Anthropology & Aging Quarterly

SPECIAL ISSUE: ANTHROPOLOGY & AGING IN EAST ASIA, PART II

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From the Editor

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In the previous issue of AAQ, we highlighted scholarly work on East Asia, one of the most rapidly aging regions in the world and home to a diverse array of cultures. Unfortunately, many of the articles that I had hoped to include were still being prepared, including what I felt was an very exciting group of articles from scholars in Japan, organized around the theme of aging and materiality. When AAQ recieved a unique submission looking at intergenerational communication in Mongolia and America, I decided to extend the special issue on Aging in East Asia to Part II. The result is the current issue, featuring articles that together highlight the importance of the anthropological lens for understanding macro-level social transformations as well as more intimate processes of managing age-related life transitions.

Choi, Giles and Hajek's examination of intergenerational perceptions of communication not only makes an important contribution to social science studies of Mongolia in general, but stands out for its use of statistical methods, which provide compelling data linking cultural attitudes and communicative strategies. These quantitative measures allow the authors to present cross-cultural comparisons with an American sample, further setting their findings into relief. Using the CPAM model of the intergenerational encounter, the authors elaborate on the changing values and relationships in contemporary Mongolia that no doubt resonates with the situations in other Asian countries where communication between the young, middle-aged and old has profound implications for social integration, care, and continuity. While AAQ has not published many quantitative studies, Choi, Giles and Hajek's work is a strong example of the utility of these methods for helping us to question the salience of cultural norms across cohorts and their influence on behaviors.

The following three articles (Suzuki, Taniguchi, and Fujiwara) were adapted from papers originally delivered at the Society for East Asian Anthropology conference "Material Asia: Objects, Technologies and Rethinking Success" in August, 2011. It was a pleasure to have AAQ submissions from this exceptional group of Japanese scholars, and I sincerely appreciate the earnest efforts made to develop their work for our journal.

Each article in this group not only show how various objects, materials, and technologies affect older adults' self-identity, sense of meaning, and agency, but they also illustrate the ways in which materials extend persons into the social and natural world, creating new possibilities for intergenerational relationships, configurations of labor, and political authority. Older adults not only remain productive members of their communities, but they are energetic innovators, self-promoters, and keen business-people. Suzuki's ethnographic work on decorative leaf industry in the town of Kamikatsu and Taniguchi's study of decorative traditional textiles both show how older adults' have been able to leverage practical knowledge, experience, and labor in ways that have expanded their skills, created opportunities for new forms of intergenerational communication, and brought about changes not only in wealth, but also in local infrastructure and the social capital of the community. Fujiwara goes even further in deconstructing the border between persons and materiality, drawing on older aduts' beliefs and practices focused on statues of Jizō. Fujiwara suggests that worshippers' dependence on Jizō, materialized in the practice of vows and the circulation of the statue's many heads, produces a new understanding of "successful aging," in which authenticity is not tied to a singular notion of an integral identity, but rather, it is ambiguous, transient, and distributed across bodies and locations. Not only have these articles covered a broad range of material engagements, but they have also provided some wonderful photographs to accompany them.

To be sure, we have not seen the last of aging in East Asia in AAQ, as many regions and topic still remain unaddressed in these last two issues. I continue to look forward to more fine submissions for future issues of AAQ, including commentaries, photo essays, reviews, and research reports. My sincere thanks to all of the contributors, reviewers, and AAGE for making this issue possible.

Jason Danely
Editor

ARTICLE

Young Adults' Perceptions of Intergenerational Communication: Mongolian and American Data

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Abstract
This study examines Mongolian and American young adults' perceptions of intergenerational communication, specifically with respect to age stereotypes, norms of respect, communication behavior, and communication satisfaction. Using the Communication Predicament of Aging Model as a theoretical framework, the relationships between these variables are investigated using regression analyses. Young adults from both cultural contexts were asked to evaluate prior interactions with both middle-aged and older adults. The findings indicate a difference between how each generation is perceived, and the unique role of the middle-aged generation in Mongolia is evident.

Key Words: Age stereotypes, Age norms, Vitality, Benevolence, Politeness, Deference, Respect, Avoidance, Communication satisfaction, Communication enjoyment, Middle-Age, Older adult, Mongolia

INTRODUCTION

The population of older individuals has increased significantly in the past decade. This, coupled with increasing longevity, offers more opportunities for young adults to have contact with older individuals. Research in Western societies has indicated that young people construe communication with non-family older adults as often dissatisfactory and problematic (see Hummert, 2010; Williams & Giles, 1996). Consequently, younger interlocutors are often conversationally avoidant of older adults but, nonetheless, report it necessary to be respectful (Gallois et al., 1999; Ryan, Kwong See, Meneer, & Trovato,

1992). This profile is cross-culturally resilient to the extent that it spans an array of different cultures having disparate religious and social traditions (e.g., McCann, Ota, Giles, & Caraker, 2003; Ota, Giles, & Somera, 2007).

The current study also aims to examine communicative behaviors that occur between generations. While the interaction between younger and older adults has been given a considerable amount of attention, there has been little, if any, examination of the encounters between young adults and middle-aged adults. This study will contribute

to this line of research by investigating how young adults perceive interactions across the lifespan, with middle-aged and older adults.

Due to a programmatic commitment to understanding intergenerational dynamics across cultural contexts, the current study compares Mongolia - a country with a recent history rich in political, economic, and social change – to the USA, applying a model of attitudinal and behavioral factors in intergenerational communication. In Mongolia, the development of a recent democracy has replaced an older foreign system of government. This has created a shift toward the revitalization of traditional Mongolian values, particularly with regard to how each generation is perceived, along with role adjustments for the different generations today. The evident cultural difference of Mongolia, as compared to the USA, is also a reason to investigate this context. The unique upbringing of Mongolian young adults should affect the intergenerational interactions with other generations (Nomintushig, 2011). Interestingly, little communication data has emerged from this nation, let alone as it relates to intergenerational exchanges.

COMMUNICATION PREDICAMENT OF AGING MODEL

The communication predicament of aging model (CPAM: Harwood, Giles, Fox, Ryan, & Williams, 1993; Ryan, Giles, Bartolucci, & Henwood, 1986) offers a theoretical perspective on communicative behaviors that can be found in intergenerational interactions. The CPAM (see Figure 1) proposes that when a young adult interacts with an older adult, a negative stereotype may be triggered by age cues associated with the latter. The physical and communicative characteristics of the older adult target (e.g., physiognomy, hair color, and voice quality) and the context of the interaction (that can make age salient and/or highlight a particular age subtype) will influence the stereotyping process (Hummert, 2010), and have personal implications for the older individual (e.g. self-esteem). Once these typecasts are triggered, the speech of the younger adult is adjusted in a way to accommodate the relational partner's assumed deficiencies (Hummert & Ryan, 1996). The communicative behaviors seen in this interaction are best explained by communication accommodation theory (CAT: e.g., Giles, Coupland, & Coupland 1991; Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005). CAT explores
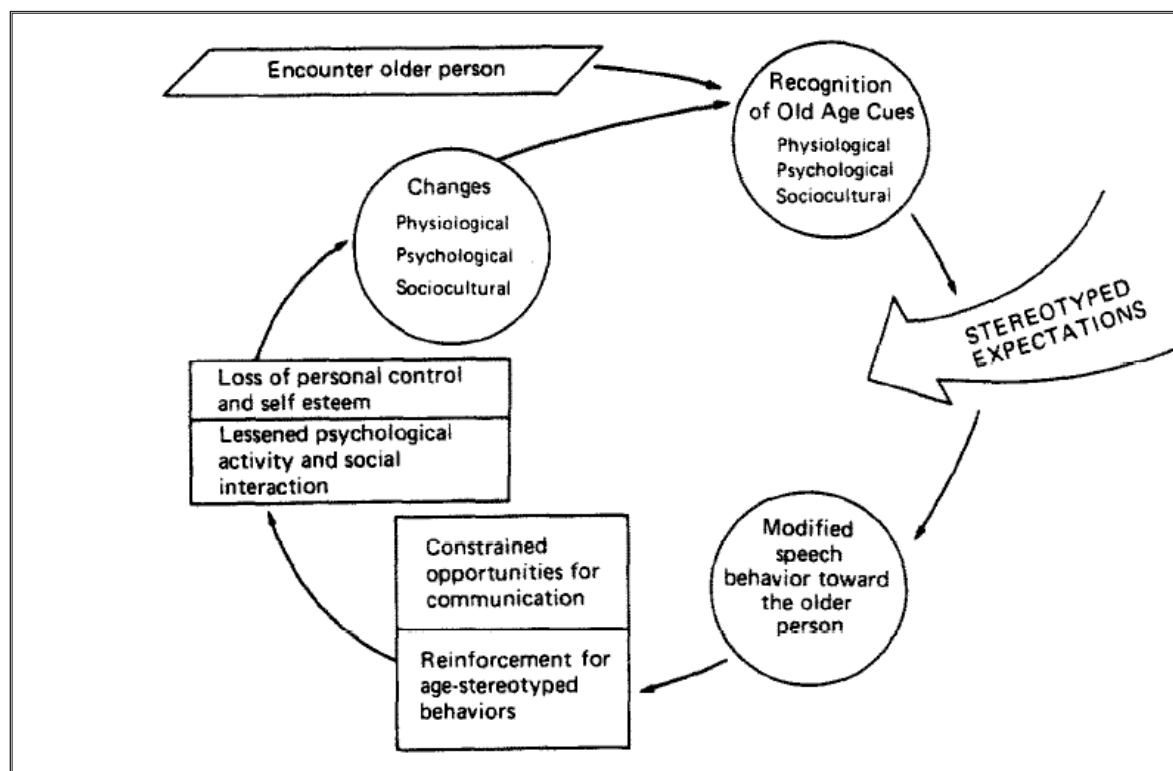

Figure 1. Communication Predicament of Aging Model (CPAM) (Ryan et al., 1986). Reprinted with permission from Elsevier Publishers.

the ways in which individuals vary their communicative behavior to accommodate others given where they believe others to be, their motivations for so doing, and the social consequences arising.

Accommodative communication fosters a climate where conversational partners listen to one another, take the other's views into account, desire to understand their conversational partner's unique situation, and explain things in ways that "sit right" with their partner. An accommodative climate also features pleasantness, politeness, and respect and is predictably more positively perceived by the interactants involved (as well as third-party observers) than nonaccommodative messages (e.g., Myers, Giles, Reid, & Nabi, 2008). Nonaccommodative communication can occur when the differences between the communicators are accentuated. The goals or motivations of this communication style include signaling disapproval or emphasizing social distance, which has the potential to make communication problematic (see Coupland, Wiemann, & Giles, 1991).

Predictor Variables of Intergenerational Communication Satisfaction

Using CPAM as a guiding theoretical framework, a program of research across different cultures has emerged to investigate intergenerational interactions further, and to determine the predictors (for young people) of the communication behavior within and how they, in turn, predict perceived satisfaction when talking with older adults (Giles, Dailey, Sarkar, & Makoni, 2007; Giles, Hajek, Stoitsova, & Choi, 2010; Giles, Makoni, & Dailey, 2005).

More specifically, intergenerational conversations are first regulated by the existing stereotypes of vitality and benevolence (Hummert, Garstka, Shaner, & Strahm, 1994), and the general norms of politeness and deference attributed to the various age groups (McCann, Dailey, Giles, & Ota, 2005). These perceptions work as a psychological starting point, and then determine whether young adults will either communicatively show respect or decide to avoid such contact. Subsequently, these communication behaviors produce the varying levels of fulfillment and satisfaction in these kinds of encounters (Harwood et al., 1993). What will follow is a description of each of these concepts, how they fit within the theoretical model of CPAM, and how they also work together to influence the overall success of an intergenerational interaction.

Age stereotypes: personality and benevolence. Young adults have certain impressions about the physical ability and health of other age groups, and as the target age groups become older, this leads to attributions of decreased personal vitality. In contrast often, stereotypes of

benevolence that include attributed wisdom, kindness, and generosity of a particular target age group correspondingly increase as the target age group becomes older (Harwood et al., 1996; see also Hummert et al. 1994; Zhang, Hummert, & Gartska, 2002).

Filial piety. This is a cultural norm that prescribes looking after and respecting older family members, as well as older individuals in general (Barker, Giles, & Harwood, 2004). While this type of respect is shared across different cultures, the extent of its influence has been seen to vary (see Gallois et al., 1999). The concept – its recent erosion notwithstanding (Giles, McCann, Ota, & Noels, 2002), has traditionally been associated with East Asian (and other) cultures (e.g., Ho, 1994; Sung, 1995) such as the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan. McCann et al. (2005) found that young adults would subscribe more to norms of politeness and deference toward older adults than their same-aged peers, and that these norms acted as predictors of communicative behaviors with non-family older adults.

Communicative behaviors. A key aspect of an intergenerational interaction is the communicative respect conveyed during conversation, and this can be understood from a CAT perspective (see above). The level of accommodation that a speaker demonstrates through his/her communication can reflect the degree of respect apparent in the interaction. Communicating respect is an outcome variable that can determine the success of an intergenerational exchange (Giles & Gasiorek, 2011). The CPAM (see Figure 1) underscores the importance of this behavior particularly for the older adult. The amount of respect conveyed in a young adult's communicative behavior affects the self-concept of the older individual. Specifically, the accommodating communication of a young adult (if perceived as authentic) counteracts the vicious cycle inherent in CPAM. The amount of appropriate accommodation used in such interchanges has also been proposed as one reason the outcome can be perceived as either communicatively satisfying or dissatisfying (Barker et al., 2004).

A contrastive set of behaviors relate to decisions to avoid intergenerational encounters. Avoidance is a broad concept that includes not only staying away from an interaction, but also finding ways to exit conversation or avoiding saying what one wants to say (Cai, Giles, & Noels, 1998). Ryan et al. (1992) conducted a study where young adults would engage in or avoid an interaction with an older adult based on impressions of physical ability. The resulting negative communicative output (i.e., under- or overaccommodating communication) led to negative impressions of these interactions. Even with more positive attempts, a younger adult may not feel appreciated for

their accommodating efforts, or an older person may feel incompetent by the overaccommodating efforts. In these situations, both parties can feel discouraged. Consequently, interlocutors may be deterred from seeking out these types of intergenerational encounters, and may avoid them altogether (Giles & Gasiorek, 2011).

When predicting the overall satisfaction experienced by young adults in these intergenerational encounters, this line of research has, as mentioned above, been pursued in South Africa and Ghana (Giles et al., 2005), India (Giles et al., 2007) and, most recently, in Bulgaria (Giles et al., 2010). Each of these cultural contexts offers variations on what predicts positive evaluations. For instance, in the USA, communicative respect and avoidance predict intergenerational satisfaction whereas, in India, age stereotypes are stronger predictors of this outcome variable (Giles et al., 2007). The following section will offer a background to the Mongolian context and its unique intergenerational context.

Mongolia: Cultural Parameters

Like many of the other cultural contexts previously analyzed, Mongolia has also endured societal changes and political shifts that have had a significant impact on intergenerational relationships. Over the last 100 years, Mongolians have been influenced by different strands of social thought: the native nomadic way of life; Buddhism; the Communist state; the more recent democratic government; and the ongoing modernization of the country that is underlined throughout all of these systems (Brunn, 2006). These changes and political shifts have had a significant impact on the Mongolian culture as a whole and, in particular, the way various generations communicate with one another. These transformations have resulted in large-scale value and experiential differences between younger, middle-aged, and older generations; new social identities in regard to generational characteristics are being forged together with some desire to break with tradition (de la Sablonniere, Tougas, & Lortie-Lussier, 2010).

Over the centuries in Mongolia, age came with a certain amount of prestige and respect. As people grew older, they would increase their ability to gather wealth and status in their communities. However, the influence of communism began essentially to separate the connection between age and wealth (Pedersen, 2006). The more recent onset of democracy and capitalism similarly deteriorated this traditional connection. As a result, there is a growing tendency, especially in more urban parts of Mongolia, to demonstrate less reverence toward older adults (Cheng, Chan, & Phillips, 2008). The rise in more individualistic ideologies is apparent and older generations are expressing

a growing concern for the future of these traditional practices (Stol & Adiya, 2010).

Additionally and in more urban contexts, older adults are not as much of a presence in the family unit. Many older adults are choosing to stay in the countryside while their children's families are moving into larger urban areas. This adds a unique dynamic to the intergenerational relationship in Mongolia. Urban adolescents seem to be growing more disrespectful toward this older generation, partly due to a lack of contact with older adults and, instead, it is the middle generation that is more often revered and constantly looked upon for leadership (Pedersen & Hojer, 2008).

In regard then to the middle-aged, Mongolia provides a unique setting where the middle-aged, in comparison to other age groups, has been given a significant amount of authority and status. Due to the extreme political and economic changes that have occurred since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the middle generation has, arguably, been forced to adapt to these changes the most over any other generation, and has also been viewed as the most influential and authoritative generation during this transition toward capitalism (Stol & Adiya, 2010). Specifically, it is the increased group vitality of those who are middle-aged, and the limited exposure young adults have with older adults that create a unique status for this particular generation.

In light of all the cultural changes experienced by the Mongolian people, there now seems to be the growth of a conflicting paradigm, and a rise in efforts to re-establish the status afforded the older generation. The eldest men of a community are explicitly associated with the past, and there is a growing belief that the past before both communism and democracy was a morally superior age in comparison. As a result, modern Mongolians are attempting to balance a revival of cultural tradition with the recent memory of two influential political structures in an efficient communist government and a potentially lucrative democracy. The tension begins with the idea of recapturing a culture and tradition that has been lost as a result of foreign government, followed by an understanding that communism provided quality in education and consistency in annual monetary earnings and, finally, that modernization through democracy provides an opportunity for a more promising future (Brunn, 2006). There seems to be a split in sentiment toward the desire to become modernized and the value of Mongolian traditionalism. The aim of this investigation is to identify evidence of these trends and to attain a better understanding of the intergenerational communication found in Mongolia.

Predicting Behavior: Communicative Respect and Avoidance

In the USA, young adults' stereotypes of older adults' personal vitality do, in fact, predict the reported avoidance of encounters with older adults (McCann et al., 2005). Findings have indicated that the more stereotypical benevolence and personal vitality (i.e., positive perceptions) young people attribute to older individuals, the more these older adults are respected and not avoided. In various cultural contexts described above, the existing norms of politeness and deference have also been seen to predict communicative respect for older individuals (Giles et al., 2010).

According to the CPAM (see Figure 1), the existing stereotypes and norms of behavior should function as predictor variables for the communicative behavior found in intergenerational encounters. In addition, the cultural norms of intergenerational politeness and deference that exist in a given context should predict the communicative respect exhibited by a young adult toward middle-aged or older target age groups (McCann et al., 2005). Hence, the following is predicted:

> H1: When young Americans communicate with either middle-aged or older adults, communicative respect will be predicted by normative politeness and deference, while communicative avoidance will be predicted by normative deference and negatively by stereotypical personal vitality.

Returning to the Mongolian context, due to current changes in political and economic infrastructure, the middle generation continues to grow as an influential age group leading Mongolia in this Post-Soviet era. The stronger group vitality of the middle-aged (see Giles et al., 2000) in comparison to other age groups in the current Mongolian context should have an impact on the predictor variables that have emerged in previous research. Specifically, a different pattern of predictive relationship might be expected to emerge between age stereotypes, age norms, and communication behavior. In order to identify what patterns emerge when middle-aged targets with high group vitality are inserted into the evaluative frame, the following research question is proposed:

> RQ1: When young Mongolians communicate with either middle-aged or older adults, will age stereotypes and age norms predict communicative respect and avoidance?

Predicting Communication Satisfaction

As stated earlier, CAT offers insight into the overall satisfaction that may be perceived within an intergenerational interaction (Barker et al., 2004). As a young adult accommodates a middle-aged or older adult, this communicative respect may lead to a satisfying encounter for both parties involved. On the other hand, nonaccommodative behavior (i.e., underaccommodation or overaccommodation) should be negatively associated with communication satisfaction.

Regarding the predictive power of avoidance (i.e., nonaccommodation) in these previously found interactions, high communicative avoidance was found to be responsible for dissatisfaction in all settings, whereas communicative respect was potent only in Africa (Giles et al., 2005). With consideration of this significant nuance, the stability of communicative avoidance's impact and the effect of communicative respect should be considered. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> H2: When young Americans communicate with either middle-aged or older adults, intergenerational satisfaction will be predicted by communicative respect (and negatively by) communicative avoidance.

With regard to intergenerational encounters in Mongolia, prior research in this area offers some indication of the predictor variables that may be influential in intergenerational satisfaction (i.e., communicative behavior). It is unclear, however, how young adults might communicate with other generations in Mongolia, and the role of both communicative respect and avoidance on the overall satisfaction in this interaction. Therefore:

> RQ2: When young Mongolians communicate with either middle-aged or older adults, will communicative respect and avoidance predict communication satisfaction?

Method

To test the hypotheses about intra- and inter-generational communication perceptions, individuals from the two nations (USA and Mongolia) offered self-assessed reports across three different target ages. Using a within-subjects design, questionnaires asked participants to indicate their interaction experiences with non-family members or non-close friends regarding middle-aged, and older adults. This design allowed for the analysis of more observations and an increase in statistical power. Two orders of these age targets were presented for half the sample respectively: middle-aged, and older adults in contrast to older, and middle-aged adults. Order effects were not apparent and these data were subsequently collapsed.

Participants

Undergraduate students (N = 409) from universities in Mongolia and the United States participated in the study. The Mongolian sample (n = 181; 93 females) was comprised entirely of ethnic Mongolians, who ranged in age from 17 to 29, with a mean reported age of 20.12 (SD = 2.00). The participants were all volunteer undergraduate students from the capital city, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The United States sample (n = 228; 100 females) was drawn entirely from communication undergraduates at a Western university who received extra course credit for their participation. The majority of these participants were Caucasian (53.5%), the remainder being of Latino/a (12.8%), Asian/Pacific Island (10.2%), East Indian (2.6%), Middle Eastern (2.2%), African-American (.9%), and "Other American" (2.2%) descent. Their ages ranged from 18 to 34, with a mean reported age of 20.22 (SD = 1.85). The respondents were not asked to specify their citizenship or residential status.

PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS

For each target age, the questionnaires included measures of perceived stereotypes of the age group, norms of respect (i.e., how they believe they should generally interact with the age group), communication behaviors (i.e., how they actually behave during interactions with the target age), and communication satisfaction with the age group. Participants were allowed to self-define these age ranges (i.e., middle-age adulthood, and older adulthood). Respondents were allowed to self-define the age range(s) of the specified targets (e.g., middle-age adulthood begins at X years and ends at Y years), as opposed to working from pre-specified target age ranges. The perceptions of "middle-aged" and "older," were evaluated from relative standpoints using a within-subjects design.[1]

The scales were translated into Mongolian and then back-translated into English for validation. All items (7-point Likert format) for these scales (as well as their original sources) are provided in McCann et al. (2005). Separate analyses were conducted for the Mongolian and American samples. Confirmatory factor analyses revealed the same factors and general loading invariance between the two nations, and the same factors across target ages, for age stereotypes, norms of respect, and communication behaviors, and these were, indeed, identical to the factors revealed in past studies and described above (e.g., Giles et al. 2005). For the data collected in this study (both the USA and Mongolia samples), the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) for the factors by each target were calculated (see below).

Age stereotypes. Participants' stereotypes regarding each age group were assessed (e.g., Harwood et al., 1996) through a nine-item semantic differential scale: personal vitality (α = .67) and benevolence (α = .61). The personal vitality factor included six items about the physical ability and vitality of members from the target age group (e.g., strong vs. weak), and the benevolence factor included three items regarding the personality characteristics associated with a target age group (i.e., generous-ungenerous).

Norms of Respect. Participants' beliefs about how they should act with each age group were assessed through seven items (Gallois et al., 1999). The politeness factor (α = .88) refers to norms people feel they should enact during interactions with the target age group and included three items (e.g., "I should speak politely to them"). The deference factor (α = .75) refers to a restraint of behaviors during interactions and included four items (e.g., "I should restrain myself from arguing with them").

Communication behaviors. Communication behaviors during interactions with the three target ages were assessed through two dimensions: respect and avoidance across the nations and target ages. The respect factor (α = .74) included six items (e.g., "I accommodated to them"), and the avoidance factor (α = .72) included three items (e.g., "I did not know what to say").

Communication satisfaction. This was assessed with each age using two items: "I enjoyed my conversation with them" and "I was not satisfied with my conversation with them." The second item was reverse-coded so that greater scores indicated greater satisfaction and enjoyment. Although these items were correlated in the American data from moderate to high degrees (r = .389 to .599, p < .01), not surprisingly, the correlations were much weaker in the Mongolian data set (r = .198 to .279, p < .01). The entire data set, which included both the Mongolian and the USA sample, showed too low of a correlation (r = .277 to .393, p < .01). Previous use of this scale in Ghana and South Africa (Giles et al., 2005) separated the two items when the reported correlations were too low (for older targets, r = .25 for Ghana, and the correlation was non-significant for South Africa). Since the correlations in the Mongolian sample were similarly low, and the reliability coefficients were inadequate, these items were assessed separately in the analyses (as communication satisfaction and communication enjoyment).

RESULTS

Predictors of Communicative Respect and Avoidance

In line with McCann et al. (2005) and Giles et al. (2007), separate regression analyses were used to determine whether the two stereotypes and two normative factors

Table 1   Regression Results for USA Data (Older Adult Targets)

	B	F	df	R^2
Respect		12.68**	(5, 183)	.26
Vitality	-.091			
Benevolence	.035			
Politeness	.205*			
Deference	.344**			
Avoidance		10.80**	(5, 185)	.23
Vitality	-.145*			
Benevolence	-.141*			
Politeness	-.042			
Deference	.435**			
Communication Satisfaction		7.50**	(7, 182)	.23
Respect	.054			
Avoid	-.498**			
Vitality	.005			
Benevolence	.007			
Politeness	.120			
Deference	.132			
Communication Enjoyment		8.31**	(7, 183)	.25
Respect	.235*			
Avoid	-.421**			
Vitality	.091			
Benevolence	.073			
Politeness	.162*			
Deference	-.021			

Note. $*p < .05$, $**p < .001$.

predicted the extent to which communicative respect and avoidance were reportedly enacted with middle-aged and older adults. H1 found only partial support. Specifically, the predictors of communication toward older adults confirmed the hypothesis; however, when communicating with the middle-aged group, young adults reported some differences. The Mongolian data also revealed some similarities and differences (RQ1) across the two nations (Table 1-4) that will be reported next.

Older adult targets. Both politeness and deference significantly predicted respect toward older adults in the American data: self-reported displays of respect increased as participants' beliefs regarding politeness and deference about older adults increased (Table 1). The politeness finding was reflected, even more so, in the Mongolian data (Table 2). However, for Mongolians, deference did not predict respect.

When predicting avoidance of older adults, the stereotypes of personal vitality and the norm of deference were significant for the American data. That is, as participants' views of older adults decreased in vitality, avoidance during interactions with older adults increased; avoidance also increased as the norm of deference increased. In

contrast to the American participants, vitality and deference did not predict avoidance in the Mongolian sample. In sum, and as one might expect, age stereotypes and norms are important predictors of intergenerational communicative outcomes, albeit less so for the Mongolian participants.

Middle-aged adult targets. In the USA data set, norms of politeness about middle-aged adults significantly predicted respect toward the middle-aged: self-reported displays of communicative respect increased as participants' beliefs regarding politeness when interacting with middle-aged adults increased (Table 3). The norm of deference, however, did not predict communicative respect as predicted. From the Mongolia data, it was norms of politeness, which was the only significant predictor of communicative respect (Table 4).

Regarding communication avoidance, while Americans reported that the norms of deference were a significant predictor, stereotypes of vitality did not seem to influence communicative avoidance. In Mongolia, neither the reports of stereotypes nor the norms of politeness had any impact on avoidant communication.

Table 2   Regression Results for Mongolia Data (Older Adult Targets)

	B	F	df	R^2
Respect		15.90**	(5, 141)	.37
Vitality	.066			
Benevolence	.106			
Politeness	.466**			
Deference	.115			
Avoidance		1.28	(5, 143)	.04
Vitality	.163			
Benevolence	-.030			
Politeness	-.036			
Deference	.133			
Communication Satisfaction		4.42**	(7, 140)	.19
Respect	.151			
Avoid	-.377**			
Vitality	-.065			
Benevolence	-.075			
Politeness	.196			
Deference	-.071			
Communication Enjoyment		10.07**	(7, 138)	.35
Respect	.642**			
Avoid	-.198*			
Vitality	.049			
Benevolence	.054			
Politeness	-.077			
Deference	-.006			

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

Predictors of Communication Satisfaction and Enjoyment

In line with previous work in this arena, separate multiple regressions were conducted to determine the predictors of communication satisfaction and enjoyment with older and middle aged adults for each nation. H2 received partial support and the findings pertaining to RQ2 offered additional insight into how Mongolian young adults interact differently with the middle-aged in comparison to older adults.

Older adult targets. When the communication behaviors were used to predict communication satisfaction and communication enjoyment with older adults in the American sample (Table 1), only avoidance was significantly related to satisfaction, while both respect and avoidance predicted communication enjoyment. Therefore, H2 was partially supported. The same predictors were found in the Mongolian sample (Table 2). An increase in both satisfaction and enjoyment was related to a decrease in avoidance, and there was a significant relationship between communicative respect and overall enjoyment.

Middle-aged adult targets. In the American sample (Table 3), identical to the evaluation of older adult targets, the predictors of communicative respect and avoidance impacted the overall evaluation of these encounters. Communicative avoidance negatively predicted communication satisfaction: As avoidance decreased, the levels of communication satisfaction increased. For enjoyment, both respect and avoidance were found to be predictors.

In the Mongolian sample (Table 4) avoidance similarly predicted satisfaction, however it was only respect that predicted enjoyment. Unlike the USA sample, communicative avoidance did not predict the evaluation of enjoyment. When speaking with middle-aged adults, Mongolians reported that a decrease in avoidance predicted an increase in satisfaction, but a decrease in avoidance did not predict overall enjoyment.

Discussion

This study investigated the variables that influence the communication and the perceptions that young adults have about previous intergenerational encounters. When evaluating past interactions with various target age groups (i.e., middle-aged adults and older adults), the perceived

Table 3   Regression Results for USA Data (Middle-Aged Adults)

	B	F	df	R^2
Respect		15.86**	(5, 183)	.31
Vitality	-.060			
Benevolence	.194*			
Politeness	.403**			
Deference	.122			
Avoidance		2.44*	(5, 184)	.06
Vitality	-.103			
Benevolence	.061			
Politeness	-.080			
Deference	.216*			
Communication Satisfaction		8.09**	(7, 183)	.24
Respect	-.031			
Avoid	-.417**			
Vitality	-.069			
Benevolence	-.026			
Politeness	.245*			
Deference	-.072			
Communication Enjoyment		5.93**	(7, 183)	.19
Respect	.270*			
Avoid	-.351**			
Vitality	.101			
Benevolence	-.033			
Politeness	.102			
Deference	.023			

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

Table 4   Regression Results for Mongolia Data (Middle-Aged Adults)

	B	F	df	R^2
Respect		7.18**	(5, 142)	.21
Vitality	.139			
Benevolence	-.165			
Politeness	.472**			
Deference	-.046			
Avoidance		1.33	(5, 140)	.05
Vitality	-.081			
Benevolence	.044			
Politeness	-.081			
Deference	.165			
Communication Satisfaction		2.78*	(7, 139)	.13
Respect	.068			
Avoid	-.281*			
Vitality	.023			
Benevolence	-.147			
Politeness	.010			
Deference	-.104			
Communication Enjoyment		3.37*	(7, 138)	.15
Respect	.203*			
Avoid	-.090			
Vitality	.124			
Benevolence	.026			
Politeness	.132			
Deference	.094			

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

stereotypes of each age group, the norms of how members from each group should be treated, the perceptual reports of the communication behaviors that occur, and the overall reported outcome of these interactions varied by the cultural context. The evaluations of these concepts identified predictor variables for communicative behaviors and evaluations of satisfaction and enjoyment when speaking with target age groups.

CPAM (Figure 1) describes how the negative stereotypes, which are initially triggered by age cues, determine the communicative behaviors within an intergenerational encounter (Hummert, 2010). The findings in this study demonstrate and support this phenomenon, but also indicate a difference in cultural behavior regarding how each generation is perceived. These data indicate the importance of cultural influences in any given context, demonstrate a need for more analysis of the predictor variables found within intergenerational encounters, and finally provide further insight into the patterns of behavior described in CPAM.

American young adults seem to adhere more to a norm of

deference toward an older generation, but in Mongolia, young adults reported that a norm of deference did not contribute to their efforts in creating an accommodating climate for the same target age group. The findings also described the unique status of the middle-aged generation in Mongolia when compared to the same target age group in the USA. Nonaccommodative communication predicted negative evaluations for all other intergenerational encounters in both contexts; however, even with the presence of this negative communication behavior, Mongolians still reported that their interactions with the middle-aged group were enjoyable. The group vitality and position of this middle-age group in Mongolia seems to outweigh nonaccommodating behavior.

In a post-hoc analysis[2], Mongolians showed the same level of respect in their communication to the middle-aged group as they would a member of their own target age group. Similarly, the findings showed only a minimal increase in avoidance between young adults and the middle-aged in comparison to the more drastic increase seen in the U.S. sample. Middle-aged adults tend to hold a significantly higher level of group vitality within a society (Giles et al., 2000, Ota, McCann, & Honeycutt, 2012),

and this appears evident in the cultural and historical characteristics of Mongolia. This intergenerational quality seems to influence the communicative dynamic with the middle-age generation.

The hypotheses and research questions of this analysis were generally supported. The predictor variables were found to be wide-ranging in both contexts for the communication behavior, evaluation of satisfaction, and perceptions of enjoyment. When comparing the USA and Mongolian findings, these data proved to be helpful in more comprehensively understanding the impact of culture and historical influences within these interactions. Additionally, the analyses of intergenerational communication offered insight into the array of influences that produce such interactions. Let us now turn to discussing findings for each culture separately and as they relate to reported between-age group interactions.

USA Sample: Intergenerational Communication

The first two hypotheses in this study pertained to the USA sample, and both were partially supported. Similar to a previous analysis (McCann et al., 2005), both stereotypes and norms were seen to be predictors of the communication behavior found within an intergenerational encounter (H1). Within the USA intergenerational setting the expected norms of politeness and deference determined an adjustment in communication by young adults toward communicative respect, thereby creating an accommodative climate. Unfortunately, as also predicted, the same age cues also led a young adult to be more avoidant of these interactions (Gallois et al., 1999). Specifically, the stereotypes of personal vitality toward this older generation predicted nonaccommodative communication with older adults. Just as the CPAM proposes, when the stereotypes toward a particular age group become more negative, there is an increase in detrimental and avoidant communication behavior.

When predicting the perceived satisfaction and enjoyment of an intergenerational encounter, this analysis looked at the communicative behavior as predictors (H2). For the current USA sample, identical patterns were reported when American young adults communicated with the middle-aged group. The findings indicate that a positive communicative adjustment, or accommodative communication, led to the overall enjoyment of these intergenerational encounters. CPAM identifies the benefits of an accommodative climate for the older interlocutor, but being respectful seems to contribute also to the enjoyment experienced by the young adult as well. As for communicative avoidance, this variable clearly predicted both satisfaction and enjoyment. As the stereotypes,

driven by age cues, triggered more nonaccommodating behavior, young adults seem to experience a reduced sense of overall satisfaction. Cautiously applied, value may be obtained from these findings as they pertain directly to making intergenerational encounters more pleasant for both parties.

Mongolia Sample: Intergenerational Communication

In the Mongolian sample, RQ1 and RQ2 address how Mongolian participants evaluated interactions with middle-aged and older adults. The political and economic transformation of this context has resulted in a large-scale shift in values over the past several decades, and interactions with older adults have increasingly been evaluated as negative in Mongolia (Pedersen, 2006). As in the USA, and according to CPAM, the findings show that the norms of politeness predict communicative respect toward both middle-aged and older adults. Within an intergenerational encounter a young adult is reminded of the cultural and/or contextual expectation of how an older adult should be treated (i.e. norms of politeness), and as a result a communicative adjustment toward accommodativeness occurs. However, even though norms of politeness were reported in these reflections upon intergenerational communication, a norm of deference seemed to have no impact on communicative behaviors in the Mongolian sample.

This actually demonstrates a distinct cultural difference between the USA and Mongolia that may be caused by a rise in more individualistic ideologies throughout Mongolia's recent history (Stol & Adiya, 2010). Furthermore, the lack of relevance of deference toward older adults to communication behaviors in the Mongolian context is a surprisingly unique phenomenon in this cross-cultural line of research. Previously collected data in both the USA (McCann et al. 2005) and India (Giles et al. 2007) demonstrated that the norms of deference predicted accommodative behavior. However, this apparently is not the case in Mongolia, and these young adults reported that a norm of deference did not contribute to the efforts in creating an accommodative climate. As feared by older adults in Mongolia (Pedersen & Hojer, 2008), this finding offers evidence that young adults seem to be lacking in deference for this older generation.

Once again as elsewhere (i.e., USA, India, and South Africa), the most potent predictor of intergenerational communication satisfaction in Mongolia was communicative avoidance and, more importantly, the findings confirmed that communication behavior played a significant role in determining the perceived outcome

of these interactions. The regression analyses showed that there was much similarity between the USA and Mongolia in regard to what predicted both satisfaction and enjoyment, especially when older adults were the targets of evaluation. In answer to RQ2, the predictor variables were identical in the Mongolian sample as they were in the USA when evaluating communication with older adults. Communication avoidance was the only predictor of satisfaction, and communicative respect and avoidance appeared as predictors for communication enjoyment.

A difference, however, was reported when middle-aged adults became the target of communication. For the Mongolian sample, communicative avoidance did not act as a strong predictor of satisfaction, nor did it play a significant role in predicting enjoyment. In every other context reported (i.e., the USA, India, S. Africa, Ghana, Bulgaria, and when interactions with an older target age groups were evaluated) less avoidant communication, or underaccommodation, predicted more overall satisfaction and enjoyment. When young Mongolian adults reported on communication with the middle-aged target age group, this was not the case, and it is possible that this may be caused by the overall group vitality of the middle-aged generation (Giles et al., 2000).

The findings from the Mongolian sample seem to indicate that this middle-aged generation holds a unique position of authority in the social hierarchy of age groups. The group vitality of the middle-aged group in Mongolia seems to negate the impact of even nonaccommodative communication. Even with the presence of this negative communication behavior Mongolians still reported that their interactions with the middle-aged group were enjoyable. The status of the middle-aged target is so high in Mongolia that young adults report enjoyment from these interactions regardless of this negative communicative factor. This provides further evidence as to the differences between the two cultures, and specifically in regard to how this middle-aged group is perceived.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

These findings should be interpreted in light of some limitations, not least of which is the reliance, as before, on student populations. The experience of urban living college students with higher levels of education should be considered to be a unique perspective on intergenerational communication. The amount of contact that college students in Mongolia have with the older generation may be significantly different than those who live in more rural areas. Relatedly, the amount of contact should be included as a moderating variable and/or controlled to determine its influence on the existing stereotypes and norms of behavior when young adults interact with other generations.

Another limitation of this study was that the existing political attitudes of participants in the sample were not independently assessed. Mongolia is unique in that the country has gone through considerable political and economic changes in just the past few decades. How young adults perceive communism and the Soviet Union may have an impact on their stereotypes of older generations who were contributors of this past political system. Negative attitudes toward communism and how those political ideologies affected Mongolian history, may be associated with older adults as an age group, and these negative impressions may have the potential to determine the evaluation of intergenerational encounters.

Despite these limitations, this study provided valuable data with an under-studied population in intergenerational communication research, and this Mongolian setting is deserving of more focal empirical and theoretical scrutiny. Yet again, this line of research has not been able to locate a cultural setting where the communication climate for older people holds any appreciable advantage for them. Clearly, there is a need to further investigate the factors that incline young people to avoid older individuals (as in the USA) – or where they are less deferent (as in Mongolia) - and what adverse outcomes arise as a consequence. Future work should continue to investigate all pertaining factors that work within these important intergenerational interactions.

Notes

1 Perceptions of "young" "middle-aged" and "older," were evaluated from relative standpoints using a within-subjects design. Further discussion of these data, as well as the age boundaries reported by participants can be obtained from the first author.

2 A univariate analyses showed that the interaction between target and nation was significant for respect (F = 37.30, p < .001, $\eta2$ = .099). Mongolians reported more respect for younger adults than did American participants (Mongolian M = 5.01; American M = 4.16). Mongolians and Americans reported similar levels of communicative respect for the middle-aged target (Mongolian M = 5.03; American M = 5.06). However, Americans reported more respect for older adults than did Mongolian participants (American M = 5.95; Mongolian M = 5.37).

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Creating a Community of Resilience:
New Meanings of Technologies for Greater Well-Being in a Depopulated Town

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Abstract
This article reflects upon the process of care in a depopulated town that is progressively graying. This has led to a consciousness of older adult's well-being and has led to the creation of living places for people from diverse cultural backgrounds and multiple generations. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in this town, this article traces the activities of persons searching for ways to promote a new industry in a manner that is appropriate to the local environment and that also matches the needs of older adults, aiming to help them continue to live in the community. It explores the kind of world discovered by those older adults who have continued to work by taking advantage of both their own resources and those of the community, and looks at how creative ways of supporting those efforts have affected the lifestyle of younger generations as well as the very nature of the town. It also explores the meaning of the development of technologies as an element that makes up the time and space in which people gather and considers the ways the community expresses and shares wisdom.

Keywords: aging, depopulation, work, technology, community, environment, Kamikatsu, Japan

INTRODUCTION

Japan has become well-known for its rapidly progressing aging and depopulation. Since 1994, it has witnessed the emergence of the so-called "aged society," with 14-21% of the population aged 65 or older, and became classified as a "super-aged society" (21.5%) after the population estimation conducted in 2007. There are frequent reports of depopulated towns or villages falling into a critical situation with the local community, public service and social infrastructure no longer functioning and the natural environment being destroyed. Since the beginning of 1990s, this situation has been such a concern that areas with more than 50% of the population aged 65 or older have been called "Genkai Shūraku" (region in limit situation) (Ōno 2005), expressing worries especially for older people lost or isolated. Genkai Shūraku increased to eleven municipalities in 2010 according to the latest national census. These days, graying and aging in "new towns" developed on a wide scale after 1960s are also a concern as they are in the U.S. (Stafford 2009).

In an effort to halt depopulation and isolation of older people, researchers of economics and demography have insisted on the importance of promoting primary industries in regions experiencing depopulation

Photo 1: Japanese dolls of an older man and woman in traditional silk kimono (Photo courtesey of author)

(Matsutani & Fujimasa 2002: 94-99). This is because in Japan, the ability to continue work and other roles is a significant factor contributing to the well-being of the older adult. According to one international comparative study on the traits of the aged in five countries, the older adult in Japan have a greater tendency to attach importance to having a paid job and to getting along well with their neighbors (Maeda 2006; Yuzawa 2003:176). In the history of Japan, the older adults have important roles working in the community, such as tending pineland and caring for and educating children (Miyata et al ed. 2000:22; Miyamoto 1984:33-43) (Photo 1). Aging and depopulation may deprive both older adult and younger generation of the opportunity of cultivating inter-generational relations (Thang 2001), and going through life as a whole.

Kamikatsu-cho (Kamikatsu Town), located on the island of Shikoku, is an example of an area that has suffered from progressive aging and depopulation. Several prior studies reported the reconstruction of regions as carried out both by local governments and a semi-public joint venture (defined as a category of the third-sector in Japan). Honma (2007) and Ōe (2008) referred to Kamikatsu Town in their comparative studies on successful cases in promoting primary industries in various depopulated municipalities,

focusing on the government's designation of special districts of structural reform. These reforms were an attempt to avoid restrictions in certain fields and to stimulate the administration of local districts. Ōe has termed these attempts as "welfare promoted by industry" (Honma 2007: 70-71; Ōe 2008: 69). One of leaders of the semi-public joint venture of Kamikatsu Town reported his efforts toward cultivating new products as an agricultural instructor (Yokoishi 2007). The mayor of Kamikatsu Town also gave reports of recycling system developed in the town (Kasamatsu and Sato 2008).

In previous research, I conducted a general study concerning Japan's aging society and the well-being of people from various generations. First, I examined historical changes in the thoughts about the lifecycle starting from medical writings of Hippocrates (ca. 460-370 BC) (Terasaki and Suzuki 1994). I found that similar to western conceptions of the lifecycle (Cole 1992), such as "the stairway of life" that first appeared in medieval western society in the form of "The Seven Ages of Man" in the Orbis Sensualium Pictus ("World in Pictures") textbook by John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), for example, adults became recognized as the "norm," while the older adult and children became peripheral, or were considered only as recipients of care by the adult generation. Second, based on fieldwork, I examined the process by which older adult in Kamikatsu Town have been able to continue making use of their abilities and their local material resources, culminating in the promotion of a new industry. The article sheds light on townspeople's search for the way of normalization for older adult to participate in their new work (Suzuki 2005; 2009; 2010).

This article, based on fieldwork and interviews I conducted starting in 2004, proceed to look into how a depopulated town revive with creative ways of promoting a new business through indigenous products, and how the venture has spiraled not only to provide well-being to the older adults, but also allowing for more new ideas to surface by younger people who came from outside the town. I especially focused on experiences of older women who participated in the industry and the ways their work reshaped both their social life and personal outlook. I also shed light on how technologies and the creative ways of

supporting the older adult's activities have affected the lifestyle of the younger generation and the town itself by examining the process of developing technologies and working out plans toward the creation of new events and activities. Through those works, each townsperson as well as people that considered about the town contributed to the empowerment of the local community by pursuing well-being, without clinging to generational or gender-based norms or roles (Matsumoto ed. 2011). I also explore how older adult in particular came to expand their system of mutual aid with the cooperation of people outside of their town, sharing leisure time and regenerating experiences in addition to work.

DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW INDUSTRRY

Crises and changes of Kamikatsu Town

Kamikatsu Town is situated upstream of Katsuragawa River in the central region of Tokushima Prefecture of eastern Shikoku (Figure 1). The town is dominated by range of mountains higher than 1000m above sea level. Low-lying lands under 200m comprise only 4% (4.2 square km) and lands between 200m to 500m are 28%, thus two thirds of town is nestled in upland region. Some 55 settlements are scattered in the mountain slopes of the V valley, around 100m to 700m. Forest area reaches 86.1% of the town. 68% (73.96 square km) of agricultural land is located over 500m and can be seen up to 600m (Kamikatsu-cho 1979: 3-8).

The population of the town was 1783 and the number of households was 763, the percentage of the town's population aged 65 or older was 52.4% according to national census of October 2010. In the years between 1915 and the Second World War, the number of household increased but the overall population decreased. The population peaked at 6,356 in 1950 when returned servicemen and dislocated workers came back to the town. Since 1955, the population began to decrease, and since 1960, it fell fast due to drastic out-migration to the three major metropolitan areas as well as to such cities in Tokushima prefecture as Tokushima, Komatsushima, Anan and Katsuura (Kamikatsu-cho 1979: 23-26, 1216). Kamikatsu Town thus has been regarded as a Genkai Shuraku in critical condition (Figure 2, 3, Table 1-3).

The town's main industry — lumber and mandarin oranges of the Onshu variety — had started to become unprofitable during Japan's rapid economic growth years of the 1970s and 1980s, owing to increasing imports and the expansion of production of those products in other areas of Japan. In February 1981, the town bore the brunt of an unprecedented cold wave that was quite localized, with the mercury going down to -13 degrees Celcius (around 9 degrees Fahrenheit), dealing a devastating blow to its mandarin orange orchards. Trees of the special indigenous varieties of aromatic, sour citrus fruits — such as yuko and sudachi — were also on the verge of dying. An agricultural instructor, Mr. A, was transferred from Tokushima City to help develop new crops suitable to chill high ground. Various other crops as scallion, nozawana and shiitake mushroom, were planted experimentally, but people's livelihoods barely improved (Yokoishi 2007:160-165). Having lost hope, many of the local residents turned to alcohol or became depressed. Deprived of the opportunity to cooperate in farming and seasonal festivals they were happy with in the past, people lapsed into saying nasty things about others at "Idobata Kaigi" (gossip meetings). It thus became an urgent task to revitalize not only the town's economy, but its spirit as well.

New work of leaf production: discovering the resources of a town

The town's residents tried to create a new industry suitable to the town. They came up with a hit agri-forestry product, inspired by a conversation overheard at a Japanese restaurant in Kyoto. Mr. A, the agricultural instructor brought to Kamikatsu, was eating dinner this restaurant after a long day of work when he overheard some young women happily conversing about the beautiful leaves decorating their food. Mr. A thought to himself, "Those kinds of leaves can be found all over Kamikatsu Town — is it really true that they make people so happy?" Indeed, leaves are often placed upon *kaiseki* and other types of Japanese cuisine as a garnish, with the cooks normally obtaining the leaves themselves in the vicinity. Mr. A, however, wondered whether the demand for leaves might be high if young people like the women in the restaurant enjoy food so much, including the leaves. The work of picking the mountain leaves was perfect for the older adult of Kamikatsu Town, who were quite familiar with local vegetation. Moreover, the work did not require so much physical energy.

Mr. A returned to Kamikatsu and broached his idea with the local residents, but no one took him seriously at first. Older people who had previously thrived in the forestry and mandarin orange industries refused to believe that just going to the mountain, picking up leaves, and putting them in a box was "real work." His proposals were not easily accepted by the townspeople, in part because he was considered an "outsider." It was hard to persuade the older adult, who had so far enthusiastically engaged in the development and production of other agricultural products that "leaves could be products" too.

Photo 2: A woman prepares and packages leaves (Photo courtesey of author)

of the product being sold at the Osaka Central Wholesale Market. City-dwelling customers now enjoy dishes decorated with beautiful leaves, and willingly pay for them as well. More than 150 households (around 20% of all households) in the town participate in the production of the leaves, with the average age of the people engaged in the tasks of collecting, washing and packing the leaves standing at around 68 (as of 2005). Many women and older adult do the work as it allows them to apply their knowledge of local vegetation and because of relatively light workload in all stages of production (Photo 2). They earn a monthly income of 200,000 to 300,000 yen (around $2,500 to $3,750); some people even occasionally earn 1 million yen ($12,500) a month. Kamikatsu Town had successfully created a top-selling product that could be made primarily through the activities of its older adult residents.

At last, he found several farming households whose female members agreed to cooperate with his plan. The various kinds of leaves collected by the women—all in their 60s—were loaded by Mr. A in the agricultural cooperative's automobile, which he drove to Osaka and Kyoto in an attempt to peddle them at several markets. In the beginning, Mr. A found difficulty in grasping consumers' needs, such as the form of a leaf, color, size that are called for each season. Reluctantly, he made repeated visits to restaurants where leaves were actually being used in cooking. Bit by bit, he learned how to choose and arrange leaves that would be seasonal and those that would bring out the best flavor of the food.

When the enterprise got off the ground, the town entered a semi-public joint venture, prepared cooperation with an agricultural cooperative association, and began to tackle this industry completely. Indigenous leaves and branches of plants growing in the village were commercialized as ingredients in food, including the leaves of persimmon and maple trees, nandina, giant elephant ear (a kind of taro), camellia plants and bamboo grass, along with azalea flowers and the flowers of plum, cherry and pear trees.

The industry was successful beyond everyone's expectations. Moving forward 19 years to 2005, some 300 kinds of leaves were being shipped from Kamikatsu Town, with annual revenue exceeding 250 million yen (around $3.25 million), accounting for more than 80%

DEVELOPMENT AND MODIFICATION OF TECHNOLOGIES TO INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY AND CHANGES IN OLDER PEOPLE'S LIVES

While the work of the older adult may seem outwardly simple, it is in fact hardly simple at all. It is not enough for them just to pick some leaves here and there—the harvest must be planned and designed in a way that meets market needs, with the leaves being sent to the market at an appropriate time. The act of producing the kinds of leaves that match such needs is something that older people ought to do well, for they have seen various kinds of leaves over many years change colors throughout the four seasons on the slopes of the mountains. Still, there remained for the producers the issues of identifying exactly which kinds of leaves were being demanded by the market, as well as figuring out a method to transport the products to the market in a timely fashion.

The special efforts that were utilized to bring out the abilities of the older adult in Kamikatsu Town can be broadly categorized into three types, as described below.

Divert use of wireless telegraph for equal information dissemination

First, it was suggested that the town's existing simultaneous-broadcast wireless system, designed for use in disasters,

be utilized to equitably get information sent out to the people participating in the leaf production. For people living and working in scattered mountain areas, the simultaneous-broadcast wireless system has been utilized to inform townspeople of emergencies and other important matters. This time, a new system was organized by which the disaster fax service could be used to send out information to the leaf producers, forming a network that allowed everyone to quickly acquire information such as requests for shipments, etc. That way, information about seasonal leaves in demand including the copy of leaf samples that help the producers easily adjust the form of a leaf, a color, a size, to a standard, are sent swiftly and simultaneously to all the farm households registered as leaf producers.

Photo 3: Using a computer with a trackball device to recieve and send out information on deliveries (Photo courtesey of author)

Upon receipt of the fax, the producers can then ascertain whether or not they can make a timely delivery of the amount of leaves specified in the order, and then make a phone call to the central office to place a bid for the job. After that, they take the packed leaves to the agricultural cooperative by the specified deadline. Only if a bid is placed does the order get finalized, however, so the old people of Kamikatsu Town always keep close tabs on the condition of the leaves growing on their mountains as they patiently wait for a fax to come in, acting very quickly until their phone call to make their bid goes through. Once, when I was interviewing one of the local women, she got a fax with an order request, whereupon she quickly dropped everything else to concentrate on the mountain leaves.

Producers' feeling of fulfillment by acquiring information of the area

Second, a computer system—loaned to anyone who asks for it—has been developed that is easy even for older people to use. It is extremely important for the leaf producers to get timely market information—regarding such things as the products being traded, the deadlines for delivery, and prices—so that they can plan what to cultivate in light of the season. As such information constantly changes, it was considered desirable to have it distributed through the network to the individual producers, who would then be able to act on it.

As far as using computers was concerned, discussions were made about the type of software and settings that could be used by older adult for the first time. An easy-to-handle trackball, with the ball moved by the entire palm, was devised for older adult unaccustomed to clicking a mouse. The older adult could receive and send out information by simply rolling the trackball and moving the cursor to the desired place on the easy-to-understand, color-coded screen (Photo 3).

What especially makes the leaf producers excited is getting constantly-updated information about their own sales totals and sales rankings, as well as which kinds of leaves are hot sellers. With color-coded bar graphs depicting shipment targets and current shipment status, the leaf producers can instantly decide whether to ship seasonal items or those in constantly high demand. Every day, the older adult lift up the protective cloth covers over their computer screens and pay rapt attention to them.

Another method to share information was Mr. A's handwritten newsletter reminiscent of the bulletins used to exchange information at elementary school. The paper includes detailed information about leaves and is chock-full of stories about minor events in the town. Each issue, too, is distributed by fax. The townspeople are often highlighted in the newspaper, and they look forward to reading about each other's activities there.

Transportation and communication

Manufactured leafs have to be supplied to an agricultural cooperative association by the fixed time. In a town without a public transportation facility except for a trunk road, reservation of transportation which older adult can easily use was a pressing need.

Taxi services are now being provided through paid volunteers in special zones, allowing the older adult to deliver their products safely to the agricultural cooperative to meet the prescribed deadline. Kamikatsu Town applied to the government to develop the original system of helping aged and disabled people to move around town with volunteer-run, fare-charging taxis. The "Project in Special District of Transportation with Fare-charging Volunteers" was approved through the government's policy of "Special Districts in Structural Reform" in May 2003. This policy was efficient because residents devised an idea that is suitable to a region they live. Thanks to the system, older adult who cannot or do not drive are now able to ask someone else to transport them without hesitation.

Changes in the lives of the aged

The way of life of older adults in Kamikatsu Town has changed significantly thanks to the new leaf-collection industry. Thanks to the stable income they earned through the "easy and clean work", they were able to enhance their lifestyles and build a sense of hope in the future. With their extra money, the first thing they did was to increase their avenues for amusement. Mrs. B said that although it seemed small pleasure, she was relaxed and happy to have a cup of beer with her husband at supper time after work. Her husband had been engaged in charcoal burner, but he had never got enough money from his hard work. Now they cooperate in collecting, coordinating, and shipping leaves. They feel so happy to have something to work for together and to talk in smile about. They even hope that their son's family come back to the town and inherit their work.

In the case of older women, especially—those who had married into farmer's families or who had been housewives—a whole new life began, one in which they had income to spend freely for the first time. Mrs. C, who was 84 years old in 2005, evenly split the income she made from collecting leaves with her daughter-in-law, who was helping her in her work. Although Mrs. C lost her husband long time ago, she was proud to have supported her grandson living in the city to buy a house and to prepare for family gathering all by herself. She and her daughter-in-law work and live together happily.

The second thing the old people of Kamikatsu Town did with their extra money was to use it to invest in the future. Examples of that include people who have planted new trees with an eye on those kinds of leaves that are in high demand. Mrs. C, who has the nickname of "Ace," has been participating in this work from the very beginning of the project, and has continued to plant new persimmon trees in anticipation of future harvests. While it takes some three years from the time a tree is planted until it can be harvested for its leaves, she says that she looks forward to it.

From the viewpoint of the investment, it is a new experience for the work colleagues to make bus trips to Kyoto for the purpose of study tours, not only the sightseeing trip. On the tours, they can enjoy going to restaurants that buy their leaves to see how they are actually prepared, and taste dishes with the leaves in them. It makes good opportunity for them to spark the new ideas together.

The leaves have gone beyond merely being things that are "plucked" to things that are "made." The relation between such factors as sunlight and altitude with the color of leaves can only be predicted by those who have a lot of experience. What was formerly seen as the town's weak point—its unsuitability for planting crops because of the scarcity of flat land—is instead now recognized as its strong point, namely, the ability to get leaves of all sorts of colors. The whole town is now viewed as "shelves in a store," with the people totally absorbed in the task of caring for the nature of the forest.

The third change that came about was the increased number of opportunities for individuals in the community to "exist with visible faces." Many of the women, particularly, told me that for the first time, they felt that they existed with a "visible face." Thanks to the information they get sent to them over the network, they can keep track of what their colleagues in the business are doing and learn about the market, even while they remain at home. Mrs. D is happy to do her work with her son thanks to the growing accessibility of work. After being ill, her son is not strong enough for working outside but he can drive to bring leaves for his parents.

The opportunity for people to meet others face-to-face has also expanded because they have common topics of conversation. The townspeople use the well-appointed facilities of the remodeled and expanded local public inn to enjoy the hot springs there, and often get together in the inn's meeting room to discuss common themes.

The Design of Well-Trafficked Places

The changes in the lifestyle of the older adult in Kamikatsu Town led to changes in the atmosphere of the whole town, including the lifestyle of other generations and the way people interacted.

The volunteer taxi service that was organized to help the work of the older adult can be done by anyone who can drive, but one necessary condition for the drivers is to be within voice range of their customers. Thanks to the introduction of the small taxi system, both older adult and younger people have expanded their opportunity to talk with members in the vicinity. The small changes have led to an increase in the number of conversations, bringing about a sense of greater vitality to the town.

Since 1993, the "1Q (Ikkyu) Athlete Meet," named after the famous Buddhist priest "Ikkyu," who loved to hold dialogs in the form of questions and answers in order to get and share good ideas, has given everyone in town a chance to express their opinions on how to make the town a better place to live and visit. Starting in 1995, the town was divided into five districts, each with six representatives (two of which are women) serving on a 30-member committee that was organized to think up and transmit ideas about the town, including its environment, at the meet. Each of the five districts presents its problem, and the committee has figured out a solution together as it did in developing the taxi service for townspeople living in the mountains.

According to Mr. A, such activities are positioned as an attempt to "*Ki wo Sodateru*" (foster spirits) of the residents. Thinking and coming up with ideas are said to be a form of "play." Surely, in places outside of work to earn income to support their livelihood, new arenas were created for people to be active in the community, where ordinary people came to have experiences that were universally illuminated by coming out to the front stage.

Transition to a "clean town" by the efforts of recycling

One stage for fostering spirits was the recycle center set up to support the town's economy and ecology. Since the town did not have an original garbage dump, garbage processing was an important subject of discussion. The townsfolk did not want to use tax money either to buy an incinerator or to ask another town to dispose of their waste materials. Searching for the good way to recycle, they solicited, over the Internet, someone who could help them develop a feasible system of recycling for the town. They received an application from a young woman who had learned many ways of recycling in Denmark. She has

lived in Kamikatsu Town since the summer of 2004, and has taken leadership as Director of an NPO (nonprofit organization) called "Zero Waste Academy." to improve the method of recycling.

Recycling begins with carefully classifying waste. The newly hired recycling expert and the townsfolk formed "Zero Waste Academy," and developed a system to separate rubbish according to categories. Following the expert's directions, the townsfolk have come to separate their rubbish into 30 or more groups at the "Hibiya Recycle Center." At the center, people classify garbage, with a clear explanation given of how the rubbish is to be recycled. The recycle center also resembles a small museum where children can learn recycling. People now enjoy more opportunities than ever before to converse with others by consulting other older people on the center's staff as they carefully separate their garbage. A volunteer group that helps older adult or carries their garbage was also formed. Now the rate of recycling in Kamikatsu Town is 80%, compared to just 19% overall in Japan (Kasamatsu and Sato 2008: 107).

The "Zero Waste Academy" publishes a journal called "Kurukuru," a Japanese word describing a circular motion, to introduce its "eco-life," giving information to the townsfolk about how to make small articles from waste materials. Kamikatsu Town has been known for its efforts to recycle garbage to become a "clean town," which will enhance its image of growing "beautiful leaves."

Nowadays, the recycle center has become a kind of community center, the site of various activities being put into practice. A place called "Hidamari" (meaning a "cozy place in the sun") has been set up next to the center as a meeting place. The space has been utilized as a place for people to bring their unneeded items for recycling and/or making things. There, older adult and young people enjoy making new shirts, bags and hats out of material recycled at the center, as well as koinobori carp streamers, making use of older adult's knowledge on sewing with old cloth such as tafu (made from bark of the region in winter). In that small space, people use their leisure time to pass on knowledge about sewing and making things, with cloth remnants being transformed into new items.

Deployment of the local specialty stand of a town

Another stage that has been established for people was the local grocery store, "Ikkyu-san," which has served as the site for the new plan of cooperation between the young people coming to the town from the outside and the town's older adult and housewives. Since 2000, young salesmen and women have been dispatched to Kamikatsu Town for

a year at a time by a NPO in Tokyo. They select and sell the foods considered to be interesting from a stranger's viewpoint. In cooperation with the housewives, they sell a small amount of vegetables, home-made side dishes, the seasoning made from citrus fruits, the traditional rice-cake sweets that are characteristic of the region.

Next to the product is a small piece of paper where they can write down such information as where the product came from, what times of the year it is best to eat certain mountain vegetables, etc., and delicious ways to prepare the ingredient. That gives tourists and newly-arrived young residents information about the region's distinctive food culture and connections with the natural environment. On the second floor of the shop, both tourists and townspeople often enjoy healthy meals using local food at lunchtime as well.

Activities of the younger generation and a new movement in the town

Most people in Kamikatsu Town welcome returnees (u-turn people) and newcomers (i-turn people). For older adult and townspeople of Kamikatsu Town, various new plans have been a sense of discovery of new ways to use their leisure time, and that has led to the discovery of new jobs and activities for young people as well. Some young people, after a temporary stay, decided to continue to live in Kamikatsu Town.

Since 2005, a working-holiday scheme has been instituted in the town, with more than 100 persons participating while staying in farmers' homes. A few of the participants have moved to Kamikatsu Town as well.

Each year, one person sent from an NPO to work as a clerk at "Ikkyu-san" as a relocated person from the outside. The town pays for part of their living expenses, also supporting their lifestyle by providing low-cost housing—a house filled with the scent of new wood—built by a joint public-private lumber processing venture. That also meant the use of local timber, one of the resources in the town, which has promoted forestry. Some 17 young people have been sent there so far, with six of them settling permanently.

One young person, when asked why she wanted to keep living in the town, said that it was because the townspeople frequently talked to her about the way of living in the town. Young people have plenty of opportunity to try their idea together with a resident. By expressing their viewpoint as a "stranger", young people can gain a valuable place as a member of the town.

There are also those who apply experiences obtained in the town in new places. The woman who took charge

of maintenance of a recycle center offers her experience now in another location near Tokyo. Thus, the experience cultivated and accumulated in Kamikatsu Town has been shared and utilized by people of other areas with similar challenges of aging and depopulation. People who have worked in town would share the same subject with and feel sympathy with people in other areas in Japan.

Although newcomers increased, the total population of Kamikatsu Town did not grow significantly. Older people have died and some students have moved out of the town to go to school. However, the circulation of residents gives the town a chance for new conversations and ideas to grow. Thus, townspeople have made efforts to share resources with people living outside of the town as a means to offer urban dwellers the chance to own a tanada or "terraced field" in the town. Summer outdoor concerts have been held for the townsfolk and visitors at the tanada, now famous throughout Japan for its beautiful scenery. In former times, rice planting was conducted with the cooperation of community members of a settlement and rice-planting festival was held. Nowadays, tanada has been tended through the cooperation of townspeople and outsiders, and the concert gives various meaning to this mutual aid.

In order to realize their vision for the town, old and new residents alike are trying to find out how the factors once considered the disadvantages of a depopulated town have turned into advantages more recently. However, they do not have a vision of making Kamikatsu Town a "big town" or a tourist spot.

The idea of maintaining and employing a town efficiently came to be shared by people through developing techniques and technologies of communication and sharing the town with newcomers. This involves the superimposition of each generation's life cycle as the culture of the district is being spun forth.

CONCLUSION

Kamikatsu Town was a depopulated town that aimed to promote an industry that took advantage of the region's special features and the practical knowledge of the older residents. Their innovations enabled the accessibility of work, which not only allowed older adult to participate, but also changed the lifestyle of the community including other generations. The numerous innovations aimed at the district's revitalization created a new range of activities, in turn increasing the number of opportunities for everyone to better communicate with each other.

The new store selling locally-produced goods served as a physical entrance or "channel" through which new young

residents and tourists were attracted to the town. The recycling center became multifunctional in nature, having set up places for people to relax and socialize. This led to the development of indigenous products of the town that utilized recycled goods. Those attempts also expanded the spaces for interpersonal exchange within the town, and opened up the possibility for people to build new relationships.

The older adult's feeling of happiness and well-being came not only from the money they earned, but also from social and cultural factors such as their place in their family and community. Without stereotyping older adult as "objects of assistance," their participation in an activity as full members of the district resulted in their feeling that they existed in the community with a "visible face." Having their own money—earned through work that they were good at—led to new activities, giving rise to a situation that might be described as "cyclical coexistence" (Suzuki 2005: 355, 366), in other words, a practice of care that works only when everything moves in cycles in conformity with the setting and situation of the people who are related to a certain place.

All the technologies have been applied by face to face communication until users understood after many trials and errors, not by simply distributing manuals. Such normalization processes have only taken shape by listening to wishes of each older adult as well as by looking into the environments where they have been leading their lives. This kind of effort is indispensable toward cultivating "a society without handicaps" (Suzuki ed. 2012: 1), a place where people are able to live performing what they would wish without feeling barriers, and where they are able to get a feeling of sharing a place with others and being included in the community.

The purpose of developing and applying technologies is not to make people live independently, but rather to get access to ideas of how to care for the town in which people of various positions would want to live, and developing a more holistic system of care. For the people in the town, the act of building a relationship of interdependence—namely, depending on each other and helping each other out—for the purpose of letting others advance in their chosen field and accomplishing what they want done, leads to mutual recognition and the ability of each person to secure his/her niche in life. At the present day, developing technologies for normalization of the environment would surely give more opportunities especially for older adult living in changing society to extend care as in former times for the place they live as well as younger generation would want live.

In the past, mutual aid was practiced mostly within the family and among community members in a settlement to accomplish work such as rice planting, forestry, and roofing, and to prepare the festival following harvesting. At present, a greater variety of mutual cooperation is conducted by a diversified group of people, often as an experience of "rite of passage." The residents of Kamikatsu Town noticed that it was not only economics or governmental administration that gave people power to think about what they value in everyday lives and in the future, but also the time they had for pleasure and regeneration, often on occasions of new types of events shared with various people. Producing local foods and newly invented handicrafts by making use of the resources of the area, townspeople enjoy communicating with visitors and discovered the meaning of sharing leisure time to continuously develop ideas and reconsider their values. This promotes the resilience and flexibility of the community toward the well-being of people living in as well as visiting the district.

Developing technologies has enhanced accessibility and communication for people to participate in generating ideas to care for the place they live in as well as in regenerating themselves to reconsider what they value for their future life design.

Acknowledgements

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SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL SUBMISSION ON AGING AND MATERIALITY IN JAPAN

The Sense of Social Commitment and Well-being among Elderly Japanese Women:
Focusing on the Reinterpretation and Exhibition of Bridal *Noren*

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Abstract
This article explores the ways in which elderly Japanese women's sense of well-being relates to their sense of "social responsibility" and "deep involvement with society." It is based on fieldwork conducted in Nanao City (Ishikawa Prefecture) in 2010-2011. The local government of Nanao recently emphasized the development of a community welfare network and tourism resources in order to deal with depopulation and an aging community, and to reinvigorate the local economy. I describe various activities in the social and political context of Nanao, meant to revitalize the local community. One of these activities is performed by women in their sixties, who retreated from their roles as housewives and/or shop proprietors. These women's activity reinterprets the given values of bridal noren (door curtain), a local object known for its beautiful sensuousness. When the women recently initiated activities to display bridal noren as objects of art, they become one of the main tourist attractions in the city. This paper concludes by demonstrating that elderly women expressed subjective well-being through involvement in their social world via social activities.

Keywords: well-being, social commitment, folk art, reinterpretation, exhibition

THE PROBLEM OF JAPAN'S AGING SOCIETY

Japan has faced with a falling birth rate and a growing aging population for several decades, especially in rural depopulated areas. People aged 65 and above accounted for 23.1% of the total population of Japan in 2010. This is already the highest ratio in the world, and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare estimates that it will reach 30% in 20 years. In that social context, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare issued its Annual Report, which indicated that life after retirement was "the second active life" and suggested that it was an important toward developing one's own *ikigai*. The Japanese word *ikigai* means "that which most makes one's life worth living" can be translated into the English expression of "the sense

of well-being" (Mathews 2010: 167). The report implied that development of one's own *ikigai* could be realized by increasing one's social connectedness through active commitment to neighborhood activities (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2003).

On the other hand, a white paper on Japan's aging society issued in 2009 showed that the number of elderly who expressed uneasiness due to living alone was increasing. In 2009, 22.5% of the elderly lived alone. If households comprised only of an older couple are added, the percentage goes up to 52.9% of the whole. The high ratio itself is not the problem. The problem is, again, the high ratio of elders who express uneasiness due to living alone:

63% in 2009 (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan 2009: 18-19). Moreover, over 30% of the elderly who expressed uneasiness remarked that they felt uneasiness when they thought that they had no close family or friends to be able to rely upon in their neighborhood (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan 2009: 18-19). These results indicate that creating or rebuilding close relationships with others in late life may have significant value for older Japanese adults' sense of well-being.[1]

Inter-relationship Between Well-being and Social Connectedness

Quite a few reports and studies concern the inter-relationship between one's sense of well-being and social connectedness. In the 2001 report of OECD (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) stressed that an economic aspect of well-being is only a part of human well-being and defined "human well-being" as a broader concept: "(it) is more than the sum of individual levels of well-being" (OECD 2001: 11-12), while the 1976 OECD report stated that "social well-being" was the aggregate of well-being of individuals that were affected by their relations with other human being and the physical environment (OECD 1976: 11-12). The important point to note about the 2001 report is that it stressed not only economic factors but also the complementarity between well-being and human and social capital that affects human well-being, employing American sociologist James Coleman's work on social capital in the 1980s (Coleman 1988, OECD 2001:13). Putnam's assertion that "social connectedness is one of the most powerful determinants of human's wellbeing" (Putnam 2000: 332) was also quoted in the report.

In his work, Putnam explained the way in which social isolation is profoundly linked to personal unhappiness and illness (Putnam 2000: 332). Various reports since the late 1980s have supported the strong relationship between personal well-being and social connectedness from the sociological and psychiatric viewpoints (Klinenberg 2010; 2012, Kiley 1989). Many sociological studies of Japan have discussed the inter-relationship between social connectedness and well-being, social isolation and self-neglect that often causes death (NHK "Unrelated Society Project" Press 2010, Tachibanaki 2011, Ishida 201, Inaba 2011). These studies showed that a sense of well-being, especially among Japanese elders, was affected by whether they had close social relationships with others.[2]

In this article I use Mathews and Carolina Izquierdo's definition of "well-being", which offers an anthropological concept involving a sense and experience that differs among individuals with different sociocultural contexts and a sense and experience that are common among humans (Mathews and Izquierdo 2010: 1-22)(2).

Purpose and Contents

In this article I will present one of the Japanese elderly women's activities that increases social connectedness through community based activities to reinterpret and exhibit folk objects called *Hanayome Noren*[3] ("bridal door curtain"—I will call it bridal noren) in Nanao city of Japan's Hokuriku region. Noren is a door curtain and is often hung at store entrances, however, bridal noren is a special luxury door curtain which is used only for wedding rituals. The women I will focus on are in their sixties and have retreated from their roles as housewives, caregivers of children and elderly parents, and co-managers of a family business. These roles were handed over to their daughters-in-laws. These older women express a sense of *ikigai* when participating in activities related to the broader social world. In their household roles, their social world was primarily in the domestic sphere, but now they are mediating between the domestic and public spheres by displaying and telling stories about the bridal noren in exhibitions. First, I will examine the social and cultural background of the city in which I conducted my research. Second, I will focus on the activity of exhibiting the bridal noren. Finally, I conclude by reconsidering the meaning of the concept of "productivity" in late life.

Research Methods and Background

Method and Material

The main research method that I employed was participant observation, interview and an analysis of a brochure that was published by an executive committee of exhibitions. I conducted informal, "non-directed" interviews with two of the five women who took leadership in the activity of bridal noren exhibition. . I asked a few questions to trigger off the story but the interviewee guided the course and the flow of the interviews.

Research Area: Nanao

As a researcher, I have been conducting fieldwork in a rural depopulated area for the last four years. Magnitude 9 earthquake, known as Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake, struck this area in 2004, and I have been, researching the way in which the elderly expressed a sense of uneasiness and well-being in the recovery process from disaster.[4] For making a comparative study on this topic, I started fieldwork in Nanao city, which was struck by a magnitude 6.9 earthquake in 2007, known as the Noto Peninsula Earthquake. Fifty houses collapsed and 6,745 were damaged by the earthquake in which 127 people were injured but no one was killed.[5] After the earthquake, the municipal government began to emphasize the idea that the most efficient measures for preventing a disaster are to

strengthen existing relationships and organization among neighbors and for people to reform close-knit relationships in the local community. The local government recognizes senior citizens who live alone or with only a spouse as "vulnerable people in emergency", and thus it works hard to strengthen local community ties and the services provided to them. Promotion of welfare and well-being, especially of elderly, receives much attention today in Nanao.

Geographically, Nanao faces the Sea of Japan (or the East Sea), situated at the entrance to the Noto region of Ishikawa prefecture. It has a population of 57,714, as of 2011, but faces depopulation and a rapidly aging population. Thirty percent of the population is aged 65 or above (Nanao City 2009), however, Nanao is still the largest city in the Noto region.

Culturally, Nanao is influenced by Kaga where is now a capital of Ishikawa and has a nickname of "A little Kyoto", the ancient Japanese capital city Kyoto, which was once the political and cultural center of Japan. For instance, the traditional techniques used to dye bridal noren were named after Kaga and it was originally imported from Kyoto. Nanao consists of 15 rural districts, and its economy depends on agriculture and fishing. Tourism recently became one of the city's key industries. A popular annual festival, held from May 2–5, called Seihaku-sai attracts 15,000 tourists every year. The exhibition of bridal noren is one of the events at the festival. The bridal noren exhibition is launched by the bride and groom parade down the 400-meters-long old Ipponsugi shopping street, while fifty or more norens are hung from the front doors of the shops on both sides of the street. Along the street leading to the ancient temple are four old-style storefront residences. They received the cultural asset specification in 2004 and sell local products to tourists, such as marine products, handmade Japanese candles, and soy sauce. There are 37 shops in this street which has become one of the popular tourist attractions for those who are interested in the history and products of Nanao.

Why Bridal Noren?

Background of My Research

At the beginning of my research in 2010, I conducted participant observation in an activity of the community-based elderly group for the purpose of "prevention of long-term care" (*kaigo yobou*). That activity was based on a yearly grant from the local government. The group has been continuing the activity twice a week for 8 years since the frame of the grant was established. There are no other groups like this in this city. Five to ten members over 65

come together to have a chat, sing and play small games. The group activity is not limited to recreation. They voluntarily visit the hospital and some welfare facilities to entertain by singing, playing games or dancing a few times a year. Their social commitment was unique and I became interested in understanding these older adults' feelings of well-being. Some members were just looking at other people talking or playing games from a distance, but they said "It is fun to come here." The other member said, "It is fun to be involved with the local friends and to visit facilities." From these comments, I became more convinced that the opportunities to meet people and work together would affect a sense of well-being for the elderly. Then one day during my fieldwork, I met a lively elderly woman who was delightedly working on an exhibition activity of bridal noren. I was very impressed with her story about her experience of social commitment and fulfillment and she became my first interviewee about bridal noren.

What is Bridal Noren?

The origin of the bridal noren dates back to the pre-modern period around the nineteenth century, and they had been used widely up to the beginning of the twentieth century. A bridal *noren* is made using techniques called Kaga yuzen, a dyeing process, commonly used for high-quality silk kimonos. Although, in general, the noren curtain is made of stout cotton dyed with a simple indigo dye, a bridal noren is made of silk (sometimes cotton and linen) and is designed with auspicious, colorful, hand-painted patterns such as court carriages, mandarin ducks, and flowers. The noren is a gift from the bride's family to the groom's family. It can be understood as a kind of dowry. The custom of using bridal noren as dowry was introduced by the upper warrior caste to the general public during the late pre-modern period, around 19th century and was a symbol of an alliance between the families.

The bride's mother, who passed it on to her daughter, arranged the patterns and colors of noren. When wedding rituals were customarily held in the groom's house, at least until the 1950s or 1960s, wedding rituals were held as follows. First, the bride and groom would stand in front of the entrance of the groom's house and drink a small cup of water mixed from their respective natal houses. Second, they would step into the groom's house, where the noren hung from the lintel at the entrance to the room near the family's Buddhist altar. The room was the area where the groom's family's ancestors were worshiped. The bride would pass under the noren, enter the room, sit straight, put her hands together in front of the altar, and say, "Please recognize me as a new family member" (*korekara yorosiku onegaishimasu*). It was a rite of passage

for the bride to transfer her family membership to her spouse's family. In addition to the noren, the bride also brought a lacquered multi-tiered food box filled with fresh Japanese sweets for the neighbors. The box was wrapped in a colorful wrapping cloth (Furoshiki), which is also made using the Kaga Yuzen dyeing process. Although the location and style of weddings have varied in association with the change of lifestyles and values after the World War II, noren still play a significant role in the wedding ceremony. Now, the wedding ceremony venue has shifted from the groom's family home to a wedding hall, and weddings with Christian-style rituals have gained popularity. The rite of passage using noren is still performed in wedding ceremonies with Christian rituals in the wedding halls. The patterns and colors for the noren are listed in a catalog provided by kimono shops; thus, a new custom for the bridal noren has emerged, in which brides and their mothers can choose patterns and colors together.

THE EXHIBITION OF BRIDAL NOREN AND EXPRESSIONS OF THE SENSE OF WELL-BEING

Reinterpretation of the Values of Bridal Noren

After a wedding, a bridal noren becomes the property of the bride's and the family she married into and will not be reused as dowry. However, since it was of no practical use, it was usually put away in a storeroom drawer and was seldom released from there. The exhibition of bridal noren l started when four old-style houses in Nanao were registered as important cultural properties in 2004. Women in their early sixties, who co-managed stores along with merchants of Ipponsugi street, realized the significance of their own noren stored in their drawers and came up with the idea of renewing the face of the street and establishing a historical town. One day a woman asked her friends whether they still kept their noren in a drawer. They looked for her noren in their drawers and found not only their own noren but also their mothers-in-law's. Since most of the norens were kept without moth damage for years, the artistry of the noren was evident.. They consulted with their husbands, who were shopkeepers, about the plan of exhibition of norens and with a neighborhood association as well. In this way, the executive committee for exhibition was organized including five women of Ipponsugi as main members. Then the exhibition of norens started in 2004 using rooms of the building registered as cultural properties to entertain tourists visiting on the days of Seihaku festival.

Exhibition

As mentioned above, exhibitions are held using spaces in the old-style houses during the festival. The women who plan and host the galleries also play the role of guides.

They tell the audience about the stories embedded in norens. The story of noren always comes with its owner's life history and family story. Here is an example of the narrative given by a woman in early 60s:

> This is a noren of the woman born in 1919. She married a successor of the store of Ipponsugi during the Second World War when she was 18 years old. In spite of a shortage of food and clothes, her mother saved money to make a beautiful noren for her daughter's wedding. Three sets of a chest of drawers filled with kimonos were also given to the daughter. Please look at the patterns of a pair of family crests and a pair of court carriages painted on the noren. They are all hand painted and made using the Kaga Yuzen dyeing technique. The bride's mother decided all of the patterns of the noren and its arrangement. So, for her daughter, the noren has become a significant object that reminds her of her mother's love in her life after marriage.

Noren seemed indispensable for weddings, even during the war. It is bride's pride and more importantly, it is her natal and conjugal family's pride. Noren is sometimes considered to serve as an amulet to prevent women from misfortune and bring good luck to them after used for wedding, while it is confined to the storeroom drawer (Kitani 2008: 22).

By telling the story behind their norens, the women look back at their lives as daughters, new brides, and mothers. One of the women said that most of the audiences are women in the same age as them or younger; they are sometimes mothers and daughters and seem to display empathy listening to her story about her noren's history and the bond that had formed between mother and daughter. It is apparent that she feels a sense of joy when telling the story of her noren and sharing its beauty with people. She said that the activity made her feel "ikigai in the second life." She told me that she had pursued and felt a sense of ikigai by discovering a new artistic value for bridal noren and telling her story at the exhibitions.

The exhibition has since expanded outside the city. The women took their norens with them to Tokyo and Osaka for exhibitions, hoping to reach a wider range of people. In Osaka, they rented an old-style house for a show, and the exhibition went well. It takes approximately five hours by express train to get to the exhibition from Nanao. I interviewed an older woman, one of the storytellers of noren, who had just returned from an exhibition in Osaka. She expressed her excitement:

It was the very first experience for me to communicate with people outside my hometown as deeply as this. Thanks to my bridal noren, I was able to meet many people and pass on stories about affection between mothers and daughters that are embedded in the curtain's beauty. I want to continue this activity as long as possible because this is indeed my *ikigai*.

Where does her *ikigai* come from? How is it different from what she had before she retreated from her household role? What does her *ikigai* mean to her? I asked her these questions. She answered that she felt a sense of ikigai while fulfilling her household role of caring for her children and elderly parents and managing the family business with her husband. "That is my past *ikigai*," she said. Although the role of housewife was allocated to her automatically when she married, she got a feeling of satisfaction by fulfilling that role. She continued, "Now my son is married, and his wife, my daughter-in-law, has taken over the housewife role, and she is doing very well in it. I have retreated now, but I found my new *ikigai* during the last stage of my life. My new *ikigai* is to tell as many people as possible about noren." The noren has become an object that facilitates communication between the local community and the outside world. With noren as an art object, she seemed to have discovered the broader social world in which she can actively participate.

Conclusion

The elderly women of Ipponsugi revaluated the sensuous beauty of bridal noren, reinterpreting it as art object and also discovering their exhibition activity as a place to realize ikigai in their later lives after retreating from earlier household roles. They worked together not only for their own sake but also for the common good of the local community, connecting different generations of the community. Sociologist Glenn Loury[6] suggested that such social relationships can be understood as "local public goods." He used the concept to explain one aspect of social capital that indicated "public education, (…) peer influences that shape the development of personal character, contacts that generate information about the world of work, and friendship networks that evolve among persons situated in the same or closely related communities" (Loury 1988: 273). Social relationships in local as "local public goods" are intangible but reliable sources that increase opportunities of social commitment. The elderly women also used "local public goods" to extend their social relationships to outside the community. Later-life retirement may give one the image of "a phase of regression" or "withdrawal from an active phase" but it is neither. It means nothing other than entering a new phase of the life cycle. In American gerontology,

the concept of being "productive" was reconsidered as a concept that included the wide range of activities in which elderly people engage in of their own accord. The concept overarches any activity, whether paid or unpaid, such as housework, childcare, volunteer work, assistance to family and friends, as well as capacity building and self-care (Butler, R.N. & Gleason, H.P. eds., 1985; Howell, N. M., J. Hinterlong, & M.W. Sherraden 2001). Aging is not a negative transition at all, but is a positive and active phase that recreates individuals and their way of living. Robert C. Atchley argues against previous sociological works, referring to retirement as a "roleless role." He states that socialization during retirement involves establishing prerequisites at least as much as developing specific knowledge and skills (Atchley 2000: 124). One of the specific prerequisites for retirement is to develop leisure skills and ties with organizations in the community (ibid.: 119). Doris Francis discusses how retirement after 35 years of work is perceived as an opportunity to reassess and renew commitments, explore untapped avenues of creativity, and reconstitute the self (Francis 2000: 183). Reconsidering the meaning of the concept of "productivity" provides us with an idea for reexamining an inter-relationship between a sense of social commitment and well-being. Defining ikigai for oneself is important not only for the elderly after retirement but also for people at any stage of life.

Notes

1 Japanese pedagogist Hiroaki Terasaki contends that "well-being" has gained currency as the translation for the Japanese word fukushi, which was often used as the translation for the English word "welfare." Referring to Michael Foucault, he explains that the term "welfare" came to take on a restricted and superficial meaning owing to the overwhelming torrent of the concept of "police" that arose in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Terasaki 2010: 22-23). He summarizes Foucault's work, which described policing as a national institution that extended beyond the sphere of civic order, which deals with crime and criminals, to the comprehensive oversight and management of such spheres of life as poverty,

hospitals, hygiene, the nursing of children, and schools (ibid.). Therefore, the areas subject to policing were the marginal areas underpinning modern society. The concept was referred to as "biopower" by Foucault who contended that capitalist states exerted control over people's birth, morbidity and longevity (Foucault 1976: 139-140). Foucault defined biopower: "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power, or, (in other words) how, starting from the 18th century, modern Western societies took on board the fundamental biological fact that human beings are a species" (Foucault 2007: 1) and "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault 1976: 140). The capitalist states promote people's better life. This better life is so called welfare. Under "welfare," the old, the sick, children, and other marginalized groups are to be protected and controlled. On the other hand, Terasaki stresses that "well-being" is a subjective sense of feeling good, such as when eating, and the resultant visceral sensation in human's bodies of feeling comfortable, and it must be said to be meaningful life for all living human beings regardless of sociocultural differences (Terasaki 2010: 22-23).

2 From an anthropological point of view, Mathews and Izquierdo regarded it important to consider an inter-relationship between human commonality and sociocultural differences of sense of well-being. They define that "Well-being is an optimal state for an individual, community, society, and the world as a whole. It is conceived of, expressed, and experienced in different ways by different individuals and within the cultural contexts of different societies: different societies may have distinctly different culturally shaped visions of well-being. Nonetheless, well-being bears a degree of commonality due to our common humanity and interrelatedness over space and time" (Mathews and Izquierdo 2010: 5).

3 There is an official website on Hanayome Noren. The URL is as follows: http://ipponsugi.sakura.ne.jp/noren/

4 In the background of the growing interest in revaluation of social connectedness in Japan, it is pointed out that there were disasters that frequently struck Japan in the last decade.

5 The earthquake killed one person in another city.

6 He primarily discussed concerning the inequality of social capital and how it affected young people of the same community to form social cluster (Loury 1988: 273).

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Rethinking "Successful Aging"
From the Perspective of the Jizō with the Replaceable Heads

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Abstract

Modern medical technology has allowed us to hope for long lives while also making us anxious about being bedridden or suffering from long-term dementia. Maintaining independence into the twilight years, especially after retirement, has become a focal point of public and scholarly discussion. The concept of "successful aging" has been associated with the image of "independent" individuals fulfilling their social responsibilities and engaging in useful social activities. Scholars and researchers have attempted to grasp what makes older adults feel successful in their later lives. They seem to have paid little attention, however, to ontological issues such as identity and self-interrogation about the meaning of our lives, which we might ponder at the prospect of our death regardless of our condition or degree of "success." This paper deals with these ontological questions in relation to "successful aging," arguing that we are not very "independent" or "free" at any stage of our lives, and demonstrating that modifying our model of human nature will permit us to embrace the human aging process more fully.

Keywords: successful aging, Jizō, Japanese religion, ontology, self, interdependence

Introduction

We begin to "grow" the moment we come into being. Adults are regarded as independent people with social responsibilities, enjoying freedom and participating in many useful activities. The concept of "successful aging" has been associated with the image of human beings as "independent," formerly immature but now old enough to fulfill their social responsibilities and engage in useful activities yet who will eventually fall into a decline while longing to age as "successfully" as possible.

When life expectancy was relatively short, longevity used to mean "successful aging" and it was celebrated with magnificent banquets. Longevity is now the norm in advanced countries; we take it for granted and are more likely to approach it anxiously than see it as a blessing. Relatively recent developments in medical technology have allowed us to see our grandparents and parents live long enough to suffer prolonged pain, lying immobile in bed, sometimes as hospital patients full of tubes. It has thus become our desperate hope to live not only long but also as healthily and happily as we can.

Studies on successful aging have been searching for the key to what makes older adults feel successful. Basic

concepts have been described through such terms as "life satisfaction," "physical and psychological well-being" (Palmore 1979; Carol 1989; Maddox and Campbell 1985), "economic well-being" (Crystal and Shea 1990), "autonomy" (Deeg 1995), "adaptation and adjustment" (Atchley 1985; Gorge 1980), "environment" (Lawton 1988), "spirituality" (Crowther et al. 2002), "lifestyle" (Franklin and Tate 2009), and "social participation" (Wan and Odell 1983), to name a few. However, studies on successful aging have paid little attention to the ontological issues that older adults might confront in the face of their impending death. Since questions such as "Who am I?," "What is my identity?," and "What has my life meant?" are not restricted to older adults, this kind of ontological self-questioning has not yet been closely examined in relation to successful aging. In dealing with the emotional and psychological aspects of the self in terms of successful aging, researchers seem preoccupied with issues such as "[h]ow older adults sustain high levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy" (George 1998:142), "[what] allows the very old to accept loss more easily" (Marcoen et al. 2007: 63) while being undermined by illness, disability and frailty. These questions are answered through the observation of a certain developmental process of resilience (Fry and Keyes 2010; Marcoen et al. 2007) and adaptation (Marcoen et al. 2007; Polverino 2011) in later life. However, I would point out that the scholarly questions themselves derive from the established image of human nature, which I believe needs to be re-examined.

This paper deals with the ontological questions in connection with successful aging, focusing on older adults as well as on the statue of Jizō, which also "ages" and is sometimes "disabled," as significant material.

Studies in the anthropology of tourism have recently examined the nature and identity of materials, focusing on "authenticities"—the kinds of authenticities pursued, the nature of the pursuers, their histories, and their embeddedness in their cultural and political environments (Eade and Sallnow 1991; Duggan 1997; Morgan 1998; Hashimoto 1999; Nakatani 2004; Nash 2007). Regarding authenticity, some argue that the stereotypically negative image of older adults prevents them from behaving as they really are, and hence, from being their "authentic self" (George 1998) or "the true self" (Biggs 1999) because they internalize or reflect the gaze of others. This paper deals with materials and older adults in the light of authenticity as well, but from a different perspective: by examining the statue in a personified way—in terms of its close relationship with elderly worshippers seeking their own identities—in order to reconsider the model of human nature and successful aging.

Photo 1: A variety of Jizō statues with offerings of flowers and water, wearing bibs donated by worshippers (Photo courtesey of author)

HUMAN BEINGS AND JIZŌ

Jizō is one of the Guardian Deities of Buddhism, who, many Japanese people believe, saves them as they wander among the six realms (that of the god, the human, the animal, hell, and the hungry ghost), or the "Asura realms." Figures of the deity have been carved into stone statues of various shapes throughout Japan; it is believed that the statues have spirits and powers that can answer prayers.[1]

Jizō is a single deity but also appears as a multitude of stone statues, which are often described as human. They are humans with bodies of stone and are sometimes described as if their stone "bodies" were mobile. This paper will focus on the statue at the Gangyō temple, Shinagawa, Tokyo. This statue has a head that is removable from its

body; the body remains at the Gangyō temple, while the head actually circulates among worshippers. Moreover, the statue has not just one head but several—located on the body, at its feet, and at worshippers' homes. This paper examines the religious practices of worshippers who entrust this statue with their lives in exchange for the promise of answered prayers and who therefore "bind" themselves to it inseparably while creating a future in collaboration with "others" who are also being "bound" rather than enjoying freedom.

JIZŌ STATUES IN JAPANESE CULTURE

The O Jizō-sama as a Familiar Japanese Deity

There are many Japanese "once-upon-a-time" stories about Jizō. Most Japanese people know the stories of the "Umbrella Jizō" and "Rice Planting Jizō," while many other, local stories have been transmitted orally. A wide variety of Jizō statues based on those stories and related beliefs line the streets of Japan (see Photo 1). People use "O Jizō-sama" as a general term for such images, but each statue has a specific name and origin story.

People learn these names and histories of Jizō when "miraculous stories" are reported on TV. Such reporting can widen the circle of belief nationally and even globally. For instance, "Jizō without a head" in Fuchu-City, Hiroshima, was accidentally discovered in 1977 by a man who had had a strange dream after a minor motorbike accident. In the dream, Jizō said to him, "Dig me out, and I will grant a wish to all people." This event was first announced locally, then the worshippers of this Jizō multiplied. Some began experiencing miraculous cures, such as normalized blood pressure and the remission of rheumatism. Monthly celebrations began on the 18th of each month (since the statue was discovered on May 18, 1952). The first newspaper article on the statue and its miracles appeared on June 2, 1952; on December 23, 1952, the statue was featured on local Hiroshima TV and then on nationwide TV on the 27th. The statue now draws pilgrims from abroad and has dedicated websites in English, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese, as well as Japanese.

Stories of Jizō's miraculous works have continued today. The Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent tsunami took many lives in March 2011. It was a massive disaster that caused great destruction, including to Jizō statues. They were leveled and washed away, events that some believed prevented the infliction of similar destruction on people. Locals are rebuilding the statues; there are several projects underway outside of Tohoku to support these rebuilding projects financially and to make and send new statues. Jizō is such a popular deity in Japan that its statues

are indispensable aspects of the nation's landscape.

Types of Jizō

Folklorist Ishikawa Junichirō reports more than 1,400 Jizō statue names (Ishikawa 1995: 52). He itemizes them into thirteen categories: (1) those providing a long and healthy life (e.g., "Jizō for Pokkuri," meaning "a perfect state of life until death"); (2) those who rescue from danger or disaster (e.g., "Jizō with a Mutilated Nose," "Rice Planting Jizō"); (3) those providing blessings relating to children, such as an easy delivery and happy child rearing (e.g., "Jizō skilled at stopping children's night crying," "Jizō skilled at making children play"); (4) those that heal (e.g., "Jizō who heals worshippers' skin problems"); (5) those who answer petitions and thanksgiving (e.g., "Kan-kan Jizō,"[2] "Muddy Jizō"); (6) those who tell fortunes (e.g., "Give-me-a-hug Jizō," "Perspiring Jizō"); (7) those who punish (e.g., "Dancing Jizō," "Sneaking Jizō"); (8) those whose names are based on their locations (e.g., "Jizō watching in the direction of the rising sun," "South-facing Jizō"); (9) those named after places, mountains, shrines, or people (e.g., "Jizō of Hole," "Jizō of Stream"); (10) those named after their shape, color, or number (e.g., "Jizō with a bent Nose," "Hundred statues of Jizō"); (11) those named after their origin (e.g., "Jizō for human sacrifice," "Jizō of Potatoes"); (12) those relating to religious services (e.g., "Jizō of folding flowers," "Jizō for abandoned children"); and (13) those based on famous legends (e.g., "Jizō of Drinking," "Jizō of Departure"). Jizō has thus been personified in many ways and older adults, parents, children, and others at all life stages make appeals to him.

It is important to remember that the above categorizations provide only a general view of Jizō belief in Japan. None of its names fits exclusively into one category; for example, "Jizō without a head" can be used to separate one from misfortune. The "Jizō of drinking" can describe a tipsy Jizō, but it can also represent alleviation from a drinking habit or obtaining a healthy body that never becomes intoxicated.

Headless Jizō

This article will focus on two kinds of Jizō statues, which are the features of the statue at the Gangyō temple —the "Headless Jizō" and the "Bound Jizō."

Headless Jizō is literally a statue without a head, but the name is not applied to all headless Jizō. Some statues with heads are also called "Headless Jizō," and some bodiless Jizō heads are called "Headless Jizō" (instead of "Head-Only Jizō"). The causes of their headlessness vary from one statue to another. Some were sculpted headless during the Edo period to console the souls of the beheaded. Others reflect the miraculous story of a samurai who could not

cut off an intended victim's head because Jizō appeared and was beheaded in his place. Most headless Jizō statues, though, become headless through age. Their foundations loosen, and they fall and break during typhoons and heavy rainfall. The broken statues are then put back together, their heads placed on their bodies and offerings of red aprons tied around their necks.

Photo 2: A close-up view of the five-yen "*goen*" coins on the ropes of the Bound Jizō representing a wish (Photo courtesey of author

Bound Jizō

The Bound Jizō is based on the story of a vow that spread during the Edo period. All vows are made through the Bound Jizō the same way, regardless of the binding method: the *kyōsei-kigan*, meaning "expecting fulfillments by force." Those who make a vow through the Bound Jizō do not just ask but threaten by saying, "Grant my request, or you will stay as you are."[3] There are fewer Bound Jizō than Headless Jizō, but some attract pilgrims from all over Japan. The Bound Jizō at Nanzo-In, Tokyo, is the most famous one; many pilgrims visit it to make vows by binding the statue with thick straw ropes, obscuring its original bodily form.

While "Bound Jizō" is the most popular name for these statues, they have several other names, such as "Rope Jizō," "Binding Jizō," and "Untied Rope Jizō" (Ishikawa 1995: 49). The statue's key feature is significant because "it was a great dishonor to be bound by ropes in the Edo period" (Wakasakuragi 2009: 49). At that time, three ways of binding were employed—binding with a knot (indicating an arrest), painful binding (used as a punishment), and binding without a knot to detain someone temporarily

for interrogation (Wakasakuragi 2009: 84-85). The binding method used on the Jizō depends on the place. Some people use a five-yen coin as a knot because it has a hole in the center and because its name sounds like "*goen*," meaning "happy chance" in Japanese; this has become the new "authentic" way for worshippers to wish for a happy marriage or employment (Photo 2).

In a Kyōsei-Kigan, the Bound Jizō is bound by thick ropes and put into the mud, sunk into a river (Tanaka 2006: 230-233), or covered with ash or excrement (Ishikawa 1995: 84-88). In this way, worshippers deprive Jizō of his dignity and freedom. Bound Jizō is believed to be incapable of moving of his own free will, whereas "Substitute Jizō" can helpfully substitute for worshippers in the belief that they are mobile and thus can help people and suffer in their place (Ishikawa 1995: 249-250). Although they are essentially the same helpful Jizō, Bound Jizō, and Substitute Jizō have very different ways of granting prayers.

A single statue is sometimes regarded as both a bound and substitute Jizō, apparently because Bound Jizō looks like Suffering Jizō, who suffers in place of people. The statue at the Gangyō temple also comes under the heading of this case. Whether the Jizō statue has a movable body is important to its identity; however, this kind of confusion often occurs in Jizō belief, and, as we will discuss later, worshippers seem to perceive no contradiction in this confusion.

O Jizō-sama at Gangyō Temple

There are three Bound Jizō in Tokyo. One is at Nanzo-In, as mentioned; another is at Rinsen temple; and another at Gangyō temple, Shinagawa district, which I will discuss. The one at Gangyō temple has a removable head, and, interestingly, worshippers can take it while making their vows. This is the distinctive feature of the temple's Bound Jizō.

According to the temple's leaflet, the temple was founded in 1462 by a monk who started repeating the name of the Buddha Amida on the Shinagawa coast. It became one of the

seminaries for Buddhist priests granted the light of Hōnen Buddhism. Amitābha, Guanyin, and Mahasthamaprapta are enshrined inside the main sanctuary as the primary objects of worship (Photo 3). The temple is 6,270 square meters; besides the main sanctuary, it has other buildings, such as an ossuary and a shrine for the statue of Bound Jizō.

As the photograph shows, this statue does not appear headless. Its body and head are in fact not connected: the head just rests on the body, and the juncture is covered by a scarf. Some of the worshippers I interviewed told me that they occasionally found the statue headless. This unusual phenomenon is closely related to the way vows are made through this statue.

Photo 3: Older worshippers gathered in the main hall of Gangyō temple (Photo courtesey of author)

Photo 4: The Bound Jizō with the removable head at Gangyō temple (Photo courtesey of author)

The word "gan" means "wishes," and "gyō" means "going" or "acceptance" in Japanese. This temple is located just a couple of minutes' walk from Shinbaba station on the Keikyu-Honsen line. It is thus easily accessible to everyone, especially older adults. It is situated near the station and is right under the elevated Keikyu-Honsen railroad; people periodically experience trains passing above their heads.

The Characteristics of the Statue

The original statue was dedicated in 1652 during a ceremony called giving eyes" (kaigen), believed to invest a statue with a sacred spirit. This statue was destroyed in a fire, and the current statue was built in 1841. It is 70 cm tall, wears a colored cloth, and is tightly bound by thick ropes (Photo 4). The temple priest changes its clothes on October 14 of every year. Only on this occasion is the statue released from its ropes. Thus, Bound Jizō is kept immobile virtually all year.

Making Vows

Picture 5 shows a group of Jizō heads dedicated to this temple; these are ex-votos from worshippers (see Picture 5). Worshippers either make these heads themselves with plaster or ask stonemasons to make them. They then donate the heads to the temple. Additional heads are stored beneath the statue's mounting. A signboard next to the statue reads, "Those who wish to make vows through the statue, take the head of this statue to your home, and bring it back with a new head when the prayers are fulfilled." Folklorist Tanaka Senichi reports that worshippers bring back the head of the statue and put one of the dedicated heads beneath it, which another worshipper then takes with him. Thus, the statue's facial expression changes constantly (Tanaka 2006: 235). The wife of the temple priest told me that the temple asks worshippers not to take the head of the statue but one of the heads on the ground instead, because the one on the body is part of Jizō and therefore a sacred object. However, the heads

have been circulating around the temple and among worshippers from many places, and we no longer know what the original face looked like. Moreover, according to the temple priest, some worshippers confided that they brought their pictures to stonemasons and asked to have heads sculpted to look like them, or created heads looking like themselves using plasters.[4] The question arises, then, to what degree of the statue O Jizō-sama can be regarded as a sacred entity.

Photo 5: A close-up of the ex-voto heads at Gangyō temple (Photo courtesey of author)

IDENTITY OF O JIZŌ-SAMA

The head leaves and returns along with another head as a manifestation of thanksgiving and belief in the statue of bound Jizō at Gangyō temple. The original head must be in the house of a worshipper who is still waiting for his prayers to be fulfilled, the one on the body of Bound Jizō, or one of the heads dedicated to the temple and placed under the statue. Thus, multiple Jizō heads have various temporal identities, either as the face of the statue of Jizō,

one of the ex-votos, or as a separated object of worship in the home. The origin of the sacred object should be important to worshippers expecting their wishes to come true, for, if the head they take from the temple is just a mere stone head with the face of one of the worshippers, it would be pointless to worship it in an effort to solve their problems. I would like to present several hypotheses, and examine each one.

If the body were the only sacred object, visiting the statue at Gangyō temple would be meaningful because the proper object of prayer would be present. However, there would be no reason to bring home the head of Jizō and pray to it. If both the body and the original head were sacred objects, the head's whereabouts should become the main concern for worshippers because the sacred object might be incomplete. Only by a rare chance could the head on the body happen to be the original. However, I have not met anyone who is anxious about the location of the original head.

If the original head were the only sacred object, binding the body of Jizō would be meaningless because the body would be mere stone, and Jizō would not be vulnerable to being deprived of his freedom. If all the heads, including the dedicated ones, were regarded as sacred objects, Jizō would become the owner of multiple heads and would be scattered over many places as a divided sacred object. Moreover, the *kaigen* ceremony would become invalid because the original head that went through the ceremony and the dedicated ex-voto heads would have the same status as sacred objects. Regarding the statue as being merely the symbol of Jizō and either the body or the head as being mere stones would also reduce the kaigen to a meaningless practice, nullifying the validity of binding the statue and making vows through it.

Thus, every hypothesis presents a contradiction between belief and practice. Worshippers do not appear to have noticed these contradictions, even though they place their lives in the hands of the aging Jizō statue. They entrust their fates to him yet do not examine the nature of the sacred objects to which they pray. Worshippers leave their wishes in the hands of O Jizō-sama, an obscure presence, whose facial expression might belong to one of the worshippers, without apparently philosophizing about Jizō's identity or the nature of its sacred power.

Concluding Discussion

Worshippers of Headless or Bound Jizō do not seriously examine the identity or authenticity of the statue even though it is supposed to influence their lives. Looked at from a different angle, this stance may also apply to other areas of life. People in general likely know that they will never have a perfectly clear knowledge of others including materials, yet they entrust parts of their lives to others by entering into relationships with people and other phenomena in the course of their lives.[5] Rather than trying to fully understand others and stand still in that knowledge, they embrace the fact that the things and people are inconsistent, presenting themselves as variable beings, giving different colors and stimuli to our lives. They then proceed through life in the hope of a better future.

If this is the case, harboring suspicions or conflicts about identity and pursuing the authentic self could be regarded as an exclusionary practice of differentiating ourselves from others. Those in relationships with us do not expect to gain a completely clear understanding of us but embrace us as inconsistent beings. We might be able to allow ourselves to find the way to internalize these sorts of others' gaze in a positive way instead of a negative one (cf. Geore 1998). The Jizō to which Japanese worshippers entrust their lives always remains in an identity crisis: a single statue will sometimes be headless, will always wear a different smile, on a face perhaps made by a worshipper to look like him, and will have multiple heads scattered all over Japan. The gaze of Jizō is periodically exchanged for the gaze of a worshipper, which could be someone else or oneself, blurring boundaries between oneself and others. As Japanese worshippers do not scrutinize those factors and live with ambiguities and contradictions while entrusting their future to him, we may also find a pathway to live with ambiguities and embrace ourselves as we are. The fact that they have sought help from Jizō and others might also remind us that we human beings are somewhat dependent upon others.

The stone statue of Jizō ages and will eventually be damaged, broken, and repaired, just as we all deteriorate in health, have operations, and sometimes undergo organ transplants. Whatever his condition, Jizō is there to help others and seek help to be "unbound" by others, just like human beings at all life stages. And, just like Jizō, who lives in a body with disconnected parts, we might be able to allow ourselves to be unconcerned about our identities while we live through various bodily conditions as we age.

This perspective offers a new conflict management method for identity issues. When we stop privileging ourselves by looking at ourselves as being a part of them, as one of many ambiguous beings, who are never labeled stereotypically, who are aging in the course of nature, who are not really as "independent" or "free" at any life stage as we thought we would be, we can better embrace our aging process as an issue important not only to older adults, but to all generations. This will eventually lead us to deconstruct the notion of "successful aging" and to redefine it as the uninterrupted, unfolding process of human nature.

Notes

1 There are many ways to make vows. The *promessa* (Italy), *wegħda* (Malta), and *manda* (Mexico), for example, are practiced in Catholic countries. They ask something from God through the Virgin Mary or one of the saints; when their wishes are fulfilled, they perform their promise. By contrast, a typical *Gankake* (Japan) requires that we do something first so that Jizō or some other deity will answer our prayers. *Ochadati* ("stop drinking green tea until the wishes are fulfilled") is one of the oldest ways of doing *Gankake*.

2 The term *kan-kan* represents the sound of pebbles. Worshippers make this sound by rubbing pebbles in front of the statue of "*Kan-Kan* Jizō" so that Jizō will grant their wishes.

3 Daruma dolls, modeled after the founder of Zen, also belong to the *kyōsei-kigan* category. Daruma dolls are t ypically red round figures with eyes without pupils. To make a wish, one draws a pupil in one of the blanks and leaves the other as is. After the wish comes true, one draws the other pupil to complete Daruma's eyes. In this way, Daruma are encouraged, or forced, to fulfill wishes and obtain both eyes.

4 It is believed that vow making should be kept secret, otherwise the wish will not be granted. Therefore, theoretically speaking, no personal or detailed information regarding vows made through the statue is available beyond the dedicated heads. However, the Gangyō temple priest said that he witnesses worshippers in the middle of making vows around the statue and occasionally meets worshippers after their wishes have been granted who would like to show their gratitude to him and the temple. He shared some information about the worship process, including the fact that some worshippers make heads that look like them. As the process is largely kept secret, however, no statistical data exists concerning issues

such as how many people are involved and which generations are most active. The priest did claim, though, that most of those who come to him in gratitude are older adults.

This paper focuses on the Jizō statue with replaceable heads at Gangyō temple, but there are many kinds of statues, as outlined in section 2. Jizō is worshipped by all generations, who, through the statues, choose their vows according to the statues' figures and legends. It is not clear if older adults choose the Jizō statue at Gangyō temple especially because it is aged and "disabled."

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Book Reviews

Nature's Embrace: Japan's Aging Urbanites and New Death Rites. Satsuki Kawano. Honolulu, Hawai'i University Press. 2010.
 ISBN 978-0-8248-3413-5
pp 220, $27.00(Paper)

Satsuki Kawano's *Nature's Embrace: Japan's Aging Urbanites and New Death Rites* is an account of the production of a new mortuary rite, the dispersal of ashes into the sea or wilderness. This new mortuary rite is offered as an alternative to the interment of these ashes and, ideally, their perpetual veneration, in a family grave. In conversation with the growing literature on the emergence of a "new urban elder culture" (for example, Morioka Kiyoshi, 1994), Kawano persuasively traces the complex connections between this new ritual practice and Japan's low birthrate and mass longevity. The author elegantly illuminates how individuals' experiences of not only their late adulthood, but of their post-death trajectories are transformed by demographic change.

The book, based on some ninety interviews and extended participant observation, focuses on a single organization, the Grave Free Promotion Society (GFPS), a volunteer-run social movement founded in 1991. While conventional interment rests on the acceptance of the generation contract—the care of the dead is entrusted to the living, ideally to a married eldest son who will tend to and eventually inherit the family grave—GFPS encourages its members to forgo burial and instead "return to nature" after their deaths. This approach removes the burden of ritual care from the next generation, and thus reorders the relationship between the living and the dead on the deceased individual's own terms. Thus, Kawano suggests, the movement is significant as, through their mortuary choices,

GFPS members transform themselves from "future recipients of care in a strained system of reciprocity into rewriters of the generational contract […] In other words, they contest their overdependence on the living after their deaths" (169).

A particular strength of the text is that, while Kawano carefully traces the connections between demographic change and shifting ritual practices, the story she tells is not one of declining filial piety; the feared neglect of the young does not solely drive the decision to abandon the family grave. Instead, it is the story of a lively social movement, of activism and agency. GFPS volunteering, is, Kawano suggests, "driven not only by members' wish to "return to nature" after their deaths, but also by volunteers' desire to find a new, meaningful place in society in late adulthood (108)." Kawano's analysis is nuanced; she points out that her interlocutors' conception of agency is complex. The choice to scatter ashes cannot be understood as a shift to Western-style individualism, Kawano argues, but instead reflects values of appropriate interdependence, and a distinctively Japanese articulation of personhood, and the family and its obligations.

While Kawano's overviews of historical transformation are consistently elegant (Chapters One, Two, and Five), the ethnography—in Chapter Three, on the day-to-day organization of GFPS, and in Chapter Four, on ash scattering ceremonies—is unfortunately sometimes rather thin. Beyond an extended description of ash scattering ceremonies in Chapter Four, there are few detailed examples and quotations. There are moments of real ethnographic richness, but the reader is left wanting more. In Chapter Four, for example, the author discusses the mixed reaction to the requirement

that relatives pulverize bones before they are scattered. While some GFPS members saw the requirement positively—as an act that literally put mortuary practices back into the hands of the bereaved, in contrast to commercial funerals that rendered them merely passive recipients—some relatives were horrified by what they perceived as violence against the dead. Ethnographic scenes such as this persuasively render the complex reactions to this new ritual form, but they were unfortunately rather few and far between.

The book is most valuable, I would argue, as a study of how civil society organizations function in Japan, and particularly as an account of the growing activism of urban elderly. However, because of the scarceness of ethnographic material, the reader does not get to know any particular GFPS member in detail. The book also lacks tabulated data, photographs, and interview transcripts, so the reader is left not only without a sense of what motivates individual GFPS members, but also unable to grasp how significant GFPS really is. Is the organization, as Kawano ambitiously suggests, a new subculture that marks a radical rethinking of the relationships between the generations? While the historical chapters persuade—clearly, an examination of mortuary ritual can provide a powerful lens through which to view a changing society—the importance of this particular movement is not always convincingly articulated. A further point of critique: while the book's title speaks of "Nature's Embrace," "nature" is entirely untheorized.

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Book Reviews

Aging, Society, and the Life Course. By Leslie A. Morgan and Suzanne R. Kunkel. 4th edition. Springer Publishing Company. 2011.
ISBN 978-082611937-7 pp353, $90.00 cloth, $52. Kindle e-book.

Undergraduate coursework on topics pertaining to aging are housed in departments of psychology, sociology, anthropology, gerontology, and women's studies, as well as in interdepartmental programs or certificate programs such as "aging studies" or "human development." Accordingly, there are a number of texts on the market geared for both specific disciplinary audiences and general gerontology or aging studies classrooms. Morgan and Kunkel's text, Aging, Society, and the Life Course, now in its 4th edition, is framed as a sociology of aging text, but may be appropriate for both sociology and general aging studies audiences.

The current edition, written for an undergraduate audience, is comprised of twelve chapters on a variety of topics pertaining to the sociology of aging. The introductory chapter provides an overview of frameworks for thinking about age and provides a general understanding of the relationship between the sociology of aging to gerontology. Such a framing is important for undergraduates to develop an understanding of the breadth of the aging field as well as the role of sociology within. The second chapter of the text focuses on research methodology and is a substantive and thoughtful approach that I have rarely seen

in comparable textbooks. This is one of the strongest chapters in the volume and would be useful reading for undergraduates in any social science course. The remaining chapters take a more topical focus, and address traditional sociological subject matter such as demography, work, family structure, economics, healthcare, and governance. Each chapter presents a brief introduction to the topic, a chapter summary, key words, discussion questions, and web resources. Many of the chapters also incorporate an "applying theory" section which bridges theory with specific examples to help students understand the importance of theory in understanding gerontology.

The chapters "Global Aging" and "Aging and Health" may be the most compelling to an anthropological audience. The Transnational Aging chapter addresses demographic and cultural factors which affect the aging experience in three nations, China, Germany, and Kenya. This ethnological approach is accompanied by a brief section on the "exotic other", but lacks the depth an anthropology-authored text would provide on cultural relativism, race, ethnicity, and identity. The chapter on Aging and Health is nicely balanced and provides general information on health issues among older adults, variability in health outcomes, and healthcare financing. It avoids going into excessive detail on specific age-associated disorders and is accompanied by a thoughtful essay on anti- aging and consumerism in the U.S. context.

Overall the book has a number of design features that make it a good

fit for faculty and students alike. The chapter format of the text is easy to divide over a semester calendar; each chapter provides some useful discussion-generating questions that could be used for in or out-of-class engagement. Chapters also feature student friendly sections such as chapter summaries and key terms. It may be helpful to students if future editions provided a formal glossary rather than relying upon context for definitions. The book is nicely produced and the e-book version may be attractive to some students. The e-book version does have voice-to-text capability, which is an important value for students who are visually impaired. Anthropologists teaching general aging studies or gerontology courses will find this a good choice.

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Book Reviews

Concepts of the "self" are a topic of much debate in the humanities and the social sciences. The process of negotiating a "sense of self" becomes particularly important for persons with dementia or other related diseases who may experience a diminished sense of self, especially in societies prioritizing cognition.

A diminished sense of self can come about for many reasons, including being removed from familiar surroundings. Environmental gerontologist Habib Chaudhury argues in *Remembering Home: Rediscovering the Self in Dementia* that memories of home can connect persons with dementia to their past and can be used to aid them in adjusting to present circumstances - such as a new living environment. Like many others, Chaudhury calls for a reframing of the relationship between caregivers and persons with dementia from a "medical-model" of patient care to a "person-centered" model. He asserts that understanding the person with dementia's past experiences, gleaned from stories of home and photographs, can greatly help with relating to that person. Chaudhury contends that in order to create a meaningful living environment for the person suffering from dementia we need to identify the unique identities of the individuals as reflected through their personal pasts. Chaudhury suggest that this approach can be of benefit in two ways. "First, guided reminiscences can anchor residents in remembered places, activities, and events even as

their disease threatens to leave them adrift in a present they may no longer recognize or understand. Second, home stories can enable caregivers to better understand and engage residents as persons" (102).

Remembering Home is divided into five chapters. The first two chapters set the foundations for the Chaudhury's argument presenting multi-disciplinary scholarship on place, aging, and concepts of the self. Drawing on these literatures, Chaudhury argues that the person with dementia should be viewed as a "whole" person, with a life, character and set of interests that predate the onset of dementia. Chapter Two focuses on home as one of the most significant "places" in persons' lives with both psychological and emotional frames of reference. Memories of "home"—including childhood home, a home in which one may later create and raise a family in, and the neighborhoods in which they are embedded— are complex and layered as he argues that these places have become part of the self. Chaudhury contends that working with persons with dementia to recover a sense of self through memories of place supports, and possibly even improves, quality of life. He argues that this aspect is very important in the face of the many losses associated with dementia. In Chapter Three, themes in the recollection of homes and related life experiences are drawn from interviews with 13 individuals with dementia and members of their families carried out in four care facilities in Wisconsin. Here Chaudhury develops his concept of "home story" as a place-based, home-related biographical sketch including photographs and artifacts that synthesize a resident's memories of home and serves as a tool for guided reminiscences. The goal is to avoid depersonalizing the

individual and to instead treat them with compassion, dignity, and respect while appreciating the self that is still there. Chapter Four presents five focused biographies using stories told by residents, family members, friends, and caregivers during guided sessions using photographs of past homes as triggers. In care settings, Chaudhury argues that these stories can be used to stimulate conversation and build rapport between staff and residents. In addition, specific prompts may trigger more memories which can add to the well-being of the person and aid the staff in developing innovative ways in caring for the person. Chapter Five offers practical strategies and suggestions for using home stories and biographies for caregivers who want to (re)connect with and enhance quality of life for sufferers of dementia.

Scholars in gerontology and social sciences may find Chaudhurry's theoretical arguments compelling. However, this book is also useful as a guide for health care professionals and activity leaders in long-term facilities, assisted living facilities, adult day centers. Family members and anyone interested in understanding and relating to people with dementia will also find it useful. For anthropologists, this book does not draw much on our discipline's considerable writings on dementia and material culture studies but it is still worth reading to see how a scholar from another field approaches these topics.

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Information and Submission Guidelines

Anthropology & Aging Quarterly is the official publication of the Association for Anthropology & Gerontology (AAGE). It is published quarterly (February, May, August, November) by (AAGE). AAGE is a nonprofit organization established in 1978 as a multidisciplinary group dedicated to the exploration and understanding of aging within and across the diversity of human cultures. Our perspective is holistic, comparative, and international. Our members come from a variety of academic and applied fields, including the social and biological sciences, nursing, medicine, policy studies, social work, and service provision. We provide a supportive environment for the professional growth of students and colleagues, contributing to a greater understanding of the aging process and the lives of older persons across the globe.

Submission Process All manuscripts should be submitted electronically, via e-mail attachment. *Anthropology & Aging Quarterly* accepts four types of submissions--*Research Reports*, *Policy and News Reviews*, *Commentaries*, and *Articles*.

*Research Report*s are brief discussions of ongoing or recently completed study and should be no longer than 2,000 words. *Policy and News Reviews* are pieces which offer thoughtful and reflective commentary on current events or social policies pertaining to aging and culture. *Commentaries* provide authors with an opportunity to discuss theoretical, ethical and other time-sensitive topical issues which do not lend themselves to a full-length article. *Policy Reviews* or *Commentaries* may range from 1,000 to 4,500 words. *Articles* are peer-reviewed and manuscript submissions should include the following: a cover page with the author's full name, affiliation, mailing address, and manuscript title; a 200 word abstract; the text; references cited; and tables or figures. Endnotes are permitted but should be used sparingly and with justification. *Articles* should not exceed 9,000 words, including all materials. Published materials will publically accessible and protected by a Creative Commons copyright.

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March issue 34 (1): December 20th, 2012
June issue 34(2): March 20th, 2013
September issue 34(3): June 20th, 2013