STRANGERS AND SENSEMAKING:

AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF JAPANESE HOUSEWIVES

by

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B. A., University of British Columbia 1971

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
Department of Anthropology and Sociology

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
August 1981

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This thesis attempts to look at the experiences of Japanese housewives who have spent a period of time in a foreign Western country before returning to Japan. It is an ethnography presented in the context of what it is like to become a stranger. In it I try to examine not only the initial impact of the cultural encounter, but also the day-to-day sense making as it occurs in the lives of the women, and the change in perspective which becomes apparent upon return home.

The data were collected in the form of approximately 50 tape recorded, in-depth interviews conducted in English. Because the relevant experiences of the women varied so greatly, an unstructured open-ended interview format was employed. The informants were wives of scholars, government representatives, or businessmen. All were residing or had resided in a foreign Western country solely because their husbands were studying or working abroad. About one-third of the interviews were conducted in Vancouver, and the remainder in Japan. Most interviews took place in the informant's home.

Many of the women bring with them expectations based on past experiences, handed-down information, and taken-for-granted ideas which prove to be an inadequate basis for sensemaking in the new environment. Confronted with this anomaly, they often suffer disorientation and depression. It appears that time, familiarity, and exposure to the new socio-cultural environment ameliorate the sense of dislocation. But perhaps the most important factor is the individual ability to draw from varied sources of information and to integrate this information into
the patterns of thinking and behavior. This can lead to cultural competence, which is more than just being able to perform in a socially acceptable manner. It involves both knowing the rules of society well enough to abide by them and understanding when one can successfully violate, bend or break the established tenets.

Upon returning to Japan many women feel that their encounter with another culture has affected their perceptions of self and home. Following the initial impact of return, many began to question the differences and similarities of the socio-cultural environments they had encountered. They also began, again, to question themselves. Some women found this self-examination and reflection to be a long and difficult process, but others experienced immediate insights and changes in perspectives.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisory committee for their support and encouragement throughout the course of the work which has led to this thesis. In particular, I am indebted to Dr. Elvi Whittaker for her infinite patience, her valuable insights, and her constant support. I am most thankful to Dr. John Howes for sharing with me his very considerable knowledge of Japan and Japanese culture, which was of invaluable assistance in the interpretation of my data. I am also grateful for his careful and detailed editorial comments. I wish to thank Dr. Helga Jacobson for her many helpful suggestions regarding the importance of documenting women's activities.

I am also indebted to Dr. Martin Meissner for his thoughtful and careful reading of portions of this thesis and for his many valuable comments. Dr. Ryuji Kitahara was most kind in helping me with some of the Japanese terms I have used.

Ms. Joanne Richardson and Ms. Pauline Barber read parts of the thesis and their reactions led to many improvements. I am indebted to Ms. Ulrike Rademacher for assistance with preparation of the manuscript.

A large number of people, both here and in Japan, gave me invaluable assistance in making contact with Japanese women. The list is extensive; I must give special thanks to Miss Anne Black, who first introduced me to Japanese women in her English class at the Y.W.C.A., and to Mr. Kazuo Hatano and Mrs. Hamae Okamoto who were so helpful in Japan.
Naturally, my heartfelt thanks go to all of the women who gave so much of their time as informants and who shared their feelings and experiences with me.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Anyone who has traveled to a foreign country, even for a short time has probably experienced feelings of dislocation. These feelings, unexpected perhaps, can have a sense of illusion, a sense of provoking insight, yet can be quite disturbing. The abrupt feelings of strangeness, of not knowing what to expect, can occur at any time—but are particularly apparent when one is suddenly faced with the idea that those people surrounding one—with whom social contact is maintained in everyday life—do not seem to make sense of the world in the same way.

If the period of dislocation is brief, one can relegate it to the irrelevant; if it is of sufficient duration, to wry humor in retrospect. But if it is of a time 'in between'—an indeterminate period—one must attempt to make sense of all that is happening before it can be fully understood or reflected upon.

The Present Study and Relevance to Women

The present study is an attempt to look at the experiences of Japanese housewives who have spent that indeterminate period in a foreign Western country before returning home to Japan. My reasons for interviewing only women have a bearing on the conceptual framework. Initially, I wanted a population who move to a foreign country undistracted by study or employment, but
who are charged with carrying out the same kinds of tasks and family roles in the new place as they perform in their home country. I also wanted to spotlight many of the things which women do in everyday life largely because the day-to-day activities of women have been ignored by many anthropologists, and this lack of documentation should be confronted and examined. I would comment however, that by and large, women's activities and the tasks they perform have been taken for granted and only recently has interest in them been generated. I would also suggest that this interest, or lack of it, is dictated by the relevance it appears to have in our daily lives, and as long as something remains taken-for-granted it remains at least partially hidden from view. I am not debating the morality of taken-for-granteds, I am addressing their existence.

In order to examine the sensemaking which must take place when one moves to a foreign environment, it is necessary to look at the little things, the everyday activities which require time and thought and care. In constructing the conceptual framework, I have relied heavily upon the ideas of Schutz (1944, 1945, 1964, 1970) and his observations of the everyday world.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in which I wish to place this work should be addressed at this point. The data are being presented within the context of what it is like to become a stranger. In it I try to examine not only the initial impact of the cultural encounter, but the day-to-day sensemaking as it occurs in the lives of a group of disparate women who, in common, have become
strangers in the new land.

It would appear that when one moves to a new social-cultural environment the initial impact of the encounter often overwhelms the individual. This impact so overshadows all else that most studies have concentrated upon documenting and analyzing it in terms of a disease-recovery model. Early research has indicated that in the process of the encounter, the individual seems to travel through a series of stages—often on to "full recovery". Some works, notably Schutz (1944,1945) and Simmel (1950) and more recently Adler (1975), Garza-Guerrero(1974), and Meintel (1973) have indicated the inadequacy of the disease-recovery model. Cognizant of this, I wish to propose that:

(1) In the process of confronting the unexpected and often unknown aspects of everyday living in the new place, one becomes aware of taken-for-granted notions. These taken-for-granted ideas have been hidden from view in the everyday life back home, but in the new place they stand out as anomalous entities which must be explained or understood within the context of the new circumstances. In attempting to understand or explain them a new kind of questioning begins. Depending upon the individual, this questioning can lead to a confrontation with the self. This confrontation holds the potential for further growth in terms of a new and integrated awareness of self and other.

(2) Because most early work has been done with reference to long term immigration to a foreign country, the implications of a new awareness has gone unnoticed. Additionally, the ability to change perspectives and to gain new insights has largely been
ignored in the disease-recovery model. Often the return home is the first indication that such changes have, in fact, occurred. This opens to question the idea of "culture shock" as a static closed concept and suggests that, whatever occurs in the course of confronting new perspectives, it is an ongoing process rather than a once-in-a-lifetime event.

In the following sections I present a few of the relevant studies which have a bearing on this work. The list is by no means exhaustive but has been culled from a larger body of readings less applicable to this thesis. I have tried to indicate where I feel these studies have contributed to the formation of the conceptual framework.

A Note on Terminology

In the following studies most of the writers use a genderless "he". Where I find their observations relevant to the present data, I quote them. In the past, a number of studies dealing with exclusively female populations have used this pronoun. I believe this is a matter of style governed by the period in which the work is written. It does not represent a bias. When referring to the individuals in this study I consistently use the pronoun "she".

Relevant Studies

There have been a number of studies concerning the impact of a cultural encounter upon the individual who moves to a strange place. Interest in the subject has been expressed by researchers working in the varied fields of anthropology, social
psychology, sociology, and psychiatry. Many conceptualize the experience in negative terms (Oberg 1960; Foster 1962) as something from which to recover in the shortest possible time.

Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life (Oberg 1960:177).

Oberg, who first popularized the expression "culture shock", conceived it to be an occupational disease suffered by those people who have been suddenly transported abroad. He describes a series of stages in curiously mixed metaphors, a "honeymoon stage" followed by "... a sense of crisis in the disease" which, if survived and overcome, proceeds to recovery and adjustment (1960:178-179). Foster, in writing about the impact of technological change, warns technicians who travel to less well developed countries that they will probably become afflicted with the disease. He elaborates Oberg's ideas in more medically oriented terms: first "an incubation stage" (until) "the virus bites deep" (Foster 1962:189). Despite the cautionary language, neither Oberg nor Foster give very much detail about the second and third stages, except to note: "... if successfully weathered, the patient will be restored to health" (Foster 1962:190).

In other studies emphasizing stages or phases the individual is also perceived to be afflicted and must somehow slowly make his or her way to recovery (Arensberg and Niehoff
Adler gives an alternative view of culture shock when he suggests that it be considered "... a transitional experience ... into higher levels of consciousness and psychic integration" (1975:15). He proposes various states through which the individual must pass in order to "... open the possibility of other depth experiences" (1975:18). While he compares this concept to the "U curve" (Lysgaard 1955) and the "W curve of adjustment" proposed by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), who, as human behaviorists, are studying the social-psychological implications of international travel, he does not attempt to impose a time frame for each of the stages. He suggests the following format:

**Contact**: where the individual is still functionally integrated with his own culture.

**Disintegration**: marked by periods of confusion and disorientation.

**Reintegration**: characterized by strong rejection of the second culture.

**Autonomy**: marked by rising sensitivity and acquisition of both skill and understanding of the second culture.

**Independence**: the final stage of transition, marked by attitudes, emotionality, and behaviors that are independent but not undependent of cultural influence (Adler 1975:16-18).

In a similar study from a psychiatric point of view, Garza-Guerrero (1974) suggests that culture shock is a composite of
mourning for the abandoned culture and identity crisis in the face of the new one. While he maintains that the initial impact is a "stressful and anxiety provoking situation" (1974:410) he suggests that if it is successfully resolved it can lead to further emotional growth, and if it is not, "stagnation and pathological regression may occur" (1974:410).

Culture shock is accompanied by a process of mourning brought about by the individual's gigantic loss of a variety of his love objects in the abandoned culture. Among others, these losses are outstanding: family, friends, language, music, food and culturally determined values, customs, and attitudes.

The coexistence of this emergency situation of two factors, i.e., cultural encounter plus the painful mourning which follows massive object loss—the foresaken culture—causes a serious threat to the newcomer's identity (Garza-Guerrero 1974:410). He concludes that it is a "reactive process" which profoundly tests overall personality functioning and threatens the newcomer's identity (1974:410). He perceives the individual going through three main phases:

Phase one: the cultural encounter is a period of initial shock during which time the person explores cultural differences and similarities, experiences a growing sense of discontinuity of identity, and attempts various adaptive techniques to avoid the pain of massive object loss (1974:418).

Phase two: Reorganization appears quite similar to Adler's
"reintegration", but additionally it addresses the issue of completing the mourning process which Garza-Guerrero asserts is necessary for "re-affirmation of past identity" as well as "...a more accurate and realistic concept of the abandoned culture" (1974:422-425).

Phase three: New Identity . . . constitutes the final consolidation of newly acquired cultural traits, new object relations in the broadest sense, into the organization of ego identity" and results in "...a stable and integrated concept of the self and... total objects in relation with the self" (Garza-Guerrero 1974:426).

There is an interesting similarity in these last two works to the kind of observations made by van Gennep in Rites of Passage (1960) concerning the effects of ritual isolation and what Turner calls "liminality" (1967, 1979). They all tend to confirm the potential for self awareness brought about by the confrontation with the unknown. Nevertheless, thought provoking as is this latter study by Garza-Guerrero, it seems more applicable to the situations of immigrants than to sojourners. It is the essay by Meintel, "Strangers, Homecomers, and Ordinary Men (1973)" which best conceptualizes the problems of the sojourner who experiences other ways of doing things, only to find upon return, return is impossible. In a similar vein to Adler and Garza-Guerrero, she proposes that "the most important shocks to be encountered by those who enter another culture or subculture are those of self discovery" (1973:47), but unlike Bock, who differentiates between culture shock and the "life shocks",
Culture shock should not be confused with the "life shock" that results from direct exposure to certain experiences from which many members of our society have been carefully shielded. Birth, death, and disease are particularly disturbing when they are first encountered. . . but there is nothing inherently exotic about these phenomena (Bock 1970:x).

Meintel suggest that perhaps we should consider the possible similarities between the experiences of entering a foreign culture and those to be had in daily life in one's own (1973:49).

This appears to be the direction taken by Schutz, himself an immigrant, in his paper "The Stranger: an Essay in Social Psychology (1944)," as well as in his equally well known "The Homecomer (1945)." Other writers, notably Simmel (1950) and Wood (1934;1953), discuss the stranger in terms of social relationships with others. Nash addresses the issues inherent in problems of field work in his paper "The Ethnologist as Stranger: an Essay in the Sociology of Knowledge (1963)" and suggests that some types of personalities adapt with greater ease than do others.

Most acculturation studies deal with issues intrinsic to immigration to a new country. There are far fewer studies regarding those who move to a foreign land while expecting to return home in a few years. Bennett, Passen, and McKnight (1958) studied Japanese students educated in North America and explored the various ramifications regarding the sojourn abroad, as well
as the return home. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) reported on both faculty and students who studied abroad and traced their progress in the "W curve" adjustment and readjustment experiences. In this study they extended the "U curve" hypothesis, which had proposed that the adjustment process of foreign students in their host cultures followed the shape of a "U". First elation is followed by frustrations and depression, to final adjustment. Gullahorn and Gullahorn also studied returnees and suggest that those who return home suffer similar patterns in the readjustment to their own country. Hence: the "W" curve.

Nash, in his book *Community in Limbo* (1970) observed and interviewed members of an American enclave in Spain working and living abroad for varying periods of time, but makes very little reference to accompanying family members.

In this thesis, I would like to examine the issues from quite a different perspective. Given the overwhelming implications of cross-cultural experiences, I would like to examine how one goes about making sense of the new place on a day to day basis. Following Schutz (1944, 1945, 1964, 1970), Simmel (1950), and Meintel(1973),

I see the stranger's role a locus for a critical attitude toward the culture around him. Seldom in discussions of culture shock is the notion of such an outcome entertained... Given the premium often placed on adjustment, it is not surprising to find articles devoted to explaining how culture shock may be avoided through various shielding
maneuvers, such as the creation of enclaves, role continuity, and the like. . . . the experience of the stranger, misleadingly labelled "culture shock", rather than being a disease to be avoided at all costs, holds possibilities for personal and intellectual growth (Meintel 1973:55).

I would like to address this body of data in the following way. I propose to use this collection of first person accounts as part of an ethnography. Because of the voluminous nature of the data it has been necessary to select certain accounts which best articulate the points I wish to make. While it seems appropriate to allow the women's accounts to remain in the forefront, I also try to indicate why they have been selected. This thesis, then, is concerned with what it is like to be a stranger. Essentially, it is an ethnography.

Ethnographic description . . . what we call data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to. . . (Geertz 1973:9).

This is an ethnography of Japanese housewives who are living or have lived in a foreign country solely because they are married to men who are working or studying there. Most of these women could be called professional housewives, as Suzanne Vogel (1978) has phrased it. In youth, some were scholars, a few have professions, many were salaried workers prior to moving abroad, but for all of them, once they move to a foreign country, their main concerns revolve around the home and family.
For most this is a continuation of a role assumed in the early years of marriage back home in Japan, for others it is the acquisition of a new and different lifestyle of newlywed.

When they move to the new place some find themselves assailed by feelings of strangeness, or what we have learned to call "culture shock", and with it, develop a heightened sense of helplessness and vulnerability. The physical environment, the unfamiliar language, the contrasting socio-cultural norms, and the lack of an apparent social consensus all converge to impose a sense of anomie and alienation. Yet, for a few, there is exhilaration fostered by the normlessness and isolation which springs from the freedom inherent in living among those who have no specific claim on one. "The whole joy and the whole bitterness of isolation are only different reactions to socially experienced influences" notes Simmel (1950:119). But living as a stranger can be an exhausting and penetrating experience, and learning to make sense of it all becomes a full-time occupation.

This ethnography is constructed from the accounts of the "winners". The winners, in this case, are the women who tolerated the ambiguity, the isolation, the elations and the depressions of being a stranger for varying periods of time, usually two to ten years, sometimes longer, rarely less. It does not chronicle except in an opaque way, the events in the lives of the "losers", women who could not accept the unknown and who either returned to Japan unhappy and ashamed, to await their husband's return, or who committed suicide in a moment of despair and depression. More than one informant spoke of these women. Some knew them personally and all were profoundly
affected by their tragedy.

This thesis may be seen to attempt too much—in that it tries to explicate the realities of too broad a group of women. Challenged by the constant claim of homogeneity I collected data from women both urban and rural, who profess moral systems both traditional and modern, and who, by life's experiences are both naive and wise. The three things all these women share are strangerhood, womanhood and marriage.

It is banal to note that not all Japanese think alike, but so frequently was the expression "the Japanese Way" used to explicate social action it became like a banner heralding perceived cultural differences and I have left this expression untouched in the accounts. Other expressions such as "Westerner", "North-American", "Canadian" and "the English" have also gone unexplained. I am aware of some of the vast differences between the Acadians of New Brunswick and the Chicanos of California encompassed by the term "North-American" as, I am sure, are a number of the informants who used them, but when they use these expressions it is to comment on gross differences between East and West and not upon the fine distinctions.

The Organization of the Material

The structure of the thesis and organization of material is as follows: The second chapter discusses making contact with the women and collecting the data, both in Vancouver and in Japan. The interviews were conducted in English because I felt my ability in Japanese to be insufficient for in-depth interviews.
I discuss this aspect in detail in this chapter. Also discussed are how the informants were selected, the eliciting techniques, and informed consent. Although I tried for consistency, there is some variation. The interviews in the beginning are short and the tone is tentative; toward the end, in Japan where I was doing two long interviews a day I had a better idea of what I was searching for. By that time, however, I felt as though I were suffering from a kind of "interaction overload". When I was interviewing these women I was keenly aware of my own position as a stranger in their eyes. This held my attention and only later did I come to see the many ways I shaped the interview. I have discussed this aspect in the Creation of Responses.

The third chapter: What Everyone Knows discusses the kinds of taken for granted ideas these women bring with them. They come with a sense of moral order of what is just, right and proper. They also bring cultural constructs which may differ radically from those which they find in the new place.

This chapter was difficult to write. Although I have lived in Japan, had read extensively about Japanese culture, and had interviewed informed, intelligent Japanese women, I found my knowledge totally inadequate for an in depth look at the culture. Presented here is a brief sketch of the philosophical underpinnings which form many of the unquestioned beliefs handed down from one generation to another. Although these beliefs twist and turn with time the essential core of interdependence, hierarchy and the importance of group unanimity remains strong. The themes of socially prescribed behavior, the nurturing of good interpersonal relationships, the acceptance of dependent-
indulgent types of interaction which flow from these convictions are examined. Finally, the importance of social consensus is highlighted.

The fourth chapter, The New Place, I have divided into three main parts. The first part records the overwhelming impact that expectations exert when these women go abroad, as well as the ensuing first impressions. Part II of this chapter attempts to document the way in which these women learn to make sense of the new place as they encounter other ways of doing things in a world where little things count.

The third and last part examines the idea that a cultural encounter is in fact a "journey into the self" (Adler 1975:22) and that the moments of despair and movements of the self ultimately represent a growth in spirit as well as an expanded awareness of the dialogue between self and other.

The fifth chapter, The Return Home documents what many ethnographic field workers have noted: that the bigger shock is often felt upon return. It opens the possibility that what is really being experienced when one socially, physically or culturally displaces oneself from the usual environment is not an illness from which one must ultimately recover but a continuing process of learning to live in a constantly expanding universe.

The accounts of these women are wide-ranging, diverse and disorganized. In attempting to make sense of what they told me and to present it, in what seems to me an orderly and structurally coherent manner, I have organized the main body of the data into the last three chapters. Despite my wish to keep
things whole, I found myself mentally leaping back and forth between accounts and readings, between readings and reflections, and then back to accounts. It seemed a disorderly way to proceed. And then I thought of Geertz and his admonition to anthropologists seeking the native's point of view:

... it is necessary, I think, first to notice the characteristic intellectual movement, the inward conceptual rhythm... namely, a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structure in such a way as to bring them into simultaneous view... one oscillates restlessly between the sort of exotic minutia that makes even the best ethnographies a trial to read and the sort of sweeping characterization that makes all but the most pedestrian of them somewhat implausible. Hopping back and forth between the whole conceived through the parts that actualize it and the parts conceived through the whole that motivates them, we seek to turn them, by a sort of intellectual perpetual motion, into explications of one another (Geertz 1976:235).

In a brief moment of insight I realized that this is how the women do it. This is how they learn to make sense of the new place--by tacking back and forth--between cultures, between concepts, between the experiences of every day living in an unknown place. Some are more successful than others. But with cultural competence comes the added weight of knowledge, and as
Adler has noted:

... paradoxically, the more one is capable of experiencing new and different dimensions of human diversity, the more one learns of oneself. Such learning takes place when a person transcends the boundaries of ego, culture, and thinking (Adler 1975:22).

Chapter 2

Making Contact

General Overview

In any kind of scholarly investigation the recording instruments must be fully documented. In the case of the anthropological interview, where a human being acts as an interpreting tool, the observer as well as the observed, and the interaction between them must be discussed within the context of the research. This reason alone requires a full disclosure of the events which led to the research, the manner in which the data were collected, and the perceived social image presented to those who were interviewed. In this regard, Arthur Vidich notes:

A valid evaluation of data must necessarily include a reasonably thorough comprehension of the major social dimensions of the situation in which the data were collected. The social positions of the observer and the observed and the relationship between them at the time must be taken into account when the data are interpreted. To fail to take account of these conditions is to assume an equivalence of situations which does not exist and leads to distortion (Vidich 1955:360).

I first started interviewing Japanese housewives nearly three and a half years ago. My interest in their perceptions came about as a direct result of living in Japan for a year. I
was a graduate student on leave from the department of Anthropology and Sociology when I left for Japan and was preparing for a research project on death and dying. I abandoned this project while in Japan.

However, in order to prepare for it I had previously audited a course *Approaches to Nursing Care 515*, conducted various interviews with staff members of the Psychiatric Hospital on campus, and interviewed a number of my colleagues on sensitive subjects. By the time I left for Japan I was well acquainted with recording equipment, and had a certain amount of experience in open-ended interviews. When I returned, I researched, wrote and submitted a research proposal on the present topic, which was circulated to my committee. After discussing the project with each member and receiving considerable advice and direction I proceeded with the interviews.

In view of the apparent endorsement from my committee and my standing as a graduate student, I think the social image I presented to the women I interviewed was of a reasonably qualified social scientist interested in gaining their impressions of what it is like to be a stranger in a foreign land. I suspect that the implied consent of the university enhanced my position in their eyes.

The approval of my committee had a positive effect on me. It allowed me to go into the field with a degree of confidence I might not have had without it. Perhaps I exuded this self-confidence in my behavior and in the way which I conducted the interviews.
In the course of this study I interviewed approximately 50 women who were residing in, or had resided in, a foreign Western country. The majority of them had lived in either Canada or the United States, although a few had traveled more extensively. Approximately one third of the women were interviewed in Vancouver, and that group consisted about equally of wives of scholars and wives of businessmen. The other two thirds were interviewed in Japan. Of these women about one third were wives of diplomats, about one third were wives of scholars, and one third were wives of businessmen.

In general, the wives of diplomats tended to be somewhat older than the others, while many of the wives of businessmen were younger. The wives of scholars varied greatly in age.

Several of the women I interviewed in Vancouver had been introduced to me through the English Conversation class at the Y.W.C.A. Some of these referred friends who they thought would be interested in speaking with me. I also met some women through university acquaintances. In Japan a number of personal friends referred their friends to me, and virtually all of the interviews resulted from this kind of a network of referrals.

Changing Perspectives

Most of the information for this thesis was collected at two separate times about three months apart. The first interviews took place in Vancouver in early 1978, the second group in Japan during the summer of the same year. I have continued doing follow-up interviews since that time.

With data collected over a period of time, in different locations or circumstances, or where the analysis has been
delayed for an extended period, it is wise to address the problem of changing perspectives as well as the evolution of these changes. Arthur Vidich has suggested that one way of measuring social change is to document contrasting or conflicting perspectives.

To refresh his memory the participant-observer can turn to his records. But if his perspective has changed with time, he may discount early notes and impressions in favor of those taken later. Field notes from two different periods in a project, may indeed, be one of the more important means of studying change. Instead, what probably happens is that the field worker obscures change by treating his data as though everything happened at the same time. This results in a description from a single perspective, usually held just before leaving the field, but redefined by rereading his notes. (Vidich, 1955:360)

Most of the discussion of these changes can be found in the section of this chapter entitled Creation of Responses.

Initially, I was curious as to how Japanese housewives would respond to a socio-cultural environment which might be quite different from home. To this end, I began a series of informal, open-ended tape recorded interviews with Japanese women living in Vancouver. In most cases, these were women who had never traveled abroad before, and who, because of their entrance visas were restricted from working or studying in
Canada.

I wanted to talk to individuals who define themselves as foreigners in that they have come with the idea of eventual return to their home country as part of their general expectations. I also wanted to talk to those who see themselves as performing no special tasks in the new country which they do not normally do in their own. By special tasks I mean economically remunerative ones or tasks generally associated with furthering one's own formal education.

Because of the peculiar kind of question I am attempting to frame: "What is it like to be a stranger?" I could only ask it of certain people, and access to those people could best be gained through personal referral or a network system. I made no attempt to find a representative sample of various socio-economic strata, and with the exceptions noted above, I interviewed anyone who was willing to talk about her experiences. From the observations of home visits, I believe that most of the women I talked with come from the upper-middle class segment of Japanese society, in that they either have more money or more education than most Japanese housewives in Japan.

The Role of Stranger as a Research Tool

When I started interviewing these women I was quite nervous, and although I was concerned about violating confidences I did not really think about violating privacy. I sensed, in my informants, an underlying eagerness to talk about
what they were experiencing, and I equated this eagerness to willingness on their part to share their inner selves with me for my own enlightenment. At first, I did not see their desire or need to tell "how it is" as anything other than a rather flattering desire to help me in my research.

I think I was surprised and pleased with how easily people seemed to respond to my questions. I went to considerable lengths to try to allow the individual to talk about what concerned her rather than what interested me, and I made valid and successful attempts to "recycle" this information in a thoughtful way so that it reflected, as much as possible, her views rather than my own. (please see the section titled Data Collection below.) nevertheless, I did not question until later, and upon much reflection, what motivates this eagerness to talk about private thoughts. I did not really see, as I now believe, that any kind of personal probing under the guise of anthropological research is, by its very nature, an invasion of privacy. Protecting the anonymity of the individual is not the same as protecting the privacy of the individual. Whether it is accomplished by thoughtful and careful listening, questioning and recycling or by poking and prodding, the resulting information may still come from that part of the individual which is normally closed to all but the intimate.

What motivates these women to tell me their inner thoughts? I do not mean to imply that every interview was a revelation or that all of the information given was necessarily of direct interest to this thesis. Some of the conversations bordered on triviality, others seemed deep and meaningful. Some topics
recurred with predictable frequency, while other subjects were never mentioned. For example, two topics never volunteered or discussed in any depth were sex and a belief in spiritualism. I can only speculate, I believe both were of concern to most of the women, but I did not appear to be an appropriate person with whom to discuss them. A few issues were of such an individualistic nature that only one or two people talked about them. This was the breadth of the discourse.

Why should so many women be so willing to speak so freely? I suspect that it is necessary to look at a number of interrelated factors. Among them, the interaction itself, the circumstances of the interaction, and the people involved. To begin with the last, in most cases, the individuals I interviewed were strangers to me, as was I to them. The candidness of their replies might have been predicted by Georg Simmel, who, years earlier, observed of the stranger,

...he often receives the most surprising openness—confidences which sometimes have the character of a confessional and which would be carefully withheld from a more closely related person (Simmel 1950:404).

One of the reasons for this openness, Simmel notes, is that the stranger is viewed as possessing a degree of objectivity not always found among close friends or relatives, and that this perceived objectivity influences the interaction between strangers.

...another expression of this constellation lies in the objectivity of the stranger. He is not
radically committed to the unique ingredients and peculiar tendencies of the group, and therefore approaches them with the specific attitude of "objectivity." But objectivity does not simply involve passivity and detachment; it is a particular structure composed of distance and nearness, indifference and involvement... (Simmel 1950:404).

The dialectical tension between nearness and distance is, I believe, what contributes to or detracts from a fruitful interview. In many cases, my status as a stranger enhanced the chance of rapport with the women I interviewed. I was both a stranger with a perceived degree of objectivity, one who was "...bound by no commitments which could prejudge his perception, understanding and evaluation of the given..." (Simmel 1950:405) and I was also someone recommended by a trusted friend. I could be counted upon not to reveal the identity of the speaker, yet I was an eager ear for all that was spoken. I was willing to hear anything the individual wanted to tell me and I was curious about many things which a close friend might not question. As one informant said, nearing the end of an interview which had revealed a profound degree of loneliness and despair,

It's the first time since I returned nearly ten years ago, to have this kind of conversation--what I took home from my stay, or that kind of thing. It's my first experience. I thank you very much...Japanese friends never asked me, you know--we take each other--so--for granted, you
know...and they never asked me.

Although this woman despaired at never having been asked, I doubt that she would have told a casual or even intimate friend the same things with equal candor. Later in the conversation she said,

you know, if you were Japanese--I could never tell you these things.

This theme, or some variation of it, is expressed by many of the women with whom I spoke. Many understand what Alfred Schutz means when he writes of the kind of bewilderment felt by the homecomer when he or she finds that listeners do not seem to "understand the uniqueness of the individual experiences" to which the person has been subjected.

This discrepancy between the uniqueness and decisive importance that the absent one attributes to his experiences and their pseudo-typification by the people at home, who impute them to a pseudo-relevance, is one of the biggest obstacles to mutual re-establishment of the disrupted we-relations (Schutz 1945:374).

It is not my intention to speculate in any depth about the differences between the social interactions of strangers as opposed to those of friends. I wish only to point out that in most cases my relationship to the people I interviewed can be thought of in the classic sense which Mary Margaret Wood uses, when she writes,

The condition of being a stranger is not . . .

Dependent upon the future duration of contact, but
it is determined by the fact that it is the first face to face meeting of individuals who have not known one another before (Wood 1934:44).

In Japan, I did interview a few of my personal friends whom I knew had traveled and lived abroad before returning to Japan. However, I was fairly selective in this regard, not because I felt their accounts to be of any less value than those from people I had not formerly known, but because I did not wish to disrupt close friendships and intimacies by imposing a new social identity.

When I lived in Japan the first time I was seen as a stranger, but as a recognizable part of the community. I was a housewife with a family who did many of the things my neighbors did to maintain a household and make it run smoothly. When I returned, I came alone, lived alone, free of familial responsibilities, spending most of my time collecting data for my own use. For some friends this posed no problem in understanding. For others, I think it seemed somewhat strange and perhaps irresponsible behavior as I was no longer attending to my maternal and/or housewifely duties. For this reason, the few friends I did choose to interview were women who I felt understood and appreciated the interrelatedness as well as the paradoxical nature of the dual roles I seemed to present.

But there was a more pressing personal reason for discriminate choice. Within the anthropological interview a peculiar form of interaction takes place which sometimes causes the informant to disclose more information, or information of a more personal nature than she might ordinarily divulge. Because
I did not wish to jeopardize any friendships by encouraging unplanned disclosures, I limited the number of personal friends I interviewed to a select few.

Different Locations

In Vancouver, most of the women seem to view me as one of the "locals" someone who lives in the community and who has access to certain knowledge which is not always available to the newcomer. Occasionally I am seen as a possible source of information—"Why do you people do that?" At other times as one to be enlightened when perceived cultural differences are alluded to by remarks such as "in Japan, we do it this way". The main distinction, however, is that in Vancouver most of the conversations concern things as they are happening NOW. There is a constant flow of ideas, a shifting and sifting of "data", the movement of changing perspectives. And there is a continual comparison to a motionless memory of "how things are done back home". For many, home remains immutable until they return.

By contrast, in Japan much of the information was of a retrospective nature. The women have had time to rethink, to rationalize, to modify or to ratify their opinions and ideas about their experiences. They have also had the experience of re-entering a society which has gone on without them, and which may have changed almost as much as they feel themselves to have changed.

There are other differences between those early interviews in Vancouver and the subsequent ones in Japan. In the beginning,
I tried to keep the interview to one hour so as not to tire the informant, who would be speaking in a second language. In order to gather enough information I felt it was necessary to schedule at least three one hour periods.

In Japan, because of the long distances it was necessary to travel and the time involved, I generally conducted one long interview with each informant. Sometimes this took an entire morning or afternoon. In a few cases, I returned for a follow-up interview as well.

Finally, in Japan it was possible to talk to a group of women who have never been abroad but who were expecting to move to a western country in the near future.

Impetus for Further Research

During the early interviews in Vancouver I began to wonder about those women who had already returned. Schutz (1945:569) notes that home often shows "an unaccustomed" face to the homecomer, and unanticipated feelings of strangeness in the homeland can be more disturbing than those generated by initial cultural encounters. I began to think about the possibility of returning to Japan to interview these women as an expansion and continuation of the study.

I wrote to some of my friends in Japan about the feasibility of contacting potential informants and I received encouraging replies. I had also maintained my membership in various organizations and social groups which I felt could facilitate further contact. During this period I also discussed with my family and with my advisors the possibility of return, and was given considerable encouragement by all in the form of
additional contacts, advice in interview technique and further reading. I subsequently spent approximately three months in various parts of Japan, mostly in and around Tokyo, where I interviewed about thirty-five women.

The total number of women interviewed in both countries is just over fifty. The total number of interviews is much greater due to the use of multiple interviews spaced over a period of time. Of this total, approximately two thirds were done in Japan.

Selection of Informants

As previously mentioned, most of the women interviewed were contacted by means of personal referral. However, personal referral can have a variety of contextual meanings. In most cases, the individual was called by a mutual friend or informant who explained the purpose and scope of the enquiry. I had told most people that I wished to talk to Japanese women who had lived in a Western country to "find out how they made sense of the new place". If the person making the contact had been interviewed by me she undoubtedly added interpretations of her own. If the woman agreed to the interview I then telephoned her and made an appointment.

Some of the disadvantages of this kind of data collection by personal referral are: limited scope in terms of closed networks of friends or in terms of socio-economic strata, and inadvertent invasion of privacy. When one friend refers another they sometimes discuss it afterwards.

The advantages of personal referral, I feel, far outweigh
the problems. For the stranger, it allows one to cast the net further than one small circle of friends. Most of my Japanese friends maintain close connections with others on the basis of school ties, or previous contacts in a foreign country, which are sometimes close, and sometimes ambivalent. They also have a connection with various social organizations. As a non-Japanese, I was occasionally astonished to find two or three informants who had previously lived in the same city in a foreign country now living in the same neighborhood, and who had not made contact because the social situation was never quite ripe. Apparently, the casual contact of contiguous living found at the bus stop, the grocer, the meat market or the hair dresser, for the Japanese, rarely seems to blossom into friendship.

In a few cases, I made direct contact myself. In Vancouver, I spoke directly to some members of a Y.W.C.A. English Conversation class after first speaking to the instructor who then introduced me to the class as a whole. In retrospect, I am sure that the success I experienced in getting those early interviews hinged not upon my persuasiveness, but was a direct result of the high regard felt for the English teacher.

Contact through the C.W.A.J.

In Japan, I was able to use my membership in the College Women's Association of Japan (CWAJ) as an additional source of contact. This is an organization of international scope for women who have completed study at a two year college. This contact gave me access to a third category of informant: women who had never been abroad, but who were planning a trip in the
near future.

One of the annual programs offered by CWAJ is an Orientation Program for Japanese Women Going Abroad. This six-week course is designed to give some information of a concrete nature, such as babysitting practices, school systems, housing and shopping hints—in general, many of the aspects of living in a Western culture—to the Japanese woman who will be going abroad for the first time. I was able to schedule my arrival in Japan to coincide with this program and to contact some of the women who would be attending. After interviewing some of them I was also able to arrange with a few who would be living on the West Coast of North America to contact me after they arrived. In this way I was not only able to speak to them before they left Japan, to gain some idea of their expectations, but also to interview them after they arrived in North America to find out how they actually felt about their encounter. This same kind of double interviewing was also possible when I first arrived in Japan. Because I had been given the names and addresses of some of the women with whom I had spoken in Vancouver, I was able to visit them in their homes in Japan for a second interview.

Limiting the Selection of Informants
In this thesis I would like to differentiate between the immigrant and the sojourner, and for this reason I avoided interviewing several people in Vancouver who had applied for Landed Immigrant Status.

My rationale for making this distinction had come from a kind of intuitive feeling that one of the differences between an
immigrant and a sojourner was one of commitment, or orientation to the new group. Most of the reading on the subject tends to blur the issue by emphasizing the role of the stranger to the community in terms of acceptance or rejection by the 'in group' (Schutz 1944:499, Wood 1934:45 or Simmel 1950:402). No mention is made of the kind of commitment ultimately required of the individual to the new group in order to overcome the sense of not belonging. Wood touches on this when she mentions the deep "well of loneliness" (Wood 1934:9) created by the absence of permanent personal relationships, but she goes no further. Her later book Paths of Loneliness (1953) probes the problems encountered by 'social isolates', but does not specifically address the issue of change in commitment or orientation to the new group.

However, the distinction between the sojourner and potential immigrant was most clearly articulated by a young Japanese woman. I had interviewed this woman nearly two and a half years previously and found her observations gave me considerable insight into the problems of temporarily living in a strange community. Recently, she mentioned that she and her family were considering permanent residence in North America. When I asked her about her feelings concerning this change, she said:

Before, it was like I was just camping. You know, I thought of Tokyo as my city and Japan as my home. And here--here I was just camping. Then I went back to Japan, and, well, now I'm not camping anymore. My life is here, where I am now. I don't
know about Japan, maybe, but, I'm not camping anymore.

A second requirement was that all interviews be conducted in English. This was because my Japanese language ability was inadequate for the kind of in-depth interviewing I wished to do, and I felt that the presence of a Japanese interpreter might inhibit the informant. Although I have lived in Japan for over a year and formally studied the language for more than two, my competence in Japanese was less than akin to Edward Norbeck's description, that of a "thick, dull and rusted meat cleaver (rather than) a fine surgical instrument..." (Norbeck 1970:265). Since the interview would require one of us to be speaking in a second language, I felt it better to rely on my informant's ability to use English with the understanding that the phraseology might be Japanese and to use my limited knowledge to augment the conversation. It is noteworthy that most Japanese have studied English for four to six years before graduation from High School.

A more positive, if less certifiable, reason for using English in the interviews was that my short exposure to the Japanese language had acquainted me with some of the subtle nuances inherent in the levels of politeness, good manners of understatement and outright avoidance of the negative. In a word, there is the feeling that Japanese is the language of indirection, whereas English, the language most of these women had been using while living in the West, is the language of spontaneity. And spontaneity is an asset I wished to encourage.

With regard to the foreign country in which the individual
had lived I made only the restriction that it be a non-Asian country. This was because I felt that the contrast between Eastern and Western culture was greater and of more significance than that between two Asian countries. Subsequent reading on other Asian cultures seems to indicate a strong and common Confucian bond (Chang 1980, Tu 1977, Suzuki 1962).

Although most of the informants had lived in English speaking countries such as Canada, the United States and England, there were some who had lived in other countries, such as Mexico, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Switzerland and various parts of the Middle East.

One final note regarding the selection of informants. Although this thesis is mainly concerned with how the Japanese woman makes sense of her environment while living in a foreign country, in some cases, I did interview other members of the family, usually at the request of the woman. But many husbands as well as the children wanted to tell me of their experiences of living in a foreign country. It became clear that my position as a foreigner had a great deal to do with the ability of those who responded to give candid and uninhibited replies. It also became apparent that many people wished to discuss how they felt about their cultural encounter and they welcomed the opportunity to talk about it.

Most of the interviews took place in the informant's home. This allowed for the degree of informality I had hoped, as well as the opportunity to see the kind of surroundings in which the person was living. It was from these superficial observations that I concluded that most of the women I interviewed were from
upper-middle class backgrounds.

In all cases, either in North America or in Japan, the choice of location for the interview was left to the informant. In Vancouver, I suggested the possibility of visiting me in my home or at the office at U.B.C. as alternate choices. In Japan, the alternatives were the International House of Japan, where I stayed during the first part of my visit, and later, an office in one of the Japanese Universities near Ochanomizu Station.

I tried to interview each person separately and alone. This was not always possible because of the presence of small children who often contributed to the naturalness of the setting, but who also created distraction. Japanese mothers seem to be more patient and understanding with their small children than many Western mothers. If a child wanted attention the mother usually responded quickly, and the thread of the conversation became lost. In this regard, Suzanne Vogel notes:

Young children are seen as needing the mother beside them all times. A child's cry at the threatened separation is seen as proof that the mother should never leave. Babysitters are almost unheard of... (Vogel 1978a:24).

The few conversations I taped with small children present were often filled with stops and starts, loud banging noises, little voices and an occasional erasure. Sometimes when older children were present, if they wished to contribute their mother usually encouraged them to speak. Some mothers who had been expressing their ideas and feelings candidly and eloquently, suddenly, in the presence of their school age children, became
reticent to speak because of their 'language problem'. The few times when I conducted an interview with the other spouse present I felt a lack of spontaneity on the part of the individual being interviewed. This usually resulted in one member taking over answering for the other or in re-interpreting many statements which were offered. Sometimes this seemed to be because one member felt a bit more comfortable in English than the other, but I think much of the re-interpreting occurred because of a wish to maintain a smooth surface in front of an outsider. In most cases it was the male who took over, but occasionally, when I interviewed the husband, the wife interceded. Because of the personal nature of the interviews I usually tried to talk to each person under circumstances where they felt the most at ease to express their feeling and opinions freely.

I tape-recorded the interviews, as opposed to taking notes for a number of reasons. First, I have found note taking a distraction. By recording the interviews on tape I was able to focus all of my attention on the informant and what she was saying. This allowed me to have access to the interaction as it took place. Visual non-verbal clues could be noted, any Japanese expressions or statements could be interpreted later and the context in which statements were uttered included as part of the data. Because the interviews were open-ended and self structuring each one tended to be distinct. Although I tried to gather a certain core of information about each person, I also tried to let the informant guide the discussion.
Data Collection

This method of data collection allowed me to discover questions which were relevant to the informant rather than imposing my own. The theoretical basis for this type of question and response technique follows the philosophical inclinations of Black and Metzger (1965) in their paper concerning methodological approaches to ethnography.

It is basic to communications theory that you don't start getting any information from an utterance or event until you know what it is in response to. You must know what question is being answered. . . {the ethnographer} needs to know which questions are being taken for granted because they are what "everyone knows" without thinking. To find out these implicit questions is not easy. . . The task of the ethnographer is to discover questions that seek the relationship among entities that are conceptually meaningful to the people under investigation (Black and Metzger 1965:144).

Black and Metzger suggest the following framework which differs from early anthropological thinking in that,

Whereas the ordinary speaker normally assumes knowledge of his implicit question on the part of his hearer, the ethnographic approach used here assumes lack of knowledge of the questions on the part of the anthropologist who must proceed
systematically to learn from the informants (Black and Metzger 1965:145).

It was usually necessary for me to ask the first question. Generally, I tried to find the informant's area of relevance by using a non-directive approach with such open-ended questions as "Tell me about your experiences" or a slightly more directed "What did you notice that was different/the same about the new place?"--and then let her guide the conversation. Any subsequent questions were then specifically related to the individual's just previous statement. I also tried not to take for granted the apparent meaning of an answer, by periodically restating the question or answer in several different modes. The purposeful use of this kind of redundancy was to overcome the 'noise' which accompanies any dialogue where one of the speakers is forced to use a second language. By 'noise' I mean the rather broad application which Cherry uses when he describes 'noise' as "any disturbance or interference, apart from the wanted signals or messages being sent" (Cherry 1957:42).

Edmund Leach, in his exegesis of Levi-Strauss, gives the following example of this kind of use of redundancy:

Now let us imagine the situation of an individual A who is trying to get a message to a friend B who is almost out of earshot and let us suppose that communication is further hampered by various kinds of interference--noise from the wind, passing cars and so on. What will A do? If he is sensible he will not be satisfied with shouting his message just once, he will shout it several times and give
a different wording to the message each time, supplementing his words with visual signals. At the receiving end, B may very likely get the meaning of each of the individual messages slightly wrong, but when he puts them together the redundancies and the mutual consistencies and inconsistencies will make it quite clear what is 'really' being said. (Leach 1970:59)

In addition to restatement of questions and answers I frequently recapitulated the conversational ideas just expressed in order to give the informant an opportunity to amend any information she might have felt was too trivial to correct the first time.

**Informed Consent**

Any kind of research involving human beings should always be accompanied by some safeguards. One of the safeguards most often discussed involves protecting the privacy of the individual in such a way that he or she can not be readily identified in the subsequently published findings.

Another protection which is not always offered to informants is a safeguard against *unwarranted* disclosure of private thoughts. This means that all information should be justified as contributing to the enquiry and that statements should not removed from the context in which they were originally framed.

A final assurance which should be offered is the right to break off the interview at any point and to withdraw any
previously tendered information. All of these assurances and rights fall under the assurance of 'informed consent'. I decided to seek verbal agreement from each informant at the beginning of each interview. In most cases, I offered an informal statement of these rights and assurances before beginning the actual taping. In some cases it was part of the taped conversation. This statement generally followed the format below:

1. You will not be personally identified in the thesis, and anything you say, if used will be kept in the context in which you say it, except that it may be coded in some manner to protect your privacy.

2. If for any reason you decide not to complete the interview, or if you feel any reluctance to allow the information already recorded to be used in the study, I will not use any of the information you have given me.

3. I will make every effort to supply a copy of the final draft of the thesis to anyone who takes part in the project and who expresses an interest in reading it.

My reasons for seeking verbal agreement rather than a written one were two fold. First, although most informants could speak English quite well, I had no way of knowing how many could read and write in this second language. I also did not wish to embarrass anyone who did not feel comfortable reading and signing a written statement. The second reason was less clearly defined. I had an intuitive feeling that for Japanese, signing a
written statement carried the weight of a contractual agreement similar to that of signing a lease, and that while I felt strongly that the informant's rights be articulated and adhered to, I also felt the signing of an informed consent paper would push the transaction into a too formal structure. Since collecting the data nearly three and a half years ago I have decided that an abstract translated into Japanese should be offered to anyone taking part in the enquiry who expressed an interest in reading it. This is in addition to the previous offer to supply a copy of the thesis for reading.

**Creation of Responses**

When an individual enters the presence of others they commonly seek to acquire information about him or bring into play information about him already possessed. . . Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him. . . (Goffman 1959:1).

In conducting these interview, I could not help but become aware that the women with whom I talked needed to have enough information about me and my particular interest in their affairs to account for my reasons for wishing to interview them. At first, I did not know how much information to offer, or what kind, and I stumbled around a lot. I had a somewhat idealistic notion of reciprocal exchange, and tended to offer bits and
pieces indiscriminately. Later, I developed a minimal account and then answered any questions they might have. In retrospect, I think this minimal account was a result of an emerging image I had begun to form of myself, and which I offered at situationally appropriate times.

I had begun by attempting to construct what has been called "the shared liveable world" (Olesen and Whittaker 1968:25) by acknowledging many common features between the informant's life and my own. We were both women, both married with family responsibilities and we both had experienced living in two distinctive cultures as strangers. But I could push the similarities no further. We had not shared enough time together to "develop a sense of 'we-ness' or 'intersubjectivity' which presupposes the existence of a shared world" (Olesen and Whittaker 1968:25). Neither did we share a common cultural background with the same tacit assumptions and taken-for-granted notions. For a few women the minimal account I provided was not enough. One woman actually interviewed me before she would allow herself to be interviewed. The resulting talk was one of the most thoughtful I recorded.

One of the things I had not anticipated was the reflectiveness of the responses. I believe I had become infatuated with the supposed value of the spontaneous reply and had not adequately considered that at least some of the people I interviewed had had time to think about their experiences in great depth. They wanted this depth recognized and recorded.

A few people brought prepared statements or notes to the interview. My carefully crafted data collection method failed
here. I was unprepared for several pages of first person accounts and did not take advantage of the additional data source by incorporating it into the interviews in a thoughtful way. I tended to scan the contents and then quiz them about what they had written, I did not ask to keep or copy their notes. I think some informants were disappointed. Other unanticipated sources of information were the scrap books, momentos, and diaries--carefully kept, which chronicled their thoughts and interests of the moment. More than one woman had written and published a book telling of her experiences. It would have been fruitful to compare her perceptions then and later. I mention these things because my way of collecting data was inadequate to accommodate them.

Another area of concern more directly related to what could be called the realities of the interview is that, in spite of my intention to always let the informant guide the discussion, there were times when I shaped the responses in a direct way. This usually occurred when someone did not know quite how to begin because of language problems; but at other times it resulted from a previous interview and the information that provided.

Occasionally someone would introduce a topic or idea which I later pursued with another person. Sometimes this was appropriate. Other times it tended to confuse and defocus the interview, in that it challenged the area of relevance of the latter informant.

The recycling of data seemed to work reasonably well in that, when I recapitulated conversational ideas or summarized
content, the informant usually felt comfortable enough to correct, change, amend or rationalize any statements. Where language problems were pronounced this recycling for the purpose of clarification seemed like a laborious game of twenty questions.

Finally, in reviewing the tapes I find a considerable tendency on my part toward a chronological ordering of events, which is also reflected in the structure and organization of the thesis. Rarely did the informants tell of their experiences in such an orderly fashion. Most tended to skip here and there speaking of what was relevant what is important or what was vital. I tended to ask questions implying "what happened after that..." In writing this thesis I find I have constructed a subsequent reordering of the accounts in order to explicate social action in a "logical" manner.
Chapter 3

What Everyone Knows: The Japanese Way

Introduction

No one comes to a new environment empty-headed. Even those who find themselves suddenly transported by life into a place previously undreamed and uncharted, bring with them cognitive maps drawn from other voyages past. Sometimes these maps sketched from life's experiences help them to roam the unfamiliar surroundings with consummate skill. At other times, they find themselves lost in a wasteland of taken-for-granted notions, unquestioned concepts and broken ideals. Perhaps this is the one universal theme we all share. We must all start from somewhere.

Most of the Japanese housewives I interviewed came to the new environment with certain shared ideas, ideals, values and customs which they would agree represent some portion of the "Japanese Way" of doing things. These customs stem from tacit assumptions which are accepted by consensus because they are things which "everyone knows". They may not represent the particular belief or mode of behavior of any one particular person at any one particular time, but they are ideas and notions with which these women are intimately familiar, and which most would agree speak to the issue of what constitutes being "a good Japanese wife and mother" in Japan.

Many of these women found when they came that they were confronted by a different moral order, as well as different
patterns of behavior which challenged some of their basic attitudes and beliefs. These challenges caused them to question a number of their ideas, and in questioning, to discard a few while placing a new value on others previously less esteemed.

For some of them, this process repeated itself upon return to Japan. Because they had lived apart from a community which had gone on without them, and because they had experienced new ideas and changed perspectives, the return home was as challenging as the initial encounter.

In this chapter I would like to examine some of the cultural attitudes and beliefs which these women bring with them from Japan. Most of the ideas presented here are drawn from three main sources. First, from the conversations with the women I interviewed here in Vancouver and also in Japan, second, from extensive reading of literature written by both Japanese and Western scholars, and lastly, from my own fieldwork experiences, as well as everyday life of a housewife living in Japan.

The average Japanese housewife takes her job seriously. She believes that the care of the home, her children, and the well-being of her husband are completely in her hands. She may feel overworked, under-appreciated or 'put upon' but, contrary to the experience of Western women, she rarely feels that her job is without value. She is nurturer, mediator and constant companion to her young children as well as a home-bound source of support for her husband in his daily endeavors. In sum, her devotion to the role of the housewife is total.

What then, is the difference between the Japanese housewife and her Western counterpart? Suzanne Vogel (1978a; 1978b)
suggests that it is her unmitigated commitment to the role, as well as the degree of professionalism she brings to it. Vogel points out that it is the early training given by mothers to their children which lends both value and authority to the idea of a separate but complementary division of labor and responsibility between husband and wife. This early socialization reinforced by local consensus and unchallenged by 'other ways of doing things' presents an unassailable image to the 'average' Japanese woman.

What is the source of this sense of commitment and dedication? What motivates the Japanese housewife to become so totally engrossed in the role of wife and mother? I believe that some of this motivation arises from the philosophical underpinnings inherent in Eastern thought, and that these ideas are ones which are basically different from those usually found in the Western tradition.

Some of these philosophical questions address issues concerning the value of interdependence over independence, the idea of hierarchy as a natural order in human relations, the assumption that division of labor and responsibility contributes to the autonomy of the group, the custom that group decision should take precedence over individual preference, and the belief that the stability of the nation is rooted in the stability of the family.

In the matter of behavioral modes, harmony and cooperation are preferred over confrontation and adversary procedures, and following this notion, "sensing" or intuiting the other's needs or desires is favored over a more direct and open approach which
might force unwanted decision making on the other. These attitudes reflect an extraordinary confidence in group consensus as well as an exceptional ability on the part of the individual to tolerate a dependent position in the cases of situational conflict. Finally, living in such a society requires a heightened awareness of the options open to the other as well as the acceptance that there must be limitations to these options.

The obverse side of the coin, that sensing or intuiting is better than asking, and that one can guess the other's thoughts, is that one is always being watched and that "people will see" and judge one's behavior accordingly.

In a study of middle-class values among Japanese during the years 1958 to 1960 Ezra and Suzanne Vogel observed the patterns of early socialization of children by their mothers. Of this, Ezra Vogel notes:

The widespread use of fear or ridicule, noted by virtually all observers of the Japanese scene, also serves to ally the mother and child on the same side without creating any obstinacy or feelings of opposition. Mamachi children show an amazing sensitivity to what people might think of them, and the standard device for getting them to behave properly in front of company is the fear of what outsiders may say or think. The mother, in getting the child to behave so that neighbors will not laugh, is not seen by the child as an authority-enforcing discipline but as an ally in avoiding the negative sanctions of an outside
Such methods of social control tend to dovetail with other customs or beliefs concerning child raising and ideas of proper behavior. However, rather than attempting to look at certain traits or customs in comparison with Western beliefs, I would prefer to leave the fabric whole, to resist unraveling the threads and instead to simply trace them as they are woven through time and space.

The rest of this chapter will present a short historical account of the evolution of the traditional attitude toward Japanese women. Following this is a discussion of Japanese society in terms of group orientation and the individual within the group. The final section deals with the interpersonal relationships between individuals, dependence within the family, and the overwhelming importance of social consensus in everyday life.

**Eastern Perspective**

Some of the ideas which make up the Eastern perspective stem from a confluence of many streams of thought. While the issue is complex and does not lend itself readily to facile discussion, and, as it is not the main focus of this thesis, I shall briefly allude to some dominant themes in Eastern thinking as well as the historical context in which they are embedded. My point is simply this. Unlike Western thought, which draws heavily upon Aristotelian logic and Judeo-Christian ethics, Japanese philosophical underpinnings are hewn from a different timber.

In his discussion of East Asian thought, Tu refers to the
"three teachings" which form the core of East Asian philosophy. He identifies these three as an interweaving of Confucianism, Taoist tradition and Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism. Although Tu speaks of East Asian thought from a Chinese perspective, much of what he says seems to suggest some recognizable facets of Japanese thought.

In Japan, the three most prevalent philosophies are Confucianism, indigenous Shintoism and Japanese Buddhism. As in Chinese philosophy, their very co-existence exemplifies not only a lack of confrontation but a kind of complementarity rarely found in Western tradition.

Most writers feel that religions such as Shinto and Buddhism address themselves mainly to the 'inwardness' of humankind and do not seek the "tight integration of religious principles with ethical principles" found in Christianity as it was introduced in Japan (Kishimoto 1962:251). Early Shinto stressed an 'awe of nature', a reverence for ancient beauty and simplicity, as well as the value of harmony and accord among humans (Nakakura 1962; Miyamoto 1962). Buddhism, when it was first introduced, offered a more conceptual way of cultivating a deep spiritual realization of enlightenment (Miyamoto 1962:98). Although both religions emphasized conciliation and collective agreement, neither philosophy offered a practical method for attaining it. As the lack of a clearly articulated ethical premise in the two main religious philosophies became apparent, Confucianism from China seemed to provide certain answers.

In earlier days, because of the homogeneous social structure of Japan, the need for an established
system of ethical principles might not have been as serious as in other nations. But the society grew and became more complicated. . . From the beginning of the seventeenth century, by the time of the Tokugawa government, the Confucian system was taken over as the ethical code of Japan. . .

For principles of moral conduct, people rely on the Confucian Code (Kishimoto 1962:250). Nakamura (1962:631-647) claims that it was the nationalistic character of indigenous Japanese thought which encouraged the picking and choosing of those features from both Buddhism and Confucianism which best suited the needs of the state. The resultant philosophy rejected otherworldliness and fostered a pragmatic "phenomenalistic way of thinking" (Nakamura 1962:643) with emphasis on harmony and accord in everyday life.

The hierarchical tendencies in both Buddhism and Confucianism were well accepted and were particularly well articulated in regard to the family. It was here that Japanese Confucianism was most keenly felt. It has been noted that the Japanese family system is derived from

. . . Chinese political thought that stable families meant a stable society and that filial piety was a civic and not merely a private duty. . . Kazoku seido (the family system), meaning a system of legal and political organization, is a legal personality in which property rights and duties are vested, and is represented externally by a family head who exercises wide powers of
control over family members (Dore 1973:93-94).

Within this rather formidable institution the preferred valued human relationships were those between parent and child rather than between husband and wife. The expression _hara wa karimono_ (the womb is only borrowed) contrasted with _oyako no en wa kittemo kirarenu_ (nothing can break the bond between parent and child) (Dore 1973:98). As in many other societies, when a woman married she no longer belonged to her natal group but became a part of her husband's household. In concurring, Miyamoto elaborates further by pointing out that unlike Buddhism of China or India which emphasized Dharma (law) or Sangha (assembly) of the Three Treasures, the "characteristic of Japanese Buddhism is to worship Buddha... and this was always connected intimately with Emperor-worship and ancestor worship" (Miyamoto 1962:99).

During the Tokagawa period young brides were thought of as little more than servants and breeding stock for the family line.

The relative importance between the two relationships was, perhaps, never more unambiguously stated than by Confucian Nakae Tooju in a seventeenth-century moral treatise for girls; 'The fundamental reason for a man to take a wife is that she may serve his parents and bear heirs to continue the succession.' (Dore 1973:98).

Sometimes events in history which appear so permanent and fixed in time simply because they are now in existence, or are thought to have occurred as separate and distinct entities, come
about in relation to the 'tenor of the times' or in response to a prevalent ideology.

The "subjection of women in the Confucian manner" (Paulson 1976:4-5) might not have occurred with such force during the Tokugawa period (1600-1868) had it not been for the previous overwhelming influence of a strict Buddhist view.

The form of Buddhism which reached Japan through China contained antifeminine elements not common to Buddhism generally. . . . While Buddhism had not generally held that women were excluded from salvation, the strict Tendai and Shingan sects taught that women suffered from original sin as well as Gosho the Five Obstructions which prevented them from attaining any of the five states of spiritual awareness which men were capable of attaining. A woman's only hope for salvation lay in the possibility of being reborn as a man (Paulson 1976:7-9).

During this period (1500-1600) the country was divided and at war. Often women were sacrificed to political expediency. Sometimes women were given in marriage to political opponents and subjected to divided loyalties or to being held hostage by warring factions. Despite pious rhetoric to the contrary, women were even forced by male blood relatives to divorce their husbands (and children) and then were remarried to other more favorable family connections.

It was with the status of women at this low ebb that Japan entered the Tokugawa period (1600-
1868), 250 years of feudalism in which the status of women was finally defined. With the country unified under the military shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu, a system was needed to fix the social order so as to preserve the status quo (Paulson 1976:10). Confucianism supplied that system.

Although the argument has been that it was from the interweaving of these three philosophies, (Shintoism, Buddhism and Confucianism) Japanese thought derived its main thrust, the implication is not that these were the only influences. A cursory examination of Japan's past would show a multiplicity of factors, religions and influences, each impinging in some way upon this culture as it has changed through the ages.

The remainder of this chapter will address those features which seem most prominent, when considering how one goes about making sense in the 'Japanese Way'.

Society, Group and the Individual

It is not my intention to recount the long history of Japan or Japanese women's place in it as it rose and fell with the times. Nor do I wish to imply that the moral order in conjunction with religious dogma did not work hardships on men as well as on women. I will argue, however, that women had a more difficult time than men because they were assigned a lower status within the hierarchy. But, within this system of instituted inequality lay the seeds of a stable government, and the needs of a unified society superseded the needs of the
Further, intrinsic to this system were recognized values for the members of the group. The sodality attained through interdependent action, the significant return gained from social consensus in everyday living, the place—the predictable, irreducible, irreplaceable place that each person occupied—was solidarity itself.

By proper place occupancy I mean one's awareness of the place assigned to one in a social group, institution, or society as a whole; one's capacity and willingness to fulfill all obligations attached to that place; and one's claim to recognition of that place by others.

Most illustrative of this orientation is the Japanese word *bun*, meaning "portion", "share", "part" or "fraction" (Lebra 1979:67).

The multifaceted and interrelated aspects of the word *bun* are reflected in its essential ingredients. First, the individual occupant is considered to be a fraction or a part rather than a whole. Second, the position is by its very nature, an interdependent one and one which recognizes that all individuals are dependent on others in some manner, and lastly, that each member of such a society can claim a place in it, and therefore, some kind of social significance.

An equally important contribution which Confucianism tended to bestow on Japanese society was the establishment of regulated behavior patterns in human relationships. The hierarchical system based on superior/inferior relationships within the
family, the group or the organization tended to promote identification with the other rather than with self, in that one must always know where 'the other' is in order to define the position of the self and behave properly. The five idealized relationships, (1) Emperor/subject, (2) parent/child, (3) husband/wife, (4) elder brother/younger brother and (5) friend/friend promoted the virtues of filial piety, fraternity, and trust. It is noteworthy that the Confucian emphasis on male supremacy virtually eliminates women from any significant positions within these relationships.

The interpersonal behavior within these dyadic connections were also specified. While the 'inferior' member was expected to act in a somewhat subservient and compliant manner the 'superior' party was also constrained, and obliged to perform in a compassionate and benevolent fashion. In fact, a show of deference to the feelings of others became a high art.

Other-oriented self-designation is, to put it another way, the assimilation of the self, who is the observer, with the other, who is the observed, with no clear distinction made between the positions of the two. . . Whereas Western culture is based on the distinction between the observer and the observed, on the opposition of the self versus the other, Japanese culture and sentiment show a strong tendency to overcome this distinction by having the self immerse itself in the other . . . (Suzuki 1978:145).

This "other-oriented self-designation" is externalized in
behavior and produces a marked effect upon the styles of interaction between individuals. Suzuki observes:

We Japanese are not particularly good at expressing our own opinions and in making our positions clear before we have considered the addressee's feelings and thoughts. Rather, we feel comfortable with other-oriented behavior, that is, waiting for the other person to express himself and then adapting our views accordingly. Moreover, it sometimes even happens that, before the other person states his opinion or wish clearly, we read his mind and adjust our behavior to it. Common expressions such as sasshi ga yoi 'good at guessing another's feelings', ki ga kiku 'quick to read another's mind', and omoiyari ga aru 'considerate of other's feelings' are all words of praise difficult to translate literally into European languages, a further indication that self-assimilation with the other is a virtue among the Japanese (Suzuki 1978:146).

In any society where "self-assimilation with the other" is considered worthy, the ability to empathize is an important asset. Lebra notes "... Omoiyari (empathy) ranks [so] high among the virtues considered indispensible for one to be really human, morally mature, and deserving of respect, {that} I am even tempted to call Japanese culture an omoiyari culture." (Lebra, 1979:38). She also points out that in Japan, empathy requires self restraint, enryo, or the ability to suppress one's
own feelings when they appear to be in conflict with the other. An informant indicated that while she could probably 'feel' what the other was feeling or thinking without any omoiyari, she sometimes had difficulty catching the 'not-clearly-stated' meaning behind the words spoken by someone with whom she had great empathy. This suggests two things: 1. A general distrust of the spoken (or written) word, and 2. a belief that 'empathy' differs from 'common understanding'.

Developing an awareness of the wishes of the other demands much skill and patience. It requires rigorous sensitivity training which involves attention to non-verbal clues, cognizance of ritual behavior or its absence, and finally, an ability to respond in an appropriate way.

Another informant told me:

The Westerner's way is--if he doesn't say, he doesn't want. But that is not the Japanese way. The Japanese way takes too much energy! . . . Most Japanese try to be modest. You have to ask many questions. "Would you like. . . " maybe he will answer, "no thank you" in the beginning and after a time he will say "Well, then . . ." Or--without asking or repeating you guess from his answer--"oh, no thank you!!" may mean really no thank you, but (soft voice) "No thank you. . . ." Maybe means he may want . . .

From this, I would venture that guessing the others thoughts in order to behave appropriately does not require a belief in the other's value system. It does require intimate
knowledge of expected conduct as well as the ability to act on this information in a socially approved manner.

By contrast, North Americans think of themselves as members of a 'compassionate' society. Such notions as 'rooting for the underdog', charity towards those less fortunate regardless of relationship, 'volunteer work' for various amorphous causes, are all considered acts which give evidence of compassion and concern for society. These are positive values in North American culture, and anyone who openly expresses contempt for the less fortunate or who gives neither time nor money to 'worthy' causes is considered a callous and insensitive individual. Thus, in order to be accepted in this society it is necessary at least to know how to express compassion even without feeling it.

Cultural competence is more than being able to perform in a socially acceptable manner. It not only involves knowing the rules of society well enough to abide by them, it presupposes an understanding of when one can successfully violate, bend or break the established tenets as well as the ability to anticipate the possible consequences of such actions.

The Public and Private Self

While Japanese philosophy avoids dichotomizing the self and the other, (Suzuki 1962:429; Suzuki 1978:145) many modern writers have commented upon the apparent critical distinction which Japanese make between 'inner' and 'outer' selves. (Doi 1976; Nakane 1974; Lebra 1976; Barnlund 1975). Lebra points out that although 'proper behavior' requires empathy, self restraint and intuition in order to maintain successful interpersonal relationships, the private self may reflect a different
perspective. Comparing the communicative styles of interaction between Japanese and Americans Barnlund notes:

Even the conception of the communication itself--its proper function and intended outcome--appears to differ in the two cultures. For the Japanese, conversation is a way of creating and reinforcing the emotional ties that bind people together. Interpersonal attitudes are its content. Intuition is its mode. Social harmony is its aim. The pursuit of truth is less critical than the maintenance of rapport. . . . {for} Americans. . . Interaction provides an opportunity for the expression of personal meanings, hence becomes an arena for confrontation. Ideas are its subject matter. Argument is its means. Valid conclusions are its aim. The maintenance of rapport is less important than stimulating a variety of points of view (Barnlund 1975:129-130).

This view was confirmed by several different informants. Among them are two, who, although they agree on the Japanese tendency to seek unanimity, offer different rationales for doing so.

One, who claims she is "not a typical Japanese" because "I don't keep secrets to myself" observed,

. . . For Japanese, the outside and the inside are different. . . because they worry about how others look at them. They should be--very good on the outside--they should not be offensive, rude--
so they don't say what they feel inside.

The other, who thought she was "very Japanese", told of attending a "Women's Liberation class" in New York city:

... I was told that I wasn't honest when I was in that class. But, I think I was right, you know--by being honest one can make other people unhappy--to express whatever I like--it can hurt people.

Both of these observations tend to reflect a belief that one maintains private and public sectors of the self, either of which may be expressed according to what Lebra calls 'situational interaction' (Lebra 1979:110-136). An example of the added dimension of 'cultural competence' was shown by another woman, who said:

If I meet someone here (in Vancouver) who says that my English is good, then I say "thank you". But in Japan, I would say something different... Because, if I say "thank you" that means that I also think so—that my English is—not so bad. But, for a Japanese--its better to deny—or at least to say "Do you think so?"--or to avoid. To be modest is better. Its rather--a normal reaction for the Japanese.

**Dependence and Indulgence**

No discussion of Japanese interpersonal relationships would be complete without some reference to Takeo Doi's classic book on dependence, *Amae No Kozo* (1971), translated as *The Anatomy of Dependence* (1973). In a culture which places great value on
interdependent action, importance of place, hierarchy and group decision—the ability to assume a dependent position relative to another is essential. However, 'dependent position' and 'dependency' though related are not the same, and are more complicated than first appears. Doi's definition seems to refer to a psychological or an emotional state rather than a 'position'. However, Doi sees amaе as a prominent factor in interpersonal behavior. Of amaе, variously translated as "sweet", "indulgence", or "dependence", from the intransitive verb, amaeru "to depend or presume upon another's love or to indulge in another's kindness", Doi notes:

Amaе is a key concept for the understanding not only of the psychological makeup of the individual Japanese but of the structure of Japanese society as a whole. The emphasis on vertical relationships that social anthropologist Nakane Chie recently stipulated as characteristic of Japanese-type social structure could also be seen as an emphasis on amaе. One might be justified even in seeing the susceptibility to amaе as the cause of this emphasis on vertical relationships . . . (Doi 1976:28).

Doi claims that he first became aware of the importance of amaе after having spent some time in a Western country. Upon his return,

I had come to realize that something had changed in myself as a result of the "culture shock" I suffered when I first went to America. I came back
to Japan with a new sensibility, and from then on
the chief characteristic of the Japanese in my
eyes was something that . . . Could best be
expressed by the word *amae* (Doi 1976:17).

Doi's explication of this concept is broad and complicated.
Here, I will only address the two narrow areas where the concept
relates to this work. Both of them involve relationships within
the family. The first concerns the husband-wife relationship,
the second involves the relationship between mother and child.

**Dependence Within the Family**

It is self evident that emotional or psychological support
is especially important when one goes into a new or strange
environment. For those people who are accustomed to depending on
particular 'significant others' for emotional support,
withdrawal of this buttress can be devastating.

Both Lebra and Vogel have observed that within the home and
Japanese family structure the wife and mother seems to be the
person upon whom both the husband and children rely. However,
Lebra feels that,

Outside the house it is the wife who is dependent
as if she were unable to make any judgement
independent of her husband's opinion. The common
pattern in public life still remains *fusho-fushi*
("the husband initiates, the wife follows") and a
*tanomoshi* ("dependable") husband is regarded as
ideal by many women (Lebra 1979:60).

Many Japanese women exhibit this behavior when they appear
in public with their husbands. What Lebra does not emphasize
however, is that in Japan, husbands and wives quite often lead separate lives and do not appear in public together as frequently as do Western couples. An outward show of 'polite behavior' does not necessarily signal dependence. My own observations of Japanese housewives outside of the home are quite different. While they still maintain sensitivity to the feelings of others, as well as a general reliance upon group consensus, in regard to personal matters, they are perfectly capable of independent judgement. Two examples might elucidate the matter.

At a party in my home in Vancouver, one of my daughters-in-law corrected her husband, in public. One of our guests, a young Japanese wife laughed and commented that "that would never occur in Japan!" When I asked her why, she responded "Well first, its not considered polite for a wife to correct her husband in public even if she doesn't agree with him and certainly, she wouldn't do it in the presence of her mother-in-law!" This observation of socially prescribed behavior coupled with a sense of occasion should not necessarily be interpreted as dependence.

The other example occurred in Japan where I had attended an exhibit and sale of some Japanese pearls. It was held in a private home as part of the monthly 'pot luck' sponsored by "The Family Club" a social organization for mothers of children who were attending the American School in Japan. The woman who is co-owner of the pearl and jewelry store commented that subsequent appointment making in order to sell pearls seemed to have an added cultural component.

If the woman is an American, I usually have to
make the appointment in the evening so that her husband can come along and they can decide together. If she is Japanese, I can make it during the day--because if she wants some pearls she will just buy them. She may discuss it with her husband--or she may not--but he doesn't have to come along and see.

These remarks tended to confirm my own observations that Japanese housewives in Japan are accustomed to making financial decisions as they usually manage all of the family finances. Unlike their North American counterpart, many of these women do not feel the need for consultation with their husbands before making a purchase of a private nature.

In contrast to the traditional American pattern, Japanese women, even though they do not earn the money, are managers of it. The husband turns his pay check over to her; she does the budgeting, the shopping, the banking and the saving, and allots an allowance to her husband for his daily expenses! In terms of strength and independence within the family the Japanese wife clearly has more power than the American wife. (Vogel 1978b:153-154 emphasis mine).

There is a subtle difference between control and management. These women see themselves as managing the finances. They pay the bills, decide on the priorities of the budget, organize the household and make most of the financial decisions. However, the woman is still subject to the earning power of her
husband as well as to his discretionary choices. If he wishes to buy something he may do it and leave her to decide how to pay for it. Furthermore, if she wishes to buy a large household item, such as a television set, she must find the ways of convincing him of her choice. Most of the women I spoke with considered managing finances to be a difficult task rather than a liberating one. Quite often they were preoccupied with how to save enough money for their children's future education and had not reflected very much on who actually controls the finances until they were confronted by other cultural ways of managing money.

However, these conditions generally only apply as long as the women remain within the marriage. Divorced women, though small in number, suffer considerable financial hardship (Sodei and Naoi 1978:184-188). The other factor is that this applies only while they remain in Japan. I have found that control of the finances does not always stay in the hands of the woman when she moves to a foreign country.

Although I do not agree with Lebra in her interpretation of the wife's public behavior toward her husband as an example of dependency, with all of its North American perjorative connotations, I do concur that mutual dependence exists between the two. In general, most Japanese couples are careful to choose partners with whom they feel "social and emotional compatibility" (Vogel 1978b: 151) as well as choosing someone approved of by their families. To this end nearly one third to one half of middle-class marriages are still omiai, the traditional system of introducing the man and woman only after
each family has thoroughly investigated the other side (Vogel 1978b: 151).

For the wife, a good marriage means finding a stable reliable partner who will provide her and the future family with a good home and financial security. Although she may hope for romantic fulfillment it is not necessarily a criterion for selecting a mate. Both partners are expected to work toward life-time goals. For the man it means long hours of complete devotion to his work, for the woman, an equal dedication to the home and family. Traditionally, the woman was expected to remain at home, apprenticed to her mother-in-law, but modern urban life has had a profound influence on housing patterns and work habits. Now, although most women work before marriage and some continue to work after, almost all Japanese wives leave their jobs when the first child is expected.

Many of the young women I talked with saw a widening gap between generations concerning the way in which married couples are expected to relate to one another. The younger generation seemed more idealistic and desired to spend more time with their husbands. However, most felt that after the first child is born, the wife should remain at home because "the child will need her". Babysitters were rarely if ever used.

A number of the older women quoted 'teishu wa joobu de rusu ga yoi', a proverb which means "a good husband is one who is healthy and absent ", as a humorous example of an evolving marriage. This did not appear to be a reflection of unhappiness with one's mate, but rather, a perception of the personal autonomy which the woman gains within the home as a result of
the sharp division of labor and responsibility. By many, this division is seen as a functioning example of interdependence; where the "father puts his energies into his work and the mother steadfastly protects the home which is her responsibility" (Sugiyama 1978:117).

Whether it be called an example of interdependence or simply separation of roles, once the children arrive life for the 'average' Japanese housewife revolves around the home. Some see this as a kind of independence:

Another aspect of the Japanese housewife's role that many Americans do not realize is the extent of her autonomy. Though she is nominally subject to her husband's authority in a way no American woman is, in fact, she is more independent of him, and has more real power within her sphere. The clear-cut division of labor in Japan means that a housewife is effectively the boss of her home, organizing her job according to her own judgement, making most decisions about decorating, shopping, childrearing on her own, though perhaps with consultation with her husband on larger issues. But even on larger issues, her opinion will likely be more decisive, because ultimately, even family finances and the child's education are her responsibility (Vogel 1978b:153).

In this regard, one of the women I interviewed in Tokyo expressed the opinion that,

They think that they are masters in their
families—that the husband has the power. But actually, the women have power. The Japanese woman has much more power than the Western woman because she allows the man to think he is powerful. That he is the boss, that he is the master.

B: Do you think that the Japanese man knows this?

Yes, I think so. They know,--they know. It doesn't have to be said.

When her husband returns home most Japanese housewives offer considerable nurturance and care. This care takes the form of catering to his physical needs by serving him tea, preparing his bath and evening meal, and by providing emotional and psychological support as an interested and avid listener to his tales of the work-a-day world. Of course, she will have fed and bathed the children earlier as well as having supervised any homework needed for the following day.

Emotional comfort is still overwhelmingly one-sided. Husbands are not generally expected to help a tired wife feel more comfortable after a hard day, though of course there are particular times that a husband may provide some emotional support. . . . Many observers have commented on the dependence of the Japanese husband on his wife... It is still ordinarily expected that a woman should be at home almost all of the time, at least when the husband and children return (Vogel 1978a:24).
These "ordinary expectations" have been instilled in the 'average' Japanese housewife over a long period of time. She has been raised to believe that "a woman's place is in the home" and she feels strange when she is in violation of these expectations. Nevertheless, when she is presented with a different way of doing things she may begin to question. One of the women I interviewed in Japan told me of her experiences of trying to explain herself to a group of American wives who had invited her to an evening discussion group, one which she did not attend.

I envied American housewives... That they could go out together after dinner. At that time, in Japan, [1962] when our husbands come back to our houses, we have to serve them... I have to get everything for him, and nobody could go out after dinner! Perhaps even now [1978] they can not go out... And they asked me "Why didn't you come?" {to the discussion group} I said, "because my husband comes back." And they said "But why can't you go out when your husband comes back?" And I said, "Because I have to serve my husband."--and perhaps, they did not understand...

B: Do you still wait and serve your husband?

Not so often as before--but I feel rather guilty if I go out... Because all of our lives women are more comfortable if they stay at home--doing something for our families... More and more women can have their own jobs but not so many can
go out in the evening.

This same kind of nurturance is also lavished on the children. Often, mothers will show encouragement in the evening by sitting with the child while he or she studies. She may also help with the homework, sharpen pencils, bring tea or refreshments, and in general, demonstrate a devoted interest in her child's welfare.

In Japan, the bond between mother and child is especially strong. The mother is said to derive her ikigai, self definition, from her children, and a child who is successful in passing school examinations reflects considerable credit on the mother.

Probably Japanese housewives get more emotional gratification from their children than from any other relationship. The mother-child relationship is indeed the closest relationship in all Japanese society and that fact alone indicates there is generally much gratification for the mother as well as the child (Vogel 1978a:32).

Importance of Education

An important and integral part of the Japanese mother's duties centers around her efforts to help her children secure a good education. More than adequate descriptions have been given by various writers regarding the passing of entrance examinations or shiken jigoku, literally, "examination hell," suffered by Japanese youth in order to gain a good position in life (Vogel, 1971; Dore 1973; Nakane 1974). Further, the startling statistics of the annual spring rise in the rates of
suicide among Japanese youth who fail entrance examinations attest to the perceived importance of getting into the right university (Iga and Ohara 1967:64).

No single event, with the possible exception of marriage, determines the course of a young man's life as much as entrance examinations, and nothing, including marriage requires as many years of planning and hard work (Vogel 1971:40).

Preparation for the university entrance examinations starts long before the child can read. It sometimes starts at the kindergarten level where children are encouraged to take competitive examinations in order to enter a school system. Some universities maintain lower schools, kindergarten through high school, as part of their system. It is generally believed that entering at the lower level increases one's chances of passing the university exams.

The amount of involvement by the Japanese mother in her children's education would be considered extraordinary by North American standards. As a wife and mother living in a Japanese neighborhood, I was amazed at the quantity of work required by most mothers to make sure their children succeed in school. She encourages and supervises their school work, seeks out and arranges for *juku*, special after school tutoring necessary for passing the competitive examinations, and actively participates in the P. T. A. She sometimes helps supervise the children on school field trips to zoos or museums and delicately maintains good relationships with all of her children's teachers.

This involvement takes much energy and effort on her part.
It is noteworthy that,

Mothers who identify deeply with their child's learning are not considered over protective, but are more likely to be praised by children and outsiders alike for their devotion and self sacrifice (Vogel 1978a:27).

This kind of intense personal involvement with one's children's education was of considerable interest to me. I found that publicly most mothers tended to belittle their efforts, while complaining about the system which seemed to occasion the extraordinary work required of them and of their children. Further, they never appeared to brag about a successful examination, but spoke of how 'lucky' their son or daughter had been. It was evident, however, that they shared in the joy of their child's success, but clearly, "to be modest is better".

From a low-keyed nonauthoritarian position she manages her husband and children, generally having them do what she thinks they should. The essence of her technique is to put herself on their side and then try to influence them. She uses a minimum of authority and provokes a minimum of rebellion (Vogel 1978a:29).

**Dependence and The Desire To Be Needed**

In discussing Doi's concept of **amae** Lebra points out the following: first, Lebra believes that Doi applies the concept too broadly--"so broadly that one might get the impression that all Japanese behavior including political behavior can be explained by the motivation of **amae" (Lebra 1979:54). Second,
she suggests that the concept, as stated, is inadequate because it does not consider the existence of complementary role behavior. Lebra intimates that by restricting the meaning of the term to "an indulgent relationship," one can consider role complementarity.

The role of expressing *amae*, called *amaeru*, must be complemented and supported by the role that accepts another's *amae*. The latter role is called *amayakasu*. Once role complementarity is taken into account, it is apparent that both *amaeru* and *amayakasu* can take active or passive forms, although Doi looks at *amaeru* only in the passive form (Lebra 1979:54).

Lebra's development of the active/passive forms of these two roles is tightly structured and lends itself to the kind of typology she uses within the framework of what she calls "social relativism". I find her typologies too constricting; nevertheless, I do feel that her point regarding role complementarity is particular valid, especially when viewing dependency within the Japanese family structure. It seems clear that while the husband and children seek indulgence from the wife and mother, at the same time, she actively, or passively, encourages, solicits and perpetuates this dependency.

In Japan, where mothering is an art as well as a profession, one of the most acceptable social graces is the ability to offer help in a constructive and non-threatening manner. Further, it is considered 'natural' for a woman to make sacrifices for her family and indeed she has little other
option. In Japan, to be independent is to be isolated, to be autonomous is to be threatening, but if you are one upon whom many depend, you are an important and integral part of society.

What 'taking care of others' actually accomplishes for the Japanese woman is that it satisfies the desire to be needed—to be an important part of a group—and at the same time, it allows her to feel that she has some degree of control over her life. If she does it out of love, and receives love and eternal gratitude in return for her efforts she may feel herself well rewarded. However, she already knows that withdrawal of care and attention or nurturance is one of the most powerful forms of social censure, but one can not withdraw what does not exist. Forming dependency relationships is delicate and difficult work, but it is one of the few avenues of expertise open to the Japanese housewife and mother. Not only are dependency relationships socially sanctioned, they are viewed as an important contribution to the solidarity of the community.

As I feel that role complementarity is an important factor in dependency relationships, I wrote to one of my Japanese informants and asked for her opinion.

The amaeru-amayakasu relationship is very Japanese, I think. It is the same as the feeling we mothers have for our family. We are spoiling our family, true, but I think complete dependency is part of love itself. Independent people must be praised—but helplessness is a kind of virtue—to be loved and cared for, don't you agree? . . . In Japan, older people are also quite
dependent and amaeru to their children. And they take it for granted to be taken care of financially as well as physically when they become disabled. . . So the younger generation too, has a feeling of amayakasu (must take care of) for their old people.

Social Consensus in Everyday Life

It would be misleading to imply that these prescriptive versions of human relationships and styles of interaction are practiced by all Japanese housewives. Many of the women I talked with suggested that although these ideas represented "the Japanese Way" of doing things, that they personally did something else. Most women feel that the average Japanese woman wants to marry and have children. Indeed, statistics show that virtually all women (98.5 percent) do marry, (Vogel 1978b:150), and that the expression ryosai kenbo, a good wife and wise mother, is a fair interpretation of the kind of lifetime goals articulated by the 'average' Japanese woman.

However, attitudes and customs can appear to change rapidly at one time, imperceptibly at others. Within the time I have been collecting data, approximately three and a half years, I have heard an increasing number of women modify, clarify or justify the 'traditional role' of Japanese women. Recently, a young married woman, who had had to give up a teaching job to accompany her husband to Vancouver, spoke disparagingly of the woman who marries and remains home as one seeking san shoku hirune tsuki (three meals and a nap). And finally, at last count, three of the fifty or so women with whom I have spoken
have openly questioned whether they want or intend to have children.

Nevertheless, I can not help but feel that these opinions expressed so openly to me are significantly different from those voiced to neighbors, friends and relatives back home. It is one thing to disparage traditional roles to a stranger and quite another to actively flaunt convention. One of the Japanese mothers, upon return to Japan, found herself forcing her daughter to study long hours in order to re-enter the Japanese school system,

... And the schools! I felt even for grade school children—they require so much of a little child. ... But if everyone takes it in stride—if everyone takes it for granted, I mean, there is very little one can do! You feel powerless, and I didn't want her to have to stand out to have problems. ...

"To have to stand out" is to earn the derision of neighbors, friends and teachers. The proverb deru kugi wa utareru (the nail that sticks out is the one that gets hammered) is an apt reminder of the value placed on social consensus and group conformity.

Comparing the lifestyles of Japanese and German housewives, Salamon observes:

In Japan the moral order encourages women to police other women--coercing their fellows into line through gossip, criticism and competition and thus cut themselves off from one another in their
daily lives. After marriage a woman must loosen her ties to 'orientational' intimates who are no longer easily accessible. Because her neighbors, the potential source of new intimates, are the arbitraters of a male-derived moral order, she is cut off from friendship with her peers. One's 'role specific' others, those encountered everyday, are continually exerting pressure for conformity in order to maintain the same degree of control over themselves. Men are, for the most part, absent from the daily world of married middle-class women in Japan. It is the women themselves who effectively keep one another in line and preserve their own inferior status (Salamon 1975:165).

Salamon's strong statement, informed by an international perspective, acknowledges the power but ignores the value of a local consensus. In order for the average Japanese housewife to move significantly from a traditional perspective she must be presented with alternatives.

It is not enough to say that Japanese housewives police one another--of course they do! Japanese businessmen also coerce their fellows through gossip, criticism and competition (Nakane 1974; White 1979). However, I feel Japanese housewives and mothers have a greater potential for shifts in perspective than do their husbands, because for them, the membrane between 'inner' and 'outer', inside the house and outside activities, is slowly disintegrating.
In the past, tradition has dictated that women should remain within the home. This more than metaphorical extension of the concept of the importance of place has been slowly eroding over the years. The Japanese man still sees a dichotomy between his work place and home, but his wife, in her expanding role in community life has had a much more diversified experience.

Recently, there is increasing indication that the Japanese housewife is finding her own way of demonstrating her concerns within the framework of the presiding moral order. Lewis reports traditional conservative housewives are becoming involved in the consumer movement and articulating a radical political philosophy usually unassociated with the family oriented role. Lewis expresses apparent surprise that such involvement does not lead to a denigration of the housewife's role but rather causes the women to "derive strength from identity of its members as housewives and mothers; and . . . that the movement seems to strengthen rather than weaken the commitment to the role of housewife" (Lewis 1978:85).

In studying urban Japanese housewives, Imamura also notes an increasing involvement in activities outside of the home. These activities cover a variety of spheres, ranging from Community or Culture Centres, schooling, volunteer work, child related groups to consumer and political activities or even part or full time work.

Most of the women Imamura interviewed admitted that their husbands were unaware of the extent of their involvement in outside activities. One reason was because they were careful not to let such activities intrude upon the home. Another was
because their husbands generally did not ask about their daily lives.

The most commonly reported motives for joining these groups or activities were: (1) for the sake of their children at the time they joined, but later became more interested in all community children; (2) they joined to fill their spare time but at the same time to keep up with their children by studying so that they would be able to talk to their children when they grew older; (3) they joined in order to improve their homemaking skills; (4) they joined because they wanted to have friends and contacts with other women from whom they could learn about similar situations, child care, etc. And at the same time this was a way to have access to such information without putting any economic burden on the family and without having to bring these other women into their homes; and (5) to help the family finances (Imamura 1978:111).

Most of these reported motivations reveal a continuing interest and involvement in the job of housewife and mother. Perhaps it is because "to be modest is better" that these women perceive egotistical responses such as "I was bored with housework and wanted some kind of personal fulfillment" to be an unacceptable justification, or maybe they had an acute awareness of cultural values regarding motherhood and the family--it may also be the manner in which the questions were asked. In any
event, the answers seem to reflect a desire for a broadening of the role of housewife and mother rather than avoidance or alienation of it. Perhaps this represents a cultural perception regarding the autonomy of the role of housewife. While many of the women I interviewed would not feel comfortable in this restricted role, most would agree that their primary focus in life should be directed toward the home and children.

What happens to this clear perception of the role of housewife and mother when a Japanese woman moves to a new environment? How does an apparent change in consensus affect her daily life? In what way do the strange stimuli from the outside world impinge upon the interpersonal relationships within the family? What are the effects of an enclave or lack of it in the new place? And finally, how does the Japanese housewife deal with her new perceptions? How does she make sense of the new place?

These and other questions will be addressed in the following chapters. The purpose of this chapter has been to evoke the culturally accepted life style from which most of these women come. It is important to understand that their perceptions may differ from the moral order they are likely to find in a Western country. I have here attempted to describe the depth and distance they must travel in order to exist and understand with any degree of comfort and competence in the new place.
Chapter 4

The New Place: Testing The Taken-for-Granted

Introduction

Expectations, hopes and dreams are fragile stuff. Fashioned from preconceived notions, untried ideas, and half-forgotten apprehensions, they may disintegrate and disappear before the eyes. No matter how much the future is anticipated, it flits like the proverbial butterfly, ever beckoning onward. With eyes to the horizon and minds caught in the mundane of every day living, the new stranger tries to sort the important from the trivial. Each day she encounters new surprises, forms new opinions and confirms old truths. It is an uneven process, sometimes forward or back, often with a few steps into the unknown. Slowly she becomes 'accustomed' to the new place, and at times, to a new self. Only in retrospect can she measure the distance she has traveled.

I would like to present the following ideas in three main parts. The first part deals with the kinds of expectations these women bring with them to the new place. Not everyone expects the same thing of course, but the questions regarding how expectations are formed, informed and unformed will be discussed.

Intimately entwined with the notion of expectations are the first impressions of the new place. Many people respond to the sights and sounds, while others see only brightly colored but incomprehensible pictures. Movement and its meaning have significance for some, yet a few find neither sight nor sound
nor life in the new place. All of these things have a profound influence upon what follows.

In the second part, I discuss the every day life of these women, who, as sentient, sense-making strangers perform every day tasks in a world where the little things count. This section addresses questions of how the rules of the new place are learned, what the difference might be between "passive understanding" and "active mastering" of cultural competence, (Schutz 1944:504). The advantages as well as the hazards of the enclave must be addressed, for often, when these women arrive in the new country they find a network of previously established social relationships waiting for them.

Finally, the last section, part III, tries to question what moving to a new environment does to the sense of self. This involves looking at changing interpersonal relationships, dependencies and growing concern for independent action. It questions the automatic negativity usually implied by the pain of self discovery, and suggests that the real value of such encounters is an expanding awareness of the dialogue between self and other.
Part I: Expectations and First Impressions

Just as most of the women I interviewed come to the new environment with taken-for-granted ideas and notions of what it is to be a "good wife and wise mother" in Japan, so too do they bring with them certain expectations of what they will find in the new place. Most of these expectations rely heavily upon 'social facts' they have heard from others, or information abstracted from articles, books and newspapers they have read, as well as from plays, programs stories or news items they have seen on television. Clearly, these women have not lived in a vacuum, and can conceptualize certain ideas about the social environment to which they will be going.

Some have dreamed all their lives of traveling outside of Japan, and have actively sought knowledge of what to expect. Many have studied English for several years in school (unlike most Westerners who often know little Japanese before arriving in Japan), but because many of these women have not been exposed to native speakers of English they sometimes lack conversational skills. A few of these women have previously lived in a Western country for varying periods of time, some as Fulbright scholars, others as daughters within a family where the father travels as part of his work. These experiences, too, govern expectations. However, the expectations rarely mirror the encountered reality. While part of this may be due to incomplete, outdated or erroneous information, most often it is because the formation of the expectations takes place in that fertile-sterile land of "what if--" where all things are possible but nothing becomes real until it is experienced.
Even those women who have lived in a Western country before can not be sure that the new experience will bear any resemblance to the previous one; for, as Heraclitus reminds us, "we can never bathe twice in the same river". In part, this is because one perceives things differently at different times and with time, assumes new roles, responsibilities and relevances—and it is the latter that are the most important.

Schutz addresses this problem in his now classic paper "The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology (1944)". He suggests that most of the information about the new place has been gathered from the perspective of a "disinterested observer". However, as the person becomes involved in the cultural patterns of the new group, a shifting of relevances occurs which causes him or her to move from the role of the "unconcerned onlooker" into the role of the "would-be member of the approached group."

. . . The cultural pattern acquires an environmental character. Its remoteness changes into proximity; its vacant frames become occupied by vivid experiences; its anonymous content turns into definite social situations; its ready made typologies disintegrate . . . (Schutz 1944:503).

These "typologies" can be fabricated from anything—from readings to reminiscences, wherever face to face encounters are absent.

. . . The ready made picture. . . proves its inadequacy . . . for the mere reason that it has not been formed with the aim of provoking a response from or a reaction of the members of the
foreign group. . . . Its validity is primarily based on consensus of those members of the home group who do not intend to establish direct social relationships with members of the foreign group (Schutz 1944:503).

How do Schutz's ideas relate to the data? While time and space do not allow me to present full ethnographic accounts here, perhaps these three brief sketches will shed some light on the questions concerning those "ready made typologies" inherent in our expectations of future events.

**Emiko: The bright new future.**

The first account is of a young married woman, Emiko, who has never traveled outside of Japan, but who is avidly looking forward to doing so "in a few month's time". She is one of the women I interviewed at the orientation course offered by the College Women's Association of Japan (C. W. A. J.) for Japanese women who are going abroad. When I asked how she happened to be at the course she said, "My husband's office said I'd better go."

Emiko's husband is a Certified Public Accountant who is presently working for a large company which maintains several branch offices in the United States. He expects to be transferred to one of these offices in the near future, and they will remain there for about eighteen months.

Emiko is a dress fitter by training but is currently working as a key punch operator because the pay is better than that which she can earn in her field. Her husband was a student when they were first married and it was necessary for her to
work to support them. She works at key punching from 8:45 a. m. Until 5:50 p. m. After work she returns home and does "the cooking and cleaning and preparing and all of that--" before her husband comes home. Emiko finds key punching boring but will be sorry to quit her job when they go to the United States because "Japanese companies only hire young women, and when I come back to Japan I will be too old. I will be almost thirty-three."

I asked her what she expected to find when she moved to the United States and her answers seemed to reflect a wide range of interests. After apologizing for her "bad English" she offered the following comparisons:

Regarding the racial mix:

In America, {there are} many people from different backgrounds, many religions and from different countries living there... In Japan, we Japanese are all alike...

About styles of interaction:

In Japan, usually if Japanese people don't like {something} they still say "ok"--but in America, I hear--if an American doesn't like {something} he says "no!"

Concerning safety in big cities:

In Tokyo, it's safe, but in America, a woman--long walk--not so safe. It's more dangerous in American big cities, perhaps.

Regarding husband-wife roles:

In Japan, the husband tells the wife...

Husband: huh! Huh! Huh!
(Here, Emiko mimes a Japanese husband shaking his finger at his wife, and then the wife is nodding her head in agreement)

Wife: hai, hai, hai!

But in America, many American wives have two husbands--or husbands have many wives. . . Wives have a better say, I think. . .

Clearly, this young woman has heard or read many things about the differences between the two cultures, and she is interpreting what she "knows" within the framework of her present relevances. Emiko wants "to have many American friends" but she feels that her English is inadequate, and,

When I am in America, I will study English--and I will only watch English television!"

She feels that when her English improves she will find American friends. When I asked her what she plans to do with her time during the hours that her husband works, she said,

Perhaps, in the morning, cleaning and preparing (laughs)--and in the afternoon, carrying the camera--take a walk and take pictures and back home, study English or Japanese books. . .

While she has been preparing her self by learning the facts of American culture, she seems to have made little provision for the boredom, sadness or homesickness which might afflict her when she moves to a foreign place. Perhaps there is no way to prepare--or perhaps she has considered this in a somewhat objectified manner. Nevertheless, it is difficult to disengage the mind from what Schutz calls "thinking as usual".
Thinking as usual. . . {is} that life and especially social life will continue to be the same as it has been so far, . . . The same problems requiring the same solutions will recur and that, therefore our former experiences will suffice for mastering future situations. . . (Schutz 1944:502).

Emiko will probably continue to use her "thinking as usual" until such time as the "anonymous content turns into definite social situations" (1944:502) and she finds it necessary to augment, adjust or alter her assumptions.

Noriko: Working from informed expectations

Noriko is a young married woman with three children. Her husband is an executive in a large Japanese company. Approximately fourteen years ago in 1967, she and her two oldest children followed her husband to New York where they lived for five and one half years. Her youngest child was born in New York.

Noriko is well educated and speaks fluent English. When she graduated from high school she was offered a scholarship to study in the United States, which she declined because her parents felt she was still too young to go abroad. In Japan she studied American English Literature, and while still a university student worked as an interpreter for Japan Travel Bureau and often traveled around Japan with foreign tourists. She says she had always harbored a dream of going to the United States, and was looking forward to her arrival in New York.

I thought I could go smoothly into that place. . .
I was curious, and I was not scared. I was interested, and foreigners, I mean Americans, are not unfamiliar to me.

I had expected that American neighbors would be--friendly to us. But the fact was, they were--I shouldn't say they weren't friendly--but they were--indifferent.

Noriko, as well as Emiko, was using her thinking as usual--notions abstracted from former experiences to frame her expectations of future events. She assumed that, in Schutz's words, "it is sufficient to know something about the general type or style of event. . ." in order to interpret it correctly.

Schutz has pointed out that in the process of living our daily lives we are often unaware of the incompleteness of our knowledge. Because we are guided by relevance to the moment or event, we operate with only a small amount of specific knowledge. Schutz enlarges William James's concept of two kinds of knowledge ("knowledge of acquaintance" and "knowledge about"), when he says:

. . . Within the field covered by the contour lines of relevance, there are centers of explicit knowledge of what is aimed at; they are surrounded by a halo of knowledge about what seems to be sufficient; next comes a region in which it will do to merely "put one's trust"; the adjoining foot hills are the home of unwarranted hopes and assumptions; between these areas, however, lie
zones of complete ignorance. (Schutz 1944:500)

Noriko was using her "knowledge about Americans when she expected to meet friendly hospitable neighbors. It was only when she was confronted by anomaly that she became aware of the incompleteness of her knowledge. Such anomalies cry for explication. Her explanation of the events exhibited an increased awareness of 'situational difference'.

... They were quite used to Japanese people walking around in the neighborhood, and also, they themselves are second generation of immigrants...

Which allowed her to speculate,

They were not so interested in us foreigners. I discovered they were too busy building their own lives to be interested in other people's lives.

Later she said,

... I expected too much. ... Most of the Americans I had known were people in Japan, living in or traveling in Japan. It was natural for them to be nice, to be friendly—they were having fun! They were rather older people coming to Japan for sight-seeing or to have fun. And I kept good company with them. I thought I was naturally accepted. ...

Thus, Noriko's encounter with apathetic neighbors in New York caused her to re-evaluate her previous happy experiences, and, in that light, to add to her stock of knowledge of specific situations.

While thinking as usual can quite often inform our
expectations, and failed expectations can cause us to re-evaluate our past experiences, it is also possible that these same expectations can profoundly influence our future actions. Such is the case in the following example.

Setsuko: The unrecallable past

Setsuko is somewhat older than Noriko or Emiko. Her two children, a son and daughter will be twenty-one and eighteen, respectively, in 1981. Her husband is a scholar who works in a well known Japanese scientific institute. They have both traveled twice to North America, the first time before they had children, the second time when the children were quite young.

Setsuko is also quite well educated and has little or no difficulty expressing herself in English. She had carefully prepared for the interview, and brought out several photograph albums, a number of newspaper clippings and a copy of a composition she had composed when she first went to the United States over twenty years ago. She had also kept careful notes of times and places as well as having prepared a written text of what she wished to say.

The first time I went to the United States I went as a Fulbright student. At that time, I was twenty five, quite young, and with no children, although I was married. We had a very intensive six weeks orientation course in Kansas; we had many field trips on custom and manners and conversations, so I was quite well informed about the way of life. I had no difficulty at all when I went to the University of Texas where I was sent to do
research in linguistics. I was an English teacher when I was chosen, so my field was teaching English as a second language.

The orientation course, mainly about life in the United States, did not dwell on the cultural values of people from other places. Nevertheless, Setsuko broadened her awareness. She showed me a number of group pictures of Fulbright scholars and offered,

... This is me, and there are about ten different nationalities, I think. There are about fifty Fulbrighters from all over the world, so it was a very interesting experience! I never had such an experience—(laughs)—we got to be very good friends, and they took care of us very well, but, I also had very good American friends too.

Setsuko says that when she first went to the U. S. She wondered if she would encounter any anti-Japanese feeling. The year was 1957, only twelve years after the Second World War. However, she found that "people were very kind to me," and thought that perhaps this was because she was a Fulbright student.

I think that they felt I was a guest—maybe it was because we were paid by the government (laughs) so my experiences were very fortunate.

A few months later, Setsuko's husband came to the United States. He was sent to Kansas as a scholar by his institute. At that time, he did not speak English as well as she, but Setsuko was able to contact some of her good friends in Kansas and "they
welcomed him and took care of him" until she was able to join him there about a year later.

When they went looking for an apartment in Kansas, they experienced "a bit of discrimination, or something. . . ."

When we went into the building they asked us our nationalities, and we told them, then they said that it (the apartment) was just occupied. But that was the only time—the only experience. The rest of the time was good.

B: Had you expected discrimination?

Not "expected," but, if such things should occur, I knew I would be alright.

While Setsuko did not "expect" discrimination, she anticipated the possibility of its occurrence and in doing so, thought about how to deal with or defuse any negative feelings toward her. When her fears did not materialize she viewed the experience in the best possible light. In speaking of her first trip abroad she said,

It was I who wanted to come. . . . This time, I was well protected, I was so well taken care of, I was busy! The schedule was so tight—and every minute everything was set! (laughs). We attended classes then we had lunch, invited by various people—and then we went on field trips—everything was scheduled. . . . So I had no time—there was no time to feel lonely or homesick. I was kept so busy. . . . I might have felt rather lonely, but in this case, when I was occupied—
busy—well, I had a kind of mission to do, to study and to bring back the culture to my country. At that time, I had a purpose.

Some eleven years later, Setsuko traveled to North America again. However, instead of going to the United States she went to Canada. The second experience was vastly different.

... The next time, I had no purpose. I went there only because my husband went... I was not so young then, about thirty six, and I had two children ages eight and three. I was not so well adjusted.

This time Setsuko's husband preceded her. He found an apartment and one month later, sent for his wife and children. Setsuko says that because her husband knew she could speak English so well, and because she was so well informed about North Americans it never occurred to him to find an apartment near the Japanese community located in the downtown area.

At that time, I thought Canadians and Americans were alike—that they would treat me as the Americans had treated me... I expected them to do the same, but I think they are very different. Americans are very friendly and positive, but Canadians are like—I think they are like English people—reserved, and do not make friends so easily.

At first, I expected the same hospitality from Canadians and I failed. I had two small children and I couldn't go about because it was so
cold outside; I was confined in a small apartment with two small children and I was very depressed. I wanted to make friends with the people in my same apartment building, but I couldn't make any friends at all.

I tried to talk to the people in the laundry room—where we were in the washing room together—and, when I tried to talk to the next lady I found out that the apartment building we are in was almost full of—how to say—people from other countries—some are from Italy and some are from Israel—anyway, they don't speak English at all. (laughs) Well, they could make themselves understood in English, but they didn't speak English so well—so it's impossible to make friends!

Setsuko's expectations of what it would be like to live in Canada were dominated by her past experiences in the United States. Those experiences bore little relation to her present circumstances. Not only the country and the people were different, she, herself had changed. She had assumed new roles and responsibilities and those things which had been relevant in the past were no longer so. She did not appear to remember that as a Fulbright scholar, when she had encountered people from other cultures she was able to "make friends". Then, she had been in community with them. This time, the women she met in the laundry room did not appear to mirror sufficient concerns in common to bridge the linguistic and cultural chasm. Perhaps they
too, in Noriko's words, "were too busy building their own lives to be interested in others."

The disorientation suffered by one whose expectations are invalidated can be quite intense.

The discovery that things in his new surroundings look quite different from what he expected them to be at home is frequently the first shock to the stranger's confidence in the validity of his habitual "thinking as usual". Not only the picture which the stranger has brought along of the cultural pattern of the approached group but the whole hitherto unquestioned scheme of interpretation . . . becomes invalidated (Schutz 1944:503).

The sudden casting into question everything previously taken for granted can be difficult, but it is at such times of disjunction that discoveries are made.

I think, really, this time was a trial for me. I thought--my husband and I--we thought that we could well adjust ourselves to Canada. No problem at all! We could speak English, and we had two experiences in America--and then we found that things were quite different! And I found that although I can speak English very well, I can't make friends. This is a discovery! I thought that if one can speak the language then one can make friends easily. But that isn't always correct! I think its a wonderful discovery. . . . Language
isn't the problem--I mean of course it's a problem, but it isn't the whole problem!

The importance of this discovery should not be underestimated. Part of Setsuko's sense of self had been immersed in her feeling of competence at being able to communicate so well in English. Once this image was shattered she learned new things about herself.

So when I came back, I found my mother-in-law's company so comfortable! I missed her greatly in Canada. And we had tea together and we talked, and this was a small thing--I didn't realize before but it is very important to make life happy! (laughs). Just small talk--nothing important. "Let's have tea together, and some sweets together--and say something about the trees and flowers," such things are very important in life!

Not everyone can relate their unfulfilled expectations so directly to a newly acquired awareness of the importance of the little things. For many people expectations and first impressions are a jumbled lot. Most women saw immediate differences in size, content and space between Japan and the new place. One woman, an artist by profession, recounted,

I thought--it's so big! Everything is so big--even the door of the car, it's so heavy! Everything is so heavy, the chair, the couch--and in the kitchen, the counter is too high for me. I had to use my high heels in the kitchen! And wide--and the people, the same! (laughs). So, I felt small.
I felt so small!

Another woman who went to Germany, and who did not speak German upon arrival, said,

Everything seemed so strange—many things were completely different from ours—the houses, food, dress—not so much the dress. Of course, I couldn't understand what they were saying—only as a picture. Only as a picture, it appeared before me.

A third woman could not even see the picture as it appeared before her.

When I came to Vancouver, I was so sick—because of the flu and the air sickness I almost got a mental disease! (laughs). My husband was worried about me. I couldn't feel any life in Canada. I just wanted to overcome my sickness—when I felt the life in Canada it was three months later... I couldn't speak to anyone—I couldn't even go out—I felt I was in a small cage I didn't feel I'm human.

B: What made you come out of the cage?

It was when I got a friend.
PART II: Making Sense In The New Community

While the over-riding long term goals of most of the women I interviewed include being able to make friends with the people in the host community, their immediate concerns are committed to more practical matters. Learning to live in the new place on a day to day basis involves many skills, much flexibility, and a lot of work. For some of these women the task is made easier by others who have preceded them. In this regard, I found distinct differences between the three groups of wives. These differences not only include the manner in which the wife is introduced to the new social environment. They also include the kinds of ongoing relationships she will be expected to maintain, and it is these relationships which will profoundly affect her perceptions, interactions and ultimate involvement with the new community.

In Part II of this chapter dealing with life in the new place, I first propose to give a broad overview of some of the special problems faced by this particular group of people when they come to a socio-cultural environment quite different from "back home". In the latter half I explicate the sensemaking of these women in terms of Schutz's three typologies from his essay "The Well-Informed Citizen" on the use of socially derived knowledge.

Of the three groups of women, two groups, the wives of business men and the wives of government representatives tend to follow their husbands to the new place after a period of three to six months. Depending upon company policy, the wife will
remain in Japan, packing or storing belongings, closing accounts, paying bills and arranging for the children's supplemental schooling. Some wives also pack and ship separately numerous items such as special food stuffs, additional clothing or Japanese language books for use in the new country.

The unaccompanied business man or government employee usually finds company representatives in the new place who mediate on his behalf. Although he may come alone, the businessman's entry into the new community is generally facilitated by his predecessor or supervisor who arranges for his living quarters, introduces him to his new colleagues and helps him get settled in the new job. When his predecessor and family return to Japan the new man may even take over their living quarters. During this period of transition, the newcomer will likely incur a number of 'social debts' in the Japanese community, in the form of home-cooked meals of Japanese food, personal favors such as mending or laundry and general helpful assistance. Most of these tasks will be performed by the wives of his colleagues.

When his wife and family arrive three to six months later, they too will be welcomed into a network of established contacts in the existing Japanese community.

Although a few of the wives of scholars will follow their husbands a short time later, as did Setsuko, usually the woman who is married to an academician accompanies her husband when he goes abroad to study. Even though these individual families do not have any official mentors or mediators from the home group waiting to assist them in getting settled, they usually can
depend upon some local member of the university, institute or hospital for initial contact. Nevertheless, they seem to be thrust much more quickly upon their own resources than those of the other two groups. Of course, there is considerable overlap and some variation between these two general patterns of entry into the new community.

Inumaru, in his study of the Japanese business community in Milan, found that for the businessman,

the arrival of his wife and or his family was extended up to one year in the 1950's and early 1960's...now it seems to be about three to six months, (and) in the case of childless couples the wife might even arrive with the husband...The personnel department of the head office, which pays for the ticket for the family decides when they should come (Inumaru 1977:151).

One difference which seems to be consistent is that Japanese members of the business community tend to remain longer in the foreign country than do scholars. For business men and government employees the average is three to five years, whereas scholars tend to remain an average of one to two years. However, scholars such as graduate students and post-doctoral students who have not yet found a job in Japan seem to remain for a somewhat longer period of time.

Many new arrivals from Japan say that they depend upon the Japanese community for support. In writing this thesis, I have found difficulty determining just what is implied by "Japanese community." When speaking to informants, I think they perceive
the term in a rather special way. It seems to refer to a temporary, transient and ever-changing community rather than an established group of people of a particular ethnic background.

Inumaru addresses this problem of definition when he talks about the Japanese Business Community in Milan. Because his specific interest is focused on a different member of the community, the cases are not identical, however, the problems are similar. Inumaru has chosen to divide the community in the following way:

the Japanese coming to Milan belong to two major distinct categories: businessmen and diplomats, and artists, students and similar, whom we can classify as "others", since there is no apparent link among them. The fundamental distinction...is between individuals working for a Japanese institution with its head office in Japan, and those who do not work for such an institution...a first definition of the Japanese society... might be as follows: Japanese business community in Milan includes all Japanese working full-time for a Japanese institution with head quarters in Japan and their families who reside with them. (Inumaru 1977:7, emphasis in the original).

In restricting the scope of his inquiry to the Japanese business community, Inumaru has chosen to ignore other Japanese temporary residents because they have limited influence on the functioning interrelationships among the newcomers in the community. The same thing could be said of the resident
immigrant group of people of Japanese ethnic origin.

The degree to which the immigrant groups have assimilated within the larger society varies from place to place. Most large cities outside of Japan have some Japanese immigrant populations. Although there are always meaningful exchanges between the newly-arrived Japanese and the earlier Japanese immigrants, it is my observation the two groups do not tend to mix.

One woman, who had spent her early years in the United States, who returned to Japan to marry, and who later traveled and lived extensively in several large cities in the United States observed:

I remember in Chicago there was a section where all the Japanese immigrants live, and these Japanese who have come over for business reasons after the war, they form another community. Somehow, at first I'm sure that the newcomers were greatly indebted to the old immigrants in settling down. But gradually, the ones who came afterwards started to look down on them. . . . The only contact we had with the immigrant society was shopping. . . to buy food or little Japanese gifts.

This same kind of distancing oneself from a group of people who seem to share certain origins but who no longer share relevancies also occurs within the resident immigrant society. Additionally, I have found that when most of my informants talk about "the tightly knit Japanese Community," they are referring
to those, who, like themselves, will one day return to Japan. Perhaps this is simply because they perceive these people to be those with whom they will have on-going contacts, relationships and obligations in the future.

Regardless of how the recently arrived Japanese housewife is introduced to the new place, within a few days she will be expected to assume certain roles, responsibilities and tasks having to do with sense-making in the new community. Usually, if her husband precedes her, she will find him reasonably conversant with his surroundings, and she will probably receive considerable help from other Japanese wives in the community. If she accompanies her husband they might learn 'the rules' of the new place together. Because of this difference, I will first discuss the life style of the woman who follows her husband.

Many of these women said that after a day or so for them to become 'rested and adjusted' their husband left them on their own to learn to cope with the new world. Several informants told me that their husbands went away on a business trip the day after their arrival.

The division of labor and responsibilities so taken-for-granted in Japan is difficult to maintain in the new place. The newly arrived housewife needs to have considerable information at hand if not in hand. The simple matter of shopping for food, furnishings and cleaning equipment the necessary arrangements to be made for the children's schooling, and the routine learning of the local transportation systems, all these things assume an importance akin to adventure.

The wife of an overseas member of the Japanese business
community usually finds that she is encouraged to become a part of a tightly knit group. There are usually several groups or family clubs she can join which are mainly comprised of other Japanese company wives. However, she soon learns that most of the companies are fiercely competitive, and that in the new place she will always be identified with her husband's company. Finally, if the business is large enough she will be expected to assume a position within the hierarchy of the company wives relative to the position her husband holds within the company. If her husband's position is high in the company she may be expected to assume considerable responsibilities for the other wives. If her husband is just starting out she may find herself paired with someone with whom she feels she has little in common.

We had to be tied to each other very strongly, because in Germany, I got all the information about how to do anything from another Japanese wife.... In Japan, we can select our friends according to who we like. But in that city far away from Japan, the selection is limited. Although I don't like "her" I must be kind to her and I must be tied strongly to her.

For some women this is quite different from any previous experience in Japan, where she was expected to maintain a distance from her husband's daily activity.

The diplomat's wife usually finds the hierarchical system particularly firm among the wives of government representatives. Lower echelon wives are sometimes called upon to perform tasks
with which they might have little familiarity, such as the young woman married to a diplomat who was given a large fresh fish and told to prepare sashimi (raw fish) for an embassy function.

I had never even seen that kind of whole fish before! You know, when we buy sashimi in Japan it is already prepared--skinned, and boned and sliced! I just sat down and cried (laughs).

Most women were surprised to find the importance which food and its preparation came to assume in their lives. Some who had always taken for granted the adequacy of their culinary skills experienced uncertainty in the face of the new prospects.

I had to entertain when his Japanese friends came to New York or for some special event. The first thing I had to learn--can you guess? Japanese cooking! Because most of the Japanese who came from Japan expect very special things at home, and most of the American who we invite expect something Japanese too! So I started learning Japanese cooking.

B: You didn't know Japanese cooking?

I did! But you know the meat and fish? Everything is such a different shape--we don't have blocks of beef in Japan, just slices. And the chicken, I had to bone it, the fish--everything. And if we need something special, something Japanese we have to go to a special Japanese store or food shop which is not near. So we have to plan for several days ahead.
In Japan, it is not customary for the wife to have to entertain her husband's business associates. He usually takes them out to a restaurant, while she remains at home with the children. Unaccustomed to interacting with her husband's associates and unacquainted with their wives, the newcomer sometimes finds such social commitments a strain.

Wives of diplomats are expected to learn quickly the formality of entertaining Japanese families who travel abroad as well as the "foreigners" of the host community. Business men's wives are also expected to entertain but on a more casual scale. Scholars and their wives entertain more or less as the social occasion dictates.

Of the three groups, scholar's wives have the least pressure to conform according to the consensus of the overseas Japanese community. However, they also receive the least help from this particular source of knowledge. Perhaps it is because she arrives with her husband, or perhaps it is because their primary affiliation is with an institution considered to be part of the host community, for whatever reason, scholars and their families are introduced to the problems and the pleasures of learning how to cope on their own more quickly than the other two groups. Quite often, the help they receive depends upon their perceived status. Research associates and visiting faculty seem to receive more concrete aid than graduate students and their wives or post-doctoral fellows and their families. The gamut of assistance from the host community runs from non-existent to arranging for a well furnished home with freshly stocked larder. Whatever the circumstances, the husband, wife
and children are exposed to it together. However, soon after their arrival the husband goes to work leaving his wife to cope with the new social and physical environment.

The Priority of Education

Regardless of their husband's occupation, profession or status, schooling for the children assumes a major priority. Many women spoke of arriving in Canada or the United States and being surprised when they were thwarted in their attempt to enrol their children in school because the local school authorities felt it was too near the vacation period.

In Japan, where education is a year-round occupation if not obsession, the school year runs from April to the following March. The summer holidays, a period of about 35 days, extend from about the 25th of July till the end of August. The winter break is about ten days. Further, as one mother told me, in Japan, if a child is absent from school more than one quarter of the school year, he or she can not pass to the next grade, thus separating the child from friends, irrespective of the marks attain in the subject matter. For this reason, many parents attempt to register their children in school as soon as they arrive in the new country. Most elementary school children have not been exposed to English and many parents believe that even the short contact with schoolmates facilitates entry into the community. A large number of women said that they enrolled their children in school within three days of arrival.

Many Japanese parents are fearful of interrupting their child's Japanese education. Passing the entrance exams requires such specific, detailed and unambiguous knowledge that they are
reluctant to hinder the flow in any way. For this reason, some children are either left in Japan or are sent back to live with grandparents while they complete their studies. This works a considerable hardship on the relationship between mother and child. However, of the women who did send a child back to Japan, most attempted to look upon the occasion as something which could not be helped (shikataganai). All of them had discussed the possibility with their child beforehand so it would not come as a surprise, and in all cases the child agreed to the arrangement. It is noteworthy that all of the children sent back were boys. No daughters were returned for educational reasons, with the exception of one girl who spent a year in a mission school in Japan while her parents lived in an East-European country. She later joined them in Europe where she completed her education through the university. This tends to tally with White's assertion that,

The standards for mainstream "normalcy" are much higher for boys; girls are permitted a gloss of internationalism, and parents rarely worry as much about their occupational future (White 1979:4).

Inumaru also confirms that parents tend to be more concerned about sons receiving an Japanese education than they are about their daughters. He also notes:

No foreign school. . . is acknowledged by the Japanese Ministry of Education (monbusho). At the end of their stay abroad, many children can not have their diplomas recognized, although they can enter a Japanese school more or less corresponding
to their last one (Inumaru 1977:166).

Despite the hazards and difficulties involved in educating children in a foreign country many parents do choose to bring them when they live abroad. Those who travel to an English speaking country see it as an opportunity for the children to learn English in a natural setting. Because tests in English are part of the difficult entrance examinations the experience is viewed as a potentially positive one. Inumaru notes that the Japanese perception of the value of learning a foreign language is a pragmatic one where the ability to speak English fluently is viewed as praiseworthy but the importance of learning Italian is downgraded because it is "... less used in the international context in general and in the Japanese society in particular" (Inumaru 1979:166). This agrees with what some of the informants told me, that even Japanese who move to a foreign non-English speaking country such as Germany, still tend to conduct affairs with the host business groups in English.

The overwhelming involvement by mothers in the children's education is somewhat tempered in the new country. Many women are rather perplexed to find that a province of concern previously thought to be theirs alone is now to be shared with their husband. One woman expressed surprise that the P. T. A. meetings are held in the evening and that on "Parent's Night" both the father and the mother are encouraged to attend. This involves either getting a babysitter (not generally done in Japan) or leaving the children alone in the evening.

You see, we don't have that system {of babysitters} here in Japan. When we have to--we
just ask the neighbors to--look after them. They were at the age when they needed babysitters but they didn't want it, (laughs) so I just left them. We had some troubles, you know, when we arrived home late at night we found the light on in the garage and I couldn't know {imagine} what happened. And then we opened the garage door--and found two sons sleeping there! Because I asked them to bring their keys with them always, but they're not used to that, and I thought they wouldn't go out after dinner--but it was light enough so they did (laughs). And they forgot their keys and were locked out. And they were shy, and they couldn't ask the neighbors to help them. Moreover, they couldn't speak English at all.

This woman felt it was best to continue the close bond between mother and child uninterrupted by another caretaker. If her sons said they did not want a babysitter she did not impose one on them, but in return, she expected responsible behavior from them. In the Canada or the United States the lack of a babysitter might be interpreted as negligence on the part of the parents. In Japan this conflict would not have occurred because the husband and wife would not have been expected to appear together at the same function.

In general most Japanese mothers show a continuing and considerable interest in their children's school work and are surprised at the small amount of homework their children are expected to do. Most Japanese children excel over their Western
counterparts in math and music, but lack verbal skills and English proficiency. Unfortunately, this lack is often shared by their mothers, so help is difficult to give. Thus, the pattern of always being able to offer help, knowledge and direction is threatened, as is the amaeru-amayakasu (dependence-indulgence) relationship.

Occasionally unexpected problems arise. A sensitive, alert mother can detect them, but often is powerless to effect changes.

The first time we took her to school—how can I describe her teacher? She was very eager to help us and she chose one Chinese boy in her class, but she couldn't tell, distinguish Chinese from Japanese—so when the little Chinese boy started talking we said "I'm sorry, but we are Japanese." And—ah—some people just laugh and say "I'm sorry," this very often happens—but she took it very seriously, and she wasn't very happy, it seemed to me, she wasn't very happy to have my daughter in her class. That means she might have a little trouble to teach something or {my daughter} would have trouble to catch up to the class for the first year um—well, she {daughter} probably had a lot of trouble in English but the little children didn't hesitate to play with her at recess. But I think she had a hard time from April till June, until she got another teacher in September.
Another mother was able to use such an experience to help someone else:

The reason we had difficulty is that we moved after one year. . . . When we first arrived, the teachers were very accepting because they know they don't speak English, but when we moved after one year or so, they assume you should know this or that. . . But one year is not enough, I believe.

B: comparing the two teachers, do you think the second one was as accepting as the first?

Well, I'd rather say—if I were to do it again I'd ask the school to change the teacher, maybe. . . . That thing did happen again, and I was a kind of volunteer worker at the school then—when another Japanese child came in and had the same difficulty. So, I and my other friend there helped her—to help him to switch teachers and then he had a very nice and happy time.

Nevertheless, because the children are learning school subjects in a language not always familiar to their parents, some mothers find a growing gulf where before had been a bridge. In this regard, interpersonal relations within the family are changed by other factors as well, in the day to day style of living. One woman noted that the close ties she had always fostered with her two children were slowly being eroded by a shifting meal pattern.

The children were not used to having guests at
home so often. And they had to get used to--well, usually when the Japanese {man} invites guests, the children and mother have dinner all together and well, they don't do that there. So my children had to eat alone--and they were not happy, at first (laughs). . . . When we had guests, of course, I ate with my husband.

Size and Space

Size and space also play a large part in the overwhelming impact of the new surroundings. Many women commented on the great distances they had to travel to do simple shopping for everyday living. In Japan, most neighborhoods have several small stores where one can buy food such as fresh produce, eggs, fish, tofu (soya bean cake) meat or canned goods. These stores are usually within walking distance of any part of the residential area. Larger super-markets and shopping centres located some distance away are still within reach by various forms of public transportation. In the new country, the strange surroundings, the fear of becoming lost, the feeling of incompetence in linguistic ability can take its toll with the timid. One woman, Hiroko, remembers the first six months as being particularly frustrating.

At that time, I couldn't drive because I didn't know how. My husband had a car but in the day I couldn't go out because the apartment houses were so far from town. I couldn't go shopping--I didn't have any friends so I could not go out. No way! So all day I was alone by myself.
At first, I didn't feel I'm accepted—for six months. I felt so isolated I was always crying. The letter from Japan was the only thing to make me happy. There were no telephone calls from my friends. My neighbors were good but still I couldn't speak English well—I couldn't understand what they say—they speak so fast... I didn't have so many friends—just neighbors, and my husband, when I told him, he just said "be patient" that's all.

Knowing how to drive and how to converse in English are obviously two very useful skills in suburban New York. But they are only two kinds of practical knowledge among the myriad necessary for everyday living.

Relevance, Interest and Practical Knowledge

In reviewing the many accounts, a pattern seems to emerge. There appears an obvious correlation between how much the person knows about the new place and how comfortable she feels in it. Further, how much she knows seems directly related to her interests, and these interests are governed by what she finds relevant. One of the problems of moving to a new place is that of shifting relevances because it is difficult to separate which things one must learn in great detail from those which can be taken for granted.

Schutz discusses this in his essay "The Stranger (1944)" and in a later paper, "the Well-informed Citizen (1964)" he suggests three typologies to explicate the manner in which socially distributed knowledge is accumulated. The ideal types
he proposes, the expert, the man on the street (hereafter referred to as the ordinary citizen) and the well-informed citizen, are simplified and rough outlines. Schutz notes that "each of us in daily life is . . . simultaneously (all three) with respect to different provinces of knowledge . . . and that these three kinds of knowledge differ only in their readiness to take things for granted" (Schutz 1964:123). To this, I would add that the acquisition and use of accumulated knowledge also depends upon the ability to reflect upon past experiences and to extract meaning from them.

I propose to use the three outlines suggested by Schutz in conjunction with ethnographic reality to show how accumulated knowledge affects one's perception of a new country. The first typology (the expert) is an example of a woman who has amassed a certain amount of detailed and specific information "...restricted to a limited field but therein it is clear and distinct" (Schutz 1964:123). Most important, is that this information is of particular relevance to her reason for living in a foreign country.

The second account, the ordinary citizen is of a woman who comes to the new place with an extraordinary number of taken for granted notions. Because she is never able to find a sustaining interest in any subject outside of an all consuming desire to be accepted by the people who live there, she is unable to disengage her perceptions from a feeling of personal rejection. While she possesses a unique ability to record and replay events and their impact, they remain, for her, single entities, ununited and invariable.
The third typology is drawn from the accounts of two different women who also came with taken-for-granted ideas and preconceptions, but who are able to extract from their previous experiences enough data to determine a list of priorities. These priorities correspond to what Schutz calls "graduated knowledge of relevant elements, the degree of desired knowledge being correlated with their relevance" (Schutz 1944:500).

Just as Schutz's well-informed citizen "...does not acquiesce in the fundamental vagueness of mere recipe knowledge or in the irrationality of unclarified passions and sentiments" (1964:122), these women are able to look beyond the imminent and the impending, to perceive changes in situations and to grow and gain from the shifting continuity of their everyday lives.

The Expert's Knowledge: Limited but Precise.

Hisako is an expert. She is the wife of a high-ranking diplomat, and in that role, has traveled extensively and lived in many parts of the world. She is multilingual, gracious and has a disarming manner about her which puts one at ease. A former Fullbright scholar, she has put her fluent English to use in her role as a representative of her country.

Her area of expertise is meeting and entertaining both Japanese and foreign people. This is a problem area for many Japanese women because of the differing cultural patterns in various countries. Hisako, however, is not only aware of differences in entertaining styles between Japanese and North America, she is equally well versed in the regional discrepancies in protocol.

If you give a party in honor of some person in San
Francisco, for instance, we gave a party for ("Mr. X") from Japan, and we invited several guests. Of course, we invited his patron too. Well, we just naturally decided to seat him as the guest of honor. But in Washington, his seating would depend upon his title as well as who also was present. In Washington, even though he is the guest of honor, ("Mr. X") would probably be seated further down. I always had to be rather cautious in Washington.

Hisako says that this pattern of entertaining changes when they live in Japan.

When we live among Japanese people we don't have too much joint entertaining. So my husband meets his friends and I meet mine. I usually entertain at lunch time and he entertain his friends at restaurants. That doesn't interfere with the style of entertaining in foreign countries. If we meet families there we entertain them together so we can share interests together.

She feels that this diversity is possible because she and her husband have a good understanding of one another's preferences and interests. "We can do things either separately or together." She elaborated further,

My main concern is how to mix people. My husband has opportunities to meet men through his job, and of course, when he invites "officially" I meet some of them. I have opportunities too, to meet women. So I meet several groups of interesting
people through a number of different clubs, and I'm always very glad to meet the husbands of those ladies. If there are people I think my husband would be particularly interested in, I try to introduce them.

Then, when we entertain those government people, we can ask these other sets so they can join in and share their interests.

Embedded in the above account is the idea of separate private worlds being brought together for the purpose of shared public interests. If these public interests then become private concerns, Hisako feels rewarded.

When I asked her what kinds of functions she preferred, she exhibited a precise knowledge which indicated considerable experience, thought and judgement.

I prefer small dinner parties—except official occasions when we have to invite more—but even then I try to keep it under twenty. I like the number fourteen—seven couples. It's easier for the cook to prepare—six is difficult—I mean twelve people—the seating is difficult, but fourteen is good—I can talk to everyone.

I know an Ambassador's wife in ( . . . . ) who is always complaining about her husband's willingness to invite so many people. They always give large parties, the smallest they have is twenty so she doesn't get a chance to talk to some of the guests. Just to say a few things after
dinner, if you invite seven couples you can share a lot. I like that.

I asked Hisako if she ever experiences any problems in mixing and matching people. She displayed an aptitude for perfection.

Oh yes! It's always a strain until the party is over . . . If I had a good group, or if I have done the right thing in getting certain people together. You know, some people are rank conscious—they may be resentful if I have mixed very highly ranked people with lower or middle rank people.

Hisako is aware that certain functions call for a more careful selection of the guest list than others. In knowing "the rules" she also knows which she can bend or break. Undoubtedly cognizant that her high status allows her more leeway than a lower echelon wife, she claims to prefer the natural and unaffected and dislikes entertaining the wives of her husband's subordinates because "when I joke they still take me seriously." Nevertheless, when entertaining abroad she is acutely aware of her responsibilities as a representative of Japanese culture.

During our conversation she made several observations indicating a perception of the similarities as well as the differences she found in various cultures. However, she is also somewhat aware of the limitations of her experiences.

After we were married wherever we went we were always belonging to some embassy. We were not quite totally exposed to the life there. That's why
I appreciated the society—the people I met through my daughter's schooling. For example, in San Francisco, we met lots of interesting people in the neighborhood. Still—it was not the same as some people.

Without doubt, there are many areas of taken-for-granted notions in Hisako's stock of knowledge about everyday living in a foreign country, but within the domain of entertaining foreigners and Japanese families abroad, she is an expert. It is no accident that her expertise coincides with her profession as a diplomat's wife. It is relevant to her lifestyle and interests at hand.

It is our interests at hand that motivates all our thinking, projecting, acting, and therewith establishes the problems to be solved by our thought and the goals to be attained by our actions. In other words, it is our interest that breaks asunder the unproblematic field of the preknown into various zones of various relevances with respect to such interest, each of them requiring a different degree of knowledge (Schutz 1964:124).

The interplay between interest, relevance and sensemaking in daily living is of paramount importance. Setsuko, who found that more was involved than just knowing English in order to make friends in Canada, eventually did find other women with whom to share her interest in Christianity when she joined a local church group. She met Canadian women who welcomed her into
their homes and lives and who showed concern for her and her children. She felt that this concern arose from their "Christian ethic" and though it was not the same as home in Japan, it allowed her to reach outside of herself and to join in the community of others.

Hiroko, who felt that she didn't speak English well enough to understand and interact with her neighbors, and who spent the first six months alone and crying, also met someone with whom to share her interest in painting. Later, she joined a professional artists' group and exhibited several paintings in New York before returning to Japan.

But what happens if the level of interest does not rise to the point where it intersects with relevance; when the "unproblematic field of the preknown" is indistinguishable from the unknown? And what happens when interest in the unobtainable obscures all else?

Accepting the World as Given

The following truncated account is of a woman who traveled to New York with her two children of elementary school age. Wakako is young (mid-thirties), fluent in English and although she had always wanted to travel to New York, she had no clear idea of what she wanted to do when she arrived there. She came with the same unfocused dreams as many others, but remained unable to sharpen the vision beyound the vague outlines she first perceived.

It's very strange, when I was living in Tokyo after my children went to school and my husband went to the office I was all alone and I didn't
have any of my friends near my house. I was doing by myself all day, almost every day. But I took it for granted. I didn't think so much about it. I was lonely, but—I wasn't lonely so much because I thought it was the way I live.

In New York, the same thing happened. After they went to school and my husband went to the office and I was alone in the apartment. But it was a kind of frustration. I wanted to do something—to go out because everything is new—everything is so stimulating! I wanted to meet many people—American people—because I had been expecting it.

Wakako said that when her husband moved to New York, six months previous to her arrival, he had taken over his predecessor's "nice two bedroom garden apartment". When she and the children arrived she found many other Japanese families living in the neighborhood. Her next door neighbor was Japanese, and told them how to register the children in school and "about the doctor check-up". From the beginning she had someone near with whom she could speak in Japanese. However, she said:

I didn't need to speak Japanese. I already knew English, and I was not afraid to speak it or hear it spoken to me.

With her neighbor's help, Wakako was able to register her children in school the day after their arrival. However, because it was early June they were in school only about two weeks. After that, Wakako felt caught in a nightmare of slow motion
moves in her attempts to see things and meet Americans.

In the suburbs of New York if you don't have a car you can't go out. I had a Japanese driving licence but to have a New York licence I have to pass a written test. To make application for a written test I have to go to the office--but I didn't have a car--how can I get there? So it was a big frustration.

I asked her if were possible for her to have gotten an International driver's licence in Japan, but she dismissed the idea with:

the International licence is for tourist. I was not a tourist. It is only good for one year. If you are going to live there--better get a regular one.

She continued:

I finally got a licence about a month later, but then, I didn't know the way. If you are walking you can stop and look at a map but if you are in the car you have to know where you are going. So, in the beginning my husband took me to the supermarket because that's the main place I should know how to get to. The supermarket, the school and the station.

Wakako said that even after she got her New York licence she still spent most of the time in the apartment. A kind of nervous apathy seemed to grip her.

The apartment had a nice garden with a pond and in
the good weather you could go out to take a little walk—but to take a walk all by myself seemed funny--strange? It's not the usual thing to go out like that. I wouldn't go out in Tokyo. . . . To walk, take a walk all alone, and sitting down on the bench doing nothing--its the thing that I don't do in Tokyo.

B: Not even to take a book and read?

But if you read the book, you can read it in the apartment (laughs). In Japan, when we see the stranger, when we see Americans we welcome them.

Wakako was waiting for someone to welcome her. One of the tacit assumptions many Japanese hold is that a guest should be made to feel at home. Wakako considered herself a foreigner and in Japan, a foreigner is always a guest. She imagined as she explained,

. . . If the children were little and needed to be watched then maybe I could be with them and I would be sitting there on the bench maybe somebody would pass by and say "Hello" and start a conversation, but all alone--I just couldn't do it . . . . I thought that American people were more friendly and open-minded and easy to speak to--or maybe they easily speak to me. That's what I had expected . . . .

Wakako felt that the diversity in cultural origins which she saw in New York accounted for the lack of interest in her affairs. As with Noriko and Setsuko, she observed:
In New York they have many nationalities. They are not curious about the foreigner. They are so used to seeing different nationalities and they are busy working all the time—even the wives.

Waiting for the other to welcome her is the kind of non-assertive "modest" behaviour appropriate in Japan. However, getting along in the new place sometimes requires a change in behavior pattern. It is not enough to do only the things one does back home.

My husband bought me golf clubs (laughs) and told me to take lessons, so I started.

B: Did you meet anyone on the golf course?
Yes, but only while playing golf. (10 sec. Pause) but, I enjoyed playing golf very much! It made me feel much better. I could enjoy—and I could forget about other little things—before that, I used to think—or feel.

B: Were there any other interests that would take you out of the house?
I tried—well, there are these Japanese family ladies, they get together all the time because of a language handicap. They are afraid to be with Americans so they go shopping together, and they have tea together and even when they want to do something—anything, they do it together. They don't speak English so they are living just like in Japan. No difference. They don't try to meet Americans they don't try to make friends. They are
just with Japanese people all the time. I didn't like that. Because this is a very good chance for me to meet the country's people. So I tried to get acquainted with American people and I didn't join that Japanese community. Maybe the other Japanese ladies thought I was not sociable for them. So I joined the voting league. I was the only Japanese lady.

B: the voting league—would that be the League of Women Voters? Yes. But I wasn't afraid to join that league. And they had that league every Friday morning at the same bowling place. Fifteen Japanese ladies there {in one alley} and about fifteen American ladies and one Japanese lady here (laughs). All bowling. I think the Japanese ladies were envious when they saw me because I could speak English, but after bowling the American ladies didn't say "come along to my house for coffee" they just said "See you next week." And left. Just that. Once a week. That's all.

Perhaps Wakako made an inappropriate choice of social groups to join among American women in that the ultimate aims of this particular league or group is to involve the community in the voting process. This was inconsistent with Wakako's goal of increased social interaction because although she was a resident of New York she was also an alien who could not vote. When I asked her about the aims of the league she seemed unaware that they had any purpose except bowling once a week. She was not
able to make sense of the new social environment because she had not gathered enough specific, detailed information. Furthermore, by joining the bowling group of the league in search of American friends she also became alienated from the social group of overseas Japanese wives.

Wakako lived in New York for four years. During that time, she became resigned to the idea of never having American friends but when the time came to return she did not wish to go back.

While you are living in the same place you get used to it. It feels like living in Tokyo. The same thing. You get used to it. So, as I said before, when I was living in Tokyo--when I was alone, all alone--I didn't feel bad about that. But when it changed--in the beginning--I felt so bad about that, but gradually, you get used to it. You start living exactly the same as living in Tokyo. So you don't feel much about it. Gradually, you don't feel it.

She paused,

You asked me what made me feel easier after six months. It is nothing. I should say nothing but I got used to it. Time took care of it. Time.

And reflected,

... maybe I was not so stimulated as I was before. I took everything for granted, and I didn't think I wanted to meet any people anymore. Many things gradually change. I didn't feel like that anymore. So, life changed into the same life
as in Tokyo. The places change, that's all.

"The same as in Tokyo"--this simple yet profound observation speaks directly to the issue at hand. It is in the everyday-life, where little things count, that cultural competence rests. The care, deliberation, and sense of inner knowledge with which one meets the day-to-day events; the ability to reflect upon past experiences in order to gain meaning for the present or insight for the future--these are the skills or lack which cull the incompetent from the capable.

The Well-Informed: The Broader Search

Not all women have such a difficult time. Noriko, who had encountered apathetic neighbors "too busy building their own lives to be interested in others" did not remain isolated from her surroundings. I asked her if meeting indifferent neighbors made her feel lonely.

I didn't have time to feel lonely--I think I have never felt loneliness in my life--even now. I had so many things to do.... My husband had not prepared everything--the furniture was basic, but I had to buy curtains and small things--the things necessary for our family.

Some of my Japanese neighbors came and told me where to buy what I needed. I drove a car and as I had an International driver's licence, I went shopping the next day.
There were seven families in my husband's branch office—all Japanese. So, the first thing I did was to have a party—a family party in our apartment. It was eleven days after I arrived... When my husband was alone in the apartment—in that neighborhood each of the same seven families took him in—gave him dinner when he wanted, the neighbors were so kind to him, I wanted to return their kindness.

Noriko showed a considerable awareness of what she believed to be her incurred obligations toward the Japanese families who "took in" her husband. Nevertheless, her behavior, appropriate in the sense of repaying social obligations, was unusual in speed and dispatch. In the five and one half years she lived in New York she continued to initiate contact with both the Japanese community and the American mothers of her children's friends. Of the Japanese wives, she said:

I knew so many Japanese women who were passive, who became neurotic... I think I helped them. Because of the language barrier, they had a hard time. I never would be kind to anyone who didn't want my kindness, but instinctively, I knew when they needed help. But I was also careful not to give—too much... I myself, don't like to be given kindness or help I don't need.

Of American mothers, she said:

Later, I found there were so many lonely people in New York. And I was surprised there were so many
lonely women—American women! But, oh! They are lovely women! They are so independent! One of my son's friends' mother was a divorcee, and she was a very attractive person—but I think she was a very lonely one too.

Noriko and her husband had expected to stay in New York about three years. The last two and a half of the nearly six years they were "in suspension" until they actually knew the company's plans. Noriko experienced and tolerated the ambiguity of the imposed circumstances well.

Even in suspension, in my deep mind I knew I wanted to stay more. Deep in my mind. But I didn't tell anybody about it. Outwardly I said "I'm happy now, because now I know I'm really going back."

But, in my deep mind, I wanted to stay.

Not everyone can meet the challenge of the new social and physical environment so directly, with such finesse and enthusiasm. For many it is a step by step process to be taken with time and care.

Sumie was a young woman in her early thirties with three small children when she followed her husband to Vancouver. In the tradition of many company men, he had preceded her by six months, found a nice house on a quiet street and then sent for his family.

The first two or three months I was very lonely because it was the first time I went out of Japan. I was born in Tokyo and I had never left it before.
Before we went to Canada we lived in a small apartment house that was for young couples and most had young children. We had a nice playground so after my husband left for work the children went out to play and we had to watch them, to keep our eyes on them, so we had lots of chance to talk with our neighbors.

But in Vancouver, it is so quiet and I couldn't see very many people even on the street! Very often, my husband laughed at me when I said I felt I was left on a desert. (laughs) Vancouver is a very nice city but it is so quiet. . . . It was a very busy time for my husband—he had to take many business trips, each time, about a week or so. I was alone with three small children.

Did you have problems?

Not really, because it was our custom among Japanese, when we arrived, my husband's colleague's wife—she came and helped me. She took me to Woodwards {the local department store} so I could do shopping and buy things. . . . She is a very nice person and—ah, I always appreciated her kindness, but if I am close to only Japanese group then probably I will lose the chance to see anything—everything by myself. So sometimes I didn't ask her. I tried by myself.

Sumie soon found that to feel comfortable in the new place she must have a better command of English. She went to night
school for new Canadians.

I think it was very good for me because the teacher never thought "oh, they are just ladies" she thought "they are students so I have to be very strict and correct their pronunciations" and I learned a lot.

The first little while I couldn't understand what you are saying and I could only say a few words. I could only follow a little bit. It was very irritating to find I can't talk about many things as much as I want (laughs).

After having lived in Vancouver for two years, about the time she felt she could understand spoken English well enough to take some U. B. C. Extention courses, Sumie's husband was transferred to a small town in the interior of British Columbia.

When we first arrived there, I was not very happy. It was April and there was still deep snow on the ground.

Sumie had other surprises as well. She had always lived in a big city and was unprepared for small town life. I asked her what differences she found.

I'll tell you frankly--in Vancouver, the people are nice and they are very polite they say "how do you do"--and they know all the words you use for some social occasion and they are very nice to us. But I really couldn't understand to a full extent that we are accepted. I couldn't understand that. But, they are highly educated and they knew for
the people like us, from Japan—we probably have some difficulties so they always felt they had to do something for us. They are willing to offer to give some help.

But in a small community--they are exactly a big family. If once we are involved, then its alright but until then, they are just watching what we are doing! They are not going to talk to us--they are waiting. Waiting for us to start to talk (laughs). So, that was a bit of trouble for me.

B: Did anything ever happen to change that?

I guess it was when there was a meeting of the (Christian) church group, and someone suggested to me that if I had time, there were lots of needs to be filled at the Extended Care section of the hospital. She asked me "Why don't you come for the Spring Tea at the hospital?" And I didn't quite understand--it was what they call a General Hospital in the district, and it is public. Why do we have to do something for the public? But that was the first chance I really got--ah--all of the people have sort of a feeling that we have to do something for the community and it was how to say, it was a kind of shock! In Japan, we use the words "we have to do something for the community" but I really don't feel anything we call "community". But in (Inner Town) they have a real sense of this
is our community and we have to do something for the community.

Sumie's awareness of "community responsibilities was activated by another incident.

Sometimes I heard somebody talking behind me {behind my back} about the Japanese families, "they are just a customer"--and that was very true! But I felt as long as my husband is working for this pulp mill, and also, we are Christians--our churches {in Japan} were helped spiritually and economically by churches in Canada and the States,--I felt I am one person, but I have to do something for this (laughs) for this occasion.

Sumie's 'sense of occasion' led her to become a volunteer at the Extended Care unit where she learned rather directly about the Canadian elderly.

To us Japanese, it is the ideal because they have a place to stay, and they are cared for, but sometimes, they want to go back to their families--and they are lonesome and sometimes, they call their families names. . . One of the nurses who gave the orientation class was a bit of a philosopher. She told us, "Here in the hospital, they have lost their 'status' so we should treat them--how to say, equally. And we should not enquire about their background--unless or until they want to talk about it."

During the time she lived in the interior Sumie became an
integral part of the small town community. Her close involvement in the community affairs did not obliterate her ability to look objectively at the Japanese utilization of Canadian resources. She perceived and distinguished short term goals inconsistent with long term objectives of the community and she rationalized and attributed the disjuncture to insufficient education in the community.

If there were more educated people in (Inner Town) maybe they could realize that, ah, Japan is getting more industrialized and is putting more money to investigate some mining company or something. Maybe they should think—in a sense, it's nice to start a good job, but it's not so good to export the raw materials out of the country. But there aren't so many educated people in (Inner Town), most people just finish senior high school or maybe not even that, so I think they don't think that far ahead.

Sumie wanted to discuss these things as well as the theme of Japanese exploitation, but found no appropriate way of broaching these subjects.

It was one of the things I wanted to talk with somebody about, but I couldn't start it (laughs).

Sumie never lost sight of the fact she was a stranger in the community. Although she could contribute to and partake of the joint activities in day-to-day living, she always possessed that degree of objectivity noted by Simmel: . . . A particular structure composed of distance and nearness, indifference and
involvement . . . (1950:404) which marks the one exterior to the group.

Sumie and her family lived seven years in Canada, (two in Vancouver and five in the interior) before returning to Japan. When I spoke with her in Tokyo in 1978, she was busy re-integrating herself and her children into Japanese society.

It seems to be a mere truism to state that only an exceedingly small part of our actual and potential knowledge originates in our own experience. The bulk of our knowledge consists in experiences which not we but our fellowmen, contemporaries or predecessors, have had and which they have communicated or handed down to us. We shall call this . . . Socially derived knowledge (Schutz 1964:131).

In the abbreviated accounts which make up these three typologies I am suggesting that cultural competence comes from direct involvement in the new social and physical environment, and that this requires a kind of stepping outside of the self and into the concerns and lives of the people in the new place. It necessitates the use of socially derived knowledge as well as what Geertz has called an "inward conceptual rhythm" (1973:235) of alternating between the outward social events and the inward sense of meaning.
Part III: Moments and Movements of the Self

In *The Silent Dialogue* Olesen and Whittaker discuss the growing self-awareness among student nurses brought about by enforced self-examination. They chronicle not a linear path, but a precipitous trail of peaks and valleys, of emerging levels of understanding and intuition which dissolve or disintegrate, only to reform elsewhere as pools of reflection and insight.

These, then, are the cycles of the inner world. Together they suggest the nature of the movement between social and inner reality. They suggest, moreover, how social reality permeates the membrane of the self, and conversely, how the self could make itself felt on the social reality. In this way, the individual moves toward higher and higher levels of integration, of internalization and of socialization. The higher this level, the greater, presumably, is the independence of the individual from his social environment in the self-sense of his identity (Olesen and Whittaker 1968:286).

Within the 'social reality' encountered by these women, some move dramatically toward individuality while others seek and slip toward the person, that safe, self-same identity which offers warmth in duplication.

But deep in my heart I can't--I just can't overcome the prejudice against another race. When I say prejudice it doesn't have such a good
meaning, but I felt so much at home in America, and still I felt I'm a foreigner there. And when I come back to Japan, as a person I feel so much at home in the point that I am just the same. I look the same as other people, and I am quite conscious about that. Even though I was quite well adjusted to the United States, and I felt so much at home—but if I look back at my life there, I think there was a little bit of tension all the time—that I am living in the foreign land among foreign people.

Burridge differentiates between the person, "... A single instance of the species, the conformist. . . in word and deed" and the individual, "the moral critic who envisages another kind of social and moral order," (Burridge 1979:5) and grants they may dwell within the same body, albeit restlessly,

And this apparent oscillation or movement between person and individual—whether in a particular instance the movement is one way or a return is made—may be identified as individuality. Or, individuality refers to the opportunity and capacity to move from person to individual and/or vice versa. The self now becomes an integrative/disentegrative energy which gathers particular relations either into the person or into the individual and, also, an energy which either inhibits or makes possible the movement between person and individual. (Burridge 1979:5-6)
Sometimes this oscillation can be heard in the accounts of the culturally competent as moments of self doubt and discernment. Noriko, who said, "I've never felt loneliness in my life" reflected,

Maybe I was always with someone, I like looking around, reading books--I don't have time to spare--for loneliness. Maybe I'm not a deep introverted person--"to touch the edge of loneliness"--(laughs). I always express--maybe I'm covering.

Well, I can't tell exactly. But, sometimes I want to be lonely! I want to--ah--to run away from home! Sometimes, I feel like running away from all of it--to be alone. . . Maybe I'm a very happy person--I've never felt alone.

At times, the elations which spring from the small successes of coping with the new culture have a way of fading from sight. At such times, simply overcoming inertia in the face of the incomprehensible seems like too much trouble. At such times when ". . . disenchantment settles on us unawares in a crowded existence, with the untutored pause the mind seems to take while it lets the world recede. . . " (Read 1965:25). At just such times it helps to see what the hand can produce or the ear can hear--if only to know that we are still here. We may not be entirely right with the world, or with ourselves, but at least we are still here.

At such times of existential crisis when one feels the words will not come, that communication with others can not
proceed along the usual lines of talking, words, or gestures, because of language problems communication gaps, cultural boundaries, or intellectual levels, it is a human condition to want to bridge the gap, to fill the hole and to make whole the self, by performing in another sphere—to make something with the hands when one can not articulate the thoughts.

"To make visible"—in the sense of to externalize the emotions, the feelings, the stuff of which the self is made, the things which carry on the dialogue between the person and the individual, that something which one feels from the inside representing all which is same and all which is different from all others.

This feeling was eloquently expressed by a woman who had lived in London with her husband and children. Although she could read English, Japanese and Arabic she hesitated to speak in English. When I asked her what was the most important thing she could think of, she said it is to be able to speak the language, and how important it is to be able to express yourself to others, and how her husband would chide her for talking to her Japanese friends in Japanese too much,

When my husband went out and my children went out and I, just I left, my neighbor—was Japanese, so sometimes I speak Japanese but my husband says "Don't speak Japanese! Speak English! Practice! Practice! Practice! But--English people are--ah--difficult to get to know...

And so, she took courses in tatting and needlepoint and her house was filled with finely constructed dolls, rugs, and
tapestry and many books.

I have many books but when I feel lonely, I--refuse--to--read. Because, some Japanese women, when become ah, kokoro no byoki (sick at heart) can not ah--communicate. To read, yes. To understand what is read, yes, but to communicate--to express is not so easy... So, when I am lonely, I have many hobbies (laughs).

Dorothy Lee writes perceptively of the satisfactions inherent in performing tasks imbued with social meaning. Finding herself adding "an entirely unpremeditated and unnecessary edge of embroidery" to her daughter's Christmas present, she writes:

At this moment of discovery, I knew that I was experiencing what it meant to be a social being, not merely Dorothy Lee, an individual; I knew that I had truly become a mother, a wife, a neighbor, a teacher. I realized that some boundary had disappeared, so that I was working in a social medium; that I was not working for the future pleasure of a distant daughter, but rather within a relationship unaffected by temporality or physical absence. What gave meaning to my work was the medium in which I was working--the medium of love in a broad sense (Lee 1959:28).

Both Dorothy Lee and the woman with the dolls were in communion with human-kind because they were actively performing in this world. It is interesting to note that what they produced would be considered examples of individual creativity.
What do some people do when they feel depression brought about by a sense of anomie—of normlessness and alienation from the community which surrounds them? Some may retreat to an enclave, a group of people who may share common backgrounds, but if they are completely cut off from this source of respite or if they do not wish to utilize it, they may seek to show demonstrable competence in another area. The effect of this effort is to put one in touch with the self; to acknowledge some of the questions raised in the pain of self discovery.

And what of those who do retreat to the enclave? Do they escape unscathed the onslaught of strange stimuli? I doubt it. My personal observation is that loneliness goes deeper than that. At its most profound the inner self comments upon the inappropriateness of our own behavior; when the social consensus around us reflects this inappropriateness it shines the mirror directly in our eyes, painful indeed.

At such times, it is helpful to speak with someone who understands the peculiar reasons for the actions taken. And while it is possible to meet people from the new social environment who understand, one tends to want to seek out those who understand without thinking about why something was done in a certain way. Somehow this seems to normalize inappropriate actions and make them seem less important. One can still see that they weren't quite right but they no longer seem so grossly wrong, only relatively so, and thus they become understandable.

If there are no people around who understand without thinking or if one finds oneself always having to explain one's actions, it becomes an exhausting task. Having constantly to
provide explanation to others can yield a variety of effects. For some it becomes an adventure in self-awareness, for others, a shattering experience.

Are all such excursions into the self so painful? Some of the women I spoke with don't think so. One woman said, just before returning to Japan:

For the first year or so I didn't speak my feelings. I was afraid—-you know, sometimes you tell your good friend something and very quickly that person over there knows all about it. So, I didn't speak openly. But, now, I think I have changed. Now I say frankly what I think. When the young wives come I tell them how to shop—-to buy things—but I tell them the difficulties too! Before we didn't talk about those things.

I tell them to learn English. They always want to get into groups to practice English though. I think they should go separately to learn. Its hard, you know, but it is better. Of course the group is nice, but they need to go alone too.

Our company gave us orientation classes—-of what kind of life style to expect here—-and we learned and studied about the customs of the country. But now, I think I want to study more about my own country. I want to find out why. I want to know who I am.
Finally, this theme of emergent self awareness, so prevalent among the women I interviewed, seems to be associated with a shifting in the balance between public and private self. In the new place many have found that they must articulate their concerns in an open manner in order for them to be taken seriously. Sometimes this involves exposing a part of themselves previously kept private. In this process they also question their own taken for granted notions in light of a new cultural awareness.
I was thinking that I was simply coming back to Japan where I knew everything very well. It's quite natural, don't you think so . . .

It was not so (laughs). Because--it's simply because I was not coming back to the same place--I went out . . . I got used to very spacious places, and the road was so narrow--that same road I was walking, it should have been wider!

The first night I arrived here, all the walls were attacking me, I thought. They were falling down to me (laughs). That's the feeling I had.

Size and Space

The size of space and the lack of space are themes which thread all of the accounts together when these women return home. Where before, the new place spread like a deserted wasteland, now home seems small and cramped and crowded. Small. Everything is small and smaller still than remembered.

The sheer visual impact of the home country seems to be the first thing mentioned by most women. Quite often, when I invoked a response by asking directly, "What was your first impression upon return?" the reply involved a perception of diminished physical size. Noriko commented,

The first thing I noticed was the narrowness of the roads with which I was so familiar! Suddenly, every road looked narrower than it used to be. It
was funny.

Other aspects of the physical surroundings were perceived with the same instant clarity, and for some women they had a more lasting effect. But, eventually, the size of things "go normal" again. Coffee shops become larger, the tables and chairs are no longer placed as closely together, and, as one woman laughed, "the tiny glass of water they serve you eventually grows in size."

In the first part of this chapter, the early impressions, the comparisons and contrasts, as well as the reflections upon the meaning of re-entry are recalled. The homecoming process and many of the complicated aspects are examined.

The second section is concerned with settling back into life at home. The overwhelming importance of school, the manner, ability and the competence with which the women readjust their lives to the demands of their own society is discussed. This is an ongoing process; life does not stop when these women return home.

In the third and last section I briefly discuss the so-called "lasting effects" of having traveled and lived beyond the confines of the home-community.

Early Impressions

Perhaps the reason most people can recall their first impressions upon re-entry is because of the contrast they present to whatever has gone before. What Simmel calls the "sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance" (Simmel 1950:410) can fix in the mind events and scenes commonly lost in the mundane of every day living. No doubt most Japanese
people who go to the airport see little more than teeming crowds of well wishers and leave takers. Few would be overwhelmed at the sight of so many dark haired people congregated in one area. But this is one of the vivid images which recurs with regularity in many accounts.

The first thing I saw was that everybody was Japanese everybody had black hair and brown eyes and they all looked alike! (laughs)

This same kind of impression can evoke different responses. The first time Setsuko and her husband returned to Japan she was impressed by how happy all the Japanese people looked. She thought,

What happy looking people! I think it's partly because Japanese are a homogenous people. When I saw a crowd of people—all Japanese, all the same color, eyes, hair—they looked very happy! It was the first impression.

Because I went to the United States—at first I lived in Texas and there was racial discrimination—black and white—and signs and such everywhere, so, when I saw this homogenous group of Japanese people,—I thought how happy they look!

A younger but equally impressionable returnee noticed the same kind of uniformity but responded to it differently.

My son was one and a half years old when we returned, and he couldn't speak too much Japanese and when he did, it was with a strong American
accent (laughs). But for him it was the first time to see so many Japanese--and he was really scared at the airport to see them--because in Pittsburgh there are not so many Japanese.

Perhaps the biggest shock is the sheer numbers of people the returnee encounters.

At first, I was overwhelmed by the number of people in the streets--and the traffic--and the people rushing on to trains--and, well, in public, they seem very rude, whereas in the United States--people treat you as a woman (laughs). You know, "ladies first". We don't have that here. I remember I got frustrated every time I went out on the street.

The frustrations so overpowering at first, have a way of subsiding after a time. Another woman recalled,

It's so crowded everywhere--for a month or so, I was afraid just to walk around... and every time I hit another person, I used to say "excuse me" and then the man who was hit by me was surprised (laughs)--and looking at me (laughs)--and finally I recognized that I could not walk without hitting any person, so I just stopped saying that ... And then, I was afraid of riding a bike so I would just walk around... And then, I got used to ride a bike, but I'm still scared of driving a car (laughs).

These first impressions, so overwhelming to the unexpected,
have a way of precipitating introspection.

And when I reflect myself back, I would say that I was a kind of foreigner, looking at Japan for the first time (laughs)—after so many years! So, so I was curious about what they were doing, and I just wondered, "did I do the same thing, or not?" (laughs)——that kind of feeling.

One of the obvious disparities noted by many women is a difference in living standards. Much of this depends upon the year in which the woman returns; the recent prosperity in Japan has tended to diminish the contrast in economic wellbeing between Japan and the West. Another factor is the number of years she has been out of the country and in which part of the world she has been living. One woman, the wife of a scholar, traveled to the United States during the early sixties. The trip had been accomplished at considerable financial hardship and much budgeting. Upon return,

What a narrow place! Everything seemed so small—including the houses and glasses and plates and buses and toilets and everything!

We were so unhappy after that! That is why I wrote this book. I had to compare the life in America with the life in Japan and I had too justify why I have to live here in Japan. While I was writing, I realized everything must be done by money (laughs)—money and space—because American people are living in very rich houses and it was because of money, and it was because of the land
they have. It is twenty-five times wider than what we have, I think.

In Japan, it is a very narrow country and we have to live in a smaller house, even if we have the money. The space and money make the difference.

We had no money—and again and again I asked my husband to go back to the United States even if he would be a guard at the supermarket! (laughs) But of course, my husband knew it was nonsense (laughs). "I am a professor of a University!" He said.

My husband was not so unhappy because he could teach again—but I, myself was so unhappy. I again became a Japanese housewife—always confined in the house, and I had to do everything by hand. I didn't have a big oven, not much hot water, I had to go shopping every day, and I was so poor.

Bye and bye I had to adjust and to justify why we have to live here in Japan. That is why I began to write a book and regain my energy.

The relative deprivation suffered by this woman was ameliorated somewhat by an eventual improvement in her economic situation. She and her husband had found it necessary to sell the used car they had purchased and enjoyed in the United States, but, after a few months in Japan,

We bought a car again. And, again, a car was a solution to our own unsatisfied feelings at that
time. Not so many people had a car, but we could have it. Somewhat—as if we could regain the life in America.

Another woman who returned to Japan a few years later (in the early part of 1970's) found that Japanese dress had changed remarkably during the three years she was away.

Before we went to the U.S., the business men didn't wear colored shirts—only white. When we came back we noticed colored shirts, stripes and very modern neckties (laughs) and they seemed very fashionable.

When I was in the U.S. I couldn't buy many clothes—my husband's scholarship was too small—(laughs). . . so when I came back I really didn't have anything and (laughs). . . I was just—how do you say—darashiganai? Ah—I thought myself very unfashionable.

Additionally, this woman noticed the different priorities in spending patterns between Japanese and North Americans. Several people also commented that where Japanese tend to be acutely aware of fashionable dress, well made watches and other items of personal apparel, most Americans or Canadians take a more casual approach. A number of women were surprised to find that even in big cities Americans do not tend to dress with formality. This becomes relevant here because several women said that upon return to Japan they no longer paid as much for clothing, and tended to look for bargains. Most felt after return that Japanese spend "too much money on fashion". Wakako
had an explanation for this:

Japanese people dress nicely because they have to meet so many people all the time. So you have to meet so many eyes you have to wear good things...

In New York women just wear everyday things—they just get in the car and go, so nobody knows what they are wearing (laughs).

Most of the woman I interviewed traveled to and lived in economically developed countries in the West. A few lived for short periods of time in less economically developed places with lower standards of living, but most did not.

One woman, the wife of a government representative spent most of twelve years commuting between Washington and her home in Tokyo. Then, her husband was sent to Bangladesh. It was during a time of considerable stress for the country—and in her account she describes a "not very elegant kind of colonial existence" of mixing powdered milk for starving children by day and playing bridge at the hotel in the evening. I asked her what was her first impression of Tokyo when she returned.

I thought Tokyo had changed and I thought it was Paradise. I thought the United States was one extreme and Bangladesh was the other—and Tokyo was between, in economic standard, in everything. And, really, it's a comfortable place to live in—no problems. We didn't have to worry about sanitation, water, food, violence—yet everything was in abundance—and it's very luxurious for me (laughs) and the Japanese people didn't seem to
appreciate this. Once you get deprived—and get deprived—you really start to appreciate these things. The Japanese people really don't know to appreciate them—that was my first impression.

Reflection and Re-entry

Other women who have spent busy active lives while overseas had time to reflect on what it meant to them once they returned. One woman said,

I was not lonesome. Oh—I did not recognize that I was lonely or that I was lonesome because I had my family with me. I was living quite a busy life. But, after I came back, after a nearly four years stay in London—to Tokyo—I realized that I needed my friends more. Because of my poor English I cannot explain these things from my heart. My friendships in Tokyo are very deep ones. The group is very nice ... We were friends with each other throughout time, and they were not simple friendships.

Not everyone looked with such pleasure upon regaining intimate relationships. Noriko said,

I soon got tired of the family relationships. I had the new wives of two brother-in-laws to meet, and, well, it was a sort of everyday matter. Every Sunday all the family gathered and because we are still living with the in-laws, younger brother and his family all gather in our house. And even if we had planned to do some shopping or to go somewhere
by ourselves, we have—we are supposed to entertain them. So, big brother and big sister were busy, and mother-in-law always wants it. And it was always she who 'phoned her younger sons to come to our house.

This desire to seek a private life separate from the public can be heard in many of the comments from other women, as well. The return to Japan seemed to elicit a desire for the kind of privacy they had experienced in the new place.

Japanese style friendship—to visit without an appointment is not impolite. But now, I don't like this kind of visiting anymore. I don't want to visit this way and I don't want to be visited without an appointment. This is a clear difference. I now feel free to make a choice. Private and not private life has become clear for me...

The woman who returned to Japan after twelve years abroad and who spent time in Bangladesh acknowledged a need for time to readjust. The period of commuting between cultures expired. She had time once again to consider the past and present and to contemplate the future. And she had many things to learn.

I really needed a new adjustment. I was entering into a new orbit. Starting a new life—because, every two years I used to come back on home leave but I never really got settled down in Japan for twelve years. It was really a new life—and also exciting in a way—but it took me a while to get
adjusted. It was all kinds of things.

Settling In Again

Clearly, settling down takes time. Time to re-adjust, time to discern the daily rhythms, time to pick up old habits and new responsibilities.

I regarded my stay in Germany as a kind of holiday. Only a three year's stay, but during that time I had no outside obligations toward society. I had to maintain good relationships with other Japanese, that was all. Economically, I had no obligation—rent, telephone all these kinds of spending money—they were not my responsibility—economically I was completely free. And the Japanese school—there was only one—I didn't have to work to decide—I had no choice—so I didn't need to worry about educational things... But when I returned to Japan I had to worry about all those things again.

Undoubtedly one of the biggest concerns for the women when they return to Japan is schooling for their children. Although much depends upon the age and sex of the child, as discussed earlier, it is considered more important for boys to get into a mainstream track toward a good university than it is for girls, for whom the economic value of education assumes a lower priority. Another factor seems to be the age at which the children return. The closer to the entrance examination period the less time to learn all of the detailed specific information
required. Finally, these children are competing with others who have remained within the Japanese school system all their lives. Sometimes competition is difficult indeed. Unless the child has continued in an overseas Japanese school system he or she has learned different kinds of study patterns as well as having been exposed to quite different subject matter. Even the presentation of material differs.

Japanese school system offers a steady curriculum. That means the mother can know her child has to study math on one day and maybe some other subject the next day but each day she knows what kind of homework he will probably bring. All the students study the same thing at the same time. It keeps everyone together.

A recent newspaper article told of the extraordinary difficulty some returning children have in re-integrating into the Japanese school system. Written for a public unacquainted with the possible differences in socio-cultural demands, it tells an appalling tale of rejection, alienation and despair (Murray 1981:B1). Perhaps it is pride but none of the women I interviewed said their children failed to make eventual adjustment. This does not mean that there were no problems or that the problems were easy to overcome--only that most catalogued an eventual reintegration into some segment of Japanese society.

I asked one of the women who had returned after a four year period What kinds of things a good Japanese mother does to help her children in school after they return from abroad.
She is very busy! You have to collect information—well, there are books sold in the bookshops—and you meet parents of children and exchange information—and I don't want to be persuaded by others so I visit the school and see for myself.

So, you visit schools, read books, read to see what standing the schools have—where they are in the system, ask friends and find out from parents of your children's friends.

Also you look for a good tutor. Juku (special school)—a small one is better than a big one I think, you get a test for test—it's called a mock test I believe. But first you must find out which mock test is good. Then apply for it.

Some schools give mock tests printed by companies, not schools. The Educational Industries—there are many.

This woman expressed an opinion I was to hear from many others.

In the Japanese test, writing is a very small part. It's 'fill in the blanks'. They must memorize everything in detail! They don't encourage children to think. In this system, they lose how to think, how to read and how to organize their ideas. We can say this system is not good but when we come back home—I don't want my children to have to be in the lower group. It would mean having them sacrifice for their parents.
ideals. I have very mixed feelings.

One woman, whose husband works for a company with rather broad travel privileges softened her child's re-entry into Japanese schooling in a rather unique way.

Every three months we came back and during that time we put her in a Japanese (private) school for about ten days. We didn't expect her to keep up the language, but we kept her enrollment here at school, so we had the right to let her go with her friends. We kept paying the tuition so she had a place. So, she always felt she would return.

Later, she acknowledged that,

I think it is because she is in a private school she can go on to college, I think I don't have to push her. But if she is in a public school where she had to take public examinations I might think differently.

This woman had spent the last fifteen years of her married life moving back and forth between the two cultures. During that time she had reflected deeply on the purpose and meaning of education. She herself had acquired part of her early education in Japan and part in the United States.

I think it is not because of my personal experiences in education but rather the education my child has received in America which has changed my ideas a bit.

Japanese education has changed over the last twenty years. Not only the education but the whole
society, the community has changed in many ways.

I think--the purpose of education is to make a person who can, I don't want to use "contribution," but so one can do something to make a better life...

As a parent we have to provide her with the environment or the conditions where it will make it easier for her to think that way. But that's about all we can do. We shouldn't tell her to do this or that. Deep in our hearts we have a desire that she will go up to the top--but to do that we have to provide the conditions--and wait.

Another woman, unable to maintain such an attitude of "wait and see" expressed profound regrets upon the return home. This woman had spent her own early childhood in the international circuit and had felt herself well equipped to guide her daughter.

Well, I kind of directed my daughter at every stage--when she was in doubt--even at times when it wasn't necessary. But I thought that if I directed her in time--that she would be better guided,--and in that way, she never really had a chance to, well, this is a terrible thing to say, she never really had a sense of self identification and she really couldn't find out what her true needs were--and when she went to the States she had difficulty again--at a very important period, when one has to decide what one
should take up for further study. At that time, because of the language problems she had to put more emphasis there than in true interests. She kind of lost her direction, and I feel that the lack of judgement which she has is because I made her rely on me so much that she couldn't really develop her own skills.

Needless to say, the success of the re-entry into the structured system depends in a large part upon the motivation and keen interest of the child.

Hisako's daughter, who had been schooled on three different continents, developed an expertise of her own. Regarding entrance examinations,

I really got sick and tired of studying for them. When we get into high school they tell you to start studying for entrance examinations--so you have three years of studying and by the end I really was tired of it. I wanted to go to the university and study whatever I like, instead of just learning techniques for passing exams. From January to February (of the final year) they don't have classes you just go to school once a week for homeroom and they let you study at home.

I made my own routine. A lot of people went to preparation schools juku. I didn't go. I just studied at home. I did it by text book and by myself. My mother helped me in Japanese Classics. Hisako says that because of her daughter's experience of
living in North America and Europe she finds Tokyo crowds and traffic too much to bear.

She hates to go downtown--she can not go to those schools juku--when she comes home, she just has to go to bed.

Hisako's daughter says,

I like working on my own--and not being moved back and forth according to what the teachers think. In those classes at juku you have to adjust and I'd rather set my own schedule according to myself.

Currently, there are a few Japanese schools which pay particular attention to the problem faced by returning students. Hisako's daughter attended one of these schools.

Almost all of my friends from {school} do like to study at home. The school is really good and they have good teachers who look after each one of us, give us advice and tell us what to do and how to study on our own.

When I spoke to Hisako, her daughter had just passed entrance examinations for the university and was preparing to enter the pre-medical course of study.

Changing Roles and Relationships

In the few interviews I conducted where other family members were present I had a general impression of solidarity. They gave the impression of having gone through an experience together. Several women suggested that living in a foreign environment fostered a feeling of closeness but, in the process the interpersonal relationships within the family sometimes
changed. A number of women commented that because they had been expected to assume more responsibilities in terms of joint entertaining, they found themselves relying more on their husbands to do things which they (the husbands) had not previously done. This included chores around the home as well as "facing the outside" together. Upon return, however most reverted to the pattern that had been established before going overseas. There are exceptions. One woman refers jokingly to her husband as having been "American trained" because he still treats her with the personal deference and outward show of feelings not always accorded to a wife in public in Japan.

Inumaru notes that in Milan women tend to rely more heavily upon their husbands for emotional and psychological support than they had previously in Japan.

...the wives greatest problem in Italy is is the stress of being alone, without relatives or friends upon whom they can rely and with whom they can communicate. Her husband becomes the natural scapegoat and has to listen to her grumbles, he argues that she is "amateru" (sic) (depending on his love, taking advantage of him) (Inumaru 1977:154).

Because Inumaru does not present any data on returning wives it is difficult to know if he sees a return to previous behavior patterns. Some women with whom I spoke said that they felt a closer relationship to their husbands when they were overseas but that in most cases when they returned to Japan old habits reappeared. The women were again charged with total
responsibility for the home, complete financial jurisdiction as well as a heavy commitment towards the children's education and care. One woman, herself a physician, said,

I really enjoyed going places and doing things with my husband. It was nice. But here, in Tokyo he is always so busy! He has these social responsibilities and he has to pay very much attention to them--every night--or he will lose contact. It's important to maintain good relationships with his colleagues. Still, I miss it.

Not everyone goes back to the same pattern. Noriko started to teach English in a high school one month after return. Of particular interest is the way in which she managed to accomplish this.

I started teaching right after I came back... Because my mentor at the college where I went wrote to me about teaching at the high school attached to the university. So, I kept saying "yes" to him, but we were "in suspension" (sic). So we were not sure when we were coming, but very fortunately, we came back here in early March, so I could take the interim position in April. I was lucky.

Perhaps she "was lucky," but she was also aware that because her former professor had requested that she teach she "could not offend him" by turning the job down. This is quite different from activity soliciting the job, and shows
considerable cultural knowledge. Nevertheless, Noriko says that her father-in-law did not exactly approve.

He told me "we don't need *tomokasege* in this house..." --it means my husband works and I work-- well, in jest he said that--(laughs) but he sounded rather 'real' to me! And that was only working once a week!

B: And you didn't back down? That was a fairly independent thing to do, wasn't it?

Yes. It was the first step I made, and once I began working I found it easier to "add up" one more day, one more morning for me to go out.

B: What did your husband think?

Well! I'm sure (laughs) he doesn't like it very much but he says he can't help it, since *I was asked to do it by my mentor* (both laugh). I was so thankful to my professor!

Noriko later "wrote a tiny piece about (--.--)," which was published, and then "grabbed a chance (offered by her mentor) to teach at a four year university--my old Alma Mater."

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**Developing the Sense of Personal Self.**

The developing sense of personal self experienced by many of these women sometimes found the home surrounding arid land indeed. An older returnee who had been away for over ten years said,

There were so many unreasonable things going on!

Like paying respect to older people... We had to
constantly bow to other people when we came back, we had to formally visit our superior, and we had to keep up with the conversation—I really couldn't express myself I had to get tuned up to their interest!

Accompanying this questioning of respect behavior sometimes are further doubts.

And also, the giving and exchanging presents so often... Human relations are so complicated in Japan! Sometimes it was really offending—and took a while to get used to... I thought it was really ridiculous that we have to express our feelings—to measure ours and other peoples' feelings in terms of concrete material objects. That we have to express what we really feel—ah if we want to invite people, we really want to invite them! I want nothing from them! —but in Japan...

Perhaps equally frustrating is the concern that one has lost track of what is considered 'proper behavior'. It is one thing to object to custom but quite another to feel ignorance. A wife returning from diplomatic service abroad expressed it this way:

The most complicated thing is that we no longer know how much we should take,—for example when we are invited for lunch or dinner. How much?—I never thought that way! If we are invited for dinner, we should take more expensive things—that kind of thing. Fortunately, I have two sisters who
can advise me—but they thought I was not quite bright and know nothing about Japanese customs (laughs).

When people die or if there's a wedding gift you really have to consult with your superior or older people who really have the wisdom to know such things! If we don't act properly they think we have no common sense. The average Japanese people think we are very ignorant.

Later this same woman admitted to a kind of two tier system of behavior among members of the diplomatic corps regarding gift giving.

So, among the returnees we don't do this kind of thing—among our good friends who have come back from Russia or the United States or from Europe, they know this kind of custom. So they don't expect—so we stopped this kind of custom, and we don't bring anything, and they don't bring anything but—with other people—we have to! We feel obligated to take something! Well, it doesn't matter if they feel we are strange people—but still, we feel that—reciprocity.

Not all the wives of government representatives felt such group closeness. Another woman who was also intimately involved in the diplomatic life in London said:

I myself was living in that diplomatic community (laughs) but I couldn't find any British diplomatic people who—they are—I think they have
a special point of view towards Oriental—or Japanese—other people. A kind of prejudice they don't need us! They are sufficient by themselves! You know, diplomatic people are all like that! They live for a few years in one country and then they move to another country for a few years, then they move again. So their way of thinking is not—it tends to be superficial.

The social demands of the wife of a government representative do not always end when she returns home. Some women find them even more disturbing than implicit discrimination experienced abroad.

I really enjoyed the company of American or some other outside friends—because, in Japan—especially being a wife of—well, my husband is not an important person—but still, he has some relationships, and always he is part community, and whether I like it or not, I have to associate with certain people, and that is really very painful to me. And even if I don't like it, I have to go to a certain party and I have to talk with a lady whom I don't necessarily respect, or with whom I have nothing in common. And I think those kinds of relationships are too many in this world! It's hypocritical!

Questioning the Self

This questioning of home values occurs with most of the
returnees. Following the initial impact, when the early impressions are still fresh they begin to question the differences or similarities of the socio-cultural environments they have encountered. They also begin again to question themselves. For some it is a long arduous process, for others come immediate revelations. Noriko, always quick to respond, said of her New York experience:

I was not very aggressive... I should have been more aggressive—now I know that. Even to make friends in America, I should have been more—uh—active is not good—aggressive I think... But, I didn't like being aggressive—I thought I would be able to make friends without being "showy" or overwhelming...

Now, I think I feel more independent. Well, it was when I was much younger but,--before I went to America I had a sort of attitude toward my parents-in-law or towards the ie or "house" that I should do whatever the "house"--the family needed me to do, or whatever my parents wanted me to do.

Now, I don't feel that way. I have to cherish my own self too. I think I feel this way because I got older. But I think the influence I received in New York played a big role too. Because I saw so many independent women. So many divorcees (laughs).

Setsuko, mindful of the ache of isolation, would probably not agree.
Before, when I lived in Japan I used to learn Tea Ceremony. At that time, I thought it wasn't so important--it was just part of my life. But when I went to Canada and missed people so much--I found that Tea Ceremony group was so nice!

We Japanese don't always say things straight out. Sometimes we have a special way, *haragei* of communicating our wishes... A kind of atmosphere... And I value those people and missed them so much... I think the company, to talk with people who understood is very important--to make people normal--and to have tea.

Both of these women feel that their encounter with another culture has affected their perceptions of self and home. Where Noriko finds freedom in a growing thrust for independence, Setsuko finds peace and new truths in old habits. The potential for self discovery activated by experiences in other cultures seems self evident. But it is only after the return that one can fully evaluate the personal meaning of such an adventure. Regarding the return home, Meintel notes:

Once the possibility of radical questioning of oneself and others has been accepted as potential in culture shock, what has been termed "reverse culture shock" appears in a new light. His new perspective of his home society, persons in it and his own past may not be fully realized until rendered immediate by returning home. For some informants the return was the equivalent to what
Strauss calls "the critical incident" when a change in oneself and one's relationships with others has evolved gradually. Sudden recognition then necessitates new alignment of these relationships... (Meintel 1973:52).

But, do profound experiences always cause movements of the self? I asked Wakako if she felt that her experience in New York had changed her. After first saying that she felt the experiences to be "broadening and educational" she reflected further,

I love to be sociable—but I'm the kind of person who does not speak first. I don't mind to be spoken to, but I don't speak to a person first.

B: How did we meet? (both laugh).

Because you have something you wanted to do—to speak to me. But, if you didn't and we met there—without any introduction maybe I wouldn't speak to you (laughs). Because, I hesitated—although I wanted to speak to you, I waited. Until you speak. That doesn't mean I don't like to speak to you—I wanted to speak to you but I hesitate—and I'm glad—I love to be spoken to—from other people.

B: And if no one speaks to you?

Then I keep quiet (laughs). Some people get the wrong impression of me—that I'm not sociable but inside I'm waiting and hoping that someone will speak to me. I'm that kind of person. It's hard for me to make friends.
Wakako was true to her word. A few weeks after the interview I chanced to see her at a gathering held in the American Club in Tokyo. The room was crowded and I was in the midst of a conversation with some friends. When I was able to break away I looked for her but she had disappeared. I still don't know if she would have responded if I had spoken first.

The Lasting Effects

What are some of the lasting effects of having traveled and lived in another culture for a period of time? Always a difficult question to ask, there are no facile answers. Schutz notes:

To a certain extent each homecomer has tasted the magic fruit of strangeness, be it sweet or bitter. Even amid the overwhelming longing for home there remains the wish to transplant into the old pattern something of the novel goals, of the new skills and experiences acquired abroad. (1945:375)

Many of the women who have lived abroad feel that it is a once in a lifetime experience. Aware that Japanese businesses incorporate strong personal ties built upon face-to-face interactions they know that their husbands will probably be reluctant to be transferred overseas very many times. A number of business men claim that "out of sight--out of mind" is a very real concern, and that while they may still receive promotions during the time away from the home office, they might, as one man expressed it, "be put on horizontal hold" after they return. Nakane confirms this prevalent fear:
A group member who is absent temporarily may well lose ground within the group, for a period of separation often alienates existing contacts. When a man working in Tokyo leaves for another part elsewhere his departure implies not only a physical separation from the city itself, but also the growth of social distance from his circle (Nakane 1970:136).

For this reason, when Japanese businessmen's wives get ready to return to Japan, often the farewells have a particular bitter-sweet atmosphere. They do not expect to return.

For the wives of government representatives the reverse might be true. Career diplomats and their families may spend more time abroad than they do in Japan. This also presents problems not only in terms of education for the children; it makes lasting relationships difficult to maintain. The married daughter expressed it this way:

I've lived half of my life abroad. Friends? Where did I make friends? Mostly abroad, neh? I have made friends recently after marrying and settling down in Japan but the friends you make when you are young are very precious, very precious indeed...

She paused and then continued:

Because I am Japanese, I look like a Japanese, and as long as I am in Japan everyone will regard me as Japanese. And they get shocked when they see or they feel, or they get the reaction -- when they
find out that I don't think Japanese! I try to hide it, but sometimes I just come out and "I think you are wrong--I think you are not right!" Which we Japanese are not supposed to be doing...

I'm married to a Japanese man who goes out with his friends [at night]. And I know I shouldn't complain, it's the "Japanese way". But I still suffer from the lack of socializing together. Then my husband does his best to socialize with me, but he doesn't have time! Because I've been a diplomat's child, and because I'm used to socializing--I'm used to Mr. and Mrs. being invited. I feel as though I were not treated right. As though I were not human. And those feelings I might not have, if I had lived in Japan all of my life.

What are the lasting effects on scholars' wives? Again, it seems to be an individual matter. As with businessmen's wives they do not expect to return in the near future. Both of these groups of women take with them new patterns of behavior or styles of interaction which may or may not remain in their repertoire after they return home. One thing which probably does last long after the experience of meeting and coping with the unknown is the elation of having survived the ordeal. Meintel touches on this aspect of having assumed different roles when she notes,

Whether the new role is admirable or despised it unveils a "potential me" formerly unknown to the
actor, and in either case, is likely to bring about a re-alignment in self-regard. (Meintel 1973:56)

Thus, unravelling the mysteries of the mundane can sometimes yield unexpected finds. In unveiling the "potential me" new worlds are born, and a continuing process of crowding our own horizons has begun.

Concluding Remarks

In this thesis I have attempted to look at the way in which a group of Japanese women make sense of a new cultural encounter and the manner in which this encounter alters their perceptions of home. The interviews emphasize the importance of everyday activities in learning to make sense of the new environment. Rather than fitting the disease-recovery model propose by others (Oberg 1960; Foster 1962), they indicate that sense-making is an ongoing process which does not terminate upon return home.

Because the initial impact of the cultural encounter seems profound, I have examined the expectations that the individual brings with her to the new place. These expectations may have considerable variation, but they are all drawn from a pool of past experiences, handed down information, and habits of thinking-as-usual which were appropriate to the place from which she came, but which have little bearing on the new circumstances. When these expectations prove inadequate for understanding the new place, she must search elsewhere for ways to make sense of the day-to-day experiences. Some women are more successful than others.

The information which they provided in the interviews
suggests that time itself, as well as familiarity and exposure to the new environment contribute to the process of their understanding. However, a more important factor appears to be the individual ability to draw from the many sources of available information and to integrate and utilize it in a fruitful way. In confronting the unexpected, she comes face to face with her taken-for-granted ideas previously hidden from view. In questioning these ideas, she then begins to question herself. This opens up a potential for new personal growth and development of cultural competence.

It is only upon returning home that she may realize how far she has traveled. One is struck by the interviews which describe changed perceptions of the physical world on return home, including perceptions of space and size. But the changes go beyond, to realizations of new potentials and to heightened appreciation of familiar surroundings and relationships.
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