkai*s because she “hated gossips”.

The organizers of these alumni and old boy/old girl meetings are called *kanji* in Japanese. These office-bearers usually go by a rotating basis and the task of organizing the meetings is extremely difficult. Imamura-san’s husband (68) was a *kanji* for organizing *dōsōkai* meetings for his former workplace. He had already retired and the group consisted of old boys from his former workplace. This group met three times a year. They ate and sang and some came from far away to join the meeting. In organizing the meeting, her husband first drew a list of potential people who should join. The limit was fifteen people so his potential list was between fifteen and thirty names. He considered this list for a very long time because he had to choose those who were friends with each other. Also, he had to consider whether the combinations of people would be good or bad for the atmosphere of the party. He would make a big mistake if he invited a person who was not on good terms with another in his list. Therefore, his list went through many iterations and Imamura-san said her husband was always troubled (*nayande iru*) over this matter for weeks before the meeting. The phenomenon described here is indicative of social relations in Japan where one has to be very careful in all aspects. The phrase “*ki o tsukau*” is often used to mean worry or concern about others or to take others into consideration.

As older adults aged, what happened to their *dōsōkai*? Ueno Kenji, a doctor, was 84 years old and until a few years ago, continued to attend *dōsōkai*s. He said that *dōsōkai*s that worked were rare. At the life stage that he was in, what he got regularly in the post were notices of funeral rather than invitations to *dōsōkai*. He said that he used to have ten friends who were very close (*shitashii*) and very easy to talk to. Now, only about a quarter remained. Towards the end of the interview with him and his wife, she went to get the mail and among them was a funeral notice. Ueno-san showed it to me. He said jokingly, “I wonder when my turn is”.

As we have seen here, such association meetings are strong among the young older adults but they lose significance in the eighties. The sixties seem to be a prime time, especially for men, because just after

their retirement they have time on their hands and they want to seek out new things to do, so meeting up with old friends become one avenue for them.

Another avenue open to the older adults to form social relationships is in the neighborhood. The next section will tell us whether neighborhood networks worked in my informants' cases.

### *Neighborhood Network*

With only a few exceptions, most of the informants preferred a superficial (*asai*) relationship with their neighbors. Okayama-san said that he did not want a close relationship with his neighbors. He said he bought his house there and if there was any trouble with his neighbors, he would have to move out and he could not possibly do so. Therefore, it was best for him to keep a distance to avoid any trouble. The Maruyamas (63 and 61), who lived in a city to the north of Tokyo said they had no friends in the neighborhood because they were not born there. They only had casual talks with the neighbors but nothing deep to form any relationship. Imamura-san shared Okayama-san's opinion that if there was any quarrel with the neighbors, it would be a terrible thing as life would not be pleasant after that. Sugawara Yuko (82), also said that they did not mix with the neighbors. They would just say "hello". This was despite the fact that they had lived in their house for more than fifty years. About three to five years ago, there were some women who were the same age as her and they used to chat but now that they had become older and were staying alone, they hardly met nowadays.

The two exceptions were Kataoka Ryo (48) and Tachi-san. Kataoka-san had lived in that area for a very long time. His dual-generation home and his brother's house were on family land. His family and his neighbors had grown up together from the time they were children so they were close. Tachi-san said that before his retirement, he hardly had any acquaintances in the neighborhood but now he had joined two groups there. His activities in the neighborhood included golf, reading club, cooking for men and drinking parties. He said "I am happy that I can make friends in a relaxed mood".

Here I would like to describe two cases as examples that neighbors do not have deep relationships

with each other. In the first case, I was visiting Kojima-san for the second time. She met me at the station and together we walked to her home. Nearing her home, we could see an old lady ahead, standing along the street looking at us. It was an uphill slope so it took us some time to reach the old lady. She did not move off but stood there for quite a while, seemingly waiting for us. Perhaps she was curious about my presence next to Kojima-san. Upon reaching her, Kojima-san struck up a conversation. She explained that I was a student doing research on older adults. As the conversation progressed, Kojima-san asked whether she would like to participate in my research. At first the lady said she did not think she had anything to contribute (something that my informants usually say) but eventually, without too much difficulty, she agreed. She said she would drop by Kojima-san's place in the afternoon. She came and she became my informant, Nogiwa Yoshiko. What I would like to emphasize here is that after the interview, the three of us sat around Kojima-san's dining table and chatted. It was during this time that I found out that Kojima-san did not know much about Nogiwa-san. Since the consent for the interview was obtained quite easily, I had thought that the two ladies knew each other quite well. That was not the case. Kojima-san only found out who Nogiwa-san's husband was during the chit-chat. I became more of an observer as they got to know each other.

In the second case, Kimura-san introduced me to Maejima-san who was her close friend. After the interview with Maejima-san, I walked over to Kimura-san's house with her as she had fixed up an interview for me with her neighbor, Kitada-san. A similar thing as described above happened. After the interview with Kitada-san, the three of us sat around Kimura-san's dining table and chatted. Again, I found that the two ladies did not really know each other. They started discovering about each other's family during the chit-chat.

Therefore, as we have seen here, relationships in the neighborhood tended to be superficial, with regular greetings (*aisatsu*) but not going much further. Neighbors observed what was happening around in the area, for example, who came to the house. They might ask questions like "Is that your friend?" but the conversation might not go on much further. The exceptions that had surfaced were those older adults who

have lived in the area for a very long time. These neighbors had seen their children grow up together, even with the possibility that the children went to the same school. In such cases, the older adults professed a friendship relationship. It is difficult to say what period is long enough. In Sugawara Yuko's case, they had lived in that area for fifty years and yet they did not have a close relationship with the neighbors. As Platz (2011) has shown, it was only in "old neighborhoods" where the residents had roots that there would be a high degree of neighborhood involvement (referred to in Chapter 1). Yuko-san was 82 years old, so fifty years ago would put her at around 32 that could possibly have made them newcomers to the place. This leads us towards the conclusion that neighborhood networks might be difficult to establish in urban Japan.

### *Casual Conversations*

Besides the social relationships mentioned above, my informants told me about forms of casual conversations that were keeping the older adults, especially those who lived alone, connected with society in some way.

As described earlier, Yamamoto-san went to the supermarket twice a day to buy food to cook lunch and dinner. I responded to her by saying that in fact, I had seen old ladies at the supermarkets and implied that they were probably like her. She hurried to say that these old ladies were not the same as her. According to Yamamoto-san, they went because they were living alone and they were lonely. By going to the supermarket, they had the opportunity to talk to the supermarket cashiers or staff or other customers. In this way, they did not feel so lonely.

Mori-san, a 74-year-old widow I talked about earlier told me that it was not necessary to have friends (*hitsuyō ga nai*). After much probing, she explained, "It is not that they are not necessary, it's just that it is not necessary to go out and try to make friends on purpose." She said that she talked easily to people on the bus or in the library. She was an avid reader and went to the library regularly. She said she could talk to people she met like friends but once she said "bye bye" (*sayonara*) and got down from the bus or out of the library, "that's it – that's the end of it". Mori-san was comfortable with having such

casual and short connections. She did not want more.

### *Relationship Conflicts*

The picture painted for social participation by the older adults is often a rosy one. Social participation is said to contribute positively to the older adults' well-being. However, as Thang (2005) found in her study in Singapore,

... the dynamics of the interpersonal relationships among center members are similar to those in classroom interactions. Because older persons spend most of the week at the center, it is inevitable that personality clashes and conflicts will sometimes occur.

I was warned by my key contact that there had been some conflict between Sakuma Reiko (71) and Nakamura Yuki (70) for a while now. Both of them were on the committee that organized Korean language learning at the community center. I took the opportunity to observe the class in early August 2010.

A number of classes divided into language proficiency levels, were run on the same evening. I observed the class that Sakuma-san and Nakamura-san were in. When I first entered the classroom, Sakuma-san was already there with two other students. Two more students came in. They greeted Sakuma-san and she told them to sit in front. There were two visible cliques, one of the younger adults (fifties and sixties) and the other of the older adults of which Sakuma-san was one of them. After some time, Nakamura-san came in with a moneybox, as she was the treasurer. Sakuma-san handed her money for the school fees. Nakamura-san sat behind Sakuma-san and collected money from the rest of the students. After completing the collection, she went out, apparently to collect money from the rest of the classes. The lesson started and as it was the beginning of term, the teacher told them to practice introducing their partner. The students broke into pairs. Nakamura-san came back to the room to join the

class. She sat with the younger group and joined their discussion. About mid-way through the lesson, Sakuma-san stood up to get tea to serve her group of older ladies. She did not serve the other group. The other group got up to get their own tea. After tea time, they practiced introducing their partners and the class ended at 9 p.m. I observed no open conflict between Sakuma-san and Nakamura-san during the lesson. During casual conversations with the younger group before the class started, the students commented that Sakuma-san and Nakamura-san were always fighting. Everybody seemed to be afraid of Sakuma-san and openly paid her a lot of respect, in the form of greetings and following her instructions, like where to sit.

As this participant observation session happened before the trip to Mt. Fuji, I was also on the lookout for any tell-tale signs during the trip. Other than the fact that the two ladies kept their distances and moved around in different circles, it would have been difficult for any outsider to detect any trouble. I observed that Sakuma-san tended to be a loner, which was something that she admitted to me in her interview. She liked to do things by herself. I also observed that even the male committee members for the trip showed deference to Sakuma-san. It was not so easy for me to get closer to Nakamura-san because she was always with her husband or other ladies. An update this year from my key contact showed that the two ladies had stopped talking to each other completely. The reasons behind the conflict remained known only to the two ladies and their close friends.

The point that I would like to make here is that regardless of age, conflicts in relationships occur. Although social participation of the older adults is encouraged, one must not forget that interpersonal conflicts do happen just like in any workplace or groups, and age offers no protection against conflict. In fact, leaders who are orchestrating social activities with older adults have to be even more vigilant in keeping such conflicts at bay, as older adults have greater freedom to quit the activities at any time.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I have shown how some of the older adults overcame the retirement transition and

entered into a life of leisure. The loss of their place at work was especially traumatic for men if they were not prepared for it. Some of them were able to reconnect and find new places for themselves through other forms of work. The women, on the other hand, had worked for shorter periods following the “M curve” pattern of employment. Many stopped work upon marriage and returned to work when their children were at least in their teens. The women looked forward to their retirement as a time for leisure. However, in cases where the older adults ran their own businesses, their commitment to their business went beyond their retirement and this was the same for both men and women.

In the home, generally continuation of gender roles was observed. The older women continued in their roles in taking care of the meals, laundry and cleaning of the house. While the wives did their housework in the morning, the husbands read the newspapers or watched TV or started on their work or hobbies. The husbands did not help with any housework. Exceptions were found in two cases where the wives worked full-time and their husbands were already retired. Their husbands took charge of the meals and shared in the housework and one of the husbands gave care to his co-resident father. These husbands apparently enjoyed cooking the meals and were good at it.

While some of the older couples always did things together, the greater majority allowed their spouses independence to do the things that they liked. Even in their daily walks, a couple could set off together and went their separate routes. The freedom to have their own individual space was achieved through having separate rooms, where they could watch their own favorite programs or pursue their own hobbies in peace and quiet. The couples’ relationships were generally good with just one clear exception. The presence of a spouse had a positive contribution towards efforts to maintain their health as they could spur each other on. Such support was not available for those who lived alone.

The older adults’ participation in society might not be significant in some cases, especially those who did more of solitary activities. For the majority, each older adult participated in at least one hobby, kept a disciplined lifestyle and got out of the house regularly. Their efforts to exercise, to get out of the house, and to keep their minds occupied with some activities helped them to maintain their independence.

With health and finance as their resources, the older adults had adjusted to independent lifestyles in the third age. With more time on their hands, some older adults expanded their social network although this was found mostly in the young-old cohorts. Only a few said that they would depend on friends to support them in times of need, particularly in instrumental support. Most of the time friendships tended to be shallow especially in the neighborhood. Friends were more for having fun with.

With independent lifestyles and minimum dependence on friends, do the older adults depend on their family? We examine this question in the next two chapters.

## Chapter 4 Older Adults and Family

As we have seen from the previous chapter, the older adults were leading independent and active lives. Some continued to contribute to society through work while others contributed through volunteering or the arts. Although most of them acknowledged that friends were important, only a few believed that they could depend on friends in time of need. Therefore, I would like to turn to look at the situation with their families. Are the older adults leading lives independent of their children? What types of relationships do they have with their children? These are some of the questions to be answered in this chapter.

In order to answer these questions, we have to first understand the shape and form of the older adults' families. In this aspect, I will use four elements from the Intergenerational Solidarity model developed by Vern Bengtson and colleagues (Bengtson and Roberts, 1991). The model describes sentiments, behaviors, and attitudes in parent-child and other family relationships. The model consists of six principal dimensions of solidarity between generations : affectual (emotional closeness or the sentiments and evaluations family members express about their relationships with other members); functional (the giving and receiving of support across generations including instrumental and emotional support); structural (the geographic proximity between family members as affecting their opportunities for intergenerational interactions); consensual (agreement in opinions, values, and orientations between generations); normative (norms and expectations regarding familistic values, and filial and parental expectations; and associational (the frequency of contact between intergenerational family members (Giarrusson et al. 2005). The model also enables a prediction of the inter-relationships between the various dimensions, for example, whether higher normative solidarity influences affectual solidarity and associational solidarity. However, in this dissertation, I will not examine the inter-relationships between the dimensions but rather I use the dimensions as elements to examine the multifacets of the family. In other words, I examine the family of older adults through four elements – geographic proximity (structural), contacts (associational), exchanges (functional) and emotional closeness (affectual). In the next chapter, I will look into the filial and parental expectations (normative).

In a research in Japan, Yamauchi (2011) used the Fourth National Survey on Family in 2008 to analyze the factors that determine assistance from older adults to non-resident married adult children. The sample he selected was 1,236 married women, born between 1930 and 1959 and had married adult children. He found that the socioeconomic status of the parents did not have an impact on the extent of assistance but the following factors were significant. If the married adult child was a daughter, assistance tended to be support to grandchildren whereas if it was a son, it tended to be financial support related to housing. Support to grandchildren included financial assistance towards expenditure on grandchildren, instrumental support during birth of grandchildren and instrumental support in childcare. If the parents had experience of receiving assistance from their own parents, then they tended to give financial support in weddings and support to grandchildren. If the parents had intention to pass on an inheritance to their children, they tended to give financial support. If the children lived nearby, there was a tendency to offer all types of support except for consultation during difficult times. If the frequency of conversations was high, the parents tended to give all types of support except for financial support in weddings. Frequency of conversations was used as a measure of emotional distance between parent and child. Overall, more than 50 percent of the respondents gave financial support in weddings and the lowest support was in financial support for housing (less than 20 percent). More than 60 percent indicated support for grandchildren through financial support, support during childbirth and childcare support. Although the survey gave us some indications of trends, we are unable to determine the reasons behind the trends. By using a qualitative methodology, this research is able to investigate the reasons behind the various elements involved in intergenerational solidarity.

From this chapter I will also include the child generation in my sample that comprised eleven informants, out of which six of them had parent(s) who are also my informants. This will provide a more complete picture of the families from both parent and child perspectives.

## Geographic Proximity

All, except one, of the older adults had children, averaging from one to three children in a family. They had various types of living arrangements, ranging from one-person (4 cases), couple-only (14), couple living with unmarried children (5), couple with parents (1), three-generation (2) and other (1, divorcee with sibling) households (See Table 4.1). In the child generation, the youngest informants in their thirties were living in couple-only households. The older informants in their forties and fifties had living arrangements ranging across the various types of household structures.

**Table 4.1 Types of Households**

<i>Parent Generation</i>						
Age Group	One Person	Couple Only	Couple with unmarried children	Couple with Parents	Three Generation	Others
60s	1 (F, div)*	6	3	1		
70s	1 (F, wid)*	7	2			1 (F, div)*
80s	2 (F, wid)*	1			2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Note: *(female, divorced or widowed)</i>						
<i>Child Generation</i>						
50s		1	2	1	1	
40s					1	
30s		3				
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

### *Three-generation households*

There were altogether three three-generation households in my sample. In one household,

Fujiwara-san (80) lived with her husband (86), divorced daughter (59) and twin unmarried granddaughters (27) under one roof. In the second household, Kataoka-san (48) lived with his wife (49) and two daughters (19, 17) and his mother (75) in a dual-generation house that had a single entrance. His house was on family land and his brother (45) and his family lived in another house next door. In the third household, Sugawara Takashi and Yuko (85, 84) lived with their second son, Naoki-san (56) and daughter-in-law, Fumiko-san (55) and their unmarried daughter (26) in a dual-generation house that had separate entrances. Both generations in the Sugawara household are my informants.

A brief explanation of dual-generation houses (*nisetai-jūtaku*) is appropriate here. These houses are built for two generations - parent and child generations - to live together under one roof while protecting each generation's privacy and avoiding interference by the other generation. There are three general types – common, separate or partially common and they are built in an upper-lower formation, or left-right formation or common formation. Platz (2011) described the dual-generation home as including three types:

It could describe two completely separate households under one roof with two entrance doors, a house with one joint entrance door but separate dwellings within the building, or a house with several shared rooms such as kitchen and living room but separate bedroom spaces. Only this latter type is officially registered as one household, while all the others are registered as separate ones, which makes it difficult to get meaningful statistics about who lives with whom. (p.255)

In the past, in Japan's traditional family system (*ie*), the eldest son and his family lived with his parents forming a three-generation family. My sample showed that three-generation households nowadays could have been formed by other reasons as well. In the three cases above, Fujiwara-san's eldest daughter moved in with them after her divorce. In Kataoka-san's case, he was the eldest son. He and his parents

used to live in different buildings but twelve years ago, they rebuilt the house into a dual-generation house. His case was closest to the traditional way of living with the eldest son. Sugawara Naoki, as the second son, moved in with his parents according to circumstances at that time. His elder brother was living in another city and could not move back to the family home. At the same time, Naoki-san was going abroad with his family and instead of leaving his own house empty for a few years he sold his house and moved in with his parents before going overseas. They had remained this way even though his elder brother eventually moved back to the city.

There were also cases of sons living with their parents-in-law, for example, Maejima-san's second son. How close the children were to their in-laws appeared to matter as the following case showed. The Nakamuras' second son bought a house that was ten minutes from his parents-in-law and Yuki-san expressed her unhappiness about it to me. She said it should be half-way between her house and her son's parents-in-law's house. Nevertheless, this son was living near to her so the complaint was more a question of principle of equality in her mind that the children should be shared equally between parents and parents-in-law.

#### *Non-resident children*

In the cases where their children were not living with them, I asked the older adults whether the children were living nearby or far away. I did not use an objective measure, like distance or time to travel because I wanted to know the older adults' perception of whether their children were near or far from them. Table 4.2 below shows details of family composition and living arrangements.

**Table 4.2 Family Composition and Living Arrangements**

Informants	Age	Marital Status	Type of Household	No. of Children	Children			
					Live-in	Nearby	Far away	Deceased
Aida Romi	70	M	C	2		S,D		
Aso Satoru	73	M	CWC	1	S*(36)			
Fujiwara Ikuko	80	M	3-gen	2	D (div)		D	
Fukui Jun	71	M	C	2		S, S		
Hirakawa Junko	71	Wid	OP	2		S	D	
Imamura Ayako	65	M	CWP	2		S*(38),S		
Itabashi Yoshiyuki	73	M	C	1		S		
Iwai Kenta and Yumi	67,65	M	C	1		D		
Kimura Yoko	60	Div	OP	2		D*(21)	S	
Kitada Shinobu	64	M	C	1		S		
Kojima Keiko	80	Wid	OP	3			S,D,D	
Maeda Junmi	64	M	C	3		S,S,S		
Maejima Sae	80	Wid	OP	3		S	D	S
Maruyama Koji & Kazuko	63,61	M	C	3		D,D	S	
Minami Takuya	70	M	C	2		D	D	
Mori Emiko	74	Wid	WWC	3	D*(41)		D,D	
Naito Masafumi	62	M	CWC	2	D*(21)		S*(19)	
Nakamura Akira & Yuki	73, 70	M	C	2		S	S	
Nogiwa Yoshiko	72	M	CWC	2	D*(38)	D*(40)		
Okayama Koichi	69	M	C	3		S,D,S*(32)		
Sakuma Rieko	71	M	C	1		S*(36)		
Sugawara Takashi & Yuko	85,82	M	3-gen	2	S	S		
Suzuki Tomoko	70	Div	Other	0				
Tachi Ryosuke	67	M	CWC	2	S*(32)	S		
Tatsuda Tsunehiko	66	M	CWC	1	S*(30)			
Tsuji Shigeto and Meiko	74,68	M	C	2		D,S*(40)		
Ueno Kenji & Mariko	84,81	M	C	3		D,S,S		
Yamamoto Maki	63	M	C	3		D,S*(27)	D	
Yoshida Aiko	60	M	CWC	3	S*(25)		S*(27)	S

*Notes:*

*Marital Status:* Div=divorced, M=married, Wid=widowed

*Type of Household:* C=couple only, CWC=couple with child, CWP=couple with parent, OP=one-person household  
WWC=widowed with child, 3-gen=3-generation, Other=with sibling

*Children:* S=son, D=daughter

*Live-in and Nearby Children:* \*( )= Unmarried (age)

As the table shows, only two informants did not have children living with them or even nearby. One of them, Suzuki Tomoko, was a divorcee with no children. The other informant, Kojima Keiko was a widow with three married children. In fact, Kojima-san's home was a 40-minute car ride from her

youngest daughter, Yukie-san's home. Objectively, it was not far from her but she perceived her children to be far away. On the other hand, Yukie-san did not consider her mother's house to be far from her.

According to the Cabinet Office (2012), the number of three-generation households has decreased from 50.1% in 1980 to 16.2% in 2010 out of the total of elderly households. This significant trend is often used in reports to imply a "collapse" of the traditional family in Japan. As we have seen above in my sample, the majority of the older adults either had children living with them or children living near them. Therefore, even though government statistics show that the occurrence of co-residence has been declining, it is not indicative that the older adults are isolated from their children. Moreover, the recording of three-generation household is ambiguous. Some families living in dual-generation houses register with the authorities as one household while others register themselves as two separate households (Usui, 2005). Overall, the older adults in my sample had easy access to their children.

## **Contacts**

The previous section has shown us that even though the older adults may not live with their children, their children are still in geographical proximity. So, given that there is geographical proximity, what is the situation with contacts? To understand this, I asked my informants how often they see their children or communicate with them over the telephone or through email. I also asked them what they did and what they talked about when they meet.

### *Contact with Coresident Children*

Although Tatsuda Tsunehiko (66)'s only son (30) lived with him and his wife (64), their frequency of contact is not daily. In replying to my question of how often he saw his son, Tatsuda-san laughed and said,

That's really funny. Sometimes I see him when he comes home at midnight or 1 o'clock

because he's working. When I peek into his room, he's sleeping or looking at comics or reading. I probably will not see him until the weekend. But he's home every night.

However, on weekends, his son usually caught up with his sleep after a whole week at work. If they had time together, they talked about sports or watch DVDs together. They would sit and watch programs together and if his son had anything to discuss, he would bring it up during this time. On the other hand, his son saw and talked to his wife on a daily basis. His wife would wait up for his son and lay out dinner for him when he got back from work. Tatsuda-san felt that they talked easily because they communicated in Japanese whereas his son would communicate with him usually in English. Tatsuda-san grew up in America and his son was born there. They only came back to Japan in the 1990s. English had remained as the language of communication between father and son.

Aso Satoru (73)'s only son (36) also lived with him and his wife (63). They did not meet in the mornings because their schedules were different but they always ate dinner together. His son worked in a medical organization. He did not consult with his father so their conversations usually revolved around baseball or movies. His son liked movies so he would tell his parents what were the good movies to watch.

Sugawara Naoki (56) lived in a dual-generation house with his parents, Takashi-san and Yuko-san (85, 82). Their dual-generation house had separate entrances so his family and his parents could move in and out without disturbing each other. He saw his parents about once a week. He was very busy at work and often worked late. Therefore, when he had some free time, he would go up to the second floor where they lived and talked to them. Sometimes, his wife, Fumiko-san (55) would tell him to go up and have lunch or dinner with them. When talking to his parents, he usually listened only. His father always told old stories of the time when he was working. When Naoki-san was younger, he used to argue with him but now he only nodded his head and agreed. His mother talked about everything from shopping to food. Again, he only listened. He said that because they were old, they always repeated their stories.

Unlike the Sugawaras, Kataoka Ryo's dual-generation house had only one entrance. Therefore, in

order to access his rooms on the second floor, he and his family had to pass through the first floor where his mother lived. When he came home from work, he had to pass through his mother's door. After his father passed away, he would stop by at his mother's room and put incense (*senkō*) and ring the bell at his father's altar. This custom had become a daily routine. After this he talked to his mother for a while. There was usually more time during the weekends. Sometimes they fought. He said that his mother fussed over him as if he was still a boy. Their usual conversation revolved around health. Usually she talked and he listened. She would ask him to take this vitamin or read this book or watch this program. On special days, she would join his family for meals. For example, it had been planned that they would go out for a meal the following week (after the interview) as it was Respect-for-the-Aged Day (*keirō no hi*)<sup>26</sup>. Last week they had grilled meat (*yakiniku*) together. Other times, she would cook by herself. Every day, she would also talk to Kataoka-san's wife for a few minutes.

Contact with co-resident children cannot be assumed to be frequent. Even when parents and children lived together under the same roof, their different daily lifestyles could contribute to infrequent contacts. In the case of dual-generation houses, the environment itself could support frequent contact, like in the case of Kataoka-san. Where the housing structure did not support frequent contact, like in the case of the Sugawaras, effort had to be made by at least one party to initiate the contact.

#### *Contact with Non-resident Children*

For parents with non-resident children, their frequency of contact ranged from daily to once a year or less. For discussion, I separated them into three groups according to frequency of contact.

##### Very frequent (daily to weekly)

The Maruyamas (63, 61) had one son (38) and two daughters (36, 28) who were all married. They lived in a city north of Tokyo and their daughters lived nearby. They met with their second daughter and

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<sup>26</sup> Respect-for-the-Aged Day (*keirō no hi*) is a national holiday in honor of elderly citizens and it is celebrated on the third Monday of September.

grandson every day. Their second daughter used to live in Tokyo but the Maruyamas bought a house for her nearby. Since their daughter was a full-time housewife and her husband was working at home, she brought her one-year-old son to play at the Maruyamas' house every afternoon. (Mrs.) Maruyama Kazuko said that her grandson was her motivation for living (*ikigai*)<sup>27</sup>. Their youngest daughter also joined them now and then. The Maruyamas' eldest son lived far away (in another prefecture) and owned two restaurants. As he was very busy with his business, he only came once or twice a year, usually during the New Year. When he came, they would get together to eat, drink sake and sing karaoke. His wife phoned and emailed once a week to give a report on their son, who was just one year old.

Iwai Kenta (67)'s only daughter (35) was married and lived nearby. They lived in the same city as the Maruyamas. Their daughter came over to their house three times a week. Sometimes her husband worked night shifts so she would stay over at her parents' house. They had phone or email contacts every day, regarding very ordinary day-to-day things. On the day that I interviewed Iwai-san and his wife, his daughter and son-in-law also came over as they wanted to listen in to the interview.

Imamura Ayako had two sons, aged 38 and 35. Her eldest son was still single while his second son was married and had a two-year-old daughter. Both of them lived nearby. Imamura-san lived in a city west of Tokyo. Her second son's wife and daughter would visit Imamura-san once a week. Sometimes Imamura-san went to see them about twice a week. Imamura-san said that she treated her daughter-in-law just like a daughter because she had no daughter of her own. They got on very well. Her eldest son came back to eat about twice a month. Imamura-san said he had the same relationship with both parents. He would talk about work with his father and about food with his mother, like asking her how to cook certain food. They only had telephone contact if there was any matter to talk about.

Aida-san had one son (41) and one daughter (39) who was divorced. Her son had two children, a son (6) and a daughter (4). Her daughter also had two children, a daughter (12) and a son (8). Aida-san lived in Tokyo. Her children came over every weekend. She said that her daughter and daughter-in-law

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<sup>27</sup> Explained in Chapter 5.

had a lot in common and got along very well. The grandchildren were also very close. They had telephone contacts as and when there was something to talk about, which was usually about very small matters (*komakai koto*). From what Aida-san had told me, she became very close to her daughter during and after her daughter's divorce. Aida-san supported her emotionally as well as practically because her daughter came back to live with her for a while. Her relationship with her son also got closer after her grandson was diagnosed with autism. She said the whole family came together to support her son's family.

#### Not so frequent (monthly to quarterly)

Kitada Shinobu (64) met her only son (39) and daughter-in-law at least once in two months. Her son did not have any children yet. They had phone or email contact occasionally (*tokidoki*) regarding any matters arising or where to go for a meal. When they met, their conversation were about ordinary daily affairs (*futsū no hanashi*) like politics or *onsen*.

Yamamoto Maki (63) had two daughters and one son. Her eldest daughter (35) had two daughters (4 and 1) and lived nearby. Her second daughter (34) had one daughter (3) and lived far away. Her son (27) was single and lived nearby. Yamamoto-san met her eldest daughter once in two to three months. As my interview was conducted in February, near to the time of the Japanese Doll Festival (*hina-matsuri*) or Girls' Day on March 3, there was a beautiful display of dolls in her living room. Yamamoto-san said these dolls were for her daughters. Now that she had some time on her hands, she had brought them out and displayed them. In a few days time, she would go over to her eldest daughter's place as she had bought dolls for her daughters too. She would help with the display and also join in the celebrations. Her second daughter lived far away but her son-in-law had to come to Tokyo for work once a month. Therefore, the whole family would usually come together and stay for a night. At other times, they communicated by telephone. Her son was still single and lived by himself in an apartment. He came once a month to pay Yamamoto-san for the payments she had made on his behalf, for example, insurance premium payments. Other than that, he came when there was something to attend to. If nothing came up, he did not visit or call.

The Nakamuras (73, 70) had two sons (44 and 39). Their second son and his family lived nearby. His eldest granddaughter (8) always came and stayed with them during the holidays. They would do many things together, like cooking. Their daughter-in-law also brought her other children, two sons, aged 5 and 2. Sometimes the 5-year-old would also stay over. Yuki-san said they felt very tired when the grandchildren were around. Other than this, there was also a lot of telephone contact. The eldest son worked and lived in South Korea. They hardly met. Even when the Nakamuras went on holiday in South Korea, their son did not come to meet them. However, when Akira-san had an operation some years ago, his son came back to see him.

Okayama Koichi (69) had two sons (39 and 32) and a daughter (37). The youngest son was still single and all the children lived nearby. His eldest son came once in two to three months. They talked and had meals together. They might talk about his son's work but most of the time, attention was on his grandson who was 9 years old and loved to talk. From last year when he was 8 years old, he was allowed to come to their house on his own. His daughter only visited four to five times a year. She did not have any children yet. His youngest son was still single. He stayed with them until he was 25 years old. Okayama-san's wife emailed and phoned all the children frequently.

#### Infrequent (once a year to three times a year)

Mori Emiko (74) lived in Tokyo with her youngest daughter (41) who was single. Her two elder daughters were married and lived in another prefecture. Her eldest daughter had two daughters (20 and 18) and her second daughter had one daughter (16). Her youngest daughter worked and came home for dinner every day. However, when she was eating dinner, she would switch off all the lights and watched TV while she ate. As Mori-san did not like it, she usually ate by herself earlier on and when her daughter was back for dinner, she would go to her room to read<sup>28</sup>. Mori-san met up with her two elder daughters less

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<sup>28</sup> My key contact informed me that this daughter had some developmental issues.

than four times a year. It was usually when she went to the family graveyard during Obon<sup>29</sup> or if there was any matter that had arisen (*yō ga attara*). Her eldest granddaughters were studying in Tokyo now so her eldest daughter came to Tokyo more frequently nowadays. Usually when they met, they just ate and talked, mainly about the children or any matter that might concern them. Mori-san also met her granddaughters about two times a month. She said they were busy with their studies and part-time jobs so there was not much that she could do for them. Mori-san did not have much contact with her elder daughters over the telephone, maybe just once a month. She said her daughters were busy, and they had their families and own livelihoods to worry about.

Sakuma Reiko met her only son (36) once a year even though he lived and worked nearby. There was no telephone communication. He worked in a jazz bar and as it was business through the night, he slept in the day so she did not want to disturb him. If there was nothing to deal with, there was no contact between them. In his previous job where he ran a bar (*izakaya*) business with a friend, she used to bring her students and friends there but in this current job, he worked for the owner so she did not want to bother him. Sakuma-san said that she had trained her son to be independent from a young age.

Some factors that contributed to the differences in frequency of contact could be deduced from the narratives. For those who met frequently, both the Maruyamas and Iwais lived in a city in another prefecture north of Tokyo. As living arrangements have been found to be different in different parts of Japan, there is a possibility that the high frequency of contact could be attributed to regional differences in values and attitudes towards family living arrangements. It was a fact that the Maruyamas made a purposeful decision to buy a house for their daughter so that she could be near to them. The other two families with high frequency of contact lived in a city west of Tokyo (Imamura-san) and Tokyo (Aida-san) itself. In the case of Imamura-san, she got along very well with her daughter-in-law so they visited each other frequently. For Aida-san, difficult situations with the children drew them together. Aida-san was

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<sup>29</sup> Festival of the Dead, explained later in this chapter.

fully supportive of her daughter when she got divorced and she was also supportive of her son's family when her grandson was found to be autistic.

Other than these four families, the other families in my sample had fewer frequency of contact. Generally, the lack of geographical proximity impeded contact. For example, even though the Maruyamas have very frequent contact with their daughters, they could not meet their son frequently because he lived far away and his businesses kept him busy over there. Mori-san, for example, could not see her daughters frequently because they lived in another prefecture.

For those living around the Metropolitan Tokyo area, frequency of contact was generally between monthly to quarterly, even though the children might be living nearby. Telephone and email contact were only on an as-needed basis, that is, if there was any matter to discuss or arrange.

One factor that encouraged contact was the grandchildren. For example, the Nakamuras' granddaughter came to stay over during the holidays and because she was there, her mother (the Nakamuras' daughter-in-law) also came and brought her other children. Mori-san now saw her eldest daughter more frequently because her daughter came to Tokyo to see her own daughters who were studying here.

Another factor that supported more contact was opportunity. Yamamoto-san's second daughter could come every month because her husband had to come to Tokyo once a month for work purposes.

The two cases where contact was only once a year or less indicated some kind of estrangement. Sakuma-san only met her son who lived nearby once a year. Although she gave work as an excuse for the situation, I wondered if the relationship was estranged because they used to meet when her son was in his previous job. The second case related to the Nakamuras' eldest son who lived in South Korea. The lack of geographical proximity could have impeded contact but it was strange that even when the old couple went to South Korea for holiday, their son did not make any efforts to meet them. The Nakamuras first met their granddaughter when she was already in elementary school. Their Korean daughter-in-law had never come to Japan. Her granddaughter was now 18 years old. The only consolation the couple had was that when

Akira-san had an operation, their eldest son came back to see him.

Generally, telephone or email contacts were on an as-needed basis and it was most often undertaken by the wives. This supported the understanding that women are the kin-keepers of the family. Newer methods of communication like Skype<sup>30</sup> and Facebook were not common. The use of Skype was mentioned only by Kimura-san (60) who communicated frequently with her son living overseas. There was no mention of Facebook.

In one case, the lack of geographical proximity was compensated by very frequent telephone contact. Maejima Sae (80), a widow who lived alone was very close to her daughter who lived far away. Her daughter was married and also worked full-time. Her daughter emailed her every day to check on her. About once a week, her daughter would also call and have a long telephone conversation with her lasting about an hour. Maejima-san stated very clearly that her daughter was her emotional support.

Rindfuss and Raley (1998), in looking at data from the 1994 National Survey on Work and Family Life found that unmarried sons visited their parents less than their married counterparts. They suggested that this was a life-course stage when their job or educational responsibilities kept them away but they expected to visit more frequently or coreside after they married. I found no evidence of this in my sample.

Probably as a result of the infrequent visits, the times that they met became more special. This took the form of family gatherings which might be just a meal at home or at a restaurant. The family gathering once in a while and at special occasions had been mentioned by most of my informants. In the case of the Maeda family, all three sons' families would gather together with their parents for a good meal. They would talk about current situations or current affairs. Now that the sons were all married, they made it a point to meet in each son's house in turn. In Japanese, the family circle where everyone comes together and eats and talks is known as *kazoku danran*<sup>31</sup> (family gathering). Since the nest has been emptied in

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<sup>30</sup> Skype is a software that enables voice and video communication over the Internet.

<sup>31</sup> *Kazoku* means family whereas *danran* means round or circle and the Kadokawa Shinjigen dictionary defines it as intimate (*shitashii*) people gathering together to have an enjoyable and happy time (*tanoshii kaigō*). From the Meiji period onwards, school books have depicted *kazoku danran* as the family sitting around a table at mealtimes, talking and enjoying communications (Sodei 2004).

many cases, my informants' *kazoku danran* now happens once in a while and on special occasions when the whole family gathers together. Lebra (1976) thought that Japanese converse with one another by eating and drinking together (p.4).

Two special events are celebrated in Japan where families gather together. One is the New Year (*shōgatsu*) where the younger generation goes back to their hometown to see their parents and grandparents. The other event is the Festival of the Dead, or midsummer festival, called *Obon* in Japanese. It is a popular Buddhist holy day in Japan and its focus is ancestor worship. It is observed on August 13-15 by most people, somewhere close to the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> days of the seventh month by the lunar calendar (Smith, 1974, p.15). During this time, both young and older generations go back to their hometown to visit the family tombs. The Japanese believes that after a man dies, his spirit lingers near his body and then near his house for seven days, or perhaps forty-nine days, until his memorial tablet is put up with those of the older ancestral dead; these ancestral dead are in the mountains and in paradise, where they are joined by the spirit of the newly dead only after its first *bon* following death; at *bon* the living go to the mountains or to the graveyard to meet the ancestral spirits and escort them back to the house; at the end of *bon* the living send the spirits back until the following year, usually by floating boats bearing lighted lanterns onto the river or out to sea (Smith, 1974, p.67).

If the myth that family has collapsed was true, then naturally, we should see a decline in such travels to their hometowns. However, during these two events, air, rail and land transportation in Japan are at their peak, giving an indication that family is still extremely important in the hearts of the Japanese.

Rindfuss, Liao and Tsuya (1992) expected that the senior generation serves the role of preserving traditional values and opinions and therefore, the more contact that adult children have with the older adults, the more likely they will hold traditional values and opinions. The opinions studied included whether it was the duty of the eldest son to look after his parents, whether it was a good thing for men to do kitchen work and what characteristics they expected of sons versus daughters. However, their results showed that for those not living with parents, contact with parents has little, if any, relationship with

opinions held by their respondents who were aged 30 and older. However, those who lived with parents held more traditional opinions. They suggested that contact with parents has to be extremely frequent to influence opinions of the adult children. It was also thought that increasing levels of education pushes family opinions away from traditional positions. As described above, the contact that my informants had with their children were focused on mundane, day to day affairs (like where to go for a meal) and deep philosophical discussions do not happen.

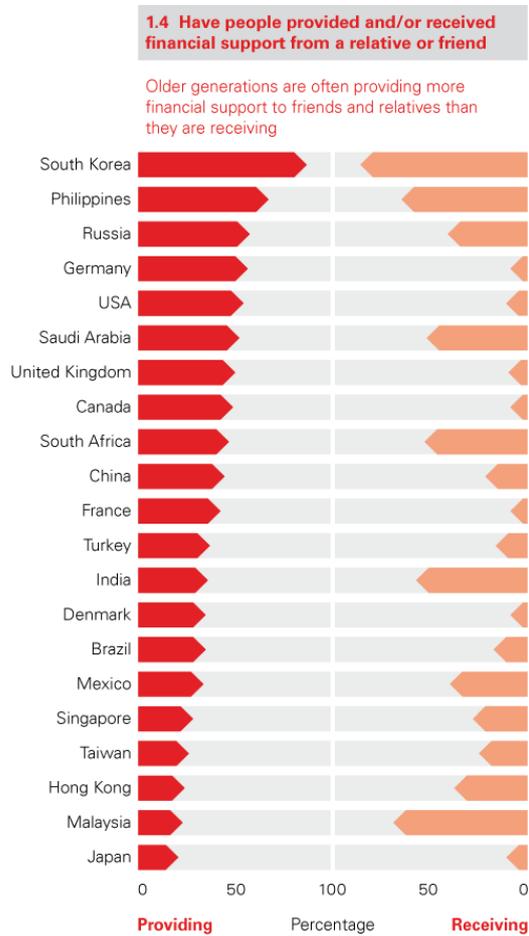
To recap this section, the frequency of contact is not related to residence type. Co-residence does not ensure more contact. However, the lack of geographical proximity appeared to impede more frequent contact. Unless there was opportunity (for example, travel because of work commitments), contact became restricted to the main special events when family got together. We have seen one case (Aida-san) where difficulties encountered by the children brought the family closer together. In other cases, we have also seen the grandchildren as the force pulling parents and adult children together more frequently. Generally, mothers had more communication with their children through the telephone or emails. Most of the older men had no telephone or email contacts with their children.

With children who were married and had their own families, the parents gave them a lot independence and privacy and did not interfere in their daily lives. The positive outcome of this was that when they found time to meet, it became a special time for all of them.

## **Exchanges**

Functional solidarity in Bengtson et al.'s model (1991) involves exchanges, both financial and instrumental. Instrumental exchange refers to help and support from either the parent to the child or the child to the parent. In a survey of people between the ages of 40 to 79 by Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC, 2007), it was found that Japan occupied the last position among twenty-one countries in terms of the amount of financial exchanges between parents and children (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Ranking of Countries by Intergenerational Financial Support



This survey result was one of the triggers that started me on this research. With Japan at the top of the world in terms of aged society, I wondered why there was so little exchange between parents and children and whether parents and their adult children were independent.

In this section, I will elaborate on the exchanges between my informants and their children, covering both financial and instrumental exchanges at the same time.

## *Financial Exchanges*

### No financial exchange for daily living

All my informants had no financial exchanges with their adult children for daily living expenses. Some of my informants were in fact, rather surprised at my question. The reason was best summed up by Nakamura Yuki who said “Giving money is disrespectful (*shitsurei desu*)”. She meant that it was showing disrespect to the receiver. Kitada Shinobu (64) was the only informant who had given money to her mother before her marriage. She gave the money during bonus time, so I asked her what motivated her to do so. At first she thought children giving money to parents was because parents needed it financially but then she corrected herself to say that her mother was not in need either. So I turned the question to her and asked her whether she expected any money from her son. She said “No” and after thinking about it, she said it was because she wanted her son to take care of his own family (*jibun no katei o daijini shite kudasai*). All my informants had no expectations of receiving money from their children. The adult children shared the same view and had never given money to their parents for daily living expenses.

### Parents’ financial gifts to children

I believe that one of the reasons for Japan being at the bottom of the chart in the HSBC Survey shown earlier was that parents’ financial gifts to their children were not viewed as “financial support” in the eyes of the Japanese. What the parents gave was a “gift” to the children and these were given at significant events in the children’s lives, mainly weddings, and secondly the purchase of a house. The sums were substantial. Some parents viewed this as their inheritance to their children. Yamamoto Maki and her husband gave their two daughters money when they got married. She said it was their “share”. The couple had saved up money for each child to give to them when they got married. The Maruyamas covered all the expenses for their second daughter’s wedding and apartment. They also did the same for their third daughter as they said they wanted to give the same treatment to all their children. Imamura Ayako and her husband paid the deposit for the purchase of both their sons’ apartments.

In addition, parents also gave gifts to their grandchildren, usually during special occasions like the New Year or birthdays.

#### Children's financial contribution for co-residence

A number of my informants had asked their co-resident children to contribute a little money to the household. The sum they asked for was very small (around 20,000 yen) and the parents had no intention to use the money. Instead the money was being saved up to be given to their children either when they leave the house or when they get married. Maeda Junmi asked both his second and third son to do so while they were living with her. Aso Satoru said his son contributed some money towards the household and he believed that it was his wife who told his son to do so. I believe that the objective was so that if any relative or friend should ask about their children's living with them, they could answer that the children were contributing their part to the household.

#### Children's gifts to their parents

Most of the children gave gifts to their parents for occasions such as birthdays, Father's Day and Mother's Day. This could be something that they thought their parents liked or it could simply be a bouquet of flowers. Sometimes, the children might pay for the holiday that they went on together. However, there were also complaints from my informants that some children either bought things that they liked themselves (and not what their parents liked) or sent over some gifts that they did not want themselves (for example, extra whiskey received as year-end gifts).

#### *Instrumental Support*

##### Support out of "convenience"

Usually the parents gave small helps to their children simply because it was convenient to do so. Yamamoto-san paid the bills for her son when they became due and got reimbursed by him when he came

around to the house. Aso-san and his wife sometimes bought clothes for their son when they saw something that they thought fitted him.

On the other hand, Tatsuda-san's son might borrow books or wire cords from his father's library since they lived together. The Maruyamas' eldest son who ran sushi restaurants in another prefecture sometimes requested his parents to buy and send rice over to him. It is difficult to say whether the following case is convenient or not but Okayama-san's unmarried son who lived by himself, regularly brought back clothes for washing.

Sometimes when the children came to their parents' home, their parents might ask them to help out in doing some difficult tasks (for example, changing a light bulb) or heavy tasks (for example, carrying heavy boxes from one place to another). At other times, they might ask their children to help read and explain some official documents.

I observed some helps given by the children that probably went unnoticed even by parent or child themselves. For example, whenever Kojima Keiko's youngest daughter, Yukie-san visited, she always brought a lot of food to fill up her mother's refrigerator. She would also check around the house to see whether anything was out of the ordinary that needed fixing or was dangerous for safety reasons.

#### Support in care of grandchildren

One area of instrumental support that is often researched on nowadays is care provided to grandchildren by the grandparents. Most of the older adults in my sample did not want to take care of their grandchildren on a regular basis. Yamamoto-san (63) said that if her daughters asked her, she would help but only for two to three hours. She said that if her children needed someone to take care of their children on a long-term basis, they should use childcare services since they were now available and of course, if they could afford it. She believed that until elementary school, it was her daughters' responsibility to take care of their children. Of course if the daughters or grandchildren were sick, she would help out but not every day. Hirakawa Junko (71) simply said she would not do it as it was too tiring. The Nakamuras also

complained that when the grandchildren came, it was so tiring for them. Maeda Junmi (64) said,

I won't do it because it is tiring. It is fine if it is for a short while only but not every day. Although a small number of such grandparents exist – for example, the daughter is working so the mother takes care of the grandchildren – these mothers are young and usually do simple things like picking the children up from kindergarten.

However, when I asked the younger older adults who were yet to have grandchildren, they said they would like to provide care. For example, Kitada-san (64) was anxiously waiting for her only son to have children. The Iwais (67, 65) were also waiting for their daughter to have a child so that they could help to take care.

Imamura-san (65) was the only one who said she took care of her daughter-in-law when her (first) granddaughter was born. She brought food to her daughter-in-law every day.

Other than the cases mentioned above, parents and their children did not ask for support from each other. Both generations would try to do everything by themselves and even turn to the outside to buy services rather than request their children's or their parents' help.

In summary, money was not exchanged between parents and children on a regular basis within the Japanese family. As Yuki-san said, "It is disrespectful (*shitsurei desu*)". Parents, in almost all cases, saved up money for their children to give to them either at their wedding or when they bought an apartment, or both. They also took great care to show equal treatment to all the children. Children did not give money to their parents. However, they gave presents at birthdays or Mother's Day or Father's Day. Sometimes, the children might pay for a family holiday together. When children lived with them, some older adults had asked their child to make a token contribution to the household. They usually saved up this money to give back to their children when they got married or moved out.

Instrumental exchanges were low as both generations kept their independence in day-to-day affairs

and did not interfere with each other and did not ask for each other's support generally. Although helping to take care of grandchildren was thought to be common, this was not the case with my informants. The main reason was that they found it too tiring to do on a regular basis. For some, even the occasional visits of the energetic grandchildren made them feel tired. The exceptions were those who were in the earlier sixties who did not have any grandchildren yet so they looked forward to having their first grandchild. Other instrumental exchanges were minor helps that were not significant enough for most of the informants to remember.

In the Elderly's Financial Consciousness Survey conducted by the Cabinet Office in 2011 (Cabinet Office, 2011), the priority for spending for persons 60 years and older was for health maintenance, medical, and long term care expense. This was 42.8 percent of total expenditure, followed by travel (38.2 percent) and expenditure for children and grandchildren (33.4 percent). As we can see, the amount of money given to children and grandchildren was actually rather substantial.

### **Emotional Closeness**

Trying to find out the true situation about emotional closeness between parents and children was the most difficult among all the interview questions that I had. The most common answer that I got was that the older adults treated all the children the same and the relationships were all the same. They would not say whom they were closer to or whom they relied on most for emotional support.

I tried this question on Kojima-san a few times from different angles but each time, she replied by saying that her children were all wonderful (*subarashii*) and so were her grandchildren and it was impossible to compare them. When I asked her youngest daughter, Yukie-san, she said it was probably herself since she lived the closest to her mother and saw her mother more frequently than her elder brother and sister. When I observed mother and daughter talking, I found that Yukie-san occasionally controlled her mother by saying things like, "Don't talk about unnecessary things" (*yokei na koto o iwanaide*). Kojima-san, being the spirited person that she was, would ignore her and continued as she

liked. We will come back to look at this mother and daughter pair again in Chapter 5.

Mori Emiko who had three daughters, said,

It is difficult to answer. Maybe my second daughter understands me the most. Each child is different and it is difficult to differentiate and compare. As a mother I cannot show favoritism.

I then asked her whether she would turn to this daughter for emotional support. She said “now that I am healthy, I don’t want to bother others. I am not thinking deeply about such things.”

Maeda-san, similarly insisted that she had the same relationship with all her sons. However, when I asked her second son, Tsutomu-san (30), he revealed that he was closest to his father because it was his father who took care of him when he was young. His mother was closest to his elder brother because she took care of him. His younger brother was close to both of them. All three brothers were born within a two-year gap of each other so the parents must have had their hands full during the early years. Unlike the other male informants, Tsutomu-san’s father had frequent telephone and email communications with him.

There were a few women who said they were close to their daughters. Aida-san said that she was closest to her daughter as she always called. When her daughter got divorced, it was Aida-san who supported her emotionally and nowadays she came with the children every weekend. Maejima-san said her daughter was her emotional support. She emailed Maejima-san every day to check on her and they would chat on the phone for a long time at least once a week. They did not meet often because her daughter worked and lived far away.

For the men, Tatsuda-san said he was not as close to his son as before because his son was working hard on his career and their timings were off except weekends so they did not see each other so often. However, if his son wanted to talk about female relationships, he would talk to Tatsuda-san. Tatsuda-san also said that his son was very close to his wife because his wife waited up for him every night.

### *Child generation's opinions*

I also asked the child generation about their relationships with their parents. Most of them said they were closer to their mothers because it was their mothers who brought them up. Many of them were quite resentful that their fathers were always focusing on their work only. Tachi Kanako (35) said that she did not have a close relationship with her father because he was never home. She said, "It was just work, work, work for him". Her father who had just retired, had tried to reach out to her recently. Whenever he came to Tokyo, he would ask her out for a meal so that they could talk. However, Kanako-san said she would just listen. Her husband, Kentaro-san (36) said he did not want to follow his father, Tachi-san's footsteps as he never came home early so he grew up with his mother. He said "Men grew up not taking care of children. I want to talk to my children as friends and laugh with them on the same topics". Furukawa Yuichi (33) also said he had a closer relationship with his mother because they spent time together when he was young. He said,

My father was always working. Even though he was the coach for our soccer team, I still felt a distance with him. Maybe, when I am with him, it is man to man. I feel that my father is independent but for my mother, I have to help her.

The children mentioned above were in their thirties (born in the 1970s) and their parents were in their sixties (born in the 1940s). The two generations belonged roughly to the time of the two baby booms in Japan. Their fathers were building up their careers during the time when Japan was starting to feel the economic crisis in the 1980s and 1990s. They dedicated their lives to their work and paid the price of some emotional distance with their children.

Having examined the four aspects, geographical proximity, contact, exchanges and emotional closeness, we will proceed to look at the independence and dependency of the children and see how the

older adults were affected by the situation of their children.

In the next section, we will first examine the situation of some of the co-resident children and see how the older adults viewed the dependency of their children. My objective is not to examine why the children continue to live at home but rather their parents' attitudes toward them.

### Seeking Independence of Children

In Japan, marriage is treated as a marker of being an adult (*ichininmae*), so children usually move out of their natal home to start a home of their own upon marriage. The age at first marriage has been on a steady increase since 1950 and by 2010, the average age for male was 30.5 years and female, 28.8 years (Table 4.3). Customarily, young men and women remain in their parents' homes until they marry. Thus, compared to earlier years, there is now "delayed departure" from the natal home (Newman, 2008).

Table 4.3 Average Age at First Marriage

Year	Male	Female
1950	25.9	23.0
1960	27.2	24.4
1970	26.9	24.2
1980	27.8	25.2
1990	28.4	25.9
2000	28.8	27.0
2010	30.5	28.8

*Source: Compiled from Statistics Bureau (2012)*

If we look at households with older adults aged 65 years and older, households where older adults live with their unmarried children have risen from 10.5 percent of total elderly households in 1980 to 18.5 percent in 2010 (Cabinet Office, 2012). In their early twenties, the percentage of male unmarried children who leave the household is higher than females but in the late twenties and thirties, the percentage of

females who leave the household because of marriage rises and surpasses that of the males. Nonetheless, the proportion of females leaving their home before marriage has been on the rise over the long term. The reasons for leaving home include education, occupation, marriage and other reasons (Nishioka et. al, 2012a).

In my sample, I found a group that told their unmarried sons to leave the house at around the mid-to late-twenties. However, there were also other older adults who had no issues about their unmarried sons living with them and yet others who had unmarried children who were unable to leave because of some problems. I will also introduce a number of older adults who have divorced children and one older adult who is divorced, but still supporting a married son for his studies.

#### *Older Adults who wanted their Unmarried Sons to be Independent*

Yamamoto-san was a 63-year-old housewife living with her husband (67). They had three children – two daughters aged 38 and 36 and one son aged 28. Their daughters were already married and lived separately from them. Their son was still unmarried and lived by himself in an apartment nearby. Yamamoto-san said that her son lived with them until one year ago (at age 27). They were the ones who asked their son to move out. The reason for asking him to do so was so that he could be independent. She said that actually both she and her husband wanted him to move out earlier on but he did not. Nowadays, he came once a month to pay Yamamoto-san for the payments she had made on his behalf, for example, insurance premium payments. Other than that, he came when there was something to attend to. If nothing came up, he did not visit or call.

Okayama-san was a 69-year-old former salaryman. He lived with his 64-year-old wife. He had two sons aged 39 and 32, and one daughter aged 37. His eldest son and his daughter were both married and lived separately but nearby. His youngest son was not married. He stayed at home until he was 25 years old. Okayama-san said that they told him to move out as they wanted him to be independent. Okayama-san admitted that this son was his wife's biggest worry. After moving out, he did not give the

key of his apartment to his parents. Until now, he still brought clothes back for washing.

Imamura-san was 65 years old and lived with her retired husband (68) and her 98-year-old father-in-law. They had two sons, aged 38 and 35. Her eldest son was still unmarried but her second son was married and both of them lived separately but nearby. Her husband told her eldest son to leave the house at age 25 because he never did anything around the house, not even get a glass of water by himself. Imamura-san believed that his son was only thinking for himself. When he bought an apartment, his parents paid the deposit. He bought the apartment because he had plans to get married but separated from his girlfriend later. He worked in a temporary staffing company (*haken kaisha*<sup>32</sup>). Imamura-san did not know much about his son's job<sup>33</sup> but thought that he had not enough money because of the apartment purchase. He came home about twice a month to eat.

Sakuma-san was a 71-year-old volunteer who lived with her 67-year-old husband in a rented apartment. She had one son, 36 years old, unmarried and lived nearby. She put her son in childcare (*hoikuen*) at a very young age because she went back to work soon after delivering her son. When her son was around 23 and she felt that he was being too dependent, she told him to move out and live by himself. She believed that when a child lived with his parents, he should pay them. Even if his parents gave him money, it was only a loan and he had to pay back. Even though he lived nearby, she only met him once a year. If there was nothing to deal with, there would be no contact by telephone.

In the cases that we have seen above, the older adults believed that their sons would learn independence by moving out of their house. The ages that the sons left ranged from 23 to 27, with the most common at 25. Tracing the events by calendar year, most of them left between 1997 and 2001, with the exception of Yamamoto-san's son who left in 2008. The term "parasite single" became popular from 1997 and could have influenced the decisions of the parents in some way. I will elaborate on this in a later section in this chapter.

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<sup>32</sup> Temporary staffing companies (*haken kaisha*) dispatch workers to companies based on requirements. The contract period could be short-term or long-term, some stretching on for years.

<sup>33</sup> It is not clear whether Imamura-san's son works for the *haken* company to arrange contracts and workers or is one of the workers dispatched by the company as she does not know any details about the job.

The reasons cited by the parents were mainly that their sons were being too dependent, described most vividly by the example of Imamura-san's son who "never did anything around the house", even to the extent of not getting a glass of water (implying that somebody had to get the water for him).

However, while accepting moving-out as an act towards independence, we can see from the above cases, that acts of dependency continued in some cases. In Yamamoto-san's case, she continued to manage the timely payment of insurance premiums for her son and only got reimbursed when her son came home. In Okayama-san's case, his son still brought the laundry back for his mother to wash. What we see here are still cases where the sons continued to be dependent on their parents. In most cases, the continued dependencies appeared to be on the mothers. When the informants told me about the situation of asking their sons to leave, it was most often said in this way, "My husband told him to leave". As the responsibility was shifted to the husband (father), the mother reserved the capacity to continue to show benevolence to her child and continued to do things for the child.

While some of the sons came back frequently for a good meal, Sakuma-san's son had almost no contact with her, except meeting just once a year. In Okayama-san's son's case, perhaps some resentment had arisen in the parent-child relationship as Okayama-san highlighted that his son did not give them a key to his apartment. Whether this was a common thing that the children did was not clear, but Okayama-san had certainly been averse to it as he emphasized it during the interview.

Next, let us take a look at the cases of older adults who had no issues about their unmarried sons living with them.

#### *Older Adults who had no issues about their unmarried sons living with them*

Tatsuda-san's son was 30 years old, unmarried and working in a top telecommunications company. I asked Tatsuda-san whether his son was going to get married soon. He said he had not heard anything. His son had had relationships but he had no steady girlfriend at the moment. His wife was concerned and thought that their son should get married. Tatsuda-san said that he was not going to force his son to marry

– “It is not a requirement.”

Aso-san was 73 years old and married for thirty-eight years. His wife was 63 years old and their son was 36 years old, unmarried and working in the medical field. He and his wife had travelled in and out of Japan many times but they were worried about safety “because they have a son”. Therefore, they always went for overseas travels separately. He went with his friends while his wife went with her friends.

Aso-san’s son worked in a hospital which Aso-san claimed was giving him very low salary. He said other people had told him that he was too kind (*amae*). He did not know whether his son had a girlfriend or not. Father and son did not talk about marriage but his wife did so with his son. From about one to two years ago, his son started doing housework by himself and now it was his duty to hang up the laundry. His son gave a little money for meals at home which the parents saved up to be given to him in future. Aso-san believed that his son was giving money because his mother told him to do so. Aso-san felt that families in Japan had changed. He had six siblings and they all stayed together under one roof so they had a very good relationship that was maintained even up to now. Nowadays, couples stayed in new apartments, probably bought for them by their parents. He believed that wealth was the reason that caused this generation to change. His siblings always discussed everything together but now each child had his own room so they stayed in their own world. Although people had said that families had collapsed, he did not think so. Even for his generation, parents did not interfere in the children’s affairs. He thought that maybe the expression of love was different. “If my son wants to move out, I have no objections.”

Maeda-san, a 64-year-old businesswoman lived with her husband (64) and her two unmarried sons until they got married. Their eldest son had already married and left the house. Her two younger sons got married at ages 30 and 29. When I interviewed Maeda-san, her youngest son was preparing for his wedding and her second son was still living with her. The thought of her sons leaving the house before their marriage had not occurred to her. A few years ago, she started asking her co-resident sons to contribute some money to the household. It was a small sum and she saved up the money for them.

The above cases were parents who were very comfortable with their unmarried children living with

them. They had not thought of asking them to leave. They were confident of their children's independence in terms of their careers. They also had a fairly close relationship with their sons. Although Tatsuda-san's son did not contribute anything to the household, Aso-san's wife and Maeda-san demanded token contributions to the household, even though they had no intentions to use the money. In Aso-san's son's case, he also did part of the housework. I believe that the contributions were requested so that the parents could answer positively to other people's comments. Aso-san gave us the clue that "other people" commented about his son living with them. Therefore, while they allowed their sons to be dependent on them, they were able to demonstrate some independence through actions like contributions to the household. For some of them like Aso-san and Maeda-san, this was the situation within the house which in Japanese culture was known as *uchi* (which means inside). To the outside (*soto*), they could say their sons were not dependent on them because their sons were contributing to the household.

In both Tatsuda-san and Aso-san's cases, their sons were still unmarried in their thirties. Neither felt compelled to put any pressure on their sons to get married. Tatsuda-san said "It [marriage] is not a requirement." While Tatsuda-san said that his son would discuss female relationships with him, Aso-san said that he and his son did not talk about such things. Tatsuda-san, himself, married at age 29 in 1973 while Aso-san married at age 35 in 1972. Referring back to Table 4.3 earlier, the average age at first marriage was 26.9 in 1970 and 27.8 in 1980 so both men married later than the average age at that time. Their own late marriage could account for the reason why neither men pressured their sons to get married.

In both of these cases, the sons were the only sons in the family. The fathers enjoyed the company of their sons, sharing some hobbies. Tatsuda-san would sometimes peek into his son's room to see what he was doing. Aso-san had regular dinners with his son and he said he would continue to watch over his son. The relationships that the sons had with their mothers seemed to be different in the eyes of the fathers. Tatsuda-san described an intimate relationship between his wife and his son. He believed that they had a lot more communication, especially as she waited up for him and gave him dinner on a daily basis. They also communicated in Japanese. He described his own relationship with his son as more of a man-to-man

type of relationship, focusing on difficult business related subjects and also on female relationships. In Aso-san's case, he did not talk about female relationships with his son but he considered setting an example for his son as important. Therefore, he stayed away from bad habits like gambling in order to provide a good example to his son. He took pride that his son did not have such bad habits and that people had commented that his son was like him. Even though he did not talk about his wife's relationship with his son, we could see that his wife had put his son into action on certain things like participating in housework and contributing to the household expenses.

A point worthy of attention is how Aso-san said a few times, "some people have told him". Firstly, this related to the comment that Aso-san was "too kind (*amae*)" and the second comment was that his son was like him. I cannot be sure who "some people" were but whoever these people were, they had left an impression with Aso-san, so much so that he could tell me about them. I believe that this is related to the eyes of others, or *sekentei* in Japanese where what others think of you or your family is important.

When we talk of unmarried children living with their parents in Japan, a term quickly comes to mind, "parasite singles". This is a term that sociologist Masahiro Yamada used in a newspaper article in February 1997, to signify people who exploit their parents by remaining unmarried and continuing to live in their parents' houses, depending on them for the basic needs of food and housing, while having independent incomes from their own occupations (Lunsing 2003). In his book "The Era of Parasite Singles", Yamada even went on to blame these singles for worsening the economic crisis in Japan by not marrying and setting up their own household (Yamada 1999). Kiyoko Yamamoto (2001), in her study of single women in their thirties, however, provided a more balanced view, comparing 'parasites' and 'non-parasites', and concluded that the singles would like to marry, preferably later, if they could find a suitable partner. They also contribute financially to the household and there are more male parasite-singles than female parasite-singles (Lunsing 2003).

I was surprised to find that the Statistics Research and Training Institute, Japan actually published a report on the "current situation of parasite-singles" in 2006, quoting the reason for the survey as

“increasing parasite-singles influence the rapid progress of declining birth rate and prolonged economic stagnation” (Nishi and Kan, 2006, p.1). In the report, parasite-singles was defined as “persons who are 20-34 years old, never married, and living with parents”. There was a qualifier that the condition of whether they rely on their parents or not was not included. The population in this category was said to have increased from 8.17 million in 1980 to 12.11 million in 2003, the latter of which constituted 45.4 percent of the total population in that age group. The report also had a category of “middle-aged parasite-singles” that was defined as those of ages 35-44, with the same conditions as above. The population as of 2004 was 1.98 million which constituted 11.9 percent of the population of that age group, having risen from 390,000 in 1980.

In the two cases described above, the fathers did not, at any time, imply that their sons were “parasites” on them. On the contrary, they enjoyed the company of their sons and talked affectionately of their relationships. Marriage was “not a requirement” that Tatsuda-san had set for his son. Scholars who did not support Yamada Masahiro’s point on parasite-singles said one of the assumptions that Yamada had made was that marriage was a necessity to boost the economy of Japan (Lunsing 2003).

In the next section, we will see two cases where the children were not independent because they were suffering from social withdrawal and two cases where married children continued to be dependent on their parents.

## **Older adults with Dependent Children**

### *Unmarried Children*

Yoshida Aiko was 60 years old and lived with her retired husband (62) and their third son (25). They had three sons but the eldest son had died of a road accident seven years ago. He would be 28 years old if still alive and their second son was 27 years old. Yoshida-san was a manager, working full-time in a service company. Every morning when Yoshida-san got up, she made coffee and put it at the altar of her eldest son. Then she went to work. Her second son was still unmarried and working in Kyushu. Once

every two months, he went to Yokohama for a meeting so he would come home. Other than that, he only came back during holidays or the New Year. Her third son was 18 years old when his eldest brother died. The shock caused him to drop out of university and now he was just staying at home, doing nothing. Yoshida-san said he was not really a shut-in (*hikikomori*) but just that he could not find what he wanted to do. She said, “as parents, there is nothing to do but wait”. Her husband was angry in the beginning but not anymore. Her son did not lock himself in his room but moved around the house, interacted with them and ate with them. Once, her son apologized to her and said he was sorry he could not find what he wanted to do and he was sorry for causing trouble. Yoshida-san said that she and her husband really enjoyed bringing up the boys. As her sons were really close, her eldest son’s death was a great shock for her other sons. She said,

looking at it from another point of view, nowadays children usually leave home but my (third) son is always at home with us, so I feel happy about it. Of course there are sad things and happy things. I cried when my (eldest) son died but I feel he is inside me now.

She said that people said she was an “iron woman”. As she was brought up in a very traditional home, she always endured and endured (*taete, taete*) like a Japanese woman. Once a month, she and her husband visited their son’s grave. Every day, she had conversations with her third son on simple things like what to eat and so on. Her husband was really waiting for him to get on with his life but she did not nag her son about it.

Nogiwa Yoshiko was 72 years old, married and lived with her husband (73) and her second daughter (38). Her eldest daughter was 40 years, unmarried and lived by herself nearby. Nogiwa-san met her eldest daughter once every two to three months. She was worried about her daughter as she was living by herself but her daughter had told her not to worry. She had tried calling her daughter but she would not answer because she did not like it. Nogiwa-san had learned how to use email before but since her daughter

was not responsive, she had stopped using it and had now forgotten how to use emails. She was worried that this daughter was working too hard and her health would suffer.

Her second daughter was living with her. She talked a lot with this daughter and had a close relationship. Her daughter had school refusal phobia (*tōkō kyōhi*) since elementary school, so she was often absent from school. Half-way through high school, she stopped going altogether. Currently her daughter was not working but stayed at home and worked on the computer. She put photographs onto CDs but according to Nogiwa-san, they did not have Internet in the house. Nogiwa-san said that if her daughter wanted Internet, she would have to pay for it herself so she would have to get out of the house and try to find work. She also said that they would discuss issues but she would not say anything harshly as she was afraid that her words would have the reverse effect on her daughter. She was worried that this daughter would not go out even for a walk but lived only in a world of just the two of them.

In the mothers' cases described above, both Yoshida-san and Nogiwa-san had their son and daughter respectively, shutting themselves in the home. Neither of them used the label of *hikikomori*. My contact who introduced me to Yoshida-san told me before the interview that she had a *hikikomori* son and that I was to be careful and sensitive talking about it. Therefore, I did not bring up the subject during the interview and waited for her to tell me about it. In the case of Nogiwa-san, there was no pre-warning because the person who introduced us, Kojima-san, did not seem to know. During the interview, pieces of information that she provided did not come together so I had to probe for quite a while to get the total picture. At no time did Nogiwa-san say her daughter was a *hikikomori*. However, she did use the words for school refusal, *futōkō*, to describe her daughter's early experience in school.

The term *hikikomori* was popularized by psychiatrist Tamaki Saito, for the psychiatric phenomenon, acute social withdrawal. It rose to prominence in Japan in the 1990s and early 2000s and the word *hikikomori* became listed in the Oxford English Dictionary in 2010 (Horiguchi 2012, pp.122). The Japanese government defined *hikikomori* as “anyone who has completely withdrawn from society for more than six months” (Watts 2002). Statistics on prevalence has not been considered reliable by scholars

because of the difficulty of measurement. At the same time, what *hikikomori* do on a daily basis has also been reported in diverse ways from spending most of their waking hours on the Internet or playing video games, while snacking on food and drink delivered to their homes (Watts 2002) or spending the day at home but going out late at night or in the early hours of the morning (Furlong 2008).

In the case of Yoshida-san's son, he did not leave the house but he left his room. He moved around the house, interacting with his parents and having meals with them. The situation was described as he "not knowing what he should be doing". His withdrawal started from the traumatic death of his beloved elder brother. At 25 years old, he had not left the house for seven years.

In the case of Nogiwa-san's daughter, she started to be irregular in school attendance from elementary school and dropped out completely in the middle of high school, which was around the ages of sixteen to seventeen. At age 38 now, this would put her withdrawal experience at around twenty-one years.

As I have emphasized at the beginning of this section, my objective is not to examine the reasons for the children to stay at home but rather to look at the attitudes of the parents. Watts (2002) said,

In the past, such unproductive behavior for those of working age would have prompted many to be kicked out of their houses, but today's Japan is so rich that millions of parents are happy to allow their children to remain at home until their thirties. (Watts 2002)

Vogel (2012) related the *hikikomori* phenomenon to "refusal to go to school" (*tōkō kyōhi*) when the children were younger. She suggested that students "retreat to the confines of home to avoid facing failure, rejection or social disapproval" and "their parents collude because they share the wish to avoid disapproval and want to hide their shame" (p.691). As I mentioned earlier, neither Yoshida-san nor Nogiwa-san used the term *hikikomori* to describe their children. In fact, Yoshida-san told me that her son was not *hikikomori* but just that he did not know what he wanted to do.

What both Yoshida-san and Nogiwa-san were doing was just “waiting” for their children to get out of their *hikikomori* state. Even though Yoshida-san’s husband was angry in the beginning, he had mellowed and accepted going into a “waiting” state with Yoshida-san. In their case, they were, at the same time, grieving the loss of their eldest son. In Nogiwa-san’s case, she was afraid to say anything harshly to her daughter for fear of getting a reverse effect. She could only hope that her daughter would get out of the house so that she could expand her world. Neither had taken any action to seek outside help for their children.

### *Married children*

Many of the older adults whose children had married said they did not worry about them anymore. However, there was a handful who were still laden with their married or once married children’s situations.

Kimura-san was a 60-year-old divorcee. She had been divorced for twelve years. She had a son, 35 years old and a daughter 21 years old. Her son was married and had two young children, aged 6 and 4. Her daughter was a university student. Kimura-san worked in childcare and was due to retire in the following year. Her son was a doctor doing research in an overseas hospital for two years, with no pay. She had to give him money every month as he was living there with his family. Kimura-san communicated with her son frequently through Skype<sup>34</sup>. When I asked her what her role as mother was now, she said her role was finished and yet she was continuing to support her son financially. Her daughter was an university student and lived alone. According to Kimura-san, her daughter left to live by herself after Kimura-san warned her severely. She had been a “*rōnin*”<sup>35</sup>. Kimura-san said that her daughter was independent even though she had made mistakes. Kimura-san was currently supporting her in her studies. Her ex-husband supported her daughter until she was 20. Kimura-san guessed that life was difficult for him too. Among her children,

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<sup>34</sup> Skype is a software that enables voice and video communication over the Internet.

<sup>35</sup> “*rōnin*” is a term used for students who failed the university examinations and spent another year or so studying for the examinations again.

Kimura-san said that she was closer to her son because he used kind words (*yasashii kotoba*) to her. In the case of her daughter, they were always arguing about things. Kimura-san believed that her daughter was troubled because she had an inferiority complex. Until her daughter could be independent, Kimura-san would continue to give economic and emotional support to her, even though her daughter did not seem to be accepting her emotional support. Kimura-san's biggest worry now was her retirement. She was due to retire in about six months so she would have difficulty supporting her children. She hoped she could continue to work for another year at least since her daughter was only in her second year of studies.

Aida-san was a 70-year-old housewife who worked part-time in the beauty and health business. She lived with her 74-year-old retired husband. They had two children. Their son was 41 years old and married with two children. Their daughter was 39 years old, and divorced with two children. Aida-san said she was closest to her daughter because she always called. Her daughter divorced seven to eight years ago so Aida-san supported her emotionally and they moved in to live with her. When her daughter found a job, Aida-san took care of the grandchildren (a daughter now 12 years old and a son now 8 years old). Her daughter had moved out since but she always came over for the weekend with her children. Aida-san also supported her son because her grandson was autistic.

Fujiwara Ikuko (80) and her husband (86) lived with their divorced eldest daughter (59) and their twin unmarried granddaughters (27). Her second daughter, Asami-san (56) was married with two children and lived far away. Fujiwara-san said that her eldest daughter was a bit strict and often forbade her to do this and that. Her second daughter, Asami-san, on the other hand was kind. However, she was always very busy and often could not be reached on the phone. She mentioned that when she hurt her back in the past, her second daughter massaged for her but her eldest daughter did not do anything. She and her husband often went to Asami-san's house to relax. Asami-san said that her parents felt stressed living with her elder sister so when they were with her, they felt relaxed and were able to talk freely. She felt that they relied on her for emotional support. Asami-san also said that after the divorce, her father "took on" the role of father for her nieces. The comfort that Fujiwara-san had living in their own house was her twin granddaughters

whom she adored and said that they were her *ikigai*.

In this section we have seen three cases where the children continued to cause worry to their parents. Kimura-san was still burdened financially with both her children's study and living expenses even though her eldest son was already married and had a family. Aida-san supported her children through difficult times when her daughter got divorced and also when her grandson was found to be autistic. The family stayed together supporting each other and they appeared to have overcome the hurdles. They visited her every weekend. Fujiwara-san's daughter and her granddaughters came back to live with them after her daughter's divorce. However, her eldest daughter appeared to be strict and perhaps tyrannical in her eyes. Therefore, even in their own house, the old couple felt so controlled and stressed that they often had to seek solace in their second daughter's house far away.

Therefore, even though the older adults described here could lead their own independent lives, they were restricted in doing so.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, we have looked at various aspects of the family of the older adults and the picture that arose is as follows. Even when the older adults did not coreside with their children, many had children living near them, although the frequency of contact varied over a wide range. Coresidence did not necessarily contribute to more frequent contact as some of the co-resident parents might only see their children once a week. Contact by telephone and email was usually made between mothers and their children and they were usually regarding ordinary day-to-day matters. Since face-to-face contacts were not frequent, the times that they met tended to become special times where the family gathered around for a good time, just like *kazoku danran* in the old days. Parents gave money to their children and grandchildren for their weddings or when their children bought apartments. Financial exchanges were never made for day-to-day support as this was thought to be disrespectful. Children gave gifts to their parents for special occasions like Father's Day, Mother's Day and birthdays. They might even pay for

special family events like holidays. Parents did not interfere in their children's lives and tried their best to handle day-to-day affairs by themselves. Therefore, they did not ask for much help from their children. The children similarly did not request their parents' help as they wanted to manage on their own. Regarding emotional closeness in their relationships, parents tended to insist that they treated every child the same. A few mothers admitted to closer relationships with their daughters and this was usually accompanied by close contacts like frequent telephone calls and visits. The younger generation had complained about the absence of their fathers (because of work) while they were growing up and this brought about a closer relationship with their mothers and a more distant relationship with their fathers.

Some of the older adults revealed that they had asked their unmarried sons to move out of the house around the ages of 25 to 27. The command was usually delivered by the fathers and evidence showed that even after moving out, the mothers continued to do things for their sons. With the trend of late marriages in Japan, other older adults had allowed their unmarried children to continue to live with them into their thirties. Perhaps in order not to invite the unpleasant remarks of outsiders, the parents, again usually the mothers, prompted their sons to give a token sum towards household expenses. In fact, the parents never used the money but saved them up for their sons.

There were two cases where the parents had dependent, shut-in (*hikikomori*) children. The parents did not acknowledge that their children were *hikikomori* in the first place but used phrases like "they could not find what they wanted to do". They were afraid to use any harsh words for fear that their children might react badly to them. The parents were just waiting for their children to come out of their *hikikomori* state by themselves, in their own time. Besides these two cases, there were also cases where married children continued to depend on the parents. The parents offered financial support for studies and living expenses and emotional and instrumental support for the children's divorce. In one particular case, the parents came under the strict control of their daughter who had divorced and returned to the nest. Even though they were living in their own house, they felt stressed and had to seek solace occasionally in the company of their other daughter.

Therefore, we can see that the older adults had to navigate between their own world (*jibun no sekai*), their own independence and their family. The picture is not yet complete as we still have to look at how the older adults view the future in terms of their anxieties, their expectations of care plans when they become frail, and their motivations towards their later lives in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5 Expectations of the Future

The previous chapter has shown us the way that family relationships played out in terms of contact, exchanges and emotional closeness. We have also seen how some older adults could stay independent of their adult children and how some adult children continued to depend on their parents. The balance between independence and family will be further tested when we consider the need for care in later life. Even though the older adults were healthy and active at this time, a time would come when they would require assistance as their bodies become weaker.

When Hashimoto (1996) studied families back in the 1980s, she found that in Japan, families took the “protective” approach, assuming that older adults would need care and therefore, families were organized around it. However, in the rural areas, with the children working away in the cities, the older adults were dependent on each other and their social network for support and care as Traphagan (2000) had shown us. Now forty years down the road, what are the new forms of support that older adults expect of the future? We have already seen in Chapter 3 that the older adults’ dependence on the social network was minimal. Do they continue to depend on their families or public services? Are public services available to them?

A key turning point in these past few decades was the implementation of the Long Term Care Insurance System in 2000. Details of this system were already given in Chapter 2. Very briefly, all adults aged 40 and above have to contribute a premium to this insurance. When the older adult is unable to perform some or all of the activities of daily living (ADL)<sup>36</sup>, they can apply to use the insurance (hereinafter known as LTCI). Upon their application, they will be assessed of their abilities and classified into either two lighter levels of support or five heavier levels of care. The assessment test is standardized throughout the country. Based on their assessed level, they can use the LTCI to pay for a variety of services ranging from purchase of aids, to in-home services and up to a portion of residential fees at health

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<sup>36</sup> ADL includes eating, personal hygiene, going to the toilet, bathing, functional mobility, and dressing.

or welfare facilities.

In this chapter, we will explore the older adults' views about the future now that the LTCI has been in operation for more than ten years, starting first with their anxieties about the future, their perception of their role as parents, and then their expectations of the type of care they would like to receive. We will also look at the older adults' motivations (*ikigai*) to continue living an active and independent life.

### **Anxieties about the Future**

The older adults that we have been introduced to were leading independent and active lives. I asked them whether they had any anxieties about the future. The anxieties that they mentioned were health and finance, fear of losing their wives, and generally about the children. The older informants talked about death and how they were not afraid of it.

#### *Health and Finance*

Health and Finance are the two basic prerequisites for an independent lifestyle. Currently, the older adults in my sample possessed these two resources but naturally they were anxious about losing them. Besides making efforts on their part to be healthy, they had no direct controls over when sickness might strike or when an unfortunate accident might happen rendering them immobile. For example, Tatsuda-san (66) had anxiety over his health because he smoked and had been diagnosed with early stages of diabetes. He was taking steps to address the diabetes problem now by walking long distances to reduce his weight. However, he was anxious about the future. He said,

But when your health is to a point where you can't take care of it then you're a burden on your family. That's the anxiety. That's a kind of negative way of thinking but I hope that

when I go, it'll be quick and I will not be a vegetable<sup>37</sup>.

To the older adults, losing one's health means becoming dependent on others and becoming a burden to family. These anxieties drove many of the older adults to work really hard on their health. What the other adults feared most was becoming dependent on others or their family.

In terms of finances, some were confident that their pensions and insurance would see them through. Others believed that pensions were not enough. In the next section on Plans for Care, we will be able to see the older adults' perceptions about the situation.

#### *No Anxiety about Death*

The older adults did not generally worry about death. Ueno-san (84) said he had no worries about the future and added "Any time!", meaning that he was ready to die any time. He also said, "at this age, even if I don't want to die, I am not fearful of death" (*mochiron shinitakuwanaiga dakaratoitte shinunoga kowai wakedewanai*). Kojima-san (80) said she probably had some anxieties but she could not recall them. Then she added, "For example, I don't know where I will die." She used the word "where" instead of "when" because she was just telling me about what would happen if she were to collapse suddenly. She had received an emergency pendant from the local community (she referred to it as the "police") and in case of an emergency, she could press the button to activate the police. She said that when she went out to work in the garden, she wore the pendant. She lived alone in a big two-story house with a big garden. Sugawara-san (85) said "It will be unpleasant (*iya da*) if I live too long!". He suffered a stroke five years ago and now moved around with a walking stick. Although he took walks and went out with his eldest son and family about once a week, he was not doing much except watching TV or listening to the radio on sports programs<sup>38</sup>.

Interestingly, death was not talked about by the older adults who were younger than 70 years old.

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<sup>37</sup> Vegetative state.

<sup>38</sup> An update after the interview showed that he had started going to a daycare center three times a week.

As the Theory of Gerotranscendence suggested, the older adult in the old-old group reaches a fundamental acceptance of the life lived, implying more of a forward or outward direction, including a qualitative redefinition of reality. Death becomes something that they are not fearful to talk about.

#### *Wife dying before him*

A number of men stated unabashedly that their biggest worry was their wives dying before them. Okayama-san (69) said he had no concerns (*fuan ga nai*) except this. Sugawara-san (85) said, “Please don’t let my wife die first – it will be a spiritual (*seishinteki*) loss”. Ueno-san (84) said, “Men cannot do anything. If she (pointing to his wife) dies first, it will be the most troublesome thing (*komaru koto*)”. From the description of their daily lifestyles, these men were completely dependent on their wives for preparation of meals and housework so in terms of daily living, losing their wives would give them difficulties in living on their own. Besides instrumental support, Sugawara-san also admitted that his wife was his spiritual support.

#### *Children*

Without hesitation, Mori-san (74) said her only worry (*shinpai*) was over her children. She had three daughters, two of whom were married and had their own families. The youngest daughter (41) was unmarried and living with her. She did not specify which daughter she was particularly worried about but she mentioned that when her eldest daughter was sick, she went to take care of her. She also said that a mother’s role will never end (*oya ga sotsugyō dekinai*). Yoshida-san (60) was only anxious about her third son (*hikikomori*) and she would continue to be until he could go back out into society.

#### **Role of Parents**

Since some of the older adults were still worried about their children, I asked them what they thought were their roles as parents in the family now. I used the word “*yakuwari*” in Japanese to mean

“role”. Their answers varied depending on their interpretation of the word “*yakuwari*”. When the children were young, the parents provided for them, protected them from danger and supported them in their development into adults. Some of the parents believed that their responsibilities to look after their children had ended whereas others thought that these responsibilities would not end. Others thought that their responsibility now was to maintain their health so that they would not be a burden to their children.

*There is no graduation for the parent (role remains)*

Mori-san (74) said “Until death, parents cannot ‘graduate’ from their roles (*oya ga sotsugyō dekinai*)”. In Japan, the term “graduation” (*sotsugyō*) is often used to describe the completion of a role. For example, actors or entertainers stay in a role only for a certain period and they have to “graduate” and leave their roles and let someone new take over when the period is over. Mori-san used the same term to say that her role as mother would not change. She was still worried (*shinpai*) about her children. When she was talking about this, she mentioned one incident when her eldest daughter was very sick. Although she said earlier that her children did not ask for her help, she obviously went to help when her daughter was sick. Tsuji Meiko (68) said that even though she had finished bringing the children up, if her children or grandchildren needed help, she would help.

Other informants described their parental role as either a diminished role or just a role of watching over (*mimamori*) the children. Tatsuda-san (66) said his role as father had changed because his son was now establishing his career and was “self dependent to a big degree”. His son did not rely on him so much now. He was available for chit-chat or advice. He also believed that as his son gained more responsibility in his career and as he developed relationship with other people, it would naturally decline further. “For me that’s reality, for my wife I don’t know. I think she’ll miss that because that’s her baby son. He’s always a baby to my wife.” Yamamoto-san (63) said that now she did not have to move her hands – that is, she did not have to physically do things for them. In the past, she helped out when her daughters delivered their children. Occasionally she might correct their mistakes, if any. She said her

children were healthy and living well so there was nothing much for her to help. She said that right now, there was no reversal of roles but maybe later when she became forgetful, there might be a reversal. Maeda-san (64) said that after bringing them up, now her role was only to “watch over” (*mimamori*). Maybe time would come when she could not do this anymore but for now just *mimamori*. This would continue regardless of how old the children became. I also interviewed her son, Tsutomu-san (30) and he gave almost the same answer. He said his parents’ role was to watch over (*mimamori*) and doing it always. As long as they remained healthy, this role continued. Once they became frail, the roles would be reversed.

#### *Role had finished*

The Nakamuras (73, 70) stated emphatically that their role as parents had finished. Okayama-san (69) said that until graduation from university the children were the parents’ responsibility. After that they should be independent. There was no need to take care of parents. Since he did not want his children to take care of him, there would be no reversal of role. He said his wife also thought the same way. The Maruyamas (63, 61) said that feelings (*kimochi*) had changed. The children were now married and they had a good relationship with their spouses so they were not worried (*anshin,shinpai ga nai*). They said their role had finished because everybody was healthy. Tachi-san (67) said that his eldest son was married and the couple was independent and had created their own family so he felt secure (*anshin*) about it. To the extent of not causing trouble to them he might occasionally visit them and support them emotionally. His son, Kentaro-san (35) said that his parents’ role now was to enjoy their lives. They were tired out bringing the children up so now they should enjoy themselves. Sakuma-san (71) said that a mother’s role was to make a child independent. She might give financial help or emotional support but only when necessary. However, she strongly felt that even if she gave financial help to her son, her son should pay her back later.

Imamura-san did not say her role had finished but she said there was no need to watch over

(*mimamori*) because they had independent families. She might discuss things with them but would never tell her children what to do.

### *Role had reversed*

By reversal of role, it meant that the children become the protector over the parents. Hirakawa-san (71) said that her role as mother had been reversed (*gyakuten shimashita*). Last time she protected them but now they protected her and took control. She quoted two examples. First, one day her son called and said “It’s me.” (*oreore*). She answered “Oh, it’s you, Kyotaro.” Her son scolded her for replying this way since it would open up the way for people who were committing “Cash Transfer Fraud”<sup>39</sup> (*furikome-sagi*)<sup>40</sup>. The second example she quoted was when she bought her current apartment, her son came and checked the whole apartment and fixed things to ensure it was earthquake-proof.

The Uenos (84, 81) said there was no more responsibility over the children after they got married. They just had to pray for the children’s health and maybe gave advice if needed. Ueno Mariko said that parents should not leave any loan to their children and burden them (*meiwaku kakenai yoni*). She would only give advice to her daughter if she was asked. Ueno Kenji jokingly said that the role had been reversed because he always had to say “Yes, yes” (*Hai, hai*) to his eldest son. I also asked their daughter, Fumiko-san (55) what she thought of their roles as parents. She said,

When we were children they gave us a good education and we graduated and started a new family. I think my parents have been a good model of family life throughout my marriage. As they are not getting weaker, it has been all the same. As long as they are healthy and independent, their roles will not change. It will remain like this, I think. If they don’t have enough money to support themselves then their position is weaker but if

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<sup>39</sup> See Chapter 2 for a detail explanation of this criminal trend.

<sup>40</sup> The term “*furikome-sagi*” is used by the Metropolitan Police Department whereas the term “*furikomi-sagi*” is often used in the media. “*furikome*” is in the imperative form.

parents are rich enough to support themselves then the relationship is not going to be changed.

#### *Other roles*

Some other adults said that their only role was to maintain their health. Kitada-san (64) said her role now was “not to trouble others (*osewa ni naranai yōni*)” and “to be independent (*jiritsu shite ikō*)”. Maejima-san said her role was to keep healthy and not to trouble others. The Sugawaras said that their role now was to keep themselves healthy so that they would not be a burden to their children (*meiwaku kakenai yōni*). Kojima-san said her role was to live (*ikiru dake*) and to look nice in her best kimono at her grandchildren’s weddings. If other people commented that she was healthy (*genki*), she had fulfilled her role.

The older adults’ answers could be summarized as that they have completed their roles of provision and protection for their children because their children had become independent and capable of looking after themselves. However, they still cared for their children emotionally and watched over them in case they needed help or advice. On the other hand, some of the children have already undertaken the task of protecting their parents from harm (Hirakawa-san) and had gone on to tell their parents what they should do (Ueno-san).

#### *Actions compared to their perceptions*

I would now like to consider what some of the older adults said about their roles and compare them to their attitudes towards their children’s independence in the previous chapter. We examined four cases there so I will review the situation here.

Okayama-san’s case was consistent. He believed that his role as a parent finished when his children graduated from university. Therefore, when his youngest son was still living in his house, he told him to

move out. Okayama-san did not want his children to take care of him and his wife so he did not envisage any reversal of the parental role. He also said that he had no inheritance to give to his children.

Yamamoto-san also asked her son to move out of the house but she did not consider her parental role as finished. Instead she described a diminished role where she did not need to “move her hands” to help her children. However, we are reminded that she continued to pay the bills for her son even though he had moved out. She seemed very ready to put on her full mother’s role again if and when her children asked for help.

Imamura-san’s eldest son was asked to move out and he bought an apartment with his parents’ help with the deposit. She did not consider it necessary to watch over (*mimamori*) her sons because they were independent. She said her role now was to keep her health. However, during the course of the interview, she said that she hoped her eldest son would get married. I believe that despite everything that she said, she was watching over her children.

The fourth older adult who asked her son to move out was Sakuma-san. She said her role as mother was to make her child independent. I believe she was referring back again to the time when her son was younger and she was training him to be independent by putting him in childcare at an early age. Now she said that she might give financial help to her son if asked but her son had to pay her back. In the whole conversation, she always wanted to give the impression that she and her son were separate entities and it was not necessary for the mother to provide any indulgence (*amayakasu*) to the son.

#### *Children’s views differed*

The Sugawaras said that their role now was to keep themselves healthy so that they would not be a burden to their children (*meiwaku kakenai yōni*). When I asked their son, Naoki-san what he thought their roles were, he said it was to be a teacher and role model of how to live to the eighties. He said he did not want to be like his father. He elaborated this as not having friends or hobbies after retirement. He also said that he had always been independent and his parents did not intervene in his affairs so there was really no

big change now even though his parents were old. When they became older, he would take care of them.

Kojima-san said her role was to live (*ikiru dake*) and to look nice in her best kimono at her grandchildren's weddings. If other people commented that she was healthy (*genki*), she had fulfilled her role. She did not worry about the children. She also did not give them advice. She believed it was better this way otherwise she might be disliked. However, her daughter, Yukie-san (56) said her mother was the one who was holding the family (Yukie-san and her two siblings and their families) together. Her mother was always the number one central figure (*itsumo chushin ni naru*) drawing everyone together. As long as her mind was fine, the role would not change.

The children's views were different from their parents. While the senior Sugawaras felt that their roles had finished and they should just maintain their health, their son, Naoki-san and his wife, Fumiko-san both considered their parents as their role models. While Kojima-san believed it was her role to act as the healthy, active (*genki*) grandmother, her daughter, Yukie-san believed that her mother's role was binding the family together. She was the central figure (*chushin*) that all the children and grandchildren look to.

In Tachi-san's case, he felt that his role was finished since his son was married and had his own family. His son, Kentaro-san strongly believed that his parents' role now was to enjoy themselves as reward for the hard work they had put in bringing the children up.

There was diversity in how the older adults viewed their roles as parents. Some parents believed that their role as parents would never end while others believed that since their children had become independent, they could have the diminished role of "watching over" (*mimamori*) which meant that they could be called upon when the need arose. At the other extreme, some parents believed that their role as parents had finished and they did not even need to watch over their children. They believed their children could manage their situation by themselves. They continued to enjoy time with their children and grandchildren when they made contact. A number of them believed that their new role was to keep healthy

so that they would not be a burden to their children (*meiwaku kakenai yōni*). Some of the adult children had different views about their parents' roles. Some viewed their parents as role models on how to live a meaningful life till the eighties. They were learning from their parents not only positive things but also what they should not do. At least one informant saw her mother as the central force holding the family together. Other informants thought that this was the time for their parents to enjoy themselves as they had worked hard to bring the children up.

After examining the older adults' anxieties and their perceptions of their current roles as parents, I will move on to look at what plans for care they have in mind for themselves in the future.

### **Plans for Care in the Fourth Age**

Elliott and Campbell (1993) conducted focus groups on values for family care for the elderly in Tokyo in 1982 and 1990. A total of three generations – G1 (61-91), G2 (27-59) and G3 (18-22) – were involved in the focus groups. The opinions of G2 and G3 are particularly relevant to this research because these are the people born from 1955 to 1931 (G2) and 1964 to 1968 (G3). They are equivalent roughly to my parent generation and child generation respectively. I summarize relevant parts of their findings here.

Men from G2 (roughly equivalent to my parent generation) believed that it is the woman's duty to care for dependent children and the elderly in her household. The women on the other hand, would like the men to help out more in the home in both eldercare and housework. Indeed, some men do, either out of personal devotion to an elderly parent or as a practical matter to enable the family to survive the burdens and stresses. In the traditional *ie* ideology, the eldest son inherits the home and the obligation to take care of the parents (the duty of which falls on his wife). With the abolition of the *ie* after the War, inheritance laws were also changed to require inheritance to be shared equally among all the children. However, eldercare usually falls on one child, so conflict arises over fairness in terms of effort versus inheritance. The result is not a wholesale shift from one to another but a practical, circumstance-driven mix of traditional and non-traditional elements.

The G3 (roughly equivalent to my child generation) expressed their desire to care for their own parents out of love and gratitude and do not want it to be dictated by law or other external pressures. These feelings of obligations, “*on*” is the indebtedness one feels towards one’s parents for having brought them into the world, and for all the love, effort and hardship which they have invested in caring for them when they were younger (p.129). One of the results of this is the increasing trend of women caring for their own parents. Care for in-laws is seen more as an obligation related to the traditional *ie*. In contrast, G2 respondents, on the other hand, asserted that adult children have an obligation to care for their parents, or parents-in-law and saw it as a obligation in terms of the *ie* family system. They saw themselves as a generation caught between the traditional *ie* framework for eldercare and more recent changes.

Some of my informants in the parent generation took care of their parents-in-law, for example, Imamura-san and Yamamoto-san. What were their views now regarding their own care by their children?

The following section describes the plans that the older adults had in the event that they required care to be given to them. Naturally when they talked about care, they also thought of death. A small number of older adults said that they would like to depend on family to take care of them. The majority did not want to depend on family but would like to do it by themselves. Some implied in their answers that they would depend on their spouse but others were open to using public services like in-home service or move to a welfare or health facility. For those who wanted to use public services, they said that they would use LTCI to pay for the services. There was also one group who said that they have not thought about it or that they did not want to think about it. As we will see, the answers were ambivalent at times. I will explain some of the terms that the older adults used at the end of this section.

#### *Those who wanted to depend on family*

The following older adults said they would depend on their family for their care. However, they did not expect that the family will be completely responsible as they realized caregiving would be difficult. Therefore, they were open to accepting other services to help out the caregiver.

Tatsuda-san believed in self reliance on his part. He said that both he and his wife did not want to burden his son down but he admitted that “unfortunately when you get to be 93, you want to be self reliant but you might have physical problems you can’t do by yourself”. Ultimately, he thought he could rely on his son. He also expected his son to definitely take care of his wife. I pressed him on what he would do if his health condition was really bad. He said,

If I am still in a bad situation, I’ll probably go with the family as long as I can and as long as it’s not a big burden. I think I prefer the family but if it gets to a point it’s causing a health problem for them - that’s why I say I hope that when I go, it’ll be quick.

Imamura-san first said that if possible she would just like to manage with her husband. I probed her further and she said that if she had to select one child, maybe she would live with her second son. She would sell her house then. She took care of her parents-in-law so her sons witnessed them and said they would do the same for her and her husband. Again, she insisted that she did not think about the future and did not do any preparation. They both had pension so they did not worry about money. Imamura-san was accustomed to big families so as long as her husband was alive, there would be two of them but after her husband passes on, she would not like to be alone. She said that she was anxious about being alone.

Ueno-san said they would probably depend on their eldest son’s wife because she was young. Their daughter (Fumiko-san) had her parents-in-law to worry about so he was not sure whether she would be able to do anything for them. Fumiko-san was married to the Sugawaras’ second son, Naoki-san, and lived with them in a dual-generation house.

Tsuji Shigeto (74) preferred to ask his family to take care of him. He said he could use state facilities<sup>41</sup> and also insurance but it was better to have his children take care. Choosing between his son and daughter, he thought his daughter was better because she worried about him. His wife Meiko-san (68),

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<sup>41</sup> Either in-home or residential services.

however, said that depending on her condition, she might use state facilities. Her children had their own lives so if possible, she would not impose on her children. However, if her children felt like giving care, she would accept it. If they were busy, they could not help. Nevertheless, she would not want them to take full responsibility (*zenmenteki futan*), but only as necessary. She meant that part of the services could be purchased from the state.

The above examples indicated that those who had closer relationships with their family currently tended to say that they would depend on family. Tatsuda-san lived with his son at the moment. They had a close relationship and he described a closer relationship between his wife and his son. Tatsuda-san particularly expected his son to take care of his wife after he himself has passed on. In Imamura-san's case, she married into an extended family of nine members. She was used to having family around her and as she indicated, she was afraid of being alone after her husband has passed on. Tsuji-san also emphasized how close her family was.

#### *Reasons for not wanting to depend on family*

This group of older adults said they did not want to depend on their children for their care. Several reasons were given.

#### Their own caregiving experience taught them how difficult it would be

Maruyama Kazuko provided care to her grandmother and her father so she knew how difficult it was. She did not want to burden her children. Her son and second daughter had said they would come back (from the current faraway residence in the case of her son and potential faraway residence in the case of her second daughter because she was married to a foreigner) when the parents needed care but she preferred to go to the hospital. They might also use daycare. They had prepared money so they were not worried.

#### They did not have confidence that their children would do it

Okayama-san believed that his children would not give him care. If he needed care first, his wife would take care of him. If his wife died before him, he would go to a home. Okayama-san had asked his unmarried son to move out and he was not happy that his son had not given him a key to his apartment. He did not have confidence that his children would take care of him and his wife. Fukui-san (71) wanted to do it by himself as he had no expectations of his children (*kitai ga nai*). He would not go to a facility because he “had no money”. He would just stay at home and did his best (*ganbaritai*).

The following two older adults had dependent children as explained in Chapter 4. Yoshida-san did not wish to rely on her children. She wanted to be independent and not cause trouble for her children. She would use facilities or services. Although she would like to live with her children and grandchildren, she did not really expect it will happen. She said, “It would just be the two of us - me and my husband”. Nogiwa-san said that as far as possible, she wanted to do it by herself even when she became older. She was not sure how long her body and health would last, therefore health was very important and that was why she exercised every day and walked regularly. If the need arose, she thought her daughters would do it but if possible, she did not want to ask them (*tanomitakunai*). When she had the operation for her breast cancer, her eldest daughter came every day except for one day because of her work. Her second daughter (*hikikomori*) never came but she did the laundry and housework at home. She said that she did not really think much about her future (*amari kangaenai*). If her husband needed care, maybe she had to do it but she did not like to because they had a bad relationship. If she could, she would send him to a home, but sending him to a home would be very expensive, she said.

#### They did not want to see unhappy faces

Minami-san (70) said he would start to think about care in about ten years or more because he was healthy now. He said he was not worried (*shinpai shinai*). He would try to do by himself because “it is better to see the happy faces of other people”, implying that care-givers, especially family caregivers

might show him unhappy faces.

Kojima-san (80) said that when she needed care, she would not ask her children. She would use LTCI (*rōken*) and if possible, she wanted to stay at home. Even though her family was wonderful (*subarashii*), she was afraid that if she needed help from her children, they would start to fight. They would not say that they would take care, so it was best to pay for services. Running it at the business level was best. She could just say goodbye (*sayonara*) each day to the helper without feeling any obligation. She disliked any unpleasant (*iya*) situations with her family. In preparation, she had worked out how she could do it by herself. She said she would crawl to the toilet (she demonstrated how she will do it) and she would also cook. As long as she could go to the toilet, she could live by herself. The second choice was to use LTCI since 70 percent of her income went to LTCI premium. Food and vegetables could be delivered to the house by the shops. If necessary, she could get a helper to come to the house. Kojima-san felt she would be obligated to her children and it would divide up the family if the children fought over the issue. Therefore, she wanted to handle everything by herself.

I asked Kojima-san's youngest daughter, Yukie-san about this matter. She said her mother never asked for help in anything. As long as she was alive, the children felt her emotional support (*anshinkan ga arimasu*). She believed that her mother did not want care from her children but she would somehow do what was necessary according to the condition (*nantoka suru*). She said her elder brother would definitely do anything necessary. She had also considered bringing her mother to her house but she knew that it would be difficult to get her mother to agree. I asked her what she would do when she had grandchildren and her mother also required care at the same time. She said she would give first priority to her mother. She also confessed that she did not know anything about her mother's finances since they never talked about money.

### Reasons for not wanting to use health or welfare facilities

The older adults had heard quite a number of unpleasant stories about health or welfare facilities<sup>42</sup>.

Kojima-san said she had undergone home helper training so she had visited some homes for the elderly (*tokuyo*). It was not that they did not feel like home but she did not like the day's menu to be decided by others. For example, she would not be able to decide by herself whether she wanted to eat sushi today. Her friend had gone into such a home. She said, "at the home, six people share one room and they must obey rules. They have to cut their hair like men and queue up and wait for the bath (*ofuro*)". She said she had researched and found that it was best to stay at home.

Aida-san did not want to go to a home because she did not want to stay with only old people. She had heard unpleasant things about homes. For example, it was very boring there so the residents became weaker and if they became sick, they were asked to leave and they had to use a lot of money. Therefore, it was better to be careful about eating healthy food. (She was selling health products as a part-time job.) It was fine to use a helper. Her own father (in his eighties) used a helper for thirteen years and had remained mentally strong, meaning that he did not have to suffer mental deterioration under the poor conditions of the home.

These stories may be true or not true depending on the conditions of the home but anyway, these older adults heard them over the grapevine and formed their conclusion through them.

### *Lack of knowledge about facilities and use of insurance*

Kitada-san said that her daughter-in-law had indicated that she would take care of them but she did not want it. She had considered it for a long time (*nayande imashita*) and had discussed it with her husband. She decided it was better to go to a public facility. She had not seen any facility yet but would probably go with a friend to visit the friend's mother to see what the facility was like. She confessed that she had not actually thought much about it but just chatted casually with friends regarding this matter.

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<sup>42</sup> Details given in Chapter 2 on these facilities.

The Sugawaras said they would not depend on their daughters-in-law because they were busy. They did not know whether using LTCI required any procedures. They would like to go to a private home.

*Use of services under the watchful eyes of the children*

Maeda-san wanted to use care services at home. She would use the LTCI plus her own money and bring someone in to do work at home. At that time, maybe her children would watch over (*mimamori*) and provide emotional support. Her second son, Tsutomu-san's answer was completely in line with his mother's. He said that when the time comes, he and his other brothers would share in the finances and they would rely on his youngest brother to recommend the services since he was in this business. Even if they decided on care services, Tsutomu-san would still watch over (*mimamori*) their parents. He would also visit them more frequently so that they would not feel lonely. To him, this was filial piety (*oyakōkō*).

*Do it by themselves*

Suzuki-san (70), a divorcee with no children, said that even if she were ill, she would stay at home. If necessary, she would go to the hospital. She emphasized that she would never go to a home for the elderly. She insisted that she would not want to rely on others so she wanted to keep her health. If the need arose, she would just starve herself like a monk. She was currently living with her brother, also a divorcee. She said they would help each other when the time comes.

*Not thinking about it*

A number of the older adults insisted that they were not thinking about the issue of care. It was not that it had not occurred to them but more that they did not want to pursue the matter. Their only strategy was to try to avoid being sick.

The Nakamuras said they were trying to exercise and take supplements to maintain their health.

They hoped for sudden death (*pokkuri-shi*)<sup>43</sup>. The two of them would just work hard together. They said they had no inheritance to give, just the house they were living in and they had not thought about what to do with it.

Iwai-san said he did not want to think about care services as everyone was healthy. He just did not want to cause any trouble (*meiwaku*). He would prepare his own house. He was not worried because there was insurance.

Maejima-san said that she did not want to go to a home so she would only go to a hospital if there was any medical problem. Therefore, she was trying her best not to fall. She did not like day service either. She added that she had not thought about it. She just did not want to be dependent.

Aso-san said that he was not thinking about it because he was healthy. His wife thought a lot about it because she was still taking care of her mother. He wanted to do things in his own time, at his own pace. He would try not to depend on his wife (*sewani naranai yōni*). He would keep his health by walking and he was not taking any medicine right now. He had insurance so if he died, there was enough money for his wife and son.

Before commenting on the older adults' views on the preparation of care, I would like to explain a couple of points mentioned by the older adults.

First, some informants used the term “hospital” to mean medical hospital and also home for the elderly. I believe this is the result of a lack of understanding of the facilities that are available currently in Japan. Second, while talking to the informants, I found a lack of understanding of the Long Term Care Insurance system. Many informants assumed that they could use the system whenever they wanted to. They did not know any details of the assessments needed in order to qualify to use the insurance. This lack of understanding gave the informants a false sense of confidence that they could use the insurance any time for any condition.

Third, quite a number of the older adults hoped for sudden death (*pokkuri shi*). Suzuki (2004) calls

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<sup>43</sup> See explanation later in this section.

*pokkuri* a faith (*pokkuri shinkō*) and tells us that there are more than twenty-three temples all over Japan that support *pokkuri* prayers. These temples belong to various schools of Buddhism including Shingon, Sōtō, Tendai, Nichiren, Jōdo, Zen, and Rinzai. The ancient-word dictionary (*kogo jiten*) gives the meaning of “sudden death” (*hito ga kyu ni akkenaku shinu sama*) or (*pokkuri ōjō*) and “dying suddenly without pain or suffering” (*totsuzen kurushimimonaku shinukoto*). There are elderly people who pray for a sudden and peaceful death, without pain and suffering, especially seeking out these temples. He explained that the philosophy behind is not just praying for death but also health throughout, until death comes painlessly. *Pokkuri ōjō* was recorded in Japanese literature as far back as the Eighteenth Century. However, Suzuki asserted that the term really became popular after Ariyoshi Sawako’s novel “The Twilight Years” (*kōkotsu no hito*) was published in 1972. Kawano (2010) suggested that “rather than expressions of despair, older persons’ visits to *pokkuri* temples should be seen as expressions of self-control and attempts to avoid overdependence” (p. 18).

An analysis of the answers provided by the older adults showed that only a small minority wanted to rely on family should care be needed. Even so, they were ready to accept that in case the care required was too taxing on family, they were willing to accept alternatives, like going to facilities. There was general acceptance by most of the older adults that in-home services or day services were available for them to use. There was greater resistance to using facilities like homes for the elderly, perhaps because of the bad images that the informants had heard of. Some, like Aida-san, were resistant to being in a place where there were only old people that might accelerate mental and physical deterioration. They had also heard that facilities were expensive and might not be affordable.

The informants who did not want to rely on family gave various reasons for it. Some have experienced giving care to their grandparents or parents, for example, Maruyama Kazuko, so they knew the difficulties of it and did not want to burden their children with similar problems. Others anticipated negative impacts on their children and family solidarity. Kojima-san was afraid that the children would

start to fight because of her. Minami-san anticipated his children's unhappy faces.

I asked Maeda-san, who was in the care service business, why Japanese people do not want to depend on children. She said,

LTC insurance is available. The children have their own lives. If there is time, they can support parents. But they don't know for how long so the important time of their lives is wasted. That's why LTC was created by the country. Historically, women stayed at home and wasted their lives. So that's why the government changed the policy. I think this is a great development. It is unimaginable that there is now freedom for women. It is still not fully developed yet but it is going in the right direction.

Tsuji Meiko (68)'s opinion was that in the past there were no state policies and facilities and no helpers, so people had to depend on children. Mothers had to take care of their children so they became full-time housewives. But things were different now. Policies and facilities were available so people could live fulfilling (*jūjitsu*) lives. I asked her whether this was the situation with her friends. She said, "each person's situation is different because they live different lives. I can only say for myself. My family cooperates with each other. Even my grandchildren bring me on tours".

An issue that had been raised consistently was the high cost of elderly homes. Maeda-san and Yoshida-san were in the care service business so they knew very well the costs involved. Maeda-san said that she would use LTCI plus her own savings, knowing very well that LTCI alone would not be enough to provide her a service level that she desired. In fact, her son Tsutomu-san said that Maeda-san was very worried about finances and tried her best to save up for the future. Her husband, on the other hand, was not worried at all and his tendency not to save was the cause of squabbles for the couple. Yoshida-san, on the other hand, said that if one had no money, it was not possible to enter a facility. A minimum of 200,000 yen was needed per month. Pension was so small that the fees would become the children's burden. The

older adults also had to worry about funeral related fees.

Another issue that had been raised was the grave. In Japan, caring for the dead requires “many years of care, typically for thirty-three or fifty years, through a series of post-death stages, and the establishment and /or maintenance of a permanent memorial site” (Kawano, 2010, p.9). “The maintenance of a family grave by generations of descendants is critical to the security of the family dead” (p.11). Annual fees are required to maintain a grave and donations to the priest performing ancestral veneration rites on a monthly or seasonal basis (for example, the New Year, the equinoxes, and the Festival of the Dead in summer). The maintenance of a grave also involves regular cleaning and weeding. Therefore, having a family grave that brings about the long term need for maintenance is something that the older adults, like Kimura-san and Sakuma-san wanted to avoid. I will explain newer trends in this area in the final chapter.

What is perhaps, most worrying out of all the answers are those older adults who were not thinking about the future in terms of care required. They appeared to be reluctant to think about it. I was unable to determine clearly the reasons behind the reluctance. There were both men and women in this category so it could not have been any gender differences. The following sections describe some of the plans a small number of the informants had made and also what two older adults said about not planning for the future.

## **Plans for the future**

### *Actions taken for independent living*

Hirakawa-san (71, widow) was the only informant who had taken concrete actions to enable herself to live an independent life. She did not want to live with her son or her daughter. She felt that if she lived with her son, even though she liked her daughter-in-law, there was bound to be friction. She had objected to building a two-generation house with her son. She chose to live in an apartment by herself. It was good enough that they occasionally call her or visit her. She said she did not want to stay even with her daughter. When she was visiting her daughter during her grandson’s birth overseas, she could not wait to come home. There was no particular reason. When her daughter was visiting her in Tokyo, she had to cook, help

with the laundry and help to look after her grandson. She said she had no freedom during those times.

Therefore, she took action to craft an independent life for herself. In the past, she lived in a two-storey house with a garden. She realized that it would become difficult for her to maintain the garden and also walk up and down the stairs. Moreover, the house was on a slope and far away from the station. Therefore, she put her money together to purchase an apartment. Her requirements were that the apartment had to be near the station, it should be of comfortable size but not too big, with a small balcony for some plants. The apartment she now lived in met these requirements and was served by an elevator. When she had made up her mind about this apartment, she told her son to come and take a look. He said it was alright if she liked it. She signed the papers straight away. She said she was very decisive (*omoikiri ga ii*). Her daughter-in-law said she was like a man (*otokorashii*). In moving to this apartment, she just picked up the essential things from the old house. She did not want to clutter the apartment. For cooking utensils and cutlery, she brought just enough to fill one cabinet.

She was well aware that the risk of living alone was that if she should fall sick suddenly, there was nobody around to help her. She told her daughter to expect this and not to be sad but just believe that she was happy in heaven.

She had also studied the private homes for the elderly (*yūryō rōjin hōmu*) for the future when she might require medical attention. She had visited a couple of them and knew the various types available and the situation like waiting list, fees and so on. She had heard about cases where the homes had gone bankrupt and therefore she was only looking at those which were managed by big corporations. She was well aware that they were very expensive and she was considering very carefully whether this was an option at all. Just as an indication, a private home for the elderly could cost a few million yen to twenty or thirty million yen for entrance fee and nearly 200,000 yen per month or more, depending on the location and facilities.

After her husband's death four years ago, Hirakawa-san started all the above preparations. She said that this was the happiest period of her life. She felt that she had suffered under her husband's rule as well

as her husband's infidelity. Now that her husband had passed away, she was free. She was grateful to her husband for the pension that she was receiving every month. Her children were grown up and they were doing well. Therefore, she did not need to worry about them. She was happy doing whatever she liked to do.

#### *Financial and Medical Plans Made*

A few older adults had made financial and medical plans for their final days. Maejima-san (80, widow) had prepared money for her funeral expenses and she had also done up her will. The Uenos had also prepared financially. The Sugawaras had done up their Living Will<sup>44</sup>. Tatsuda-san and Aso-san had also prepared financially. These were the only handful that had done anything in this aspect.

#### *No Plans*

Two of the older adults stated specifically that they did not want to make any plans for the future.

Kitada-san said she and her husband never think of the far future (*toi saki*) but only the near future (*kinmirai*), like where to go for holiday next year. She said, "we are now past 60 – there is no need to think of the far future. Being able to enjoy and having a full life now is good enough" (*toi mō iin desu. ima tanoshii, jūjitsu shite ga ii*). In order not to be sick, they encouraged each other to exercise and train their bodies. She said they were both working hard on this.

Mori-san said she had no plans for the future. She just wanted to live naturally (let nature takes its course). She said she might never know what would happen – maybe she would die in the bathtub like her husband. She had seen her own father go senile (*boke*). He was over 85 years old. Emiko did not wish to be like him. However, she did not say what she was going to do to prevent it.

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<sup>44</sup> The Living Will is a written document that spells out a person's preferred medical treatments and life-sustaining measures. Family and doctors will consult this document if the older adult is unable to make his or her own health care decisions.

### **Motivations for Living (*ikigai*)**

So far, we have studied the type of lifestyles that the older adults led, their social network, their family and their plans for care and for the future. What motivates them in their daily life? In Japanese, we would ask “What is their *ikigai*?” Mathews (1996) defined *ikigai* as “that which most makes one’s life seem worth living” (p.5). It is a “sense of commitment to some facet of their world – perhaps their work, or their family, or their dream, or their religious belief – that gives them a reason to believe in the worthwhileness of their lives” (p.5). As a person lives through his or her life course, *ikigai* may change at different stages in life and further, a person may have multiple *ikigais* at any one time. Johnson (1993) said that *ikigai* subjectively furnishes a crucial point of reference to “true” or “ideal” self, as “this is what really makes me tick – really moves me” (p.232).

In studies in Japan, the word *ikigai* is often used to mean well-being or satisfaction in life. In the Elderly’s Financial Consciousness Survey 2011 (*kōreisha no keizai seikatsu ni kansuru ishiki chōsa*) (Cabinet Office, 2011), a question was asked about *ikigai* but *ikigai* was explained in brackets as “pleasure or joy” (*yorokobi*) or “enjoyment or fun” (*tanoshimi*). For respondents 60 years and older, those who said “fully feel *ikigai* (*jūbun kanjiteiru*)” was 38.9 percent and “somewhat (*tashō kanjiteiru*)” was 43.2 percent, giving a total of 82.1 percent who said they felt some form of *ikigai* or satisfaction in life. Imai, Osada and Nishimura (2009) said that *ikigai* has been substituted as subjective well-being (*shukanteki kōfukukan*) (SWB) in the study of gerontology in Japan. Their research found that *ikigai* has a structure that partially overlapped with but was wider than the SWB. *ikigai* and SWB both assessed satisfaction with life up to now. However, in terms of time, *ikigai* looks to the future and in terms of relationship, *ikigai* includes both individual and society whereas SWB looks only at the present and the individual.

In this research, I use Mathews’ definition, that is, what gives them the reason to believe that their life is worthwhile living or what motivates them.

The answers that I received from my informants regarding *ikigai* were quite unexpected at times.

Some informants were able to tell me straight away what their *ikigai* was but some considered for a long time and some even said they did not have any *ikigai*.

#### *Giving to Others as ikigai*

Tachi-san used the term “lifework” to describe one of his main *ikigais*. He started work in a labor related organization at age 22 and worked all the way up to director position before retiring at age 61. Immediately he joined an independent administrative agency (*dokuritsu gyōseihōjin*) as director (*riji*) and chairman (*rijiichō*). He retired from this organization at age 64. However, he set up a management and labor consultancy in the same year and while acting as consultant, he also served as chairman, adviser, or director in a number of public and private organizations. As these jobs were not full-time positions, he worked about twelve to fourteen days in a month, making his rounds in the above organizations. Timing was according to his clients’ appointments but he tried to work less than five hours a day, making sure to return home by six or seven o’clock in the evening.

Tachi-san was a meticulous man. He prepared the answers to my interview questions in advance and sent them to me before the interview. Regarding his daily lifestyle, he listed them in detail and had thought about every question before we met.

On the question of *ikigai*, he listed some nine items under the heading “*ikigai*, objectives (*mokuhyō*)” He described his “lifework” (*raifuwāku*) as being concerned with management and labor issues, and labor strategies. He wanted to “lavish unceasing support” (*taezu shien o oshimanai*) to the activities of related people and organizations. In order to do this, “I want to study, organize information, and create networks as my life mission (*shōgaigeneki*)”. The phrase *shōgaigeneki* means being on the active list until one dies. Tachi-san selected very strong words to describe this *ikigai* which was on the top of his list. His other *ikigais* related to family, social network and even in the hope to research the genealogy of his family.

Suzuki Tomoko (70) was a businesswoman in the beauty and health industry. Her daily activities included telephoning or visiting clients, and organizing workshops (*benkyōkai*). She travelled overseas for

business about four times a year, went to Osaka every month and also travelled domestically for business. She was very busy at work and she said that the more she worked the more money she could get. She started this work when she was 53 years old. Before this job, she had been a stewardess, an interpreter and also a tennis coach.

She divorced at age 63 and she had no children. One of her brothers was also divorced and retired and as he was loitering around (*burabura shita*), she asked him to live with her. Suzuki-san said that economically this was the best solution. She had another brother who was married and she had a good relationship with him and his wife and also their daughter. As hobbies, she played tennis and golf and also danced. She also read books and talked to learned persons (*chishikijin*) for emotional support. She had always decided everything by herself.

Her *ikigai* was her business and seeing others healthy and happy (*shiwase*). She said it was not important to have her own happiness but rather to see others happy – only in this case, could she get any returns. Her mission was to make women beautiful through her products and services. She always had an interesting time with her members (clients) which totaled two hundred to three hundred. She felt that this was her life mission (*shimeikan*). She also stressed faith and conviction (*shinnen*). She wanted to continue working until the day she dies.

While Tachi-san described life mission as *shōgaigeneki*, Suzuki-san described it as *shimeikan*. *shimeikan* is, perhaps, best translated as “calling”. Suzuki-san believed that her job was her calling.

Ueno Kenji (84), a doctor, said his *ikigai* was to help patients – even if there was little, he should give. Currently, he had retired from the clinic that he had handed over to his son but he still went there two mornings a week to see his old patients. Among all my informants, he was the most philosophical about life. He was still heavily involved in charity work, like fund raising, blood donations, organ donations and wheelchair donations to the elderly. He also went to schools to give lectures. He said he fully understood patients’ suffering (*kurushimi*).

Sakuma-san said her *ikigai* was in her child students. She believed that if it was adults, the

relationships could not last for a long time. They had been in the class for six years so she could see through their development (*seicho*). Her own son was already grown up and lived on his own. She said she had trained him to be independent from young. Therefore, she did not worry about him and instead put all her energy into nurturing the children under her charge at the community center. She was also the coordinator for the other classes, checking the volunteer teachers' reports and coordinating replacements if teachers could not turn up for class. She said she would continue doing this for as long as her body and mind could manage.

#### *Children and Grandchildren as ikigai*

Children and grandchildren served as *ikigai* for the following informants. Maruyama Mariko said her *ikigai* was her health and her grandson. She was not worried about her children any more as all of them were married. She loved to play with her grandson but she did not want to stay with them. She said if it was every day, it would be too tiring. She preferred them to stay nearby.

Kojima-san stated simply that her *ikigai* was her children and grandchildren. She felt happy (*shiwase*) every morning and prayed and gave thanks for them. She had no requests to the gods and ancestors but just thanked them for the excellent (*subarashii*) children and grandchildren that she had.

Maejima-san said her *ikigai* was her daughter and grandchildren and her hobbies (*shumi*). Then she added "my son too". She said that at any age, children were parents' *ikigai*.

Interestingly, unfulfilled hopes in children also served as *ikigai* for some informants. Imamura-san said her *ikigai* was to see her eldest son (38 years old) get married. Her second son was already married and she considered that her hopes in him had been fulfilled. Most importantly, she hoped that everyone was healthy and she could enjoy her hobbies, like attending the *Tōhōshinki* concert the next week.

#### *Have not found an ikigai yet*

We were first introduced to Yamamoto-san (63) in Chapter 3 when she described how she was at a

loss after the death of her mother-in-law to whom she had been giving care to. She said that she did not know what her *ikigai* was. She said she was just living day by day. She believed that she could not find “her own thing” yet. She only wanted to think about the future when she reached 75 or 76 years. After her husband retired, she wanted to go traveling to local towns, watch movies, or go to some country nearby.

### *Conditions for Active Aging*

As a way of triangulation of my data to understand what the older adults thought was important in later life, I asked them what advice they would give to other elderly people.

Looking at both their *ikigai* and their advice to other people, the older adults’ list of important things matched the Active Aging framework that we looked at in Chapter 1. The older adults’ first focus was the maintenance of their independence through physical and mental health and finance. Besides physical health, older adults, especially the women, should also look after their appearance (to be *oshare*) so that they would feel good about themselves. Next, they said it was important to be active by having hobbies and finding new challenges. They should also stay connected with the community by getting out of the house regularly. This related to active participation in society. The older adults also said that they should try to have good family relationships, related to intergenerational solidarity in the Active Aging framework. In addition, the older adults said they should not be passive and just depend on the state but should make their own plans as far as possible. All these supported and worked towards an independent lifestyle.

### **Independence for older adults**

The overall picture that we can see so far is that the older adults were trying their very best to avoid dependence on their children and also their friends. They did not want to cause trouble to other people (*meiwaku kakenai yoni*). They were able to do so because they had the two basic resources of health and finances. All of them were aware that if they lost their health, they would lose this independence in one

way or the other so they were working very hard on exercising their body and mind.

Walking was one of the activities that the older adults could do by themselves. However, it was interesting to note that the existence of a surviving spouse had a great impact. As Kitada-san said, “we encourage each other to take care of our health. We are really working very hard on this.” Couples were able to encourage each other and spur each other on. By having a fixed routine, they kept watch on each other, for example, Okayama-san, Aso-san, and the Nakamuras all had fixed times when they went out for walks. Such encouragements were naturally missing in those who lived alone. In the case of the widows, none of them mentioned any regular exercise routines. They tended to exercise as and when they felt like it or when their friends invited them to do so.

The older adults’ finances came mainly from pensions. Some who were in the higher income bracket were not worrying about finances. However, we could see some indications of anxiety about whether their current level of finances could see them through the Fourth Age when they require care.

Since the older adults wanted to be independent, we would naturally think that they would prepare for their independence. However, as shown in this chapter, most of the older adults had made little practical plans to enable them to do so into the far future when they needed care. Quite a number had not thought about their funeral plans as well. They also did not know much about details of the welfare systems available to them. It was mostly a plain declaration that they would manage by themselves. As all of them were educated and intelligent, active people, I do not believe the situation was a result of ignorance or carelessness or thoughtlessness. I propose that they make little plans because ultimately at the back of their minds, their family will take over when the time comes when they themselves cannot make any decisions. The Nakamuras, while talking about their two sons, said that when Nakamura Akira had an operation, both of their sons came back to see him. The elder son who had little contact with them after moving to Korea, came back just to see him. Nogiwa-san told me how her elder daughter, who did not live with her, came to the hospital to see her after her operation every day except for just one day because of her work. Fujiwara-san said when she hurt her back, her second daughter, Asami-san massaged

her back for her but her eldest daughter did not. I believe that despite their intentions to remain independent of their family, they were still confident that their family was there for them. All these remarks were made to me without my prompting. This shows how the children's presence at a time of need was appreciated and how well these acts were remembered. However, what had also surfaced from the older adults' stories was how reticent both parent and child were in expressing their true feelings to each other as we shall see in the next section.

### *Reticent in expressing true feelings*

I would like to describe two cases that, I believe, will demonstrate clearly the unspoken feelings between parent and child.

It was my third meeting with Kojima-san and her youngest daughter Yukie-san. We just got together for a meal and chit-chat at Kojima-san's house. Over lunch, we talked about many things and in the natural course of conversation Yukie-san mentioned that she would be going to see her daughter who had just gotten married and moved to the south of Japan. This was the first time that Kojima-san heard about the trip. She was excited immediately and asked many questions, like when she was going, who she was going with and so on. At this point in time, I think Yukie-san regretted having mentioned it at all. She was going with her husband and her son and daughter-in-law by car and it was going to be a long drive. After answering the questions, Yukie-san managed to change the subject and conversation continued. Around evening time, the three of us went out to a sushi restaurant that Kojima-san had always wanted to show me. As we sat down to dinner, Kojima-san was not her usual bubbling, talkative self. She was rather quiet and occasionally asked Yukie-san a question or two about her trip. She did not at any point in time ask whether she could go along with them. However, I felt it strongly as her questions came rather suddenly, out of the blue, in the middle of non-related topics of conversation. Yukie-san also did not say anything like, "would you like to come" or "I am sorry we cannot bring you" or anything along these lines. I felt the tension between mother and daughter but they would not say anything regarding this to each other. I wondered if

Yukie-san knew that her mother would like to go too. After dinner, Yukie-san dropped her mother off at her house and sent me to the station on her way home. In the car, Yukie-san said, without my prompting, that she would have liked to bring her mother along but there was just not enough room in the car. I believe that since Kojima-san did not ask directly and Yukie-san did not explain to her mother that the car was full (even though she could have guessed because Yukie-san mentioned who was going), the matter remained buried that might have resulted in Kojima-san feeling rather lonely or forgotten. She was brooding the whole evening. If either one of them had said anything directly, there would have been no tension and the matter would have been closed easily without the feelings of loneliness in Kojima-san and the feelings of guilt in Yukie-san.

A similar situation where requests went unspoken was told to me by Tsutomu-san. He said his mother, Maeda-san liked to travel and kept saying “Please take me (here and there).” Tsutomu-san confessed that he would not do it. If he wanted to go, he would go with his wife. He said when he was working in Hong Kong, he saw the close contact between parents and children – for example, children would visit parents every week. He thought this was too exhausting! He said his parents would never ask them to do things. I asked “how about the above – asking you to bring her here and there?” He said she would talk only but would not ask directly. I believe that Maeda-san felt a lot of disappointment in Tsutomu-san not picking up the hint and not acting on it. However, having said that, Tsutomu-san said that when his parents become frail, he would visit them often because he did not want them to feel lonely. He said he did not want to do much for them now because they were independent and could go skiing, for example.

When we examined the plans for care in a previous section in this chapter, we came across cases where the older adults did not expect that their children would give them care when needed and also cases where they expected their children would show unhappy faces when giving care. We do not really know how much of these were really true and how much of these were just the older adults’ imaginations since they had never spoken honestly with their children regarding these issues. We have also looked at the

contacts between parents and children in Chapter 3. We know that the infrequent contacts became a special time for the family, just like the *kazoku danran* of old times. However, we also know that they do not talk about serious matters during these times. They were just having a time of fun, chatting, eating and talking about current affairs. These were not the times for serious talk like care-giving. Other than these times, there were also no conversations about serious matters. Yukie-san, for example, confessed that she did not know her mother's financial situation as they never talked about it. Since the children did not give Kojima-san any money, looking at it objectively, Kojima-san was on her own as to whether she could make ends meet.

### *The Plunge to Dependence*

Some of the older adults in my sample held on to their independence very proudly, for example, Kojima-san. This is different from the past when dependency on others was valued and encouraged in the traditional family system and the elderly have traditionally and naturally been considered to be physically dependent on younger people (Elliott and Campbell, 1993). While it is good to be independent from all aspects, the more proudly they feel about their independence, the more difficult it will be for them when their independence is taken away from them by sickness or accidents. The loss of independence will cause a huge drop in self-esteem, exacerbating their health deterioration and hindering their adjustment to a dependent lifestyle. The most vulnerable are those who feel very strongly about their independence now but have not made considerable planning for the future when they require care.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, we have looked at the older adults' anxieties and their plans for care and the future. We have also looked at what makes life worth living for them (*ikigai*) and what they see are important for an independent life. Health and finance are the main elements that the older adults want to maintain in order to continue to live in independence. They understand the value of exercise and the value of having a

hobby or hobbies to exert their energies on and thus maintain good mental health. They want to remain active by staying connected with the community in small and big ways.

A small number of older adults would like to depend on their family in the event that they require care. However, they do not want their family to be responsible totally so much so that their families' health or family lives are affected. In this aspect, they are open to using external services to complement family care. The majority of the older adults said they prefer to manage by themselves without any burden to their families. Some will do this through the help of external services while others have not seriously considered the options. The number of older adults who have made plans right up to funeral and other expenses is very small. Some go as far as financial plans only. I suggest that this lack of planning is not a result of ignorance or thoughtfulness but rather an ultimate confidence that their family will step in when the time comes that they are no longer able to remain independent.

I have also noticed that there is a risk that the other adults are so proud of their independence now that any unfortunate effects, like sickness or accident, will plunge them into a loss of self-esteem, making it difficult for them to adjust to a dependent life in the Fourth Age. As explained by the Active Aging principles, older adults can remain active and live a fulfilling life despite physical disabilities. What is most important is the older adults' acceptance of their conditions and a flexible mindset to adjust to future changes. Although independence is good for the older adults, their family and also the country, we need to pay more attention to the older adults' emotional needs that may not be expressed directly.

Next, we will take a look at the situation of the generations following the older adults – those who are in middle-age and also those who are just starting their families – and see how they are situated in the midst of the older adults and what their expectations are regarding their parents' old age.

## Chapter 6 Adult Children

The older adults that I have introduced in the previous chapters were independent and led active lives. We have also seen the comments and views of some of their adult children. In this chapter, I focus on a number of the adult children and describe their views on the current situation as well as their expectations of their parents requiring care. Some of them were sandwiched between aging parents and their own children and grandchildren. The youngest in their thirties got married not so long ago and some were yet to have their own children.

David Plath (1975) used the word “sandwich generation” for the middle aged who are “weighed down by the elders above, (and) pressed against by insurgent youth from below” (p.56). At the time of his writing, the middle-aged was defined as people born during the first Showa decade (1925 to 1935), roughly from ages 40 to 50. With longer life expectancies today, the informants in my sample who were sandwiched between a parent generation and a child generation ranged in age from the 40 to 70, an extension of some 20 years at the older end.

Past literature has also referred to this generation as “adult children of the aging”, a segment of the population between roughly 45 and 65 years of age. Their unique position in relation to their parents, children, and grandchildren exposes them to a unique set of unshared stresses in which giving of resources and service far outweighs receiving or exchanging them (Miller, 1981). Stress suffered by this generation may result from too many crises involving several members of the family from one or more generations occurring at the same time, feelings becoming inflamed over the issue of autonomy versus dependence, which is under constant negotiation among the generations, an elderly parent suffering an accident or acute illness, a decision about institutionalizing an elderly parent is pressing, already stretched financial resources are acutely strained (ibid.).

Views on the support of elderly parents were surveyed in the Fourth National Survey of Family in 2008 and Nishioka et. al (2012b) selected 6,870 ever-married women for their analysis of the opinions. Compared to previous surveys in 1993, 1998, and 2003, the percentage of respondents who agreed that it

was best for parents in old age to live with their married children dropped between the first and second surveys and thereafter remain around 50 percent (49.7 percent for the fourth survey). Those who agreed that elderly parents in need of special care should be taken care of by their family exceeded 60 percent. Another view that has persisted through the four rounds of survey was that mothers with children under the age of 3 should concentrate on child-rearing. The respondents who agreed were consistently in the 80 to over 80 percent region.

### The Sandwiched

The following table (Table 6.1) is a list of the informants who had children as well as surviving parents and parents-in-law. Out of a total of forty-six informants, there were fourteen informants who met these conditions. This was almost one-third of the whole sample.

**Table 6.1: Sandwiched Generation and their Upper and Lower Generations**

Grandchildren <sup>1</sup>	Children <sup>1</sup>	Informants <sup>2</sup>	Father <sup>3</sup>	Mother <sup>3</sup>	Father-in-Law <sup>3</sup>	Mother-in-Law <sup>3</sup>
	2tog (19, 17)	Kataoka Ryo (48)		75, tog	76, far	65, far
2 (5, 3)	2 (31, 26tog)	Sugawara Fumiko (55)	84, near	81, near	85, tog	82, tog
2 (5, 3)	2 (31, 26tog)	Sugawara Naoki (56)	85, tog	82, tog	84, near	81, near
	2 (31, 28tog)	Koizumi Yukie (56)		80, far		
	2tog (29, 27)	Mizutani Asami (56)	86, far	80, far	82, near	
4 (9, 7, 6, 4)	2 (34, 33)	Takeda Takako (57)		79, near		90, tog
	1 (22)	Sakai Yutaka (59)	84, far, C	79, far		81, far
2 (6, 4)	2 (35, 21)	Kimura Yoko (60)	89, far, C	86, far		
	1 (39)	Kitada Shinobu (62)		90, far		
3 (4, 3, 1)	3 (35, 34, 27)	Yamamoto Maki (63)		91, far, C		
1 (1)	3 (33, 31, 29)	Maeda Junmi (64)		92, far, C		
1 (2)	2 (38, 35)	Imamura Ayako (65)	86, near	86, near, C	98, tog, C	
	1tog (30)	Tatsuda Tsunehiko (66)			93, near	93, near, C
4 (12, 8, 6, 4)	2 (41, 39)	Aida Romi (70)				91, near, C

*Notes: (1) Number (ages), tog: living together; (2) Name (age);  
(3) age, tog: living together; near: living nearby; far: living far away, C: requires care services*

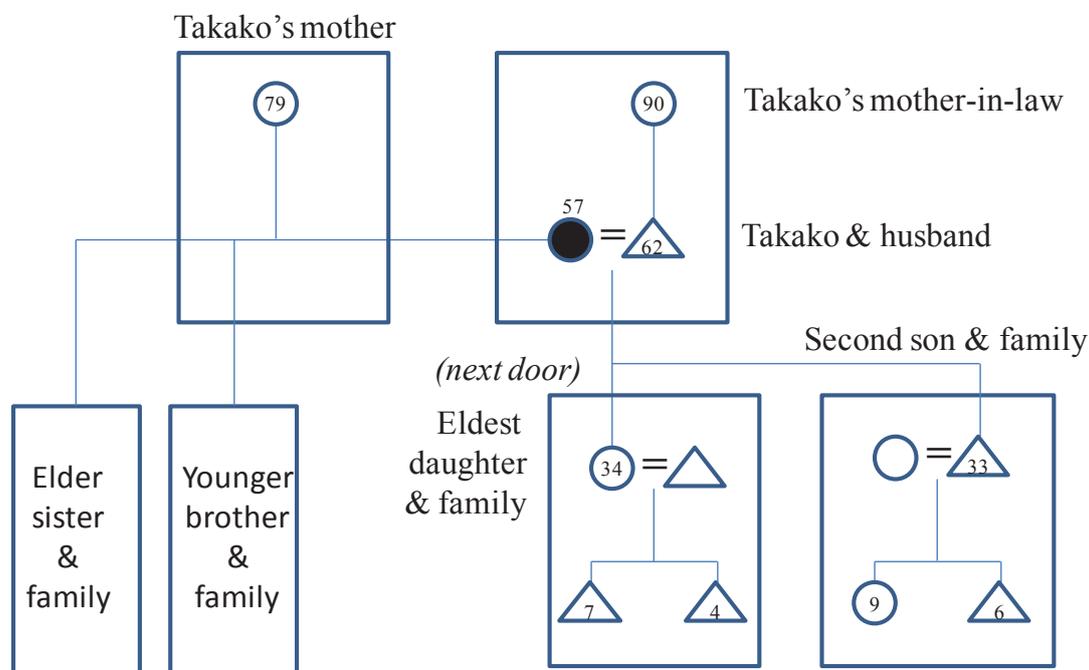
The cases where the informants were living together with either parents or children were shaded in Table 6.1. The sandwiched informants' ages ranged from 48 to 70, a range of 22 years. This was a reflection of the increasing life expectancy of their parents, many of whom were into their 90s. Eight out of fourteen of the sandwiched informants were grandparents themselves. The parents who required care services were either receiving home help or were institutionalized, especially for those who indicated they were living far away.

In this section, I will describe the families of three of my informants in their forties and fifties who were sandwiched between parents and children.

#### *Daughter-in-law, co-resident*

Takeda Takako was a 57-year-old housewife. Her husband was 62 years old and had his own company. They had been married for thirty-eight years. They lived with her 90-year-old mother-in-law in the same house. They had one daughter (34) and one son (33), both of whom were married. Her daughter was living next door and her son was living nearby. They had two children each. Figure 6.1 below shows Takeda-san's family structure.

**Figure 6.1 Takeda-san's Family Structure**



Takeda-san's husband was actually the third son of the family. Her husband's two elder brothers were working and living in another city and the eldest was supposed to come back at some time to the family home. Soon after Takeda-san got married at age 19 (in 1972), her husband had to work abroad alone (*tanshinfunin*) for two years so the family thought it was safer for her to move in with her in-laws rather than living alone by herself. As it turned out, her brother-in-law did not want to come back and so she had stayed there with her in-laws for all the thirty-eight years of her marriage.

In addition to being a full-time housewife she volunteered for the disabled and was also a district welfare officer (*minseijin*)<sup>45</sup>. For the disabled, she talked to her charges once a month to see whether they had any complaints. She had been in this role (*daisansha-iin* or the equivalent of ombudsman) for three years. As welfare officer, she had to provide counseling and advice on the phone.

<sup>45</sup> District welfare officers are neighborhood association (*chōkai*) appointees to other institutions. Their duties involve consultations with ward staff more than with neighborhood officials. (Bestor, 1989, p.179)

Her mother-in-law (90) was still active in the community women's club (*fujin-kai*) and senior club (*rōjin-kai*). She used to be the president of these clubs until six years ago. She used to dance (*odori*), play the samisen and go to karaoke. Now she mainly went to karaoke with her friends. Twice a week, she went to a city senior support center (*kōreisha shien sentā*) from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. She exercised and did craftwork and also took her lunch there. She started going there from three years ago at age 87. It was a program for healthy older people to maintain their health or “move their bodies” as Takeda-san put it. Her mother-in-law used to be a district welfare officer (*minseijin*) and had now passed over this duty to Takeda-san. Now she travelled and loved to try out delicious food at restaurants and was leading her own fulfilling life (*jibunrashii seikatsu*). She was very healthy. Since Takeda-san did everything around the house, her mother-in-law went for a lot of travels. Takeda-san told me, “Today I came out for this interview, so I told her to take care of her own meals. She decided to go out too. She is such an active person. She can go shopping by herself”.

Takeda-san did all the housework, including her mother-in-law's laundry. However, her mother-in-law would do simple things like washing her own tea cup. I asked Takeda-san about her relationship with her mother-in-law. She said it was “normal” as they did not fight or quarrel. If she felt any frustration, she would just keep quiet. When her eldest daughter was young, her mother-in-law was very anxious over her because she was the first girl in the family after a long while – her mother-in-law had three boys. Her mother-in-law had many comments on how to raise children, for example, keeping them warm, ensuring that she did not catch a cold, and so on. After her daughter started going to school, her mother-in-law stopped making comments about her upbringing. I asked her what her mother-in-law was like. She said she had a lot of pride (*puraido takai*) and had been a strong person from the time Takeda-san was the young bride of the house (*yome*). She said, “maybe that is why she can live to 90. She is tough person (*kijōna hito*). She has no chronic disease so maybe I'll die before her (laughs)”.

If Takeda-san or her daughter (who lived next door) had to go out for a short while, like thirty minutes, they would ask her mother-in-law to look after her daughter's children (7 and 4). In the

beginning when Takeda-san first started working as *minseiin*, she asked her mother-in-law for advice since she had been a *minseiin*.

Takeda-san said that in the past her mother-in-law had a taken-for-granted attitude (*atarimae*) towards her. In recent years, however, she had expressed gratitude and had even thanked Takeda-san for the food she had prepared. When she started receiving pension from last year<sup>46</sup>, she had given Takeda-san money in the region of 30,000 yen for her to buy things that she liked. Takeda-san was very surprised and even her husband was surprised by the action. They guessed that her mother-in-law might have had this inspiration through contact at the senior support center and realized that she had to be thankful for Takeda-san as daughter-in-law. It appeared that her mother-in-law had just started to appreciate her after thirty-eight years of marriage.

Takeda-san's own mother was 79 years old and lived by herself in another city. Takeda-san's elder sister and younger brother were living near her. She had a lot of hobbies, like ballroom dancing (*shakō-dansu*), picture postcards (*ehagaki*), watercolor painting (*suisai*) and travelling. Her mother had told her that after her father passed away, she had really become free (*jiyu*). They had frequent telephone contacts. If Takeda-san did not call her after a while, her mother would call to ask if she was alright. Once a month, Takeda-san met with her mother and sister for a good meal. Takeda-san said that she lived the furthest from her mother so as long as her mother was healthy, it was happiness for her.

I asked Takeda-san why her daughter was living next door. She said that the house was empty and since her son-in-law liked the area, they were happy to live there. They had also considered that if the children should be ill, Takeda-san could help to take care of them. Takeda-san said that even though her daughter lived next door, she would never interfere with their lives.

With regard to care-giving in future, Takeda-san's own thoughts were that she would not want her children to take care of her. If she had dementia and did not know what was happening around her, then she should be sent to a nursing home. Actually, she did not think her children would take care of her and

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<sup>46</sup> I could not get a clear explanation from her as to why this was the case since it meant that her mother-in-law only started receiving pension when she was 89. She was rather unclear about the situation.

said that family care-giving was difficult (*taihen*). As for her mother-in-law, she would take care. As long as her mother-in-law was conscious of what was happening around her, she did not want to send her to a nursing home. However, if she came to a stage that she did not know anything that was happening around her (*mattaku nanimo wakaranai*), then she would send her to a nursing home. In the case of her own mother, she expected that her brother's wife would take care of her when the time comes. She said her sister-in-law was the same age as her (*dōkyūsei*) and as her own mother had passed away, she treated Takeda-san's mother like her own. Even so, Takeda-san maintained that family care-giving was very difficult (*taihen*) so she said that she and her sister would take turns with her sister-in-law to do the care-giving. They would also contribute money. She added that as this was her own family, it was easy to discuss such issues but it would be difficult to do so in the case of her husband's family.

Takeda-san would be 60 years old in three years' time. I asked her how she felt about it. She said when she was younger, she thought being sixty would be a big event but now she felt that it would not be anything special. She had no anxiety about the future. She just wanted to keep moving her body (keep healthy) so that she would not be a burden to her children, have a good relationship with her husband and have a happy family.

I asked her whether she felt any pressure being sandwiched between her parents' generation and her children's generation. She said "Sometimes." For example, during the summer holidays, her grandchildren who lived next door would come over for meals, so it was a lot of work. And on top of doing things for her mother-in-law, she also had to take care of her mother-in-law's dog. She said "It is alright for mother-in-law but her dog.....(laughs)".

Takeda-san said she had no anxiety over her mother-in-law or her own future. She wanted to keep her healthy by remaining active and not cause trouble to her children. She would like to go travelling, especially with friends. If it was a long trip, she had to go with her husband otherwise her mother-in-law would complain and since her husband was running his own business, they were not able to go often. She said her role as a mother was to ensure that the family was happy, that she had a good relationship with

her husband and to stay healthy.

Takeda-san married young and even though her husband was not the eldest son, according to circumstances at that time, she went to live with her in-laws as the young bride (*yome*). She performed all her duties as the obedient, quiet, young bride (*yome*) under the control of a strong mother-in-law (*shūtome*). After thirty-eight years of marriage, and co-residence with her mother-in-law, her mother-in-law had just started to show her appreciation. She had managed to balance her duties at home with a lot of volunteer activities outside. According to her, as a district welfare officer (*minseijin*) she had to take phone calls any time, sometimes late at time if there was some trouble somewhere. Further to all these, she was also the doting grandmother to her grandchildren next door. With her busy lifestyle, she was still prepared to take care of her mother-in-law when the time comes. She was also prepared to share in the care for her own mother when the need arose. She said she was not stressed by this sandwiched situation.

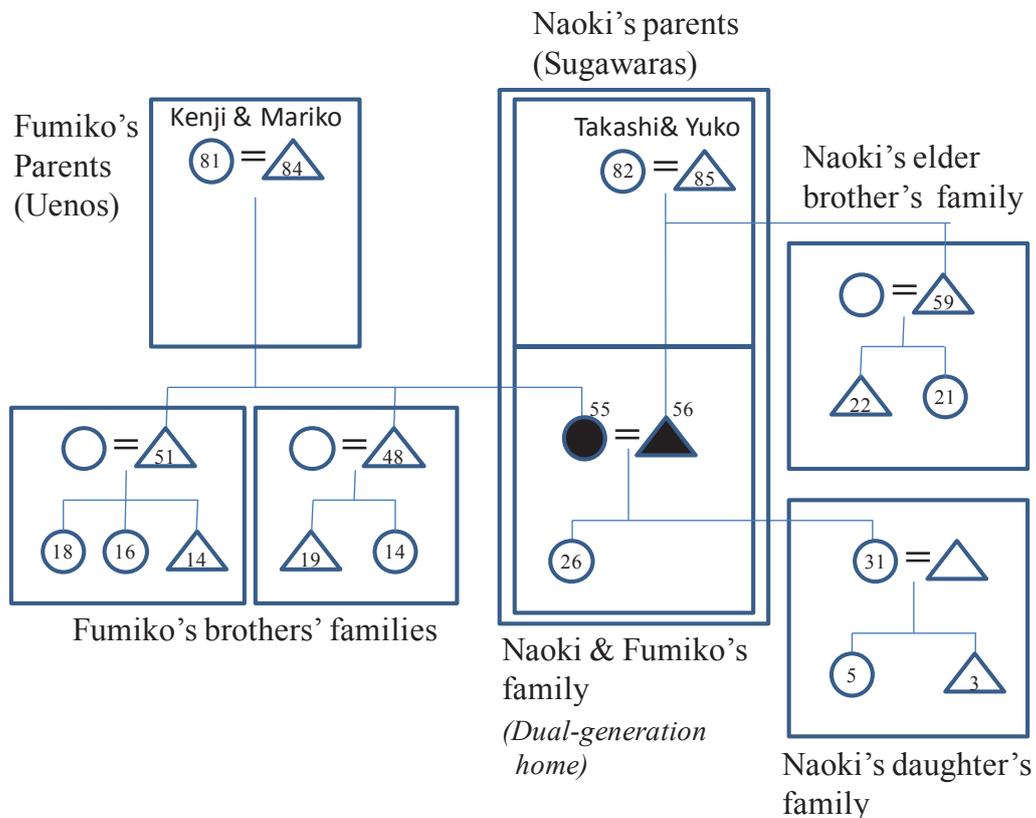
I suggest that one of the reasons that she was not stressed was because the older generation – her mother-in-law and her own mother – were still very healthy and active and did not require care at this point. If and when her mother-in-law or mother or daughter's family or all of them required more support from Takeda-san, she would be faced with up to three dependencies that she had to handle, which she said would do. In the case of her mother, she was able to share the burden with her siblings. She said, “regarding my own mother, I can discuss with my siblings but it is difficult to do so for in-laws”. She meant that she could discuss and arrange the sharing of the care burden with her own siblings but it would be difficult to do so with her husband's siblings (two other brothers) regarding her mother-in-law's care. Therefore, she had said earlier that she would take care of her mother-in-law. As Elliott and Campbell (1993) found in their study, care is closely tied to inheritance. If a child is co-resident with the parents and lives in the parents' home, it is assumed that he or she would be responsible for care of the parents. As the child is co-resident, he or she would also inherit the family house. Takeda-san's stress may increase depending on when each of the dependency situations kick in.

*Second son and eldest daughter, co-resident*

The Sugawara family and the Ueno family were related by marriage. Sugawara Naoki (56) and Fumiko (55) had been married for thirty-two years. They had two daughters (31, 26), the eldest of whom was married with two children (5, 3). Therefore, Naoki-san and Fumiko-san were grandparents themselves.

Naoki-san's parents, Takashi-san and Yuko-san were 85 years old and 82 years old respectively. Naoki-san and Fumiko-san and their unmarried daughter lived with his parents in a dual-generation home. Fumiko-san's parents were Ueno Kenji (84) and Mariko-san (81). She had two younger brothers and Naoki-san had one elder brother. I was able to interview both Naoki-san and Fumiko-san, Naoki-san's parents as well as Fumiko-san's parents. Figure 6.2 below shows their family structure.

**Figure 6.2 The Sugawaras' and the Uenos' Family Structure**



The dual-generation home that the Sugawaras lived in had two separate entrances and separate mailboxes. The parents lived on the second floor and the children lived on the first floor. Both floors were also accessible by an internal staircase and were self-contained with their own kitchens and toilets. Therefore, each generation could move freely in and out of the house without disturbing or engaging the other generation. I asked Fumiko-san why her parents-in-law lived on the second floor since it might be difficult for them to move up and down. She said that the first floor bedrooms were facing north and were very cold in winter whereas the second floor bedrooms were warmer. Also, when Fumiko-san's children were younger, it was convenient for them to play in the front yard. Her parents-in-law had also got used to living on the second floor since their parents' time. I think moving up to and down from the second floor might become a problem for the parents in future.

Naoki-san, as the second son, moved in with his parents according to circumstances at that time. His elder brother was living in another city and could not move back to the family home. At the same time, Naoki-san was going abroad with his family and instead of leaving his own house empty for a few years, sold his house and moved in with his parents. They had remained this way even though his elder brother eventually moved back to the city.

Takashi-san held a top position in the company that he used to work for. He had travelled widely for business. He retired when he was 67 and travelled with Yuko-san to many countries. He suffered a stroke five years ago and had since recovered. Now he moved around with a walking stick. His leisure included watching all sorts of sports programs, especially baseball which he called “my very important hobby”. His eyes were not so good so instead of reading the newspapers, he watched news on TV or listened to it on the radio. Sometimes he went for walks by himself. Yuko-san prepared the meals for the two of them. Depending on the day of the week, she went for a massage or to the hair salon. She liked to watch documentary programs and so they went to different rooms to watch their favorite programs. She also liked needlecraft. They had done up their Living will already and were not anxious about their future. They did not want to depend on their daughter-in-law because she was busy enough. They did not know whether use of the LTCI required any procedure. They would like to go to a private home for the elderly.

Naoki-san worried that his father was not moving enough. He said his father always lied on the couch to watch TV or listen to the radio. His mother liked shopping and meeting friends. Both of them visited his elder brother every Sunday. Both his mother and his elder brother wanted his father to go out, because shopping or just going out was a good stimulus for him. Naoki-san believed that his mother’s health was good and she was active. She was looking after his father and he believed that she wanted to enjoy life more. He had asked them to go for a holiday but his father refused, which made his mother very disappointed. In an update after the interview, I found that the Sugawaras had found a daycare center (*kaigo rōjin hoken shisetsu*) in their neighborhood for Takashi-san. He went there three times a week. There was an equal number of men and women so he was quite comfortable there. It also freed up

Yuko-san's time to do something that she liked while Takashi-san was at the daycare center.

Naoki-san knew that his parents wanted to continue to stay at home so he would get professional help. His mother could take care of his father. His father was not strong physically so he anticipated that his mother would outlive him. After his father had passed on, he was not sure what his mother wanted to do so he would discuss with her at that time. He believed that his mother would not ask his wife so he would get outside help. Naoki-san believed that emotionally the family had to be there but physically it would be tough to do by themselves.

Ueno Kenji (84) was a doctor and had his own clinic. He had retired and handed the clinic over to his son. He just visited the clinic a few mornings a week to see some old patients. He was very involved with charity work as well. Mariko-san (81)'s first priority was her husband. She said that it was only when her husband was not home that she cooked her own favorite food. When her husband was home, she always cooked his favorite. For her leisure, she liked Japanese traditional dance (*shinnihon buyō*). They lived in an apartment by themselves. They had prepared financially for the future. When they needed care, Kenji-san said that probably his eldest daughter-in-law would do it because she was young.

Fumiko-san visited her parents about twice a month. She said that they used to visit her but they did not do it anymore after she moved in to the dual-generation home. As she was very busy, she was not planning to visit them more often but she might do it if their health was not good. Asked about her anxieties, she said that when her parents become older, they would need more help, more often. She wondered how she could cope with both parents and parents-in-law at the same time, or one after the other. At first she would have to give up her hobby of tennis which was currently taking up a lot of time. She hoped that her two younger brothers and their families would be able to share the load by taking turns. She would also consider external service providers. However, she had not discussed this with any of her siblings and would only do so when her parents' health deteriorates.

Fumiko-san often helped out with her eldest daughter's children. She felt that she should do it because her daughter was working full-time. Fumiko-san herself was a full-time housewife so she spent a

lot of time with her daughters. Now that her daughter was working and could not spend so much time with her children, Fumiko-san wanted to step in by spending more time with her grandchildren. She would probably continue this until they reached junior high school, by which time, her parents would require a lot of care. Also, her second daughter would probably be married then and have children too. I asked Fumiko-san what she would do in case both upper and lower generations demanded her attention at the same time. She said she would give up her tennis. She was an avid tennis player and giving up this hobby was perhaps a major sacrifice on her part.

Fumiko-san was reluctant to send any parent to a nursing home. She believed that this was not considered a good thing to do. However, in her own case, she would like to go to a nursing home with her own friends and live happily there. Fumiko-san had a lot of friends. As her husband was very busy with work, she had pushed him to make more friends now when he was still young and not wait until he retires.

Although they did not feel stress at the moment, they anticipated that the time might come that they would have to do a very delicate balancing act. At the time of the interview, both Naoki-san and Fumiko-san and the senior Sugawaras did not know anything in detail about the LTCI.

#### *Eldest son, co-resident*

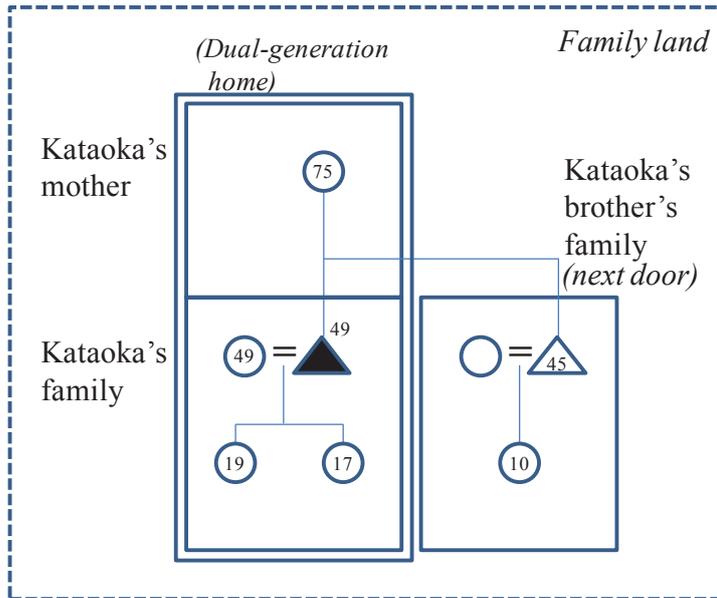
Kataoka Ryo was 48 years old and worked as a salaryman. He had been married for twenty-one years and had two daughters (19 and 17). He lived in a dual-generation home with his family and his 75-year-old mother. His mother lived on the first floor and his family lived on the second floor. His younger brother was 45 years old and lived next door with his family. Both houses were on family land.

Kataoka-san and his parents used to live in different buildings but twelve years ago, they rebuilt the house into a dual-generation home. Unlike the Sugawaras, Kataoka-san's dual-generation house had only one entrance. Therefore, in order to access his rooms on the second floor, he and his family had to pass through the first floor. When he came back from work, he had to pass through his mother's door. After his father passed away, he would stop by at his mother's room and put incense (*senkō*) and ring the bell at his

father's altar. This custom had become a daily routine.

The figure below shows Kataoka-san's family structure.

**Figure 6.3 Kataoka-san's Family Structure**



Kataoka-san's mother went out about twice a week, sometimes to a movie, or window shopping or to the shrine if there was any lecture there. Once or twice a week, she went to a swimming school to exercise. Travelling was rare although this year, she had gone to Thailand for two weeks with a friend. He was not sure about her interests and thought that they were sewing and cooking. He criticized her cooking as "strange taste and bad appearance". She had stomach cancer six years ago so she went for a check-up every year.

Kataoka-san talked to his mother every day when he went home. There was usually more time during the weekends. Sometimes they fought. He said that his mother fussed over him as if he was still a boy. Their usual conversation revolved around health. Usually she talked and he listened. She would ask him to take this vitamin or read this book or watch this program. On special days, she would join his

family for meals. For example, it had been planned that they would go out for a meal the following week (after the interview) as it was Respect-for-the-Aged Day (*keirō no hi*, a national holiday in honor of elderly citizens, celebrated on the third Monday of September). Last week they had grilled meat (*yakiniku*) together. Other times, she would cook by herself. Every day, she would also talk to Kataoka-san's wife for a few minutes.

He had never thought of living anywhere else. He believed that as eldest son, he had to take care of his mother. She was independent now and her policy was not to bother others. Regarding care-giving in future, Kataoka-san said that if he was still working, he would ask his wife but he would respect his wife's decision if she refused. Depending on the cost, he might get outside help. If he was retired, he would do it by himself. He said this was to ensure that everyone was happy (*minna ga shiawase no tameni*). He also said that he would discuss with his younger brother before making decisions.

He was worried about his mother's health. She had cancer before so he was worried about recurrence. Regarding his mother's role now in the family, he said that her view was different from his. He wanted his mother to "take care of his daughters kindly", meaning that his mother should change her behavior so that his daughters would go to her for advice. He believed that his daughters might have situations that they could not discuss with him or his wife so they should be able to go to his mother. He believed that his mother was meddling too much (*osekkai*) now so his daughters did not like to talk to her.

He said his mother seemed to recognize her role and position and so she tried to make occasions "to have fun" with the family. For example, when visiting his father's grave, she arranged for them to stay overnight and also go sightseeing. She also joined her granddaughter in a band concert because her granddaughter liked that band. She said "this is what I can do" and insisted on doing it - "let me do it".

His wife's mother was 65 years old and lived with her eldest son, also in a dual-generation house. He expected that his brother-in-law would take care of her.

Kataoka-san, at 48, was at a critical period in his career. He had been getting more responsibilities at work and was learning English seriously for the sake of his career. On the private side, he and his

family loved rock music, movies and travelling. He also played the guitar and loved sports. He had a very close relationship with his daughters.

Among all my informants, Kataoka-san had the strongest views about the aging society in Japan. After his father retired, he only had two years of happy life before being struck by cancer at age 67. The cancer recurred twice and he suffered much. Kataoka-san did not want the same situation for himself. He said the state should consider systems to enable people to have safe lives. He did not want a long life but he wanted to be able to have fun. He believed that there was no guarantee from the state.

When Kataoka-san was explaining about his father's illness, he mentioned that it happened during the "danger year" (*yakudoshi*) which was the 42<sup>nd</sup> year (Plath, 1975). Kataoka-san said that it was during this year that both his parents were diagnosed with cancer. It was the third time for his father and the first for his mother. She was diagnosed in December and his father in January. At the same time, his own stomach condition was also bad. He said that one could not help but believe in *yakudoshi*. He quoted the proverb "Truth is stranger than fiction." (*jijitsu wa shōsetsu yorimo kinari*).

In Kataoka-san's case, he had already experienced the problems with taking care of his parents, especially when his parents were sick. Right now, his mother was already dependent on him and so were his own family.

### **Young Adult Children**

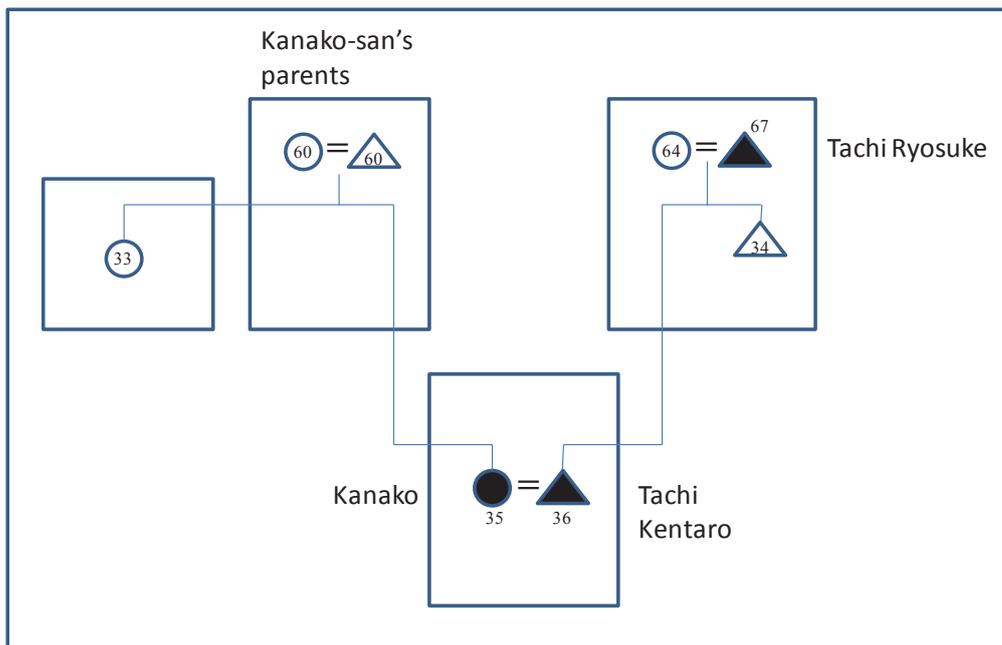
In this section I will describe three young adult children in their thirties, two of whom were married to each other. Again, I focus on their family composition and their expectations of their parents' future dependence. They were not co-resident with their parents.

#### *Eldest son – eldest daughter, non-resident*

Tachi Kentaro was 35 years old and the eldest son of Tachi Ryosuke (67), whom we have read about

in the previous chapters. Kentaro-san had one younger brother (32) who was not married and living with his parents. His wife, Kanako-san was the eldest daughter in her family. They did not have children yet. Kanako-san had one younger sister who was living by herself near to her parents. Their family chart is given in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4 Tachi Kentaro and Kanako's Family Structure



Just to recap, Tachi Ryosuke had his own management consultancy firm now after his retirement three years ago. He had a lot of leisure activities and went travelling with his wife very often. His view on care in future was that he and his wife would manage on their own. He wanted to work hard to maintain his health so that he would not be a burden to his children. However, other than an idea to remodel his home to make it barrier-free, he had no other concrete plans. He just hoped to die quickly in case he was struck by illness. Tachi-san and Kentaro-san lived in their own homes which were a 30-minute train ride apart.

Kentaro-san did not like to contact his parents. He emphasized that he did not like it and could not

understand why his wife had to contact her parents so frequently. He said when the phone rang, it should be about some important matter. He and his wife visited his parents once a quarter and he also visited his parents-in-law about twice a year. His parents sometimes asked him to help out in small things but he did not ask his parents for any help. This was for both instrumental and financial help. Kentaro-san emphasized that he always made decisions by himself and did not consult with his parents. He would only report to them after the event. Similarly, his parents also told him after the events.

He believed that the role of his parents now was to enjoy themselves. To him, filial piety (*oyakoko*) means to contribute to society. That is to say, by working and contributing to society, he was being filial to his parents.

I asked him what he would do when his parents became frail. He said that as eldest son, he would take care of his parents. He was not sure whether his younger brother would help. He would take care of them by himself as he would not want to ask his wife to do it. He believed that since he had flexibility in his work, he would be able to do so. He could travel to their house easily. If he had money, he might get external services as a final choice. He emphasized that primarily he was the one who would do it. He would decide by himself and just inform his younger brother of his decision. If necessary, he would tell his brother to do his part.

He added that his wife had her own parents to take care in time to come. He was quite sure they would be able to work out some arrangement when the need arose. Having said all that, he added that his biggest wish was for his parents to go to the hospital by themselves and die quickly. His view was that the state was already doing enough. His opinion was that everyone should do it by themselves and not depend on the state.

On his relationship with his parents, he said that he was closer to his mother as his father was mostly absent because of his work. He did not want to repeat the same thing when he has his own children. He would definitely take an active part in his children's lives.

Kanako-san was 35 years old and the eldest daughter of her family. She had a younger sister (33)

who was still not married and lived by herself. Her parents were both 60 years old. They lived in another prefecture the distance of which was a two-and-a-half train ride by the fastest bullet train.

Her father worked in a managerial position and had just retired. The company offered him to stay on but he wanted to retire and concentrate on teaching which was something he had done on a part-time basis. Like Kentaro-san, Kanako-san said her father only liked work and nothing else. He was always working weekends and was never home before midnight. For this reason, she felt that she was closer to her mother. Her mother also liked to work. She thought that working for a living was not a happy thing for women but working for leisure was wonderful. She was working as a teacher when she became pregnant with Kanako-san so she quit and became a full-time housewife. When Kanako-san was 18 years old, she started working as a volunteer teacher. She continued teaching on a part-time basis and got a full-time job when she was 50 years old.

Kanako-san contacted her parents regularly, although more frequently with her mother. She did this through phone and email. She visited them four times a year, twice by herself and twice with her husband. She also organized golf competitions between her parents and her parents-in-law. When her father came to Tokyo, he would ask Kanako-san out for a meal.

Kanako-san felt that it was her responsibility to support her parents in their retirement. She said they had devoted their energy to their children so this was their time together. Her parents liked to do things together, for example, travelling, driving, and shopping. Their neighbors had commented that her parents stuck together (*naka ga ii*) because her mother always walked with her father to the station (when he went to work).

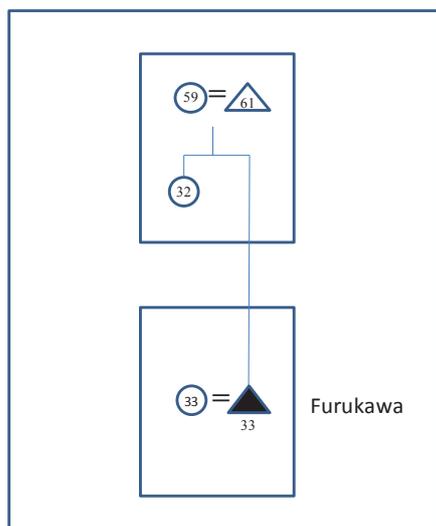
Kanako-san was anxious over her parents' health so she always advised them to cook food healthily, like having less salt. She believed that when her parents required care, she and her husband could live apart, dividing their time equally between parents and themselves. She believed that her husband's parents would require care earlier than her parents because they were older. She did not want her husband to take care of her parents. She believed that her parents did not want them to give care as they were saving up

money now. If they decided to go to a home for the elderly, she would support them. If they wanted to go to a home, she thought they should come nearer to Tokyo (where she was living) but if they preferred to stay at home, then they could hire a helper. She would also make the decision herself and if necessary, tell her sister to help her, probably to look in on her parents once in a while since she lived near them. She knew that eventually they would become the sandwich generation. However, she said she and her husband were open to living anywhere. The difference between this case and the earlier cases of the sandwich generation, was that there was a considerable physical distance between the couple's parents. If Kanako-san wanted to take care of her parents, it would involve moving closer to them and moving away from her husband. Even though they said they were open to move anywhere, there were issues like their workplaces and also their marital happiness. Furthermore, once they had children, the situation would become more complicated. Neither of them, for various reasons, thought their siblings would do much in the care of their parents. Without access to the siblings, I was unable to confirm their views. Kanako-san did comment that just considering age, her in-laws would probably require care earlier than her own parents because her in-laws are older. Therefore, they could probably give care one after the other. Even so, considering the actual number of persons, they had to handle four of them in unpredictable timing.

*Eldest son, non-resident*

Furukawa Yuichi was 33 years old, married and working in a service company. He was the eldest son of the family and his parents were in their hometown in the south of Japan. He had one younger sister who was unmarried yet and lived with his parents. His father was 61 years old and his mother was 59. His father was retired and his mother was a full-time housewife. His wife worked and did not have surviving parents. She had an elder sister who was married. His family structure is shown in the following figure.

Figure 6.5 Furukawa-san's family structure



He kept very frequent contact with his family, including his grandmother. He did this mainly through the phone. His wife also kept in regular contact with them. He only visited them twice a year, once in summer and once during the new year. Sometimes his parents would come over to see him in Tokyo. His parents came over during his wife's "danger year" (*yakudoshi*) at 33.

Whenever he went home, his parents would ask him to help in small things, like changing light bulbs, or fixing things around the house. Often, he would help to buy things at the supermarket. He did not ask his parents for help, except when he found his apartment, he got his parents to be his guarantor. His parents gave him financial support during his studies. He did not give them money but during special occasions like birthdays or Father's Day or Mother's Day, he would send them presents. Usually his wife would manage everything for him. His parents would also send him food items like vegetables and fruits.

Furukawa-san was anxious about his parents' mental and physical health. He believed that after his father retired in 2009, he had not been going out much so he worried that he might not be keeping his mind active. He spent most of his time planting vegetables in the garden. Furukawa-san wished that his father could find some work. He was closer to his mother as his father was mostly absent because of work,

during his growing up years. He believed that the parental role was to protect their assets for their children and also take care of his grandmother. His father was not the eldest son but the eldest brother had died so Furukawa-san felt that his father should do the duty of looking after his grandmother. His grandmother quarreled with his eldest aunt all the time because they lived together.

His parents had said that they did not want to be given care by their children. They wanted to be independent. However, Furukawa-san said that he would definitely do it. Actually, even now, if he could find a job in his hometown, he would have liked to go back.

In an update after the interview, Furukawa-san and his wife had just had their first son. For the delivery, his wife went to his parents' home and the baby was delivered in a hospital in his hometown. His wife was very close to his parents and they felt that she could be well taken care of over there. After the confinement period, they had gone back to their own home in Tokyo.

Furukawa-san's situation looked simple, especially as his wife did not have surviving parents. He just had his parents to take care and he also had a sister who was able to help. His sister was a nutritionist and was already involved in the care of his grandmother. After the baby, he had become sandwiched as well. However, the problem with his situation was the distance between him and his parents. If he wanted to provide care to his parents personally, he had to change his job because the distance was too far for daily commute. As his hometown was in the rural area, it would be difficult to find a suitable job. His wife had resigned from her job after the arrival of the baby so she would be able to move with him.

### **Children's commitment to their parents**

The above cases show us first that there is great diversity not only in the parent generation but also in the child generation. It is difficult to find one solution that fits all. Every situation has to be separately considered because of the diversity of living arrangements, expectations, personalities, and relationships. Second, even though the majority of the parent generation said that they did not want their children to give care to them, the majority of the child generation expected to do so and wanted to do so. In Elliott and

Campbell (1993)'s study, the G3 generation (born between 1960 and 1972) wants to provide care to their parents out of gratitude (*on*) and love, and not out of obligation. The younger generations described here expressed their gratitude to their parents for bringing them up and emphasized that their parents should enjoy themselves now. Third, with the willingness to provide care, those who were already co-resident with their parents had to work out a way to practically offer the care. However, those who were not residing with their parents had an extra problem to work out – geographic distance. In order to fix this problem, some might have to change their jobs or move house in order to work out a solution.

According to the Cabinet Office (2012), the number of people who quit their job or changed their job because they had to provide care to a family member was 144,800 people from Oct 2006 to Sep 2007. This was an increase of 40,500 people over the previous year. Out of this number, 82.3 percent were women. The men who quit or changed job for this reason were highest in the 50-59 age group and 60-69 age group, at 29.0 percent for each group. In the case of women, the highest was the 50-59 age group at 41.6 percent, followed by the 40-49 age group at 19.2 percent. I came across an actual case among my casual informants. Ito-san (male, in his early fifties) held a manager position at an international firm in Tokyo. One day in mid-2011, his father who was living in his hometown in Chiba prefecture, fell ill (*taoremashita*) so Ito-san went home for a “family conference”. He did not say how many members of the family were there but he was the eldest son so the conclusion was that he would move to his father's home. Very quickly he found another job in Chiba because of his specialized skills. He quit his job and went to work in Chiba so that he could take care of his father (*kaigo suru*) on a daily basis. However his wife and children remained in his house in Tokyo because the children went to school there. Ito-san was going to share his time equally between his father's house and his own family. He would work in Chiba and take care of his father during the week and go to Tokyo to be with his family during the weekend. He was not able to say how he was going to take care of his father and work at the same time but his mother was around so one possibility was that his mother was the main care-giver and his presence was needed to take care of the heavy work, like lifting his father. I was not able to get any updates on his current situation but

he was very stressed out during the job change.

Fourth, looking carefully at the various cases, we can see that it is the women who are most torn between parents and parents-in-law. Takeda-san would have to take care of her mother-in-law and share in the care of her mother. It is unimaginable that her husband would help out in the care of her mother. Similarly, Fumiko-san is also pulled both ways to her parents-in-law and her parents, even though the burden with her parents could be shared by her brothers. It is unlikely that Naoki-san would share in the care given to his parents-in-laws (Fumiko-san's parents). Kanako-san said that she would not want her husband to take care of her parents. Among my casual informants, I have come across cases where the men were helping out with care of their in-laws but in those cases, the men were resident with the in-laws. I do not know the situations of their own parents so I will not comment on whether they are sharing any burden of care there.

Fifth I would like to add that in talking to the adult children, there was an underlying anxiety and I would like to call this "anticipatory anxiety". Just like the situation when a person knows that a loved one is dying because of illness, that person suffers anticipatory grief even before the loved one has passed away. In our discussion here, the adult children were feeling anxious about the future, as to what they would have to do when their parents require care. For example, Fumiko-san expected the day would come when she would have to handle some form of care for her parents-in-law, parents and also her children and grandchildren. Therefore, in anticipation of that time, she said she was currently playing all the tennis that she could because she expected that she would not be able to play much when that time of caregiving arrived. Currently, in one month, she could have at the peak, up to four tennis tournaments. Another example is Furukawa-san. He enjoyed his work very much now and worked in a good company with a lot of good prospects. However, the anxiety of having to leave his job and move back to his hometown one day was not far from his mind, especially when he knew that job prospects were not good there. Although on the one hand, he would like to be near his parents, on the other hand, his current job was not something that he could easily give up, at least emotionally. His anxiety had also been "transmitted" to his wife as

she too felt uncertainty and anxiety even now.

### **Changes across generations**

Comparing the generations, some positive changes can be found in the child generation.

One issue brought up by the child generation was that their fathers were mostly absent during their growing up years. They hardly got home before midnight during the week and they also worked during the weekends. The result of this was that they did not want to follow their fathers' footsteps. They declared that they would do things differently with their own children. They would spend time with the family and play with the children and be their friends. The women also would not tolerate anything less from their husbands.

The child generation was also aware that their parents, especially their fathers, did not have a lot of hobbies or friends outside of their work. After they retired, they had to start searching for new hobbies and make new friends. Therefore, the adult children are making efforts now to have hobbies and a circle of friends that they can maintain as they grow older.

The younger generation of male adult children in their thirties could cook and enjoy sharing time in the kitchen with their wives. For example, Kentaro-san and Kanako-san cook meals and bake cakes together. The wives were also outspoken in demanding an equal share of housework. In the older generation, the men's involvement in housework was dependent on the attitude of their wives. If their wives were willing to let their husbands depend on them, the husbands did not need to do anything around the house. However, if their wives encouraged them to participate in housework, they did so. For example, Naoki-san does his own ironing while watching his favorite TV programs. He has already started to join more hobby clubs in preparation for his retirement. He believes in the value of making friends now before he retires.

## **Summary**

Even though most of the older adults had said that they did not want their children to take care of them, the adult children in my sample consistently said they would take care of their parents when the time comes. Not one of them said that they would not do anything.

At this point in time when the older adults are still healthy and are leading independent lives, none of the adult children expressed any stress even though they are sandwiched in between their parents and their children and grandchildren. Nevertheless, the potential for a number of dependencies happening all at the same time is there. The adult children are already prepared to sacrifice some of their activities. Fumiko-san, for example, said that when the demands of care come in, she would sacrifice her favorite hobby tennis and in anticipation of that, she is playing tennis as much as she can now.

Some of the adult children who are non-resident with their parents right now could be faced with a further problem of having to move closer to their parents that may upset current job and family arrangements. Nishioka et. al (2012a) reported a trend that separately living children return home to live with their parents due to a change in their parents' health.

The women appear to be facing more demands as they have to take care of their parents-in-law as well as their own parents. The men seem to be faced only with demands of their own parents as their wives did not want them to take care of their own parents. This may not be true for other cases as my sample is small so further research in this area will be helpful.

## **Chapter 7 Conclusion**

Scholars are still working hard to formulate new theories to explain the intricacies of aging, especially in how to age successfully. The word “successful” has been subject to much criticism because it implies that there are also those who are unfortunate enough to be “unsuccessful” in aging. Rowe and Kahn’s model requires the existence of all three components – low probability (risk factors) of disease and disease-related disability, high cognitive and physical functional capacity and active engagement with life (Rowe and Kahn, 1997). It is difficult to find people who fulfill all three components at the same time. In its place, scholars have continually formulated other theories to attempt to define successful aging. I believe that the term “successful” is elusive because it depends on which perspective we are talking about. From a societal point of view, if older adults can avoid frailty, it will reduce medical and welfare costs and is therefore, successful. From an individual point of view, depending on the individual’s desires, it could mean being surrounded by family on a daily basis, or being able to maintain activity independently, or being able to contribute to the community and the list goes on. From a cultural point of view, in the case of Japan, not being a burden to others would probably equate to being successful in old age. For these reasons, I have not used Rowe and Kahn’s model and I have not used the word “successful” in this dissertation.

### **Active Aging**

The Active Aging framework (WHO, 2002) is a framework for analysis and design, both at the country level and the individual level. It is WHO’s guideline to both developed and developing countries of the world to help them cope with not just aging but also health and poverty issues. It is relevant because it recognizes that aging “takes place within the context of others – friends, work associates, neighbors and family members” (p. 12). It also advocates interdependence as well as intergenerational solidarity in the broader context of generational equity. Further, it aims to extend healthy life expectancy and quality of life

for all people as they age, including those who are frail, disabled and in need of care. Therefore, in terms of a framework, it can work beyond the third age into the fourth age. It does not assume that older people are passive but recognizes their rights to equality of opportunity and treatment in all aspects of life as they grow older.

The determinants of Active Aging include health and social services, physical environment, social determinants, economic determinants, behavioral determinants, and personal determinants. The first four determinants are more relevant at the country level and the last two at the individual level. I have examined the health and social services determinants in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. These determinants include preventive, curative and long term care services. Japan has improved in its health and social services from after the War and this is reflected in the continual increase of life expectancy in this country. Physical environment determinants are concerned with age-friendly environments that ensure safety (for example, clean air and clean water, safe food) and availability of public transportation. Japan would also rate highly in this aspect. Social environment determinants include opportunities for education and lifelong learning, social support (against social isolation), and prevention of violence and abuse. While Japan fairs well in education and lifelong learning, some doubts are cast on social support and prevention of violence and abuse, especially in crimes against the elderly. The last country determinant is economic. This includes income, social protection (pensions, savings, and insurance) and the availability of work opportunities. Japan appears to do well in work opportunities as the labor participation rate for older adults is very high (explained in Chapter 2). Although the older adults in my sample receive good pensions, scholars are becoming increasingly concerned about poverty and income inequality in Japan. The poverty rate<sup>47</sup> among the elderly (22 percent) ranks seventh among all OECD countries (Fujimori, 2012). The issue is most severe among those living alone and especially for women. Measures are being considered by the government to alleviate the problem but positive results may not be forthcoming in the short term.

The first individual determinant is behavioral and includes lifestyle and self-care. It includes

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<sup>47</sup> Percentage of elderly in the elderly population living below the poverty line defined in the country. The poverty line was fixed at 1.24 million yen annual income in 2007 (Fujimori, 2012).

tobacco and alcohol use or its avoidance, physical activity and healthy eating. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, the older adults in my sample practice a healthy and active lifestyle. They work hard to maintain both their physical and mental health through an active and engaged lifestyle.

The second individual determinant is personal. It includes biological and genetics, which are outside the scope of discussion in this dissertation, and psychological determinants. Psychological determinants include intelligence and cognitive capacity. If there are no behavioral abuses (for example, tobacco and alcohol), problems may arise because of illness (for example, depression), lack of confidence and loneliness and isolation. These are demonstrated in an inability to cope with the rigors of living. My informants appear to have no issues with the personal determinants. They do not have major crises and most importantly, they have functional and intact families. However, for Japan as a whole, the issue of loneliness and isolation for older adults appear to be growing and scholars are directing research into this area.

The Active Aging framework defines two other overriding determinants – culture and gender. For gender, the issues are centered round what is called the “feminization of aging” because of the longer life expectancy of women as compared to men. Across the world, older women are often associated with lower statuses and poverty. In the case of my informants, the women, including widows who are living alone, are living comfortably. The other determinant is culture and relates to values and attitudes. The example cited by WHO is that in Asia, co-residence with children appears to be the norm. As we review the research objectives in this dissertation, I will highlight the values and attitudes as we go along.

### **Maintaining an active and independent lifestyle**

The first research objective is to understand how the older adults maintain an active and independent lifestyle. The key enablers of an independent lifestyle are health and wealth. Maintaining their physical and mental health is at the top of the agenda for all of my informants. Some are more active than others but as a minimum they participate in at least one activity. They have disciplined daily routines

and they get out of the house regularly. The motivation behind keeping fit is so that they will not succumb easily to disease and become a burden to their family (*meiwaku kakenai yōni*). In terms of wealth, as shown in Chapter 2, the average elderly household has income close to the average household income in Japan. Based on average figures, the older adult can expect to get about 200,000 yen per month and a widow around 144,000 yen per month in pensions. These figures are comfortable enough for living expenses. Besides a steady income, I have also noticed that the older adults are careful with spending and do not indulge in unnecessary expenditure.

Beyond retirement, some of the older adults continue to work for self-fulfillment, for interest and even with the objective of contributing to society by giving of their knowledge and skills. They also contribute to society through volunteer activities such as supporting the disabled or connecting to the younger generation. Even though for the men, losing their jobs upon retirement caused them some distress in losing their place in society (*bun*), they are able to recover, adapt and find new places for themselves through continued work or leisure activities. Leisure activities may be undertaken in groups or as solitary activities, like reading.

The social networks of the women tend to be larger than the men because of their connections to various circles through their lifetime of work, full-time child-rearing, and a return to work for some of them. They have more time to connect with the community and also to participate in leisure activities. The men, on the other hand may lose their wide social network of work-related friends as many do not wish to reconnect with them after retirement since they have lost their place (*bun*) in society through retirement. However, regardless of the size of their social network, only a small number of older adults admit that they would turn to their friends in time of need. Relationships in the neighborhoods are also not deep because the older adults want to maintain harmony in order to continue living there. This implies that even though community organizations would like to establish networks for social participation and social support, it may not be an easy thing to do in urban areas.

## **Independence and family**

The second research objective of this dissertation is to understand how independent of the family the older adults are. I used Bengtson et al.'s Intergenerational Solidarity model to guide the aspects of family to investigate. This has proven to be a comprehensive model. The elements of geographical proximity, contacts, exchanges and emotional closeness provided a multi-faceted picture of families of the older adults.

Family structure has gone through many changes since after the War. With the abolition of the traditional stem family (*ie*), by the 1970s when Takie Lebra conducted her research, she had already found that older adults no longer required their sons to live with them. However, there was still the tendency for the older adults to move back in with a child when frailty set in. The latest statistics show that the number of 3-generation households has decreased but the number of older adults living with their unmarried children has increased, bringing about an overall increasing trend of older adults living with their children. A possible cause could be the late marriages of the children. This research has found that 3-generation households today are not necessarily formed with the eldest son as it was in the traditional stem family system. Instead, the household could be formed with sons or daughters of any birth order and many were formed out of necessity, convenience or opportunity. Further, even in cases of non-resident children, many children live near their parents. 3-generation households have always been assumed to mean happiness for the older adults. Yet as we have seen, this may not necessarily be the case as physical closeness does not mean emotional closeness in all situations. And just as 3-generation households are thought to be good, the older person living alone is assumed to be unhappy and pitiful. The number of one-person households has shown an upward trend but an investigation into the three cases of widows living alone found in this research showed that they enjoy the freedom of not having to cater to the needs of another person. They consider this period to be a time of freedom and happiness. All three of them have loving children who watch over them and keep in regular contact.

The frequency of contact is diverse with some meeting as much as daily while others are infrequent

but the most common are at least within a quarter. Coresidence does not necessarily mean more frequent contacts. Financial exchanges are not made for daily living expenses both for parents and children as they consider it disrespectful to give money. Nonetheless, parents usually give large sums for special occasions such as weddings, or purchase of an apartment. Children give their parents gifts for special occasions such as birthdays or Father's Day or Mother's Day. Instrumental support is usually not requested from either party. Parents are also reluctant to support the care of grandchildren on a regular or long-term basis as they claim that it is too tiring for them. Most of the parents claim that they offer equal treatment to each child although some mothers admit to better relationships with their daughters. The child generation, especially those in their thirties do not have close relationships with their fathers because their fathers spent all their time at work during their growing up years. They have closer relationships with their mothers.

Both generations are independent in daily living. They do not interfere in each other's affairs and their lives are almost at "arms-length". Yet it does not mean isolation as the times they meet become something special and the connection to the family ancestors are still extremely strong with grave-cleaning about four times a year.

However, the independence of the older adults may be disrupted if they have dependent children, whether they are unmarried or married and have returned to the natal home for some reason.

### **Expectations of the future**

The third research objective in this dissertation is to understand what the older adults expect of the future.

Compared to the study that Akiko Hashimoto conducted in the 1980s, there has been a change in the attitudes of older adults towards their care in later life. In the first place, it is no longer assumed that the older adults will need care from the family. Only a few informants still desire care to be given by their children. The majority want to handle the care with their spouses or use public services, the most preferred of which is in-home service. This change of attitude is enabled by the availability of the Long Term Care

Insurance implemented since 2000. Although institutional services are still shunned by many because of the high costs and perceived bad services, many older adults are comfortable with using in-home services. There are many factors behind this. First, the premiums for LTCI are deducted automatically from pensions for the older adults. Hence, they feel that since they are paying for it anyway, why not use it. In other words, it has become an entitlement and part of the new “social contract”. Second, some older adults expect that their children may not be happy giving them care and so instead of having to feel obligated to the children, they thought it would be simple and clear-cut to buy services from outside the family. In this way, as consumers, they are free to express their dissatisfaction, if any, with the service and there are no strings attached. As Kojima-san said, at the end of each day, she can just say “goodbye” to the service provider and not feel any obligation. Third, since the 1970s when the plight of care-givers have been highlighted through novels like “The Twilight Years”, the older adults have been exposed to news, TV dramas, books and other forms of media on the difficulties of care-giving. This has brought about the willingness for the care-giving burden to be shared by external service providers.

Therefore, the attitudes toward care have changed from informal care that is provided by family to two other types. One is self-care provided by the older adult himself or herself and the other is formal care that has become more readily available through the LTCI. The older adults in my sample showed a strong tendency towards self-care although practically, they are still talking about care provided by a spouse in most cases. What has caused the shift in attitudes toward care? Besides the availability of formal care, I suggest that it is their love for their children. They do not wish to burden their children with the rigors of care-giving or in Japanese *meiwaku kakenai yōni*. They also feel that their children have enough troubles of their own because of the prevailing bad economic conditions in Japan. They also do not wish to see their children quarrel or the family break up because of them. All these are the same attitudes of “*obasute*” in the past (explained in Chapter 3) where older adults at age 70 willingly go up to the mountains to die because of limited food supplies in the village. I propose that this self-sacrificing attitude prevails up to today.

However, I propose that this self-sacrificing attitude is also fed by reticence in expressing their feelings and thoughts. As I have demonstrated in the cases of Kojima-san and Maeda-san, lots of things are left unsaid between parent and child and many assumptions are made. These assumptions may not reflect the true situation. In the case of informants in the child generation, all of them are committed to providing care to their parents, not out of obligation but rather out of love and respect for them. They appreciate the hard work put in to bring them up and want them to enjoy their later life. They look up to their parents as role models for their own marriage. They know they have to make some sacrifices in order to provide the care but they are committed to do so.

#### *Changed image of older adults?*

Then, can we say that the image of the older adult has improved? It is true that they are not weak and dependent anymore. However, some young people do not think so, especially when they are not talking about their own parents. During my casual conversations with young working adults, I found that some of them still hold negative impressions of the older adult. The complaints center round the idea that the elderly are taking away all their money so that they will not have enough money to live when they grow old. This can be attributed to the panic reports often found in the media that imply a collapse of the pension system due to the overwhelming number of elderly people.

The older adults that I have studied in this research have not made big names for themselves because I have targeted the ordinary. Yet as this research has shown they are active and independent in their own small ways. However, they tended not to plan so far ahead, perhaps with the assurance that their family are always “on call” when they are needed. Therefore, I have listed below my suggestions on how older adults can further enhance their lives in the third age and beyond.

## **Suggestions to enhance their lives**

### *Start preparations early*

Starting to prepare for old age is recommended for both the older adults and their adult children. First, let us consider age-related deterioration of body functions, like hearing loss or teeth loss. Many older adults put off the use of hearing aids or dentures until it is much later or in other words, when they have reached a very old age. As the older adult ages, adjustment at older ages is more difficult than when they were younger. This adds to the frustration of the older adult and affects them psychologically as they face the reality of losing their body functions. I would recommend that through education of the older adult and their children, the older adult can be persuaded to try out these aids when they are younger so that they can have more time to adjust to their use.

Second, for men or women who have immersed in their work for most part of their second age, they need to be told or wake up to the fact that they need to start planning for their retirement and life after. Some of my informants in the child generation (for example, Naoki-san) have started this, spurred on by his wife, Fumiko-san. They start to join leisure circles outside of work while still in their fifties. This will help them to build their social networks for retirement. Some companies have engaged consultants to talk to their staff who are about to retire. The Japan Association of Development for the Aged (JADA) publishes annually a Pre & Post Retirement Education and Life Planning Program (PREP) written by economist, Mochizuki Mamoru (JADA, 2010). The guidebook covers financial planning, physical and mental health management planning, career development planning, and useful information for all the related areas.

### *Clearer understanding of LTCI*

The older adults need clearer and simpler explanations of social systems, especially the Long Term Care Insurance system in order to understand the risks and difficulties before they need to use it. This will help them to prepare better, perhaps with more savings, to cope with contingencies of frailties. The adult

children also need to be better educated in this as they do not know better. I propose that the best way to provide information to the older adults is through their family. However, we have seen some communication problems in the previous chapters.

#### *Parents – child communication*

The ordinary older adult may not have high motivations and aspirations like members of the Association for the New Elderly. Some of the ordinary older adults need to be spurred on, and solicited to do activities. Especially in cases where the older adults do not have many friends, the children have to take an active part to introduce activities or friends to their parents. For those with few friends, family is the main source of support in this area. Since the degree of independence is very high in adult life in Japan, children usually do not step in until their parents cannot manage on their own. Earlier, honest discussions would certainly help the situation. In addition, they need a better understanding of their parents' reticence in seeking care or help.

#### **Limitations**

There was one topic that was particularly difficult to investigate – emotional closeness with children. The standard answer given to me by the informants was “fairness” for all the children. Most of the informants would not say which child they like the best. I could not get around the issue from different angles of questioning. This may indicate an underlying cultural value that will require further investigation through separate research design.

The informants in my sample can be classified as middle-class to upper-middle class in Japan. Therefore, my study may not apply to other classes, especially the lower classes where there may not be sufficient financial resources.

I have transcribed the interviews directly from Japanese to English. Therefore, some nuances in Japanese may be lost in the course of translation.

### **Future research directions**

As we can understand, the older adults who are healthy and active in the third age can be independent and not rely on their children. Longitudinal studies on these older adults especially into the future when illness sets in will provide a better understanding of the transition into the fourth age. Research in this coupled with the research available on the fourth age will help to smooth out the transition.

There appear to be difficulties in expressing their true feelings for both parent and child. Further study focused in this area, on affect and communication will help to understand how this reticence can be broken so that more open communications can be facilitated.

I have only touched on the issue of dependent children briefly in this research because of the limited number of informants meeting this condition. Further research focused on this area will provide better insight into this growing issue.

As I have focused on the older adult as an individual and his or her children, I have not investigated the relationship between husband and wife. Further research on husband-wife dyads could reveal information on older couples, especially in their conversation topics and discussions about the future and their family.

In this research, I have not examined the influences of media (for example, printed media and radio and television) on the older adults throughout their lifetime and especially in the third age. The older adults have shown a greater tendency to be independent than previous generations. As demonstrated in this research, the availability of resources and social systems enabled them to do so. However, the older adults have also been exposed to media constantly throughout their life and these could have influenced their change of attitudes and values. Further research is needed in this area to get a more complete picture of how society influenced the older adults in the change.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A: List of Informants**

Parent Generation

Child Generation

List of Informants – Parent Generation

	Informants	Gender	Age	Highest Edu	Spouse Age	Age at Marriage	Marital Status	No. of Years	Type of Household	No. of Children	No. of GC	No. of GGC	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child	Children		
																Live-in	Nearby	Far away
1	Aida Romi	F	70	HS	73	26	M	44	C	2	4		S(41)	D(39)Div			S,D	
2	Aso Satoru	M	73	U	63	35	M	38	CWC	1			S*(36)				S*(36)	
3	Fujiwara Ikuko	F	80	HS	86	21	M	59	3-gen	2	5		D(59)Div	D(56)		D (Div)		D
4	Fukui Jun	M	71	HS	76	32	M	39	C	2	3		S(46)	S(44)			S, S	
5	Hirakawa Junko	F	71	HS	74	26	Wid	4	OP	2	1		D(40)	S(37)			S	D
6	Imamura Ayako	F	65	HS	68	24	M	41	CWP	2	1		S*(38)	S(35)			S*(38),S	
7	Itabashi Yoshiyuki	M	73	HS	78	27	M	46	C	1	2		S(45)				S	
8	Iwai Kenta	M	67	HS	65	29	M	38	C	1			D(35)				D	
9	Iwai Yumi	F	65	MS	67	27												
10	Kimura Yoko	F	60	WJC			Div	12	OP	2	2		S(35)	S*(21)			D*(21)	S
11	Kitada Shinobu	F	64	U	70	24	M	40	C	1			S(39)				S	
12	Kojima Keiko	F	80	HS		19	Wid	16	OP	3	5		S(60)	D(58)	D(56)			S,D,D
13	Maeda Junni	F	64	WJC	64	29	M	35	C	3	1		S(33)	S(31)	S(29)		S,S,S	
14	Maejima Sae	F	80	WJC		25	Wid	1	OP	3	4	2	S(55)#	S(49)	D(46)		S	D
15	Maruyama Koji	M	63	HS	61	17												
16	Maruyama Kazuko	F	61	Nil	63	15	M	46	C	3	2		S(38)	D(36)	D(28)		D,D	S
17	Minami Takuya	M	70	U	61	33	M	37	C	2	2		D(36)	D(33)			D	D
18	Mori Emiko	F	74	HS			Wid	13	WWC	3	3		D(48)	D(45)	D*(41)	D*(41)		D,D
19	Naito Masafumi	M	62	U	52	34	M	28	CWC	2			D*(21)	S*(19)			D*(21)	S*(19)
20	Nakamura Akira	M	73	HS	70	25												
21	Nakamura Yuki	F	70	HS	73	22	M	48	C	2	4		S(44)	S(39)			S	S
22	Nogiwa Yoshiko	F	72	HS	73	31	M	41	CWC	2			D*(40)	D*(38)		D*(38)	D*(40)	
23	Okayama Koichi	M	69	U	64	29	M	40	C	3	1		S(39)	D(37)	S*(32)		S,D,S*(32)	
24	Sakuma Rieko	F	71	WJC	66	32	M	39	C	1			S*(36)				S*(36)	
25	Sugawara Takashi	M	85	U	82	25												
26	Sugawara Yuko	F	82	U	85	22	M	60	3-gen	2	4	2	S(59)	S(57)			S	S
27	Suzuki Tomoko	F	70	WJC			Div	7	Other	0								
28	Tachi Ryosuke	M	67	U	64	29	M	38	CWC	2			S(35)	S*(32)			S*(32)	S
29	Tatsuda Tsunehiko	M	66	U	64	29	M	37	CWC	1			S*(30)				S*(30)	
30	Tsuiji Shigeto	M	74	HS	68	30												
31	Tsuiji Meiko	F	68	HS	74	24	M	44	C	2	1		D(41)	S*(40)			D,S*(40)	
32	Ueno Kenji	M	84	U	81	27												
33	Ueno Mariko	F	81	HS	84	24	M	57	C	3	7	2	D(55)	S(51)	S(49)		D,S,S	
34	Yamamoto Maki	F	63	WJC	67	28	M	35	C	3	3		D(35)	D(34)	S*(27)		D,S*(27)	D
35	Yoshida Aiko	F	60	HS	62	29	M	31	CWC	3			S(28)#	S*(27)	S*(25)		S*(25)	S*(27)

*Notes:*  
 Highest Education: HS=High school, MS=Middle school, WJC= Women's Junior College, U=University  
 Marital Status: Div=divorced, M=married, Wid=widowed  
 No. of Years: Number of years married, divorced or widowed (reference Marital Status column)  
 Type of Household: C=couple only, CWC=couple with child, CWP=couple with parent, OP=one-person household  
 WWC=widowed with child, 3-gen=3-generation, Other=with sibling  
 No. of GC: Number of grandchildren  
 No. of GGC: Number of great-grandchildren  
 Children: S=son, D=daughter, (age), \*(age)=unmarried, ()#=deceased, ()div=divorced  
 No. of Parents/In-laws: M=mother, F=father (age)

List of Informants – Child Generation

	Informants	Gender	Age	Highest Edu	Spouse Age	Age at Marriage	Marital Status	No. of Years	Type of Household	No. of Children	No. of GC	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child	Children			No. of Parents
															Live-in	Nearby	Far away	
1	Furukawa Yuichi	M	33	GS	33	29	M	4	C									F(61), M(59)
2	Kataoka Ryo	M	48	U	49	27	M	21	3-gen	2		D*(19)	D*(17)		D, D			M(75)
3	Kozumi Yukie	F	56	WJC	61	24	M	32	CWC	2		S(31)	D*(28)		D			M(80)
4	Maeda Tsutomu	M	30	GS	30	29	M	1	C									F(66), M(64)
5	Mizutani Asami	F	56	U	55	23	M	33	CWC	2		D*(29)	S*(27)		D, S			F(86), M(80)
6	Sakai Yutaka	M	59	U	56	25	M	34	C	1		D*(22)				D		F(84), M(79)
7	Sugawara Naoki	M	56	GS	55	27	M	32	3-gen	2	2	D(31)	D*(26)		D	D		F(85), M(82)
8	Sugawara Fumiko	F	55	GS	56	24												F(84), M(81)
9	Tachi Kentaro	M	35	GS	33	34	M	1	C									F(67), M(64)
10	Tachi Kanako	F	34	GS	34	33												F(60), M(60)
11	Takeda Takako	F	57	HS	62	19	M	38	CWP	2	4	D(34)	S(33)			D, S		M(79)
<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <p>Highest Education: GS=Graduate school, HS=High school, WJC= Women's Junior College, U=University</p> <p>Marital Status: M=married</p> <p>No. of Years: Number of years married</p> <p>Type of Household: C=couple only, CWC=couple with child, CWP=couple with parent, 3-gen=3-generation</p> <p>No. of GC: Number of grandchildren</p> <p>Children: S=son, D=daughter, (age), *(*)=unmarried</p> <p>No. of Parents/In-laws: M=mother, F=father (age)</p> <p>No. of Siblings: B=brother, S=sister (age)</p>																		

## **Appendix B: Research Brochure**

Japanese Version

English Version

## インタビューの質問

### ■お父様、お母様世代の方

#### ■ご本人について

毎日の生活パターン、余暇の過ごし方  
生きがい、目標、趣味、楽しみ等

#### ■ご家族について

ご家族（お子様の家族、お住まい等）  
お子様との交流（訪問、電話、贈り物、  
お手伝い、精神的サポート）  
親としての役割の変化（今まで、今後）

#### ■外でのお付き合いについて

社会との付き合い（友人、親戚）

#### ■将来について

今後の予測（介護、心配ごと、ケア）

### ■お子様世代の方

■質問させて戴く内容は、親世代の方のものと同様ですが、あなたとご両親の関係もふまえてご教示いただけると幸いです。たとえば、あなたのご両親が普段どんな活動をされているか、など。

#### 秘密保持について

ご提供下さいました情報は確実に秘密保持をいたします。

ご協力いただいた方のお名前はすべて仮名に変更し、個人のお名前は消去いたします。

その上で、ご提供頂いた情報はこの研究および関連する論文等の発表出版に限って活用し、個人情報への外部への公開、配布、販売等は一切行いません。

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## リサーチ プロジェクト

## シニア世代の活力

- 生きがい 活動 期待 -

## リサーチプロジェクト: シニア世代の活力、生きがい、行動、期待を中心に

### なぜこの問題を考えるのか?

日本人の平均寿命は、2055年には女性90歳、男性84歳になるとも予想されています。いままでシニア世代に関する研究といえば、そのほとんどが高齢者の介護問題か、あるいは終末期の社会生活に関するものがほとんどでした。

しかしながら、延びたのは健康な時間であって、衰えの時間ではありません。シニア世代の健康な時間はもはや15年、20年あるいはそれ以上にもなるのに、これについての研究は十分ではありませんでした。

一方で、シニア世代の方たちは自分たちの存在が国や家族の負担にならないように自らを管理しなければならないと考えている傾向も見られます。シニア世代の方たちは身体も意識も健康でいられるよう心がけ、また社会活動にも参加するよう求められてきました。

私たちは、社会で積極的に活躍するシニア世代の方たちの「成功物語」は耳にしますが、しかし、私たちの身近にいる方については実はほとんど知りません。

この研究は日本の一般のシニア世代の生活について、彼らご本人やそのお子様たちへの聞き取りを通じて解明していこうとするものです。

### 研究の目的

この研究は、60歳以上の方で介護必要とせず健康に活動している方について、親世代と子世代の二つの側面から、状況を分析していきます。

この研究の目的は、下記の項目を解明しようとするものです。

- (1) お年を重ねていく過程に、どのように対応しているか
- (2) ご家族の中で、親としての役割がどのように変化しているか
- (3) 将来について何を期待し、それにどのように備えているか
- (4) お子様世代は、ご自分の親が高齢化されていく過程をどのようにとらえているか

### 研究の方法

1時間半程度のインタビューへのご協力をおねがいします。

インタビューはご協力下さる方のお宅にて、あるいは喫茶店のような公共の場所で行います。

なお研究の正確さを期すため、あらかじめご了承をいただいたうえで、録音機を使用させていただきますことでもあります。

### ご協力をお願いしたい方

#### 親世代

以下の条件に合う日本人の方。

- 60歳以上の方（上限はありません）。
- 健康に活動されている方（介護を必要とされない方）。
- お子様がいなくても構いません。

#### 子世代

上記の条件にあう親御様をお持ちの日本人の方。

親世代としてご協力いただける場合、お子様が同席されなくても構いません。同様に、子世代としてご協力いただける場合も、ご両親は同席いただかなくて結構です。もちろん、親子でご協力いただけることは大歓迎です。いずれにしても、インタビューは別々に行います。

ご協力いただけます場合、下記の研究者にご連絡いただきたく、お願いいたします。

Soon-May Lum

ラム・スンメイ（ラムが姓）

## Interview Questions

### Parent Generation

#### *About yourself now*

- Daily activities (daily routine, leisure activities, favorite activities)
- Your motivations

#### *About your family*

- Current structure of your family (children's marital status, where they live)
- Contact with children (visits, phone calls, giving of gifts, practical help, emotional support)
- Current role as parent (has it changed, will it change in future)

#### *About your friends*

Social network (friends, relatives)

#### *About your future*

Plans for the future (care-giving, any anxiety, views on current available services)

### Children Generation

Topics are the same as Parent Generation above but they relate to your parent(s), rather than yourself. For example, what are your parents' daily activities?

### *Privacy Statement*

*Participants in this research can be assured that their personal data will remain confidential.*

*Names will be changed to protect their privacy. Any information collected will not be used for any purpose other than this research and its subsequent publications in various sources.*

*Personal information collected will not be disclosed, shared, distributed or sold under any circumstances.*

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## Research Project

**Seniors**

**Aging Actively**

-

**Looking at their  
Motivations,  
Actions &  
Expectations**

## Research Project: Seniors Aging Actively – Looking at their Motivations, Actions and Expectations

### Why this Research?

Life expectancy in Japan is projected to increase to 84 years for male and 90 years for female by the year 2055.

Many scholars have conducted research on the period when seniors are frail and require care-giving. Nevertheless, with increased longevity and good health standards, the period that has been extended is not the frail period but rather, the healthy period. This healthy period is now in the region of between 15 to 20 years and there is insufficient research in this area.

At the same time, the trend is that seniors all over the world have been encouraged to take control of their own aging in order not to burden the state and also their families. Seniors have been encouraged to maintain both physical and cognitive health and continue to engage actively in society.

While we have heard of “success stories” of seniors who “defy their age” and attempted courageous activities or have attained leadership or gained publicity in society, we do not know much about the seniors in our midst. This research project seeks to understand the lives of ordinary seniors living in Japan by hearing from them as well as their children.

### Research Objectives

This research focuses on seniors, 60 years and older who are still active and healthy and do not require care-giving by other persons.

It seeks to understand the situation from two perspectives – both the parent generation and the children generation.

The objectives of this research are to understand:

- (1) how seniors are managing the aging process
- (2) how their role as parents in the family are changing
- (3) their expectations of the future and how they are preparing for it
- (4) how the children generation are understanding their parents' aging process.

### What is involved in participating in this research?

Attend an interview with the researcher lasting around 1.5 hours.

Interviews can be held in your home or a public place (e.g. café).

Voice recorders will be used during the interview.

### Who can participate?

#### Parent generation

Any Japanese person who meets the following conditions:

- 60 years and older (there is no upper limit to age)
- Healthy and active (that is, do not require care-giving)
- With or without children.

#### Children generation

Any Japanese person who has a parent who meets the above conditions.

*If you participate as a parent, it does not necessitate your child(ren) to participate. If you participate as a child, it does not necessitate your parent(s) to participate. However, you are most welcome if both generations would like to participate. Interviews will always be conducted individually.*

**If you would like to participate, please contact the researcher as follows:**

**Soon-May LUM**

## **Appendix C: Informant's Basic Data**

Form PA: For older adults

Form PA (English): For older adults (English)

Form CPL-A: For couples

Form CA: For adult children

## 面接調査票 A・個人基本状況

対象者番号 \_\_\_\_\_

お名前		性別	男・女
生年			
年齢			
最終学歴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 中学校卒</li> <li>● 高校卒</li> <li>● 短大・大学卒</li> </ul>		
最終の職業	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 経営者</li> <li>● 常時雇用の一般従業員</li> <li>● 臨時雇用（パート・アルバイト・内職）</li> <li>● 派遣社員自営業主・自由業者</li> <li>● 家族従業者</li> <li>● 専業主婦</li> <li>● その他</li> </ul>		
退職年			
配偶関係	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚 いつ _____年 配偶者のお年 _____</li> <li>● 離婚 いつ _____年</li> <li>● 死別 いつ _____年</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>		
お子様の数	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 男 _____人</li> <li>● 女 _____人</li> </ul>		

<p><b>ご年収</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 100 万円未満</li> <li>● 100 万円以上 200 万円未満</li> <li>● 200 万円以上 300 万円未満</li> <li>● 300 万円以上 400 万円未満</li> <li>● 400 万円以上 500 万円未満</li> <li>● 500 万円以上 1000 万円未満</li> <li>● 1000 万円以上 3000 万円未満</li> <li>● 3000 万円以上 5000 万円未満</li> <li>● 5000 万円以上</li> </ul>
<p><b>収入源</b> (複数回答可)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 労働所得</li> <li>● 公的年金・恩給</li> <li>● 財産所得</li> <li>● 年金以外の社会保障給付金</li> <li>● 子供からの援助</li> <li>● その他</li> </ul>
<p><b>居住形態</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 一人暮らし</li> <li>● 夫婦のみ</li> <li>● 未婚のお子様と同居</li> <li>● 既婚のお子様と同居</li> <li>● 親と同居</li> <li>● その他： _____</li> </ul>
<p><b>お住まい</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 都府縣市 _____</li> <li>● 区 _____</li> </ul>
<p><b>住居の種類</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 持ち家 (親などが持ち主の場合も含む)</li> <li>● 民間の賃貸住宅</li> <li>● 社宅・公務員住宅等の給与住宅</li> <li>● 公社・公団等の公営の賃貸住宅</li> <li>● その他： _____</li> </ul>

	子供 (1)	子供 (2)	子供 (3)	子供 (4)
性別	男・女	男・女	男・女	男・女
年齢				
配偶関係	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>
収入をともなう仕事をしていいますか	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>
居住形態	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>
お子様の年齢	1.____ 男・女 2.____ 男・女 3.____ 男・女 4.____ 男・女			

	ご本人の親 (1)	ご本人の親 (2)	配偶者の親 (3)	配偶者の親 (4)
性別	男・女	男・女	男・女	男・女
年齢				
配偶関係	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>
居住形態	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>
介護を受けていますか	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>

**Interview Questions A • Personal Information**

Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Name		Gender	M • F
------	--	--------	-------

Year Born		Age	
-----------	--	-----	--

**Last Qualifications**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Middle School
<input type="checkbox"/>	High School
<input type="checkbox"/>	College (2 years)
<input type="checkbox"/>	University (4 years) / Post-graduate School

**Last Job**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Own business
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular Employee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-regular Employment (Part-time • Arubaito • Side-job)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contract • Freelancer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family business
<input type="checkbox"/>	Others

Retired in (year)	
-------------------	--

Spouse Relationship	<input type="radio"/> Not married
	<input type="radio"/> Married When _____(Year)      Spouse's Age _____
	<input type="radio"/> Divorced When _____(Year)
	<input type="radio"/> Widowed When _____(Year)
	<input type="radio"/> Separated
	<input type="radio"/> Co-habiting

No.of Children		M		F
----------------	--	---	--	---

### Annual Income

	Less than 1,000,000 yen
	1,000,000 to less than 2,000,000 yen
	2,000,000 to less than 3,000,000 yen
	3,000,000 to less than 4,000,000 yen
	4,000,000 to less than 5,000,000 yen
	5,000,000 to less than 10,000,000 yen
	10,000,000 to less than 30,000,000 yen
	30,000,000 to less than 50,000,000 yen
	More than 50,000,000 yen

### Source of Income (Multiple answers allowed)

	Job Income
	Public Pension
	Property Income
	Social Security benefits other than Public Pension
	Support from children
	Others

### Type of Residence

	Live alone
	Live with spouse only
	Live with spouse and unmarried children
	Live with spouse and married children
	Live with parents
	Others : _____

### Place of Residence

Address (Ward)	
-------------------	--

### Type of House

	Own house (including parental house)
	Rental apartment
	Government/Public Housing
	Company Housing
	Others : _____

	<b>Child (1)</b>	<b>Child (2)</b>	<b>Child (3)</b>	<b>Child (4)</b>
Gender	M • F	M • F	M • F	M • F
Age				
Spouse Relationship	<input type="radio"/> Unmarried <input type="radio"/> Married <input type="radio"/> Divorced <input type="radio"/> Widowed <input type="radio"/> Separated <input type="radio"/> Cohabiting	<input type="radio"/> Unmarried <input type="radio"/> Married <input type="radio"/> Divorced <input type="radio"/> Widowed <input type="radio"/> Separated <input type="radio"/> Cohabiting	<input type="radio"/> Unmarried <input type="radio"/> Married <input type="radio"/> Divorced <input type="radio"/> Widowed <input type="radio"/> Separated <input type="radio"/> Cohabiting	<input type="radio"/> Unmarried <input type="radio"/> Married <input type="radio"/> Divorced <input type="radio"/> Widowed <input type="radio"/> Separated <input type="radio"/> Cohabiting
Income earning job	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Live together	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Live separately – nearby	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Live separately – far away	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Ages of grandchildren	1. _____ M • F 2. _____ M • F 3. _____ M • F 4. _____ M • F	1. _____ M • F 2. _____ M • F 3. _____ M • F 4. _____ M • F	1. _____ M • F 2. _____ M • F 3. _____ M • F 4. _____ M • F	1. _____ M • F 2. _____ M • F 3. _____ M • F 4. _____ M • F

	<b>Your Parent (1)</b>	<b>Your Parent (2)</b>	<b>Spouse's Parent (1)</b>	<b>Spouse's Parent (2)</b>
Gender	M • F	M • F	M • F	M • F
Age				
Spouse Relationship	<input type="radio"/> Unmarried <input type="radio"/> Married <input type="radio"/> Divorced <input type="radio"/> Widowed <input type="radio"/> Separated <input type="radio"/> Cohabiting	<input type="radio"/> Unmarried <input type="radio"/> Married <input type="radio"/> Divorced <input type="radio"/> Widowed <input type="radio"/> Separated <input type="radio"/> Cohabiting	<input type="radio"/> Unmarried <input type="radio"/> Married <input type="radio"/> Divorced <input type="radio"/> Widowed <input type="radio"/> Separated <input type="radio"/> Cohabiting	<input type="radio"/> Unmarried <input type="radio"/> Married <input type="radio"/> Divorced <input type="radio"/> Widowed <input type="radio"/> Separated <input type="radio"/> Cohabiting
Live together	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Year moved in				
Live separately – nearby	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Live separately – far away	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Require care-giving?	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

## 面接調査票 A・個人基本状況

対象者番号 \_\_\_\_\_

## 個人状況

	お父様	お母様
お名前		
生年		
年齢		
最終学歴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 中学校卒</li> <li>● 高校卒</li> <li>● 短大・大学卒</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 中学校卒</li> <li>● 高校卒</li> <li>● 短大・大学卒</li> </ul>
最終の職業	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 経営者</li> <li>● 常時雇用の一般従業員</li> <li>● 臨時雇用（パート・アルバイト・内職）</li> <li>● 派遣社員自営業主・自由業者</li> <li>● 家族従業者</li> <li>● その他</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 経営者</li> <li>● 常時雇用の一般従業員</li> <li>● 臨時雇用（パート・アルバイト・内職）</li> <li>● 派遣社員自営業主・自由業者</li> <li>● 家族従業者</li> <li>● 専業主婦</li> <li>● その他</li> </ul>
退職年		

## 夫婦状況

結婚年	
お子様の数	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 男 _____ 人</li> <li>● 女 _____ 人</li> </ul>
ご年収	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 100万円未満</li> <li>● 100万円以上 200万円未満</li> <li>● 200万円以上 300万円未満</li> <li>● 300万円以上 400万円未満</li> <li>● 400万円以上 500万円未満</li> <li>● 500万円以上 1000万円未満</li> <li>● 1000万円以上 3000万円未満</li> <li>● 3000万円以上 5000万円未満</li> <li>● 5000万円以上</li> </ul>
収入源 (複数回答可)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 労働所得</li> <li>● 公的年金・恩給</li> <li>● 財産所得</li> <li>● 年金以外の社会保障給付金</li> <li>● 子供からの援助</li> <li>● その他</li> </ul>
居住形態	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 夫婦のみ</li> <li>● 未婚のお子様と同居</li> <li>● 既婚のお子様と同居</li> <li>● 親と同居</li> <li>● その他：_____</li> </ul>
お住まい	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 都府縣市 _____</li> <li>● 区 _____</li> </ul>
住居の種類	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 持ち家（親などが持ち主の場合も含む）</li> <li>● 民間の賃貸住宅</li> <li>● 社宅・公務員住宅等の給与住宅</li> <li>● 公社・公団等の公営の賃貸住宅</li> <li>● その他：_____</li> </ul>

	子供 (1)	子供 (2)	子供 (3)	子供 (4)
性別	男・女	男・女	男・女	男・女
年齢				
配偶関係	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>
収入をともなう仕事をしていま すか	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>
居住形態	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>
お子様の年齢	1.____ 男・女 2.____ 男・女 3.____ 男・女 4.____ 男・女			

	ご本人の親 (1)	ご本人の親 (2)	配偶者の親 (3)	配偶者の親 (4)
性別	男・女	男・女	男・女	男・女
年齢				
配偶関係	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 未婚</li> <li>● 既婚</li> <li>● 離婚</li> <li>● 死別</li> <li>● 離婚を前提に別居中</li> <li>● 同棲中</li> </ul>
居住形態	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 同居</li> <li>● 別居－近く</li> <li>● 別居－遠く</li> </ul>
介護を受けて いますか	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● している</li> <li>● していない</li> </ul>

## 面接調査票 A・個人基本状況

対象者番号 \_\_\_\_\_

お名前		性別	男・女
-----	--	----	-----

生年（西暦）		年齢	
--------	--	----	--

配偶関係	<input type="radio"/> 未婚
	<input type="radio"/> 既婚 いつ _____年 配偶者のお年 _____
	<input type="radio"/> 離婚 いつ _____年
	<input type="radio"/> 死別 いつ _____年
	<input type="radio"/> 離婚を前提に別居中
	<input type="radio"/> 同棲中

お子様の数		男		女
-------	--	---	--	---

お兄弟姉妹 の数		男		女
-------------	--	---	--	---

## 最終学歴

<input type="checkbox"/>	中学校卒
<input type="checkbox"/>	高校卒
<input type="checkbox"/>	短大・大学卒

## 職業

<input type="checkbox"/>	経営者
<input type="checkbox"/>	常時雇用の一般従業員
<input type="checkbox"/>	臨時雇用（パート・アルバイト・内職）
<input type="checkbox"/>	派遣社員自営業主・自由業者
<input type="checkbox"/>	家族従業者
<input type="checkbox"/>	その他

## ご年収

	100万円未満
	100万円以上 300万円未満
	300万円以上 500万円未満
	500万円以上 1000万円未満
	1000万円以上 3000万円未満
	3000万円以上 5000万円未満
	5000万円以上

## 収入源（複数回答可）

	労働所得
	公的年金・恩給
	財産所得
	年金以外の社会保障給付金
	親からの援助
	その他

## 居住形態

	一人暮らし
	夫婦のみ
	未婚のお子様と同居
	既婚のお子様と同居
	親と同居
	その他：_____

## お住まい

住所（区）	
-------	--

## 住居の種類

	持ち家（親などが持ち主の場合も含む）
	民間の賃貸住宅
	社宅・公務員住宅等の給与住宅
	公社・公団等の公営の賃貸住宅
	その他：_____

	ご本人の親（１）	ご本人の親（２）	配偶者の親（３）	配偶者の親（４）
性別	男・女	男・女	男・女	男・女
年齢				
配偶関係	<input type="radio"/> 未婚 <input type="radio"/> 既婚 <input type="radio"/> 離婚 <input type="radio"/> 死別 <input type="radio"/> 離婚を前提 に別居中 <input type="radio"/> 同棲中	<input type="radio"/> 未婚 <input type="radio"/> 既婚 <input type="radio"/> 離婚 <input type="radio"/> 死別 <input type="radio"/> 離婚を前提 に別居中 <input type="radio"/> 同棲中	<input type="radio"/> 未婚 <input type="radio"/> 既婚 <input type="radio"/> 離婚 <input type="radio"/> 死別 <input type="radio"/> 離婚を前提 に別居中 <input type="radio"/> 同棲中	<input type="radio"/> 未婚 <input type="radio"/> 既婚 <input type="radio"/> 離婚 <input type="radio"/> 死別 <input type="radio"/> 離婚を前提 に別居中 <input type="radio"/> 同棲中
居住形態	<input type="radio"/> 親と同居 同居開始の年 _____  <input type="radio"/> 親と別居－近く <input type="radio"/> 親と別居－遠く			
収入をともなう 仕事をしていま すか	<input type="radio"/> している <input type="radio"/> していない			
退職年				
介護を受けて いますか				

	兄弟姉妹（1）	兄弟姉妹（2）	兄弟姉妹（3）	兄弟姉妹（4）
性別	男・女	男・女	男・女	男・女
年齢				
配偶関係	<input type="radio"/> 未婚 <input type="radio"/> 既婚 <input type="radio"/> 離婚 <input type="radio"/> 死別 <input type="radio"/> 離婚を前提 に別居中 <input type="radio"/> 同棲中	<input type="radio"/> 未婚 <input type="radio"/> 既婚 <input type="radio"/> 離婚 <input type="radio"/> 死別 <input type="radio"/> 離婚を前提 に別居中 <input type="radio"/> 同棲中	<input type="radio"/> 未婚 <input type="radio"/> 既婚 <input type="radio"/> 離婚 <input type="radio"/> 死別 <input type="radio"/> 離婚を前提 に別居中 <input type="radio"/> 同棲中	<input type="radio"/> 未婚 <input type="radio"/> 既婚 <input type="radio"/> 離婚 <input type="radio"/> 死別 <input type="radio"/> 離婚を前提 に別居中 <input type="radio"/> 同棲中
収入をとまなう 仕事をしていま すか	<input type="radio"/> している <input type="radio"/> していない			
居住形態	<input type="radio"/> 親と同居 同居開始の年 _____  <input type="radio"/> 親と別居－近く <input type="radio"/> 親と別居－遠く			
お子様の年齢	1.____ 男・女 2.____ 男・女 3.____ 男・女 4.____ 男・女			

## **Appendix D: Interview Questions**

Form B - Parent: For older adults

Form B - Child: For adult children

## Interview Form B 面接調査票 B

This is a research that I am doing for my doctoral degree at Waseda University. Your personal privacy will be protected at all times. If you have any questions that you do not wish to answer, please feel free not to answer them. Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

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もし、お答えになりたくない質問がありましたら、もちろん、お答えいただかなくて結構です。  
よろしく、ご協力をお願いします。

Now, we will start the interview.

### Daily Activities 毎日の生活 (Ask each person in turn if it is a couple)

1. Are you doing any work now?

Yes - what type of work, how often, paid/volunteer?

No - continue

いま、何かお仕事をされていますか？

はい 仕事の種類？ ボランティア？ アルバイト？ 週に何日くらい？

(For those not yet retired まだ現役の方へ)

2. What do you plan to do after you retire? Why?

退職後は何をされたいですか？ その理由は何ですか？

3. What is your daily routine like? (Pick up on activities and probe)

毎日何をされていますか？

4. What do you enjoy doing most?

一番の楽しみは何ですか？

5. What special activities do you do? E.g. hiking, travel

趣味やスポーツをされていますか？ (旅行、登山、等)

6. Which is your favorite?

お気に入りのことは何ですか？

7. What activities do you do together with your spouse?

夫婦一緒にする活動は何ですか？

8. How did you get to know your spouse?  
お見合い結婚ですか？

Children お子様

9. Tell me about your children and grandchildren.

Family structure

What does he do?

Where does he live?

Is he married?

No- is he getting married soon?

Yes - does he have any children?

お子様についてお伺いします

ご家族構成について教えてください

お子様は何をされていますか？

お子様はどこにお住まいですか？

お子様はご結婚されていますか？

はい お孫さんはいますか？

いいえ ご結婚の予定はありますか？

Contact お子様たちとの交流

10. How often do you see him?

どのくらいの頻度でお子様方にお会いしますか？

11. When you see him, what do you all do together?

お会いすると何をされますか？

12. What do you all talk about?

どんなお話をされますか？

13. How often do you communicate by telephone/email?

お子様とは、電話や電子メールでどのくらいお話しされますか？

14. What sort of things do you communicate about?

おもに、どんなことを話されますか？

Exchanges (from child to parent) お子様から

15. Does you child ask you to help him/her out?

お子様から何か頼まれることはありますか？

16. What type of help? (check practical and financial)

どんなことですか？(依頼の内容)

17. Have you offered help voluntarily even when they didn't ask? Examples?

頼まれないけれど、何かを手伝いをしますか？たとえばなんですか？

18. What type of presents have you received from your children? When?

お子様からはどんなプレゼントをもらいますか？どんな時ですか？

19. Have you received monetary gifts from your children?

お子様から、金銭面の援助はありますか？

Exchanges (from parent to child) お子様へ

20~24. Repeat above questions for exchanges from parent to child.

Relationship 関係

25. Which child do you feel closest to?

どのお子様と一番親しくしていますか？

26. Why do you think this is so?

なぜ、そうお感じになりますか？

27. What were your hopes in him?

その方への期待はなんですか？

28. Do you think your hopes are fulfilled?

その期待はかなえられそうですか？

29. Do you feel any anxiety over his career or his family? Why?

その方の人生やご家族について何か心配事はありますか？なぜですか？

30. Do you think you can rely on him for emotional support?

その方は精神的な支えになってくれますか？

31. How often does he come to ask you for advice?

その方は、あなたに相談などなさいますか？

32. Do you think you have a good relationship with him?

その方との関係はいかがですか？

33. Has the relationship become better or worse? Why?  
良くなっていますか？変わりませんか？

34. Do you think you can depend on him for your old age? Why?  
将来、その方に世話になることは期待できますか？

Role in Family 家族の中の役割

35. Do you think you still have a role in the family now?  
家族の中で、どんな役割を行っていますか？

36. Do you think you will continue these roles in future?  
その役割は、今後も続きますか？

37. How do you think your roles will change in future?  
何か変化がありそうですか？

Social Network 社会とのつきあい

38. Besides family, who are your close friends?  
ご家族以外に親しいお友達はいますか？

39. Do you think you can depend on your friends for help when you need it?  
何か困った時、そのお友達に助けを頼むことはできますか？

40. Do you think having friends is important? Why?  
お友達がいることは大切ですか？ どうしてですか？

Future 将来

41. What are your plans for the future?  
今後の計画を教えてください？

42. Who will you depend on when you need care-giving? Why or why not?  
将来、介護のような支援が必要となった場合、どなたに頼みますか？

43. What sort of preparations are you doing now?  
いまどんな準備をされていますか？

44. Do you feel any anxiety over the future?  
将来について何か御心配事がありますか？

45. What motivates you in your daily life?  
生きがいは何ですか？

46. What do you think elderly people need to do to prepare for their future?  
高齢者が将来のために準備しなければならないことは何だと思いますか？

47. Will you depend on the government or public for support for your old age?  
Why or why not?  
今後、年齢を重ねられたのち、なにか公的な支援を必要とされますか？

48. Have you thought about what you will do with your assets and property?

Yes - who will you give to?

No - when will you think about it?

資産はどうされるか考えていますか？

はい           どなたに譲渡しますか？

いいえ       いつ考えますか？

## Interview Form B 面接調査票 B

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もし、お答えになりたくない質問がありましたら、もちろん、お答えいただかなくて結構です。  
よろしく、ご協力をお願いします。

Now, we will start the interview.

### Daily Activities 毎日の生活

1. Are your parents still working?

Yes - type of work, how often, paid/volunteer?

No - continue

いま、ご両親は何かお仕事をされていますか？

はい 仕事の種類？ ボランティア？ アルバイト？ 週に何日くらい？

いいえ

(For those not yet retired まだ現役の方へ)

2. What do they plan to do after they retire? Why?

退職後は何をされたいですか？ その理由は何ですか？

3. What special activities do they do? E.g. hiking, travel

趣味やスポーツをされていますか？（旅行、登山等）

4. What do they enjoy doing most?

一番の楽しみは何ですか？

### Contact ご両親との交流

5. How often do you see them?

どのくらいの頻度で御両親様方にお会いしますか？

6. When you see them, what do you all do together?

お会いすると何をされますか？

7. What do you all talk about?

どんなお話をされますか？

8. How often do you communicate by telephone/email?

御両親様とは、電話や電子メールでどのくらいお話しされますか？

9. What sort of things do you communicate about?

おもに、どんなことを話されますか？

Exchanges ご両親から

10. Does your parent(s) ask you to help him/her out?

御両親から何か頼まれることはありますか？

11. What type of help? (check practical and financial)

どんなことですか？(依頼の内容)

12. Have you offered help voluntarily even when they didn' t ask? Examples?

頼まれないけれど、何かを手伝いをしますか？たとえばなんですか？

13. What type of presents have you received from your parents? When?

御両親様からはどんなプレゼントをもらいますか？どんな時ですか？

14. Have you received monetary gifts from your parents?

御両親から、金銭面の援助はありますか？

Exchanges ご両親へ

15. Do you ask your parent(s) for help?

御両親に何か頼まれることはありますか？

16. What type of help? (check practical and financial)

どんなことですか？(依頼の内容)

17. Do you want your parents to help take care of your children?

ご両親に自分のこどもの世話が頼まれることはありますか？

18. Have they offered help voluntarily even when you didn' t ask? Examples?

頼まれないけれど、何かを手伝いをしますか？たとえばなんですか？

19. Do you like to buy things for your parents? What type of things?  
御両親様に何かを買ってあげますか？たとえば、どんなものですか？

20. Do you give monetary gifts to your parents?  
御両親に、金銭面の援助はありますか？

Relationship 関係

21. Which parent do you feel closest to?  
お父さんとお母さんだれと一番親しくしていますか？

22. Why do you think this is so?  
なぜ、そうお感じになりますか？

23. What hopes does your parent(s) have in you?  
その方からの期待はなんですか？

24. Do you think you have fulfill their hopes?  
その期待はかなえられそうですか？

25. Do you feel any anxiety over parents? Why?  
その方のこれからの人生について何か心配事がありますか？なぜですか？

26. Do you think they can and will rely on you for emotional support?  
その方はあなたに精神的な支えなさいますか？

27. How often do you go to ask them for advice?  
その方は、あなたに相談などなさいますか？

28. How often do they come to ask you for advice?  
その方は、あなたに相談などなさいますか？

29. Do you think you have a good relationship with them?  
その方との関係はいかがですか？

30. Has the relationship become better or worse? Why?  
良くなっていますか？変わりませんか？

31. Do you think they can depend on you for their old age? Why?  
将来、その方に世話にしてあげますか？

Role in Family 親の役割

32. Do you think your parents still have a role in the family now?  
今家族の中で、御両親はどんな役割を行っていますか？

33. Do you think they will continue these roles in future?  
その役割は、今後も続きますか？

34. How do you think their roles will change in future?  
何か変化がありそうですか？

35. How much advice do they give you in your current life? E.g. upbringing of your children.  
今の生活にご両親のアドバイスをもらいますか？たとえば、お孫様の育つこと。

Social Network 社会とのつきあい

36. Besides family, who are your parents' close friends?  
ご家族以外に御両親は親しいお友達はいますか？

37. Do you think they can and will depend on their friends for help when they need it?  
何か困った時、そのお友達に助けを頼むことはできますか？

38. Do you think it is important for your parents to have friends? Why?  
お友達がいることは大切ですか？ どうしてですか？

Future 将来

39. What are your parents' plans for the future?  
ご両親今後の計画を教えてください？

40. Who will they depend on when they need care-giving? Why or why not?  
将来、介護のような支援が必要となった場合、どなたに頼みますか？

41. What sort of preparations are your parents making now?  
いまどんな準備をされていますか？

42. Do they feel any anxiety over the future?  
ご両親は将来について何か御心配事がありますか？

43. Do you feel any anxiety over their future?  
ご両親の将来についてあなたは何か御心配事がありますか？

44. How are you preparing for their future?

両親の将来のため、どんな準備をされていますか？

45. Among your siblings, how will you all divide out the load of caring for your parents?

兄弟姉妹の中に、両親の介護の負担どうなりますか？

46. What do you think elderly people need to do to prepare for their future?

高齢者が将来のために準備しなければならないことは何だと思いますか？

47. Will they depend on the government or public for support for their old age? Why or why not?

今後、年齢を重ねられたのち、なにか公的な支援を必要とされますか？