SOCIO-CULTURAL CONDITIONS OF JAPAN
REFLECTED BY
FACTORS INDUCING RECENT JAPANESE IMMIGRATION TO CANADA

by

MARIKO NAGOSHI
B.A., Osaka City University, 1985
M.A., California State University, Los Angeles, 2000

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the socio-cultural conditions of Japanese society as reflected in factors that induce recent Japanese immigration to Canada. The examination is based on interview research done with six female and six male Japanese immigrants living in Vancouver, who arrived in Canada after the mid-1990s. While previous migration studies emphasized political-economic conditions as the causes of migration flow, the narratives of these interviewees reveal a different migratory pattern that is motivated by spiritual well-being and life values. In order to encapsulate the complexity of contemporary migration flow, the push/pull factors that induced interviewees' emigration are thematically categorized and analyzed within a frame that emphasizes both these factors' interdependence with the interrelationships of Japanese social systems that have swayed the interviewees' decision to emigrate from Japan, and the nature of complexity in Japanese society.

Showing the pluralism of these factors, they are categorized into nine themes: 1) physical environment; 2) spiritual enrichment and a stress-reduced life style; 3) socio-cultural constraints; 4) family life; 5) education; 6) age restrictions; 7) gender roles; 8) diversification, and 9) self-actualization. Luhmann's theory of social systems and Foucault's notion of governmentality serve as touchstones for the re-interpretation of the push/pull factors based on the examination of the interrelations among three Japanese social systems of family, education, and employment. The analysis reveals the complexity of the push/pull factors. Moreover, the interviewees' image of a "simple Canada," which also contributes to their decision to immigrate, is explained in terms of
the "double complexity" of Japanese society stemming from both the complexity of modern society and the complexity of an amalgam of "modern" and "pre-modern" elements in Japanese society. Through an extensive examination of the correlations between the experiences of contemporary Japanese migrants and Japanese social systems, this study brings new insights to discussions on tensions between human agency and social structure, and the importance of intangible, mental images in the ways people shape their lives.
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GLOSSARY

aidagara : contexts

amae : an indulgent desire to be taken care of by others

Burakumin : descendants of the earlier *Eta-Hinin* outcastes discriminated against in Japan due to their occupation or itinerant status

chokkei kazoku sei : a stem family system

chōjo : the eldest daughter

chōnan : the eldest son

dekasegi : to “go out to work” (a practice of going out from home to seek temporary jobs in other areas)

derukui wa utareru : The nail that sticks out gets hammered down.

friitaa : part-timer or unemployed person looking for a job

fuan no jidai : the era of anxiety

furusato : home village

Gaimushō : The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

gakkyū hōkai : disruption and lack of order in elementary school classroom

gakureki shakai : academic career-oriented society

gakurekishugi : cultural emphasis on educational credentialism

giri : obligation

han : small group

heisoku-kan : a sense of no way out, deadlock

hensachi : deviation value or the percentile academic ranking of students

hensachi kyōiku : education emphasizing hensachi

hikikomori : social withdrawal
hito : people at large

hito ni warawareru : to be laughed at by people at large

hito no me : people’s eyes

honne/tatemae : real feelings/public stance

ie system : Japanese family household and lineage system

iitoshi-shite : “act your age” (implying the person is too old for something)

ijime : bullying

ikigai : that which most makes life worth living

ikuji noirōze : mother’s childrearing neurosis anxiety

I/U taan genshō : I/U turn phenomena (I taan is the movement of urban born people to a rural area, U taan is a boomerang-like motion of rural born urban dwellers returning to their native areas.)

iyashi : healing

iyashi būmu : healing boom

jibun : the self

jibun-rashisa : being true to oneself

jibun-sagashi : the search for one’s true self

jiko-jitsugen : self-actualization

juken jigoku : exam hell

juku : private cram school

jukunen rikon : middle age divorce

kafulchō : male householder

kafulchō ken : a father’s legal patriarchal authority over his family members

kanjin : person-in-nexus
karōshi : death by overwork

datei rikon : so-called ‘divorce within the family’ referring to couples who continue to live together and do not divorce but no longer have a basis of relationship

katoku sōzoku sei : an inheritance system where the status of householder, lineage, family name, and estate are inherited by the eldest son (chōnan) or the eldest daughter (chōjo) in the case when there are no sons

keigo : honorific language

kigyōjin : corporate person

kigyō senshi : corporate warriors

kiritsu : stand up

ki wo tsuke : stand straight

kojin : individual

Kokudochō : The National Land Agency of Japan

kōnai bōryoku : school violence

Kōseirōdōshō : The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare of Japan

kyōdōtai : gemeinschaft community

kyōiku mama : education mama or a mother who is especially ardent about her children’s education

mae ni narae : line up facing the person in front of you

maihōmu : my home

maiho mu-shugi : a Japanese invented word from the English phrase “my home” combined with the word shugi (Japanese for -ism), which literally means “My Home Ideology” indicating the principal of placing one’s own family life first

maware migi : right-about-turn

mawari : people around

migi e narae : to follow suit or to fall in line; ‘right-dress’ meaning body positioned forward, head turned toward the right
Monbukagakushō : The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan

mura shakai : village society

Naikakufu : The Cabinet Office of Japan

NEET : an acronym for “Not in Education, Employment, or Training”

Nihonjinron : theories about the Japanese

Nikkeijin : people of Japanese descent (i.e. Japanese Canadians, Japanese Americans, Japanese Brazilians, etc.)

nikyoku-ka jidai : bipolar era in which there is expanding disparity of the income between the rich and poor

ninjō : empathic kindness

okami-ishiki : hegemonic consciousness that supports government’s power over people

OL : office lady

oyabun/kobun : parent part/child part

rentai sekinin : collective responsibility

rōnin : a student who did not pass the school entrance exam and is preparing to take it again the next year

saabisu zangyō : unpaid overtime work

sakoku : national isolation (the foreign relations policy from 1639 to 1854 which in principle prohibited traveling abroad by Japanese as well as visiting Japan by foreigners)

sarariiman : salaried worker

seishin : spirit, spiritual values

seken : society

seken no me : the public eye

sekentei : public image

senpai/kōhai : senior/junior
shakaijin: people who are regarded as full-fledged members of society by entering the workforce after schooling

shikata ga nai: There's nothing that can be done about it.

shi-nō-kō-shō: warrior-farmer-craftperson-marchant, referring to the four-tier class system of Japan until into the Edo era.

shitataka: clever, or even sly, to make gains from one's situation

shokuba no hana: "workplace flowers" (A phrase which was frequently used to refer to young OLs and connotes that office ladies are supposed to be sweet and young women who support male workers by doing clerical work and serving tea.)

shufu shōkōgun: wives' psycho-somatic symptoms and depression

shūshin: ethics based on Confucianism and the Imperial Rescript

shūtome: mother-in-law

sōgō gakushū: integrated learning

Somushō Tokeikyoku: The Statistical Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan

tanshin-funin: living away from one's family because of a transfer in employment

teishu genki-de rusu-ga-ii: the good husband is healthy and absent

tennō: emperor

tennō-sei: emperor system

tennō-sei kazoku kokka: the emperor system family state

uchi/soto: inside/outside

ura/omote: back/front

yasume/yasmumi: rest

yobiyose: a migration pattern, by which people who have established themselves in a host country sponsor the immigration of their relatives and friends

yome: daughter-in-law
yutori: a relaxed lifestyle with less stress, a relaxed sense of spirituality

yutori kyōiku: more relaxed education
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DEDICATION

To my parents

Shoji and Emiko Nagoshi
CHAPTER I
Introduction

1.1 Thesis Introduction

This dissertation explores the socio-cultural conditions in contemporary Japan by examining the “push and pull factors” of Japanese immigration to British Columbia (B.C.) after the mid-1990s. One theoretical framework suggests that “migration is the movement of populations through geographic space organized by polar nodes that ‘push’ and ‘pull’ migrants. Thus, migrants may be pushed from ‘sending’ areas and pulled by ‘receiving’ ones” (Kearney 1996: 122). This study examines how the socio-cultural conditions in contemporary Japan have contributed to the decision of Japanese emigrants to migrate to B.C. The push and pull factors of emigration can explain some aspects of the socio-cultural conditions of a sending society. A comparison of the ‘sending’ society with other societies often leads to a better understanding of the former. Therefore, examining the reasons why recent Japanese migrants prefer B.C. over Japan is useful to understand Japanese society in comparison with other countries. The research was based on interviews with newcomers in B.C., to obtain information from people who had experience of living in both Japanese and Canadian societies. Their perspective on the differences between the two societies provides valuable data. A detailed investigation of the push and pull factors of recent Japanese migration also provides insights into contemporary Japan.

After experiencing high rates of economic growth and the bubble economy, Japan is now said to be in the “fuan no jidai” (the era of anxiety). The features of this era can be
seen in an increase in various incidents occurring in Japanese society since the mid-1990s. These incidents include a drastic increase in the suicide rate, 16.4 per 100,000 in 1990; 24.1 in 2000; 25.5 in 2003 (Köseirōdoshō 2004a), along with cult-based terrorism,\(^1\) teen prostitution and murders committed by teens, children’s suicides, rebellious children, and hikikomori (social withdrawal). According to a 2006 government opinion poll, nearly 70 percent of people felt worried and anxious in their daily lives (Naikakufu Daijin Kanbō Seifu Kōhōshitsu 2006).

Numerous scholars and people in public and private sectors in Japan have engaged in a lively debate regarding the causes of these social events. Publications in Japan investigate these debates from various perspectives, including social structure, the education system, family, the individual psyche, community, and the media (NHK nihon-no-syukudai purojekuto 2001; Kishida 1998; Asahishinbun Shakaibu 2001; Honda 2000; Saitō 2000; Miyadai 1997, 2000; Kawai 1998; Nishibe 2000; Miyazaki 2000; Takahara 2006). However, clarifying the causal factors is never an easy task because they involve diverse issues, including but not limited to historical, economic, political, cultural, and psychological elements.

Further, the desire felt by Japanese people to identify a simple explanation for conditions that cause social anxiety has led to strident nationalistic voices blaming domestic social instability on outside factors, that is, Westernization (or as people also voice it “Americanization”). The growing nationalism also coincides with increasing resentment against non-Westerners, especially Chinese and Koreans (see Takahara 2006). This

\(^1\) There was a Sarin gas attack carried out by Ōmu Shinritkō, a Japanese religious group, on the Tokyo subway in 1995.
dissertation attempts to offer information and perspectives, which will contribute to the discussion on the socio-cultural factors underlying people’s conception of the “fuan no jidai”. Therefore, the dissertation analyzes the socio-cultural conditions in Japan and its social systems by studying the push and pull factors of recent Japanese immigration to B.C.

B.C. was one of the major receiving areas of Japanese immigrants before World War II. Although the number of Japanese immigrants to Canada was not significant after WWII, recent years have witnessed an increasing number of Japanese immigrants to B.C. The number of Japanese who were lawfully permitted to enter Canada and obtain permanent residence ranged from 205 to 541 between 1984 and 1990 (Minister of Supply and Services Canada 1991), and 502 to 1057 between 1991 and 1996 (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada 1999). Although numerous studies exist on Japanese immigrants before WWII and their descendants, few studies have been conducted on recent immigrants. Thus, this study is also expected to contribute to a better understanding of Japanese immigrants to B.C. This research also sheds light on the gender dynamics of contemporary Japanese immigration to B.C., in which women notably outnumber men.

In addition, a significant finding of this study is that contemporary Japanese migration to Canada is not motivated by political or economic concerns, but by more intangible issues of well-being. Most of the previous studies of migration, whether about contemporary or early immigrants, or wealthy or poor groups, have emphasized the political-economic aspects of migration in their analyses of the causes of migration. However, this study reveals a different migratory pattern in contemporary immigrants. The study also presents valuable data and a discussion of the tension between human agency
and social structures. These aspects are explained by extensively examining the correlations between the experiences of contemporary Japanese migrants and the social systems prevalent in their home country.

1.2 Methods

The research for this dissertation employed a combination of methods including short life histories and in-depth interviews. My informal interactions with Japanese migrants and my previous research on recent Japanese immigrants in Los Angeles (Nagoshi 1999) and on Internet communication among overseas Japanese (Nagoshi 2004) offered important background knowledge of the experiences and perceptions of overseas Japanese. Therefore, the previous knowledge provided depth to my interpretation of data obtained from interviews with Japanese newcomers in Vancouver. Moreover, my participant-observation research in Japan, and my experiences and knowledge of Japanese society as a native Japanese who grew up in Japan, served as the basis for the analyses in this dissertation.

The primary research site was Vancouver, B.C., as of 2000 the eighth-largest destination for Japanese in the world (following New York, Los Angeles, London, Singapore, Hong Kong, Sydney, and Sao Paulo). Vancouver was the most frequent destination in Canada, and Canada was the sixth-largest destination for overseas Japanese (following the United States, Brazil, the United Kingdom, China, and Australia) (Gaimushō 2001). To explore current Japanese socio-cultural conditions and have access to relevant literature, I also conducted a few months of participant-observation and library research in
Japan every year from 2002 to 2005 by traveling to various places\(^2\) both in urban and regional areas.

Two interview sessions were conducted with each interviewee between 2002 and 2003. The in-depth interviews had non-structured questions which were designed along the following topics: 1) the motivations of the newcomers' emigration — why they left Japan and why they chose B.C. as their destination, 2) their perceptions of Japanese society, and 3) their comparison between Japanese and Canadian societies. The interviews were open-ended to encourage meaningful narratives comprising interviewees' own thoughts and feelings. Johnson comments, “[In-depth interviews] commonly seek to build the kind of intimacy that is common for mutual disclosure. They tend to involve a greater expression of the interviewer's self than do some other types of interviews” (Johnson 2001: 103).

Although concerns existed about the extent to which I could establish rapport with my interviewees so that they would disclose their personal experiences and feelings, the process was so successful that I soon became friendly with many of them. I tried not only to be a sympathetic listener but also to express my own feelings as a native Japanese living abroad. This empathy was probably beneficial in producing in-depth disclosures of their experiences and feelings.

The objective of using short life history in this research is to collect information concerning the socio-cultural and personal contexts of Japanese immigration to Canada. Life histories are particularly useful for the exploration of the subjective reality of

\(^2\) The places include Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo, Shiga, Okinawa, Shimane, Hiroshima, Okayama, Ehime, Kagawa, Tokushima, Gifu, Yamanashi, Shizuoka, Kanagawa, and Chiba.
individuals and for locating individuals in their overall life experiences. Marshall and Rossman argue that life histories are valuable for studying cultural changes that have occurred over time to gain an inside view of a culture. This method provides specific information about events and customs of the past by showing how the individual interacts with society (Marshall and Rossman 1989: 96). In collecting short life histories, the backgrounds of interviewees, such as where they were born, where they lived, family background, education, work experiences, marital status, and other experiences, were documented.

Finally, the interviewees were drawn from Japanese people in Vancouver who arrived in Canada after the mid-1990s. I limited my informants to those who intended to stay permanently in Canada or for extended periods, and excluded those who had been sent by their employers and those who decided to immigrate to Canada due to marriage. Due to the nature of this study, it was imperative to establish a good rapport with the participants to gather detailed accounts of their experiences as immigrants. Therefore, I did not recruit a large number of participants, but chose twelve interviewees (six females and six males). The recruiting of interviewees was mainly carried out through advertisements in “Jpcanada.com,” an information website, intended for a Japanese audience, especially newcomers in Canada, and in the website of Vancouver Shinpō, a Japanese newspaper in Vancouver. Two of the male interviewees were introduced to me by female interviewees, and one female interviewee was referred to me by an acquaintance.

Ruth Benedict’s work, in which she dealt with the first and the second generations of Japanese Americans as informants, provides some inspiration to the method of my study.
having overseas Japanese as my informants. Since the existing circumstances (WWII) prevented her from conducting fieldwork in Japan, her analysis of Japanese culture has subsequently been criticized because of this. Despite this fact, her work impressively depicts subtle characteristics of Japanese culture and behaviors and is still valued as a classic in anthropology of Japan. Conceptualization of our own culture is often difficult since we tend to take it for granted. An outsider’s examination of a culture is often more revealing than an insider’s, which is regarded as an advantage in doing ethnographic work. I expected that Japanese newcomers hold insider as well as outsider views of Japanese society, which would be advantageous for the examination of the society.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Studies on Japanese Society

Aspects of Japanese society have been discussed in different disciplines from various perspectives. Older analyses often highlighted how Japanese society was culturally and historically different from most other highly industrialized societies. The aspiration of the U.S. to understand the “mysterious war enemy” led to the publication of Ruth Benedict’s seminal work in English on Japan *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword in 1946.* The research for this study was inspired by the war between Japan and the United States during WWII and was funded by the U.S. Department of War. The study was based on a cultural-anthropological viewpoint.

Benedict constructs oppositions between Western and Japanese culture to highlight the different way in which the Japanese think and interact. Her theories were based on the
scholarly paradigms prevalent at that time. She designates Japanese society as a “shame culture,” that relies on external sanctions for good behavior and not on an internalized conviction of wrong. Her presentation contrasts Japanese society with American society which is seen as a “guilt culture” and is defined as a society that includes absolute standards of morality and relies on the development of an internalized conscience. She also observes that, in Japan, people tend to suppress their personal demands in favor of the collective “expectation.” Therefore, a rigid hierarchy in society is a source of stability, and hence taking one’s proper place is seen as necessary for the common good (Benedict 1946).

It was common at that time for scholars, as demonstrated by Benedict’s work, to attempt to identify key paradigms or patterns of culture for the analysis of Japanese culture and society. Later, particularly beginning in the 1970s, partly because of the rapid economic development in Japan, there was a plethora of studies on Japanese society. Many scholars of Japan have investigated Japanese culture and society from organizational principles or key concepts that they identified, such as vertical principle, amaee, and wrapping principle.

Among those scholars is an anthropologist Chie Nakane, who analyzed Japanese hierarchical relations in Japanese Society (1970). Nakane formulates a theory of Japanese social organization described as the “vertical principle.” According to her, in Japan, the formation of a group depends on people’s daily integration with the frame (ba) that may be a locality, an institution, or a particular set of relationships, which bind a set of individuals into one group. She points out that in the case of personal relationships developed between senpai (seniors) and kōhai (juniors), the group consciousness provides emotional security
but tends to ignore the dynamics which will accommodate differences of individual characteristics (Nakane 1970). Although this work was written more than three decades ago and hierarchical relations in Japan have changed since then, many of her arguments about Japanese social organizations are still valid. The current validity of her theories can be seen from the impact of hierarchical relationships on the interviewees in this study. As most of the interviewees have negative feelings about Japanese hierarchy, their narratives are valuable reflections on the state of the social hierarchy in contemporary Japan.

Along with Nakane, Takeo Doi is another Japanese scholar who provides significant insights into later studies of Japanese society. Doi (1973), a psychiatrist, uses the Japanese word *amae*, which refers to an indulgent desire to be taken care of by others, to understand the psychological makeup of Japanese individuals and the structure of Japanese society. He notes that Japanese are more comfortable than Americans with the dependence embodied in *amae*, and Japanese culture values and supports *amae* while American culture tends to discourage it. He suggests that, although the psychological phenomenon of *amae* is basically common to humanity as a whole, the tolerance of *amae* indicates the nature of Japanese society and culture: Japanese social structure is formed in such a way as to permit expression of *amae* while American culture is not (Doi 1973). One interesting finding in this study is that many of the interviewees appear to have internalized *amae*, even though they came to Canada seeking an environment that they believed would support independence. Their contradictory sentiments stemming from this situation induce some difficulties that they experience in Canadian life, which are examined in chapter three.
Important aspects of Japanese culture and society are also discussed by Joy Hendry (1993) from the viewpoint of the “wrapping principle,” which she contends is the most pervasive aspect of Japanese life. Hendry examines various forms of wrapping and their symbolic or ritual power, for a detailed analysis of the modes of indirect communication within Japan, where a high value is placed on non-verbal communication. She illustrates the Japanese propensity for ‘wrapping’ everything, from gifts to language, garments, architecture, and time. The function of wrapping is to refine the object and to add layers of meaning which it could not carry in its unwrapped form. Honorific language (keigo) may also be seen as linguistic wrapping (Hendry 1993). Many of the interviewees in this study, especially women, describe their own personality as either straightforward or indicate they have a desire to be perceived as such. As indirect communication that Hendry sees as part of the wrapping principle is emphasized in Japanese culture, this desire to be straightforward can be seen as an important factor that attracts Japanese, such as the interviewees in this study, to a different socio-cultural setting.

While these organizational principles or key concepts are valuable in exploring aspects of Japanese culture and society, other scholars questioned the validity of anthropological approaches to the study of Japan and that of Nihonjinron (‘Theories about the Japanese’). In their attempt to deconstruct Nihonjinron, Sugimoto and Mouer (1999) argue that although numerous studies exist on Japan both by Japanese and non-Japanese scholars, many of them tend to dismiss Japan’s sub-cultures. Many authors, especially the Japanese authors, emphasize the uniqueness of Japanese culture, highlighting such aspects as a weak sense of self, groupism, consensual decisions, and other harmonious aspects.
Sugimoto and Mouer question the homogeneous/consensual model of Japan by showing statistical evidence and examples contradicting this model. They reveal conflict to be part of every period in Japanese history. Also, they point out the problems in the methodology of these studies including the bias in the sources of information, which is mainly the elite class. Additionally, the methodology compares Japan primarily with the West. Moreover, previous studies show a tendency to view the West in a monolithic manner. The authors claim that a shift should be made from the homogeneous/consensual model of Japan to a heterogeneous/conflict model and that Japanese society contains various social strata according to occupation, education, residency, age, sex and so on, which present diverse sub-cultures, behaviors, and values (Sugimoto and Mouer 1999). Sugimoto and Mouer also argue that anthropologists’ consensus-oriented view of Japanese society is stereotypical rather than a valid empirical representation. They reject the notion that Japanese society is culturally predisposed and insist that the homogenous/consensual dichotomous perspective of Japanese society is the result of the influence of ‘the anthropological heritage’ of Ruth Benedict (van Bremen 1986).

In contrast, Jan van Bremen (1986) defends anthropological theories against the criticisms of Sugimoto and Mouer. Responding to their critique, he contends that these new directions are not new to anthropology and that the anthropology of Japan is not uniform and unchanging. He maintains that the work of anthropologists of Japan includes comparative perspectives to offer an important new platform for discussion and research (van Bremen 1986). Similarly, Hendry (1998) also supports anthropological work on Japan. She views *Nihonjinron* as theories about the aspects of Japan that make the society
uniquely Japanese, and argues that unlike the authors of *Nihonjinron*, anthropologists try as far as possible, to explain Japanese society with value-free criteria. She maintains that although Nakane’s work has been classed as *Nihonjinron*, it is clearly based on theories of social anthropological analysis. The ‘model’ presented in *Japanese Society* is not meant to explain all behavior in Japan, but rather to elucidate an underlying structure (Hendry 1998).

Although I subscribe to Sugimoto and Mouer’s argument that questions the homogeneous/consensual model of Japan, I concur with van Bremen's defence that their critique of anthropology cannot be supported. As Sugimoto and Mouer contend, various social strata and subcultures should not be ignored and Japanese society comprises diverse populations (Weiner ed. 1997), including the Ainu (Siddle 1997), the Burakumin ³ (Neary 1997), the Okinawan (Taira 1997), and *Nikkeijin*⁴ from South America (Sellek 1997). However, anthropologists should be credited for exploring Japanese diversity through in-depth ethnographic work in various areas and among different groups of Japanese society. This study also contributes to the exploration of Japanese diversity through in-depth interviews with Japanese people who have ventured overseas and not followed the “main stream” lifestyle in Japan.

Another important direction in the study of Japan related to this project is a focus on the intersection of pre-modern, modern, and post-modern in Japanese society. Clammer (1995) contends that Japan, which is categorized as a modern society, is deeply traditional,

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³ The Burakumin refers to descendants of the earlier Eta-Hinin outcastes discriminated against in Japan due to their occupation or itinerant status.

⁴ Nikkeijin refers to people of Japanese descent (i.e. Japanese Canadians, Japanese Americans, Japanese Brazilians, etc.).
but shows many characteristics of post-modernity. He questions the relevance of applying Western social and cultural theories to contemporary Japanese society, which has a different history and view of its self-identity, in contrast to Western societies. While exploring the interplay between cultural theory and Japanese popular culture, he sees Japanese popular culture as a microcosm of Japan’s response to Westernization; the blending of technology with very distinctively Japanese cultural themes. In Japan, the formal characteristics of post-modernism, i.e. the effacement of the boundary between art and everyday life, coexist within a culture still committed to the preservation of its own cultural meaning, hierarchy, profundity, and seriousness (Clammer 1995). The amalgamation of modern and pre-modern is one of the essential aspects of contemporary Japan, which, I would argue, enhances the complexity of Japanese society. This issue is discussed in more detail in chapter five.

Additionally, gender issues are also among the most discussed subjects in the study of Japan. According to Lenz (1996), gender relations in modern Japan are interpreted in two ways. Gender polarization, in the division of labor and institutions, emphasizes the subordination of women. Gender parallelism provides specific power resources for women in the female demarcated domains of household, kinship and neighborhood (Lenz 1996). As a result, one group of sociologists has specifically examined Japan’s sexual division of labor. Sociologists questioned why Japanese economic growth had not resulted in a diminished sexual division of labor, as has occurred in the U.S. (Tamanoi 1990). Based primarily on fieldwork among urban middle-class housewives, one group concluded that the sexual division of labor provided women almost total autonomy in the family domain
and that Japanese marriage was not a romantic union but a socially valued female career in which a woman finds self-fulfillment. Tamanoi argues that this led to a new stereotype, which identifies all Japanese women with urban middle-class housewives and ignores many women who became wage earners to support their families’ middle-class standard of living (Tamanoi 1990).

Accordingly, this study participates in the discussion of gender in Japanese society by examining the differences and similarities between both sexes of Japanese newcomers in Vancouver. The female interviewees exemplify Japanese women who do not fit the models of “stereotypical” urban-middle class housewives. Their attitudes and preferred lifestyles cannot be ignored when studying contemporary Japanese women. On the other hand, the discussion of men in this study contributes to the study of gender in Japan, which now focuses mainly on women.

Furthermore, another significant topic in the study of Japan is the “sense of self.” Recent decades have witnessed the resurgence of “self” as a key concept in social theory in a variety of academic disciplines, including anthropology (Rosaldo 1984; Spiro 1993; Creighton 1990; Whittaker 1992; Csordas 1994; Farley 1998; Lindholm 1997; Morris 1994; Murray 1993; Rosenberger ed. 1992), sociology (Giddens 1991; Callero 2003; Schwalbe 1993; Wiley 1994; Dunn 1997), psychology (Marcus and Kitayama 1991; Cushman 1995; Leary and Tangney eds. 2003) and philosophy (Foucault 1988; Strawson 1999). Anthropological studies suggest that the sense of self may vary from culture to culture. The distinctive features of Western self versus non-Western self are among the
most frequent themes in this discussion. The Japanese self, as an example of the non-Western self, has been widely investigated.

Consequently, Hamaguchi’s contextual model of the Japanese self is an important contribution to this discussion. He questions the validity of the dualism of individual/group, used in methodological individualism, in the study of Japan. He presents a human model of the Japanese as *kanjin* (person-in-nexus) and attempts to interpret the form of their human nexus as *aidagara* (context). The contextual model discusses two types of actors: the individual actor and the contextual actor. An individual actor is an independent unit of action and strongly emphasizes the individual aspect of human nature. The contextual actor establishes a psychosocial identity of the self in relation to other actors. The term *kanjin* or “contextual” is used to distinguish a contextual actor from the “individual” or *kojin* (Hamaguchi 1985).

As has been noted, the view that dominates discussions of the Japanese self is that it is profoundly sociocentric and contextual. However, Mathews (1996) disputes this view on the basis of intensive interviews conducted with adult Japanese of various ages. He claims that cultural conceptions of self are not isomorphic with an individual’s sense of self. Individuals use an array of cultural conceptions to understand themselves and their experiences. They apply these conceptions with varying degrees of self-awareness and critical distance, and manipulate related concepts for their own self-defining and other-defining ends. Therefore, no single cultural conception of self exists in contemporary complex societies such as Japan, but what occurs is an array of overlapping and often
contradictory views that people may use in various combinations in constructing themselves (Mathews 1996).

In fact, the in-depth interviews with Japanese newcomers in this study indicate that the interviewees recognize how Japanese society emphasizes and cultivates contextual and relational aspects of each individual’s self. At the same time, however, their narratives support Mathews’ argument that an individual’s sense of self does not necessarily coincide with the cultural conceptions of the self. While they were raised in Japan, most of the interviewees developed an individual and independent sense of self that contradicts Japanese cultural conceptions of self. This disparity eventually led to their preference for Canadian society, which, they believe respects people’s individualism.

Additionally, this study employs the notion of *uchi/soto* (inside/outside), *ura/omote* (back/front), and *honne/tatemae* (real feelings/public stance), the notion of *amae* (Doi 1973), and the “reference other model” (Kuwayama 1992) to examine Japanese socio-cultural conditions and the Japanese sense of self. *Uchi/soto, ura/omote, and honne/tatemae* have served as significant analytical tools in various studies on Japanese society and the Japanese self. Previous studies have argued that although an orientation for inside/outside may be universal, the Japanese have specifically and self-reflectively linked “inside” to “self” and “outside” to “other” or “society.” These meanings are epitomized in paired sets of terms, including *uchi/soto, ura/omote,* and *honne/tatemae* (Creighton 1990; Bachnik 1992, 1994, 1998; Kondo 1990, 1992, 1994; Lebra 1992; Rosenberger 1994; Wetzel 1994; Tobin 1992). Along with these sets of terms, the notion of *amae* introduced by Doi (1973),
as previously mentioned, is a critical concept in the discussion of the interconnectedness of the Japanese self.

While Kuwayama (1992) acknowledges that the *uchi/soto* model is useful in analyzing Japanese behavior and mentality, he presents the "reference other model" as a complementary alternative to the *uchi/soto* model. In the "reference other model," he defines three categories of others -- *mawari* (people around), *hito* (people at large), and *seken* (society). Compared with the *uchi/soto* model, where the position of the self is ambiguous, the "reference other model" clearly indicates the self by using the term *jibun* (the self). Kuwayama claims that the weakness in the *uchi/soto* model is that the self tends to be submerged into *uchi*. He argues that even though the Japanese self is relational, the self has an identity of its own. Additionally, the "reference other model" can show the interaction of the self with others in more concrete terms than the *uchi/soto* model (Kuwayama 1992). Kuwayama's model, which shows the subtlety and intricacy of the Japanese sensitivity to others, serves as an explanatory framework in the discussion of Japanese socio-cultural ambience that makes the interviewees feel constrained.

1.3.2 Studies on Japanese Migrants/Overseas Japanese

Most studies on Japanese migrants focus on those who emigrated from Japan before WWII to Hawaii, North and South America, and on their descendants. Some studies focused on the post-war emigration program sponsored by the Japanese government that began in South America in 1953 and ended in 1973. Japanese emigration, began in 1868,
after the end of *sakoku* (national isolation),\(^5\) to Guam and Hawaii and then to North America.\(^6\) In 1908, the Gentlemen’s Agreement in the U.S. and the Lemieux Agreement in Canada limited the number of Japanese immigrants. Emigration companies, which faced problems in sending people to North America due to anti-Japanese movements, found a suitable venue in South America. During WWII, Japanese immigrants and their descendants in the U.S. and some of those in South America were summarily sent to U.S. internment camps (Takahashi 1997).

As discussed previously, extensive studies and general literature exist, on pre-WWII immigrants and their descendants in Canada. The topics in these studies encompass the history and lives of Japanese immigrants (Hayashi 1971; Shinpo 1977, 1986; Adachi 1991; Young, Reid, and Carrothers 1938; Marlatt 1975; Iino 1997; Yamagata 1996; Tsuji 1990; Yoshida 1993; Sasaki ed. 1999; Sasaki and Gonnami 2000), anti-Japanese movements before WWII (Sugimoto 1966), picture brides (women who were selected as brides for migrants from their home countries by matchmakers using photographs) (Makabe 1983), Japanese volunteer soldiers in Canada during WWI (Kudō 1983), acculturation (Yamada 2000), forced relocation and internment during WWII (La Violette 1948; Nakashima 1946; Takashima 1971), the post-WWII repatriation policy of the Canadian Government (Kage 1998), post-WWII redress movements for wartime relocation and internment (Omatsu 1992; Thomson ed. 2002; Miki and Kobayashi 1991; Miki and Kobayashi ed. 1989; Miki 2004), the study of third-generation Japanese (Makabe 1998), religion (Mitsui 1964).

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\(^5\) This refers to the foreign relations policy from 1639 to 1854 which in principle prohibited traveling abroad by Japanese as well as visiting Japan by foreigners.

\(^6\) Initially, the emigration business was controlled by the government and subsequently shifted to the private sector in 1894.

For instance, Yoshida (1993) describes the history of Japanese immigrants in Canada and the context in which anti-Japanese movements arose. The first Japanese immigrants arrived in B.C. in 1877, when many Chinese came to Canada mainly for railway construction. Anti-Chinese movements and government policies resulted in a decrease in Chinese immigrants, which led to an increase in Japanese immigrants as a source of alternative cheap labor. At first, most of the immigrants were men, who came to Canada for economic reasons and planned to return to Japan after several years. The major sources of employment for Japanese immigrants, who remitted money to Japan, were fishing, sawing, and mining. In the late 1880s, the number of Japanese immigrants increased steadily through yobiyose7 (Yoshida 1993).

Thus the rapid increase in Japanese immigrants led to intensified racism, which led to the 1907 anti-Asian riots.8 The Hayashi-Lemieux Agreement of 1908 further limited immigration of labor from Japan. However, this agreement did not limit the number of women and child immigrants. Therefore, married men sent for their wives, and unmarried

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7 Yobiyose refers to a migration pattern where successful people in a host country sponsor the immigration of their relatives and friends from the home country.

8 Supported by public opinion that sought to deny the rights and existence of Asians in Canada, a mob attacked the Chinese immigrant areas of Vancouver and the Powell Street area, the so-called “Japanese town” in Vancouver.
men found mates through the “picture bride” system. During WWI, the Japanese Society in Canada sent volunteer soldiers to show their loyalty to Canada. However, when WWII broke out, all those of Japanese ancestry were classified as “enemy aliens” and ordered to evacuate to internment camps or to the interior by the government. Although the population of Japanese immigrants was concentrated in B.C. before WWII, after the war, the Japanese diaspora moved to all parts of Canada, with some returning to Japan. In 1988, after much struggle and effort on the part of Japanese-Canadians to redress their experiences during the war, a settlement was announced in the Canadian Parliament (Yoshida 1993).

Although considerably fewer studies focus on recent Japanese migrants compared to early Japanese migrants, there are some important works on recent Japanese migrants. Befu’s (2000) work on the Japanese diaspora views Japan’s modern history as a process of its globalization in terms of human dispersal. He identifies communities for Japanese newcomers including multinational business expatriates and their families, and other Japanese who serve the business community, in cities such as Beijing, Hong Kong, Seoul, Taipei, Bangkok, Singapore, Sydney, Los Angles, San Francisco, New York, London, Paris, and Dusseldorf. However, these newcomers and old-time Nikkei (Japanese immigrants and their descendants) remain socially separate. As the Japanese community became more self-sufficient, the need for adapting to the local environment and associating with old-time Nikkei decreased (Befu 2000).

9 The “picture bride” method was a variation on the Japanese tradition of arranged marriage, where prospective partners were introduced by an exchange of photographs.
In a study focused on Japanese youth, Andressen and Kumagai (1996) discovered that the motives of youth to study in Australia revolve around individualism and a search for meaning. Japan’s younger generation shows a more international perspective than the preceding generation and has the financial capacity to indulge their curiosity. Japanese society also imposes a high level of stress on youth; women, especially, are caught in this storm of change with increased options available in education and work that coexist with persisting traditions of marriage and social mores. Although the expectations of youth for their preferable lifestyles appear to be growing, Japanese social structures, such as the education system, remain highly conservative. Many Japanese youth are beginning to question the wisdom of intense educational competition and the work ethic of their parents, and some of them have moved overseas looking for new meanings in their lives (Andressen and Kumagai 1996).

Among the interviewees for this study, both students and non-students, and across age groups from teenager to the elderly, individualism is seen as a strong motivation for immigrating to Canada. The search for meaning is highly significant among those who have not yet reached their mid-thirties. Andressen and Kumagai argue that a significant cause of stress on Japanese youth that eventually forces some of them out of Japan is the dilemma between increased options in their lifestyle and traditional social mores. Chapter five of this dissertation delves deeper into this issue.

In this perspective, Satō (2001), an author studying the experiences of Japanese people in Australia, describes the ethnographic aspects of Japanese migrants who arrived in Australia between the mid-1970s and the end of the 1980s. She recognizes three broad
categories among these migrants excluding Japanese business expatriates and their families: 1) senior citizens who have chosen to retire to Australia seeking a comfortable climate, housing, and a relaxed social environment; 2) women of various ages who pursue active lives and professional careers and enjoy more freedom in gender relations; and 3) people with skills transcending cultural boundaries, such as Japanese chefs, car mechanics, nurses, acupressure masseuses, hairdressers, and IT technicians. While Satō affirms that the primary motivation for Japanese emigration before the 1970s was economic, she finds that the majority of Japanese migrants in Australia after the 1970s are “lifestyle migrants” who wish to improve the quality of their lives and seek a more easygoing lifestyle (Satō 2001). My study concurs with Satō's findings as the primary motivation for emigration among the interviewees of this study did not stem from economic concerns but from their desire to lead a more relaxed and meaningful life. While her study does not include a detailed examination of the socio-cultural factors in Japanese society, which produce “lifestyle migrants,” my study contributes to this discussion through an extensive analysis of these factors.

1.3.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Migrants' Experiences

To examine my interviewees' experiences as immigrants, I employ the theoretical perspectives of Aihwa Ong and Arjun Appadurai, along with the notion of liminality developed by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner. Moreover, my examination is also consciously aware of the nuances that gender introduces. Ong (1999) provides an anthropological perspective on the influences and constraints on migration placed by
modernity and globalization. In contrast to how globalization is often analyzed as flows of
capital, information, and populations, her investigation of the journeys of human practices
and cultural logics over a global landscape explores how cultural meanings along with
political, economic, and cultural rationalities shape migration and transnational processes:

As a social scientist, I point to the economic rationality that encourages family
emigration or the political rationality that invites foreign capital, but as an
anthropologist, I am primarily concerned with the cultural logics that make these
actions thinkable, practicable, and desirable, which are embedded in processes of
capital accumulation (Ong 1999: 5).

This emphasis on the importance of analyzing people’s everyday actions as a form of
cultural politics embedded within specific contexts of power is the impetus for her
introduction of the idea of “flexible citizenship,” which she describes as “the cultural logics
of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly
and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions” (Ong 1999: 6).

Her study focuses on contemporary members of the Chinese diaspora who seek a
flexible transnational position among the multitude of possibilities and problems in late-
capitalist, global economy (Ong 1999). This study of Japanese migrants provides another
example of contemporary flexible citizenship. Although the interviewees decided to
immigrate to Canada in order to live within a more favorable environment, they are
uncertain about whether they will settle there permanently. Some of them regard Canadian
permanent resident status as a sort of insurance, which can minimize negative influences
from the external political, economic, and social environments, and thus allow for the
construction of more desirable lives. They opportunistically choose their place of residence
between Canada and Japan according to circumstances. Their experiences also provide examples of the impact of imagination and media on migration as discussed by Appadurai.

Appadurai (1996), who also focuses on modernity and globalization, sees immigrants, tourists, refugees, guest workers, and other migrating groups and individuals as essential elements within our modern world. He uses the term *deterritorialization* to refer to this situation, in which things and people transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities. He also coined the terms *ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes* to explain the landscapes of global cultural flows in five different dimensions respectively: people, images, machinery, money, and ideas. These five landscapes are the building blocks of our contemporary “imagined worlds,” which are “constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (Appadurai 1996: 33). These neologisms and their underlying philosophies provide a theoretical foundation to explore the new global cultural economy that “has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models” (Appadurai 1996: 32).

The images of foreign lives in mass media motivated some of my interviewees to migrate. These images, including notably those in newspapers, magazines, television, and film, blur the lines between reality and fantasy, and lead people to construct deterritorialized, imagined worlds (Appadurai 1996). Appadurai’s “scapes” provide a way of viewing the flow of images and ideas that shape how people understand their world. The detachment of people, images, and ideas from their origins has led many people to consider
potential lifestyles both portrayed and intimated by mass media (Appadurai 1996).

Appadurai argues,

The story of mass migrations (voluntary and forced) is hardly a new feature of human history. But when it is juxtaposed with the rapid flow of mass-mediated images, scripts, and sensations, we have a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities (Appadurai 1996: 4).

The interviewees' narratives show how the fascination and appeal of these mass-media images of foreign lands and cultures encouraged some of them to seek new possibilities in a foreign land.

Both those employing flexible citizenship analyzed by Ong and the members of deterritorialized populations theorized by Appadurai exemplify people in a liminal state. Both are at a threshold where they do not belong to any specific space. “Liminality,” a long cherished anthropological term introduced by Arnold van Gennep and later elaborated by Victor Turner, accurately epitomizes the position of newcomer immigrants. In his 1909 seminal work *The Rites of Passages*, van Gennep introduces the idea of the “liminal phase” within *rites de passage*. He divides rites of passage into three phases: preliminal (separation from previous surroundings), liminal or threshold (the transitional stage), and postliminal (incorporation) (van Gennep 1960). Turner, in his work *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (1969), expands van Gennep’s concept of liminality by explaining that people in liminality or at a threshold are in an ambiguous position which eludes social and cultural classifications: “[L]iminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (Turner 1969: 95). Turner’s idea of liminality provides a fertile soil for my examination of the interviewees’ transitional position as newcomers within their adopted society.
Continuing a trend that can be observed in recent anthropological studies on migration, gender plays an important, yet sometimes subtle role throughout my study on Japanese newcomers. Although women migrants were largely invisible or regarded as dependents of male migrants in studies in the social sciences until the mid-1970s, gender-debates have become a focus in subsequent research on migration in several disciplines, including anthropology (Cheng 1999; Knorr and Meier 2000). Morokvasic compares the push factors of women migrants with those of men migrants, stating “the emigration of women would [be expected to] be more, due to individual, private, family reasons, while male migration would be a result of external, public, economic reasons” (Morokvasic 1984: 898). She argues that the interrelationships between non-economic factors and economic ones determine which women engage in migratory movements and how they incorporate new values and behaviors (Morokvasic 1984: 899). By looking at both female and male immigrants from Japan, this study examines the applicability of Morokvasic’s argument to the cases of contemporary Japanese migrants.

Morokvasic’s theory is supplemented in Creese and Dowling’s study of the gendered meanings and experiences of migration and settlement among women in Sydney and Vancouver. In both societies, conditions of the immigrant labor markets have significantly different effects on immigrant men and women, native-born and overseas-born women, and women from English and non-English speaking backgrounds. Nevertheless, immigrant women are not merely passive participants in the construction of their lives; they negotiate their cities and neighborhoods as they redefine their everyday spaces, construct new networks and communities, and actively utilize political organizations and lobbying to
reshape settlement, multicultural, and anti-racist policies and practices (Creese and Dowling 2001). While, in terms of number, Japanese immigrants are a minority in Canada, this study adds to the discussion of immigrant women in Vancouver by exploring the experiences of women from Japan.

Kelsky (2001) and Kobayashi (2002) also both researched recent Japanese women migrants. Kelsky sees Japanese young women’s personal and professional investments in the foreign, including studying or working abroad, as the primary means for them to resist gender-based expectations of the female life course in Japanese society. She argues that Japanese women use narratives of internationalism as a justification for shifting their allegiance from what they call a backward and “oppressive” Japan to what they see as an exhilarating and “liberating” foreign realm, and in the process, they deploy pervasive, subversive, and performative discourses of complaint and desire (Kelsky 2001). Kobayashi discusses how Japanese women have used emigration as a way of negotiating gender and lifestyle. Although not many women in Japan choose migration as a means to resist the rigid, social attitudes that restrict them and to transcend the limited economic and educational opportunities available to them, some manage to use this method to escape Japanese society’s patriarchal system (Kobayashi 2002). This dissertation compares the observations and conclusions of Kelsky's and Kobayashi's findings with the experiences of my female interviewees. Similar to their discussions, discontent with Japanese gender roles encouraged most of the female interviewees to immigrate to Canada. Nevertheless, it was not necessarily their foremost reason. Chapter three discusses this issue further.
1.3.4 Luhmann, Foucault, and Bateson

For the analysis of interrelations among Japanese social systems, which contributed to my interviewees’ push and pull factors, I will draw on the social systems theory constructed by German sociologist Niklas Luhmann and his concept interpenetration. In order to explain the system’s mechanism, Luhmann employs the notion of Autopoiesis. An autopoietic system is an autonomous unity, which refers only to its self-construction and the relations between elements within its boundaries in the production of its elements. Luhmann defines social systems as autopoietic systems which use communication as their mode of reproduction. This theory deals with the interrelationships among social systems using the concept of interpenetration in terms of the society’s internal environments (social subsystems) and external environments, including other social systems as well as human psychic systems (Luhmann 1995).

Luhmann sees the world from the perspectives of “system and environment.” Everything that happens in the world belongs to a system and at the same time to the environment of other systems. In his theory, system refers to a unity which consists of a network of interrelated elements of sufficiently similar types. While system and environment are not in hierarchical relations, system cannot exist without environment, which contains many other systems. Since an entity can have an identity only by being different from others, the existence of the environment is indispensable for the system’s identity. By creating and maintaining difference from the environment, the system is able to retain its identity and existence. The events of systems disappear from moment to moment.
and subsequent events are produced in order to maintain the difference between system and environment (Luhmann 1995).

Society as a system is unable to exist without its environment, which includes other societies, the physical environment, and human beings. Unlike the theoretical perspectives based on a humanistic tradition, which see human beings as a permanent part of the social order playing important roles for the formation of society, Luhmann views human beings as part of the environment of society. However, this does not mean that human beings are less important than for humanistic perspectives. The environment is an indispensable constitutive factor for the system. Hence, human beings are rather given a more autonomous position being part of the environment of society than being part of society (Luhmann 1995; Kneer and Nassehi 2002). Human psychic systems and social systems hold close interpenetrations and have evolved together in a synergistic fashion (Luhmann 1995).

Luhmann’s social systems theory has been highly recognized especially in Japan and Europe as an original innovative attempt to explain social complexity from a perspective that is more comprehensive than previous social theories by synthesizing various approaches, including structural-functionalism, social dynamics, action theory, communication theory, and a psychological approach. In Japan, various scholars have discussed the significance of his theory. Nevertheless, most of them have focused on the “study of Luhmann’s theory” and have not developed its application into actual social phenomena. This would be largely due to the reputed abstrusity of his theory. In this dissertation, I attempt to apply Luhmann’s theory to the examination of socio-cultural
conditions of Japanese society. His theoretical perspectives are drawn upon for the analysis of interrelations of Japanese social systems (chapter four) and that of the trajectory of Japanese modernization (chapter five).

After the analysis of interrelations of Japanese social systems based on Luhmann’s systems theory, I will evaluate my data using Michel Foucault’s theoretical perspectives. Through his “archaeology” and “genealogy” of insanity, modern medicine, the penal system, and sexuality, Foucault explored the themes of power and knowledge – how power techniques and the forms of knowledge have reciprocally constituted each other. For instance, in charting a detailed history of insanity, he shows how madness became excluded from society and came to be seen as mental disease, which is controlled under the treatment of scientific and “humanitarian” treatments in the context of modernity (Foucault 2001). By tracing the development of modern medicine and the penal system, Foucault presents how the medical “gaze” changed and defined what is a healthy or normal person (Foucault 2003) and how discipline has produced “docile” bodies, which are subjected to the control of people in authority (Foucault 1995). During the formation of modern states, power has been exercised on the body as a political strategy.

Foucault developed his argument about power exercised on the body into the notion of “biopower” and “biopolitics.” Biopower and biopolitics also refer to technologies of power which modern states exercise on the bodies of their populations. Foucault contends that biopolitics were “created in the eighteenth century as techniques of power present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and the administration of collective
bodies)” (Foucault 1990: 141). Through biopowers and biopolitics, which are rationalized with the cause of promotion and protection of the populations, the state gains legitimacy and capacity to control people by subjugating their bodies.

These examinations of power and knowledge as well as biopower and biopolitics ripened into the notion of “governmentality” in his late work from the late 1970s to the early 1980s. He defines governmentality as the “art of government” and “complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principle form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security” (Foucault 1991: 102). With this notion, Foucault explores the genealogy of the modern state and attempts to show how modern states exercise their regime of power over the bodies and the selves of their populations.

The notion of governmentality indicates how the complex interrelations of power and knowledge exercise the efficient and strong disciplinary power over people. This is quite useful for my evaluation of the underlying socio-cultural conditions, which motivated my interviewees to immigrate to Canada from Japan, in the relation to interrelations of Japanese social systems, which I examine using Luhmann’s perspective in chapter four. Both Foucault’s and Luhmann’s perspectives are valuable when we look at the relations between society and individuals in this modern complex world. They reveal that relation between society and individuals is no longer grasped by a simple controller/controlled model but should be examined by inextricably interconnected factors in society while they illuminate different aspects of socio-cultural conditions of Japanese society.
Finally, Bateson’s theory of the double bind will be referred to for the examination of the psychological aspects of people in Japan, who face contradictory messages stemming from such intricately-intertwined social factors in Japan. Gregory Bateson (1972), who is known as an anthropologist, social scientist, cyberneticist, and contributor of various other fields, developed the theory of the double bind in his seminal work *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. In a double bind situation, a primary negative injunction is communicated to a person in the form of either prohibition or enforcement, and a secondary negative injunction, which conflicts with the primary injunction but is enforced by punishments, is repeatedly communicated to the person in a more abstract way than the primary injunction. Bateson contends that if the person realizes that she or he cannot escape from the field of this double bind situation, she or he would be inflicted with significant psychological burdens and even develop schizophrenia (Bateson 1972: 206-207). Although Bateson created this theory to explain conditions inducing schizophrenia, a double bind situation is often seen in ordinary interactions among people. I will apply the double bind theory to the examination of psychological burden which Japanese society places on its members in chapter five.

1.4 Identification of Biases and Ideology: “Leaving Native”

As a Japanese native anthropologist, I should clarify my advantages and disadvantages in studying my own culture. Narayan, an Indian born anthropologist, points out that studying one’s own culture involves an inverse process from studying a foreign culture. Reflecting on India with the vocabulary of a social analyst, Narayan finds that new light is shed on many of the experiences that have shaped her into what she is. While
anthropologists usually learn conceptual categories and then, through fieldwork, find the contexts in which they can apply the categories, native anthropologists absorb analytic categories that reframe what is already known, locating particulars within larger cultural patterns, sociological relations, and historical shifts (Narayan 1993: 678).

Japanese-born Ohnuki-Tierney claims that if native anthropologists can gain enough distance between their personal selves and their culture, they can make an important contribution to anthropology because of their access to intimate knowledge of their own culture. Both native and non-native anthropologists can play complementary roles in enhancing our understanding of the cultures of the world (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984: 18).

Research is often ideologically driven and there is rarely a value-free or bias-free design. Janesick claims that the qualitative researcher identifies his or her biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame for the study. By identifying them, the researcher can easily see where the questions that guide the study are crafted (Janesick 1994: 212).

It is said that if an anthropologist “goes Native” in the culture she is studying, analysis is difficult due to the subjective and emotional perspective she has gained. On the other hand, as Morse says, real personal interest is the key factor to retaining a long-time commitment to the research (Morse 1994: 230). This project is motivated by my personal concern for Japanese society as a Japanese national as well as my own position as an overseas Japanese. Although I have been concerned with these issues since I left Japan eleven years ago, at the time I felt I was too subjective and emotionally embedded to
analyze them. After many years’ overseas experiences and training in anthropology, I now feel more able to be analytical of these processes.

1.5 Chapter Outline

This dissertation consists of six chapters. The first is an introductory chapter, explaining the significance of this study, methods, and literature review including theoretical perspectives. The second chapter delineates twelve research participants’ ethnographic narratives of their backgrounds and subjective motivations for immigrating to Canada, which were obtained from short life histories and in-depth interviews, and discusses some characteristics of female and male interviewees. Their detailed and in-depth narratives offer valuable information for the investigation of the push and pull factors of their immigrations as well as socio-cultural conditions of Japanese society. The third chapter shows that their immigrations were induced not by political-economic problems in their home society but by other issues, including their seeking spiritual satisfaction and a relaxed way of life. In order to investigate these issues, my interviewees’ conceptions of the factors that have contributed to their decision to migrate to B.C. are categorized into nine themes: 1) physical environment; 2) spiritual enrichment and relaxed life; 3) escape from socio-cultural constraints, such as people’s interference, sekentei (public image), pressure for conformity, and the suppression of individualism; 4) family life; 5) education (not for academic credentials but individual enrichment); 6) escape from age restrictions; 7) escape from gender roles; 8) diversity; and 9) self-actualization, trying new possibilities, experiencing other worlds, and escaping from a predictable life. These categories shape the
frame of both my reviews of the literature and my analysis of my interviewee's narratives. This examination shows the pluralism of the push and pull factors of their immigration. The fourth chapter re-interprets my interviewees' push and pull factors based on the detailed examination of the interrelations among the social systems, which have swayed my interviewees' decisions to emigrate from Japan -- the family system, the education system, and the employment system. For the purpose of offering sufficient information for this analysis, I present an overview of these three systems as well as ethnographic information through my interviewees' perspectives and experiences. The analysis of the interrelations of these social systems draws on the concept of "interpenetration," which is introduced in Luhmann's social systems theory. This analysis reveals the complexity of the push and pull factors, which consist of multiple factors intertwined with each other, as well as Japanese social systems, which are intricately-intertwined with each other. Emigration can be seen as a means of escape from the web of interrelations of social systems. The fifth chapter discusses the "double complexity" of Japanese society, which stems from both the complexity of modern society and the complexity of the amalgamation of non-modern and modern natures in this society and causes psychological burden for its members by imposing contradictory messages on them. My interviewees feel relaxed in Canadian society, which they see as simple compared to Japan. I argue that their conception of simple Canada vs. complex Japan is attributed partly to the "double complexity" of Japanese society. Emigration can be seen as an attempt to escape from psychological burden caused by such complexity. In order to explain how Japanese society has accommodated both non-modern and modern, I present the trajectory of Japanese modernization. Chapter six
concludes this dissertation by summarizing major findings and stating contributions and limitations of this study as well as future issues.
CHAPTER II
Narratives of Interviewees: Background and Motivation

2.1 Introduction

The narratives presented in this chapter offer valuable data for the anthropological studies of globalization and transnational agency that extend detailed work by Ong and Appadurai (1996). While globalization has been analyzed in terms of flows of capital, information, and populations, Ong (1999) draws human practices and cultural logics into the discussion and explores the political, economic, and cultural rationalities that shape migration and transnational processes through her study on transnational Chinese migrants. Meanwhile, Appadurai (1996) discusses in his work *Modernity at Large* the critical role that the imagination as human practice plays in both global cultural processes and the production of modern subjectivities. He explains how mass-mediated events and migratory audiences define the core of the link between globalization and modernity. His work inspires anthropologists to capture the meanings of translocal culture in their ethnographic work in this transnational world.

While Ong and Appadurai have significantly contributed to the theoretical frameworks in the study of contemporary migration, including the importance of human agency, their works miss people’s narratives which reflect the real lives of human actors as meaning makers. By conveying vivid life experiences and subjective feelings of these Japanese newcomers, this chapter provides important ethnographic data for the study of migratory people in late modernity.
This chapter presents the stories of twelve interviewees: their backgrounds, immigration processes, and major factors which motivated them to immigrate to Canada. “Push and pull factors” are the factors influencing the decision to migrate, at the sending and receiving ends, respectively. These factors are not always ‘objective’ reasons for migration, but actually the migrant’s subjective perception (Demuth 2000). The purpose of this chapter is to provide the in-depth subjectivities which I gained through my extensive interviews. They demonstrate how the motivations of immigration vary according to the individual situation. Also, I will discuss some different characteristics of motives for men and women.

The interview sessions for this research were held from 2002 to 2003. The recruitment of interviewees was conducted through advertisements on Japanese web sites whose intended audience is Japanese people in Canada, especially Vancouver. I was able to recruit eight of the interviewees (Ayumi, Hiroshi, Mika, Izumi, Takuya, Masayuki, Mai, and Keiko) in this manner. I recruited one other person (Michio) through a Japanese newspaper in Vancouver, and was also referred to three additional interviewees (Masako, Satoru, and Yuji). Also, I had a chance to have a conversation with the wife of one of the male interviewees (Satoru). The total of twelve interviewees (six males and six females) were all Japanese people living in Vancouver, who voluntarily moved to Canada as adults after the mid-1990s and had already acquired Canadian permanent resident status or have clear intentions of gaining that status.

While six interviewees initially came to Canada for study, four came through the Working Holiday Program (WHP). The WHP enables young people to visit other countries
for an extended period and to take temporary employment, usually a maximum of 12 months. Canada has the WHP for people aged 18 to 30 from Japan, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, the Republic of Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. My interviewees who came to Canada for study or through the WHP considered immigration after experiencing Canadian life.

In order to obtain in-depth, subjective information, two sessions were conducted for each person, which were usually from one and a half hours to two and a half hours long. Overall, they spoke their minds about their experiences and thoughts. At the beginning of the sessions, some seemed to hesitate to talk about their personal details. However, as we were able to establish some rapport between us, they became more relaxed, open-minded, and welcoming to “their own stories,’ that is, the stories of subjects’ worlds” (Gubrium and Holstein 1997: 28). As an ethnographer, I try to be the sensitive vehicle which conveys my interviewees’ experiences (see Gubrium and Holstein 1997: 28). Initially, I was concerned about a Japanese cultural emphasis of honne/tatemae (real feelings/public stance), which often prompts people to refrain from talking about their real feelings and intentions to those whom they are not familiar with. However, I was able to gain access to their personal experiences and subjective feelings more than I had expected. This would be largely because many of them were self-selected informants who responded to my advertisements for recruitment and, hence, were ready to talk about their stories. Also, two interview sessions for each participant made it possible for me to establish rapport with them, which would have helped them to reveal their honne.
I gathered short life histories of, and conducted in-depth interviews with, these twelve people in order to obtain the following information: 1) the backgrounds of interviewees, such as where they were born and lived, family, education, work experiences, marital status, and other life experiences, 2) the motivations for their immigration – why they left Japan and chose B.C. as their destination, 3) their perceptions of Japanese society, and 4) their comparison of Japanese and Canadian societies.

All interview sessions were conducted in Japanese and recorded. I chose Japanese for the interviews because the native language can convey the delicate nuances of the interviewees’ subjectivities. After transcribing their narratives, I translated them into English with emphasis on maintaining the original Japanese meaning. I will first present the narrative of each female interviewee and then the narrative of each male interviewee, followed by some discussion. Pseudonyms are used to protect their privacy. This detailed information on each interviewee is expected to serve as important background data for the discussion of their push and pull factors in the following chapter.

2.2 Female Narratives

The six female interviewees are Keiko (33), Ayumi (19), Mika (32), Masako (37), Mai (25), and Izumi (28). Female interviewees were all from a Japanese urban area except for Keiko and Ayumi, the former is from an agricultural area in Kumamoto and the latter is from a non-urban area of Chiba prefecture, a neighboring prefecture of Tokyo. Masako was born and raised in Tokyo. Mai and Mika were born in Tokyo and raised in its neighboring prefectures: Saitama and Kanagawa, respectively. Due to her father’s job, Izumi, a Tokyo
native, moved every few years and had lived in other major provincial cities such as Osaka, Hiroshima, Chiba, Saitama, and Nagoya.

2.2.1 Keiko

After finishing a secretary training program at a vocational school, Keiko worked at a travel agency to study English abroad, which was motivated by her experience of a three-week homestay in Los Angeles. People at her workplace and relatives cautioned her not to go abroad because they thought that her age would be disadvantageous for both marriage and employment upon her return to Japan. Looking at her mother’s struggle for a steady job due to lack of special skills, she hoped to acquire enough economic power to be independent, whether she married or not. She says, “That may relate to my motivation to study abroad.”

She came to Vancouver when she was 24 in 1994. Her initial plan was to stay here for a year and find an English-related job after returning home. However, a year later, insufficient improvement of her English skills led her to decide to stay longer. After attending ESL classes, she went to a community college. In 1997, she applied for permanent residency (PR) for cheaper tuition and more options for her future (She can choose either Japan or Canada for her residence). She waited for her PR to be finalized in Japan. After obtaining PR in 1998, she worked at a gift shop in Vancouver, and then started her BA program at the University of British Columbia.

Her parents financially supported her on the condition that she would return to Japan after finishing school. However, after she applied for PR, they stopped sending her money,
which made her struggle to survive in Canada both academically and financially. Moreover, adverse events such as being robbed and an illness requiring an operation diminished her confidence to live in Canada by herself. These events resulted in her planning repatriation at the completion of her BA. She also thought that returning to Japan would make it easier for her to earn money to pay back her student loan. Nevertheless, after finishing her BA in 2002 and getting rid of the burden of schoolwork, she changed her mind and started to look for a job in order to stay in Vancouver.

Spiritual encouragement, which Keiko can feel more poignantly in Canadian society, has been a major attraction for her to stay here. Canadian society brings her a sense of possibility to do anything she wants. In Japan, she feels somewhat oppressed by the discouraging attitude of her cultural environment which tells her that, “It is impossible for you to…” Her parents and other people in Japan showed their difficulty in understanding her dream of studying abroad and expressed doubt at her ability to pursue it. In contrast, when talking about her dream to her friends in Canada, they usually encouraged her, saying, “That’s a good idea” and “Go for it.” She notes, “That makes me think that I can pursue my dream… People in Canada try to fulfill their dreams. That attitude also stimulates me to pursue my own.”

In Japan the admission to good universities requires people to go through difficult entrance exams. In contrast, in Canada, people can climb up from ESL beginner, to community college, and to university. This system encouraged her to challenge herself to go to university in Canada. In her words.
It is hard. I feel lonely. I feel hard [living in Canada]. But I feel fulfilled when I accomplish a goal. I feel comfortable with the dull but easy environment in Japan. But Canadian life provides me a lot of sense of fulfillment. I feel ‘I’m alive (ikiteru)!’

It was very hard and stressful for her to survive at school. Through it, however, she finds her development of perseverance and willpower.

Considering her age and personality, Keiko regards Canada as more suitable for her. Searching for a job in Japan reminds her of difficult situations such as age discrimination against both men and women: “When I conduct Internet job searches, I find that there are still age limits on employment.” She is also concerned that her personality would be problematic for her repatriation. She says,

I was originally strong-minded and self-assertive. After coming here, my mind has become stronger. So I am wondering if I fit into Japanese society... People in Japan follow others (migi e narae). People here have and express their own opinions.

She feels that it is difficult to live in Japan with individuality (jibun wo motte). Canadian life brings her more sense of freedom. She also notices that people in Japan tend to be more materialistic and very self-conscious about their appearance. She notes, “It is stressful for me to be among them. I feel easier here... I don’t want to blend into materialistic society.”

2.2.2 Ayumi

When Ayumi was a high school student, she became psychologically exhausted due to family matters. While most students of her high school went to university in Japan, her health made studying for rigorous entrance exams too difficult for her. Moreover, she preferred the university system abroad where she had heard that people study assiduously after acceptance - not before it - as in Japan. There was little opposition from her parents.
against her plan to go abroad. Although considering other places such as cities in the U.S. and England, she chose Vancouver because of issues such as living expenses, climate, and safety.

She had a strong internal struggle about coming to Canada, wondering if it was a mere escape from Japanese entrance exams. While doing Internet research she found some Japanese comments criticizing studying abroad as an escape from entrance exams and a stupid dream. She could not deny the criticism. Nevertheless, she decided to go to Canada. Although it was a significant decision, she wanted to take action rather than just endlessly dwelling on the issue and getting nowhere. Thinking that she could prove her move was not a mere escape by producing meaningful results, she came to Vancouver to study at a community college in March 2003. She plans to apply for employment in Canada after graduating from college, as well as hoping to become a Canadian permanent resident in the process.

Changing environments was one of the reasons for Ayumi’s desire to immigrate. Moving to Vancouver has resulted in the noticeable improvement of her psychological and physical health. Despite finding difficulty in studying and communicating in English, she feels more emotional satisfaction and is more relaxed than she ever was in Japan.

Ayumi sees Canada as a society offering a better quality of life and a more relaxed sense of spirituality (seishinteki na yutori) than Japan. Living in Canada is more comfortable for her, although she regards Japanese society as decent. She appreciates Canadians’ value for their family, various educational opportunities available regardless of
one’s age, beautiful landscapes, abundant nature, friendly people, the slower pace of life, and the lower cost of living in Vancouver.

She notes, “I could lead a more relaxed way of life if I worked here. Though people in Japan often have more income and live a materially good life, I prefer living with an easier and more frugal lifestyle to working very hard for money.” She believes that we can lead a spiritually healthier life in Canada than in Japan, since Japanese life is much more stressful, including the pressure not to be outspoken, strict hierarchical relationships, a great emphasis on other people’s opinions, and long hours of work.

Ayumi’s father was transferred to other parts of Japan every four years leaving his family -- wife, mother, Ayumi, and her younger sister -- at home. Until her mid teens, Ayumi’s mother worked. To Ayumi, her parents’ work, not their children, seemed to be their priority. She says, “I felt unhappy about it and thought that I would not work hard like them.” Spending quality time with her future children has been her hope.

2.2.3 Mai

During her childhood, Mai’s personality was not self-assertive and she tended to go along with others because she was afraid of being bullied. At junior high, however, she acquired a more independent personality, which showed a reluctance to hang around other girls. During high school, the most important means of socialization was not attending school or hanging out with her friends, but, instead, reading books and magazines whose intended audience was intellectual adults. This type of erudite lifestyle allowed her to grow
into a more mature and logical thinker than her schoolmates. She thought that high school education was a waste of time and meaningless, and became a school truant.

Since early childhood, she had worked hard in practicing piano to enter Music College. Before graduating from high school, she became interested in music therapy, for which there was no college in Japan that offered a degree and so she decided to study abroad. She considered factors such as language and safety and chose Vancouver as the place to study. Understanding her serious intentions, her parents became supportive of her plan.

She arrived in Vancouver in January 1998. After attending ESL classes, she entered into a music program at a community college and transferred to the University of British Columbia. Like Keiko, Mai feels a sense of fulfillment from being able to independently study in Canada and live abroad, although doing this is especially tough. Through these formative years, her fondness for life in Vancouver and strong desire for immigration were developed. She remarks, “If I cannot get a permanent visa, I may go back to Japan. If so, I might fall into depression.” She expects to find employment during a post-graduation work program and expresses her firm resolve by saying, “If I work hard, a good future would open up for me.”

Although her friends’ parents usually feel reluctant about their children’s emigration, Mai’s parents regard immigrating to Canada as beneficial for her. She explains,

My parents think that I do not fit into Japanese society and could not lead a happy life there. They also say that the good aspects of Japan are disappearing; there are many disturbing incidents such as social withdrawal (hikikomori) and bizarre murders. My mother says that Japan is becoming a very rough society. People have trouble surviving if they don’t have a lot of nerve, so she prefers my immigration to Canada. I also feel that Japanese society is being distorted. I check [Japanese] news everyday.
When I read the news, I feel reluctant to return... If I had children, I would hate to raise them in such an environment.

The primary reason for Mai's immigration was her aversion to the pressure for conformity in Japanese society. She comments, "Canada is a multiethnic society. Various people come here with various cultures from various places. So this society respects originality. People don't criticize me even if I am different from them. This society is open to individual opinions." She feels her independent personality fits in Canada. After coming here, she has learned how to express her opinions and how to argue with others effectively. She says, "But, if I return to Japan with the self-assertiveness that I have developed here, I would experience conflict with others." She also detests following Japanese cultural norms of the age- and gender-driven life courses. She notes,

People in Japan tend to feel pressure to follow these rules due to public image (sekentei)... Especially, women have more limited opportunities and roles. As I am 25 years old, I have not had such pressure. However, my friends in their early 30s say that they are pressured to marry by people such as their relatives.¹⁰

Vancouver's environment, which is urban, as well as being close to the beach, ski area, and various trails, is a great attraction for Mai. She notes, "Even if we don't have much money, we can enjoy our life here... Money is not the only factor for our life. We can relax, enjoy nature, shop at cute stores, and also go to the mountains. Everything is here. This town is the greatest hit!"

¹⁰ While until fairly recently it was 25 years old that was seen as the limit for Japanese women to marry with favorable conditions, the tendency of delaying marriage in these years has led to the shift in this age.
2.2.4 Izumi

Izumi feels as though she has had a smooth ride through her life in Japan. Since her childhood, she was inclined to be bossy and had grown up to be self-assertive. Nevertheless, her social skills caused few conflicts with others. At her university in Tokyo, the rarity of female students in her major -- mechanical engineering -- brought her male colleagues attention and respect to her opinions.

Although it was a hard time for job hunting when she started her job search, there was a demand for mechanical engineers. However, she declined the job offers from private companies expecting a better environment in public service for working women, especially after marriage, and planned to take an exam to be a flight operations officer in the fall of 1999.

After graduating from university, she came to Vancouver for a vacation as well as to learn English in April 1999. Despite her initial plan of three-months’ stay, she extended it; cancelling the exam for the flight operations officer. After attending ESL classes, she started to go to community college. She majored in mechanical engineering in Japan, expecting little gender discrimination in engineering work. However, she found that Canada has a better environment for simultaneous pursuit of work and raising children.

In Japan, she felt difficulty in knowing where she stood and in figuring out what was right or wrong due to the complexity of the society in which the amount of information about life in general ‘descends upon you like a waterfall.’ For her, living in such complexity was mentally demanding. She has an impression that the social systems in
Vancouver are simpler and says, “I want to lead a simple life but cannot do it in Japan... I know where I stand in Vancouver.”

While the life in Tokyo appears much richer to Izumi in terms of material things, people in Vancouver relish spiritual richness (*kokoro no yutakasa*) although they also enjoy some material richness. She comments, “I guess that spiritual richness remains in Vancouver because people from all over the world come here seeking it.” She also regards Canadian life as more enjoyable and healthy compared to Japanese hectic life. She comments, “People in Japan usually have their hands full with going to the workplace in the early morning and coming back home late... If I didn’t know Canadian life, I could lead such a life. But now I don’t think I can (laugh).”

After coming to Canada, Izumi realized the shortfalls of Japan’s espoused homogeneity and feels more comfortable in the diverse environment of Canada, which gives her much less pressure to conform in behavior and in female life course trajectory. In Japan, she did not feel these pressures from her parents, who even encouraged her individual freedom, but rather from Japanese society at large.

2.2.5 Masako

When Masako was a sophomore in high school, she was granted a two year scholarship to study in Victoria, Canada. When she attended university in Japan after her stay in Canada, the way she had changed through her Canadian experience caused friction between her and other students. Later, she realized that to other Japanese people she had
become very self-assertive, impudent, and insensitive to the feelings of others and learned to readjust herself to Japanese society.

While doing a Master’s program in clinical psychology at a privileged private university in Tokyo, she started to work for a non-profit educational organization, which dealt with overseas exchanges. Many of her bosses have MBAs from international schools. Masako saw them as her role models and developed a desire to go abroad and earn an MBA like them. After a few years of marriage, she started to mention studying abroad to her husband. Despite his reluctance, she eventually succeeded in convincing him. Before they came to Canada, he quit his job and created his own company, which sells shareware on the Internet and enables him to do business anywhere in the world where there is Internet access.

Due to her familiarity with Vancouver and its mild climate and shorter travelling time from Japan by air compared to other parts of Canada, she decided to enrol in the MBA program at the University of British Columbia. Shortly after being admitted, she became pregnant. She arrived in Vancouver in July 1997 and decided to apply for permanent residency because the status offers less limitation for the life in Canada than an international student visa status. In 1998, her family acquired PR. Although unsure about her permanent stay in Canada, she thought about settling down in Canada when she was pregnant again after finishing her MBA in 2001. While childrearing, she assists her husband’s business and is actively involved in activities of Japanese people in Vancouver. Her family lives comfortably in a spacious house.
On her visit to Tokyo with her children, childrearing in Japan seemed to be more difficult than in Canada. Going out with her children was not easy, because Tokyo is terribly congested and she was afraid that other people in the streets would find her children annoying. She says, “When I went out with my children I felt a bit guilty. I needed to say I’m sorry (sumimasen) everywhere.” For her, Canada is a better environment for childrearing. She comments, “In Canada, there is much more space and we can go anywhere by car. I feel that, in general, people in Canada are kinder to those who have children and it is natural for husbands to help with childrearing.”

Masako and her husband strongly prefer the Canadian education system for their children. She desires her children to explore and try various things without much restriction while they are young in order to find out what they really like. For this purpose, she regards Canadian education as better. She also wants her children to be bilingual in English and Japanese. Moreover, she is afraid that if she sent her children to school in Japan, they would stick out and might be bullied because they are too Westernized.

Also, Canada has a better environment for her life plan: concentrating on childrearing while her children are small and having her career after that. She comments, “In Japan, once a woman has children and stays home, she is labelled as a full-time housewife, and it is difficult for her to get back into society afterwards. There are few job opportunities for women over 35 years old with children in Japan.”

Nevertheless, she expects more job opportunities in Japan than Canada especially with her MBA. English skills, and connections in international business in Japan, which has less gender and age restrictions for employment than other Japanese business circles.
However, she believes that pursuing her career in Japan would not allow her to enjoy a relaxed life with her family. She might have returned to Japan if she did not have children. However, she has decided to stay in Canada due to the favorable Canadian environment for family life.

2.2.6 Mika

Since childhood, Mika noticed herself as different from others. Her Christian parents sent her to Sunday school, which was uncommon in Japan. Also, they did not allow her to enjoy TV programs, comic books, and music, which were popular among children. That lifestyle created a sense of a gap between herself and her friends. She recalls, “I tended not to belong to a group though I had best friends. I was rather independent.” After graduating from high school, she went to Art College. Being an artist fosters her uniqueness. She explains, “Art College is the place where unique people with various values gather. They are regarded as strange in society. Strange is better and cool.”

Wanting to experience life overseas, at the age of 20, she withdrew from school for a year to study English in Christchurch, New Zealand. That joyful memory made her return to Christchurch through the WHP when she was 23. After returning to Japan and experiencing a few jobs, she started to think that overseas life is more suitable to her and then began searching for a designing job abroad at age 27. At this time working overseas became popular in Japan.

Although Canada was her first choice, her qualifications were not enough for her to find employment in Canada. Instead, she worked as a designer in Guam and Saipan in order
to build up her working experience and made a detailed plan for a job search in Canada. The life in Guam and Saipan was not suitable for her, which was harsh as well as detrimental to her health. Nevertheless, she did not want to give up on developing her working experience there because of her wish to live in Canada.

She came to Vancouver through the WHP in April 2001. Although not expecting to find a job immediately, she was employed as a graphic designer at a Japanese design studio within a month and then applied for PR. She talks about her feelings about Canada, “It is as if I married Canada. Of course, there are both good and bad aspects. Yet, the bad ones do not bother me a lot. There are much more good ones for me.”

She notices that the development of the Internet has changed her overseas life. When she was in New Zealand, communication means were by mail and telephone. Since the telephone fee was much more expensive, she did not often contact people in Japan. She comments,

I cannot exclude the development of the Internet as a reason why I think I can live overseas. Now Japan is not so far. Even if we were in Japan, we would not often see our friends and family, would we? Here I cannot see them but everyday I exchange emails with them. I feel that they are very close. That is important.

Her claim is that gender inequality and the economic situation in Japan were not contributing factors for her immigration. In Japan, she had worked at a foreign affiliated company, and then, worked as a designer for a toy company. In both jobs, gender inequality was not noticeable. If any thing, she says, it was less significant than the linguistic disadvantage she has experienced in Canada. Then, what inspired the desire to immigrate to Canada?
Mika’s wish is to lead an interesting life, escaping from the predictable life in Japan. Things in Japan, she feels, are just repetitive and the future is too predictably boring for someone interested in a more adventurous life. Moreover, the living environment of Vancouver, in terms of nature, space, and population, was a crucial factor which attracted her to Canada from Japan. Having nature and space is important for her mentality. In her words,

The primary reason of my immigration is the life environment... I think that I am demanding, but I have strong feelings for wanting to live where I feel comfortable... Vancouver is almost a perfect city for me because of its abundant nature and size of population... I feel strong anxiety in Japan. If something, such as an earthquake, happens, there is no place for evacuation. It may be strange but I always felt so... I had a feeling that I needed to get out [from Japan] and wanted to go to a more spacious place.

Also, the multiculturalism of Vancouver, where Asians live as members of a community, makes her feel comfortable living here. She explains,

After I came here I was surprised. I guess that there would be no other place than Vancouver where Asians live naturally outside Asia... When Asians walk in the town they are residents not tourists... It was not that way in New Zealand. In New Zealand, Asians were guests.

She expresses how impressive the multiculturalism in Vancouver appears to her; “I was very shocked as if I felt like I came to another planet. That was a good shock, though... It was like the scene of Star Wars where various characters communicate in different languages in cafés.”
2.3 Discussion on Female Interviewees

One of the common features of these female interviewees is their description of their personality as self-assertive. They are well-educated women with a sense of pride and independent mind. Although Ayumi’s self-assertiveness had been suppressed during the course of schooling in Japan, she claims to be originally outspoken. Keiko and Mai were concerned about possible conflicts with people in Japan if they returned there due to their strong personality. Actually, Masako’s self-assertiveness developed during a two-year stay in Victoria, B.C., which caused conflicts between her and her schoolmates in Japan. One of my male interviewees observes the prevalence of strong personality among Japanese women in Canada. He told his impression that, “Japanese women in Vancouver whom I have met are all tough.”

In Japanese society, self-assertiveness is often regarded as a problematic trait against the group’s harmony, and, hence, tends to be suppressed in socialization and schooling processes. Hendry found the “wrapping principle,” which linguistically places a great emphasis on indirect communication, a most pervasive part of Japanese life. Wrapping communication is a crucial social skill not only for smoothing interaction and expressing consideration, but also defending oneself, exercising some power by persuading people, and impressing and influencing others (Hendry 1993). Those who are inept at that skill are apt to be seen as immature, impolite, and even aggressive. Mai feels more at ease communicating in English because she can be straightforward. She notes, “In English, I can say ‘No.’ I cannot be so straightforward in Japanese. In Japanese, if we say harsh things (by Japanese standards), it really sounds harsh. It would hurt a person more than necessary. So I
hesitate to say it to them in Japanese.” Straightforwardness would often offend people who are accustomed to “wrapping communication.”

Suppression of self-assertiveness is more common to women than men, although a “stereotypical” traditional image of obedient and submissive women is no longer applicable to contemporary Japanese women. Kelsky depicts the repulsion of female Japanese internationalists toward Japanese men who reject aggressive and tough women like them and seek docile “girls” (Kelsky 2001: 209). As Kelsky described for the Japanese internationalists who were the subjects of her research, my female interviewees were more comfortable living away from Japan; in Canada they could be themselves and act more individualistically. After returning from Victoria in her teenhood, it took a while for Masako to readjust to the Japanese way of communication. Although Izumi learned not to cause conflict with others despite her self-assertiveness, she needed some effort to pursue what she really wanted to do. She comments, “I would need to encourage myself a lot. Even if nobody says I am wrong, I would tell myself, ‘I’m right. I’m right.’” Mika says that she found places where she can be individualistic in Japan. Although these female interviewees did not view their personalities as a reason for immigration, living in Canada would also be more comfortable for them to be themselves.

In Kelsky’s book, the narratives of Japanese women who invest in study or work abroad depend on rhetorical contrast between a “progressive” West and a “backward” Japan to justify their shift of loyalty from home country to foreign realm. She points out the prevalence of their occidental longing and fantasy (Kelsky 2001). In contrast, my female interviewees do not seem to hold a strong sense of a “progressive” West and a “backward”
Japan, or rather they seem to hold an opposite contrast between Canada and Japan. Their impression of Canada is that it is simpler, more relaxed, less urbanized, and less advanced in terms of material life than Japan, although they recognize Canada is more progressive in terms of equality in gender and age. This gap could be largely attributed to the fact that most of them are from the Tokyo metropolitan area or its neighboring cities. Moreover, Kelsky’s focus on the U.S., not on Canada, in her study would contribute to this difference in the perceptions of Japanese women in her study and those of my female interviewees.

Also, Japanese women in Kelsky’s book are mostly those who were raised in Japan when it was catching up to Western industrialized countries. They experienced more severe gender inequality under more rigid social structures and norms than the generation of my interviewees. Hence, they would more likely consider Japan as backward and traditional, and the West as advanced and modernized. On the other hand, the alleviation of overt gender inequality and rapid modernization of Japan (especially technological) would have overturned the image of Japan from backward and traditional to advanced and modernized. For instance, while Mika loves Vancouver’s environment, she also feels that the city lacks many things that she considers as hallmark features of an urban area. She remarks, “In the end, this is countryside.”

Regarding backgrounds, all of my female interviewees have high educational backgrounds. This statistic accords with Kobayashi’s study on recent Japanese female immigrants in Canada, which tells that an analysis of data based on the 1986-96 censuses shows most of these women are highly educated. There are largely two types of Japanese female immigrants: Those married to male immigrants who come to Canada primarily for
occupational reasons and those who are single, or who are married to men of non-Japanese backgrounds. The majority belong to the last group (Kobayashi 2002: 205-206).

Five of my interviewees are single and one moved to Canada with her Japanese husband. This is partly because the recruiting criteria of my interviewees excluded those who immigrated due to marriage since obtaining subjective reasons of immigration other than marriage is the purpose of this research. In Masako’s case, it was her husband, instead of her, who came to Canada for his spouse’s career, a situation not common among Japanese immigrants. His Internet/information technology business made this situation easier.

While Kelsky points out the eroticization of the white man as liberatory agent for Japanese women searching for a foreign spouse to realize the dream of escape (Kelsky 2001: 210), Mai denies this notion. Although she thinks that the majority of Japanese men would be incompatible with her since many of them still want their wife to stay home and care about sekentei (public image), she does not idealize white men, contending, “White guys have their own problems, too.” Moreover, despite cohabitating with her Canadian boyfriend, she has little intention to marry him for immigration purposes. She says, “It is against my philosophy to marry for immigration.” Since she has worked very hard, even if it cuts into her sleeping hours, she wants to continue to be independent in shaping her own future without relying on marriage. Mika also does not idealize Canadian men and says, “…in fact they [Japanese men] think that their wives should stay home. But men are like that not only in Japan but universally, I think... I hear there are such men who want their wives to stay home here.”
Another common feature of them is their unwillingness to become a full-time housewife although it is not unusual for Japanese women in younger generations. Unlike middle-class women in older generations, whose main place is the domestic sphere, contemporary women are more interested in simultaneous pursuit of work and family or late marriage. It is often the case in Japan that a woman should handle the double burden if she hopes to balance work with family life. For women who value both work and family, the Canadian environment is more attractive than the Japanese one. Chapter three discusses these issues further.

2.4 Male Narratives

Six male interviewees are Hiroshi (30), Takuya (32), Michio (65), Satoru (48), Yuji (30), and Masayuki (30). Hiroshi, Takuya, and Masayuki were from urban areas: Hiroshi was born and raised in a suburb of Yokohama, Takuya was born and raised in Chiba, and Masayuki was born in Yokohama and raised in Saitama. Michio was born in Yamagata and worked for a company in Tokyo. He has many overseas life experiences because of his job. Satoru was born in Aomori and moved various places in regional areas of Japan due to his work. Yuji was born at a seaside town in Aichi prefecture. Although the size of my interviewee population is rather small, their occupations in Japan represent a variety of Japanese workers — sarariiman (salaried worker), a normative occupation in Japan (Hiroshi, Takuya, Michio), truck driver (Yuji), an officer of the Japan Self-Defence Force (Satoru), and "friitaa" (part-timer or unemployed person looking for a job) (Masayuki).
2.4.1 Hiroshi

From the time when he was little, Hiroshi has recognized his distinctiveness. He comments, “Though I have never disliked Japan, it has not been easy for me to live there because of my uniqueness since childhood.” He has felt a reluctance to conform and has been incompatible to group actions, even though socialization encourages them. However, his reluctance to conform was seen as impudence at elementary and junior high school.

In the middle of the bubble economy, he attended a well-known private university in Tokyo and enjoyed a rich college life. After graduation, he worked for a well-established department store in central Tokyo for three years, which imposed uncompensated overtime on him and an undue amount of stress. Eventually, he quit his job to come to Vancouver through the Working Holiday Program (WHP) in 1997. His decision came partly because of his wish to improve his English and to refresh himself. Moreover, B.C. is an ideal place for yacht sailing, his favorite hobby. Vancouver seemed to be the most comfortable city to live among the places he had visited in the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. During his stay in Vancouver from 1997 to 1999, he worked for a yacht school and a catering service and spent his free time enjoying skiing, snowboarding, and yacht sailing.

From 2000 to 2002, he worked at a foreign-affiliated bank in Japan to save money for immigrating to Canada. Despite his status as a contract employee, he was given a responsible position to train new employees and offered a position as a regular employee. Nevertheless, he refused the offer in order to come to Vancouver. He also gave up his relationship with his girl friend. He recalls, “I really had trouble deciding to come here by
giving up everything.” In January 2003, he moved to Vancouver as a landed immigrant (permanent residence status or PR).

He emphasizes that the economic factor did not really contribute to his decision to immigrate. Economically, he regards life in Japan as better, and the income of Canadians is much less than that of Japanese. He notes, “Considering the balance of income and spending, Japan is one of the best countries in the world.” Moreover, he realizes that immigrants like him have disadvantages in employment in Canada. He explains,

I earned more than the average in Japan. My salary was about ten million yen (CAN$118,000@CAN$1=85yen), which was enough for me to save money for my living and tuition in Canada for a few years. My salary was that amount although I only have a BA and was not in a high position. I knew even if I finished an MBA in Canada I couldn’t get such a high salary here... Men have still more advantage in Japanese society. It is not difficult for men to earn five million yen (CAN$59,000) at my age. I have confidence to earn that amount of money if I return to Japan.

Although Hiroshi misses the variety of material goods in Japan, the living environment, including the nature and housing condition in Vancouver, is more attractive to him. He notes, “Canada is in harmony with nature. The majority of Canadians seem to be fairly satisfied with their lives... Not many countries are like Canada which has retained rich nature and offers a convenient life.”

Also, the uncertainty of the future of Japan brought him a sense of necessity to reduce risk for his future life:

Though the level of life in Japan is still better than other countries, it has its aggravation for sure. It may be OK for another ten years. After that it may become more aggravated. Nobody knows the future. Yet, when [the situation in Japan] becomes very bad and it becomes beyond an individuals’ power, I don’t want to be involved in the country’s fate. That is one of the reasons why I decided to create my foothold (ashiba) in another country... All things have both aspects: risk and benefit... Coming here means that I need to give up my career in Japan. I worked for
a foreign-affiliated bank with a good salary with acknowledgement from my boss. If I continued working there, I could live very comfortably. So I really had trouble with deciding to move outside of Japan by giving up my career.

To be a kinder person is another motive of immigration. He was remarkably impressed by his Canadian coworkers’ kindness at the catering company despite communication problems due to his English skills. In Japan, he was dismissive to less capable people because of his confidence in his capability, but his Canadian coworkers’ gentleness motivated him to become sympathetic to those people. He says, “If I really wanted to, I could become a kinder person in Japan. However, humans are weak and influenced by their environment.” He regards the Japanese environment as callous to people in a weak position, such as less capable people, foreigners, and people with disabilities.

He also claims not to have been pushed away from Japan but to have immigrated because of his inclination to see various worlds as well as his desire to try his potential:

We only live once… I want to bring out my potentials… I worked for a department store for three years. I could largely tell my future income and life if I continued working there… Then, I wanted to see a different world. That is why I came to Canada through the Working Holiday Program. Then, I came to know I could get a permanent resident visa, which made me curious about life as a permanent resident.

Attending an MBA program was another reason for Hiroshi’s immigration. He chose Canada over the U.S. because of the cost of tuition, perceived safety, and the people. He comments, “I don’t expect that the salary I can get after studying would exceed the one I got in Japan. Though economically it is a loss, it is for my intellectual curiosity and possibility.”
2.4.2 Takuya

His interest in foreign countries, which he has cherished since his early teens, made Takuya a frequent overseas traveler to various places in Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America, including British Columbia and Alberta during his university years (1993, 1994, and 1995). Although his job-hunting was not easy after the collapse of the bubble economy, he found employment at a subcontract construction company of the Public Road Administration in Kanagawa. After a year at the company, he quit it to go to Canada through the WHP in May 1996. He needed to overcome his parents’ opposition against his decision. His familiarity with Vancouver and its multiculturalism made it his destination.

After working at a Japanese restaurant in Vancouver, he found an employer who offered to sponsor him for a work visa as a ski instructor and he applied for permanent residency (PR). While waiting for the residency status, he returned to Japan and worked as a temporary engineer. Despite the acquisition of PR in January 1999, he struggled to find a job in Canada. He worked as a part-timer for a Japanese freight company, which did not satisfy him, and also took engineering courses at a polytechnic institution in Vancouver. Although he found a full-time job at a construction material company, he was laid off due to downsizing.

His several months stay in Japan for rehabilitation work after a knee operation in 2002 revived his appreciation for his life in his home country and he wavered between repatriation to Japan and living abroad. He also began to consider relocating due to a dearth of job opportunities in Vancouver. He comments, “Taking into account my age and future, I shouldn’t waste time spending too much time finding a job here.”
One of Takuya’s motivations for living in Canada was his interest in foreign countries since his early teens. He was a great fan and player of soccer. Watching the strength of foreign teams, he had hoped to get first-hand knowledge of foreign countries and to experience life overseas. When he traveled abroad, he noticed that people seemed to have confidence and were not sheepish like many Japanese people. He says, “I wanted to know why. That was one of the reasons why I came here.”

His doubts over the Japanese lifestyle, which emphasizes materialism rather than spirituality, motivated Takuya to come to Canada. The 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake in Hyogo Prefecture, which killed 6,434 people and injured 43,792 people, especially made him doubt the pursuit of a material lifestyle. He realized that material things are ephemeral and spiritual satisfaction is more important. The lifestyle of Canadians, he notices, places more value on their private time with family and friends than on work. He notes, “Even if they work hard, they take advantage of paid vacation time. In this sense, Canada is better.”

Although his job in Japan provided him with a decent salary, Takuya did not find a sense of satisfaction and achievement. Promotion was made according to accumulated tenure rather than abilities and achievements. There was rigid seniority, where junior workers received little acknowledgement, had to agree with senior workers’ opinions, and often sacrificed their private time to serve their boss. He recalls, “A construction company is apt to have a conservative nature that considers the older to be great and the younger to be stupid.”
Despite lacking a sense of achievement, he felt a need to work hard and long hours. He explains,

I took the first train of the morning to go there and usually went home after 11:00pm... I was wondering whether I would have a sense of satisfaction or achievement if I worked for the company until retirement... I thought I could change my life while I was young and decided to go to Canada.

In Canada, he has been seeking a job and an environment through which he can grow, and found that the Canadian system provides him more incentives than the Japanese system. He notes, “People [in Canada] are promoted not according to their accumulated tenure but to their abilities and appear to be willing to take on a difficult challenge.”

Takuya appreciates life in Canada, which makes it easier for him to live by his own values (jibun-rashiku irareru). He also feels that Canadian society is more encouraging to people to be self-assertive and explains, “[In Japan] once people belong to some organization, they don’t discuss what is good or bad but just follow what their bosses say... In that environment, it is difficult to be self-assertive.”

In terms of other social constraints, he found Japanese society oppressive in that it tends to limit people’s options in their lifestyle such as in their occupations, studies, and marriage. He comments, “There are many ‘should be and should do’ [from others]... In Japan, we may lead an easy life if we keep up with the tide... However, we need a lot of power to go against the tide.” On the other hand, he feels that Canadian society is tolerant of people’s free choice in their lifestyle. “It is acceptable for people over 30 to go to school. If we challenge what we want to do, others acknowledge it.”
2.4.3 Michio

After graduating from a national university in Miyagi, Michio entered an oil company in Tokyo in the early 1960s and was transferred to various parts of Japan as well as overseas countries, including Syria, Oman, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Due to the structural depression of the oil industry in the 1980s, his company began to offer early retirement with discharge allowance at a premium. By taking advantage of the system, he quit the company and created a consultant company with his friends in 1989. His company became successful and has dispatched professionals to many countries. Although his company’s office is located in Tokyo, he moved to the U.S. He had a passion to contribute to the economic development of the countries for which he worked on a contract basis; and he conducted seminars and lectures to public officers in developing countries.

He married a Syrian woman, who is twenty years younger than him, about ten years ago. Then he decided to immigrate to Canada and applied for PR with his wife. He immigrated to Canada as her dependent because, he assumes, his age was disadvantageous for acquiring PR status. His daughter was born five years ago. Now his semi-retired life allows him to enjoy a relaxed lifestyle with his family in a condominium in central Vancouver. Life in Canada offers him pleasure to experience nature and escape from the crowded environment and to enjoy skiing and climbing mountains.

Michio’s original personality was one that could not be cast in a mould, and his long overseas experiences make it uncomfortable for him to live in Japan, which he regards as closed and collectivistic. Despite some unequal treatment he senses in Canada due to his
Asian background, living here is still more comfortable because he encounters less interference from other people and he can enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle than in Japan.

He says that if he did not get married, he would have returned to Japan and led a relaxed life in Hokkaido, enjoying nature there. In his words,

I don’t want [to live in Japan] not because I dislike Japan or deny Japan, but because Japan wouldn’t accept my current situation [marrying a non-Japanese and having a small child]. I am afraid that my daughter would be bullied by other children since I am a grandfather-like age to her. Such bullying would not often happen here.

He also prefers Canadian education, which, he thinks, has more flexibility, for his daughter. He explains,

In Canada, we can choose school according to our policy. For example, if we like cramming education, there are such schools. If we weigh education which fosters subjective ability to think and act, there are such schools. We have various choices. In Japan, we might have limited choices. I’m not sure, though. If so, I prefer here.

2.4.4 Satoru

While the majority of students at his high school went on to college, Satoru gave it up considering the financial situation of his family. At age 18 he entered into Japan’s Self-Defence Force (SDF) to be a fighter pilot. At the SDF, he was transferred to various places: Okinawa; Hokkaido; Fukuoka; Tokyo; Miyagi; Miyazaki; Yamaguchi; and Nara.

At 40, he decided to move to Canada in order to pursue his dream: the establishment of a flight school. While pilots in the SDF are transferred to deskwork at 42 or 43 years old, Satoru had a desire to continue flying, and he had an ambition of creating a flight school. However, he found that the airline industry in Japan was often unaccommodating and exclusive to newcomers who lack strong connections to the industry. Thus, he decided to
establish a flight school abroad. Considering various critical factors such as language, the scale of the airline industry, openness to newcomers, safety, and environment, he chose Canada.

Satoru arrived in Vancouver with his wife, an eight-year-old son and a six-year-old daughter in January 1995 (another daughter was born here later) and applied for PR. After obtaining PR, he left his family in Canada and worked in Japan for less than a year in order to support them, which was a very painful experience making him regret quitting a job at the SDF. Afterwards, he started a carpet cleaning business in Vancouver, and then worked at a Japanese travel agency. His wife works as a music teacher at a Japanese school as well as a private piano instructor. In May 2003, he quit the travel agency to focus on the establishment of his flight business.

His immigration has made him appreciate and long for his home country again. He regards himself as a precise, square, and rule-abiding person, and feels much more comfortable in Japan where people are more disciplined and orderly than in Canada where people have a more easy-going attitude. However, he wants to stay in Canada because of his goal to establish a flight school. Also, considering the happiness of his wife and children who enjoy Canadian life and prefer living in Canada, he decided to stay in Canada.

Although it was not a major reason for his immigration, Satoru also feels that living in Vancouver is easier than in the Japanese countryside, like his hometown in Aomori and his wife’s hometown in Okinawa, with respect to interpersonal social relationships. While people’s interference in the Japanese countryside is overwhelming, he believes that people in Vancouver, both Japanese and non-Japanese, do not meddle in other’s private matters.
Satoru’s wife is glad to escape from the bothersome socialization with his colleagues and their wives at the SDF quarters in Japan. She comments, “People [in Canada] don’t meddle in other’s business. I can live the way I like without caring about others too much.” Also, the relationships with Japanese people here do not involve giri/ninjō (duty and human feelings), which is considered a classic tension and source of social and personal conflict in Japan, because many people from Japan prefer not to associate in such a manner. She can keep a comfortable distance with them, which makes her feel more comfortable and easy here. Satoru hopes to respect her feelings, which has contributed to his decision to stay in Canada.

Moreover, Satoru believes that living in a multicultural society like Canada is beneficial for his personal growth, although it was often difficult for him to accept the different values and behavior. However, his association with people from various ethnic backgrounds made him realize that he needs to be open-minded and gradually be able to accept people who think and behave differently. He notes, “Canada is a place which gives me a chance to turn over a new leaf.”

2.4.5 Yuji

From the age of 11 years Yuji had dreamt of living in a Western country, having been influenced by a TV drama about an orphaned boy sent to his aunt’s family in the countryside of Oregon. He was heavily impressed by Oregon’s nature and lifestyle shown in the drama and started to cherish the dream of living in a foreign place richly endowed with nature. Before graduating from high school, he consulted with his teacher about living
abroad. However, he was told that it was impossible for a new graduate from high school to get a work permit.

After graduating from high school, he worked as a salesman at a computer company. Dissatisfaction with his salary based on a seniority-based pay scale made him quit to become a truck driver, who earned 400,000 yen (CAN$4,720) per month after tax. However, the job was hard. He says, “I usually worked six days a week and long hours…from 12 to 15 hours a day. I just slept [at home].”

Information on the WHP gave new life to his dream of living abroad. He applied for a WH visa just after learning about it at age 26, and chose Canada for his destination because he liked spaciousness, nature, and North American culture. In 1999, he came to Vancouver. Although his initial plan was to stay for one year, the comfortable Canadian environment gave him a desire to immigrate. After staying here for a year and seven months, he returned to Japan and found that many of his friends were not only married but even had children. Although admiring the support of their families, he was not ready to settle down and hoped to pursue a different lifestyle. He remarks, “You only live once. I am sure that we had better do what we want.”

Luckily, he got a job offer as a gardener from his friend’s brother who runs a gardening business in Vancouver and returned to Canada in 2001. Now he wishes to start a gardening business in Canada after building up his experience. He says, “There will be more and more Japanese who speak English and live abroad. Since the world has become globalized, I want to find some challenge abroad.”
The nature and landscape of Canada holds a strong attraction for Yuji. Moreover, he dislikes the muggy Japanese summers and appreciates the comfortable Vancouver summer with its long days. Although his hometown is a regional town surrounded by the ocean and hills, Canadian nature and landscape are more to his taste and the spacious houses and beautiful gardens are very appealing to him.

Yuji is also impressed by the Canadian lifestyle in which, he found, people enjoy outdoor activities without spending much money, take more holidays, and value their relationships with their families. He claims, “In Japan, people are pressed by work. Work is their life... Here, people don’t often work overtime but spend time with their family.” His sense of discordance with Japanese hierarchical relationships according to status and age was another push factor. The Canadian work environment, which, he found, lacks a strict hierarchy, makes it psychologically easier for him to work here. He comments, “I don’t like Japanese traditional style. That is one reason for coming here.”

2.4.6 Masayuki

While other children were learning cooperativeness, Masayuki remained self-assertive, causing some conflict with his schoolmates. After entering a high ranked local high school, he developed his sensitivity to others’ thinking and tried to go with them in order to not be disliked. His parents were strict and expected their children to go to university. While his elder sister met their expectation and became a university professor, he worked part-time jobs at a convenience store and a factory in Tokyo after graduating
from high school. At the age of 21, he was diagnosed with depression and returned to his parents’ home in Saitama.

After his parents’ separation, he lived with his father. Although his mental and physical condition was not favorable, he felt uncomfortable relying on his father and hoped to restart his life in a new environment. At 25, he decided to study in Canada with the hope of getting a degree or diploma in the medical field. It was a significant decision which caused much anxiety because of his health. After he came to Canada in 1998, his parents divorced.

After attending ESL classes in Nanaimo, he moved to Vancouver to study computers in college and made friends there, with whom he is planning to start a computer business. After his friends start a company, they are going to support his work visa. Although he knows that it will not be easy to obtain a visa, he still has hope.

Building a new life and human relationships was one of the reasons why Masayuki wanted to immigrate. In Japan, his health hampered him to establish good relationships with people. Also, he was involved in his parents’ ugly conflicts. However, in Canada, he was able to develop reliable relationships with his host family and made many friends. He felt that he did not need to be tied to his past and started thinking about his new life here. He notes, “It is good for my mental health that I can form reliable relationships. In Japan, I often made mistakes. People were not very understanding about my poor condition. Even my parents didn’t support me well, as they were in the process of a divorce.”

Self-actualization is another reason. He says, “In Japan, it was difficult finding and pursuing what I really liked due to gakurekishugi (cultural emphasis on educational
credentialism) and sekentei (public image). Japanese society expects men to work for a company.” In Canada, which is more tolerant of various lifestyles, he does not feel pushed by such social values.

Due to his medication, it is difficult for Masayuki to lead a tough life in Japan in which men work very hard and go for drinks after work. He notes, “In Canada, even if I don’t have family here, I can get support and people are more understanding. I feel people with mental illnesses have more rights here. So there seems to be less discrimination at work.” Moreover, he found that Canadian mental health care services are much better quality than those he received in Japan. After being hospitalized due to depression in Vancouver, he was sent two support workers who provided him with not only medical but also personal support. They gave him a sense of purpose. Also, doctors explain side effects well and allow him to make his own decision in choosing medication, which did not happen with the doctors whom he saw in Japan.

2.5 Discussion on Male Interviewees

All interviewees, except for Satoru, hold individualistic mindsets and are reluctant to follow conformity, which is regarded as a vital cultural element of Japanese society. Such a mindset is also recognized among female interviewees. Yoder points out that various authors of Japan, such as Condon (1984), DeVos and Wagatsuma (1984), Kanazawa and Miller (2000), Lebra (1976), Nakane (1970), and Vogel (1980), portray conformity as a Japanese cultural emphasis and have equated it with the desire to maintain harmony in interpersonal relationships, uniformity, collectivism, family, group and community
solidarity, deference to authority, vertical reciprocal relationships, or the need to belong and dependency on others (Yoder 2004: 90). Kanazawa and Miller recognize critical effectiveness of informal social control for behavioural conformity in Japan. Through informal social control which involves socialization at home and in school, peer pressure and informal group monitoring and sanctioning, normative (socially approved) behaviour is taught and maintained. Kanazawa and Miller see that despite universal existence of informal social control in the world, few countries use it as effectively as Japan (Kanawaza and Miller 2000: 8-9).

While it is true that informal social control is highly effectively incorporated into Japanese social institutions, such as the family system, the education system, and the employment system, this also provides uncomfortable pressures to those with an individualistic mindset. As my interviewees decided, emigration is one of the measures to escape from such informal social control.

Among the male interviewees, four (Hiroshi, Masayuki, Yuji, and Takuya) were in their early thirties, one was in his late forties (Satoru), and another (Michio) was in his mid-sixties at the time of the interviews. Like female interviewees in their thirties (Mika, Keiko, Masako), Hiroshi, Takuya, and Yuji have work experiences with decent salaries in Japan but were not satisfied with their working environment. Satoru also had a high salaried secure job as an SDF officer but decided to seek his dream to establish a flight school in Canada.

In a study on the growing migration of workers from North America and Europe to the Cayman Islands, Amit-Talai found that many were skilled workers and professionals,
highly educated, for whom long-term salaried jobs appeared increasingly out of reach. A number of newcomers reported a longing to get away for new opportunities or ‘adventure,’ and to escape jobs that had reached a dead end (Amit-Talai 1998). On the other hand, most of my interviewees in their thirties and forties came to Canada because their jobs in Japan had reached a dead end, not in terms of salary, but in terms of feelings of contentment. They were longing for new experiences or ‘adventure’ in Canada, a place they expected to provide a sense of satisfaction.

Takuya, who came to Canada leaving his decent job in Japan, contends that such an adventurous spirit is uncommon for Japanese. He refers to himself as a “hunter-type” person who has a challenging spirit to migrate, searching a better environment and opportunities, while he sees that the majority of the Japanese are oriented toward maintaining the status quo. He also points out the influence of other people who had ventured into overseas life, saying, “Some people who are a little older than me started to go abroad and motivated younger people to open their eyes to the world.” He mentions that popular athletes who succeeded abroad, such as Nomo, Ichiro, Matsui (baseball players), and Nakata (a soccer player), provided a good inspiration to people with a challenging spirit to take a calculated risk and venture abroad.

The experiences of some male interviewees indicate the power of imagination in the migratory process. In Appadurai’s terms, the imagination has now gained a critical factor in social life, and mass media has inspired an increasing number of people throughout the world to consider a wider set of possible lives. The new power of imagination in social life in this deterritorialized world is tied up with images, ideas, and opportunities that originate
from elsewhere. The imagination, on which media and migration hold joint effects, plays a role as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity (Appadurai 1996). The image of North American life with which Yuji was imbued by a Japanese TV drama had become a crucial driving force for him to decide to move to Canada. In a similar way, the image of strong foreign athletes which Takuya gained through watching world soccer tournaments on TV aroused his keen interest in foreign countries and eventually led him to pursue an overseas life.

While Appadurai’s ideas on the power of imagination, flows, and “-scapes” link to the concept of deterritorialization which refers to transnational movements of things and people, Ong also discusses transnational agency introducing the concept of “flexible citizenship.” This notion is eminent in the narratives of Hiroshi and Masayuki. They see the status of Canadian permanent residency as insurance and an attempt to minimise risk for uncertainty of their home country’s future. Such a notion resonates with Ong’s study on recent Chinese transmigrants, who strategically develop a flexible notion of citizenship and hold foreign passports as an insurance and a means of reducing risk against political insecurity in their home society (Ong 1999). Although Hiroshi and Masayuki regard the current political and economic situation of Japan as relatively decent and do not hold a sense of urgency to find an escape from their home, potentially destabilizing factors in Japan, such as a decade long recession, political and economic restructuring, and aging of population, would have engendered a notion of emigration as insurance and an attempt to minimise risk.
Among the interviewees, only Michio is a senior person who was in semi-retirement. Japan’s senior population, the generations who had underpinned its high economic growth, show growing interests in moving overseas after retirement. This trend is also seen in the proliferation of publications regarding overseas immigration after retirement (Fujino 2005; Rongusuteizaidan 1998, 2002; Nakamura and Wada 2002; Nakamura 2004; Tachimichi 2005; 2007; Toda 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002; Nakanishi 2002, 2006; Yanagisawa 2004). These people hope to lead a relaxed life after many years of hard labor. By moving to a place with lower living expenses than Japan, they wish to live comfortably off their pension and savings. In interviews with Japanese migrants who settled in Australia from the mid-1970s to the end of the 1980s, Sotō recognized a number of Japanese senior citizens who moved there in order to enjoy a comfortable lifestyle (Satō 2001). Michio also seems to enjoy his life in a cozy condominium in the central city and recreation such as swimming, skiing, and hiking. However, while Canada is one of many prime destinations for those senior people, such as Michio, a recent sharp appreciation of the Canadian dollar against the Japanese yen would be expected to detract from Canada’s popularity as a destination for those people to countries with lower exchange rates against the yen.

2.6 Chapter Overview

The data from these interviewees presents the pluralism of push and pull factors that have encouraged their immigration to Canada from Japan, while it also shows that they share common motives, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Although they prefer the Canadian environment for their residence and are critical of some aspects of Japanese
society, the majority of them show appreciation of favorable aspects of their home country. Most of them hold solid academic or career backgrounds. This is understandable when considering Canadian immigration laws, which require people to have strong academic or vocational backgrounds in order to be considered independent immigrants who do not have any family or relatives in Canada.

My interviewees regard themselves not as escapees from or losers in Japanese society who are unable to make decent lives there, but instead they regard themselves as independent-minded, positive choice-makers with determination who actively carve out their own lives by free will. Their narratives depict them not as passive social beings who are reconciled to socio-cultural constraints, but as those with active human agency who have the volition and courage to develop their own unique life-paths to create their personal destinies. Agency refers to “the actors’ characteristics and capabilities in perceiving, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and acting as well as affecting the world around them” (Burns 1994: 202). The narratives of my interviewees show how they have engaged in such activities: They perceive and interpret the situations of both home and host societies; analyze and evaluate through comparison of those societies; and act for immigration, which could have some affect or even greater impact on both societies.

Their perspectives would not necessarily represent the real situation of Canadian society. Their life experiences in Canada for less than ten years could offer them partial information regarding their host society. Moreover, their perspectives could sometimes be the projection of the idealization of their new home. As Appadurai (1996) sees the imagination as a critical social practice in global cultural processes, such idealization was
often infused by mass-mediated images. As newcomers, they can enjoy a transitional position, which has not yet been fully incorporated in socio-cultural constraints and interpersonal relationships in Canada. In a sense, they are in a “liminal” (Turner 1969) situation under fewer constraints of socio-cultural norms and mores in their host society. Their opinions on Canadian society are not necessarily based on objective realities but relative ones in comparison to Japanese society. Hence, if the Canadian situation appears to be better they tend to overvalue it. Nevertheless, the information from my interviewees provides the subjective, detailed, and individual push and pull factors of their immigration to Canada.

Among the most striking things in my interviewees’ narratives is their appreciation of Canadian family values and its harmony with nature and spiritual values or seishin, which eventually has a significant influence on their immigration to Canada. They perceive Canadian stronger emphasis on family values, despite the fact that the family was the essential core value of Japanese society. Moreover, their preference for Canada due to its closeness to nature and greater attunement to spiritual values or seishin rather than material ones is also impressing since these two as well as emphasis on family values are often seen as the strongest in terms of what “Japaneseness” is constituted of and why, according to this ideology of Japaneseness, Japan is better than elsewhere. My interviewees’ longing for these three might be partially attributed to being socialized to see these as values under that socio-cultural environment. However, their narratives suggest that the lifestyle embracing these values is not easily attainable in Japan, although they are espoused Japanese values, hence want to seek them out in Canada.
Another notable finding in my interviewees' narratives is the prevalence of individualistic and independent mindedness, which contradicts the widely discussed Japanese sociocentric and contextual sense of self. Hamaguchi presents a human model of the Japanese as *kanjin* (person-in-nexus) or "contextual." In contrast to the individual actor, which is an independent unit of action, he sees, in Japanese, the predominance of the contextual actor, for which the psychosocial identity of the self is established in relation to other actors and fluidly shifts through time and situations according to interpersonal relationships. The in-between space of interpersonal relations becomes an essential constituent element of an actor (Hamaguchi 1985). Contrarily, Mathews contends that the sense of self that Japanese individuals have does not always coincide with the cultural conception of self and that selves may use various combinations of overlapping and often incongruous conceptions of the self in constructing themselves (Mathews 1996).

The narratives of Japanese newcomers in this study indicate that they recognize the predominance of contextual and relational aspects of the Japanese self. However, they describe themselves as independent actors with individualistic propensity. This concurs with Mathew's claim for a discrepancy between the cultural concept of self and individuals' selves. Lebra's presentation of an intriguing nature of the sense of the self also provides insight for explaining this discrepancy. She organizes the self that the Japanese are aware of into three interrelated, overlapping dimensions: 1) the interactional self, 2) the inner self, and 3) the boundless self (Lebra 1992).

There are two aspects in the interactional self: the presentational self and the empathetic self. The presentational self involves the surface layer of self and consists of
continuous reflexivity between performance by self and sanction by audience. While Lebra recognizes that Goffman’s dramaturgical analogy explains this self well, she points out an important exception in Japanese society: the performance/audience relationship is not limited to face-to-face interaction but involves seken, which is the world of the audience who is not immediately present and varies with where the self happens to stand. The empathetic self feels bounded to others, as between intimate people, and also seeks empathy from others. It ties in with amae. The inner self is a fixed core for self identity and subjectivity. Kokoro, which stands for heart, sentiment, spirit, will or mind, is the center of the inner self, and is regarded as free, spontaneous, and even asocial. In the notion of the boundless self, which is embedded in the Buddhist version of transcendentalism, self is supposed to be absolutely passive and receptive to merging with the rest of the world (Lebra 1992).

The interactional self, which is the most surface level of self would be the most susceptible to the social environment in which the individual is situated. Therefore, in the Japanese social environment which sensitises its members to their image and reputation by seken, people tend to develop the contextual, relational aspect of their interactional self. On the other hand, the inner self, which is a fixed core for self identity and subjectivity, would present a wide range of individual variations; some possess a quite independent mind while others do not. My interviewees’ inner self would have been originally too independent and individualistic to succumb to the social environment in Japan, or the socialization processes that they have been through would not have provided them much discouragement to suppress these traits, which contradict with the predominant cultural concept of Japanese
self. In either case, this disparity of their selves and the Japanese cultural concept of self ultimately led to their preference for Canadian society, which they believe respects people’s independence and individuality.

While an independent and individualistic nature prevails in both genders of my interviewees, main gender differences found in their narratives are women’s descriptions of their personalities as self-assertiveness and strong-minded and their concern that their personalities could be the source of possible conflicts with other Japanese if they repatriate. Satoru also observes that the women who emigrate from Japan to Canada are usually stronger than those who remained in Japan while the men from Japan are often gentler than those in Japan. As previously discussed, Japanese society, where culture emphasizes the maintenance of harmony, tends to encourage indirect modes of communication, which are more pronounced and complicated for women. While gentle men are often appreciated, aggressive women tend to be criticized. In this regard, the women in my study break Japanese conventional ways more than the men.

For an incentive for immigration to most of my interviewees, experiencing Canadian life through the WHP or by studying in Canadian educational institutions serves as an important role. Hiroshi, Takuya, Mika, and Yuji first arrived in Canada through WHP, while Keiko, Ayumi, Izumi, Masako, Mai, and Masayuki came here as students. Although the initial plan for most of them was only a temporary stay, they developed a desire to immigrate after recognizing favorable living conditions in Canada.

All married interviewees (Masako, Satoru, and Michio) are parents. For them, the situations concerning their children are major reasons for their immigration. The
differences between Canada and Japan in the education systems, in people's attitudes to bicultural children, and in the environment for childrearing are among those differences. These important issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

Despite their holding permanent residency, citizenship, or an intention to obtain them, all of my interviewees are unclear as to whether or not they will remain in Canada permanently. This resonates with Satō's interviews with Japanese migrants in Australia who have settled there since the 1970s: the majority of them are reluctant to commit themselves to permanent residency in their host country (Satō 2001: 2). Takuya and Hiroshi are ready to relocate or return to Japan in case there are more opportunities in other places or in their home country. Masayuki regards holding permanent residency of two countries as an insurance of sorts. Masako mentions a possibility of repatriation when her children grow up. Keiko often wavers between staying in Canada for a purposeful life or returning to Japan to reconcile herself to what she considers Japan's dull convenience. Although Mai wishes to remain in Canada, she is going to give it up if she cannot get a permanent resident visa. The notion of flexible citizenship (Ong 1999) also seems to be prevalent among my interviewees.

In fact, after the interviews, Mika, Masayuki, Keiko, and Takuya returned to Japan. Although Mika had endured working for low wages in Vancouver in order to obtain permanent resident status, after getting it, she decided to return to Japan for a while. Masayuki gave up his dream of creating a computer business with his friends and could not obtain a visa which allows him to stay after finishing school in Vancouver. Keiko hoped to get a job which is commensurate with her diligent efforts in finishing a BA at UBC.
However, she found it difficult as an immigrant with a linguistic handicap. Although Takuya had expected the ability-based system in Canadian corporations, he was very disappointed by the fact that his hard work and perseverance were not acknowledged in the Canadian company where he found a job after our interview. Both Keiko and Takuya were 33 years old when they decided to repatriate. Their decisions were influenced by the age limit in the Japanese employment system, where the upper age limit for decent jobs is often around 35 years old.

The fact that a third of my interviewees, who had strongly hoped to immigrate to Canada, have already returned to Japan is significant. Actually, however, not only these four people but also the other interviewees did not have firm determination to make Canada their final home as mentioned before. Satoru laughingly says, “I would return to Japan when I become around 80 years old. I miss Japanese hot springs!” He continues,

I want to manage to succeed in my business, and want to return to Japan when I become around 80. If I return to Japan, I want to do so not because I dislike Canada. I want to go back to Japan with the feeling that I like both Canada and Japan as well as with a good understanding of Canada. That is my repayment to Canada for accepting me and letting me lead life here.

My interviewees seemed to have prospects to return to Japan when they become older or find the situation in Japan more preferable than Canada, finding few politically or economically adverse situations in their home society unlike many other immigrants from other places in the world. Relative political stability and economic affluence of Japanese society would make them attracted to their home when they are disillusioned by the reality of their host society and face up to difficulties, i.e. they can always return home. Some growth of employment possibilities in Japan due to the recent recovery of its economy
would also affect the decision of their repatriation. Especially single people, like those who have returned to Japan -- Mika, Masayuki, Keiko, and Takuya--usually have weaker emotional and relational ties in Canada than those who have family or a partner there. Therefore, they would be more nimble in the decision-making processes for repatriation.

The narratives of my interviewees present multiple reasons for their immigration to Canada. As well as individual personal reasons, various common reasons are recognized. Among them, the Canadian physical environment, such as spaciousness, landscape, nature, and housing conditions, attracts all of them. They also seek spiritual enrichment and a relaxed sense of spirituality that Canadian life appears to offer. Escaping from Japanese socio-cultural constraints is another reason. Such constraints include peoples’ interference, sekentei (public image), pressures to conform, suppression of self-assertiveness, and suppression of individualism. Other reasons considered are factors such as the environment for family life, education, age restrictions and gender roles in Japan, contrasted with multiculturalism and diversity in Canada. Moreover, most of them see overseas life as beneficial for their self-actualization. The next chapter discusses these motivations as well as gender differences and similarities further.
CHAPTER III
Escape from an Affluent Society: Why Did They Leave Japan?

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter summarized this study’s interviewees’ backgrounds and their subjective, and largely internal, reasoning motivating them to immigrate to Canada. This chapter examines in more detail the external push and pull factors for their immigration. The primary motivations of my interviewees for expatriation do not follow the widely discussed migration patterns rooted in political-economic systems of societies. In those discussions, migrants expatriate from their home country in pursuit of economic improvement, employment opportunities, political security, and liberation from political oppression (Schiller, Basch, and Blanc 1992, 1994, 1995; Kearney 1989, 1996; Moberg 1997; Malkki 1995; Donnelly 1997; Ong 1999; Ong and Nonini eds. 1997).

A majority of the studies on Japanese migrants have focused on Japanese emigration to North and South America and Hawaii before WWII and their descendants (Hirabayashi, Kikumura-Yano, and Hirabayashi eds. 2002; Kikumura 1981; Niiya ed. 2001; Okihiro 1991; Takezawa 1995; Takaki 1989; Daniels 1988; Duus 1987; Hayashi 1995; Ichiooka 1988; Kitano 1976; Miyamoto 1984; Nakano 1990; Fujii and Lynn 1959; Kumusaka and Saitō 1970) and on Japanese Brazilians migrating to Japan after 1980 (Linger 2001; Roth 2002; Lesser ed. 2003; De Carvalho 2003; Tsuda 2003). Furthermore, most of these studies also attribute economic reasons as the push and pull factors. The early migrants were pushed by economic dislocation and a rapid population growth during the construction of
the modern nation-state of Japan, which began with the 1868 Meiji Restoration. Economic factors were a major driving force of early Japanese immigration to Canada. The early immigration, which began with Manzō Nagano from Nagasaki in 1877, mostly consisted of people from Japanese fishing and farming villages. They set off for British Columbia as their destination by seeking job opportunities in the fishing, mining, sawmill, and pulp mill industries (Nagoshi 2000). While a majority of them settled in Vancouver, Steveston, Victoria, and in the surrounding towns, some ventured into places scattered along the Pacific coast and other areas, wherever they saw job opportunities (Kawahara 2005).

Japanese Brazilians going to Japan is an example of reverse migration from their host country to ancestral country. Both their ancestral migration to Brazil and their migration to Japan were primarily motivated by demand for cheap labor in their host country. They are descendants of Japanese immigrants who went to Brazil from 1908. The earlier immigrants worked on coffee plantations under contract and later left the plantations due to unbearable conditions. Since the early 1990s, pushed by the recession in Brazil, 250,000 Japanese Brazilians in the prime of their lives were pulled by demand for labor power during the Japanese bubble economy to their ancestral country (see Neuman 2004).

This situation fits with a classic understanding of motivations for migration. Brettell (2000) explains that in the early anthropological work on migration which was influenced by modernization theory and emerged from the urban-folk continuum model that placed the city in opposition to the country, as well as the modern in opposition to the traditional, the motivations of migrants are regarded as the rational and progressive economic decisions made in response to differentials in land, labor, and capital between a sending and a
receiving society. In the historical-structuralist approach which emerged later, it draws broadly on the work of dependency theorists and world systems theorists and migration is framed within the context of a global economy and core-periphery relations. Concepts such as the international division of labor or the internationalization of the proletariat have emerged to describe the inequities between labor-exporting and labor-importing countries (Brettell 2000).

Other approaches for the study of contemporary migration are U.S. and Euro-centered migration studies and “diaspora studies” (Ong 1999). Ong designates these studies as among main directions of inquiry in the approach to transnational flows and Diaspora. The scholars of U.S. and Euro-centered migration studies are interested in domestic attempts at managing the influx of refugees and migrant workers. They subscribe to either a world-system theory with “core” and “peripheral” relations or a neo-classical economic theory about the flows of diverse labor supplies toward an advanced capitalist formation. Their studies regard immigrants from poor countries as victims of racial discrimination and corporate exploitation by receiving countries. “Diaspora studies” have drawn inspiration from authors associated with British cultural studies such as Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall. These studies look at the heterogeneity of African diasporan cultures and identity as well as the subjective experiences of displacement, victimhood, and cultural struggles (Ong 1999: 8-13).

While these approaches focus on the working class, subalterns, and victimized people, Ong looks at elite Chinese transmigrants in late modernity in light of their human agency and cultural practices within political-economic forces. Their migration was a
reaction to political insecurity and changing global markets; many of the actors are migrants from Hong Kong on the eve of the city’s return from British to mainland-Chinese rule. Developing a flexible notion of citizenship as a strategy, they held foreign passports for their flexibility in geographical and social positioning, which served as an insurance and a way of minimizing risk against political insecurity as well as an asset for accumulation of power and capital (Ong 1999).

Whether focused on immigrants before or after WWII, or working class or elite immigrants, the previous studies gravitate around political-economic forces in their analyses; this tends to treat people as purely economic agents. However, my interviewees do not really fit these patterns. Although they are critical of the Japanese political system, it was not a predominant motive for their expatriation. In fact, most of them believe that in terms of material and economic aspects of life, Japan is better than Canada. Instead of material satisfaction, they claim to be seeking spiritual richness, spiritual satisfaction, and yutori, a relaxed way of life liberated from constraints and mental pressure.

Some instances of the philosophy behind the emigration can be illustrated by Takuya, Hiroshi, and Satoru, who quit their respectable jobs in Japan to start a new life in Canada. Takuya worked for a subcontractor of a government corporation and earned a decent salary which increased in relation to his length of employment. He says, “If I had stayed at that company I would be a section head by now... In Japan, I would have had more job opportunities without any language problems.” Although Japan has experienced a decade long recession, Takuya has a rather optimistic view of the Japanese economy. He contends, “This stagnation will eventually lead to the next step of growth... Japanese technology and
human resources will overcome economic downturn and make Japan better and new. Japanese national character will help it.”

Hiroshi’s annual salary at the foreign-affiliated bank was nearly 10,000,000 yen (CAN$118,000).¹¹ He conjectures that the average annual salary of a working male in Japan, with his skills and qualifications in his early 30s with a four year college diploma, would be about 5,000,000 yen (CAN$59,000), while that of a Canadian male working in Canada with the same background would be about CAN$35,500 (3,000,000 yen). Moreover, he is fully aware of the disadvantages facing immigrants regarding employment. Satoru, a senior SDF officer in Japan, has experienced a financially tougher life in Canada. He says, “Though [the Japanese economy] is currently stagnant, if there is some trigger, it will grow significantly. If I consider economic factors, I should never have left Japan. Here [in Canada], it is difficult to run a business though I am trying.”

Mika is very appreciative of Japan’s economic power, proudly stating, “I think that Japan is an amazing country (in terms of economy, industry, and technology).” Her life in Canada is financially tough, making it difficult for her to attain her wish to visit Japan so that she can reunite with her family and friends. Moreover, she recognizes the difficulties involved with her competing for a good job against native English speakers. While financial circumstances sometimes shake her resolution to immigrate to Canada, she still hopes to obtain Canadian permanent residency. Masayuki assumes that he would be able to earn 3,000 yen/hour (CAN$35/hour) in Japan with the skills and computer knowledge that he is now acquiring in Canada. Yuji says, “In Japan, we can enjoy a variety of quality

¹¹ This is based on the 2000 conversion figure of CAN$1 = approx. 85 yen.
goods. From a financial point of view, Japan is much better. It is much easier to earn money in Japan.” Keiko expects her higher earnings in Japan to pay back her student loans. Ayumi and Mai also believe that people in Japan often have higher incomes and live better material lives. Masako remarks, “Though it is said Japan undergoes recession, it is still materially rich.”

As pointed out by my interviewees, there is a noticeable difference between annual incomes in Canada and Japan. This is especially true for men. (The Japanese wage and employment systems are the source of significant gender disparities in salary.) The average annual salary in Japan for people who worked a full year in 2000 was CAN$54,400 (male: CAN$67,000, female: CAN$33,000) (Kokuzeichō 2003), and the average annual salary for full-time workers in Canada was $43,298 (male: $49,224, female: $34,892) (The Statistic Canada 2001). Considering higher income tax rates in Canada, there is wider disparity in income after taxes between these countries.

These discrepancies between wages in Japan and Canada do not necessarily mean economic improvement for people living in Japan compared to those in Canada. Over all, living costs in Japan, especially housing, are more expensive. If we compare space and housing conditions, it can be said that people in Canada enjoy a more luxurious life than people living in Japan’s cramped urban areas. In this sense, the desire to live in a spacious house can be considered a longing for an economically better life. Also, people in Japan usually need to work longer hours to earn higher salaries.

In contrast, the Japanese economy has experienced recent financial deflation, while goods and dining out in Canada, which include the added costs of high sales taxes and tip,
are often more expensive. In addition, people with English as a second language, like my interviewees, have less access to higher salaried employment in Canada. Considering these factors, my interviewees find material and economic life in Canada is not necessarily better than in Japan.

Instead of economic factors, my interviewees’ concepts of push and pull factors involves the quality of life such as private time for themselves and their families, the physical living environment, and a relaxed way of living. Their conceptions can be organized in the following themes (these are not rank ordered): 1) physical environment; 2) spiritual enrichment and relaxed life; 3) escape from socio-cultural constraints, such as people’s interference, sekentei (public image), pressure for conformity, and the suppression of individualism; 4) family life; 5) education (not for academic credentials but individual enrichment); 6) escape from age restrictions; 7) escape from gender roles; 8) diversity; and 9) self-actualization, trying new possibilities, experiencing other worlds, and escaping from a predictable life.

3.2 Multiplicity of Push and Pull Factors

3.2.1 Physical Environment

For the majority of my interviewees, the physical environment of Vancouver is one of the key motives for immigrating. Spaciousness, nature, and housing conditions are among the factors that attract them. Those who came from places with a high population density such as Tokyo and its commuter suburbs in Saitama, Kanagawa, and Chiba especially appreciate this environment. For Mika and Yuji, nature and spaciousness are
crucial aspects which attract them to Canada. Mika, born and raised in an urban environment, had a desire to escape from Japan’s densely populated urban centers. Nature and space greatly affect her psychological well-being. Born and raised in a regional town surrounded by ocean and hills, Yuji is also attracted to a more spacious environment. He says, “Japan is congested.” The beautiful residential environment, spaciousness, and the abundance of nature also motivated Masako, Ayumi, Hiroshi and Michio to settle in Canada.

Japan is well known for its high population density, which ranges from 5516.5/km$^2$ in Tokyo to 72.5/km$^2$ in Hokkaido (the average in Japan is 340.4/km$^2$) (Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2000). Large cities are especially dense. The density in Japan can be compared to placing half the U.S. population within the state of California. Job opportunities in Japan are highly concentrated within the Tokyo metropolitan area, where apartment and housing rents and prices are exorbitantly expensive. For example, the average residence in Tokyo was 63.6 sq. meters; in Chiba, it was 87.1 sq. meters; in Saitama, it was 83.9 sq. meters; and in Kanagawa, it was 74.1 sq. meters. The average monthly rent of a small studio in the Tokyo metropolitan area in 1999 was approximately 70,000 yen (CAN$1,000) (Tajima ed. 2001). When I checked the cost of apartments in Tokyo for research purposes in 2003, the monthly rent for 15 sq. meters including a tiny kitchenette and a bathroom (less in total space than the size of the 12’ by 12’ room) was usually more than 60,000 yen (CAN$700).

People working in the Tokyo metropolitan area often face a dilemma of choosing between living in a small room or house with a shorter commute time or living in a larger space with a longer commute time. Commuting in overcrowded trains during rush hour
causes undue anxiety and can be nerve-wracking, the prospect of which discourages Masako and her husband from returning to Japan. She says, “For my husband, overcrowded trains are why he decided not to return. He says, ‘I do not want to live such a life again.’”

Another example is Hiroshi’s commute which took two hours to travel from his home in Kanagawa to his workplace in central Tokyo. He explains, “It was nothing but torment.”

When Masako visited Tokyo, her hometown, with her children, she realized the difficulty in childrearing because of space limitations and crowded streets there. This problem resonates with Creighton’s work on Japanese children, which explains about the ‘streets’ in a fake town within a store. Space limitation in Tokyo makes it difficult for mothers to find open space to play with their children. Instead, the streets in front of residences often serve for this purpose. Thus the ‘streets’ in the fake town within the store also offers a place for them to play with their children, actually providing a better recreational place for families than the real streets are for them (Creighton 1994).

Although the majority (77%) of Japan’s 125 million people live in an urbanized center, Japan is also richly endowed with natural beauty, profuse with forests and woodland covering nearly 70% of the land. Unfortunately, the irony is that Japan’s abundance in natural resources is practically inaccessible to the working people who have to choose between living close to nature and having their urban lifestyle with its conveniences, job opportunities, and cultural enjoyment. Takuya says, “Jobs are all in the big cities, making it difficult to go to the suburb for fun. There are traffic-jams, and the towns are crowded.” Moreover, life in rural areas tends to be complicated by the interpersonal relationships, which my interviewees often regarded as troublesome.
In their attitudes to space and housing in the receiving society, we see some contrast between my interviewees and middle-class Hong Kong immigrants coming to Vancouver in the late 1980s. In her study of bourgeois middle-class immigrants flowing into Vancouver from Hong Kong in the 1980s, Mitchell (1997) finds real and perceived general differences in taste between the older and wealthy Anglo residents of Vancouver's west side and these Hong Kong immigrants. The cultural and economic disparity eventually caused social movements against the transformation of the urban landscape which had included initiatives to rapidly demolish small houses, the removal of mature trees, and the construction of numerous larger and glitzier homes in the hope of attracting the investment of recent Hong Kong immigrants (Mitchell 1997). While the interests of those Hong Kong immigrants in space and housing arose from their values in real estate investment as well as cultural capital, my interviewees are attracted to space and housing in Vancouver mainly for their psychological comfort. This would be a result of their difference in financial status and a sense of value. Although most of my interviewees are from middle class families, they are not so affluent compared to some neo-rich Chinese immigrants. Moreover, as discussed in the next section, most of them hold some sense of aversion to an emphasis on seeking materialistic life styles.

3.2.2 Spiritual Enrichment and Relaxed Life

Although they are seeking a physically better life, the majority of my interviewees emphasized spiritual enrichment over economic prosperity. Keiko considers Japan a materialistic society and does not enjoy living in such a stressful, artificial environment.
For Hiroshi and Satoru, Canada is a place that provides them opportunities for their spiritual growth. Ayumi, Masayuki, and Izumi regard Canadian society as better for spiritual health than Japanese society. For Izumi, complexity of Japanese society is mentally demanding since people are exposed to an overwhelming influx of information about life in general, causing confusion about what really constitutes appropriate behavior and thoughts. She prefers life in Canada, which, she feels, is simpler and more relaxed. The interviewees find that spiritual richness is more difficult to obtain in Japan because of working conditions that provide less private time and because of the education system.

Takuya says,

While [my job in Japan] was not bad in monetary terms, when I thought about having a sense of fulfillment and spiritual satisfaction, I wondered if I could feel satisfied by only consuming goods. I came to think about this when I saw the Great Hanshin earthquake.

The destruction of material things in the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake made him realize the vanity of material matters and the importance of mental satisfaction. He also comments, “In terms of money, Japan is stronger. However, in terms of seishin (spirit, mentality), Canada is stronger.”

My interviewees’ longing for spiritual richness corresponds to recent trends in changes in Japanese consciousness. Although since the end of WWII, Japan had concentrated its efforts on economic development, more recently people have begun to seek spiritual enrichment and yutori, a relaxed lifestyle with less stress. A yearly Japanese government poll also illustrates this trend, which asked people what they value more in their lives: spiritual richness and yutori or material richness. These polls show that until
1975 more people declared that material richness was more important. In 1979, the number of people who placed greater value on spiritual richness started to exceed those who valued material richness more. In that year, both groups represented about 40% of those polled. Since then, the number of those who value spiritual enrichment more has increased steadily. Since 1992, this group has exceeded 55% of those polled. The June 2002 poll shows 60.7% of those surveyed gave more weight to spiritual enrichment, considering it more important, whereas only 27.4% preferred material richness (Naikakufu Daijin Kanbō Seifu Kōhōshitsu 2002).

Recently, the Japanese government also began fostering spiritual enrichment and yutori, as can be seen in their educational reforms. The Monbukagakushō’s 2002 educational reform introduced a more relaxed education (yutori kyōiku) policy, which included the reduction of school hours, the implementation of a five-day week, and a lightening of the school curriculum. In addition, the ministry promotes lifelong education as a way of also providing spiritual enrichment for adults.

People’s yearning for spiritual richness and yutori has also affected the consumer market in Japan. One response to people’s desires has been the “iyashi būmu” (healing boom) since the late 1990s. The word “iyashi” (healing) was designated as one of the top ten annual buzzwords in 1999. Addressing consumers’ demands, industry accelerated the iyashi būmu. Iyashi guddsu (healing goods), products promoted as physically and mentally soothing and relaxing, became ubiquitous throughout Japan. These products include books, CDs of healing music, musical instruments, paintings, aroma oil, incense, bath powders, and plants. In addition, products of iyashi characters, like Winnie the Pooh, Tare Panda
(relaxing panda character), Rirakkuma (relaxing bear character), and Ochaken (relaxing dog character), became quite popular. Alternative therapies, such as aromatherapy and reflexology, also came into vogue.

The desire for spiritual enrichment and yutori brought about I/U taan genshō (I/U turn phenomena). I taan (I-turn) is the movement of urban born people to a rural area, U taan (U-turn) is a boomerang-like motion of rural born urban dwellers returning to their native areas, and V taan (V-turn) is the relocation of rural born urban dwellers to other rural areas. In the 1980s, rural-orientation, the desire of large city dwellers to live in rural areas, began to become noticeable. Data gathered by both the public and private sectors indicate that about 30% of people living in major metropolitan areas have a rural-orientation (Suga 1995). The top four motivations for I/U turn, according to the National Land Agency 1999 survey, are healthier living (48.8%), preferred life-style or hobbies (41.5%), relaxed life (40.95), and better environment for children (20.4%) (Kokudochō 1999). Michio’s hope resonates with this trend. He says that if he should ever return to Japan, he also considered living in Hokkaido, where he expects to lead a relaxed life near abundant nature.

Various scholars on Japanese society also discuss an interest in Japan of re-capturing the values and ideals of rural areas (Creighton 1997, 1998a, 2001; Ivy 1995; Kelly 1986; Martinez 1990; Robertson 1988, 1997). Creighton recognizes that ruralism in Japan, has been a consequence of fears about vanishing Japanese cultural traditions and feelings of “homelessness” among many urban people caused by ongoing internationalization and urbanization. In order to appeal to those urban people, the Japanese domestic travel
industry has exploited the nostalgia quest for traditional lifeways and *furusato* (home village) imagery, which is most frequently symbolized by rural scenery (Creighton 1997).

While rural lives in Japan may offer more spiritual enrichment, *yutori*, and alleviation of a sense of homelessness, the increase of social interactions and relations within personal lives in rural areas renders some people reluctant to lead rural lives. Also, Japanese people frequently hold negative associations of coercive conformity and individual powerlessness with *kyōdōtai*, or *gemeinschaft* community, which is projected as a rural phenomenon (Creighton 1998a: 140-141).

The comments of many of my interviewees resonate with these negative feelings toward Japanese rural lives. Yuji is under the impression that, in contrast to urban areas, there exists in the countryside a strong *seken no me* (the public eye) and more gossip. In Keiko’s hometown, an agricultural village, “neighborly companionship (*kinjo zuktai*)” is a prominent part of life and has both good and bad aspects. Masako does not like people’s meddling in others’ private matters. Although Mika desires to live in a sparsely populated place with lots of space, her image of bothersome interpersonal relationships in Japan’s rural areas makes her unwilling to live there.

Due to his employment, Satoru has lived various places throughout Japan including Tokyo and rural areas. While the Japanese countryside is abundant in nature and has a relaxed environment, he is bothered by the prevalence of people in rural areas being personally concerned with others. He compares Vancouver with Japanese rural areas:

> While the degree of relaxation would be similar to Vancouver when I went to my home [Aomori city] or my wife’s home in Okinawa, people around us meddled in our affairs. I felt like saying, ‘Get off my back!’ or ‘No thanks!’ In contrast, such things do not happen here [in Vancouver]. Though people are friendly, they do not meddle
in other’s private matters. Even the Japanese people, who I associate with here, do not meddle with others’ private affairs. In this way, I feel it easier [living in Vancouver] because we do not need to be bothered by “neighborly companionship”…
[“Neighborly companionship” in] the Japanese countryside is burdensome. I need to buy a lot of souvenirs for my neighbors when I go back to Japan, even though I do not feel any obligations (giri) to them. Here, there is no such custom. I appreciate that.

For most of my interviewees, Vancouver is in a sense an ideal place where they can enjoy the favorable aspects similar to Japan’s rural areas, its nature, along with spaciousness, relaxed life, yutori, spiritual richness, together with the convenience of the city without the demands of rural social relationships.

3.2.3 Escaping from Socio-Cultural Constraints

People’s interference, often referred to in Japanese by the phrases hito no me (people’s eyes) or seken no me (the public eye) tends to be less significant in Japanese urban areas than in rural areas. However, such interference is still evident even in large cities. My interviewees notice that the interference by Japanese urban people is greater than by people in Vancouver. Ayumi says that people in Japan tend to be concerned about hito no me and worry about how others would think about their actions. Finding that thinking about hito no me is stressful, she comments, “Things may be changing but this probably will not disappear.” Similarly, Hiroshi feels reluctant to raise his future children in such a conforming environment and prefers that they grow up to have their own will and judgment.

In his “reference other model,” Kuwayama defines hito and seken as people at large and society, respectively, and proposes that these others provide the self (jibun) with
significant frames of reference for attitude formation (Kuwayama 1992). In such socio-cultural ambience, people in Japan tend to care about sekentei (public image) and feel pressure to conform and to suppress their individualism.

Mai feels a sense of aversion toward sekentei and the pressure to conform, which have a powerful influence in Japan, and truly prefers the Canadian social environment which values individuality. She says,

Vancouver is multicultural; people from various countries have brought their cultures. So, originality is valued. Even if a person is different from others, people don’t criticize him or her… In Japan, I felt pressured to wear what others wear and to eat what others eat. I felt insecure if I did things differently. So people do things the same way as others do, and they complain about it. I hate such a system.

“Migi e narae” (to follow suit or to fall in line) is a commonly-used Japanese phrase describing people’s attitude to follow others. Some of my interviewees use this phrase when they explain the Japanese “me-too-ism” attitude, a pervading and stifling philosophy of conformity. Ayumi notes, “They do migi e narae. There is an atmosphere that what others do, you should do.” At school, she felt uneasy when she did not follow what others did. Not belonging to a group brought her a strong sense of insecurity. She recalls a joke she once read:

When a ship was sinking, the captain tried to make his passengers to dive into the sea. The English dived when he said, ‘You are the very most gentlemen if you dive.’ The Americans dived when he said, ‘You will be heroes if you dive.’ The Japanese did so when he said, ‘Others have already dived.’

She remarked on this laughing, “I thought that it was to-the-point.”

After arriving in Canada, Masayuki came to realize how much people in Japan have an attitude of migi e narae. He says, “In Japan, we can tell who is whose friend by their
clothes and hair style... In Canada, I can make friends even though I don’t care to adapt to them and copy them.” When making decisions about marriage and work, he does not want to be influenced by others’ opinions and cultural values. In Canada, he is not criticized for being single and studying at his age. People who he has associated with in Canada are mainly Canadians. In such a social circle, he feels comfortable to stay true to himself.

Similarly, Takuya says, “Japanese people tend not to have their own policies and beliefs. They tend to be carried away with others’ opinions. Many seem not to think about what they really want as individuals. Their mentality is ‘Everyone has this, so I want to have this.” Keiko, who has mostly been a student and made both Canadian and Japanese friends in Canada, has noticed by observing Canadian friends and classmates;

People in Japan do *migi e narae*. Yet, people here are mature because they have their own opinions. They express their own opinions in class. At first, this surprised me. Probably they are like this because they are raised in such a way since childhood. Maybe, this is about individualism and collectivism.

This cultural ambience would foster the contextual sense of the self (Hamaguchi 1985) among people in Japan. Hamaguchi contends that the contextual sense of self, which shifts through time and situations according to interpersonal relationships, is prominent among Japanese. This is well reflected by the word *jibun* (the self), which originally meant “one’s share” of something beyond oneself. In contrast to the ego, the *jibun* has relational and relative character and is an object seen from the point of view of his/her partner (Hamaguchi 1985).

*Migi e narae* is also a command used to order children to line up at school. When Masako took care of foreign students in Japan, she noticed that they could not arrange
themselves in a straight line. She says, “Japanese are trained right face and *migi e narae* like in an army. That is why they are able to organize in a straight line without any difficulty. We don’t realize that it is a skill in which we are trained.” Masako sees this as an example of how instilling this attitude to be lockstep according to the group has been institutionalized.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, self-assertiveness and the ability to express one’s own opinions are often discouraged in Japan in order to avoid conflicts. Keiko guesses that if she returns home with self-assertiveness she has developed in Canada people there might say, “She lacks a sense of cooperation,” or “She is strange.” Ayumi also comments,

> Though I wanted to be self-assertive and be able to express my own opinion, I could not do so in Japan because I was afraid of making conflict with others. The atmosphere for this is better here in Canada... [In Japan,] we always tried not to cause any troubles. It was an atmosphere where we tried not to say our opinions in order to avoid conflicts and troubles.

In order to discuss this Japanese socio-cultural ambience, Kuwayama presents the “reference other model,” in which there are three categories of others in Japan: *mawari* (people around), *hito* (people at large), and *seken* (society). They are concentrically related to *jibun* (the self) which is positioned at the center. “Normative reference others” is a way of referring to others, which is profoundly related to conformity. Deviation from group norms and expectations would invite strong disapproval and ridicule from others. This sanction is so powerful that people will shape their attitudes to conform to others. In the socialization process, as suggested by popular Japanese expressions like *hito ni warawareru* (to be laughed at by people at large), parents in Japan often appeal to the
imagined reactions of *hito* in order to make their children sensitive to the opinions and feelings of others. *Hito* does not designate any specific individual, but is referring to anyone, depending on the context. This referential ambiguity makes *hito* function as a powerful source that sanctions people’s actions in many diverse situations (Kuwayama 1992).

A person who is blamed and sanctioned for standing out by not following others is described by another common Japanese phase “*derukui wa utareru*” (“the nail that sticks out gets hammered down”). In order to depict the social environment in Japan, some interviewees use this phrase. Masayuki comments, “In Japan, *derukui wa utareru*. I was bullied and beaten fiercely... For I was rather self-assertive.” The common use in Japan of phrases like “*migi e narae*” and “*derukui wa utareru*” attests to the power of informal social control which imbues behavioral conformity. Even if parents try to raise their children to be independent and respect individuality, larger social norms often compromise these ideals. For instance, when Izumi was a child, her parents respected her individualism and encouraged her to do things at her own pace at home. However, when she entered kindergarten, they began to teach her to be mindful of the social environment.

On the other hand, Hiroshi’s mother tried to imbue him with conformity, which made him very disappointed. He recalls,

I have a vivid memory. It was on a parent’s day when I was in the second or third grade in elementary school. Our teacher asked us which answer was right. All the classmates except me chose A. I was the only one who chose B. The right answer was B. So I was very happy. However, when I went home my mother said to me, ‘I was ashamed. Only Hiroshi chose the answer no one else chose.’ I remember this very well... My mother is a person who cannot act from her own values. Though I was small at that time, I detested that.
Izumi also talks about her experiences related to conformity. When she was a university student in Japan, she tried to adapt herself to the image of a female university student she held in her mind. She always felt tired from the pressure to act just like other university students. She explains, “I felt fatigued. I thought that university students should play to some extent. I thought I should go to konpa (mixers) (laugh). I also thought that I should have a part-time job.” She says that mass media influenced her about how high school girls should act and how university girls should be. She says, “Every month, I always bought a few magazines which I felt I should be reading. The magazines said university girls should buy this or do that. Influenced by this information, I bought those goods.” She was always thinking about what kinds of clothes she should buy and wear and was concerned about how she looked. In contrast, as a university student in Canada, she feels little pressure regarding such matters.

Pressures to conform often hinder the development of self-assertiveness. Even though a person had developed self-assertiveness in early childhood, it is often discouraged by the Japanese education system as Ayumi learned not to be self-assertive through socialization and peer pressure at elementary school. In another case, Masayuki remained self-assertive while others started to learn cooperativeness. Even though he made enemies by making a nuisance of himself, he did not fully realize it and did not understand why he was not popular among his classmates. After entering high school, he started to care about friends’ thinking and became less self-assertive. He says,

Since I wanted friends, I tried to go along with others in order not to be disliked. For example, though I thought flu shots were useless and my parents opposed to me getting one since it had made my sister sick, I got a flu shot because I didn’t want to stand out and be different from the other students.
Michio was careful not to be self-assertive and stand out when he returned after working abroad to his company in Japan. He says, “I kept in mind that I needed ‘rehabilitation’ to get used to Japan again. I refrained from speaking openly what I thought. Otherwise, I would have stuck out.”

Kuwayama’s “reference other model” is constructed through a general consideration of Japanese society and ably explains the mechanism of the Japanese sensitivity to others. However, the degree of conformity and the sense of resistance toward conformity differ from person to person depending on their personality and the social environment. While most of my interviewees feel antipathy toward a conforming ambience in Japan, some have less negative feelings. Satoru says that he felt more comfortable in a collectivist society which emphasizes conformity since it has more order than an individualistic society like Canada. In contrast, Mika says that since she was in an environment of artists which allowed people to be unique, she was not really bothered in Japan by the interference of others, sekentei, pressure to conform, and the suppression of individualism and individuality. Similarly, Izumi comments that although she was strong-minded and self-assertive, she did not have a hard time in Japan because she knew how to socialize.

Nevertheless, whether a sanction against nonconformity exists or not, some force for conformity is placed upon most people in Japan and they would feel that pressure consciously or unconsciously. The sense of liberty found abroad would prove attractive to many of them and would be a major motivation to emigrate. Takuya felt pressure from parents, teachers, and society to conform to “normal” behaviors. He says,

I don’t like an environment where I cannot express my own opinions. I think that there are often such situations in Japan... When I wanted to do something, my parents
opposed me and said, ‘It is not a normal thing to do.’ I wondered what was ‘normal.’
In Japan, the course of people’s lives is laid out well. They are highly prescribed.

Emigration motivated by a need to escape from socio-cultural constraints can be viewed as one of the strategies developed to evade invasive “governmentality.” Ong (1999) observes that flexible citizenship among recent Chinese transmigrants is shaped within the mutually reinforcing dynamics of discipline and escape. She subscribes to Foucault’s notion of governmentality, which maintains that regimes of power and knowledge produce disciplinary effects that regulate our sense of self and normalize our attitudes, behavior, and everyday practices. She contends that the different modalities of governmentality on these Chinese subjects through the regimes of Chinese kinship and family, the nation-state, and the marketplace provide institutional contexts for their transmigration. While each kind of regime requires that subjects be confinable to specific spaces, flexible citizenship among these subjects becomes their strategy of evading some of the negative influence of those regimes (Ong 1999).

In Japan, socio-cultural constraints such as people’s interference, sekentei, pressure for conformity, and the suppression of individualism are vital modes of governmentality and hold significant disciplinary power on Japanese subjects. Various means of informal social control deeply ingrained into Japanese social systems involve these constraints, including the family system, the education system, and the employment systems. For Japanese subjects, shifting their location to overseas terrain is an effective strategy for them to evade such governmentality. The following two sections discuss how the Japanese family and education systems relate to the motivations of my interviewees’ migration.
3.2.4 Family Life

As mentioned in the previous chapter, one striking theme that arose in my interviewees’ conception of push and pull factors is family values, especially since the family was once the highly valued and essential core of Japanese society. The Japanese family was organized under the *ie* system (the Japanese family household and lineage system), which is patriarchal and endorses Confucian principles of loyalty and benevolence. Under this system, Japanese families as a rule had solidarity, with a father’s dominating presence, and strong parent-child bonds. Although the continuity of the *ie* system is seen in many Japanese families and some legal provisions still accord the values of this system, it is waning especially in urban areas.

Japan has experienced a shift to a new set of family values and relationships, accompanied by many related issues including breakdown in communication between family members, the father’s physical or psychological absences, *ikuji noirōze* (mother’s childrearing neurosis anxiety), domestic violence, an increase in divorce rate, and decreases in marriage and birth rates, where some have attributed the shift of family values to the corruptive forces of Westernization. To the contrary, my interviewees found that Canada, a representative of Western values, is a better environment for family values and family life than Japan. This also suggests a different emphasis or definition of what can constitute a family that is sought by the interviewees from the concept of a family based on the *ie* system.

The lack of a father’s presence occurs as a corollary to Japanese working conditions which often require men to work long hours. *Tanshin-funin* (living away from one’s wife...
and family because of a transfer in employment), which is a common practice in the 
Japanese corporate world, also causes fathers’ absences. Masako says, “Family values are 
more respected here [in Canada]. Here, family comes before work. Japan is not like that. It 
is natural in Japan for a man to go on a business trip even when his wife is delivering a 
baby. He is not criticized for this in Japan.” Ayumi’s father works extremely long hours 
and often did tanshin-funin. She says, “My father doesn’t really show interest in family 
matters. The image of him within the home is sleeping exhausted from work.” Similarly, 
Masayuki is impressed by Canadian fathers’ frequent interactions with their children such 
as playing hockey together, because he has never seen such father-son relations in Japan. 
He says, “There is more time in Canada for fathers to be with their children… I want to 
spend plenty of time with my future children.”

Yuji says, “In Japan, men are especially pressed by work, and often come home late. 
On weekends, they play golf or sleep at home. In contrast, Canadian men garden and go 
camping with their families.” Takuya is critical of the older generation of Japanese men and 
says, “Since so-called Ossan (men past middle age) are always outside, they don’t have 
their place inside their home. That is why they stay at the workplace late even when they 
don’t have to.”

Even if a father has time for his family, Japanese gender roles which associate 
housework with women often lead to a father’s indifference to family matters. Masako 
appreciates the Canadian environment where childrearing is often a cooperative effort 
between the two spouses. She says,

In Canada, it is really natural for husbands to participate in childrearing... [In Japan,] 
even if the father has time at home, the mother does all the hard work involving
children, such as soothing, changing diapers, and discipline. When my husband changed a diaper while I was chatting with my friends from Japan, they said ‘Amazing!’

These remarks resonate with Woronoff’s findings in Japanese family relations. Among contemporary Japanese families, commitment to work makes it difficult for a father to find time to be with his family since his primary function is to bring home an income as opposed to being required to be a care-giver. Since many couples’ relations revolve mainly around their children, they often find it difficult to communicate with each other and suffer from “living together loneliness” after the children have grown up. Under this condition, some men develop an aversion to the home. In addition, wives often do not want their husbands to come home. Such emotional distances between wives and husbands have even driven some wives to refer to their husbands as “oversized rubbish” (sodaigomi) or “cockroach husbands” (gokiburi teishu), the phrases which became part of the social discussion in Japan, and led to the phenomenon called a “divorce within the family” (kateinai rikon) (Woronoff 1997).

In cases of dual income couples, not only the father but also the mother often cannot find enough time for the children. Until Ayumi entered junior high school, her mother worked as a substitute elementary teacher. Ayumi was not happy to see her parents’ top priority dominated by work, neglecting family time with their children. She says, “If I get married, I do not want to work hard. I want to spend a lot of time with my family. My priority is family.” Takuya also feels some distance from his parents, since when he was a child his parents who run a greengrocery store did not have much time for him. He says, “l
don’t feel strong affection for my parents, though I appreciate that they raised me.” He prefers the Canadian environment where the priority of many people is their own family.

Expression of affectionate feelings within Canadian families also impresses my interviewees. Yuji believes that Canadian family values are much better than those of the Japanese. He says, “There are a lot of differences between Canadian families and Japanese families. Canadians greatly cherish their families with hugs, Christmas gatherings, and so on... There is always a sense of intimacy.” Masayuki and Ayumi are impressed by how parents in Canada express affection to their children.

In the *ie* system, the continuity of the *ie* is the most essential thing, and that is the way members are united. The parent-child bond is more important than the husband-wife bond. The father’s presence is based on his authority and the subordination of the other members (see Yoshimi 1989). However, what my interviewees, whether they were women or men, married or single, and parents or non-parents, desire is not necessarily these kind of social family values but close and equal relationships of husband and wife and affectionate and intimate family bonds. They find such family values are more prominent in Canada than Japan.

### 3.2.5 Education

For both their children and themselves, the majority of my interviewees prefer the Canadian education system. Masako, Michio, and Ayumi claim that this is a primary motivation for immigrating to Canada. They observe that the Japanese education system emphasizes studying toward entrance examinations and discourages the development of
individuality, self-initiative, creativity, subjective ability, and self-expression. In contrast, they notice that the Canadian education system with fewer restraints encourages these things and the development of one's own ability. Moreover, in Canada, higher education is more open to people of all generations.

The severity of Japanese university entrance exams is well known and often referred to as “juken jigoku” or exam hell. Entrance to a high ranked school is crucial for securing a preferred niche in the economic strata within the social hierarchy. Students who wish to enter a high-ranked school mostly face trials of anxiety and fatigue from the stiff competition. Takuya says that when he was searching for a job before graduating from university in the mid-1990s, he noticed that what companies valued most was not the applicant’s ability but the name of the university on his diploma. Ayumi’s physical and mental condition impeded her from going through the rigors of preparing for the entrance exams, although most of the students of her high school went on to attend university.

Even though Masako and her husband experienced that competition and regard themselves as kachigumi (winners), they desire to distance their children from that system. She says,

Teenagers should not focus their studies toward entrance exams because it is a time in life when people can absorb a variety of things which are beneficial to their mental and physical well-being. While the Japanese education system evaluates children only by their academic capabilities, children should be valued by diverse aspects.

Creighton (1994: 47) explains that in Japan, there has been social discussion of the importance of the “whole child,” or the “balanced child” and the “ideal of nobi nobi or free, unencumbered development.” Also, the primary goal of early child educational institutions
in Japan does not emphasize academic performance, but, instead, focuses on balance and holistic development of children. Nonetheless, these ideals and the academic pedigree orientation coexist in early child education, but eventually the latter takes precedence (Creighton 1994). By recognizing such reality in Japan, Masako wants her children to be educated in the Canadian system which, in her view, encourages children to try various things and through those experiences find what they really enjoy doing. In another case, Satoru’s children’s preference for the Canadian education system over the Japanese one has contributed to his decision to stay in Canada. His children are reluctant to return to Japan because the school system there is a place where, they heard, students need to study quite hard, strictly in the academic sense, at the expense of holistic personal development.

Although the preparation and study for the entrance exams for high ranked schools are deemed challenging, the Japanese university system allows students to lead an easy-going life. In spite of this, “play,” not study, often becomes a form of expected work as a university student which reaffirms social relations, as indicated in previously cited Izumi’s narrative about her university life. The workload of universities in Japan is usually vastly more lenient than those in Canada. Mai, Keiko, and Ayumi were unable to find a sense of satisfaction with such a lenient system and thus prefer Canada’s university system. Mai notices that Japanese university students do not focus on academic work. Instead, university life for them consists mainly of hanging out with their friends. In her words,

That kind of university life for them is empty and unproductive. Though I don’t condemn such a life. I think it is waste of time and money. While studying at a university in Canada is very difficult, the hard work provides me a sense of fulfillment. By working diligently to the full extent of my abilities, I achieve this sense of fulfillment.
Although Keiko’s high school was shingaku kō (a school where most students after graduation continue on to university), instead of going to the university, she enrolled in a vocational school to acquire practical skills. She thought that acquiring such skills would be more beneficial than studying at a university in Japan. However, after coming to Canada, she began to desire to attend university. Although surviving university life was very tough, the sense of contentment she achieved was quite dear. One of the reasons why Ayumi chose Canada for her higher education is also this atmosphere that emphasized a serious commitment to study.

Better accessibility to higher education, as offered by the Canadian education system, also has attracted my interviewees. While surviving juken jigoku (exam hell) was the primary ordeal necessary to enter a high-ranked university in Japan, the Canadian system offers more options for securing a position of study at such institutions. Being encouraged by this system, Keiko, Mai, and Ayumi decided to continue their study in Canada.

In Japan, people usually go to university immediately after graduating from high school or within the following few years during which time they lead the life of a rōnin (a student who did not pass the school entrance exam and is preparing to take it again the next year). Moreover, because of social expectations in Japan, people regard students to be young people who have not yet reached their mid-20s. On the other hand, Canada has the ambience and a system which provide easier access for older people and working people to acquire a university education. Although higher education in Japan has been gradually opening doors for shakaijin (people who are regarded as full-fledged members of society by entering the workforce after schooling), there are still limited opportunities to return to
school. Takuya comments, “While the situation in Japan is changing, the thinking of companies in Japan has not changed and this makes the situation difficult. The workplace environment is better here.” He is attracted to the environment in Canada that provides such educational opportunities. Also, many shakaijin, like Masako and Hiroshi, go abroad to enter MBA programs, since until recently, Japan did not have MBA programs.

Many of my interviewees hold negative opinions about various aspects of the Japanese school system which discourage the development of individuality, self-initiative, creativity, subjective ability, and self-expression. These aspects have long been problematized in Japan and the improvement of the school system for the fosterage of children’s individuality was the primary goal of the education reform from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s (Asō and Amano 1999).

Keiko remembers that instead of creativity, schoolteachers expected correct answers which discouraged the development of a student’s unique abilities. Correspondingly, in Japanese school, Ayumi had been discouraged from expressing her own opinions, and now wishes to learn that ability in the Canadian educational scene. She says, “When I was in the lower grades of elementary school, I liked to stand out and was rather active. Nevertheless, I gradually sensed that there was an atmosphere surrounding us that impeded us from speaking up.” During those years, she stopped speaking up and this behavior became second nature to her. She also notices that in Japan, students just listen to the teachers’ lectures and answer teachers’ questions. She doubts that this is real learning.

Sharing similar views, Michio prefers the Canadian education system for her daughter. Yuji also prefers the Canadian education system for his future children because
he finds that it is less restraining, fosters children’s own opinions and creativity, and respects their self-esteem and individuality. He says that students’ individuality is suppressed in the Japanese education system, which tries to standardize children.

While other interviewees appreciate the Canadian system, Mika worries about its quality for her future children. She says, “When comparing it [education in Canada] with the U.S. and Japan, I worry whether the quality of education is lower here. There are not many good schools, so I will not be able to expose my future children to a first class education.” Comparably, although Mai prefers the Canadian education system for herself, she has concerns for her future children about the level of study available, especially in mathematics.

3.2.6 Escape from Age Restrictions

Many interviewees have found that age restrictions are far more prevalent in Japanese society than in Canadian society. These restrictions, which involve many aspects of life including behavior, employment, education, marriage, and socialization, have contributed to their decision to immigrate to Canada. People in Japan tend to be sensitive about age differences, as illustrated by Izumi’s expression of surprise at her host mother’s remark:

“My host mother talked about a Japanese woman that is two years older than me and said that she is the same age as me. I said, ‘No! She is two years older.’ My host mother said, ‘Two years is not much of a difference.’ I replied, ‘In Japan, two years is a great difference. It is a different generation.’”

She observes that people in Canada appear not to attach too much importance to gaps of a few years.
Japanese society, in contrast to Canadian society, is more particular about behaviors that are appropriate for a person’s age. The common Japanese phrase “Iitoshi-shite,” which means “act your age” (implying the person is too old for something), is often uttered when someone tries to do something that is regarded as inappropriate for her or his age. Ayumi notes, “I don’t like the social pressure to act according to one’s age. This is changing but I still often hear ‘Iitoshi-shite.’” A person in their 60s having a small child is one target at which this comment is often aimed. When thinking about returning to Japan, Michio becomes very sensitive about having a small daughter while he is currently in his mid-60s.

As I mentioned in the previous section, schooling is another area of life in Japan with age restrictions. Mai says, “It is commonly believed that people over 30 years old should not be students.” Ayumi says, “Nowadays, older people go to school in Japan. Yet, it is still less flexible than here. I don’t like it [there]. It is very good when people can study regardless of their age. In Japan, it is still not easy.” Similarly, Masayuki, who is 30 years old and studying in Vancouver, says, “People here go to school if they want to study regardless of their age. If I return to Japan, I would tell people that I worked in Vancouver. It would be difficult for me to tell them that I studied in Vancouver.”

Marriage is another age sensitive area in Japanese life. Mai says, “A 35-year-old woman would feel ashamed if she is still single.” Izumi, 28 years old, also comments, “Around 28 or 29, women who graduated from university start considering marriage. If I were in Japan and didn’t have a boyfriend, I would be depressed. Twenty-nine is the age where women feel uncertain about life.”
In her article on recent Japanese immigrant women in Canada, Kobayashi mentions that the census data on Japanese immigrant women show that the modal age of immigration of single women was 29 years, the age regarded as the limit for Japanese women to find a suitable mate. Also, she finds that a number of her research participants came to Canada at age 29, or just before, and that pressure to enter a traditional Japanese marriage was a major factor in the decision to come to Canada for most of them (Kobayashi 2002: 211). Although the age limit of the WHP, which is 30, would also contribute to the modal age of immigration of Japanese single women, it can be said that 29 is the age for Japanese women to feel sensitive about. Mika comments, “It is said that women start to think about what to do in the future when they become 27 or 28 years old, isn’t it? I came to think the same way and started to think how I should lead my life around that age.”

The pressure to marry by a certain age is not only applied to women but also to men. Satoru, 48 years old, recalls his marriage about 20 years ago; “Because I didn’t want to be called a 30-year-old bridegroom at the marriage ceremony, I married at 29. Now it is not a big deal, though. At that time, I felt that the early thirties was too old for marriage.” Although recent trends toward later marriages have reduced such pressure somewhat, it still has visible influences. Masayuki notes, “In Japan, it is often said that there is something wrong with men who don’t marry by 35. This is insulting. I want to make decisions about my marriage without being bothered by other people’s opinions.” In the same way, Takuya

12 There is a Japanese popular term “girihori” (giri from girigiri [last-minute] and hori from holiday) which means “going abroad through the WHP just before its age limit.”
comments, “Both men and women are pressured to marry by a certain age to be considered as full-fledged adults.”

In another area of Japanese life, age restrictions on employment in Japan hold back some interviewees from returning to Japan. Keiko, 33 years old, thinks that Canada is better for her when she considers her age. Izumi also thinks if she were to return to Japan, it would not be easy for her to get a job because of her age. This contributes to her wish for immigration to Canada. In another similar case, Takuya found stronger “ageism,” that is age sensitivity, in Japan when he returned to his home country in 1998 and 2002. He says, “When people in companies asked my age. I replied 30. They responded ‘Eh?!’”

Avoiding age restrictions in social relationships also attracts my interviewees to Canada. Yuji enjoys friendships in Canada which transcend age differences. He says, Here, I can easily make friends with much older people. I play racket ball once a week. Most of the people with whom I play are over 50 and are friends of mine. It is wonderful that age is not an issue [when making friends.] However, in Japan, usually friends are close to the same age.

Japanese hierarchical relationships, which many interviewees feel negative about, are closely related to age sensitivity. Nakane (1970) argues that the Japanese societal organization is rooted in the “vertical principle.” In an internal organization, the members are in general tied together hierarchically based on the vertical principle. Vertical relations craft cohesion among group members, emphasizing rank and status, as seen with senpai/kōhai (senior/junior) relationships and oyabun/kobun (parent part/child part) relationships. The Japanese usually decide how to behave, speak, and even where to sit according to their position within the hierarchy of those with whom they interact;
awareness of one’s relative ranking is crucial. The ranking hierarchy is to be found in every field including a company or school (Nakane 1970). Although the rigidity of hierarchical relations has abated over time, such relations are still prevalent. Since large companies until recently practiced the seniority system and schools did not employ grade-skipping and did not usually hold students back a grade, the ranking hierarchy is often linked with age.

Takuya criticizes hierarchical relations,

In the Japanese vertical society, it would not be easy for people to use older subordinates. There is a widely accepted view that a boss is older and a subordinate is younger. That is why age and sex, rather than capabilities, become an issue when employers are hiring.

Age hierarchy acts to reinforce the suppression of expressing one’s individuality. For Takuya, it is easy to be himself (jibun-rashiku irareru) in Canada because he can express his own opinions without caring about the opinions of his seniors. He says,

[In the corporate world in Japan] people don’t discuss what is good or bad and instead just follow what their bosses say. If, in a meeting, a boss calls a white paper black paper, it becomes black. Even if it looks orange to someone, the person will not raise the issue. It is difficult to speak for oneself.

Takuya guesses that most Japanese who came to Canada would agree with him. Yuji is one of them. He comments, “I don’t like traditional Japanese ways. That is one reason why I came here. I don’t like the vertical society. In Japan, people grovel to their bosses, and I don’t like that.”

Ayumi thinks that strict hierarchical relationships are partly the reason why she finds the level of stress much higher for people in Japan than for those in Canada. In a music club she belonged to in junior high school, the senpai/kōhai relationship was strictly observed.
Senpai acted bossy and always gave orders to kōhai. Ayumi says, “I felt something was wrong with such relationships but had thought at the time, ‘That’s the way the world goes.’ But after coming here, I have started to have doubts about this.” She prefers relationships in Canada, where people care less about age differences.

Compared with her same age friends in Japan, Masako feels much younger than her age because she does not need to be very conscious about aging in Canada. She comments, My husband and I still feel 31 or 30 years old. When I came here, I was 31 and he was 30. We don’t feel we have grown any older... In Japan, many people talk about their age. They say, ‘Recently, I feel old.’ Women in my age (37 years old), such as my friends in Japan start to say, ‘I’m old.’ It is so-called Obasan (middle aged women) talk. Some console each other by saying, ‘We are old.’ I don’t like such relationships and believe if people think that way, they will actually become that way. ‘I’m old,’ ‘Too old to...’ There are many such common expressions in everyday Japanese conversations.

For Yuji, a good life is the one in which people do what they want to do regardless of their age. He says, Since most of my friends in Japan are married, I feel some gap between me and them being 30 and still doing what I want abroad. Yet, the life is just once so it is definitely good to do what we want to do. People can work hard until 60 in Japan. People can have various experiences abroad.

3.2.7 Escape from Gender Roles

Escaping from conventional gender roles is another reason my interviewees gave for expatriation. Kelsky’s findings on “international” Japanese women are potentially useful in understanding some of the female interviewees’ tendencies. In her book, Kelsky focuses on young women who use means such as studying or working abroad, or employment in international organizations to make personal and professional investments in the foreign.
She argues that the turn to the foreign has become the most important avenue currently at women's disposal to resist gendered expectations of the female life course in Japan (Kelsky 2001).

Gender expectations of Japanese female life course emphasize housework and marriage with childrearing, rather than the pursuit of a career. Masako and Izumi designate their reluctance to follow such a life course as one of the reasons for their decision to immigrate to Canada. Masako wants to focus on childrearing while her children are young and then return to work afterwards. In contrast, Izumi desires to continue working after bearing children. They both found conditions difficult for working mothers in Japan. They cite the pressure for mothers to quit their full-time jobs, the lack of employment opportunities, the lack of cooperation from husbands, and the insufficient childrearing support systems including maternity leave and childcare services.

In agreement, Mai thinks that we would need another twenty or thirty years to pass before significant changes will occur in Japan's gender situation. Women currently have to live with far less opportunities and roles than men, in addition they feel social pressure to follow an expected female life course. She exclaims, "I cannot wait for it to change. I will be old by then." She also says,

I don't think the distinction of gender roles will disappear. If a woman doesn't follow the female gender role, she is seen as obtrusive by both the older and younger generations. It is a cultural thing. When compared to the past, this has lessened, though... People have problems and worries according to their gender. Women have more limited opportunities and roles. 'You should do this and that.' 'Aren't you going to marry?' Even if parents don't worry, other people interfere. There may be many women who feel such pressure. Even if society changes, the dominant generation is the older one.
Masako has become aware that a better social environment for older women exists in Canada. After she came to Canada, she became very proud of being a woman and mother. She explains,

Women are more respected here. In Japan, only young women are regarded as women. Women’s value is constructed depending on men’s view... In Canada, women in their 40s, 50s, and 60s are beautiful in their own way and are respected by men, I think... In Japan, women are expected to do child-raising and housework. They are not respected and valued for it.

During his stay in Canada, Hiroshi has seen many Japanese women who had expected something better in Canada and ended up returning to Japan disappointed. He has also seen many Japanese women actually end up constantly traveling between Canada and Japan because they cannot find a place in Japan where they comfortably belong. He says, “My Japanese female friends here often try to marry a Canadian and stay because they don’t like the idea of beginning a new life in Japan.”

Escaping from the male dominant society has been discussed as a primary motive for Japanese female expatriation (Kelsky 2001; Kobayashi 2002). It is true that discontent with Japanese gender roles encouraged immigration to Canada for most of my female interviewees. Nevertheless, it is not necessarily their foremost reason in their subjective and conscious level, but one of many reasons for their immigration. Mika strongly denies gender inequality as her motive for emigration from Japan. She contends, “I feel that it is a matter of the person’s ability and not a matter of gender. If the person has ability, gender does not matter. After all, in the design business, gender is not a problem. Ability and talent are important.” At the places where she worked in Japan, she did not witness major gender inequality. She says,
If anything, it is less significant than the linguistic disadvantage I have in Canada now... When comparing Japan with other countries, it is often said that gender inequality is more prevalent, that there are not many places for women to play an active part, and that women are pressured to marry. However, my opinion differs from that. I went to Art College and worked in the art business. In the art world, there is little gender inequality and the most important thing is talent. So gender inequality is not my motivation of emigration.

Although gender inequality in Japanese society is still considerable, there have been increasing options for women. For women who found their own niches to utilize their capabilities, gender issues are not enough to push them out from their home country.

In agreement, Izumi also notes, “Gender inequality is not a primary reason for my expatriation at all. I never felt gender unfairness in Japan.” At school in Japan, she did not feel disadvantaged because of her gender and instead found girls have more advantages than boys. It was after she arrived in Canada that she became conscious about gender inequality in Japan. Masako also found little gender inequality in her employment at an organization which dealt with international education exchanges. Both Masako and Izumi find more advantages in Japan in terms of employment although they do regard working conditions in Japan as difficult for the simultaneous pursuit of career and family.

The fact that as a motive for emigration my female interviewees placed less emphasis on escaping male dominancy, in comparison to Japanese female emigrants in former studies, can be attributed to various factors. First, by attributing an escape from male dominancy as the primary motive, researchers may possibly be focusing too narrowly on gender issues, and overlooking other major motives. Second, moderation in the inequalities between genders as can be observed with increased options in education, work, and marriage being made available for women in recent years lessens the sense of oppression.
Japanese women experience although gender inequality is still prominent in Japan. Third, my small sample size could not grasp any general trends of women expatriation. All of my female interviewees had never experienced severe hardship due to gender inequality in Japan. Determining it as a general tendency would require a survey or a larger sample size.

While it is true that there is still strong gender inequality in Japan, my interviewees give the impression that they believe that men also pay a price for this inequality since they have more social responsibilities and are pressured to work hard. Izumi notes,

Men have disadvantages, too. There are many things that make me feel happy being a woman... Men are raised to feel a sense of duty in their lives and appear to be given responsibility. I always think it is not easy being a man [in Japan]. In comparison, being a woman is really easy.

Nowadays more women remain single or postpone marriage, often living with their parents, and as a result, have more money for personal enjoyment, e.g. buying brand goods, eating out at fancy restaurants, and traveling. Izumi believes that Japanese women as well as herself are shitataka (clever, or even sly, to make gains from their situation), circumventing gender inequality by turning their weakness into their strength. She explains,

We can take advantage of the ways men blame women for being weak and for indulging in escaping from difficulties by methods such as crying... Japanese women are still expected to be soft and gentle. I think that is important. We should be smart. I am going to handle things with softness, gentleness, and femininity... I have never thought making an effort to gain more female power the way feminists do.

Izumi’s remarks on shitataka are reminiscent of Ogasawara’s participant-observation research on “office ladies” (OLs) at a major bank office in Tokyo. They resist gendered power structure by embarrassing their male coworkers with their critical gaze and gossip, by exposing the degree of the popularity of those men through gift-giving practices, and by
withholding their assistance. In these ways, they subvert their weak positions precluded from promotional ladders to their advantage. Men curry favor with OLs in order to retain their positions of power. Ogasawara finds that while oppressed, OLs are also active players resisting men's authority by manipulating them and trying to make gains from their subordinate situation although their acts often serve to reinforce and naturalize conventional gender relations (Ogasawara 1998). As Ogasawara points out, although these OLs exercise their agential power to resist the existing power structure, their passive-aggressive type behaviors, which resist following authority through procrastination and covert harassment, would not ultimately enhance their status in the workplace.

Emigration might be considered one way of Japanese women's circumvention of gender inequality. While an increased transnationalization of information, goods, and people instigates young adults to dream of experiencing life in a foreign land, and while the development of transportation and communication systems, especially the Internet, has made fulfilling that dream far easier than in the past, there are still many kinds of social obstacles which hinder them from going abroad. In particular, men are still expected to have more responsibilities as shakaijin than women, and thus are more susceptible to such constraints. In a sense, when pursuing their dreams, women have more freedom and fewer restrictions. Takuya notes, "The condition of Japanese society makes it easier for women than men to go abroad."

In recent years, the difficult situation experienced by the Japanese male has become more prominent in Japan. Due to the economic downturn, there have been fewer job opportunities and more layoffs. Moreover, recent years have seen women's trend of
postponing marriage, which has resulted in “bride famine” (Roberson and Suzuki 2003: 11). The looming rise in male pathological behavior, such as suicide and hikikomori (social withdrawal), has now been recognized as growing social phenomena (Takeda 2005; Kawahito and Takahashi 1999; Kawahito 1998; Saitō 2000, 2003; Shiokura 2002, 2003; Murao 2005). Even so, some men also take advantage of the situation, where they feel less pressure to marry and to become sarariiman, which is a “dominant (self-)image, model, and representation of men and masculinity in Japan” (Roberson and Suzuki 2003: 1), departing from past custom. A sarariiman’s job was considered as a “normative” occupation because it used to guarantee a decent life. However, because of the recession, the safety net does not necessarily accomplish this goal anymore. These situational changes have led some men to modify their work philosophy and begin to pursue what they really want to do instead, as can be seen in the comments of my male interviewees. Takuya says,

The first 30 to 40 years after WWII, an image of the ideal man or sarariiman was one who worked like a horse without caring about his family. At that time, there was the lifetime employment system, so if a man worked like a horse for his company, he was able to live securely until retirement. With these sarariiman, Japan developed rapidly and became a leading country... However, the lack of a father’s presence in the home made their families not very happy. Therefore, such phrases as kateinai rikon (divorce while staying in the family) [listed in the annual buzzwords-of-the-year contest in 1986], sodaigomi (bulky garbage), and teishu genki-de rusu-ga-ii (the good husband is healthy and absent) [listed in the annual buzzwords-of-the-year contest in 1986] became popular.

Takuya thinks that men who left Japan would be those who doubt that such a situation is conducive for themselves and their families. However, he also thinks that since there are many places for men to utilize their abilities, most of them do not need to take the trouble to go abroad. Therefore, he assumes that Japanese men come to Canada to seek
spirituality or for other reasons related to lifestyle and not necessarily because of job opportunities. Men’s motives for more leisure time, or more involvement with family can be seen as gendered motives since they stem from conventional Japanese gender roles.

In another case, Hiroshi believes the collapse of the lifetime employment system made it easier for men to re-enter the workforce in Japan, and this contributes to his decision to expatriate. He explains,

> When lifetime employment was common, I might have settled down somewhere in Japan. If I do not get off the ground after studying for a year [in Canada], or if I become tired of life here after several years, or if I need to return to Japan because of my parents, I’m sure that I can obtain a decent job in Japan. I can do what I am doing because of the collapse of the lifetime employment system.

These male interviewee perceptions resonate with recent work on Japanese masculinity. The contributors of *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan* (Roberson and Suzuki eds. 2003) depict and discuss how Japanese masculinity is shifting from the dominant image of *sarariiman*. While Roberson and Suzuki (2003) point out the ideological and representational hegemony of the *sarariiman* model of Japanese manhood, they also recognize diversity and dynamics in the representations and realities of men and masculinity in Japan. Also, Mathews (2003) has noticed that the Japanese economic downturn in recent years resulted in the tarnished image of the male white-collar workers. Some Japanese men, such as my male interviewees, have lost incentive to follow the *sarariiman* “doxa” (Roberson and Suzuki eds. 2003) and began to choose alternative lifestyles.

Morokvasic (1984) finds distinct push factors between male and female migrants: While those of male migrants are more due to external, public, economic reasons, those of
female migrants are more due to individual, private, family reasons. However, the cases of my interviewees do not comply with her findings. Both women and men in my study decided to immigrate to Canada from individual and private reasons. The effects of gender roles are seen in both female and male migration from Japan. Such effects can be thought about more broadly than only women's “escape” from a highly gender-stratified society.

3.2.8 Diversity

Multiculturalism and diversity in Canadian society attract many of my interviewees. After Izumi moved to Canada, she realized how homogeneous Japan is compared to Canada in terms of people's way of thinking, their education, and their level of life, and came to feel more comfortable in a society whose population is drawn from diverse backgrounds. Vancouver's multiculturalism deeply impresses Mika. She feels especially comfortable about the way Asians are accepted as members of the community. Based on her past experience in New Zealand, she had expected Asians to be discriminated against in Canada. However, her experiences in Canada made her feel more willing to immigrate.

Mai's aversion to Japanese society with its strong pressure to conform in thoughts and attitude was the source of her main attraction to Canadian society where diversity is not only looked down upon, but instead even embraced. Although she has Japanese friends in Canada, she rather more enjoys the association with non-Japanese people including her boyfriend. Similarly, Yuji intentionally avoids being involved with Vancouver's Japanese community, preferring to associate with non-Japanese people in order to be exposed to other cultures.
In Masako’s case, she is concerned that her children may not be able to assimilate into Japan’s homogeneous environment of conformity, after so many years away from her homeland. In fact, she worries that her children, who were born in Canada, have become too Westernized to be accepted by Japanese society. Social conditions underlying her concern are seen in Merry White’s study of Japanese returnee families from sojourns abroad. She depicts their struggles with the re-entry problem which is experienced by children in schools, mothers in the community, and fathers in the workplace. Japanese social homogeneity, behavioral conformity, and a strong sense of *uchi/soto* (inside/outside) boundary often make returnees feel isolated within the group as problematic or marginal members. Families and individuals need conscious readjustment and strategies in order to be accepted by the group (White 1988). Actually, Masako experienced the re-entry shock when she came home from studying in Victoria in her teens, and told me how she eventually readjusted to the school environment. That experience may lead to her concern for her children’s adjustment to Japanese society.

Hiroshi notices that in Japan, people’s recognition of who is Japanese is mostly limited to people who were born in Japan, have two Japanese parents, and speak Japanese as their first language. Therefore, he notices, Japanese Brazilians who are living in Japan are regarded as non-Japanese. This overlaps with White’s definition; “The simplest definition of being Japanese is to be born in Japan, to be of Japanese parents, to live in Japan, and to speak Japanese” (White 1988: 110). From her definition, relocation overseas also renders people’s Japanese identity suspicious. Satoru remarks,

If I went back to Japan and people knew that I had been in Canada for eight years, I might feel some sense of alienation. They would talk about me, “He is a returnee from
the West”... This doesn’t mean that they have spiteful intentions. They just think, “He is different.” For the Japanese, being different is not good.

Hiroshi’s conjectures that, “Since they [the Japanese] think they are a homogenous race, they are very insensitive to the problem of discrimination... They tend to think it is natural to distinguish between themselves and other people.” Similarly, Masako comments, “We live in Canada as immigrants, accepted naturally by society. But in Japan, immigrants would not live like us. In Japan, people clearly distinguish between Japanese and foreigners.” Satoru also says, “Japanese tend to see foreigners with curiosity. It often leads to exclusiveness. Even when they treat foreigners nicely, it doesn’t mean they accept them. They create a ‘wall,’ which means the foreigners are ‘different’ from them.” He thinks that living in a multicultural society like Canada is beneficial for his personal growth because it promotes his understanding of people with different values. Takuya says, “My Canadian friend here has a Dutch father and an Italian mother. Yet, such an example is rare in Japan. It contributes to the closed nature of the society.”

My interviewees’ experiences relate how Japanese society tends to exclude not only non-Japanese but also people with disabilities as full members of the society. After coming to Canada, Masayuki realized how Japanese society lacks an understanding of people with mental problems. Suffering from depression, he had had a very difficult life in Japan where people did not understand his condition. Hiroshi also recognizes how Japanese society has excluded people with disabilities. During our interview session at a restaurant, upon seeing a man in a wheelchair, Hiroshi commented.

We seldom see [in Japan] a person like that in a restaurant, right? Yet, it doesn’t mean there are only few people with disabilities. Though the ratio of such people in Japan
must be similar to that in Canada, we seldom see them in town. So, people assume there are few such people in Japan... Here it is natural that a person in a wheelchair goes out by him or herself.

Once, while he was traveling back and forth between Canada and Japan, he saw a person in a wheelchair at the busy shopping area in Yokohama. That person was wearing a sign which said, “I am disabled. As I may cause you inconvenience, please forgive me.” Upon seeing him, Hiroshi almost burst into tears since he felt very sad about the situation of people with disabilities in Japan and missed Canada. He explained, “The episode [about the person in a wheelchair in Yokohama] is both a pull factor and a push factor. When I saw the person, I immediately remembered my life here.”

### 3.2.9 Self-Actualization, New Possibilities, and Escaping from a Predictable Life

The desire for self-actualization more or less compelled the majority of my interviewees to venture for a new life in Canada. For Keiko, Hiroshi, and Takuya, it serves as a major motivation for their immigration. Keiko regards Canadian society as better, since it allows her to realize her full potential because the general attitudes of people and the Canadian education system encourage people to pursue their own goals. While life in Japan provides security and stability, she feels that life in Canada promotes the value of her own *raison d'être*, even though living and studying overseas alone is very challenging.

Mika discusses her feelings of boredom regarding the predictable life in Japan: “Life in Japan is only repetitions of the same thing.” When I mentioned the book “*Owarinaki Nichijō wo Ikiro* (Go on Living the Endless Ordinary Everyday),” in which the author writes that because people not only in Japan but also in other post-industrial societies...
foresee their future and feel their daily life as continuing endlessly, they lack vitality (Miyadai 1997), Mika agreed with this opinion. She explains, “I think this is right. People will make an effort if they have a goal. If they don’t, they might commit suicide or other similar acts because they lack something to do. When people have difficulties obtaining food, they wouldn’t commit suicide.” She also notes,

Around age 27, I started to think how I should lead my life, and wondered if I would lead an uninteresting life in Japan until I die. Then I began to want to see something new, to do something interesting, and to live outside Japan… I could tell what the future in Japan would be, for having worked in a few different companies, I saw the cycle of our lives.

Dissatisfaction because of a predictable stable life and the inclination to try new possibilities are major motivations to immigrate for Hiroshi also. He contends, “I could foresee the course of my life if I were to work (at the department store) until retirement. So, I wanted to try other possibilities and to build dreams from scratch in another place.” Takuya, another interviewee not feeling a sense of fulfillment with his predictable life in Japan, sees himself as a type of person who actively migrates in order to find a better environment that will offer opportunities for him to attain self-actualization. He considers his personality as a major force that pushes him to go abroad.

My interviewees’ desire for self-fulfillment echoes the findings in Andressen and Kumagai’s study on Japanese students in Australia. They share characteristics with students from post-industrial societies who are generally more interested in a short-term change in lifestyle or a general goal of self-fulfillment, rather than with students from other Asian countries, who are motivated primarily by economic considerations. Although they seek their preferable lifestyle, Japanese social structures, which remain highly conservative,
push some of them overseas looking for new sources of meaning in their lives (Andressen and Kumagai 1996).

While economic needs and improvement have driven both earlier Japanese migration and contemporary migration, the internal urge for self-fulfillment has also often driven recent Japanese migration. The values and lifestyle (VALS) typology, which was formulated by Mitchell in order to classify Americans’ values and lifestyle, provides insights for the relationships between economic status and the types of driving forces which motivate people to move in a certain direction (Mitchell 1983).

VALS has four categories: Need-Driven Groups, Outer-Directed Groups, Inner-Directed Groups, and Combined Outer- and Inner-Directed Group. Survivors, who live in terrible poverty, and Sustainers, who live at the edge of poverty, are the Need-Driven Groups. They share the burden of being poverty-stricken, and are less able than more affluent people to express their values in American society. The Outer-Directeds consist of three distinct lifestyles: Belongers, Emulators, and Achievers. Belongers are generally regarded as middle class with middle incomes and middle levels of education. They prefer the status quo and cherish shared institutions such as the family and church, and value loyalty to their nation, their jobs, and traditional associations. In contrast, Emulators intensely strive to be like those they consider richer and more successful than they are. Achievers, situated at the top of the Outer-Direction, are ambitious, gifted, successful, and wealthy.

While the principal of driving forces of the Outer-Directeds are external, inner growth is central to many of the Inner-Directeds. The latter tends to be indifferent to social
status and money. Most of them are members of the postwar generation who tend to be the children of prosperous, outer-directed families, and have an excellent education and hold good jobs. Due to their family affluence, money and materialism no longer have a dominant presence and noneconomic aspects of life have become prominent in their lives.

Three inner-directed lifestyles are identified: I-Am-Me, Experiential, and Societally Conscious. I-Am-Me is a transition from Outer-Directed to Inner-Directed for youths who are raised in favorable circumstances and are seeking out a new way of life for themselves. Experientials tend to be excellently educated youths who have passed the I-Am-Me stage and are seeking direct, vivid personal experience for inner-exploration. The Societally Conscious are influential and mature, being more concerned with societal issues, trends, and events. These Inner-Directeds tend to be the children of prosperous, Outer-Directed families (Mitchell 1983).

Mitchell says, “Some measure of satiation with the pleasures of external things seems to be required before a person can believe in – or take deep satisfaction from – the less visible, incorporeal pleasures of Inner-Direction” (Mitchell 1983: 16). Many of contemporary Japanese migrants, who are the children of affluent Japanese society, no longer need to strive for economic betterment in their home country. While pre-war Japanese migrants and many other contemporary migrants were and are Need-Driven or Outer-Directed, recent Japanese migrants can be more Inner-Directed and seek self-fulfillment, self-actualization, and internal growth through their experiences in overseas lives. This resonates with Mathews’ argument that contemporary Japanese ikigai,
or "that which most makes life worth living," in general is directed to "self-fulfillment" (Mathews 2003).

Most of my interviewees are also from middle class families and have fairly high educational backgrounds. Their motives for immigration are Combined Outer- and Inner-Directed seeking both an externally and internally comfortable life. They acknowledge their lives in Japan were decent and that they experienced no economic hardships there. All of them suggest their possible repatriation in case of deteriorating conditions in their host society. In a sense, they have the luxury of migration, although it does not mean that migration is an easy process for them.

Although general classification conducted by social analysts like Mitchell is very useful for grasping people's overall orientations, it inevitably leaves out individual complexity comprising human actions. For instance, such a typology does not appear to take into account the interplay of critical factors other than economic ones, such as gender, ethnic minority, and issues for people with disabilities. The narratives in my study, which convey individual intricacy of human actions in the context of Japanese migration, would complement the examination of driving forces which motivate people to move in a certain direction.

### 3.3 Difficulties in Canadian Lives

While most of my interviewees possess considerably positive perspectives on Canadian life, they have also recognized some negative aspects. Even though they prefer life in Canada, living in a different socio-cultural setting is not always easy. Mika does not
consider Vancouver as urbanized enough to provide the “first grade” to her future children in such things as education, art, and people compared with Tokyo and U.S. large cities. Keiko feels that living by herself in Canada is very tough especially when she experienced hard times, such as a stressful medical operation and an unsettling robbery. Mai finds little spare time, especially for socializing during university terms. Michio sometimes feels discriminated against here although he thinks it may be his overreaction. Masako is critical of some aspects of Canadian welfare policy. She comments, “B.C. has systems in which poor people benefit. Unions are strong. Government is hospitable to low-income people. In such a system, people who work hard to contribute to society are not rewarded enough. I am disappointed at it.” Takuya also feels disappointed due to lack of job opportunities in Vancouver and started to think about relocation. Izumi says,

Living in Canada needs energy in a sense. Unexpected things happen. We need energy to cope with difficulty in language and other things here... I don’t think all of Canadian life is good. If possible, I want to have a combination of Japanese and Canadian life.

Although they like the relaxed way of life in Canada, it also sometimes annoys them. Izumi says, “People here are very relaxed. I try not to expect people here to do what I ask them. Otherwise, I would be irritated.” Satoru is sometimes annoyed by Canadians’ laid back attitudes. He notes, “Canadians who I do business with are often not precise. They sometimes don’t respond soon. Such an attitude is loose and was not acceptable to me.” Yuji comments, “There is both good and bad aspects in Canadians. They are forthright. Yet, they don’t care about details. Probably, Japanese care about details too much, though. But that is also good. Because of that, they are sensible and considerate.”
Differences in communication patterns between Japanese and Canadians are also a major cultural aspect to which they need to adjust. Mai thinks that people in Canada do not really understand her emotional cues. She says,

*They are frank and don't interfere with others. But they don't care for me, when I want to be cared for. They lack empathic kindness (ninjō). For example, when I say that I feel sick, they don't usually say, 'Are you alright? May I make rice porridge (okayu) for you?' If I say, 'I'm sick. Please, make soup for me,' they would say 'OK. No problem.' They don't understand emotional cues. We have to tell them what we want. But Japan has a culture in which people expect others to understand their feelings even if they don't tell them especially among friends and between lovers.*

While Mai has more Canadian friends in Vancouver than Japanese, she goes to Japanese friends when she wants to feel *ninjō*. In a similar tone, Masayuki comments,

*Canadians would not understand me if I tell my thinking or feelings in a roundabout way... So I am afraid that if I married a Canadian, she would not understand what I say. Canadian communication pattern is very different from Japanese one... When I did home stay, I often took a family dog for a walk to express my appreciation to my host family. But they didn't realize my intention and just thought I liked the dog. Here we need to express ourselves. Until we tell them what we want them to do, they don't do so. The expectation that, "I am doing this much, so they would do me a favor even though we don't ask them" – doesn't work here.*

Their experiences well exemplify Takeo Doi’s notion of *amae*. During his stay in the U.S., Doi (1973) experienced episodes which made him notice significant differences between Japanese and American behavior and thoughts. In one of the episodes, he was asked by an American host who he visited for the first time: “Are you hungry? We have some ice cream if you’d like it.” Since he thought that it is impolite to admit it, he ended up declining the ice cream although he was rather hungry. He says,

*I probably cherished a mild hope that he would press me again; but my host, disappointingly, said “I see” with no further ado, leaving me regretting that I had not replied more honestly. And I found myself thinking that a Japanese would almost*
never ask a stranger unceremoniously if he was hungry, but would produce something to give him without asking (Doi 1973: 11).

He searched for a clue in Japanese language to explain this cultural difference and found the word *amae*, for which there is no equivalent word in English. *Amae* is defined as an indulgent desire to be taken care of by others. He contends that in the course of socialization, Japanese develop an interdependent dimension of self with the sense of being a person able both to give and receive pleasure in intimate, interpersonal relationships. The word *amae* embodies both the psychological makeup of the individual Japanese and Japanese social structures. *Amae* has significant influences on the ideas and practices in Japanese culture, which particularly tolerates this desire of its members compared to American culture (Doi 1973).

While my interviewees appreciate independent and individualistic interpersonal relations in Canada, they also miss relations built on *amae*. This indicates the complexity of the human psyche, which often incorporates opposite types of disposition. While my interviewees developed independent and individual sense of self, they also internalized *amae* in the Japanese socio-cultural milieu.

### 3.4 Seeking Spiritual Satisfaction and Escaping from Socio-Cultural Constraints

The examination of the push and pull factors of this study reveals that seeking spiritual satisfaction and escaping from socio-cultural constraints appear to be more significant than just economic considerations in my interviewees’ immigration decision-making processes. Socio-economic affluence and relative political stability in Japan have
liberated them from needing to struggle against poverty and worry about political oppression, and thus have provided them opportunities to seek subjectively meaningful lives.

They found that the Canadian society provides a better environment for the lifestyles they prefer. Vancouver's physical environment such as spaciousness, nature, and housing conditions as well as working conditions allows them to have the more relaxed and family-oriented lifestyles they like. They question the Japanese work ethic and practices which deprive them of their private time. Also, they feel much less socio-culturally constrained in Canada from peoples' interference, sekentei, pressures to conform, the suppression of individuality, age restrictions, and gender roles than in their home country. This pulls them to stay in their host society.

While lacking solidity in the sense of the self is often a topic in anthropological and other works on Japanese people, socio-cultural changes as a response to industrialization, internationalization, and the evolution of information technology gradually have awakened shifts in the Japanese sense of self, which has led to their seeking identity, individuality, and individualism. My interviewees' sense of individualism takes them away from conventional Japanese social structures and mores, and attracts them to the aspects of Canadian society that respect individuality and diversity. They hold negative perspectives toward the Japanese education system due to its discouraging aspects that hinder both the development of children's individuality and the expression of their individual opinions.

The awakening of self, along with the liberation from economic struggles, allows people to search for internal meaning and satisfaction in their lives. Moreover, social
stalemate after decades of rapid social changes and economic growth have brought a sense of stagnation in Japanese society. Such an ambience would induce some people to venture overseas for their self-actualization, new possibilities, experiences in other worlds, and an escape from a predictable life.

Befu (2000) finds that since the 1970s, an increasing number of Japanese emigrate for non-economic reasons such as dissatisfaction with their situation in Japan and an expectation of a more fulfilling and meaningful life overseas. Also, Japanese affluence has created some “drifter” type overseas Japanese who left Japan rather aimlessly and are often supported by remittances from their parents. Most of the recent Japanese migrants maintain a relatively positive attitude toward Japan in general, while being critical of the specific structural or cultural problems that motivated their expatriation (Befu 2000). In contrast to Japanese “economic migrants” who left Japan seeking economic security before the 1970s, Satō calls the majority of Japanese migrants who settled in Australia after the 1970s “lifestyle migrants” who desire to improve their quality of life. Some seek a more easygoing life abroad escaping from kinship obligation or the burden of corporate life. Others want to have a spacious house in a foreign environment (Satō 2001).

According to Andressen and Kumagai’s study on Japanese students in Australia, these Japanese students are generally more interested in short-term changes in lifestyle or a general goal of self-fulfillment rather than economic concerns. The pressure of being caught between traditions (with rigid structures) and change (with new ideas in Japan) appear to be a more significant factor than just employment considerations in generating the movement of students abroad. They categorize those students into a “wanderer type,”
young men with low upward mobility who cannot succeed in the Japanese education
system; an “escapee type,” women whose motivations are tempered more by the idea of
self-fulfillment and an escape from the social restrictions in Japan; and an “achiever type,”
a very small number who aim to improve their careers with clear goals (Andressen and
Kumagai 1996).

My research on recent Japanese newcomers in Vancouver also supports these
scholars’ findings that the push and pull factors of recent Japanese migration stem from
people’s search for both self-fulfillment and escape from socio-cultural restrictions. On the
other hand, none of my interviewees appear to be a “drifter” or “wanderer” type. This
probably reflects the difference in sample criteria between my research and the research of
these scholars. While Befu’s study includes sojourners who do not necessarily intend to
take up permanent residence overseas and Andressen and Kumagai’s study focuses on
Japanese students, my research is limited to people who have completed the procedures to
acquire a Permanent Resident (Landed Immigrant) Visa or intend to obtain one. Also, the
majority of those who participated in my research responded to my advertisement to recruit
interviewees. Hence, those self-selected people would have some clear idea about their
reasons for immigrating to Canada. If the criteria for selection of interviewees were
extended to those who stay in Vancouver with a Working Holiday Visa, Visitor’s Visa, or
Student Permit but were not necessarily considering immigrating to Canada, I would likely
have encountered more drifter or wanderer type of people.

In order to obtain permanent residency status, Canadian immigration regulations
require people who do not have family or relatives in Canada to have work experience and
a high level of education. All of my interviewees are independent immigrants with no family or relatives in Canada. Consequently, they hold solid backgrounds in education and work experience or try hard to get them. This would also explain why I did not find a drifter or wanderer type. Many of my interviewees, such as Hiroshi, Mai, Ayumi, Masako, Keiko, Satoru, and Takuya, have characteristics of the “achiever” type with the ambition to improve their careers. If broadly classified, however, most of my interviewees possess many of the characteristics of the “escapee” type, whose motivations are induced more by the desire for self-fulfillment and for escape from Japanese socio-cultural restrictions rather than mainly by economic considerations.

This does not necessarily mean that they are fully spiritually-oriented people who give up a materially and economically comfortable life. They expect Vancouver to allow them to lead an economically decent life even though it could be more frugal than in Japan. They decided to stay in Canada with the hope of leading an economically and spiritually comfortable life. On the balance sheets inside their heads, they calculated which society would offer a better environment for an economically and spiritually comfortable life. Most of them appear ready for repatriation if the situation arises where life in their host country becomes less preferable for them.
CHAPTER IV

The Web of Interrelations of Japanese Social Systems

4.1 Introduction

The discussion of the push and pull factors in the previous chapter indicates that three Japanese social systems -- the family system, the education system, and the employment system -- had significant influences on the interviewees’ decisions in favor of emigrating from Japan. Other Japanese systems, such as the economy, politics, and religion, appear not to have much significance as their motives for emigration. This is also observed in contemporary Japanese migrants in general. My interviewees see family values in Canada as better than Japan and feel attracted to husband/wife as well as parent/child relationships in Canadian families. They also prefer the Canadian education system for their children or themselves and object to the emphasis on studying toward entrance examinations and the discouragement of the development of individuality, self-initiative, creativity, subjective ability, and self-expression, which are observed in the Japanese education system. Moreover, working conditions in Japan, such as long work hours and gender and age restrictions, are considered as highly problematic.

The purpose of this chapter is to re-interpret my interviewees’ push and pull factors based on the detailed examination of the interrelations among the family system, the education system, and the employment system. First, in order to provide sufficient information of this examination, I will present an overview of these three systems by
explaining how they have developed over time since the Meiji Restoration (1868)\textsuperscript{13} with ethnographic information through my interviewees’ perspectives and experiences regarding these systems. Second, I will analyze their interrelations using the concept “interpenetration,” which is introduced in Luhmann’s social systems theory. Then, I will conduct the re-evaluation of my interviewees’ push and pull factors as being related to my analysis of the interrelations of these systems. Foucault’s notion of “governmentality,” as well as Luhmann’s perspective, serves as a constructive guidance for this re-evaluation.

4.2 Overview of the Family System

The Japanese *ie* system, characterized by patriarchism, agnatic-cognatic primogeniture (male-preference lineage), and lineal extended families, is widely stated to be a product of Japan’s modernization, although it is rooted in the family system of the *samurai* class in the Edo period (1603-1867) and often is regarded as Japanese tradition (Ueno 1994: 69, 129; Arichi 2002; Nakajima 2002: 244; Asano 2001: 152; Hendry 2003: 25-30). After the Meiji Restoration (1868), the Japanese Government fortified the *tennō-sei* or *seido* (emperor system) as the foundation of a new nation-state that would be solid enough to counterbalance Western powers. In order to support the *tennō-sei*, the *ie* system, which is based on Confucian values, such as filial piety, devotion, and self-sacrifice, was utilized as the model of the family for the entire Japanese population (Arichi 2002).

\textsuperscript{13} The events that led to the abolition of the Tokugawa Shogunate which reigned Japan in the Edo era (1603-1867) and returned control of Japan to direct imperial rule under the emperor Meiji in 1868, beginning an era of major political, economic, and social change called the Meiji period (1868-1912).
The Family Law within Japanese Civil Law enacted in 1896 promoted patriarchism, male-preference primogeniture, and lineal extended families by stipulating a father’s legal patriarchal authority over his family members (*kafuchō ken*), an inheritance system where the status of householder, lineage, family name, and estate are inherited by the eldest son (*chōnan*) or the eldest daughter (*chōjo*) in the case when there are no sons (*katoku sōzoku sei*); and a stem family system (*chokkei kazoku sei*). As the head of the *ie*, which can be viewed as a minimum unit for government control, the *kafuchō* (male householder) was given great power and authority, facilitating for the government control over all the people.

Before the penetration throughout Japanese society of the *ie* system with lineal extended families based on patriarchy and primogeniture, many diverse family structures existed within the farmer and merchant classes. The legacy of this diversity can still be seen within contemporary Japan (Kumagai 1997a, 1997b). Before Meiji, there existed *masshi sōzoku* (postremogeniture, or inheritance by the youngest born) and *anekatoku* (an inheritance system which allowed the first child - regardless of sex - to succeed to heirship of a house) (Ueno 1994: 70; Fukutake 1997: 25). Moreover, divorce and remarriage were quite common, especially in rural villages (Kitō 2002: 46-55). However, the government’s promotion of the *ie* system as the authentic traditional family structure through the use of the legal and education systems along with people’s desire to imitate the members of the upper class advanced the widespread adoption of the *ie* ideology in all corners of society.

Despite the extent to which this ideology permeated society, the number of nuclear family households started to rise especially after WWI due to the increased migration of non-*chōnan* rural men to urban areas in search of employment opportunities. The first
national census in 1920 shows that more than 50 percent of the households were nuclear families (Fuse 2002: 325). In those days, however, the *ie* ideology which values the parent-child relationship rather than the husband-wife relationship, was still the basis of these nuclear families (Fuse 2002: 326; Aso and Amano 1999: 95).

The new postwar constitution of 1947 stipulated the importance of individual dignity and equality between the sexes. The *ie* system that feudalistically granted more power and rights to the male householder was regarded as contradictory to the principles of this new constitution. According to these new principles, the Civil Law was reformed in 1948 and articles regarding patriarchal rights (*kafuchō ken*), the inheritance system (*katoku sōzoku sei*), and the stem family system (*chokkei kazoku sei*), which supported the *ie* system, were eliminated. In this way, the *ie* system was supposedly officially abandoned (Yoda 2002; Fukutake 1992: 43; Kano 1998: 269; see Fuse 2002) although there are still various legal provisions which support this system. Although in the selection of a spouse arranged marriage remained the primary method and preference was still given to parents’ decisions, the democratic ambience of the post-war era led to the gradual increase in love-marriages (Fukutake 1992: 45).

While the reality of the *ie* system dies hard, especially in rural areas, it has been gradually replaced by the conjugal family system based not on the parent-child relationship but on the husband-wife relationship. Changes in the industrial structure during the years of steep economic growth from the 1950s led to a mass displacement of the population from rural to urban areas, and brought about a steady increase in the number of nuclear family
households (Fuse 2002: 321; Yoneda 2002: 257). In 1955, 59.6 percent of all families were nuclear families and in 1975, 64.0 percent of all families were nuclear (Fukutake 1992: 41).

While many married women joined the workforce before WWII as members of farming families or family-operated businesses, in the mid-1950s postwar industrial structural changes established a high rate of economic growth and increased the number of sarariiman, and in so doing, brought about a proliferation of full-time housewives whose husbands’ salaries were high enough to maintain a family. This further buttressed a division of gender roles within the family with the expectation that men are outside while women are inside.

After the baby boom at the end of the 1940s, the number of children decreased to around two children per family. The image of a normative family in urban areas consisting of a sarariiman husband, a full-time housewife, and two or three children lasted until the recession and period of radical inflation\(^\text{14}\) that followed the 1973 Oil Shock and led to a large influx of married women entering the workforce as cheap labor, mainly as part-time employees.

The ideological underpinning of the postwar urban family, which became more autonomous from their kin and community, was no longer the ie system but the couple-oriented maihōmu-shugi, which is a Japanese invented word from the English phrase “my home” combined with the word shugi (Japanese for -ism). It literally means “My Home Ideology” indicating the principal of placing one’s own family life first. Beginning in the 1960s, maihōmu-shugi, a product of high economic growth, became an ideological support

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\(^{14}\) Consumer price index was 100 in 1970 and 205.8 in 1977 (Emori 2002: 300).
for the cohesion of urban middle class families. The lifetime employment and seniority-based wage system in a period of high economic growth brought about prospects for increases in the husband’s salary, which allowed people to believe it was possible to become the image of an ideal family: a family-minded hardworking father and an affectionate mother who is able to focus on housework and childrearing, living together in an independent house with a small garden, a family car, and new electrical household appliances (see Fuse 2002). The discourse in Japan indicates that the ideal family image was also nurtured by American television dramas broadcast in Japan from the mid-1950s to 1960s, such as “Father Knows Best,” “The Donna Reed Show,” “Lassie,” “The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet,” “Family Affair,” “Pete and Gladys,” and “Trouble with Father.”

Before long a shadow was cast over this optimistic image of the urban middle class family. Husbands became kigyō senshi (corporate warriors) who work hard and long hours to maintain their middleclass lifestyle, repay the house loan, and finance their children’s education expenses. Commitment to his work made it hard for a father to find time to be with his family. Bringing home a salary became his primary family obligation. The widespread adoption of tanshin-funin, where the company transferred a husband to another place where he lived alone apart from his family, intensified the absence of the father from the family picture. Umene’s article in 1974 describes the proliferation of dysfunctional families with absent fathers and nagging mothers (Umene 1975: 113).

Physical absence of the father has often fortified the mother-child bond, in which mothers develop a deep attachment to their children. In the early 1970s, dedication of mothers to their children resulted in the popularization of the term kyōiku mama (education
mama), which signifies a mother who is especially ardent about her children's education. The absence of father caused the mother to have to shoulder a much larger share of the burden of raising the family. The frustration of married women who went into the workforce as part-timers often grew as they juggled a job with their domestic work. Such frustration sometimes developed into problematic conditions, such as *shufu shōkōgun*, psycho-somatic symptoms and depression caused by a sense of alienation from society and a question about one’s own *raison d'etre* (Yamate 1993: 97), and “kitchen drinker,” a housewife who becomes an alcoholic because of her husband’s lack of care, frustration, and feelings of emptiness.

In 1980, the story of *Kinzoku Batto Satsujin Jiken* (an incident of murder with a metal baseball bat) shocked the nation. The family involved lived in a *maiheimu* and had appeared to be the ideal family consisting of an elite father who had graduated from the University of Tokyo, a wellborn mother, an elite older son, and a younger son. However, having failed the university entrance examinations for two consecutive years, the younger son, one day smashed his parents to death with a metal baseball bat.\(^5\) This incident came to symbolize people’s disillusion with the ideal family image in the days after Japan’s period of high-growth (see Ochiai 2004: 50-51). Moreover, around this time, domestic violence by children toward their parents began to be seen as a social problem. Later, murders of violent children by their parents started to make sensational headlines.

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\(^{15}\) An incident in 2006 of a sixteen year old son of two doctors (father his natural father, and woman father remarried after divorcing his mother) also shocked people in Japan. The boy killed his step mother and two half sisters by setting his house afire while his father was gone. He was being pushed by the successful pair to accomplish much academically, and his study room, to which he was frequently secluded, was christened ICU (intensive care unit) by his father who expected him to study all the time.
Decreases in the marriage rate and the birth rate, the growing trend to delay marriage, and increases in the divorce rate including *jukunen rikon* (middle age divorce) are all symptoms that reveal transitions in the structures of the Japanese family. Although the marriage rate in the early 1970s was more than ten people per 1,000 per year, it dropped to under six per 1,000 by the middle of the first decade of the next century. There is a growing tendency to marry at later ages in life. In addition, the number of children in a family has steadily declined from more than 2.1 children per family in the mid-1950s to 1.29 in 2003. Meanwhile, the divorce rate has increased from less than 0.8 incidents per year per 1,000 people in the early 1960s to more than 2.25 in 2003. Also, the number of *jukunen rikon* has increased (*Kōseirōdōshō* 2004b).

### 4.3 Overview of the Education System

In the Edo period, people had opportunities to learn at educational institutions, such as *hankō* (domain schools for the *samurai* class), *shijuku* (personal schools), and *terakoya* (community private schools at local temples which taught reading, writing and arithmetic to commoners). Although these educational opportunities resulted in a high national literacy level, a comprehensive education system simply was not instituted before the Meiji era (Marshall 1994: 15-18; Academy Co., Ltd. ed. 1993: 113-121). As a precursor to the modern universal education system of Japan, the Meiji Government set up the Ministry of Education in 1871. The next year, the Ministry published its educational policy and promulgated the national education system, which was modeled on the French public
education system. The content of the education was slanted towards Western knowledge and affairs rather than practical subjects for the general public (Kokusai Kyōiku Jōhō Sentā 1986: 13).

The concern over the excessive Westernization of the nation along with the political instability caused by the spread of a national antigovernment democratic movement led to the backlash of reactionaries who argued for the necessity of moral education based on Confucianism. They eventually succeeded in establishing the education system supported by this type of moral training (Academy Co., Ltd. ed. 1993: 209-212).

In 1890, the Imperial Rescript on Education was compiled by the government and announced as the emperor’s message to the subjects. The Rescript described imperial subjects’ duties including filial devotion, loyalty, fraternity, benevolence, faithfulness, observance of laws, courage, modesty, and respect to others. They constituted the basis of ethical education until the end of WWII. Shūshin (ethics based on Confucianism and the Imperial Rescript) became a key subject in elementary and junior high school.

Moreover, there was the intensification of the government’s centralized control over education. In 1886 the Education Ministry started the screening of elementary school textbooks. The textbooks became government-designated in 1903, which fostered a sense of unity among the nation (Asō and Amano 1999: 28). The school system adopted the multiple-track system consisting of a track which offered the general masses six-year compulsory education at elementary school and other tracks for upper education. This system allowed a small number of children to go to higher education, considered the path up the social ladder into the elite class (Asō and Amano 1999: 22-30).
Although during the 1920s there was a democratic educational movement for liberal education (the new educational movement) that respected children’s individuality, it lost momentum in the 1930s due to suppression by the government (see Shimura 2002: 109-120). The rising power of militarists in the late 1930s introduced militarism and ultranationalism into the classroom.

After WWII, education reforms, which tried to eliminate the influence of nationalism and militarism, were conducted under the guidance of CIES (the Civil Information and Education Section) of GHQ/SCAP (General Headquarters/Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) (Takagi 1998: 275-276; Koyama 1998: 260-261; Academy Co., Ltd. ed. 1993; Tsuchimochi 1993). By consulting the Mission’s Report of the 1946 U.S. Education Mission to Japan, which advised the establishment of the democratic education system, the Fundamental Law of Education was enacted in 1947. Based on the principle of the law, the educational administrative system was restructured from a centralized system to a decentralized, democratic one. In 1948, education boards, which were under popular control (members were directly elected by the citizens), were set up in each prefecture and municipality (Takagi 1998: 276-278; Koyama: 1998: 260-262; Umene 1975: 147).

The period of compulsory education was extended from six years to nine years. The school system was reorganized from the pre-war multiple-track school system, which was unequal and selective, allowing only a fraction of children to move onto higher education, to the 6-3-3-4 single-track school system (six years of elementary, three years of lower secondary, and three years of upper secondary school as well as four years (or two years) of higher education) (Academy Co., Ltd. ed. 1993: 379). Shūshin was abolished and the
government-designation system of textbooks was shifted to the screening system (Koyama 1998: 262-263).

In the early 1950s, conservative initiated movements to revise post-war reform led to various reforms after 1955. In 1956, the educational administrative system was reformed, which turned back the democratization and decentralization of the system. The selection of the members of local education boards was changed from the election by citizen to the appointment by the heads of local authorities. Moreover, the reinforcement of the school management system and the intensification of the textbook screening system strengthened the state control over the education system. In 1958 a legally biding force was given to the Education Ministry’s curriculum guideline. Also, moral education classes were set up in compulsory education (Koyama 1998: 264-267; Umene 1975: 148-151).

The high-growth period after the mid-1950s witnessed the increasing entrance ratio to high schools, universities, and junior colleges. This popularization of upper secondary and higher education also led to the increasing importance of competition in entrance exams, which was only attempted by a small minority of elite-oriented students before WWII (About 20 percent of the students who finished 6-year compulsory education continued to middle schools and 3–4 percent of them went onto higher education) (Asō and Amano 1999: 68). The 1970s witnessed the further intensification of the examination race. There was increasing popular awareness of the vital role played by gaining entrance into a high ranked university for a person’s future career and economic status. Such circumstances brought hensachi kyōiku (deviation value education), in which students’
academic abilities are judged by the percentile ranking of students academically *before* university.

It was after the mid-1970s that problematic behavior of students, such as *kōnai bōryoku* (school violence), school refusal syndrome, and *ijime* (bullying), began to be considered, treated, and addressed as pathological phenomena in the school education system. Although after WWII the number of school absentees had decreased, it started to increase in junior high school after the mid-1970s, during which time, school violence, especially students’ violence towards teachers, became noticeable. While this receded in the mid-1980s, bullying and school refusal syndrome instead became prominent (Koyama 1998: 271). In the process of pacifying school violence, control-oriented education, which often involved teachers’ corporal punishment and sometimes the police, was implemented in many schools. This was the subject of criticism later on. Although school violence attracts less attention than it did, reported incidences have been increasing in these past two decades (*Monbukagakushō* 2005).

My interviewees who were teens after 1980 had much to say about bullying. Hiroshi recalls, “I was bullied in elementary and junior high school... I was called and got a beating because I was seen as insolent.” Being bullied appeared to be remembered as a traumatic experience for Masayuki. Izumi remembers the prevalence of bullying at both elementary and middle school. At a private girls’ middle school that Mai attended, bullying was not violent but insidious. If a person expressed a different opinion from others, she was attacked. Also, a person was suddenly disliked or ignored without good reason. Mai notes,
“The students in a class always acted together. So if a person was bullied it was very hard. [There was] no place to escape.”

Other interviewees talk about their experience of school refusal. Ayumi and Mai were school absentees at high school even though they had friends at school and were not bullied. While the reason for Ayumi’s absence was mainly her physical and psychological health, Mai often cut her classes because high school education seemed to be a waste and meaningless to her. She did not like the school curriculum where the classes were predetermined as a package. In her words,

I was not able to choose what I wanted to learn. Though I planned to go up to college for music education, I needed to take subjects which were useless to enter such a school or to lead social life. Also, the teachers followed textbooks in their lecture. So if I studied the textbooks by myself, I was able to manage exams without attending the lectures.

By the end of the 1990s, *gakkyū hōkai* (disruption and lack of order in elementary school classroom) was brought up as a social problem. An increasing number of elementary teachers were unable to discipline their defiant pupils, which led to unchecked disorderly conduct in their classrooms (*Asahishinbun Shakaibu* 2001: 13). Recent statistics show a notable increase in the cases of *kōnai hōryoku* at elementary school (*Monbukagagushō* 2005).

Responding to the deteriorated school system, the government established the Ad Hoc Council on Education (the Provisional Educational Reform Council) under the supervision of the Cabinet (from 1984 to 1987), which marked the beginning of an ongoing education reform. The final proposal of the Council says;
The most important thing in this education reform is to break down uniformity, rigidity, and closed nature, which have been deep-rooted maladies of our nation, and to establish ...‘the principle of the respect for the individual’... According to this ‘the principle of the respect for the individual,’ we must implement a fundamental review of all fields of education including the contents, methods, systems, and policies” (Asō and Amano 1999: 252, my translation).

The proposal claims that in the course of modernization, the education system has emphasized efficiency and has neglected individuality, flexibility, and freedom. It also asserts that school education needs to take an approach which promotes creativity, allowing time for expansive thinking, rather than “cramming,” which stresses focused learning under time-constraints that sacrifices creativity (Asō and Amano 1999: 252).

This proposal led to the introduction of *yutori kyōiku* (more relaxed education), which “aims to make education ‘less regimented and more nurturing of children’s ability and willingness to solve problems by themselves’” (Hendry 2003: 98). This includes the implementation of the new curriculum and the five-day school week in April 2002. The curriculum cuts the hours of existing subjects and makes time for the new subject, *sōgō gakushū* (integrated learning). According to the Monbukagakushō, this subject aims to change the existing standardized school education, which tends to instil knowledge in children, and to foster children’s ability to learn and think on their own. They also claim that *sōgō gakushū* is a subject in which each school can use its ingenuity to conduct educational activities in accordance with needs of local communities, schools, and children, cutting across traditional subject areas. The way of teaching *sōgō gakushū* is largely left to teachers’ discretion, although the Japanese curriculum has provided recommended
guidelines in detail to teachers (Cave 2003: 89-91). However, concern about a decline in students’ academic standards has caused controversy about this education reform.

4.4 Overview of the Employment System

During the Edo period, occupational mobilization was limited under the *shi-nō-kō-shō* (warrior-farmer-craftperson-marchant) class system. At the time of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan was a predominantly agrarian society with some 80 percent of the working population engaged in agriculture and at most five percent in manufacturing (Garon 1987: 10). The abolition of the class system and the advent of industrialization after the Meiji Restoration broadened employment possibilities.

Until the late Meiji era, the Japanese economic structure consisted mainly of light industries (Helvoort 1979: 20). The principal source of wage labor at that time was young women from poor farm families; they worked in textile mills where almost 90 percent of the employees were unmarried girls. Female labor comprised between 60 to 70 per cent of all wage labor in the Meiji period (Ōkōchi 1958: 3-4). The rapid growth of heavy industries after WWI increased the number of male factory workers (Ōkōchi 1958: 39).

Initially, many of government officials and white-collar employees were from the former *samurai* class. Later, with higher education available to more people, these occupations widely opened up to people from the other classes (Kamata 1959: 18-21). However, differences in academic background significantly affected salary. For example, starting salaries for employees at Sumitomo Bank in the mid-1920s were 80 yen for graduates of imperial universities, 60 yen for private university graduates, and 35 yen for
those who graduated from only middle schools. After ten years of employment in the company, the average salary of workers with these three different educational backgrounds was 250 yen, 200 yen, and 95 yen, respectively (Hazama 1989: 155-156; Kamata 1959: 58).

A considerable gap existed in working conditions between the managerial and higher administrative personnel and the skilled and unskilled production workers who formed the majority of the labor force. The former were endowed with special privileges; in addition to lifetime employment, they enjoyed all kinds of fringe benefits and retirement grants. However, for the latter, nothing resembling lifetime job security was ever offered. Many of them migrated from plant to plant in search of higher wages (Helvoort 1979: 21).

For government officials, the lifetime employment system was adopted in the early years of modernization. Before long private industry followed suit, but this benefit was reserved exclusively for managerial and higher white-collar employees (Helvoort 1979: 21). It was not until after WWI that the application of the lifetime employment system and the seniority-based wage system extended to some blue-collar employees in larger enterprises (Yakabe 1961: 61). Those measures were instilled to reduce the employee turnover rate. However, the widespread establishment of these as standard Japanese employment practices did not occur until the early 1950s.

To stabilize labor relations in the face of immense acceleration of industrialization during WWI, the accompanying shortage of workers, the growth of worker organizations, and increasing incidents of strikes, corporate paternalism or the firm-as-family ideology was promoted by employers as well as government officials (Dore 1973). The Minister of Communication (1908-11) remarked in his speech:
...all railroad workers should help and encourage one another as though they were members of one family. A family should follow the orders of the family head and, in doing what he expects of them, always act for the honour and benefit of the family. I attempt to foster among my 90,000 employees the idea of self-sacrificing devotion to their work... (Gotō, Shōjirō, quoted in Dore 1973: 396).

Although several labor unions were formed after 1897, their activities were suppressed by the Law for the Maintenance of Public Peace in 1900 which prohibited workers in practice from organizing a union. It was not until after WWI that the Japanese labor movement first began to flourish. Nevertheless, the highest unionization rate prior to WWII was only 7.9 percent in 1931 with total union membership numbering 368,975 (Nihon Rōdō Kyōkai 1986: 21-22).

After WWII, the Japanese labor movement developed rapidly promoted by the awakening of a passion for democracy in the Japanese people as well as by the support of the Allied Occupation Forces. By the end of 1946, the unionization rate reached 39.5 percent with total membership of 3,680,000 (The Japan Institute of Labor 1986: 21-22). Laborers' growing democratic consciousness led to the planning of a general strike which was supposed to mobilize 4,000,000 workers in February 1947. However, feeling threatened by the escalation of laborers' revolutionary movements, the GHQ/SCAP (MacArthur) ordered it halted. In addition, a strike of public officers in 1948 was abandoned when it was suppressed by the GHQ/SCAP. These events seriously setback labor movements in Japan (Takano 1958: 65-66; Koyama 1968: 115-126). Unlike other industrial countries, craft unionism was not developed in Japan. Instead, enterprise unionism dominated post-war industrial reorganization which had already been the prevailing type of labor union in Japan before WWII (Ōkōchi 1959: 69-97).
Post-war high economic growth provided the conditions for the lifetime employment system and the seniority-based wage system to take root in employment practices, especially in large corporations (Dore 1973: 302). These two practices along with enterprise unionism came to be regarded as the three pillars of Japanese employment practices.

For the workforce of a large corporation, training for new employees, which includes intensive training programs and training camps, serves as a rite of passage. Also, Quality Control (QC) launched in the 1950s and Total Quality Control (TQC) introduced to Japanese companies in the early 1960s were among the most effective corporate movements not only for quality control but also for labor management by involving all sectors in such things as production, technology and research, material, finance, sales, human resources, and general affaires, and by incorporating most employers into QC (quality control) circles, small groups which are given some autonomy as an incentive for them to work for the entire company (see Tsutsui 1998: 190-235; Gordon 1998: 167-173; Gotō 1983: 91-101).

While the lifetime employment system and the seniority-based wage system have long served as the backbone of the Japanese labor system, recent years have witnessed the signs of the collapse of those systems. The prolonged recession after the burst of the bubble economy in the early 1990s led to increasing personnel retrenchment called risutora (restructuring), which began to erode the lifetime employment system. Unemployment rates which had hovered from 2 to 3 percent since the mid-1970s to the early 1990s rose up to 5.5 percent in 2002 (Kōseirōdōshō 2005a).
While a graduate normally entered a company only once in life—when searching for employment after graduation—these years have seen increasing cases of mid-career employment and job change. Also, more companies started to introduce the annual salary system and the performance-based salary system. Over the past two decades transformation in the male career path is seen in increasing numbers of male non-permanent employees such as part-timers and temporary workers.  

Some interviewees notice transformations in the Japanese employment system. Hiroshi notes, “In Japan, working at the same company for many years is valued and changing jobs is regarded negatively.” However, he also observed the collapse of the lifetime employment system, saying, “There was the lifetime employment system. Therefore, there were not many options and opportunities of job changes for the middle aged and older. Now companies are looking for capable employees regardless of their age.” Takuya recalls that around 1994 job changing was not common in Japan and that few answered “yes” to a reader questionnaire of a job magazine asking whether job changing was preferable or not. However, he finds that job changing has become more common and notices many opportunities for mid-career employment. Michio comments, “The seniority-based wage system has been changing for these ten years due to recession. According to the newspaper, more companies are making systems which care less about age.”

Also, the popularity of the word “friitaa” (part-timers and unemployed looking for a job) in these years indicates the consciousness of a shift in employment for both men and

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16 This was 7.6% in 1982; 8.3% in 1987; 8.9% in 1992; 10.1% in 1997; and 14.8% in 2002 (Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2002). The number of male part-timers increased from 1,380,000 in 1985 to 3,800,000 in 2004 (Kōseirōdōshō 2005b).
women. The percentage of fritaa from 15 to 34 years old increased from 10.4 percent in 1990 to 21.2 percent in 2001. The number of fritaa was estimated to be 4,170,000 in 2001. The ratio of fritaa in new high school graduates increased from 13.1 percent in 1990 to 38.4 percent in 2002. It increased in new university graduates from 7.4 in 1990 to 31.3 in 2002 (Naikakufu 2003). Moreover, those who are not even engaged in a part-time job or study have become noticeable and are now commonly called NEET (an acronym for “Not in Education, Employment, or Training”).

While women comprised a major, although cheaper part of the employed workforce in the Meiji period, their predominant roles shifted to the domestic and private sphere in later days. Although a gradual increase was seen in the female workforce in the public sphere during the high-economic growth period (Ōsawa 1993: 5), their employment pattern presents an M Curve, which shows the prevalent tendency of women to work in their twenties, drop off around the time of marriage, falling to a low during child-bearing and raising years, and returning to higher levels after the busiest period for child-raising as part-time members of the workforce. The majority of the female workforce has been comprised of part-timers (70 percent of part-timers in 1985), who tend to be seen as expendable (Kōseirōdōshō 2005b). The seniority-based wage system and the cleavage between regular and non-regular employees’ wages inevitably leave female workers with lower pay and lower status.

Most OLs (office ladies), or female regular corporate employees, were regarded as an auxiliary work force for male employees and OLs were assigned simple clerical jobs including ochakumi (tea serving) and making photocopies. The majority of them are
exempt from the lifetime employment and have slim opportunities for promotion. Young 
OLs were expected to be shokuba no hana (workplace flowers),\textsuperscript{17} which offer a 
comfortable atmosphere for hard working sarariiman. Their work period was seen as 
koshikake or temporary duty until marriage. It was often the case that they experienced 
katatataki from their bosses, which gave them pressure to quit a job suggesting marriage 
after the mid-twenties (see Creighton 1996; Kelsky 2001).

Although the phrase shokuba no hana is less used due to the increasing awareness of 
gender inequality, as indicated by my interviewees, such consciousness for OLs has not 
faded out. At a travel agency, Keiko was a shokuba no hana. She remembers, “I was treated 
kindly like a masukotto (cute little doll) by male workers, though I knew it was only while I 
was young and their attitude would change when I got older.” Her workplace was male 
centered and female workers were tea servers. Male workers sometimes touched her 
shoulder or waist. She remarks, “That can be called sexual harassment.” Takuya is critical 
of such male centeredness in the Japanese workplace: “So-called Ossan (men over middle 
age), who want a home-like environment at their workplace. They treat their female 
subordinates as if they were their wives, touching their hip and asking them to make 
photocopies.”

The implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) in 1986 and 
the introduction of the dual career track system, which offers a chance to women to work in 
the career track, have helped to rectify gender inequality in the workplace. However,

\textsuperscript{17} The phrase was frequently used to refer to young OLs and connotes that office ladies are supposed to be sweet and young women who support male workers by doing clerical work and serving tea.
general consciousness of gender roles and male specific corporate systems has decelerated the rectification (see Wākingu Wūman Kenkyūsho Sōgōshoku Kenkyūkai ed. 1993).

Statistics reflect that it is slow, but there is some improvement in gender equality in the workplace. According to a survey in 2005, 18 percent of 2,528 companies with more than 100 employees introduced the dual or plural career ladder system (Nijūisseiki Shokugyō Zaidan 2005). The 2003 government survey on 236 companies, which have introduced the plural career ladder system, shows that 44.5 percent of companies have no new female employee on the career track. Female employees occupied only 3 percent of the career track work force, although the number has increased from 2.2 percent in the survey in 2000. The 1998 survey showed 7.9 percent of new employees on the career track were female, while it was 11.4 percent in the 2003 survey (Kōseirōdōshō 2004c).

My interviewees see some improvement in the status of women in the workplace. When Michio was sent abroad as an advisor to foreign governments, government missions came from various countries, such as Canada, the U.S., Japan, China, and Poland. He recalls,

The most conspicuous thing was that there were no women in the missions from Japan, while more than 30% of the missions from Poland were women. However, when I was in Indonesia five years ago, I was surprised to see that about 20% of the mission from Japan were women and thought that Japan is changing.

In Masako’s workplace, a non-profit educational organization dealing with overseas exchanges, she seldom felt gender inequality. Although there were more male executives in the travel company, there were also female executives: many of them had an MBA from an overseas school. For her, it was a very comfortable environment. However, she and her
colleagues recognized that career oriented women with upward-mobility like them were not usually acceptable to Japanese society.

More than 95 percent of the job offers before the revision of the Employment Promotion Law in 2001 set age limits (Köseirōdōshō 2003). Although the revision, which stipulates employers’ duty to “make an effort” to modify the age limits on employment, and reduce job advertisements which define age limits, it is still common in Japan for employers to discriminate against applicants on account of age. Some of my interviewees regard 35 as the upper age limit for decent jobs.

Keiko’s reluctance in returning to Japan partly came from the age limits on employment. She says, “In Japan, hierarchical relations reflect on the usage of language, such as keigo (honorific language). If I worked in Japan, my boss would be younger than me. It may be awkward.” Takuya also comments on age limitation: “An employer tends to choose workers younger than a certain age even though they are less capable. That is why it is difficult to get a job even through temporary staffing if a person is over a certain age.”

4.5 The Intersystem Relations of Japanese Society

This section examines the interrelations among the family system, the education system, and the employment system by drawing on theoretical perspectives from Luhmann’s social systems theory and his concept of interpenetration. Luhmann defines social systems as autopoietic systems that use communication as their mode of reproduction. An autopoietic system refers to an autonomous unity where elements interact
with each other in such a way as to reproduce themselves and the relations among themselves (Luhmann 1995).

The central paradigm of Luhmann's social systems theory is "system and environment." System consists of a network of the same type of interrelated elements. When boundaries are defined, elements and events must be attributed either to the system or to the environment. His theory no longer interprets the distinction between open and closed systems as an opposition of types; system is both closed and open. While elements and events of a system never migrate to the environment, boundaries make elements and events of system and environment relate to each other, allowing cause-effect transgressions. Since a system is simultaneously closed and open, it is affected by environmental stimuli but only in accordance with its own mode of operation (Luhmann 1995).

Society is a system formed by "communication" and communication is the basal process constituting social systems. The media of communication include oral languages used in face-to-face interactions between Ego and Alter as well as mass media through writing, printing, and telecommunications. Society as a system is unable to exist without its environment, which includes other societies, the physical environment, and human beings (including nervous system, organic, and psychic systems). Since an entity can have an identity only by being different from others, the existence of the environment is indispensable for the system's identity. By creating and maintaining difference from the environment, the system is able to retain its identity and existence. The communicative events of a social system disappear from moment to moment and subsequent events are
continuously produced in order to maintain the difference between a social system and its environment (Luhmann 1995).

According to Luhmann, demarcation of separate social subsystems, each dealing with a specific function, such as politics, economy, law, education, religion, and family, is one of the characteristics of modern society. Unlike pre-modern society, where the primary mode of social differentiation consisted of unequal and hierarchical social subsystems, modern society is differentiated for each subsystem to solve problems in a specific function. Nevertheless, modern social subsystems are not completely independent but organically interrelate with each other (Luhmann 1977, 1989, 1995).

Luhmann employs the concept “interpenetration” in order to explain close intersystem relationships between autopoietic systems. If two or more systems contribute to mutual system formation and still retain their autonomy, it can be said that they interpenetrate each other. Interpenetration is not merely input/output relations. The interpenetration relationship is most evident between a society and its subsystems, between subsystems within a society, and between the social system and people’s psychic systems. The interpenetrating systems are environments for each other and a system is at the same time a penetrating system, which signals another system, and the receiving system, making use of such impetus for its system formation (Luhmann 1995; Kneer and Nassehi 2002).

Social subsystems within a society, such as the family system, the education system, the legal system, the political system, and the economic system, are environments for each other, which Luhmann calls “internal environment” within a society, in contrast with other environments of a society, such as human beings and other societies. Although they are
autonomous unity, social subsystems interpenetrate with each other by sending and receiving environmental stimuli or information, which affect their structural formation (Luhmann 1995). These ideas resonate with earlier anthropological discussions of ‘patterns’ or ‘patterns of culture’ the idea that different elements of a culture somehow ‘fit’ an overall pattern, and if they did not there would be pressure to conform, or change could occur if they were all changing consistently. Explaining this concept as it was used in anthropology, Creighton notes, “Culture involves a complicated network of interrelated elements. Once certain cultural ‘rules’ or patterns are established, other elements become tenable if they are consistent with these” (Creighton 1990: 293).

The family system, the education system, and the employment system after the Meiji Restoration (1868) have developed with close interpenetrations synergistically affecting each other. The education system under the government’s centralized control functioned as a major advocator of the *ie* ideology and the idea that the whole country is one great family bound by Confucian ethics such as loyalty, filial piety, and patriotism (Irokawa 1985: 299-304). The family system, which presented more heterogeneity within classes and regions in the Edo period, showed convergence under the *ie* ideology.

The family system based on the *ie* ideology also had a considerable impact on the employment system. Agnatic-cognatic primogeniture facilitated the shift of farming population into the workforce needed for rapidly developing industries. In the *ie* system, the status of householder, lineage, family name, and estate are usually inherited by the *chōnan* (eldest son). Therefore, a large number of workers were supplied from farming
villages, where those who were not *chōnan* migrated seeking employment opportunities (Fukutake 1997: 26).

The position of daughter in the *ie* system rendered daughters in the farming family as crucial actors in the development of light industries. Daughters were less valued as shown in the Japanese folk saying, “One to sell (the daughter), one to follow (the eldest son), and one in reserve (the younger son)” (Takaki 1989: 49). Daughters in the poor farming family were often sent to serve in the labor market in light industries and played a central role as wage labor in those industries (Ōkōchi 1958: 3-4). Lenz points out that there have been arguments on the significance of the “women’s role” for Japanese modernization and industrialization (Lenz 1996). As these arguments suggest, those poor family daughters played a significant role for Japanese modernization and industrialization by serving for light industries, which were the foundation of Japanese industrialization.

Despite industrialization, master-servant relationships based on familism persisted in minor commerce and industrial expertise (Fukutake 1997: 47-48). Moreover, the *ie* ideology was extended to employee/employer relations in large corporations. Corporate paternalism or a firm-as-family ideology was endorsed in order to alleviate unstable situations in the employment system during WWI, the period which experienced immense acceleration of industrialization. This ideology crystallized in the decade surrounding 1920 (Dore 1973: 396) and discouraged the formation of strong labor unions. Although after WWI, the Japanese labor movement began to be active, the unionization rate prior to WWII remained low.

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While the formation of the employment system received significant impact from the 
*ie* ideology which underpinned the family system, the employment system also contributed
to the transformation of the family system. Increasing employment opportunities in urban
areas, especially after WWI, brought about the growing migration of non-*chōnan* rural
men. This phenomenon is consistent with a long established Japanese system of “*dekasegi*”
(literally meaning to “go out to work”), which is a practice of going out from home to seek
temporary jobs in other areas. This movement resulted in multiplication of nuclear family
households.

The education system and the employment system also held close interrelations. The
introduction of the meritocratic system opened up government and white-collar occupations
to people with higher education. However, the multiple-track school system allowed only a
fractional number of children to go on to higher education (Hazama 1989: 155-156). Wage
inequality was evident in different academic backgrounds. Also, working conditions were
considerably different between the elite workers, who enjoyed privileged lifetime
employment, retirement grants, and other fringe benefits, and the non-elite workers
(Helvoort 1979: 21). These became pre-conditions of *gakureki shakai* (academic career-
oriented society) after WWII.

These interdependencies among social systems present fair examples of system
interpenetrations. They were distinct systems which specialised in different functions, such
as education, family, and employment. Nevertheless, they held close interrelations and
contributed to system formation for each other. The *ie* ideology, which was politically
promoted, served as critical media for interpenetrations among these systems.
The interpenetrations among these systems are also notable in the post WWII era. It is argued that post-war nuclearization of the family was not initially due to a radical shift from the *ie* system but to other factors such as industrial structural changes, a mass displacement of the population from rural to urban areas brought about by steep economic growth from the 1950s, and a demographic transition from high rates of both birth and infant mortality to high rates of birth and low rates of infant mortality (see Fuse 2002: 321; Yoneda 2002: 257; Ochiai 2004: 85-91).

Ochiai discusses that it was the persistence of the *ie* system, in which the *chōnan* holds inheritance rights, that sent non-*chōnan* members to the urban areas to establish their own nuclear family households (Ochiai 2004: 85-91). Although the major legal provisions, which supported the *ie* system were abolished, the practices and values based on the system, which had been embedded in people’s lives, remained functional, as my interviewees recognize. While the legal system is an influential environment for the formation of the family system, it is not the only environmental factor and other systems also affect the formation. Above all, people’s consciousness serves as a major contributive environment for the formation of social systems. The transformation of people’s consciousness, which had long been under the considerable influence of the *ie* ideology, would have needed more changes in other systems in its environment in addition to the legal system.

Later, however, more environmental changes, which include the development of nuclearization of family and Japan’s high economic growth, led to the shift of people’s consciousness and the gradual replacement of the *ie* based family into the conjugal based family, especially among urban people. The 1960s saw the popularization of *maihōmu-
shugi, which encouraged the couple-oriented lifestyles among urban middle class families. While the form of family centering on a couple, not on the ie, has become more prevalent among city-dwellers, the legacies of the ie system are still notable among older as well as rural people.

Most of my interviewees, of whom the majority are from urban areas, consider that their family is not based on the ie system. Even if they are chōnan (the eldest son) or chōjo (the eldest daughter), they do not feel pressured to head up the family, which might make it easier for them to emigrate. As the interviewees state, the majority of the contemporary urban families are more nuclear based. However, they also recognize the legacies of the ie system, such as agnatic-cognatic primogeniture and problematic yome (daughter-in-law)/shūtome (mother-in-law) relations. Their experiences also show regional and generational differences in people’s consciousness.

Both adherence to and the breakdown of the ie system within a family are seen in Masayuki’s parents’ marriage. Masayuki regards the ideology of the ie system as a reason for his parents’ divorce. His parents’ marriage, which was an arranged marriage, began to fall into ruin with his father’s family’s repressive treatment of his mother. They strongly pressured his mother to have a son because his father was the chōnan. Later, however, Masayuki’s aunt inherited his grandparents’ house, which greatly disappointed his mother who had expected the house to go to her husband since he was the chōnan. Similar events occurred among my other interviewees; in the cases of Satoru’s father and Mai’s father, who are chōnan, heirships also went to their siblings.
Generational and regional differences in the conception of the family system are also visible in Masako’s case. She assumes that her parents’ generation would retain the values of the *ie* system in that they will hope that the *chōnan* would head up their family. However, her parents would try to understand how the thinking of the younger generations differs. In Masako’s words,

My father may want his family’s name to continue since the family comes from the warrior class... My brother has only a daughter. While my father’s real feeling (*honne*) would want my brother to have a son, he would try not to expect such a thing of young people in these days. My mother has the same thinking. She always tells my father not to pressure us.

Masako’s husband is the *chōnan* of a family which have been farmers in the Shizuoka area for many generations. For them, the *chōnan* should succeed the family with ancestral land and preserve the family grave. Her mother-in-law says that equal inheritance of siblings is urban people’s thinking. His parents, who are not yet 65 and healthy, show an understanding of their son’s family living overseas and refrain from telling them that they should return to Japan to inherit the family’s estate. Yet, Masako guesses that this will change 10 or 20 years from now. She says, “I’m wondering what my parents-in-laws’ real feelings (*honne*) are.” While Masako is reluctant to follow the values of the *ie* system with the *chōnan*’s succession of the family and the *yome*’s subordination to her *shūtome*, some of her female friends in non-urban areas appear to feel the responsibility of being a *yome*.

While the influence of the *ie* ideology decreased on the family system, it remained a potent backbone for the employment system. Tona argues that despite the official abolition of the *ie* system in Civil Law after WWII, the *ie* ideology still survives in the ideal of Japanese organizations and exists as labor groups in large companies (Tona 1992: 158).
Companies were metaphorically formulated as *ie* for the workers and exercised powerful operative forces on their total lives and consciousness. This became an effective causal pressure for the production of various instruments, which further reinforced employees’ loyalty, devotion, and self-sacrifice, and established a firm hierarchical structure which granted authority to senior staff.

The three pillars of Japanese employment practices – enterprise unionism, the lifetime employment system, and the seniority-based wage system – are among the most powerful instruments reinforcing this. According to Shirai, the following are characteristics of enterprise unions: 1) Membership is limited to the regular employees of a particular enterprise; 2) in general, both blue- and white-collar workers are organized in a single union; and 3) union officers are elected from among the regular employees of the enterprise (Shirai 1983: 119). Hiroshi points out that a corporate union system hampers the function of labor unions. *Karōshi* (death by overwork) of Hiroshi’s coworkers who were labor union members exemplify the weak function of enterprise unions in terms of opposing company management. He notes,

Ironically, my coworkers who died from overwork [in the department store where he worked in Japan] were members of the labor union. In my department store, to be a member of the labor union is a prerequisite of being an executive. Therefore, the members of the labor union work harder than others. Doing usual work made them exhausted. In addition to it, members of the labor union need to work overtime for the union without pay.

It has been argued that the lifetime employment system and the seniority-based wage system make employees commit to their company, which hampers formation of labor unions capable of stronger bargaining power (Komatsyu 1985: 160). Also, Fukutake points
out that the formation of enterprise unions was adapted to fit familialistic corporate management, a social hierarchy which had remained since the pre-WWII period (Fukutake 1997: 107).

While the introduction of the lifetime employment system and the seniority-based wage system in large companies as measures for promoting employees' loyalty was already instituted during the pre-WWII period, they became standard corporate employment practices in the early 1950s. These practices, which offered job security until retirement and allowed individuals to enter a company only at the bottom of the hierarchy and to climb the vertical ladder over time, also enhanced employees' loyalty and their sense of belonging to their company. As Nakane says, a Japanese would likely state, "I belong to S Company," rather than simply identifying themselves as, "I am a filing clerk" (Nakane 1970), indicating workers' identification with their company was prominent.

An enterprise education system and a labor management system also served as instrumental in contributing to the generation of loyal employees. While an enterprise education system was introduced from the U. S. after WWII, it developed to adapt to a Japanese corporate system (Taniuchi 2002). Workers in a large company go through various socialization processes to transform them into efficient kigyojin (corporate person), such as Total Quality Control (TQC), Zero Defective Movement (ZD), the 5S Movement, and intensive trainings for new recruits. Exemplifying the last item, Kondo (1990: 76-115) describes a spiritual retreat new company employees participate in and Creighton (1995: 54-59) describes ordeals new company recruits must undergo together, in both cases for the purpose of creating a sense of collective bonding among company employees.
When Michio worked in a large oil company, he witnessed that ZD and the 5S Movement also functioned as effective labor management, which encouraged workers “voluntarily” to become dedicated kigyojin. He explains how they produced loyal workers: “Workers in a big company tend to be gradually transformed into kigyojin. Men who entered Toyota become Toyota men. Most of my colleagues who joined the company in the same year became completely kigyojin.” During his tenure at a large oil company, Michio experienced ZD, which educated workers to avoid a mistake in manufacturing. Also, the 5S Movement was common for the promotion of productivity by pounding into workers five virtues —seiri, seiton, seisō, seiketsu, and shitsuke (good organization, good order, cleaning, cleanliness, and discipline).

After-hours business entertaining and drinking sessions have also been well-known Japanese corporate practices promoting bonding experiences among employees. Allison discusses how Japanese corporations employ after-hours drinking sessions to create bonds among white-collar men and forge a masculine identity that suits the needs of their corporations. Companies are paying for their workers to be the type of men who will become productive and committed workers. Through this comprehensive socialization process for Japanese corporate employees, their companies become more than just a work place (Allison 1994). Yuji comments on his image of Japanese male workers: “Workers spend most of their time with their colleagues and bosses. They entertain clients and go to golf on the weekend.” Michio’s remark supports this: “In Japanese companies, many people work with restraint... Personal connections are often limited to those within a company. They go to golf, drink, and travel.”
While these employment practices – the three pillars, enterprise education system, labor management, and after-hour associations – were developed to comply with the Japanese corporate ethos which had been cultivated under the ie style of familistic values, they also worked to reinforce such values. In addition, ie values were not the only causal forces for the production of these practices. Capitalistic logic and economic rationalism in the pursuit of company profit also served as vital causal forces to establish the system which effectively produces dedicated hardworking employees. As a causal pressure from the external social environment, the 1973 Oil Shock, which required companies to actively promote business efficiency and rationalization for their survival, triggered the intensification of this system. It was after the Oil Shock that karōshi (death by overwork) surfaced as a social problem (Watanabe 1992: 45).

Long working hours have been pointed to as a major characteristic of the working conditions in Japan. Regular corporate employees often endure long working hours and render saabisu zangyō (unpaid overtime work). Shachiku, a buzzword coined in the end of 1980s with a play on the word kachiku (domesticated animal), is used to ridicule corporate employees who are constrained by their company and dedicate their lives to it.

Most of my interviewees point out this working condition. Hiroshi was exhausted from work at a department store. He recalls, “I worked for 366 days a year (laughing). Basically, there were few holidays. I worked late without overtime pay and had much stress at work.” Moreover, it is not uncommon that such working conditions as well as workers’ strong sense of duty lead to deterioration of their health or even death. Two of Mai’s friends quit their job due to deteriorated health by overwork. Mai contends, “In Japan,
people should work until they burst themselves. Though nobody forces people to work to that extent, they tend to feel responsible to do so. Also, quitting a job is detrimental to one’s career.” Hiroshi notes, “Because of a high degree of professionalism and a strong sense of responsibility, Japanese workers sometimes kill themselves due to overwork.”

In developing a cast of committed workers by providing incentive and education, companies are able to make their employees work long hours and do *saabisu zangyō* without supposedly forcing them to do so. Ninomiya contends that small group educational activities such as QC circles have functions to make employees’ initiative and incentive subsumed under the framework of corporate objectives, which is a mode of corporate control of employees’ individuality (Ninomiya 1992: 364).

Anthropological works on Japan describe the stringency of control and training in Japanese labor relations. Roberts’ 1983 participant-observation research at a large lingerie factory in Japan shows how permanent blue-collar women employees at a large lingerie company are disciplined to be efficient workers with various unwritten and written corporate rules (Roberts 1994: 43-55). Friedrich reports that newly hired young employees enter a phase of intensive training according to the needs of the company he researched (Furstenberg 1998). Hiroshi also notices this socialization process, saying, “In Japan, people are trained well after they enter a company’s service.”

While the Japanese employment system, a social subsystem of the society which holds the democratic constitution, is unable to use forced labor, it succeeded in producing workers called *kigyō senshi* (corporate warriors), who “voluntarily” worked hard and were willing to do *messhi hōkō* (self-sacrifice) for their company. These Japanese styles of
management systems won international attention after the mid-1970s as a recipe for economic growth (see Vogel 1980).

There exist close interpenetrations between the employment system and the family system. While these two systems, which are environments for each other, are autonomous, they are interdependent and contribute to each other synergistically in their structural formation. This is done by sending and receiving impetuses as a form of information produced through communicative events in each system. The impact of the Japanese employment system on the transformation of the family system was substantial. Allison finds that after-hour associations keep men together in relationships that are work-based and in an institutionalized setting where work life dominates over home life. Corporate entertainment acts to include their employees so totally in their jobs that their involvement with family is restricted (Allison 1994).

Although the husbands’ initial incentive of working hard was to provide sufficient financial security to their family for the establishment of happy maihōmu, their physical absence often led to their alienation from their families. Ayumi’s father, who often did *tanshin-funin*, is disinterested in home affairs and did little housework even when her mother worked as a substitute teacher. In contrast, Mika’s father helped with the housework although he was a very busy *sarariiman*. She realized that this was uncommon: “He was not a typical Japanese father who does nothing at home and waits for tea to be served... When I talked about my father to my friends, they were surprised. They said that their fathers do nothing at home.”
While fathers were granted an absolute authority in the ie system, the decline of their position in the post-WWII family is notable as seen in Mai's comment on the widespread negative image and children's disrespect of their fathers (also see Create Media 2001: 11-50). Mai respects her father, but admits the widespread negative image of Japanese fathers. She says,

The common image of Japanese father is bad. A daughter doesn't want to wash her clothes with her father's. Since many wives often complain about their husbands, children often disrespect their father. Fathers may also do things which are not respectable, though... There are two images of Japanese fathers: One is a man who is strict and yelling; the other is a loser – he is labelled as down-and-out man... Even though not many of my friends seem to put down their father, TV and other media talk about loser Oyaji [fathers].

The Japanese employment system also hampers the transformation of conventional gender roles within the family as well as at the workplace. Husbands' long working hours consequently minimise their sharing of child rearing and household chores. While the popularization of female higher education and increasing awareness about gender equality have created a stronger desire for careers in women, the burden of housework has forced many of them to abandon their careers as shown by the M Curve (see page 163). This fact also impedes the improvement of the status of women in the workplace and their service is often regarded as koshikake or temporary duty until marriage. The economic rift between male and female employees' wages inevitably lowers working wives' position as breadwinners. These conditions have compromised the efficacy of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL). Izumi observed that women in Japan needed to wait for some years to see the effect of the EEOL. She recalls, "My female cousin started to work when the EEOL was implemented in 1986. Her generation seemed to experience a transitional
period in many aspects. When she graduated from university, the EEOL was promulgated. However, the reality was not set.”

In no way less than the employment system and the family system, the education system holds major interpenetrations with these systems. In the employment of their workers and high-ranking officials, companies and public offices conventionally place a high priority on the university’s name value as it is established in the hierarchical ranking system rather than what people learned or accomplished at university. The fact that this educational background carries great weight not only on a person’s future career and economic status but also in terms of social status to the person intensified the examination race and *hensachi kyōiku* (education which puts emphasis on hensachi). This brought Japanese awareness of their country as a *gakureki shakai* (academic career-oriented society).

During his job-hunting, Takuya felt frustrated about how much companies weighed a university’s name value. Michio noticed that the graduates from the University of Tokyo in a large oil company where he worked tended to be promoted more than others even though they were not necessarily more capable. Excessive emphasis on university’s name value influences Masayuki’s perception. He says, “Since my father’s university was not prestigious, I have some feeling of inferiority about it.” He regards that the Japanese have a tendency to see educational background as a major criterion of a person’s value.

According to Masako, who entered middle school in the end of the 1970s, students in her generation went through the intense *hensachi kyōiku* and the competition in school entrance exams. Masayuki’s image of Japanese high school students is those preparing for
higher education, concentrating on studying heavily for entrance exams. He notes, “Studying for entrance exams is not learning but is robust training. It is learning techniques.”

While from the ideal point of view, the major function of the education system would be “education,” in practice “selection” also becomes a major function of the modern education system (see Luhmann 1989). Ishido points out the widespread critical discourse on the Japanese school system, which accuses the direct linkage of selection at school system to employment and social mobility and school’s function as a job-placement institution (Ishido 2000: 244). Such direct linkage and selection processes heavily relying on hensachi are the outcome of interpenetration between the education system and the employment system.

Moreover, the education system provides the foundation of the production for loyal and obedient employees. The education system works directly on the bodily and mental conditions of people (Luhmann 1989: 104). It has made a substantial impact on the structural formation of people’s psychic systems. The Japanese education system has developed in such a way that it cultivates children’s cooperativeness, group mindedness, conformity, and docility incorporating various disciplinary means. During school years, Japanese children learn these qualities of mind through a range of school activities and practices such as han (small group) activities (see Lewis 1989: 149-150; Creighton 1998b: 196-198), the emphasis on rentai sekinin (collective responsibility), training of orderly collective manners with various kinds of words of command, discouragement of students’
opinions, peer pressure, suppression of students’ individuality, and senpai/kōhai (senior/junior) relationships.

Ayumi, Mika, and Mai remember how harmony, collectivity, and cooperativeness were emphasized in school. Mai notes, “Even if a student wanted to do something alone, the situation made it difficult.” She recollects that group activities, such as the grade activities, class activities, and han activities, played major roles in her elementary school. Rentai sekinin, in which all members of the group take responsibility in the case of a member’s misconduct, was a common educational practice in the Japanese school system. An episode given by Mika tells the emphasis on rentai sekinin: “One day a student [in my high school class] hit a science teacher who insulted my class saying, ‘This class is inferior to apes.’ My homeroom teacher ordered all of my class to write our penitence.”

Especially, orderly collective manners trained with words of command, such as ‘kiritsu (stand up),’ ‘ki wo tsuke (stand straight),’ ‘mae ni narae (line up facing the person in front of you),’ ‘yasume (rest),’ ‘maware migi (‘right-about-turn’),’ and ‘migi e narae (‘right-dress’ meaning body positioned forward, head turned toward the right),’ hold an influence on my interviewees as collectivity cultivated at school. Ayumi recalls her schooldays, “When we did group activities, everybody was not supposed to deviate from the whole and was supposed to go along with others. During a school ceremony, people stood up immediately at the word of order ‘kiritsu!’” Mika felt aversion to such commanding styles: “I hated that we should line up doing ‘ki wo tsuke,’ ‘mae ni narae,’ and ‘yasume.” Until Masako noticed foreign students’ inability to line up straight and
maware migi, she did not realize that they are socialized to do this in Japan because it seems so natural to people in Japan.

Also, students are not usually encouraged to express their own opinions in class and are expected to give right answers to teacher’s questions. For my interviewees, the fostering of children’s ability to express their own opinions is one of the most impressive aspects of the Canadian education system in comparison to the Japanese one. Keiko comments,

What I felt very chagrined about after I came here was myself who very much hesitated to speak up in front of people [in class]. People here, no matter how young they are, have their own opinions and express them by raising their hand... It may be partly due to my personality. But I thought it might be because in Japan I was not in the education system which brings out individual opinions. Teachers always expected not creativity of students but right answers from them. So even if students had unique abilities, they may not have been able to develop them.

This comparison was also made by Ayumi: “Schools here [Canada] offer many opportunities to express [students’] own opinions in class, such as discussion and presentation... But middle and high schools I went to seldom had such things.”

Pressure for conformity comes not only from teachers but also from classmates. Ayumi recognized that peer pressure which suppressed speaking up in class was noticeable at her elementary school. Masayuki started to have a sense of shame and cared about how his friends would think about his behavior in his mid-teens, so even if he knew the answer to the teacher’s question, he kept quiet. Mai thinks that children go along with others for fear of being bullied. At a girl’s junior high school, Mai felt insecure in not following others. In her words,

If a girl had a better thing than others, she was begrudged. If a girl didn’t have a thing which others had, she was despised... We felt pressured to be a fan of J league [a
Japanese professional soccer league opened in 1993] even though we didn’t know about soccer... If a girl expressed a different opinion from others, she was attacked or excluded. So girls tried to accommodate themselves to the majority opinion to get along with them. It is derukui wa utareru (“the nail that sticks out gets hammered down”). That kind of thing was prominent in junior high. Girls behaved such until the second year of high school. After that, they grew and focused more on their own things and study.

Masayuki also notices that the Japanese education system tries to standardize children and avoid creating underachievers, which in turn suppresses students’ individuality. Satoru contends that although education reforms in Japan seek to create a system which fosters children’s individuality and creativity, it would be difficult in the current situation of Japan. He contends,

In Japan, [the education system] is standardized. Since the Japanese have a standardized way of thinking, they receive education corresponding to it. Though schools in Japan try to reform the education system, parents send their children to juku (private cram school) in order to meet a standardized ethos...

Satoru regards the standardized education system as beneficial for Japanese society and the economy. He notes, “Employers have less risk to hire people who are incapable because such a system creates many standardized people... However, the system is stressful for children who cannot catch up with average levels.”

Moreover, the rigidity of age-based hierarchy called senpai/kōhai (senior/junior) relationship is inculcated into them through school club activities. Ayumi experienced the senpai/kōhai relationship, in which senpai gave orders to kōhai with an air of authority, when she belonged to a music club in junior high school. She remembers that she took it for granted. People’s psychological make-up developed in such a controlled school
environment is well adapted to disciplinary processes and corporate cultures after employment.

In these ways, the education system, the family system, and the employment system in Japanese society have developed interpenetrating with each other by sending and receiving information, which affects their own structural formation, from other systems. The interpenetrating relationships also involve other social systems. An intensification of the examination system increased the demand for juku (private cram schools), which made the juku industry one of the largest industries of Japanese society (see Rohlen 1983). In order to pay for educational expenses at both school and juku for their children, fathers work hard due to conventional gender roles at both home and workplace. A father's physical absence at home often causes emotional distance between him and his wife and children and strengthens the mother-child bond. The gender roles tend to make it difficult for mothers to find their sense of purpose in anything other than childrearing. This situation, as well as the intensification of competition for entrance exams, often led to mothers’ devotion to their children’s education, which resulted in the kyōiku mama phenomenon, especially in the middle-class. Masako’s mother exemplifies a middle-class housewife, who tried to find a sense of purpose by applying herself to her children’s education. In Masako’s words,

My mother could be called a kyōiku mama… She has been a full-time housewife. For her, her children’s education was a stage where she could shine. There are such kind of mothers, aren’t there? They don’t have their own career but think they will shine if their children go to a good school… My mother may have tried to verify her own value in life through her husband’s promotion and her children’s schooling.
While parents hope their children will have “nobi nobi or free, unencumbered development” (Creighton 1994: 47), they also supported the examination race by pushing their children to study hard and sending them to juku. Satoru’s remark reveals such parents’ attitude;

Even though the government says ‘Let’s cut classes on Saturdays,’ parents send their children to juku on Saturdays. Though school hours were reduced in order to make [school education] more relaxed because it was too rigorous, parents send their children to juku. Therefore, the situations have not changed as a whole.

After WWII, Japanese social systems have often adjusted themselves to correspond with the aim of “economic growth,” which has been the highest priority for the post-WWII Japan. Thus, the national goal of economic growth served as a medium, which promotes the interpenetrations among Japanese social systems. This then has also hindered each system to focus on its primary function. This is especially notable in the family system and the education system. Families often sacrifice their loving relations in order to keep up with social economic standards. The education system emphasizes the production of future workers who are easily manageable for employers rather than fostering children’s individual capabilities.

These tendencies were difficult to change during the high economic growth period from the mid-1950s to the early 1990s even though each system presented dysfunctional conditions previously mentioned, such as domestic violence, *shufu shōkōgun* (wives’ psycho-somatic symptoms and depression), *ikuji noirōze* (child-rearing anxiety neurosis), *kateinai rikon* (so-called ‘divorce within the family’ referring to couples who continue to live together and do not divorce but no longer have a basis of relationship), *juken jigoku*
(exam hell), kōnai bōryoku (school violence), teachers' corporal punishment, school refusal, and ijime (bullying). However, since the 1990s, especially after the burst of the bubble economy, various shifts in systems' structural formations have become noticeable. Prolonged recession led to corporate downsizing, dismal job prospects, and the debilitation of the lifetime employment system and the seniority-based wage system. These and the shifts of youngsters' values have increased the population of fritaa and NEET (people Not in Employment, Education, or Training). While the marriage rate and the birth rate are steadily decreasing, the divorce rate including jukunen rikon (middle age divorce) and the trend to delay marriage are increasing. Despite the introduction of yutori kyōiku (more relaxed education) in the early 2000s, the school system still faces a host of problems, including gakkyū hōkai (disruption and lack of order in an elementary school classroom) and recurrent suicides of children who experienced ijime. Responding to this situation, The Abe cabinet (Abe became Prime Minister in 2006) established the Education Reconstruction Council in 2006. In 2006, the amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education, which is seen as a continuation of reactionary reforms to the post-WWII reforms directed by GHQ/SCAP, stipulates the cultivation of morality, respect of tradition, and patriotism as the aims of education. This was the first amendment of this law since its enactment in 1946 and has been highly controversial among people in Japan. In particular, a high percentage of educators are against it due to its nationalistic nature.
4.6 Escape from the Web of Interrelations of Social Systems

In chapter three, I discussed the push and pull factors of my interviewees’ immigration to Canada by categorizing major factors, influencing their decision for the immigration. This means that the push and pull factors are not monothetic, but consist of multiple issues in their home and host societies, even though many migration studies focus on some specific factors such as political, economic, and gender problems. This chapter, which examined the interpenetrations among three of the major contributing systems to my interviewees’ push and pull factors, further suggests that such issues do not independently exist but hold close interrelations. Also, the analysis indicates their interpenetrations are instilled into the development of each system. Through this examination, it appears more realistic to see the push and pull factors as consisting of multiple factors intertwined with each other, rather than reducing them into specific problems.

Various social phenomena, which have become prominent in Japan, such as friitaa, NEET, delayed marriage, increased divorce, low birth rate, gakkyū hōkai, school refusal, kōnai bōryoku (school violence), ijime, hikikomori, and suicide, can be seen as means of escape from, or resistance to social systems; Friitaa and NEET from the employment system; delayed marriage, increased divorce, and low birth rate from the family system; and gakkyū hōkai, school refusal, children’s violence, and ijime from the education system.

However, as seen in this chapter, those systems are closely interrelated. This indicates the difficulty of escaping from and resistance to restraints of social systems because these restraints do not come from each system but come from the intricate interrelations among various social systems. Therefore, escaping from one system
inevitably affects aspects of social life in the other systems. For instance, if a man decides to be a friita seeking more private time and yutori by not being completely involved with the existing Japanese employment system, he would often find it difficult to form his own family, only to end up delaying marriage or staying single. As discussed in this and previous chapters, the Japanese employment system often hampers people from seeking both working with yutori and having financial stability in order to form a family unit.

Escaping from or resistance to one system consequently sacrifices the aspects of social life in the other social systems. As a result, people tend to live in undesirable social systems and develop frustration and dissatisfaction with their life. While this would be universal for any society, when the social systems are intricately-intertwined with each other as in Japan, people might feel frustration more often since the attempt of escape or resistance results in the significant detriment of their entire social life. They may feel trapped in a web of such intertwined systems, feeling a sense of powerlessness due to lack of control of their own destiny and management of their own lifestyles. Heisoku-kan (a sense of no way out, deadlock) is a word often used to describe this contemporary sentiment in Japanese society.

My interviewees’ narratives suggest that they feel that they can construct their own lives from scratch with less social constraints in Canada. They are well aware that their position as immigrants and the language barrier is a source of limitation for social mobility in their host society and seem to understand that such limitation makes it difficult for them to be prominent and influential figures or millionaires in their new homes. The hope of the majority of my interviewees is quite modest: to have a decent life and form a happy family
with *yutori* in a favorable environment. They feel that it is not easy to attain such a modest and simple wish in Japan but that this is more likely in Canada.

In Japan, people are legally and politically granted equal and democratic rights to seek their own lifestyles. There is no legal class system. The country is often seen as an economically affluent society with relatively less disparity in the quality of life of its population. Although this conception is not false, it has tended to apply only to the population who follow certain life courses, which are regarded as “normative” for people in Japan, that is, people who obediently follow the existing social systems. While official suppression to people’s lifestyles is not really overt, people often feel oppression from something invisible. Hiroshi remarks, “The Japanese are not forced to conform to others and to be spiritually poor, but lead their life by being bound to something invisible.”

While escaping from one social system without affecting other aspects of social life is difficult, there are at least three measures for escaping from the entire social system: *hikikomori* (social withdrawal), suicide, and emigration. The first two have been notable social phenomena in Japan after the 1990s. Obviously, they have negative consequence of abandoning entire social lives. On the other hand, although emigration makes it possible for people to escape from social systems of their home society, it puts them into an unfamiliar social system of the host society. Physical relocation from one society to another is the commencement of struggle with new social systems.

During the period of liminal stage of transition from home to host society, immigrants need to expend effort to learn new systems and adapt to them. However, they are not yet fully incorporated within these new systems. This situation provides them with a
sense of liberation from social constraints. When they actually face new systems after becoming familiar with them, some realize the difficulties of living in the systems and may choose repatriation, like one third of my interviewees who returned to Japan after our interviews. Unlike peoples who emigrated because of politically or economically adverse circumstances in their home society, the situations of Japan, in which people still enjoy relative political stability and economic affluence, would make Japanese immigrants attracted to repatriation when they encounter difficulties in their host society.

While Luhmann's theory provides a useful perspective for analyzing the web of interrelated social systems, the Foucaultian notion of governmentality also sheds insight for examining the ways power in these interrelated social systems impose upon people. Ong defines the notion of governmentality as "the deployment of modern forms of (nonrepressive) disciplining power by the state – especially in the bureaucratic realm – and other kinds of institutions that produce rules based on knowledge/power about populations" (Ong 1999: 264). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the notion of governmentality is valuable for the study of migration by providing a perspective to view migration as a strategy for escaping from the negative influence of social regimes (Ong 1999).

The notion of governmentality was developed from Foucault's discussion of biopower and its related term biopolitics. "Biopolitics" is a modern power technology with an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls through which the biological processes, such as health, sanitation, birthrate, longevity, race, are supervised, for the "well-being" of populations (Foucault 1990, 1997). It contrasts with another modern technology over the human body, that is, "anatomo-politics," or disciplines which produce "docile" and
efficient bodies through school, workshop, and other disciplinary institutions and means (Foucault 1990).

Biopower centers on these two modern politics and is led by “an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations” (Foucault 1990: 140). The notion of biopower was presented in Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*, which examines the historical effects of power in society on discourses on sex. Foucault coined this term to designate “what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life” (1990: 143). According to Foucault, Western society in the eighteenth century began to affirm that its future was tied to each citizen’s gender; gender and sex became ‘police matters’ that needed to be regulated through public discourse. The production of truth came to be centered on sexuality because it was a useful instrument for politically controlling a population (Foucault 1990).

Foucault elaborated his discussion of biopower and biopolitics into the notion of governmentality by tracing the history of the modern art of government. He defines governmentality as

[T]he ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principle form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security (Foucault 1991: 102).

Over a long period of time in the West, governmentality has been steadily becoming preeminent over other forms of power techniques, such as sovereignty and discipline, and has produced various governmental apparatuses and developed a whole complex of *savoir*
(knowledge) (Foucault 1991). According to Ong, governmentality “maintains that regimes of truth and power produce disciplinary effects that condition our sense of self and our everyday practices” (Ong 1999: 6).

We can see excellent examples of governmentality as well as biopower in the practices of the employment system, the education system, and the family system of Japanese society. As Michio remarks on his experiences: “Men who enter Toyota become Toyota men;” loyal and obedient workers have been successfully produced during the socialization processes in the Japanese corporate system. He recalls the Zero Defect Movement and the 5S Movement that inculcated workers with the five virtues: good organization, good order, cleaning, cleanliness, and discipline. He experienced this during his service for a large long-time established company in Japan. He comments,

Such things were prescriptions for labor control in Japanese factories after WWII. Quality control, production control, and labor control are interrelated with each other. Due to such movements, Japanese factories grew into first class entities. Workers were controlled through labor management. They could not be self-assertive, and instead were cast in a mould. When people are in such an environment, they often believe it to be the right way. Yet, I was always detached from such company indoctrinations. More educated workers tended to be more like me. My company gathered together such intelligentsias and gave us a strict education. They said, "You people are half-baked intelligentsias! ...You must contribute to our company more!" They tried to train us thoroughly. I guess other large Japanese companies did similar things. Though such training had a brainwashing effect on us, I was deprogrammed in a week.

Through various educational training regimens and other activities, which encourage workers to take the initiative, Japanese corporate employees internalize the corporate ethos of their company and become loyal and hard working.
A common corporate practice of having employees associate together after-hours also well exemplifies the power relations in which people are incorporated into a work-based lifestyle through activities that appear beneficial for workers’ well-being. Ayumi notices the persistence of this practice: “My father works extraordinarily long hours. Afterwards he often goes to drink... Japanese workers have been constrained by companies. Things are changing, but I think this still persists.” Similarly, Allison argues Japanese companies employ the practice of after-hours drinking sessions to produce hard working and dedicated employees through the creation of bonds among the men and forging of masculine identities (Allison 1994).

As Masako and other interviewees point out, training in Japanese schools to produce orderly manners in groups by using oral commands, such as ‘kiritsu (stand up),’ ‘kiwotsuke (stand straight),’ ‘mae ni narae (line up facing the person in front of you),’ ‘yasume (rest),’ ‘maware migi (‘right-about-turn’),’ and ‘migi e narae (‘right-dress’—body forward, head turned toward the right),’ is another vivid example of biopower, which exercises people’s bodies and selves into “docile” subjects. Foucault (1995) points out that “examination” infuses vital disciplinary power onto people’s bodies and selves. This can be seen in the way the role of examination in the Japanese school system has been a significant influential force upon Japanese lives and selves.

The ie ideology serves a critical role in the establishment of the family system within the Japanese modern state. This is a perfect example of governmentality by a modern state, by which the state guides its population toward a particular ideal of family life and relations. With this ideology, people with diverse backgrounds during the Edo period have been
transformed since the Meiji Restoration into a united population loyal to the modern Japanese nation-state. I will discuss this more extensively in the next chapter.

These are just a few examples of governmentality and biopower at work in the Japanese employment, education, and family systems. As this chapter's examination of these systems has shown, their complex interrelations significantly augment their power over people.

By using the concept of governmentality, along with the concepts of biopower and biopolitics, Foucault attempts to reveal how modern states have exercised their power over the bodies and selves of their populations in more subtle and complicated ways than the sovereign subjugation of subjects. The notion of governmentality suggests that in the modern era, state control has been achieved through a network of intricately-intertwined power relations and complex interrelations of power and knowledge, in contrast to subjugation through a controller/controlled model which denotes unilateral power relations. Moreover, during the process of making people subservient, power exercised externally on people is less noticeable than subjugation; people internally regulate themselves in the web of power interrelations. Foucault’s discussion of governmentality suggests the difficulty of escaping from such a web of power interrelations.

In this chapter, through an examination of how social systems in Japan are intricately-intertwined, I have shown the difficulty of escaping from the restraints of social systems because these restraints do not come from any individual system but from the complex interrelations among the various social systems.
Despite this, my study suggests that individual agency has power that can attempt to circumvent governmentality. As presented in chapter two, my newcomer interviewees display a high degree of agency and volition as they strategize over their migrations. This resonates with Ong's argument in her study of Chinese transnational migrants and their notion of flexible citizenship. She remarks,

I view transnationalism not in terms of unstructured flows but in terms of the tensions between movements and social orders. I relate transnational strategies to systems of governmentality – in the broad sense of techniques and codes for directing human behaviour – that condition and manage the movements of populations and capital (Ong 1999: 6).

Ong recognizes a high degree of human agency among members of contemporary Chinese diasporans and their flexibility in positioning themselves geographically and socially in order to evade full submission to the governmentality of states, cultures, and capital (Ong 1999). The newcomers in my study also exercise their agential power as they attempt to construct their preferable lifestyles, by escaping from the Japanese governmentality, which produces entangling social constraints, and venturing into new social environments.

The tension between agency and structure is among the central subjects in social science. One side of the debate, exemplified by some interpretations of structural-functionalism, suggests the ontological supremacy of social structure over individual humans. Another view, including methodological individualism, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology, emphasizes the capacity of human agency which exercises volition to construct and reconstruct its world. On the other hand, the majority of social theory attempt to reconcile the tension by presenting the complex interplay of agency and structure, as
seen in a dialectical relationship between objective structure and habitus proposed by Bourdieu (1977) and the theory of structuration by Giddens (1984).

This chapter suggests the significance of the overwhelming constraining power of social systems in Japan by examining the web of their interrelations and governmentality. At the same time, however, the capacity of human agency which attempts to circumvent the heavy constraints from social systems is well presented in this and previous chapters through the experiences of Japanese migrants who acted with their volition and made their own choice to immigrate from Japan to Canada in order to build a new foundation for their self-actualizing lifestyles.
CHAPTER V

Complex vs. Simple: the Interviewees’ Perception of Japan vs. Canada

5.1 “Double Complexity” of Japanese Society

The preceding chapter presented the complexity of factors which induced my interviewees’ immigration from Japan to Canada through the examination of interrelations of Japanese social systems. This chapter will discuss this complexity from a different perspective by focusing on the interviewees’ perception of complex Japan vs. “simple” Canada. The interviews with twelve Japanese newcomers in Vancouver show that most of them prefer Canada to Japan for their residence because Canadian life is seen as more relaxing. The greater relaxed sense comes from both the physical and psychological environment. In terms of the physical environment, while Vancouver fulfills urban functions, it also offers a much more favorable environment for spaciousness, nature, and housing conditions compared to Japanese urban areas. In terms of the psychological environment, the Japanese newcomers and their families can escape from various Japanese socio-cultural constraints and restrictions including long working hours, hierarchical relations, examination pressures, interference from other people, sekentei (public image), pressures to conform, the suppression of individualism, ageism, and gender roles. Also, in Canada, they feel that they can spend more quality time with their families.

“Yutori,” a relaxed way of life liberated from constraints and mental pressure, and “simple” are the words, which epitomize my interviewees’ subjective recognition of Canadian society in comparison with Japanese society. The simplicity of Canadian life, which they perceive, provides them a sense of ease and pulls them to Canada. Izumi claims.
The problems which people here have are more basic for humans. They are not complex like those in Japan. They are very simple. But I feel such things are human (ningen-rashii)... I probably feel uncomfortable in Japan because I want to lead a simple life but I cannot do this in Japan. It was hard for me... I feel things are simpler in Canada.

She feels that although she needs energy to cope with difficulty in language and socio-cultural practices in Canada, the energy she spent due to the complexity of Japan is more significant. Mika also feels that the simplicity of Canadian life offers a healthier environment. She comments, “I am not exposed to much information [in Canada]. So [life] tends to be simple... [In Japan] there are so many things to compare with. There are many options... Here, we have fewer options as if there are only two options. So [life] is simple.” The amount of information and diverse options which Japanese life provides her underscore her perception of simplicity of Canadian life.

From an objective perspective, Vancouver is by no means a society which is characterized as simple. This society incorporates a multitude of issues as a post-industrial society. In particular, the state policy of multiculturalism, which embraces people with diverse cultural backgrounds, has presented complicated issues. Nevertheless, Japanese newcomers often subjectively experience Canada as simple in comparison with their home society. Their sense of release from the complexity of Japanese society as well as their liminal position in Canada as newcomers not yet fully enmeshed in a new social complexity would contribute to such judgements. This confounds the common Western dichotomy of West/Others, which usually designates West as complex and Others as simple. What
instigates Japanese people to project this image of Japanese society as highly complex and Canada as “simple”?

Societies in this modern world are increasing the level of their complexity, which also potentially increases the level of people’s stress. As discussed in the previous chapter, the inextricable interrelations of Japanese social systems enhance the complexity of the society. Such social systems possibly exercise effective restraining power on people since the restraints do not originate from any individual system but from the complex interrelations among the various social systems.

Moreover, the coexistence of “modern” and “pre-modern\(^\text{18}\)” elements in contemporary Japan, which I discuss in this chapter, can be seen as another source of complexity. The contradictory messages from society, which attempt to incorporate pre-modern social aspects into the modern social system, have contributed to the augmentation of the complexity of Japanese society and often make people in Japan feel caught in a dilemma in choosing their lifestyles as well as their behavior in everyday interactions. As discussed in the double bind theory, which was introduced by Bateson (1972), the constant exposure to contradictory messages tends to cause psychological burdens on people. Escape from this situation would contribute to people feeling the sense of ease and comfort and \textit{yutori}, a relaxed way of life liberated from constraints and mental pressure.

\(^{18}\) Here, I use the word “pre-modern” not in a sense which designates “behind” or “backward” in the evolutilional process of society but in a sense which refers to different states from modern rationality and democratic individualism. In this sense, it has the meaning of “non-modern” or “pre-industrial.”
Differences in the trajectory of modernization between Japan and Western countries have drawn the attention of anthropological inquiry. Anthropological and other studies on Japan often focus on the non-modern nature of Japanese practices, ideas, and institutions ubiquitously existing in the modern state country. Clammer (1995) notices the amalgamation of traditional, modern, and postmodern within contemporary Japanese society. Nakane (1970) recognizes that hierarchical relations based on the “vertical principle” are still critical to the organization of modern Japan. According to Creighton (1998a), department stores, which have represented the “modern” in Japan since the beginning of the twentieth century, have not only domesticated the meanings surrounding foreign customs and material goods but have also played a role as curators of Japanese tradition, creating pre-industrial communal imagery and re-creations of the past. Swyngedouw (1993) also discusses how large Japanese companies, such as Mitsubishi, Hitachi, and Toyota, which symbolize Japanese industrialization, are actively utilizing traditional Shinto rituals.

Due to the controversial nature of the terms “modern” and “pre-modern,” a clarification of my usage of these two terms in this chapter is needed before further proceeding with my argument. Ferguson (2003) offers useful guidance for the discussion of the shift of understandings of the term modern. He presents the pluralism of the meanings of “modernity” and how this term yields different discussions, among which are modernization theory and “alternative modernization.” Modernization theory was constructed as a developmentalist evolutionary narrative in the days of de-colonization and movements of national independence after WWII and served as a scheme for nation-
building with economic development. This theory takes the progressive nature of historical time for granted and figured modernity as a universal telos. The theory premises that, “as the ‘backward nations’ advanced, in this optic, a ‘modern’ form of life encompassing a whole package of elements would become universalized” (Ferguson 2003: 2). These elements include industrial economies, scientific technologies, liberal democratic policies, nuclear families, and secular worldviews (Ferguson 2003). Therefore, in the modernization scheme,

[T]hings like industrial economies and modern transportation and communications systems necessarily “came with” political democracy; a transition from extended to nuclear families, from communal to individual identities; the rise of bounded, monadic individuals; the secularization of world view; the rise of scientific rationalism and critical reflexivity, etc (Ferguson 2003: 10).

While these developmentalist models have been losing their credibility, the shift of understandings of the modern broadened and pluralized this concept and produced the notion of “alternative modernities,” which especially anthropologists have begun to focus on lately. Many anthropologists have dismissed sequential stages of modernization and claim the contingency of history and a variety of coeval paths to “alternative modernization.” With this notion, the notion of the modern is no longer automatically connected with the West. Ferguson says, “It is now well established that so-called ‘traditional’ elements can fit together with the various elements of an archetypical modern industrial society without any necessary contradiction” (Ferguson 2003: 11). He also explains the case of alternative modernity in East and Southeast Asia,

East and Southeast Asian versions of alternative modernity have mostly argued for the possibility of a parallel track, economically analogous to the West but culturally distinctive. Broadly, the idea has been that it is possible to achieve a “First World”
standard of living, while retaining "Asian values," or maintaining a more restricted
notion of individual rights, or avoiding the West's perceived moral vices, etc
(Ferguson 2003: 12).

Japan is among the nations that represent these versions of "alternative modernity."
Hendry argues that anthropologists who study Japan are well qualified to join in the debate
about the efficacy of the "convergence theory," the supposition that the more industrialized
or "modern" we get, the more alike our social life would become. She finds that at the level
of the complex, "modern" industrialized society, Japanese ideals and institutions are not
unlike those recognized in other industrialized societies. In practice, however, these work at
the grassroots level in quite dissimilar manners (Hendry 1998).

As Ferguson claims that "traditional" elements can fit together with the various
elements of a modern industrial society without any necessary contradiction, Japanese
modern social systems have developed by incorporating "traditional" elements, such as the
ie system and hierarchical relations, without seeming contradictions. These elements even
buttressed the development of the Japanese industrial economy as discussed in the previous
chapter.

On the other hand, this process also created contradictory messages for the members
of Japanese society. In terms of the combination of "modern" economic and technological
elements with "non-modern" values, it appears these can fit together without significant
incongruence if we look at prominent economic and technological developments of Japan.
However, I believe that the coexistence of "modern" and "non-modern" elements is not
only limited to the combination of "modern" economy and technologies with "non-
modern" Asian (in this case Japanese) values and practices as suggested by Ferguson. The
coexistence also includes the combination of “modern values” with “non-modern values”; for instance, the concomitance of liberal democratic policies with a more restricted notion of individual independence, and that of individual identities with communal identities. Moreover, democratic views and the advocacy of modern individuality coexist with social structures based on hierarchical relations, which tend to restrict people’s individuality. These kinds of coexistence are often conveyed as contradictory messages to the members of Japanese society, which cause psychological burdens for them to varying degrees. In the modern world, people experience an increasing level of complexity imposed by their society, and Japan has its own mode of complexity, which often causes psychological burdens for its members in this particular socio-cultural setting. Japanese complexity can be referred to as “double complexity”; complexity stemming from modern society and complexity developed from the amalgamation of modern and non-modern elements which contradict each other.

In order to elucidate how the contradictory coexistence of modern and non-modern elements incorporated into Japanese society complicates people’s experience, this chapter presents my original analysis of the trajectory of Japanese modernization by tracing Japanese state formation after the Meiji Restoration drawing on Luhmann’s social systems theory. While Luhmann’s theory receives high recognition in Japanese academia, few works have used his theory for the historical analysis of a specific society. Therefore, I believe this analysis contributes to both the study of Japanese society and to the application of Luhmann’s theory. After discussing the trajectory of Japanese modernization, I explain how the orientation of uchi/soto (inside/outside), ura/omote (back/front), and
honme/tatema (real feelings/public stance) has also facilitated the incorporation of paradoxical themes in Japanese society. Then, I discuss how contradictory messages within Japanese society possibly place psychological burdens on its members. Bateson’s double bind theory is used for this discussion. Finally, I conduct re-examination of the push and pull factors of my interviewees’ emigration from the perspective of the “double complexity” of Japanese society. My experiences and knowledge as an overseas Japanese national, born and raised in Japan, combined with my keen observation of Japanese society as an ethnographer, also has contributed to my original interpretive analysis which is conducted in this chapter.

In the following analysis, I speak of “modern” as a form of life encompassing the elements such as industrial economies, scientific technologies and rationalism, democratic policies, nuclear families, individual identities, monadic individuals, and secular worldviews (see Ferguson 2003). The term “pre-modern” is used to designate a temporal sequence of people’s life forms, not to imply a hierarchical order of historical time. The term refers to a form of people’s life prior to the modernization of the Japanese nation-sate.

5.2 Incorporation of Pre-Modern and Modern

As Latour (1991) argues in his work We Have Never been Modern our modern world is actually full of the hybrids of “modern” and “non-modern” elements; the inclusion of contradictory aspects is not an issue limited only to Japanese society. How to cope with such complexity and contradiction would be one of the major challenges for contemporary
societies. The discussion in this chapter presents how such inclusion has occurred in a particular society.

5.2.1 Trajectory of Japanese Modernization

According to Luhmann (1977, 1989, 1995), there are three modes of social differentiation: segmentation, stratification, and functional differentiation. Segmentation, such as the division of society according to descent and settlement, is the primary mode of social differentiation in archaic societies. Growth in size and complexity of the social system result in the conditions in which the actual interaction between all members of the society is unattainable, leading inevitably to stratification. Through stratification, the society is differentiated into unequal and hierarchical subsystems, which result in unequal distribution of wealth and power. The most recent outcome of socio-cultural evolution, functional differentiation, is the primary mode of social differentiation in modern society. Each subsystem concentrates on one specific function, such as economy, law, politics, education, religion, and family. It is equipped and specialized to solve problems in a specific function (Luhmann 1977, 1989, 1995).

Radical transformation of the Japanese social system after the Meiji Restoration (1868) shifted the dominant mode of social differentiation of Japanese society from stratification to functional differentiation as a response to the rapidly increased level of social complexity. However, Japan, which still retained pre-modern social structures and corresponding elements of thought in people’s consciousness, had insufficient foundations for functionally differentiated systems with solid boundaries. Through the examination of
Japanese society for this dissertation, I came to notice that the *tennō-sei* (emperor system) ideology and the *ie* ideology played a significant role in coping with this dilemma and in establishing a solid unified nation as common grounds for functionally differentiated systems. These ideologies also strengthened the interpenetrations among those systems in their structural formations.

Until the implementation of the national seclusion policy (*sakoku*) in the early Edo period (1603-1867), Japan had steadily increased its complexity by actively introducing cultures and systems from other countries, especially China. It developed its own culture and experienced transition from archaic to pre-modern: from the Jōmon period (3000BC to 300BC) to the Edo period.\(^\text{19}\) The national seclusion policy from 1639 to 1854 limited the stimulus from external social environments. However, during the isolation period of more than two centuries, gradual socio-cultural changes and developments had occurred over time, stimulated by various internal and external factors. These factors included the internal conflicts between classes, such as the advance of merchants' power and peasant revolts, the influences of the physical environment including natural disasters\(^\text{20}\) and famines, and the introduction of cultures and technologies which were possible during the national seclusion period, including Western medicine and science. Nevertheless, such simulations had not reached far enough to see the dissolution of the feudal system by the Tokugawa Shogunate.

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\(^{19}\) The Jōmon period (3000BC to 300BC) with hunting and gathering as the primary mode of subsistence was followed by the Yayoi period (300BC to 300AD) with agriculture as the primary mode of subsistence. Imperial rule began around 300AD, which shifted to the feudal system ruled by the *samurai* class around 1000AD.

\(^{20}\) The 1855 Ansei Earthquake (M6.9 on the Richter scale) that killed 4,300 people in Edo (present Tokyo), which occurred after the Ansei Tokai Earthquake (M8.4) and the Ansei Nankai Earthquake (M8.4) in 1854, especially caused social unrests toward the end of the Edo period.
The arrival of Commodore Perry’s fleet in 1853 led to Japan’s re-opening. In the face of the highly advanced technology and military power of the West, Japan abandoned its seclusion policy held since 1639. This caused an abrupt increase in exposure to influence from external social systems, specifically Western powers, which induced disorder and conflict to the Japanese social system. These include the Ansei no taisei (1858-1859), a government purge which purged more than 100 people (eight were executed) who opposed the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Amity and Commerce, the samurai coup attempts (1860, 1862, 1863), the Satsu-Ei Sensō (war between Satsuma Domain and England) (1863), and a range of other anti-Shogunate movements. The increased complexity resulted in unprecedented policy alternatives for Japan, i.e. modernization or maintenance of the feudal system; survival of the Tokugawa Shogunate or restoration of the tennō (emperor); and exclusion of the Western powers or building a Japan-West alliance. The pressure from external social environments were understood as imminent threats from Western powers by Japan, which already had internal conflicts and a fair degree of complexity, and led to the increase in the level of entropy, that is state of disorganization, of the Japanese social system.

According to Luhmann (1995), the term “complex” refers to the situation in which it is no longer possible to connect every element with every other element in a system due to the increase in the number of elements. In this sense, most systems can be said to be complex, because a system must remain very small in order for it to exist with every element being connected with every other one. Due to complexity, the process of relating elements needs “selections” that determine which elements are connected by excluding the available possibility of other elements (Luhmann 1995).
The situation when every connection between individual elements is equally possible is called “entropy.” If a system increases its complexity, it also increases the level of entropy. An entropic situation jeopardizes the existence of a system because it leads to excessive disorder and indeterminacy. In order to maintain its existence, a system tries to avoid such a situation through complexity reduction by selecting which elements should be connected to the previous elements (Luhmann 1995).

In order to continue its existence faced with the immediate increase in the level of entropy and the state of disorganization of Japanese society in the last days of the Tokugawa Shogunate, Japan had to take steps to reduce its complexity. As a result of the civil wars among the samurai class who fought for the policy alternatives mentioned above, Japan chose the course of Meiji Restoration (restoring the emperor) and subsequent social reforms to establish a unified modern nation.

In the years following the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese social system experienced radical transformation, in which the dominant mode of social differentiation shifted from stratification to functional differentiation. Although civil revolutions often triggered the shift from stratification to functional differentiation in Western societies, the ways of functional differentiation were based on accumulated social changes. Before the Meiji Restoration, Japan also experienced social changes which would have eventually led Japan in the direction of becoming a functionally differentiated modern nation. However, unless it recognized imminent threats from the external social environment, the shift was probably more gradual and the transformation approach would not have been so radical. In order to reduce rapidly increased complexity or the level of entropy within the social system, Japan
opted to conduct drastic social reforms, which included the abolition of the domain system, in which each clan had previously been granted a high degree of autonomy (1871), the establishment of prefectures under the control of a centralized government (1871), and the abolition of the *shi-nō-kō-shō* (warrior-farmer-craftperson-marchant) class system (1869).

The solidification of social subsystems according to specific function, such as politics, law, economics, and education, can also be seen as a response to the increased level of social entropy. Each system had exigency to consolidate its boundary to other systems in order to deal with social problems. However, Japan before the Meiji Restoration had not developed a sufficient social foundation for systems for each function. Consequently, the modes of functionally differentiated systems were introduced from Western societies. For the political system, it introduced constitutional monarchy and implemented the Imperial Constitution in 1890. In the same year, the government was separated into three branches of legislative, administrative, and judicial powers. The judicial system in the Meiji era was modeled after the French system. Under the Ministry’s educational policy, the national education system promulgated was being modeled on the French public education system in 1872. The economic system began to take shape under capitalism.

As discussed, Meiji Japan had significant impacts from the external social environment. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it lost autonomy in reproducing its social structures. Although Japan was influenced by Western societies, adapting various aspects of their social systems in the process, those introductions were not mere transplantations of their systems into Japan. While Japan selected the aspects to be modeled
from systems in the external social environment, the formation of functionally
differentiated systems was based on historical and ongoing conditions of Japanese society.
This exemplifies the reproductive processes of autopoietic self-referential systems in
Luhmann’s model (Luhmann 1995).

Japanese society has a long history of stratification as the dominant mode of social
differentiation. Also, Meiji Japan still retained pre-existing social structures and people’s
consciousness was still embedded in the environment of pre-modern communal and
hierarchical relationships, which hindered the development of modern functionally
differentiated systems based on rationality and democratic individualism (Fukutake 1997).
In order to fill the gap between this pre-modern consciousness and the development of
functionally differentiated systems, Japan had to formulate its own ways.

Moreover, the construction of a nation-state that could counteract Western powers
was the most urgent issue for Japan. For this purpose, the establishment of a solid unified
nation was also pursued along with the development of functionally differentiated systems
to deal with increased social problems. However, these two aims intrinsically contain
paradoxical natures, that is, unification and diversification.

In this situation, ideological underpinnings facilitated bridging this paradox and
building up distinct modern functionally differentiated systems in pre-modern state social
structures. The *tennō-sei* (emperor system) ideology and familism based on the *ie* system
were prominent ideological backbones which tried to overcome these contradictory
situations. Ideological inculcation is a measure often employed by the dominant class to
control people with plural value systems. Rejai contends,
Looked at from the standpoint of the collectivity, ideologies serve to achieve social solidarity and cohesion. For one thing, they bind a group together and give it a sense of unity. For another, they rationalize and justify group goals, values, and objectives. In giving a group legitimacy and respectability, ideologies improve not only the group’s self-image but its external image as well (Rejai 1995: 17).

In the Edo period, Japanese society was considerably pluralistic in terms of cultures and value systems among people. The nation was divided into nearly 300 domains which retained relative autonomy (see Fujino 1979). It was also formally differentiated into class strata. Moreover, substantial climate and environmental variations within the country produced notable regional diversities in people’s lifestyles. Although within each community, thought of as mura shakai (village society) with a closed nature, people generally shared common values and lifestyles, they were rather diverse throughout the entire country (see Ichikawa ed. 1991).

Fortification of functionally differentiated systems also brings about diversification of people’s lifestyles and value systems. The tennō-sei ideology and the ie ideology were selected to mediate two contradictory goals, the construction of the solid unified nation-state and the establishment of modern functionally differentiated systems in a society where people already possessed diversity. Eagleton argues,

...in order to be truly effective, ideologies must make at least some minimal sense of people’s experience, must conform to some degree with what they know of social reality from their practical interaction with it... In short, successful ideologies must be more than imposed illusions, and for all their inconsistencies must communicate to their subjects a version of reality which is real and recognizable enough not to be simply rejected out of hand (Eagleton 1991: 15).

After ages of domination by stratified modes of social differentiation, hierarchical relations would have been deeply ingrained into the experience of Japanese people and
their daily interactions. It was part of their social reality. The Meiji Restoration was not really the outcome of the growth of people's awareness of individual rights and equalities. Hence, the shift from the hierarchical Shogunate rule to another hierarchical order based on the tennō-sei and the ie ideologies would have been accepted without strong rejection. Consequently, while legally the class hierarchy was more levelled, ideologically hierarchical social relations were retained and backed up. The family system was firmly institutionalized under the ie ideology transcending the variation of family systems.

The tennō-sei and the ie ideologies mutually fortified their legitimacy and served as underpinnings for the solidification of the unified nation-state named tennō-sei kazoku kokka (the emperor system family state). Confucian filial piety, which indicates that children should respect and obey their parents, is a core value of the ie ideology. Drawing an analogy between the ie and the nation, the parallel between loyalty to the emperor and filial piety to parents was advocated. The tennō was like a father to all Japanese nationals, and thus the one to whom all Japanese nationals should be loyal (Arichi 2002). The imperial family was both the common father and common ancestor of all Japanese nationals, and the individual family hierarchy mirrored the national social hierarchy (see Fuse 2002; Asō and Amano 1999: 96). These ideologies were communicated through various venues including the Imperial Constitution in 1890, The Family Law in 1896, and the education system, especially shūshin (moral education based on Confucian ideology, which was taught at elementary and junior high school until the end of WWII). Hendry explains how effectively these ideologies were disseminated;

21 The outcaste group were often excluded from this argument.
An imperial rescript on education issued at that time made explicit the expected values of the [ie] system. It was to be learned by heart and recited daily by all schoolchildren. Educationalists of the time tended to be traditionalists, and as enrolment in schools was up to 98 per cent by 1909, the dissemination of these ideas was extremely efficient (Hendry 2003: 26).

Thus, the ie ideology became the sustenacula of the tennō-sei kazoku kokka.

In this way, before WWII, the tennō-sei and the ie ideologies, which espoused social structures with pre-modern characteristics, paradoxically played critical roles in the modernization and industrialization of Japanese society. On the other hand, modernization and industrialization also induced the transformation of the people’s consciousness, which led to Taisho demokurasii, democratic movements during the Taisho era (1912-1926). However, the rise of militarism in the early Showa era (1926-1989) defused the incipient democracy and led to the establishment of autocracy through intensification of the tennō-sei and ie ideologies.

The end of WWII brought Japan under Allied Occupation Forces’ administration from 1945 to 1952. From Luhmann’s systems theoretical point of view, this can be regarded as crossing the border of systems within Japan’s external social environment into the Japanese social system. This merger of distinct social systems consequently caused massive transformation of the Japanese social system. Under the direction of the GHQ/SCAP (General Headquarters/Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers), a series of drastic democratization reforms were implemented. A new constitution was established in 1946 based on the draft prepared by the GHQ/SCAP, resulting in the sovereignty of the state being shifted from the tennō to the people. According to the new constitution, the
major articles in the Family Law, which supported the *ie* system, were removed and the *ie* system largely lost its legal orthodoxy.

Education reforms were implemented for the establishment of the democratic and decentralized education system, which included the supplanting of the Imperial Rescript on Education by the Fundamental Law of Education enacted in 1947; a shift from a multiple-track school system to a single-track school system; and the abolition of *shūshin*. In order to protect the rights of laborers, the Labor Relations Adjustment Act, the Labor Standards Act, and the Trade Union Act were enacted in 1946, 1947, and 1949, respectively.

While social change usually takes time and does not synchronize with environmental changes (Luhmann 1995), a series of post-war reforms in Japan occurred within only several years, which can be attributed to the fact that post-war occupation by the Allied Occupation Forces exerted more than just external pressure on Japan. Crossing the boundaries of the Japanese social system, the Allied Occupation Forces set up the GHQ/SCAP. By being a part of the Japanese social system, the GHQ/SCAP was able to exert decisive administrative power on the transformation of social systems for Japanese society. However, the GHQ-led post-war reforms were followed by increasing discourses that insisted on the recovery of pre-war systems within Japanese society. This led to the counter socio-political trend to the post-war democratization commonly called “*gyaku kōsu*” (reverse course). These became especially active after the end of the occupation. The government reviewed the administrative system, the education system, the economic system, the police system, and the employment system. This *gyaku kōsu* was backed by
nationalism which was suppressed under the occupational administration (Yoshida 2004: 79-80).

Education reforms from 1956 to 1958 included the abolition of the public election system for the members of local education boards, the reinforcement of the school management system, the intensification of the textbook screening system strengthening state control over the education system, the assigning of a legally biding force to the Education Ministry’s curriculum guidelines, and the establishment of moral education classes (Koyama 1998: 264-267: Umene 1975: 148-151).

As Saeki points out, the post-WWII democratization reforms were conducted through U. S. based discourses, ideologies, and frameworks (Saeki 2001: 39). They successfully transformed various aspects of Japanese social systems into more modern and democratic ones within a short period with GHQ/SCAP crossing the boundaries of Japanese society. Not only were these reforms drastic, they could not be attributed to the increasing consensus for democratic consciousness developing in the Japanese people after the occupation. Instead, they can be considered more accurately as bestowals of democratic individual rights from authorities to people (see Tominaga 2000: 237-240).

In a sense, the post-WWII democratization reforms were a recapitulation of the Meiji Restoration, which was induced not by the growth of commoners’ consciousness for individual rights and democracy, but instead by strong pressures from the external social environment. Also, the main actors of the Meiji Restoration were not common people but lower members of the aristocratic samurai class. Although the growth of democratic awareness was gradually seen after the Meiji Restoration and saw some flowering in the
Taisho era (Tominaga 2000: 237), under the war regime a sense of loyalty and self-sacrifice to the tennō was ingrained in people’s consciousness through and until the end of WWII. Social structures were grounded in pre-modern hierarchical relations based on the tennō-sei and the ie ideologies.

The post-WWII democratization reforms again caused Japan to face radical contradictions between formal parts--such as political, legal, and educational institutions--and informal roles--such as people’s practices--of its social systems (see Tominaga 2000: 240). As mentioned earlier, social transformations, which usually occur gradually over time, are reflexive processes that refer to ongoing conditions of society while regularly induced and accelerated by environmental stimuli (Luhmann 1995). Such gradual changes usually involve a dialectical process between social transformations and human consciousness as Creighton notes, “[T]he culture creates ‘pressure’ for a parallel development in the individual personality to achieve a match between the organization of information that exists in the social environment and the interior mental structures of its participants” (Creighton 1990: 293).

Luhmann’s perspective also supports this interplay between social changes and human consciousness, suggesting that, social systems and human psychic systems have especially close interpenetration with each other, resulting in what Luhmann calls “structural coupling” mutually contributing the reproduction of each others’ elements and structural formation. They evolve together in a synergistic fashion, in which one is the necessary environment of the other (Luhmann 1995; Kneer and Nassehi 2002).
In contrast to gradual social transformations, revolution is an example which produces radical social changes. However, when the growth of people’s consciousness for their rights is a major causal pressure for revolution, the discrepancies between their consciousness and changes in social systems are curtailed. On the other hand, radical Japanese social changes after WWII, just like those of the Meiji Restoration, were not really premised on the growth of a modern democratic consciousness in the public. Therefore, people would not have been ready to capitalize on democratic social systems.

This trajectory of Japanese modernization contributed to its persistent retention of pre-modern values, which often supersede modern individualism and rationalism in Japanese social lives. These include elements such as hierarchical ordering, collectivism, the *uchi/soto* orientation, the *ie* ideology, the emphasis on *sekentei* (public image), and strong pressure to conform. The retention of pre-modern values also contributes to the emphasis on traditional gender roles and age restrictions.

From his working experiences with the Japanese government and knowledge of literature, Michio, a male interviewee, notices the persistence of pre-modern elements in contemporary Japan and is very critical of *okami-ishiki* (hegemonic consciousness that supports government’s power over people), which he feels permeates the society. He contends,

Companies and the private sector obey government officials... In that way, contemporary Japan is established by the coalition of politics and bureaucracy. What underlies [Japan] is not democracy but the continuation of the Edo era. I have read enough of such situations and witnessed them many times.
As I discussed with the examples of the education, the family, and the employment systems in chapter four, Japanese systems after WWII also developed by interpenetrating each other and embracing pre-modern values. The practices and values based on the *ie* system remained not only functional in the family system but also as a potent backbone for the employment system. In both the education and employment spheres, the importance attributed to a university’s name based on a hierarchical ranking reveals how the formation of Japanese social systems is a combination of modern and pre-modern structures. This case reflects the combination of a meritocratic system and a hierarchical ordering system.

After WWII, “economic growth” has been the primary Japanese goal, to which Japanese social systems have often adjusted themselves. In order to produce loyal and hard-working employees, the Japanese corporate system has been developed by elaborating various instruments, such as the three pillars (enterprise unionism, the lifetime employment system, and the seniority-based wage system), the enterprise education system, labor management, and after-hour associations, all of which were developed to comply with Japanese corporate ethos cultivated under pre-modern familistic values. They were also derived from modern capitalistic logic and economic rationalism in the pursuit of company profit to produce dedicated employees.

With the transition from a pre-modern to modern state, Japan experienced two major structural shifts, that is, social reforms following the Meiji Restoration and the post-WWII democratization reforms. Such drastic shifts caused disjunctions between social systems and people’s consciousness as well as contradictions, thus increasing the level of complexity within the Japanese social system. The *tennō-sei* and the *ie* ideologies before
the end of WWII, and the post-WWII national goal of economic growth served as effective channels to mediate these dilemmas.

5.2.2. The Uchi/Soto Orientation: Mediating Contradictions

The tennō-sei and the ie ideologies before the end of WWII, as well as the post-WWII national goal of economic growth, served as effective elements which facilitated Japanese social systems to accommodate contradictory features. Furthermore, the orientation of uchi/soto (inside/outside), ura/omote (back/front), and honne/tatemae (real feelings/public stance), which are all major organizational foci for Japanese social life, also fulfill a critical role for the society’s incorporation of contradictions. A variety of scholars’ works elaborating on Japan tell us how these concepts relate to aspects of Japanese socio-cultural conditions, including child-rearing practices, socialization, education, language, political/economic ideologies, religion, philosophical views of human nature, spatio-temporal structures, gender, age, status, work, and power relations (Creighton 1990; Bachnik 1992, 1994, 1998; Kondo 1990, 1992, 1994; Lebra 1992; Rosenberger 1994; Wetzel 1994; Tobin 1992; Kuwayama 1992).

One of the longstanding issues in Japanese social life is Japanese social order which is situationally defined and highly embedded in a specific context. While in an uchi (inside) or ura (back) context, people often express their honne (real feelings), in a soto (outside) or omote (front) context, their communications tend to be based on tatemae (polite public stance). Bachnik designates “situational shifting” as a characteristic of the Japanese social
order and contends that *uchi/soto* illuminates how the organization of context is closely linked to the organization of Japanese society (Bachnik 1994).

Bachnik sees that *uchi* as the in-group is the basic unit of society, not the individual. According to her, in English, “I” is the deictic anchor point, which anchors the discourse as zero-point from which spatio-temporal distance is gauged. On the other hand, in Japan the deictic anchor point is not an individual ego, but *uchi*. *Uchi* includes the speaker, but the boundaries of *uchi* shift from moment to moment depending on the context (Bachnik 1994, 1998). *Uchi/soto* is used to index the degrees of distance between self and others, operating in daily interaction. By gauging distance from others, the Japanese communicate in different modes in their greetings, bowing, exchanging gifts, spatial communication (setting), speech register, dress, and communication content. The relationship between individuals constitutes the organization of Japanese self and social life, defined by the dynamic of *uchi/soto*. Individuals constitute social situations, and thereby participate in the mutual process of their constituting and being constituted by social order in terms of *uchi/soto* orientations (Bachnik 1994).

Hiroshi, a male interviewee, believes that the Japanese emphasis on *honne/tatemae* is a legacy of pre-modern *mura shakai* (village society), where the code of conduct of the village exercised significant restrictive power on its members. He contends,

The village code had primacy over individual codes. But individuals are not so simple beings as to completely conform to the village code. In the past, however, they were ostracized if they reneged it [the village code], and they could die. They were frightened of the consequences in their reneging the village standard.
Hiroshi believes that the propensity of honne/tatemae and situational reactions, which the Japanese people cultivated as a means to survival in the pre-modern mura shakai, still lingers in this modern era.

The orientation of uchi/soto, ura/omote, and honne/tatamae (later I use the term the uchi/soto orientation to refer to this three dimensional complex) facilitates the incorporation of contradictory socio-cultural factors, such as ideologies, opinions, norms, and practices, into one system by compartmentalizing them into either one of the binary spheres and allowing them to coexist in the same social system. Such an orientation makes it possible for a social system to be unified without consistent policies. As the contributors to Re-Made in Japan (Tobin et al. 1992) show, Japan’s domestication, or “Japanization,” of imported culture, is seen as one of the characteristics of Japanese society within anthropological inquiry. For the amalgamation of heterogeneous cultures, the uchi/soto orientation serves a critical role.

5.3. Psychological Burden Resulting from Complexity with Contradictory Messages

According to Luhmann, the increase of the communicative events in a social system enhances the level of complexity or entropy of the system, which eventually leads to system disorder. In order to avoid disorder and to continue its existence, the system needs to select communicative events among many alternatives (Luhmann 1995). A highly complex system like modern society has more options for the selection because it involves countless communicative events and more alternatives than pre-modern society had. These tend to increase indeterminacy and the level of entropy of the society. People in Japan are
exposed to such complexity inherent in modern society. Moreover, they have been experiencing another kind of complexity, that is, a vacillating bifurcation and convergence of both modern and pre-modern themes intertwined together. They have lived through these innately paradoxical principles. While modern society is complex enough to place psychological burdens on its members, the amalgamation of modern and pre-modern in a society would cause extra mental stress by making people feel caught between contradictory messages within a society.

Even so, ideological orientations before the end of WWII and the primary national goal of economic growth since the post-war high growth period effectively reduced complexity by narrowing down the options from which middle class people choose their lifestyles, values, occupations, and other choices in their lives. However, the primary national goal of economic growth has been loosing its momentum after the burst of the bubble economy in the early 1990s. Consequently, more middle class people started to seek other lifestyles than “normative” ones, that is, being sarariiman or their wives, which resulted in broadening alternatives for people’s lifestyles. This seemingly good news, however, has concomitantly increased the level of complexity of Japanese society as well as the level of psychological burden of its members, which I will explain in the following discussion.

Japanese society offers people various opportunities and options for their lifestyles, which they are supposed to be able to choose with their free will according to the Japanese constitution as well as to this modern society’s tatemae. At the same time, however, the
pre-modern aspects of the society often make them feel pressured to follow “normative”
lifestyles. Hiroshi’s remark reveals the dilemma Japanese people feel. He says,

There are many options in Japan other than following the elite course. But people
don’t choose those options due to an invisible social code... Regarding choices, Japan is probably a country in which people have the most choices in the world... Nevertheless, people in Japan do similar things as others.

Mathews’ discussion of Japanese *ikigai* (that which most makes life worth living) supports Hiroshi’s point of view. Mathews (2003) finds that *ikigai* as self-fulfillment is prominent among contemporary Japanese men and explains the reasons;

One reason is that as Japan has become more affluent, life choices have increased: one can more easily pursue self-fulfillment today than in the past. A bigger reason may be that many people continue to feel that they have little choice in their lives, given the social pressures they must conform to: their dreams of self-fulfillment function as a sort of escape hatch, making bearable their lack of choice in reality (Mathews 2003: 118).

Hiroshi conjectures that such pressures stem from people’s pre-modern consciousness relating to *mura ishiki* (village consciousness) and the *ie* values, which make people afraid of being pointed out if they do not obey the unspoken rules of the community.

I will briefly trace the changes in Japanese society and the shifts in the general national mood after WWII in order to clarify the influences contradictory messages have on contemporary Japanese. The end of WWII brought people in Japan a sense of liberation although they also had to struggle to overcome the confusion of the post-war period. Following the mid-1950s, an economic boom ensued, which gave people hope and incentive to be hard workers to improve their living standard (see Tominaga 2000: 227-230). Michio, who started to work in the middle of the high economic growth period,
explains how Japanese economic growth provided workers an incentive to be very work-oriented,

We inevitably became obsessed with work. The economy was growing like crazy with seven to nine percent of growth rate... The speed of promotion was very fast. I was quickly promoted to a section chief at 33 or 34 and had about 40 subordinates. There were so many administrative positions. It is unthinkable now, isn’t it?

While the 1960s experienced some social turmoil caused by the activism of young people who were sensitive to social injustice (see Mishima and Todai Zenkyōtō 2000; Mikami 2000; Kosaka 2006), society as a whole sought economic growth as its guiding principle and the realization of the growth more or less brought people some sense of security and hope. They pictured their future lives as richer and freer from antiquated social regimentation and convention. Maihōmu-shugi gained popularity in this period. However, many of them were eventually incorporated into corporate systems which rendered them to be self-sacrificing kigyōjin.

Although the 1973 Oil Shock destabilized the sense of economic security which had developed in the previous two decades, successful recovery after the mid-1970s, brought about by the promotion of economic and business rationalization and efficiency, gave the Japanese a sense of pride in their country as a leading economic power. However, around this time, various issues in the education system, the family system, and the employment system came to surface as social problems. These manifested themselves as discrepancies within each social system, which were submerged under the nation’s drive towards economic empowerment of their lives after WWII.
The 1980s saw steady economic growth followed by the bubble economy, which can be characterized as a period in which enjoying affluence was the primary focus. During this time, many people were exhilarated by this affluence. Many of my interviewees spent their early youth in the bubble period and seem to have developed their worldviews under this influence. Hiroshi says, “Until my junior year after entering university, I indulged myself in extravagant merrymaking.” He remembers how Japanese youth enjoyed the bubble period and notes, “When I went to university, it was difficult to book a hotel room on Christmas Eve. For example, we couldn’t make a room reservation at the Akasaka Prince Hotel [A first-class hotel in Tokyo] a year in advance.” Those days it was popular for Japanese young men to spend a luxurious Christmas Eve with their girlfriend.

After the burst of the bubble economy, however, structural recession, as well as cult-based terror in the mid-1990s, the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, a series of lurid teenagers’ crimes in the late 1990s, and other high profile incidents cast a shadow over social ambience. The “iyashi būmu” (healing boom) commenced around this period. When people whose main focus used to be enjoying economic and material affluence had fewer prospects for such affluence in their lives, some turned their attention to assuaging stress and started to seek relaxing and diverse lifestyles.

As discussed earlier, the “double complexity” and Japanese social structures which embrace a range of contradictory aspects would be among the major factors causing stress and psychological burdens on people in Japan. Japanese have been exposed to various contradictory messages from society, and this has especially influenced the youth. Messages from parents, media, and popular culture often encourage them to develop their
individuality. However, at the same time, social structures are still constructed in ways that tend to discourage their individuality and support conformity and collectivism. This is evident in the school system, which sets democracy as its principle and the cultivation of children’s individuality as an educational goal but is actually organized to promote students’ conformity and collectivism.

In Japan, there has been wide discussion of the importance of the “whole child,” or the balanced child and the “ideal of nobi nobi or free, unencumbered development” (Creighton 1994: 47). Also, the primary goal of early child educational institutions in Japan is not academic success but balance and the holistic development of children. Nonetheless, these ideals and the academic pedigree orientation have coexisted, in which the latter takes precedence (Creighton 1994). The employment system further upholds the inconsistency in the society. While the education system supposedly supports gender equality, its inequality is still deeply rooted in the employment system, which endorses gender roles in the family system. Also, youngsters, who are given the luxury to enjoy freedom and time to explore their lifestyles during their university days, are required to be hard working kigyōjin once they enter the corporate world.

The 1980s ushered in the ubiquity of messages that encourage the promotion of people’s individuality and living by one’s own values, such as jibun-rashisa (being true to oneself), jibun-sagashi (the search for one’s true self), and jiko-jitsugen (self-actualization), in media, literature, pop culture, popular songs, and commercial advertisements. Nevertheless, pressure to conform still maintained its powerful force in Japanese society. Even though individuals were influenced to develop a unique vision of their own lifestyles
while they were young, the social systems had already developed in a way that discouraged such personal pursuits.

If people chose to lead an economically decent life without damaging their sekentei, many of them eventually became hardworking sarariiman, or, in the case of women, their wives. Although some became aware of such social contradictions, they felt a sense of powerlessness imposed by their social systems. Nevertheless, in recent years, people, especially young people, whose values and consciousness were already diversified, began to choose new lifestyles, seen in the increase of delayed marriage, divorce, friitaa, NEET, and I/U taan genshō (relocating to rural areas). Being an emigrant can be seen as one of such choices.

As I discussed, the uchi/soto orientation has served a critical role for the amalgamation of modern and pre-modern in Japanese society, which tends to induce psychological burdens on its members. Paradoxically, however, its decreasing potency along with the abatement of the Japanese national goal of economic growth and the increase of people’s negative consciousness toward “conformity” in recent years can be seen as an accelerator to the sense of anxiety and frustration of Japanese people.

Historically, the uchi/soto orientation developed in the social system consisting of mura shakai (village society) communities, which were based on pre-modern structures. Such a community was small and homogenous enough for members to discern what and who belonged to uchi or soto. The orientation had been formalized as a focal part of Japanese culture. Mai, a female interviewee, comments that Japanese uchi/soto orientation is like “choreography.” While she notices Canadians also use honne/tatemae, she finds that
Japanese ways of such presentation are more stylized. There seems to be consensus among people circumscribing how and when they use *honne* and *tatemae*. She explains how the "protocol" of *honne/tatemae* is performed in Japan:

For example, a person wants the friend visiting her home to leave but cannot say so. She would say, ‘Would you like another cup of tea?’ This is a suggestion [to ask for leaving]... The friend should not say, ‘Yes, please,’ even if she is thirsty. So she would say, ‘I would like to have it but should get going.’ *Honne/tatemae* and such protocol are mixed up like choreography. There are formats [of *honne/tatemae*] and we should follow them... If a person doesn’t know the formats, she is seen as lacking of common sense. Such things are difficult, aren’t they?

Japanese emphasis on conformity has functioned for the survival of the *uchi/soto* orientation. Those who were not adept at the *uchi/soto* “choreography” can learn it by emulating observed behaviour patterns within the social order. However, ongoing diversification of lifestyles and awareness between generations as well as individuals have made it increasingly difficult for people to acquire the common *uchi/soto* “choreography” and to have consensus for what is *uchi* and what is *soto* for a particular context. Moreover, the use of *ura/omote* or *honne/tatemae* is often moralistically questioned in contemporary Japan.

Generally, a social system can reduce its complexity by applying consistent principles, and people use such principles as their reference marks for selections in their lives. Although Japanese society after WWII still embraced the inconsistency of modern and pre-modern principles, the *uchi/soto* orientation, the social emphasis of conformity, and the national goal of economic growth alleviated people’s burden in making selections in such contradictory social structures since they have served as indicators for the selections. However, the *uchi/soto* orientation and the national goal of economic growth are losing
their potency. Moreover, the popularity of “individuality” has fomented negative consciousness toward “conformity” among people in Japan, although it is still a powerful guiding force for their behavior. This situation helps people recognize more options available for their selections. At the same time, it could increase the level of their anxiety and frustration of being caught in a dilemma or “double bind.”

Bateson’s theory of the double bind explains how contradictory messages cause psychological burdens on people. Bateson (1972) proposes the necessary conditions to create a double bind situation. First, a double bind situation needs two or more persons, of which one of them is designated as the “victim” for purposes of the definition. Second, it requires repeated experience that comes to be a habitual expectation for the victim. Third, a primary negative injunction is uttered to the victim in the form of either: “Do not do such and such, or I will punish you,” or “If you do not do such and such, I will punish you,” In either case, failure to follow the order results in punishment. Fourth, a secondary injunction, which conflicts with the primary injunction, is done at a more abstract level. The secondary negative injunction is often communicated to the victim by nonverbal means such as posture, gesture, tone of voice, meaningful action, and the implications concealed in verbal comment. Like the primary injunction, however, it also conveys the message that the victim’s transgression of the injunction causes the person to be punished. Fifth, the victim receives the message that makes the person realize that she or he cannot escape from the field of this double bind situation, which, Bateson contends, would result in the person’s infliction with significant psychological burdens and even development of schizophrenia (Bateson 1972: 206-207).
As mentioned, people in Japan have been exposed to contradictory messages from society as well as in interpersonal relationships including those from their family. These messages stem largely from the amalgamation of modern and pre-modern in Japanese social systems and people's consciousness. Japanese people, especially younger generations, have been told, "If you do not develop your individuality, you will not be regarded as a full-fledged modern individual." At the same time, they have been told, "If you develop your individuality, you will be in a difficult position because pre-modern social aspects and the importance placed on the collective still occupy significant parts of Japanese society."

The first message is more overtly conveyed through various sources including mass media, literature, pop culture, popular songs, and commercial advertisements. Some Japanese parents also encourage their children's individuality as evident in my interviewees who were parents and in references to their parents of some interviewees. Moreover, the fostering of children's individuality was among the major goals of educational reforms after the mid-1980s (Asō and Amano 1999: 252). In the *tatemae* of people's overt discourse in contemporary Japan, individuality is often encouraged and conformity is said to be a negative trait.

On the other hand, people often receive the second message at a more abstract level through subtle messages in their interaction with people and society in their younger ages. Also, the biopower (Foucault 1990, 1997) of disciplinary practices in the Japanese school system as discussed in the previous chapter has helped them to internalize conformity by suppressing their individuality and individualism. Moreover, peer pressure at school to
conform is often powerful. By the time they are incorporated into the employment system, many of them fully realize the impact of the second message. Such contradictory messages are not limited to the issues of individuality and conformity but ubiquitously exist among the tension between “modern” and “non-modern,” such as liberal democratic views and hierarchical relations, gender inequality, age restriction, and “traditional” work ethics. However, as I discussed, escaping intricately-intertwined Japanese social systems is difficult. This circumstance would more or less place psychological burdens on the members of the society.

5.4. Emigration as a Means of Escaping “Double Complexity”

The majority of my Japanese emigrant interviewees often feel a sense of release and relaxation in their host society despite various challenges in adapting to the new environment. This was also evident among overseas Japanese with whom I have informally interacted and those among whom I conducted surveys and interviews in Los Angeles (Nagoshi 1999). While this sense of ease comes from both physical and psychological environments, this chapter has examined psychological aspects of this issue.

The causal factors of psychological burden that people in Japan experience have been often discussed as “socio-cultural constraints” in Japanese society, including issues of gender, age, work, hierarchical relations, people’s interference, sekentei (public image), pressures to conform, the suppression of individualism, and exclusiveness of Japanese society. These issues eventually have pushed some Japanese to move abroad (Kobayashi 2002; Kelsky 2001; Andressen and Kumagai 1996). This study also discussed these issues
in chapter three and four. Then, I also recognized that some of my interviewees used the word “complex” in order to express the causal factors of the psychological burden that they felt in Japan. “Japan is complex.” There would be no objection to this statement. However, I was wondering why they feel Japanese complexity so intensely to the point that they perceive Canada as a simple society in comparison to Japan despite the high level of complexity of Canadian society.

People often use the word “complex” when they are unable to find words to explain intricate matters. On the other hand, scholars are those who have made efforts to explain intricate issues and things in the world through various means, such as reducing to more fundamental issues, classifying into groups, decomposing into elements, deconstructing the underlying assumptions, synthesizing contradictory matters, and interpreting from their own perspectives. I also have attempted to explain the intricacy of the push and pull factors of Japanese migration in previous chapters. Chapter three classified the factors into multiple issues and chapter four explained the interrelations of different issues. In this chapter, which focuses on the idea of “complexity” itself, I presented my original analysis of the nature of Japanese complexity and explained how this Japanese complexity would affect the psychological states of its members.

As previously mentioned, one of the important reasons for the Japanese newcomers’ perception of “simple” Canada can be attributed to their “liminal” position in the new home country. Although their host society also embraces its own complexity, it takes time for newcomers to acquire adequate understanding of the social complexity of their new home country. This liminal or transitional state of newcomers moderates the impact of the social
complexity on their consciousness, which assists them in developing a belief their new
home society is simpler. This would be a reason my interviewees perceive Canadian society
as simplistic despite its own complexity as a modern post-industrialized nation comprising
diverse cultural backgrounds. Mika, a female interviewee who feels that life in Vancouver
is healthier than that in Japan due to its simplicity, also attributes her sense of this
simplicity partly to her lack of English ability to receive and digest information in her new
home. Ayumi, who also loves the relaxing atmosphere of Canadian society, notes,

Though I have been in Canada for four months, I have not associated with many
Canadians. My perspective on Canada may be that of an international student. My
classmates are not Canadians but international students from China, Japan, and other
places. So I have not known about Canadian society well and may talk about my
image of Canada. So my perception would change while I live here.

While their liminal state and unfamiliarity with a new social complexity would have
contributed to a perception of complex vs. simple for the description of Japanese vs.
Canadian societies, the nature of Japanese complexity would also have significantly
affected their perception. As examined in this chapter, Japanese complexity can be
considered to have “double complexity”; complexity stemming from modern society and
complexity developed from the amalgamation of modern and non-modern elements that
contradict each other. For Japanese newcomers, their sense of release from the “double
complexity” of Japanese society would also enhance their perception of simplicity of
Canadian society.

From this discussion, it would be reasonable to see the “double complexity” of
Japanese society as a factor contributing to pushing some Japanese overseas. When a social
system is stable and based on consistent principles, its members’ psychological stability is
promoted in general. On the other hand, as Bateson argues, the increase of complexity and contradictions in a social system tend to induce anxiety, stress, and frustration. A high level of complexity and contradictions in a social system could contribute to the growth of such feelings of discontent among people in Japan even though the country is more politically stable and economically affluent than many other countries. Izumi, a female interviewee, says that it is hard for her to figure out where she stands in the complexity of Japanese society, which induces a sense of powerlessness and social enfeeblement. She says, “We can do nothing about it. [Japan] is too complex. [We don’t know] what is wrong and what is right.”

The recent growth of the Japanese nationalistic voice as well as the *iyashi būmu* (healing boom), which often involves spiritualism, can be seen as manifestations of a general desire to find direction in these social conditions. The ongoing government’s attempt to imbue patriotism through educational reform is another form of giving direction. Also, the social phenomena of *hikikomori* (social withdrawal) and suicide could be seen as forms of repercussion to the “*fuan no jidai*” (the era of anxiety) with the psychological burden stemming from the high level of complexity and contradictions, or “double complexity” of Japanese society. Ayumi assumes that the fusion of modern and pre-modern in Japanese society has induced social instability in contemporary Japan.

Japan has developed rapidly. Should I say it is unnatural? So I guess that the growing pains have started to be seen in recent years. Though Japan has been changing rapidly, various traditional things, both good and bad, such as prejudice, still remain in a halfway manner. I think that they don’t fit to rapid social changes, which makes distortion [of Japanese society].
On the other hand, some people would choose emigration as a measure of escaping the dilemma caused by the double complexity of Japan. The prerequisite of a double bind situation is a person's inescapability from the field where he or she is exposed to contradictory messages (Bateson 1972: 207). Hence, leaving Japan is one of the effective means that overturn this prerequisite.

Among my interviewees, their personalities, which many of them describe as independent, individualistic, distinctive, and self-assertive as presented in chapter two, contributed to their choice of emigration. People with such traits would be more susceptible to be caught by the dilemma between contradictory messages in Japanese society, which I discussed in this chapter. They feel that developing individuality and being true to themselves (jibun-rashiku) are not easy in Japan. Michio claims, “I did not like hierarchical relations [in company] but followed them to get money.” He also laments Japanese hierarchy and collectivism, saying,

For example, when I went on a business trip with several colleagues, a boss-type person decided what to order at dinner for all of us. There was an atmosphere which made us refrain from saying, ‘I don’t want to eat that.’ These sorts of small things often happened and made me realize Japanese groupism. Well... It’s really hopeless.

If a person is not disinclined to keep up “mainstream” life patterns in Japan, he or she could enjoy a relatively stable and decent life. However, if a person has an independent and individualistic mind wishing to pursue his or her own lifestyle, the person often needs to give up a stable and decent life or needs to make an extra effort to enjoy such a life. The recent trend of expanding economic disparity among the Japanese might in part reflect the recent increase of people who pursue their own lifestyles.
Some of my interviewees left their stable and decent lives in Japan and ventured overseas to pursue their own lifestyles and dreams. Satoru, who has an independent spirit, quit his decent job as a senior officer of the Japanese Self Defence Force in order to establish his own flight school but realized how it was difficult to pursue his dream in Japan because of its closed nature. He notes, “[The Japanese flight industry] is very closed. It would apply not only to the flight industry but also to many aspects [of Japan]. It is very closed and exclusive.” Although he felt comfortable living in Japan, he decided to immigrate to Canada for his dream.

Takuya, who quit his sarariiman job to come to Canada, feels to be more himself (jibun-rashiku) than he was in Japan, where people are still embedded in hierarchical relations. He claims, “[In Japanese hierarchical relations] it is difficult to be self-assertive. That is why I feel very suffocated. I guess that Japanese people who came here would have such feelings.” Since his teens he was rather distinct from others and felt suppressed when he wanted to pursue his own way. He was often told, “It is not a normal way.” He says, “I wondered what was ‘normal.’” He contends that much more power is required for people to live against the mainstream of society in Japan than Canada and believes that people in Canada can pursue their individual lifestyles more easily than in Japan. He says, “For example, if people have simultaneous pursuits to have family, work, and study, there is an environment [in Canada] which allows them to do so... I feel attracted to such an aspect [of Canadian society].”

Like Satoru and Takuya, many of my interviewees feel that Canada offers a more beneficial environment for their self-actualization than Japan. Such feelings can also be
promoted by the sense of liberation from a double bind situation in Japanese society caused by its double complexity as well as their liminality in Canadian society which has not yet made them fully realize various challenges stemming from the complexity of their new home society.

The factors that influenced their decision to emigrate, including socio-cultural constraints, such as people's interference, sekentei (public image), pressures to conform pressure, and the suppression of individualism, age restrictions, gender roles, and exclusiveness of Japanese society, are all closely related to the legacy of pre-modern ideas and institutions. These constraints and norms hinder them in making the most of various options and opportunities for diverse lifestyles which modern society offers its members. Away from the Japanese double complexity, they feel free to construct their own lifestyles in Canada.

Scholars have discussed Japanese people's frustration due to dilemma between changes with increased options and "traditional" social-cultural mores and structures (Mathews 2003) and considered their high levels of stress due to such dilemma as one of the reasons for outmigration from Japan (Andressen and Kumagai 1996), although other factors need to be considered as well. On the other hand, few studies have delved into the tension between changes and "traditions," which induced Japanese people to flow overseas, along with its psychological effects on members of Japanese society. This chapter in particular explored these issues by using the concept of "complex," which my interviewees expressed in discussing their sense of burden in Japanese society.
The concept of “alternative modernities,” which presents the “modern” in juxtaposition with and not in opposition to “tradition,” asserts the existence of modernities outside paradigms based on the trajectory of Western modernization (Ferguson 2003). This idea helps us see the world from a perspective not fixed on the narrow developmentalist schema of history. However, discourses of alternative modernities tend to highlight the legitimacy of the other types of modernity while dismissing the impacts such social transformations have on people’s psyche. This chapter discussed the trajectory of Japanese modernization, which epitomizes an alternative modernity, and also illuminated how it possibly affects the consciousness and lives of people in Japan.
Chapter VI

Conclusion

The main purpose of this dissertation has been the examination of the socio-cultural conditions of Japanese society, which are reflected by factors that induce outmigration. Grasping the conditions of a complex society, like Japan, is difficult from a holistic perspective, which elucidates interrelations among various aspects of the society. Consequently, recent studies of such societies tend to focus on particular aspects of the society. Nevertheless, anthropologists have attempted to see complex societies from more holistic points of view. After exploring a way that enables me to examine Japanese society from a more holistic perspective, for sources of information I selected factors that influence Japanese immigration to Canada in order to narrow down and identify which aspects of the society I should focus on in this dissertation. By doing so, I was able to examine diverse aspects of Japanese society, which related to my research participants’ emigration. This study thus also contributes to literature on contemporary migration, gender issues in migration and Japanese society, Japanese social systems, and Japanese selfhood.

This dissertation presented the narratives of six female and six male Japanese newcomers to Vancouver, describing their backgrounds, the motivations of their immigration, and their experiences as immigrants to Canada. My informal interactions with Japanese migrants also provide background information to interpret the data in this research. The majority of them were from a Japanese urban area and have relatively high educational or career backgrounds. Their ages range between 19 and 65, although most of them are in
their twenties and thirties. Nine of them were single and three were both married and parents. Their occupations in Japan included sarariiman, OL (office lady), truck driver, Self Defence Force officer, and friitaa, and three female interviewees were students. All of them are independent immigrants with no family or relatives in Canada. Four of them first arrived in Canada through WHP (Working Holiday Program) and six of them came here as students.

This study adds to the literature on recent Japanese immigrants. As mentioned in chapter one, the number of studies on recent Japanese immigrants is not significant, in comparison to the numerous studies on pre-WWII Japanese immigrants and their descendants that have been conducted. This study of Japanese newcomers to Vancouver, B.C. serves to illuminate the experiences of recent Japanese immigrants. Moreover, it adds to discussions of gender and migration. Since the 1980s, female migrants have increasingly been the focus of studies in various disciplines (Cheng 1999; Knorr and Meier 2000; Morokvasic 1984). While gender-debates in recent migration studies related to Japan tend to focus on the experiences of female migrants, this study partakes in the debates by exploring experiences of both female and male migrants.

The narratives obtained through in-depth interviews and short-life histories provide especially in-depth and detailed subjectivity of my interviewees, while presenting the pluralism of push and pull factors in their immigration to Canada, as well as their shared motives. These accounts provide invaluable data and insight on the Japanese experience inside and outside Japan. Moreover, they are beneficial for the anthropological study of globalization and transnational agency. While anthropologists working on these topics,
such as Ong (1999) and Appadurai (1996), have made significant theoretical contributions to the study of contemporary migration, their works often miss people’s personal narratives which reflect real lives of human actors and their agency, as well as the ways individuals negotiate specific frameworks -- such as education, employment, and family. This study presents insight into the life experiences of Japanese newcomers and provides important ethnographic data for the study of contemporary transnational migration.

My interviewees’ narratives show that their immigrations do not fit in the widely discussed migration models rooted in political-economic systems of societies. Instead, they seek spiritual satisfaction escaping from the socio-cultural constraints of their home society. Although they appreciate favorable aspects of Japanese society, such as the economy and high standard of living, they found that Canadian society provides a better environment for their preferred lifestyles despite their position as immigrants and the language barrier impeding social mobility in their host society. They feel more relaxed and comfortable in the Canadian physical environment in relationship to such aspects as spaciousness, landscape, nature, and housing conditions. They also feel attracted to spiritual enrichment and yutori (a relaxed sense of spirituality) that Canadian life appears to offer and they appreciate Canadian working conditions, which, they think, allow them to have enough private time for family-oriented lifestyles. They also value Canada’s multiculturalism and diversity.

On the other hand, Japanese socio-cultural constraints, including peoples’ interference, sekentei (public image), pressures to conform, suppression of self-assertiveness, and suppression of individualism, as well as the education system, age
restrictions, and gender roles in Japan are among the major factors which contributed to their decision to emigrate. Most of my interviewees see themselves as independent and individualistic and life in Canada as beneficial for their self-actualization. They seem to regard themselves as positive choice-makers benefiting from engaging in what Ong has called “flexible citizenship” (1999). Most of my interviewees did not exhibit clear intentions of making Canada their permanent home. From what I have been able to trace, one-third of them have actually repatriated to Japan after our interviews. They seem to shift their residence across national borders according to circumstances. While elite Chinese transmigrants in Ong’s study react to political insecurity and changing global markets, my interviewees consider more intangible issues of well-being.

The majority of migration studies focus on patterns in which people leave their home societies in pursuit of economic improvement, employment opportunities, political security, and liberation from political oppression. Although these approaches have rendered a service for the construction of migration models, they fail to encapsulate the complexity of contemporary migration flows; this complexity is generated by a multitude of motivations and factors. On the other hand, this study presents an example of a migration flow that is not really rooted in efforts to seek out economic opportunity. This is an example of a migration flow from a highly industrialized society which enjoys relative political stability and economic affluence.

In order to present and examine the detail of the complexity of motivations and factors inducing my interviewees’ emigration, I conducted a three-step analysis in chapters three, four, and five, classifying the factors inducing migration, examining the
interrelationships of Japanese social systems, and discussing the nature of the complexity of Japanese society, respectively. Chapter three divided the factors into the following nine categories: 1) physical environment; 2) spiritual enrichment and relaxed life; 3) escape from socio-cultural constraints, such as people's interference, sekentei (public image), pressures to conform, and the suppression of individualism; 4) family life; 5) education (not for academic credentials but individual enrichment); 6) escape from age restrictions; 7) escape from gender roles; 8) diversity; and 9) self-actualization, trying new possibilities, experiencing other worlds, and escaping from a predictable life. While many migration studies tend to focus on specific factors that induce migration, this chapter showed a pluralism of factors. Moreover, a detailed examination was conducted for each factor.

After identifying three Japanese social systems, the family system, the education system, and the employment system, that had significant influences on the interviewees' decisions in favor of emigrating from Japan, chapter four examined the interrelationships among these three systems by drawing on Luhmann's social systems theory and his conception of interpenetration. The specific approach focused on factors and issues within these systems, including the ie system, a shift to a new set of family values and relationships, the three pillars of Japanese employment practices, an enterprise education system, a labor management system, gender roles in families and at workplaces, the intensification of competition for entrance exams, and disciplinary practices in the school system. This examination illustrated how the family, the education, and the employment systems have developed in interrelationship with each other. This showed that the push factors of their emigration do not exist independently but are closely interrelated.
Emigration can also be seen as a measure of escape from or resistance to entangled constraints of social systems.

Chapter five discussed the nature of the complexity of Japanese society. My interviewees feel less social constraints in Canada and see Canada as simple in comparison with Japan, which attracts them to Canadian society. Such conceptions would be induced by at least two issues: the liminality of their position in Vancouver and the “double complexity” of Japanese society. As newcomers, they are in a liminal, transitional state to the incorporation into Canadian society and have not perceived enough information to be acquainted with the complexity of their new home. Another issue comes from the nature of Japanese complexity, which I call “double complexity.” The double complexity of Japanese society stems from both the complexity of modern society and the complexity of the amalgamation of modern and pre-modern elements. My original analysis of the trajectory of Japanese modernization illustrated how such amalgamation has occurred in Japan. While modern society is complex enough to induce stress in its members, Japanese double complexity that embraces multitudinous contradictory messages, to a varying degree, creates anxiety, stress, and frustration among members of Japanese society. Some people would choose emigration as a measure of escaping such psychological burdens.

These analyses in chapters three, four, and five, which delved deeper into the complexity of motivations and inducing factors of my interviewees’ emigration, contribute to the studies of contemporary migration and demonstrate the complexity of migration flow. These comprehensive analyses also illuminate socio-cultural conditions of Japan. While the majority of migration studies have identified and investigated a few aspects of
the home society, such as political, economic, and religious aspects, which pushed people overseas, this study explores various socio-cultural aspects of the home society and its intersystem relations in-depth by tracing their transformations since the Meiji restoration.

Another significance of this study adds to the discussion of agency and structure, which is a focal theme in social science. While one view claims ontological primacy of social structure to individual humans, another stresses the capacity of human agency. The third position, reflected in the majority of social theory, argues for the complex interplay of agency and structure. This study supports and complements the third position by portraying the constraining power of Japanese social systems through the examination of their interrelations, governmentality, and complexity of Japanese society and people's agential power. In presenting the experiences of Japanese migrants who attempt to circumvent their socio-cultural constraints by venturing overseas in order to pursue their dreams and independent, self-actualized lifestyles, I have sought to provide a portrait of the ever-shifting interplay of structures in Japanese society and individual migrants' agency.

Although this study examines Japanese socio-cultural conditions at great length, it tends to emphasize negative aspects of Japan. This is due to the approach of this study that attempts to explore Japan from the factors pushing its members abroad. Therefore, it inevitably concentrates on unfavorable aspects of the country because this fulfills one of the major purposes of this dissertation, that is, to explore causal factors of recent social phenomena epitomising the "fuuan no jidai" (the era of anxiety) of Japanese society which also lead to outmigration.
This study focuses on Japanese immigrants who came to Canada from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s. In the future, I plan to examine how ongoing transformations of Japanese society may affect further emigration from Japan. Japan has been through various political and educational reforms since 2000. The employment system continued to change with the erosion of the lifetime employment system and the seniority-based wage system as well as the increase of friita. It is said that Japan is charging into “nikyoku-ka jidai” (bipolar era) in which there is expanding disparity of the income between the rich and poor. These changes and the concomitant shift of Japanese social and value systems could also continue to have an effect on Japanese migration flow and its push factors.
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APPENDIX

UBC Research Ethics Board's Certificates of Approval
Certificate of Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR</th>
<th>Creighton, M.R.</th>
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<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENT</td>
<td>Anthropology &amp; Sociology</td>
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<td>NUMBER</td>
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INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT

CO-INVESTIGATORS:

Nagoshi, Mariko, Anthropology & Sociology

SPONSORING AGENCIES

TITLE:

Socio-Cultural Conditions of Contemporary Japan Through the Examination of Push Factors of Recent Emigration: The Case of Japanese Newcomers to B.C. after 1995

APPROVAL DATE: 18 July 2002

TERM (YEARS): 1

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:

18 July 2002, consent form

CERTIFICATION:

The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by:

Dr. James Frankish, Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.