

Asian Studies

SPECIAL ISSUE: *Nikkeijin*

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the Philippines and Japan

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The *Iemoto* System in Japanese Performing Arts
in Southern California: Its Transformation and
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Editorial Note

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Editorial Note

This issue of the Asian Studies Journal features “Nikkeijin”. This Japanese term is explicitly explained by the authors in this volume, and for this reason, I will refrain from defining it. During the editing process, I realized the ambiguity of the term and sought a better, if not the best, alternative: Japanese diaspora, Japanese descendants, Japanese migrants, and so on. In fact, the authors in this volume use nuanced interpretation in referring to “them”: Japanese(-)Filipino/American, Filipino(-)Japanese; Japanese(-)Filipino descendants; persons of Japanese descent, Japanese descendants; Japanese migrants; Japanese; Japanese community; Japanese migrant laborers; descendants of Japanese migrants; Filipino-Japanese children; Filipino Nikkeijin; and so on. Ultimately, the concept of what “Japanese” is turned out to be problematic.

Emigrants from today’s Okinawa Prefecture and their descendants often seem to prefer labelling themselves *Okinawan* as an established English adjective and noun, over the label *nikkei* - “of Japanese ancestry” - a term less popular with English-speaking populations. Philippine history books have recorded the presence of many Japanese in different parts of Luzon in the earlier part of the 16th century, before the arrival of the Spanish expansionists. They were traders, fishermen, domestic servants, corsairs, exiles, or prostitutes. Today, their descendants are hardly recognizable, and the concept of Nikkeijin excludes them. Also, the discourse of Nikkeijin, at least in the Philippines, usually does not include so-called *karayuki-san*, or Japanese prostitutes from the late Edo to the early Showa periods (at the turn of the 20th century); nor would it likely accept their descendants, if identified, as Nikkeijin.

After a long process of deciphering the meaning of “Nikkeijin”, I decided to retain the term as the title of this special issue to stress its “embeddedness” in Japan’s modernization. It was in the process of modernization that the concept of “Japanese” vis-à-vis nation-state was established and that the Okinawa region became a part of it. The lifting of more than 200 years of maritime restrictions at the end of the Tokugawa

Shogunate (1601-1868) marked one of the first steps towards the modernization of Japan. Since then, many “Japanese” left for the Asian, Pacific, and North and South American regions under the official emigration program of the Japanese government. Others were personally motivated to leave in search of a better life abroad. The word Nikkeijin by and large refers to those emigrants and their descendants.*

In 1973, at the height of Japan’s economic boom, the Nippon-maru sailed for the last time from Yokohama Port to South America signalling the end of the era of seaborne Japanese emigrations. In the 1980s, air travel became a more efficient means of carrying international tourists, mainly from affluent countries including Japan, and migrant workers from less developed countries, including Brazil and the Philippines, across states. In the 1990s, the international labor markets expanded with the aid of the internet technology. As a result, the Japanese abroad and their descendants today do not seem to fit the category of “Nikkeijin” in a classical sense any more. They may rather be labelled as global citizens as well as members of cyber communities, perhaps with a lesser sense of attachment to Japan as a nation-state and to the Japanese community at their place of residence. They enjoy on-line connection with their family, friends and colleagues in Japan and the world, just like they do with those in their destination community to deal with their everyday concerns, all simultaneously. This marks a clear contrast from the early Nikkeijin during the 20th century who, presumably, imagined Japan from afar as a contoured territory isolated by the sea. Japan was then by and large covered with a print-media network that connected its people as their source of knowledge, information and entertainment; while embracing prefectural factions. Perhaps, that was the driving force that have bonded Japanese migrants psychologically and emotionally in their destination too; such intimacy among *the* Japanese must have been hardly possible in the pre-modern age and is becoming faint in the internet age.

* At the final stage of the editing, I came to realize that the word “shin-Nikkeijin” in the Philippines, referring to children of Filipino and Japanese parents which rapidly increased in number since the 1980s as a result of the proliferation of Filipina migrant workers and wives in rural communities in Japan, seems to be absorbed by “Nikkeijin” in the labor market and functions as an identity marker today.

Studying the Nikkeijin as the legacy of the 20th century and the contemporary issues that result from their status inevitably, means seeing the Nikkeijin from different lenses. The articles in this volume are to varying degrees a historical investigation of the subject, yet the discussion is inflected with the disciplinary background of each author. The *Asian Studies Journal*, renewed as a refereed journal, serves as an appropriate channel to feature this topic.

As issue editor, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the anonymous referees for their valuable comments that raised each article's quality. My thanks also go to Armando S. Malay, Jr., who provided insightful suggestions on some English wording and phrasing, to improve the accuracy and the flow of the scripts. (Through enlightening editorial meetings with him, my understanding of such key concepts as nation-state, citizenship, diaspora, and most importantly, the principle of academic writing as process of logic construction, sharpened). Also, I would like to thank the Japan Foundation for its generous support for the publication of this special issue. This publication is a part of the "Philippine Nikkeijin 2007", a series of events related to Nikkeijin in the Philippines. The University of the Philippines Asian Center hosted a photographic exhibition "Haponés: The Early 20th Century Japanese Community of Baguio" and a symposium "Japanese Migrants to the Philippines: History, Issues and Prospect" in 2007. "Haponés" has been favourably received in Baguio City in 2008. Lastly, I thank all of those who made this publication, as well as the above mentioned events, possible and meaningful.

The romanization of Japanese words as well as the spelling of Japanese names reflect each author's interpretation. Therefore, they are not necessarily consistent throughout the volume. Similarly, the inclusion of Japanese characters was left to the discretion of each author.

Michiyo Yoneno-Reyes
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Transnational Citizenship and Deterritorialized Identity: The Meanings of Nikkei Diasporas' Shuttling between the Philippines and Japan

SHUN OHNO

Abstract

The descendants of pre-Pacific War Japanese immigrants to the Philippines, who are called “Philippine Nikkeijin”, have attracted attention from mass media and the public of Japan for the last decade primarily because of their unique and various means to regain their “lost” Japanese nationality. One of their strategies was to change their self-identity label from “Philippine Nikkeijin” to “*Firipin Zanryū Nihonjin*” (Japanese left behind in the Philippines). With Japan’s 1990 revision of its migration law granting residential privileges to alien Nikkeijin or Nikkei, Philippine Nikkeijin have enhanced their transnational mobility from the Philippines to Japan, and have “upgraded” their Nikkei legal status (e.g. from Sansei or the third generation Japanese to Nisei, the second generation Japanese). This paper examines such fluid identities and citizenships possessed by the Philippine Nikkeijin, and discusses the meanings of their movements in the age of human globalization.

Introduction

Globalization has increased the mobility of people across national borders. This transnational migration phenomenon challenges both the basis of one's belonging to a nation-state and the notion of citizenship in developed and developing countries alike. Naturalization and the acquisition of multiple citizenship (including nationality) have become more common among foreign communities particularly in developed countries. Multiple citizenship sometimes causes disparity or dissociation between their national/ethnic identity and the "adopted" citizenship. Such transnational citizenship and "deterritorialized" identity are the central theme of this paper on "returned" Philippine Nikkeijin residing in Japan. Data for this paper were taken from my interviews with key informants—over 100 Philippine Nikkeijin (mainly Nisei and Sansei)—conducted in the Philippines and Japan intermittently between August 2001 and May 2008, and a careful reading of primary and secondary materials.

The Nikkeijin or Nikkei are seen around not only in the Americas but also in Asia and Oceania.¹ At the end of World War II, thousands of Japanese were left behind in several Asian countries. In Manchuria, over 2,300 Japanese war orphans and around 4,500 Japanese women had remained for 40 years or more after the war (Iida, 1996, p.262). Moreover, hundreds of Japanese soldiers who had deserted the Japanese Imperial Army remained in Indonesia (over 1,000) and in Vietnam (over 700) at the end of the war, and many of them joined their host nation's independence armed struggles against Western colonizers (Yui and Furuta, 1998, p. 173). In Australia, a small number of Japanese who were locally born or had locally-born wives were allowed to remain even after the war (Nagata, 1996, p. 193-217). Due to post-war hostile circumstances, most of them were ostracized in host countries and thus had to conceal their Japanese name and ethnicity.

In recent years, such a negative identity has been transformed into a more positive one in Nikkeijin (Nikkei) communities in the countries of their birth. Japan has not been hesitant to receive the once war-stigmatized

Nikkei aliens mostly as unskilled laborers in their “ethnic homeland” in the last two decades. Japan has been gradually heading towards a multicultural society in parallel with a rapid increase of Nikkei “returnees” and other “newcomer”² foreign residents in Japan. The multiplicity of ethnic groups and the absence of contiguity of such groups make any notion of territorially based self-determination patently impossible. However, insofar as such groups can make claims on states on the basis of international human rights law and, hence, become recognized actors in the international arena, territoriality becomes less critical to self-determination (Jacobson, 1997, p. 126). In provocative words used by Morley and Robins (1995, p. 87), “places” are no longer the clear supports of one’s identity. Based on the above arguments made by Western scholars, I define the term “deterritorialized identity” as one’s sense of belonging to the nation that is outside his/her residential territory or the absence of belonging to any national territory.

Citizenship was generally perceived, in the past, as membership in a nation-state. An increasing number of transnational migrants have been challenging such concept of nation-state. As the citizenship scholar Reiner Bauböck (1995) argues, it can no longer be defined by the model of national communities. In this paper, I simply define the term “transnational citizenship”, which was used by Bauböck for international migrants, as citizenship transcending the national border by various means such as naturalization and acquisition of multiple citizenship in their host and/or original country. If citizenship is inconsistent with national identity, the nation might be estranged from the state. This attests to the decline of the state as an operator of collective national identities. In this case, Japan’s citizenship principle based on *jus sanguinis* (one acquires the citizenship/nationality of one’s parents) requires new approaches.

War-Stigmatized Japanese Descendants Called “*Hapon*”

The Philippine Nikkeijin are descendants of the Japanese who emigrated to the Philippines before and during the Asia-Pacific War, and

who have remained in the country of their birth even after the end of the war. They are categorized mainly into three generations called “Nisei” (the second generation), “Sansei” (the third generation) and “Yonsei” (the fourth generation). According to the 2005 survey conducted by the Philippine Nikkeijin nationwide organization called the Federation of Nikkei-jin Kai Philippines (hereafter, abbreviated as FNJKP), the numbers of Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei are 2,972, 10,288 and 31,904 respectively.³

The Nisei who were left in the Philippines, and whom I call “Philippine Nisei”, have often been called “collaborators” (those who sided with the Japanese forces) or “*Hapon*” (Japanese) by Filipinos in their younger days. In certain contexts, the term “*Hapon*” used to carry negative connotations of a cruel race in postwar Philippine society due to the Japanese forces’ inhumane activities during the Japanese occupation in the Philippines (1942-45). Philippine Nisei had to overcome the stigma of being “collaborators” or “children of the enemy” and consequently suffered from lower social status and serious poverty. It is not an unusual story among the Philippine Nikkeijin community that they fought against Filipino pupils’ bullying, and some of them had to drop out of school due to harassment by local Filipinos who strongly hated the Japanese for committing atrocities in their country during the war.⁴ As a consequence, their educational attainment was relatively low, and most of them had no other way but to engage in manual labor such as farming and homemaking.⁵

Their war-stigma had gradually disappeared especially after Japan established a reputation as an economic power in the world and became one of the biggest economic donors for the Philippines in the 1970s. Some Philippine Nisei commenced their campaign for redress against the Japanese government to demand pension-payment for Nikkeijin veterans who sided with Imperial Japan and their families, as well as official recognition as Nikkeijin so that they and their children (Philippine Sansei) would be able to “return” to Japan to work on the basis of a long-term resident visa. The Philippine Nisei re-labelled themselves as “*Firipin Zanryū Nihonjin*” (Japanese left behind in the Philippines).⁶ This wording evokes their tragic family breakup during and after the

war, and has appealed to the Japanese government which is responsible for compensating war victims.

The "Return" Phenomenon of the Nikkeijin

Although Japan has often been perceived as a homogenous monoethnic nation, the number of its alien residents has steadily increased, exceeding 2 million in 2005, and reaching 2.15 million in 2007 (1.7 percent of the entire population of Japan) (Hōmushō Nyūkoku Kanrikyoku, 2008). This phenomenon coincided with the serious shortage of unskilled labor and the population decline in Japan. It is estimated that around 20 percent of them are alien Nikkeijin. The number of Nikkeijin residents in Japan is currently well over 400,000. Most of them are South American Nikkeijin, especially from Brazil which has the biggest Nikkeijin population (around 1.4 million) in the world (Kaigai Nikkeijin Kyōkai). Nikkeijin "returnees" currently constitute one of the biggest "newcomer" groups in Japan.

The phenomenon of Nikkeijin's "return" to their "ethnic homeland" has escalated since the Japanese government granted worldwide alien Nisei, Sansei and their spouses and children the privilege of long-term residential status called "resident visa" by enforcing its revised Immigration Control Law in 1990. A significant number of them have already acquired a permanent visa thanks to easier legal procedures based on their blood ties with Japan. Nonetheless, most of South American Nikkeijin "returnees" still consider themselves "strangers" in Japanese society due to their insufficient ability to speak Japanese and their lower social status in the country of their ancestors.⁷

These Nikkeijin are descendants of pre-war and postwar Japanese immigrants to South America. Most of them have been able to stay in their host countries even after the end of the war because of their local citizenship and the continuing shortage of labor in the receiving countries. Overseas Japanese communities in Asia, on the other hand, were almost annihilated just after the end of World War II because a large number of

Japanese migrants became victims in hard-fought battles between Imperial Japan and the Allied Forces. The surviving overseas Japanese were ordered by the Allied Forces to repatriate to Japan. Thus, Nikkeijin communities in this region had to be rebuilt from nothing. The Philippine Nikkeijin are part of such war-stigmatized Nikkeijin.

With the widening economic gap between the Philippines and Japan, a number of Philippine Nikkeijin have a strong desire to break away from impoverishment and to emigrate to Japan. However, it has not been easy for them. All Nikkeijin who wish to acquire a resident visa or any other visa have to submit the Japanese government various documents that would prove their blood relationship with their Japanese forebears. These documents include the *koseki-tōhon* (copy of family register) of their Japanese parents or grandparents. Every Japanese national has his/her *koseki* (family register) kept at a municipal office in Japan, and *koseki-tōhon* is its certified true copy.⁸ However, most Philippine Nikkeijin do not possess their Japanese ancestors' *koseki-tōhon*, which is the most crucial official document proving consanguinity with the Japanese.

There are several reasons for this. First, many of intermarried Issei deliberately or inadvertently failed to register the birth of their children in their *koseki*. Second, many Nisei did not know which municipality office of Japan kept their parents' *koseki* because their parents had not left them any record of the legal address of the family registry in Japan before the parents died in the Philippines or were repatriated to Japan. Third, many Nisei lost or had to abandon their *koseki-tōhon* and/or other documents that prove their Japanese ethnic ancestry amid the war chaos and post-war hostile circumstances in order to conceal their identity as children of Japanese.⁹

Searching for Japanese Forefathers' *Koseki* (Family Register)

Thus, one of the crucial missions of Philippine Nikkeijin associations which were organized in Baguio, Davao and other major Philippine cities since the 1970s was to be a channel for searching for their members' *koseki* in Japan. Their associations were assisted by Japanese ex-Davao

residents, attorneys, personnel brokers, among others. The Nikkeijin have been able to identify their *koseki* step by step. By the end of 2002, the Federation of Nikkei-jin Kai Philippines (FNJKP) identified 19,196 Philippine Nikkeijin (1,910 Nisei, 6,206 Sansei, 11,080 Yonsei) in the whole country. It classified their Nisei members into three categories A, B and C. Category A refers to Nisei whose names are registered in their Japanese parents' *koseki* that are already located. Category B refers to Nisei who have already located their parents' *koseki* but whose names are not registered. Category C refers to Nisei who are not able to locate their Japanese parents' *koseki*, and thus have no *koseki-tōhon*. Category C Nisei and their descendants are not qualified to work in Japan with resident visas because the Japanese government does not recognize them as "authentic Nikkeijin".

The Japanese government's attitude towards the Philippine Nisei was quite different from that towards the Chinese Nisei called *Chūgoku Zanryū Nihonjin-koji* [Japanese orphans left behind in China]. Although both groups of ethnic Japanese had very difficult lives without Japanese relatives after the end of the war under hostile circumstances in their respective host countries, the Japanese government did not extend their assistance to Philippine Nisei. On the other hand, since the 1970s, the Japanese government assisted the Chinese Nisei in identifying their Japanese relatives and realizing their permanent return to Japan. These Chinese Nisei were fostered by their Chinese adoptive parents after they lost their Japanese parents amid the confusion resulting from the Soviet invasion of Manchuria, which was once under the control of Imperial Japan, in August 1945.¹⁰

One of the reasons why the government had different policies toward the two groups is explained by Attorney Hiroyuki Kawai assisting the Chinese Nisei and Philippine Nikkeijin in locating their relatives and *koseki* in Japan: "The Philippine Nikkeijin are half (-blooded) whereas *Chūgoku Zanryū Koji* have both Japanese parents. The Japanese tend to have compassion for pure-blooded Japanese, but not for people of Japanese-foreign mixed parentage because the Japanese are believers in blood purity" (*PNLSC News*, No.10, p. 4, November 2005).

Japanese mass media and politicians voiced strong criticism against their government which they accused of not being concerned with Philippine Nikkeijin problems, especially after 1995, the 50th anniversary of the end of the Asia-Pacific War. They accused their government of causing the breakup of families after the occupying Japanese army was defeated by the US-Philippine forces. In response, the government began to promote Philippine Nikkeijin's "return" to Japan by offering assistance in locating their Japanese ancestors' *koseki*. Since 1995, the government has funded FNJKP's surveys in order to complete its members' family trees and prove their Japanese ancestry, for easier visa issuances to "returning" Nikkeijin. By 1997, Japanese government officials including then Prime Minister Ryūtarō Hashimoto himself began to use the term "*Firipin Zanryū Nihonjin*" (Japanese left behind in the Philippines) for Philippine Nisei. This is the term the Nisei used to describe themselves, too.¹¹

In parallel with its several nationwide surveys, FNJKP succeeded in finding official documents supporting their members' "Nikkei-ness", including their Japanese parents' *koseki-tōhon*. FNJKP survey figures show that 205 Philippine Nisei were "upgraded" from Category B status to Category A status between 1996 and 2002 after it assisted its members to register their names in their parents' *koseki* in accordance with legal procedures in the Philippines and Japan.¹² Once they acquire Category A status, the Nisei are qualified to send not only their children (Sansei) but also their grandchildren (Yonsei) to Japan to work in accordance with the rules set by Japan's Immigration Bureau.

Philippine Nikkei "return" migrants are composed mainly of Sansei, their Filipino spouses and children (Yonsei). According to the survey by Japan's Immigration Bureau in 2004, the number of Filipinos holding a resident visa was 23,756 (*Hōmushō Nyūkoku Kanri-kyoku*, 2005). The bureau considers that the majority of them are Nikkeijin, and their spouses and children.¹³ Currently, the Philippine Nikkeijin constitute the second biggest Asian Nikkei community in Japan, next to Chinese Nikkei called "*Chūgoku Kikokusha*" (returnees from China).

Shifting Nikkeijin Citizenship

After successfully identifying the *koseki* of their Japanese grandfathers (the first generation Japanese immigrants called "Issei") and thus proving their "Nikkei-ness", a number of Sansei "returned" to Japan to earn a living. Their *dekasegi* [emigration to earn money]¹⁴ phenomenon has caused the "vanishing" of Sansei communities in Davao, Baguio and other areas. Those Sansei usually let their parents (Nisei and his/her Filipino spouse) take care of their children (Yonsei) in the city or town of their origin after the former left for Japan.

Philippine Sansei and Yonsei have been exposed to Philippine culture and language from their birth. They did not know Japanese values and ways of thinking very much before their arrival in Japan, unlike the Philippine Nisei, many of whom were educated at the local Japanese elementary school before the end of the war. The number of "return" Sansei who have mastered writings of Japanese is quite limited even after residing in Japan for several years. This is because most of their Japanese employers do not require them to master Japanese perfectly since that is not necessary in factory or other manual workplaces.

The vast majority of Philippine Nisei are children of Japanese-Filipino mixed parentage. Thus, most Philippine Sansei have one quarter of Japanese blood whereas their children (Yonsei) have only one-eighth Japanese blood. Thus, their Filipino or foreign appearance is quite visible to the native Japanese, unlike the Chinese Nikkeijin who look like the native Japanese.¹⁵ In this respect too, Philippine Nikkeijin tend to be regarded as "Filipinos" or "foreigners" rather than "Japanese" in Japan.

Nonetheless, a number of Philippine Sansei and Yonsei "returnees" have already acquired permanent resident status in Japan. Some of them have acquired Japanese nationality. After they changed their Nikkeijin status from Category B to Category A by registering their names in their family's *koseki*, they could be recognized as Japanese national by the Japanese government. The "upgrading" of their residential status is reflected in the survey data on Philippine Nikkeijin residents of Japan conducted by a

Tokyo-based NPO, the Philippine Nikkeijin Legal Support Center (PNLSC). According to its survey conducted in 2005, 80 percent of 130 Nikkeijin respondents (100 Sansei, 25 Yonsei, 1 Nisei, 4 unknown) had a resident visa, 12 percent had a permanent visa, and 3 percent had a Japanese passport (nationality) (Kawai [ed.], 2006, p. 62).

In 2003, the Philippine government enacted a dual citizenship law that allows natural-born Filipino citizens who have lost their Philippine citizenship by naturalization abroad to reacquire it upon taking the oath of allegiance to the Philippines. On the other hand, the Japanese nationality law does not allow Japanese nationals to hold dual citizenship after the age of 22. However, in reality a number of Nikkei retain dual citizenship even after they reached 22 because the Japanese government does not strictly impose renunciation of Japanese nationality on overseas Nikkeijin who have acquired the nationality of the country of their birth. Thus, Philippine Sansei tend not to hesitate to acquire Japanese nationality. Many of them have become *de facto* dual citizens, retaining a Philippine passport even after acquisition of a Japanese passport.

I estimate that over one hundred Philippine Sansei have already obtained Japanese nationality based on my fieldwork surveys in the Philippines and Japan since 2002. The primary reasons why Sansei residents acquired a Japanese nationality are to ensure their legal rights to stay and work in Japan without limitations, and to give their descendants a citizenship choice for a better future life. Their Japanese passport also provides much more convenience for their travel abroad than their Philippine one. Generally speaking, the developed countries including Japan are cautious about illegal migrants from developing countries; thus they subject Filipino nationals and other people from the Third World to complicated procedures before issuing any visas.¹⁶

After acquiring a permanent visa or Japanese nationality, most of Philippine Nikkeijin continue to shuttle between the Philippines and Japan. The primary reason for being a “repeater” is their concern over their children, spouses and/or other family members who remain in the

Philippines.¹⁷ Although most of them wish to bring their children (and spouses) to the place of their residence in Japan,¹⁸ many consider it difficult to do so primarily due to the expensive cost of living and school fees in Japan that are much higher than those in the Philippines.¹⁹ Thus, most of them return to the Philippines once a year, especially during the Christmas holidays, in order to reunite with their family members and relatives. Sansei residents holding a Japanese passport are usually given a *Balikbayan* [returning Filipino] visa at the Philippine port of entry,²⁰ which enables them to stay for one year at the longest without fees. Sansei residents have made ceaseless efforts to send a good amount of remittances to their family members for the education of their children, family livelihood, and purchase of their lot and house. Their shuttling will not stop until they have acquired an adequate amount of wealth.

Identity Conversion—from Negative to Positive

Generally speaking, the average wage of Philippine Nikkeijin workers in Japan is lower than that of Nikkei workers from South America,²¹ yet the former's income is several times higher than that of the majority of Filipinos working in the Philippines. This is manifested by the 2005 PNLSC survey on Philippine Nikkeijin residing in the Philippines and Japan. Its data show that 68 percent of 121 Nikkeijin respondents in the Philippines earned less than 20,000 pesos (equivalent to 52,000 yen as of early 2008) monthly per household, whereas 58 percent of Nikkeijin respondents in Japan earned over 200,000 yen monthly per household (Kawai[ed.], 2006, p. 30,67).

Thus, among the Nikkeijin community, the *dekasegi* is perceived as the quickest way to upgrade their living standards in the country of their birth. It is also in line with the Philippine government's 30-year-long labor export policies, which has encouraged Filipinos to work abroad as the so-called "OFWs" ("Overseas Filipino Workers"). Their number has increased to more than 8.2 million, and the total amount of their annual remittances

in 2006 was over 12.7 billion US dollars (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, 2006).

With their *dekasegi* remittance, the living conditions of a number of Nisei and Sansei families have remarkably improved in recent years. In some areas with a concentrated population of Philippine Nikkeijin, buying a lot and building a modern house have become a popular practice among their families. Sansei's *dekasegi* is backed up by their parents remaining in the Philippines. It has become a common family practice for elderly Nisei to take care of their infant grandchildren (Yonsei) who are left behind in their home town after their children (Sansei) left for Japan.

In reality, the vast majority of Sansei *dekasegi* workers are engaged in manufacture assembling, construction, marine product processing and other unskilled manual occupations which are often called "3 K" (acronym of three Japanese words—*kitsui* [difficult], *kitanai* [dirty] and *kiken* [dangerous]) or "3 D" in English.²² These jobs are generally shunned by the native Japanese, and thus Japanese employers have to seek an alternative—Nikkeijin as cheaper and legal alien laborers. Many employers view Philippine Sansei laborers as "Filipinos", who do not understand well not only the Japanese language but also the nuances of Japanese values such as *giri* (debt of gratitude) and *ninjō* (sense of humaneness).²³

On the other hand, Philippine Sansei *dekasegi* workers often complain about their wages (which are lower than those of native Japanese workers) as well as the Japanese employers' discriminatory and distrustful attitudes towards mostly brown-skinned strangers from a developing country. Because of cultural and communication gaps between both parties, resignations without advance notice, job abandonment and job-hopping have become common practices among Philippine Sansei *dekasegi* workers.²⁴ Philippine Nisei who were taught Japanese values in childhood are apprehensive about young Sansei's "troublesome" behaviors in Japan, and tend to get frustrated by their "undisciplined" attitude and "selfish" mentality, which are sometimes expressed by

Philippine Nisei in the Filipino words "*kanya-kanya*" ("thinking only of his/her interests").²⁵ Hence, the Nisei have sometimes scolded and instructed Sansei *dekasegi* migrants to work more honestly and harder, as the Issei did in the Philippines.²⁶

It is highly probable that their sense of insecurity in Japan has inevitably changed their sense of belonging. The PNLSC's survey on Philippine Nikkeijin residents of Japan (mostly Sansei and Yonsei) in 2005 show that 55.4 percent of respondents have a sense of belonging to the Philippines and 20 percent to Japan. The other respondents answered "unknown" (12.3 percent), or "neither Japanese nor Filipino" (4.6 percent). Data taken by the same center's survey on Philippine Sansei and Yonsei residing in the Philippines in 2005 show that a little more than 50 percent of them have a sense of belonging to the Philippines, and almost 30 percent of them to both the Philippines and Japan (Kawai [ed.], 2006, p. 36, 82-83).²⁷ These survey results show that a substantial number of young Philippine Nikkeijin residents in Japan have retained their self-identity as Filipino, and their earlier dual identity has weakened or become ambiguous after their emigration to Japan.

Nevertheless, in the Philippines, the reputation of the Philippine Nikkeijin among the local populace has changed from negative to positive. In parallel with the activation of Nikkeijin associations' activities and their increasing visibility in local communities, the Japanese-loan word "Nikkeijin" has become popular even to the native populace in Davao and other places. The positive conversion of Nikkeijin status is exemplified in the non-Nikkeijin young Filipina's words expressed to me during my stay in Davao City in 2002; "I want to be a Nikkeijin if possible". Her words reflect many Filipinos' longing for emigration to developed countries like Japan, to earn more money. This trend is nicely described by one of the Nikkeijin that their own "smell" has changed from "*mabaho*" (fetid) to "*mabango*" (fragrant).²⁸

Non-*Koseki* Nisei's Endless Struggle to Prove Their "Nikkei-ness"

Philippine Nikkeijin's escalating interests in "return migration" to Japan is reflected in the growing number of members of local Nikkeijin associations. About 14 Nikkeijin associations and recruitment agencies were confirmed to be active in Davao as of September 2002.²⁹ Philippine Nikkeijin's new houses, new cars or other luxuries purchased with what they call "*lapad*" (a colloquial for "ten-thousand-yen note")³⁰ tend to be the object of poorer Filipino neighbors' envy. This was exemplified in the murder case of a Nisei, which occurred in Davao City in October 2002. One Japanese-national mestiza Nisei having seven children, all of whom were working in Japan, was killed by her Filipino neighbor after she rejected the latter's request to borrow money (*The Daily Manila Shimbum*, 13 October 2002; *ibid.* 20 December 2002). The Nikkeijin's privileged status also spawned a substantial number of "fake Philippine Nikkeijin" who illegally entered Japan in a bid to work there, pretending to be Japanese descendants after they purchased *koseki-tōhon* at a good price from a bona-fide Philippine Nikkeijin.³¹

Philippine Nikkeijin working in Japan and sending large amounts of remittances to the Philippines take pride in contributing to the economic development of Japan and the Philippines as *dekasegi* workers. This is exemplified in the theme of the eighth national convention of FNJKP held in Manila in May 2007: "The Nikkeijin as a Contributor to Philippine & Japan Economies". The FNJKP president, Carlos Teraoka, considers most of the Nikkeijin as temporary residents of Japan, imbued by a desire to come back to the Philippines in the future.³² In the meantime, however, they seem to have no other choice but to shuttle between the two countries primarily due to the absence of alternative high-salary jobs in the Philippines.

Even so, around 40 percent of all Philippine Nikkeijin still belong to Category C, that is, those who have not yet located their or their Japanese ancestors' *koseki* in Japan. Consequently, their heavy task to locate the *koseki* is still carried by the aged Nisei. It is difficult for the Sansei to find

their Japanese grandfathers' *koseki* without any information and assistance by the Nisei, who still to some extent have memories of their Issei fathers. Philippine Nikkeijin associations and their nationwide federation have striven to get the Japanese government to recognize Category C families as "authentic Nikkeijin" and enable them to work in Japan as *dekasegi* workers. If this mission were realized, Category C Nikkeijin may redeem their dignity as Japanese descendants, and reduce the big income gap between them and Category A and B Nikkeijin.

In the attempt to achieve this, the federation requested Attorney Hiroyuki Kawai, a Japanese legal expert on *shūseki* (creating one's new *koseki*) of *Chūgoku Zanryū Nihonjin-koji* who are not able to identify their Japanese parents, to help Category C Philippine Nikkeijin. *Shūseki* is a legal proceeding that registers a person, who possesses Japanese nationality potentially but whose name is not registered in a *koseki* or whose *koseki* is not found, in a newly created *koseki*. This can be done through the family court in Japan. The primary mission of Kawai, his fellow attorneys and other staff is to locate the unknown *koseki* of Category C Nisei's fathers by examining all relevant documents kept at Japanese governmental offices and fact-findings on the spot.

Since August 2004, a total number of 65 non-*koseki* Nisei have made a petition to the Tokyo Family Court to allow their *shūseki*, assisted by the PNLSC led by Attorney Kawai. Seven of Category C Nisei succeeded in obtaining the approval of the court for *shūseki* by March 2008 (*PNLSC News*, No.20, 21 April 2008, p. 1). The Center plans to let hundreds more of non-*koseki* Nisei (Category C) to make a petition to the same court in order to acquire a new *koseki* for them.³³ Those Nisei descendants are longing for "return migration" to their forefathers' affluent land.

Conclusion

As described above, Philippine Nikkeijin residents in Japan composed of Sansei and Yonsei have shuttled between the Philippines and Japan. Their constant shuttling is due to the nature of their work

“*dekasegi*”, connoting temporary and seasonal employment. In fact, the majority of them are still employed as contractual workers in Japan. Even so, the vulnerable economy and difficult employment situation in the Philippines do not allow them to return permanently to the country of their birth. Their unstable employment and daily encounters with native Japanese who tend to regard them as “foreigners” make their full assimilation with Japanese society difficult even after their long-term settlement in Japan. As a consequence, their national/ethnic identity tends to be diasporic and/or deterritorialized.

Their acquisition of a permanent visa and/or a Japanese nationality, what I call transnational citizenship, is their survival strategy to ensure their right to reside in Japan and to work permanently there. Transnational citizenship is primarily for instrumental purposes, and does not mean the loss of Filipino identity, which they acquired in their younger days. It can be also interpreted as a manifestation of their having multiethnic dual identity. If the Japanese government continues to fail to integrate these Nikkei “returnees” into Japanese society, Japan’s entrenched *jus sanguinis* principle based on Japanese bloodline will appear out-of-date in this age of post-nation state and transnational citizenship.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

- 1 The Japanese term “Nikkeijin” or its derivative English term “Nikkei” has no official definition, but it is usually used for overseas Japanese residing permanently abroad and their descendants regardless of their nationality and proportion of Japanese blood. The Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad (based in Tokyo) estimated that the number of Nikkeijin around the world was around 2.6 million as of 2004 (Kaigai Nikkeijin Kyōkai).
- 2 In Japan, the term “newcomer” means an alien resident who emigrated to Japan after World War II, especially after the 1980s. On the other, the term “old-timer” or “old-comer” means a Korean or Chinese resident who emigrated to Japan after Japan annexed Taiwan (in 1895) and the Korean Peninsula (in 1910), and their descendants settled in Japan.

- 3 Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed in its commissioned survey that 1,748 Nisei (830 males, 918 females) were still alive, and 377 Nisei (224 males, 153 females) had already died in the Philippines as of late 1995. Among these 2,125 Nisei, only 12 were full-blooded Japanese Nisei (7 males, 5 females) and the rest were all mixed blood (Firipin Zanryū Nihonjin Tokubetsu Chōsa Inkai 1995:3). In April 1999, Legal Aid for Japanese Descendants in the Philippines, an NGO based in Tokyo, listed 2,475 Nisei (including the deceased). In July 2005, the Federation of Philippine Nikkei-Jin-Kai Philippines listed 2,954 Nisei (including the deceased).
- 4 The details of Nikkei Nisei's difficult lives in postwar Philippine society are described in Amano, 1990, Ohno, 1991, and other Japanese nonfiction books.
- 5 According to a 2005 survey by the Tokyo-based Non-Profit Organization, Philippine Nikkeijin Legal Support Center, 25 percent of 130 Philippine Nikkeijin respondents chosen at random in the Philippines were elementary school graduates. Most of them were jobless (18 percent), housewives (17 percent), farmers (13 percent) and common carriers (9 percent) (Kawai [ed.], 2006, p. 24-25).
- 6 The Japanese term "*zanryū*" literally means "remaining behind" or "being left".
- 7 South American Nikkeijin "returnees" have been already well studied by Japanese, and North and South American scholars (e.g. Mori, 1992; Tsuda, 2003; Lesser [ed.], 2003; Kajita et al., 2005).
- 8 The *koseki* system was introduced in Japan from China around the 6th Century. It exists in East Asian countries, such as Japan and China, but not in the West.
- 9 The details of the reasons why many Philippine Nisei were not registered in their Japanese parents' *koseki* upon the former's birth are written in Ohno, 2006, p. 94-96. The identity-concealing phenomenon also spread in the Nikkei community in wartime Peru, where many Japanese immigrants and their descendants had to burn their documents showing their connection with Japan in order to escape from persecution by anti-Japanese Peruvians (Tan'no, 2002, p. 51).
- 10 Chinese Nikkei or the Japanese left behind in postwar China and their family members have been able to resettle in Japan some years after Japan established diplomatic relations with China in 1972. For the last 30 years, over 6,000 households and over 20,000 family members have "returned" to Japan with financial assistance by the Japanese government (A survey done by Japan's Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor on April 2006). The total number of Chinese Nikkei including those who 'returned' to Japan at their own expense is estimated at over 100,000 (Ikoh and Koh, 2003, p. 3).
- 11 See the details of politicization of Philippine Nikkeijin problems in Ohno, 2005, p. 229-247, 253-265.
- 12 See the details of Philippine Nikkeijin's politics of recognition to "upgrade" their legal status in *ibid.*, p. 255-269.
- 13 The number of Filipino "resident visa" holders in Japan presumably includes the so-called *Shin Firipin Nikkeijin* (New Philippine Nikkei). They are largely children of Japanese-

Filipino intermarriages that have rapidly increased since the 1980s when a substantial number of Filipina entertainers began to enter Japan. In this paper, I define Philippine Nikkeijin as descendants of prewar Japanese immigrants to the Philippines. Thus, they do not include *Shin Firipin Nikkeijin* in my discussion of Philippine Nikkeijin.

- 14 The Japanese term “*dekasegi*” has been commonly used also among the Nikkeijin in Brazil and Peru.
- 15 The majority of Chinese Nikkeijin (Japanese orphans and women left behind in China after the end of World War II) are pure-blooded Japanese since Japanese-Chinese intermarriages were rare in prewar and wartime China.
- 16 These reasons were explained to me by six Philippine Sansei having Japanese nationality, whom I interviewed in Manila, Davao and Aichi Prefecture sometime in 2002, 2005 and 2008.
- 17 According to the PNLSC survey on 130 Philippine Nikkeijin respondents residing in Japan, 66 percent of them left their child/ren in the Philippines, and 51 percent accompanied their spouse to Japan (Kawai [ed.], 2006, p. 64-66).
- 18 According to the above survey, 24 percent of them wish to bring their family members in the near future, and 29 percent wish to do so sometime in the future. 19 percent think it is difficult even though they wish to do so (ibid. p.85-86).
- 19 This reason was explained to me by three Philippine Sansei residents having Japanese nationality in Aichi Prefecture on May 24th and 26th, 2008.
- 20 A US-based fortnightly newspaper for the Filipino community quotes Commissioner Marceliano Libanan of the Bureau of Immigration as follows (excerpt): when one wishes to get a *Balikbayan* visa, he or she must present proof of former Philippine citizenship at the Philippine port of entry. This visa can be given to a Filipino’s foreign spouse as well as to minor, unmarried children provided they are traveling together (“Balikbayan visa-free stay”, *Manila Mail*, 4 November 2007, accessed 8 June 2008 at <http://www.manilamaildc.net/2007/11/04/balikbayan-visa-free-stay/>).
- 21 Kiyoto Tan’no (2002, p. 51, 59) explains that a small number of Japanese recruitment agencies and undertakers who employ Philippine Nikkeijin workers are primarily responsible for the lower wage of Philippine Nikkeijin *dekasegi* workers.
- 22 According to a 2006 survey by the Philippine Nikkeijin Legal Support Center on Philippine Nikkeijin residing in Japan, 76 percent of 130 respondents answered that their workplace was the factory, and only 2 percent said it was the office (Kawai [ed.], 2006, p. 72).
- 23 This statement comes from Akimitsu Miyauchi, president of Filipino-Japanese Descendants Support Association (FJDSA) based in Chiba Prefecture, whose mission is to find jobs for Philippine Nikkeijin workers in Japan. (Interviewed in Bacolod City, the Philippines on 25 April 2003.) It should be noted that the Filipinos also have a certain sense of *giri*. The Tagalog term *utang na loob* (debt of the heart or, literally, the “inside”) is an important Filipino value that obliges the recipient to repay his/her debt of gratitude to his/her

- benefactor. The similarity and difference between *utang na loob* and *giri* and *on* (obligation) is well discussed by Nakagawa (1986, p. 16-37). Also see Hollnsteiner (1973), Iletto (1979) and Cannell (1999), among others, for an understanding of the concept of *utang na loob*.
- 24 In 2000 and 2001, around 600 Philippine Nikkeijin were employed by Japanese companies affiliated with FJDSA. 250 of them, however, ran away from their respective employers within a half year (Interview with Akimitsu Miyauchi, president of FJDSA, in Bacolod City on 25 April 2003).
 - 25 Interview with Marie Dolores Escano, a Baguio-based Nisei, in Baguio City on 11 October 2002. She had many complaints about the indifferent attitudes of Philippine Sansei *dekasegi* workers who have ignored the foundation's request to contribute funds for the upkeep of the foundation. She passed away at the age of 73 in Baguio on 5 April 2007 after she made various efforts to improve the living conditions of Nikkeijin residents in Northern Luzon for the last 35 years (*The Daily Manila Shimbun*, 7 April 2007).
 - 26 Every time Conrado Katō, a Baguio-based Nisei, visited Japan in recent years, he encouraged many Sansei *dekasegi* workers to do their best at work because of their much higher salary than that in the Philippines (Interview with Katō in Baguio City on 16 October 2002).
 - 27 The total number of the survey respondents in Japan is only 130 (Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei), and that in the Philippines is only 104 (Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei). They were selected at random through Japanese employers or the regional Philippine Nikkeijin association (Kawai [ed.], 2006).
 - 28 This wording was used by a Nisei woman Hilda Tadaoan, corporate secretary of the Filipino-Japanese Foundation of Northern Luzon, when I interviewed her in Baguio City on 17 October 2002.
 - 29 Interview with Lilibeth Desabilla-Malabanan, Chief of Technical Management Division of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples Regional Office No. XI in Davao City on 10 September 2002.
 - 30 *Lapad* originally means "width" or "breadth" in Filipino. Because of the width of the ten-thousand-yen note, Philippine Nikkeijin commonly refer to *lapad* for this wider Japanese note in their conversation.
 - 31 One of the fake Philippine Nikkeijin cases was reported in *Yomiuri Shimbun* (morning ed., 9 May 2004). Its article reported that 13 Filipinos pretending to be of Japanese descent had worked illegally in Japan. According to the article, they purchased *koseki-tōhon* and other official documents comprising 13 Sansei and Yonsei identification papers through a Davao-based foundation representative at the price of 300,000 pesos (around 5,600 US dollars). This case was reported as "just the tip of the iceberg" in the same newspaper.
 - 32 Interview with Carlos Teraoka in Manila on 19 May 2007.
 - 33 Interview with Etsuko Takano, Secretary of the Philippine Nikkeijin Legal Support Center, in Tokyo on 8 April 2008.

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Compelling Memories and Telling Archival Documents and Photographs: The Search for the Baguio Japanese Community

PATRICIA O. AFABLE

Abstract

Research on the early 20th century Japanese community of Baguio focused on reconstructing its social, institutional, and symbolic foundations, a goal that was hampered by the destruction of the community in World War II and the fading memories of elderly descendants. In the face of intense prejudice from other Filipinos, much of an early Japanese heritage was suppressed if not deliberately destroyed in Baguio, as Japanese Filipinos embraced their Filipino roots in the post-independence years. In this paper, I focus on the interaction of oral history, ethnographic research, personal and official photographs, and archival documents of Baguio's creation as an American colonial "hill station," and discuss how they were deployed in the search for the Japanese community. By covering many aspects of Baguio's early history and economy, the documentary materials afforded a chronology of Japanese settlement in the Baguio-Benguet region, while also lending support to descendants' fading memories. In bringing together memories with textual and photographic records, we learn of how important space and locality were in remembering childhoods in Baguio. This interplay of resources allowed me to chart

the Japanese migrant community's occupational specializations and its social and cultural adaptations. Finally, it clarified the transformative role played by this vibrant community of pioneering builders, entrepreneurs, and farmers in the development of the city in the early 20th century.

“My task is piecing together a puzzle...I hope to reconstitute the existence of a person whose memory has been abolished...I want to recreate him, to give him a second chance—in the short run a reasonably substantial chance - to become part of the memory of his century.

(Alain Corbin. *The Life of an Unknown: The Rediscovered World of a Clog Maker in Nineteenth-Century France*. Columbia University Press, 1991, p. viii).

This paper focuses primarily on the relationship among different source materials and on some research findings in the production of the book *Japanese Pioneers in the Northern Philippine Highlands, A Centennial Tribute, 1903-2003* (Afable 2004, *JPNPH*) and the derivative photographic exhibition, *Haponés: The Early 20th Century Japanese Community of Baguio* (in the UP Vargas Museum, November 20, 2007-January 15, 2008)¹. In the beginning stages of research on early Japanese migrants to the Cordillera region, what became the biggest challenge to the research team was to find the Japanese community and to reconstitute it from the memories of Japanese-Filipino descendants. As an anthropologist making use of historical materials, I took it as a primary goal to reconstruct the social, institutional, and cultural foundations of this group of Japanese settlers and their families and to describe their place in the 20th century history of the Cordillera region.

My own background, as a third-generation descendant of a marriage in the 1910s between a Japanese carpenter-contractor from Hiroshima and an Ibaloy farmer-trader from Baguio, meant that, over many years, I

had heard my family's and other limited versions of this society and this history. However, as a child growing up in the ruins of Baguio after the Second World War, I learned quickly that storytelling about life as Japanese descendants provoked so much grief and anger about the War that it was easier to drop the subject and not to remind anyone about it. The deep emotional reactions to memories of loss and humiliation during and after the War had led to a profound collective silence among Japanese-Filipino descendants in my parents' and my generation. Recognizing this and assessing its consequences for this research was the first hurdle in this project.

Seeking manuscripts, poring through family albums, and coaxing memories from elderly descendants were basic to this quest. However, because the community was destroyed in the Second World War, metaphors of digging into the past, dredging up memories, and mining the archives and libraries were often more appropriate for describing this search. From the start, the whole project begged the question of what "community" meant, for it existed primarily in the memories of a few seventy- and eighty-year old second generation Japanese Filipinos, most of them women.

How their personal stories could be tapped for this study, bearing in mind their gender, their tragic losses in the War, their perceptions of the present, and the long lapse of time since the experiences that they described and interpreted—this question demanded review continually. In the end, bringing the data from oral histories into interaction with documents and photographs proved to be the most balanced research strategy, for it pointed to what the descendants valued in their history. In particular, it clarified the role that landscape and place played in memory recall and for contextualizing personal stories. My own larger interest in the history of Baguio's creation and settlement depended on this interplay of various sources, as I sought to describe the multicultural base of its society and the transformations to its environment in the American period.²

The beginning and the end

The beginning of this story takes us back to 1903, over a hundred years ago, to the arrival of Japanese workers for the construction of the Benguet Road (later to be named Kennon Road, after the military engineer who completed it). Built to connect the planned town of Baguio to the end of the Manila Railroad at Dagupan, this highway was the first access route built by Americans to the Cordillera climate and mineral resources that Spanish sources³ described in the late 19th century. Japanese migrant laborers, mostly brought by Japanese employment agencies with the blessing of the American and Japanese foreign ministries (Yu-Jose 1997), numbered about 1500 on this highway construction. They made up 22 percent of the total work force, which drew men from 46 nations and involved over two thousand Filipinos (Afable 2004, p.17-18).

The first Japanese settlers in Baguio came from this cohort of construction workers. Others moved from U.S. military construction sites elsewhere, especially Fort Stotsenburg (later Clark Field) and Fort William McKinley (later Fort Bonifacio). Within the decade after the Kennon Road completion in 1905, several dozens of the new arrivals found employment as carpenters, masons, gardeners, and sawmill workers during the first phase of the building of Baguio (see Forbes 1904-1913; Thomas 1906). A few men opened general stores in the city center by the 1910s. With more arrivals from Japan over the next twenty years, the migrants constructed government buildings and the first western-style residences. They found lucrative employment in the lumber industry, as sawmills were established in wooded areas circling the city. Invited by their successful relatives in Baguio, migrants from Fukushima, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Kagoshima, Kumamoto, and Yamanashi augmented the core of the fledgling Japanese community.

The expansion of transportation facilities, including the building of a second highway to Baguio by 1914, gave new scope for entrepreneurship; and Japanese started up vegetable farms, cooperatives, contracting

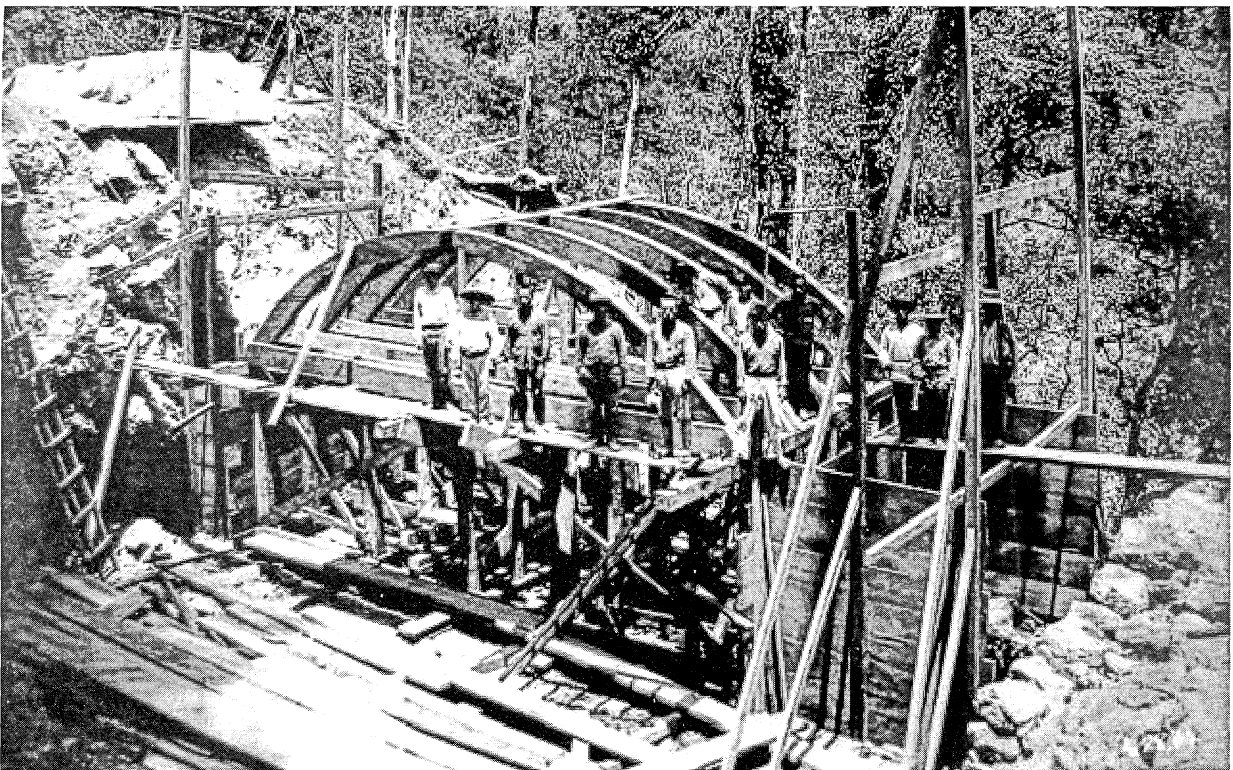


Figure 1. Building a culvert on the Benguet Road in 1904. Employment in the construction of access routes to Baguio led to technological exchange between Japanese workers and American military engineers that was crucial to the building of the city's foundations. (U.S. NARA)

companies, groceries, and department stores. In the 1920s, they formed a Japanese Association, established a school, and organized farming cooperatives to streamline the shipment of crops to the Manila markets. Until the beginning of World War II, Japanese retail businesses as well as agricultural, construction, and trucking enterprises flourished as Baguio evolved into a favorite tourist destination and the so-called “Salad Bowl of the Philippines.” In the mid-1930s, when Baguio’s mines made Benguet the highest gold-producing region in Asia, the most successful of the Japanese contractors went into lumber transport to the mines and mill construction work.

The multicultural workplaces that evolved in this new town involved many “Igorots,” people from the surrounding highlands, primarily from Ibaloy-, Kankanaey-, and Bontoc-speaking regions. Arriving in the new city (some said it took five days to walk to Baguio from their homes) in search of wage work, they usually found it on road construction crews (which often included women), the sawmills, or on the new farms. Few lowlanders who came to the highlands ventured into these kinds of heavy manual labor in the beginning, although many were employed in the gold mines in the 1930s. The role of this ethnically diverse labor force in helping to establish *pax Americana* in the Cordillera has been little considered, while government records and the media attribute this primarily to schools, missions, and the police.

Thus, in 1945, when there were over a thousand Japanese civilians in Baguio, the oldest of these migrants had lived there thirty years or more. They had known no other home for two generations, and many of their children with Filipino wives had started families. The length of that continuous residence and the survival of descendants in the Philippines and in Japan provided us with what the project team thought was a strong beginning for an oral history study. In the end, however, the biggest difficulty for this undertaking was the destruction of the Japanese community in the Second World War.



Figure 2. Friends and families of Sanji Nagatomi (at left), a Fukuoka building contractor and founder of the Mountain Studio and Hideo Hayakawa (wearing bow tie at right), founder of the Japanese Bazaar, picnic under the pines about 1920. They were leading lights in the establishment of the Baguio Japanese Association and the Japanese School. (Syunichi Abe collection)

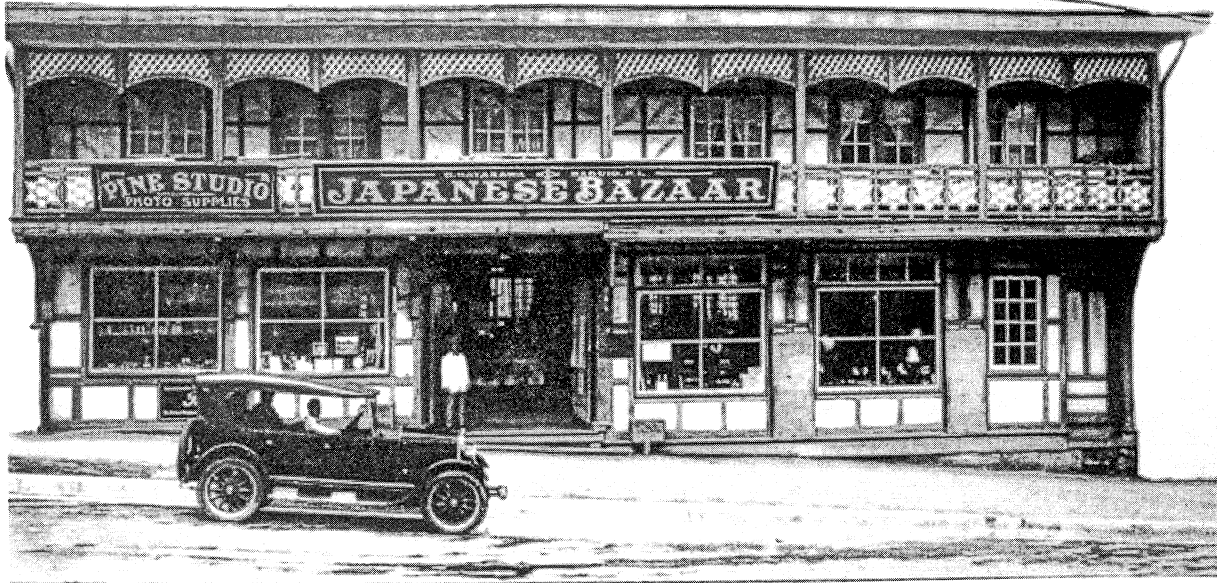


Figure 3. The Japanese Bazaar was founded in the mid-1910s by Hideo Hayakawa, who had been an itinerant merchant supplying food, alcohol, and traditional Japanese foods to various work camps during the Benguet Road construction. This most upscale of the Baguio department stores until the 1930s was the flagship of a set of enterprising ventures in transport, building contracts, and farms. (Furuya collection)



Figure 4. Fukushima workers and wives with an unidentified Filipino in front of a Heald Lumber Company workers' lodging house on Mount Santo Tomas, 1919. Most of these early arrivals built careers in the lumber industry over the next two decades. "X" was Tomoichi Kato, who helped establish the Elizalde family's silk production enterprise in Benguet in the 1930s. (Kato-Pengosro collection)



Figure 5. The families of sawmill technicians, Minoru and Isamu Ohta, who were brothers from Yamanashi, at the Heald Lumber mill near the Kilometer 70 mark on the "Mountain Trail" north of Baguio. (Furuya collection)



Figure 6. Members of the recently-founded Baguio Japanese Association gathered on the Mansion House lawn in 1921. This was at the U.S. Governor-General's residence (built in 1909), which had great symbolic value to the community, for it was an early work site for Japanese construction workers. (Furuya collection).

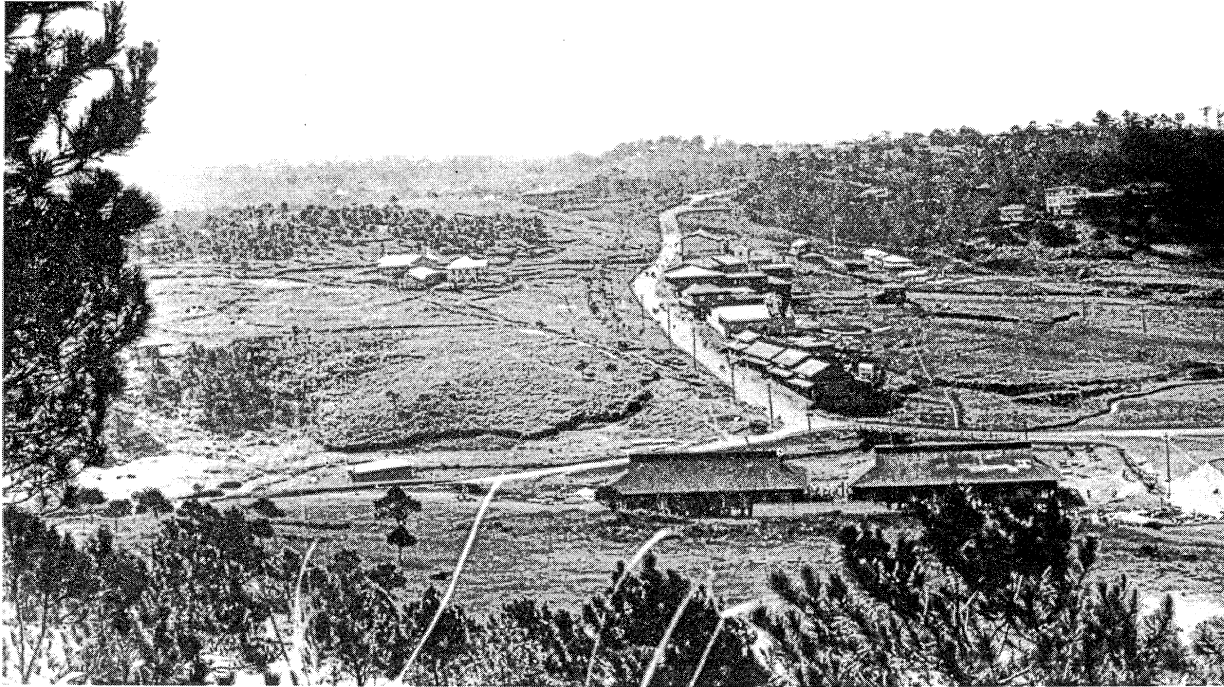


Figure 7. A 1912 view of Session Road from the north, showing early American, Chinese, and Japanese provision stores and lodging houses. The beginnings of the Catholic mission are at left, and Hotel Pines, Baguio's first tourist hotel, is on the hill at far right. The two buildings in the foreground were called the "Igorot market." (U.S. NARA).



Figure 8. A 1930s view of Session Road from the north, showing the expansion of the city center in Baguio's first two decades. The Roman Catholic Cathedral is at top left. Japanese builders found lucrative work in the construction of general stores, offices, mission buildings, and government and private housing as well as in landscaping and horticultural work. (Syunichi Abe collection).

World War II and its aftermath

During the Japanese occupation of Baguio, Japanese and Japanese-Filipino adults were, in general, allowed to continue work in their usual occupations. However, all were drafted for lengths of time into police work as interpreters and translators, and the younger men were conscripted into the Japanese armed forces. They were highly valued for their knowledge of local communities and of English, Ilocano, Spanish, and highland languages. Inevitably, through this period and in the years following World War II, the loyalties of all persons of Japanese descent in Baguio came under suspicion from both sides in the conflict, and Japanese "mestizos" bore the brunt of accusations of collaboration with the enemy.

As the Allied bombing of Baguio intensified in early 1945, the Japanese army that occupied the city moved out and began to make their way north towards the Cagayan coast. On orders of the Japanese military and also for their own protection, most of the civilian Japanese population went along with the troops. This retreat ended in the southern river valleys of Ifugao, with the surrender in Kiangan of General Yamashita and his staff in September of that year. Fully two-thirds of the Baguio Japanese, most of them children, perished in this retreat. They died of starvation and illness in the vicinities of Tinek, Tukukan, Ahin, Hungduan, Holiap and Kiangan between March and September of 1945. Those who survived became prisoners-of-war, were interned in U.S. military camps in southern Luzon, and were repatriated to Japan at the end of that year.

During the retreat from Baguio, a few of the older Japanese men who had Filipino wives stayed behind. They were protected by their in-laws and neighbors, at great risk to everyone involved, in the hills around Baguio and Trinidad. However, in April and May, 1945, when Allied forces reoccupied Baguio, these Japanese fathers and many adult mestizo children gave themselves up to the U.S. military as well. Classified as "enemy aliens," they were interned for several months in the Bilibid, Tres Cruces, and Canlubang internment camps. All the first generation Japanese were repatriated to Japan from these camps. A few children of mixed marriages



Figure 9. The family of the prominent building contractor and entrepreneur, Charles Muneo Teraoka (1900-1941; center in dark suit) and his sister's family outside of their home in Guisad, Baguio, in 1941. Teraoka had arrived in Manila as a young apprentice carpenter from Yamaguchi in 1916 and married Antonina Bautista of Tarlac in 1924. In this photograph, the only survivors of the Second World War were a nephew, Hironobu Kawamoto (8 years old, on his father's lap at left), and two children: M. Dolores Teraoka Escaño (second child from left, 11 years) and Carlos Teraoka (14 years, behind Dolores,) who is the present Honorary Consul-General of Japan at Baguio. The orphans, all born in Baguio, were sent to Japan from the U.S. military internment camp at Laguna. (Teraoka family collection).

went to Japan at that time, mainly in the company of their fathers, and so did a couple of Filipino wives. For the vast majority of the Japanese Filipinos who remained in Baguio or other Cordillera towns, the separations were final: only a few families ever saw their Japanese fathers or husbands again.⁴

The destruction of life and property in the war, the remembered cruelties of the occupation army, the enforced break-ups of families, and perhaps most traumatically, the deep anti-Japanese feelings that pervaded their communities—all these ensured the end of the Baguio Japanese community, physically, as well as in the minds of its descendants and its neighbors. In the face of this stigma, many mestizos changed their identities and embraced their Filipino roots, while concealing or at least undercommunicating their Japanese heritage. The stoic silence of their elders meant that the stories of Japanese Filipino lives would be suppressed for more than a generation. To make matters worse, Japanese Filipinos from indigenous communities in the Cordillera were doubly stigmatized because of the prejudice against “Igorots” and “non-Christians.” Also, few family photographs remained after the war; many descendants said they lost them in the evacuation, or they had burned anything that identified them as Japanese. Often, the last photograph we were shown by a family had been folded so many times, in the attempt, it seemed, to render it invisible.

Connections with Japan after World War II

The silence was slowly broken. Individual attempts to seek out Japanese relatives occurred through the 1950s, often with the help from the Red Cross and English-speaking Japanese School alumni in Japan, and they were supported through small informal networks.⁵ In the 1960s and 1970s, Japanese began visiting the Philippines, seeking remains of kinsmen who had died in the war. Meetings began to take place among Japanese veterans, survivors of the war on both sides, and descendants of the early Japanese communities. At this time, a few former residents of Baguio arrived to look into business opportunities in their old hometown. Japanese Catholics started coming too, finding special bonds with Filipinos,

and they soon moved into raising scholarships for young descendants. These generous commitments continue until today.

It was in the late 1960s and the 1970s that the plight of Philippine descendants of pioneering Japanese settlers started to gain intense attention in the Japanese media. During that period, the first Filipino Japanese friendship societies were formed in major Philippine cities that had welcomed Japanese migrants in the early 1900s. The one in Baguio started out in 1972 with 12 families. The 50th anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific and Asia, in 1995, was a turning point in the renewal of ties between Japanese descendants in both countries. Behind the scenes, all these have been part of Japanese diplomatic efforts to affirm a post-War image in Southeast Asia as well as to seek inexpensive sources of foreign labor.⁶

The documentary materials: Baguio's written history

The bulk of documentary materials for the project consisted of archival manuscripts, photographic collections, and maps. The link between Japanese migrant labor and early American colonial projects in the northern Philippines (Afable 2004, Hayase 1989, Kennon 1906, Yu-Jose 1997) pointed to U.S. government records to provide the economic and administrative background to these activities. Baguio's success as a tourist destination and as a source of highland vegetables, beginning in the 1920s, and its growth into a premier mining center in the 1930s, made for a prosperous city with a truly special identity. However, the American documentation of this development was written primarily from a tourist promotional vantage or by officials reporting on their achievements and fiscal responsibilities to the central government. Not surprisingly, few details could be found about the society and history of the migrant labor force that converged on Baguio in the early 1900s. One problem is that, as in most societies, carpenters, farmers, and sawmill workers are rarely the subjects of government reports or of biographical accounts. To start with, these men had little honor in their own country, for most of them had originally come from poor farming and fishing villages in Japan.

The Annual Reports of the U.S. War Department and/or the U.S. Philippine Commission, including their manuscript drafts, contained reports from a wide array of officials concerned with the building of Baguio, including the construction of access routes, the establishment of civil government and its infrastructure, and the indigenous peoples' economy. These materials, including photographs, form part of Record Group 350 (Bureau of Insular Affairs records) in the United States National Archives and Records Administration (College Park, Maryland). The publications that best cover the American period in Baguio, by the geographer Robert W. Reed (1999 [1976]) and the historian and former foreign service officer James J. Halsema (1991), were based on this extensive archive. The *Baguio Bulletin*, a weekly supplement to the Manila Bulletin that was supported by American mining interests, furnished confirmation for the chronology of the city's development in the 1930s.

The American officials who saw to the building of Baguio were hard-driving, charismatic men who took their tours of duty seriously. They rose quickly in the colonial government and because they traveled with government photographers and journalists, the founding of this colonial hill station was well documented on paper and in archival photographs. In addition, these officials were prolific writers about their travels and their political decisions. Their documentation was intensive, profuse, and self-conscious, and projected the exhilaration of pioneering administrators as they created, in the style of other colonials in Asia, their very own mountain retreat in the tropics. This ample textual and photographic coverage of Baguio's early development offered crucial leads for this study, once oral histories made it clear that employment in the city's construction led to the first Japanese decisions to settle there.

Members of the United States Philippine Commission embarked on the first official American exploration of the Baguio region in mid-1900. At the end of that year, this body, which was tasked with establishing civil government in the Philippines, made the first steps toward a highway for Benguet with an appropriation for its survey. William Howard Taft, who became Governor-General in 1902 and later was elected President

of the United States; Dean C. Worcester, who became Secretary of the Interior of the Philippines; and General Luke Wright, and William Cameron Forbes, who both also became Governors-General, were the most prominent Philippine Commission members interested in the building of Baguio. Thus, from its creation, Baguio and the fortunes of its American community were very much in the minds of officials in the highest positions in the Manila government.

In 1901, the founding of civil government in Benguet opened up the area's mineral and forest resources for exploitation. The U.S. Philippine census of 1903 classified Filipinos into "tribes" and foreshadowed the policies for governing mountain peoples and other "non-Christians" and their territories. Americans, Chinese, Japanese, as well as lowland Filipinos arrived in this new frontier in search of gold, trade, and wage work. Ilocanos and Tagalogs educated in the late Spanish period took up clerical and teaching positions in the fledgling city. American veterans of the Philippine-American War stayed on to prospect for gold, go into business, or staff the civil service. Meanwhile, Ibaloy cattle-owners, for whom the Baguio plateau had been an extensive pastureland, had to move their cattle herds out of the town center to make way for the building of the city. Soon, the region's traditional small-scale mining activities would also be marginalized by large corporate interests.

William Cameron Forbes, in the plum position of Secretary of Commerce and Police, was in charge of public works and had the responsibility of building a summer capital at Baguio. A wealthy bachelor from a family that had extensive business interests in the Far East in the late 1880s, he invested a great amount of energy and his own money in Baguio's development. It was Forbes who arranged for the renowned architect Daniel H. Burnham, a friend of a Harvard University classmate, to draw up a plan for the city.

Within the decade of his arrival, Forbes built his Baguio residence, a polo field and the executive mansion ("Mansion House"), founded the Country Club, and spearheaded the sale of Baguio lands to finance its

development. Also, the execution of Burnham's plan became his responsibility. He presided over the start of the building boom to provide Baguio with the office buildings, public structures, and hotel and other types of accommodations needed to fulfill its functions as the country's official summer capital. The building complexes Forbes was responsible for were the most photographed in the early history of the city; their images appeared in numerous publications, including post cards, in succeeding years. At this time, perceptions in the media of Baguio being a rich man's playground for Westerners and elite Filipinos were not uncommon.

In these initiatives, William Cameron Forbes as well as the American contractors in the sawmill and mining industries who had seen Japanese building skills at first hand became the most consistent employers of Japanese construction workers. Among the prominent projects in which Japanese participation was actually documented, Forbes's own residence, "Topside," initially involved eight Japanese masons (Forbes 1904-1913, Afable 2004:39-42). Another was the expansion of the Baguio Sanitarium in 1905, in anticipation of a large jump in population with the opening of the Kennon Road. Some 50 Japanese workmen (Thomas 1906, Afable 2004:39) were reported to be already in residence there. Initially built by Chinese carpenters in 1902 and then later renovated by Japanese workers, this fine building became Baguio's first tourist hotel, the Hotel Pines. In 1907, it published the earliest commercial notices about Baguio as "The Simla of the Philippines" in the *Far Eastern Review*, a newsmagazine with circulation in Manila, Shanghai, and Yokohama (Jenkins 1907).

Thus, through the first infrastructural projects in Baguio, including the lumber industry, Japanese carpenters and masons gained the stable employment that led to their settlement. They went on to establish a reputation for efficient, high quality construction work not only in government buildings all over the Cordillera but also in the setting up of the earliest Catholic and Episcopalian missions and schools. These backgrounds and the recommendations of their bosses assured the Japanese builders of a stable occupational niche that they maintained until the onset of World War II.

B. P. W. Form No. 329

PERSONAL DATA CONCERNING BUREAU OF PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES

Name N. Aihara Native State or Province Nakamura, Hokkaido, Japan
 Date of birth October 2, 1887 Married? Yes When? During 1922
 No. of children None What other dependants? None
 Citizenship? Japanese If foreign, is Philippine or American citizenship desired? Philippine citizenship

EDUCATION CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS TAKEN.

Schools and Colleges Attended.	Years	Grade	Date	Title of Examination.	Rating.
<u>Nakamura Int. Sch., Japan</u>	<u>1896-98</u>	<u>5</u>		<u>None</u>	

Languages spoken Japanese, Spanish and little Ilocano & Igorot Dialects

EXPERIENCE PREVIOUS TO ENTERING THE BUREAU OF PUBLIC WORKS

From—	To—	Employers.	CHARACTER OF WORK DONE.	Salary.
<u>11-1904</u>	<u>5-1905</u>	<u>Q.M.U.S.A., Fort McKinley</u>	<u>Carpenter</u>	<u>15.00 p.d.</u>
<u>6-1905</u>	<u>6-1906</u>	<u>" Zamboanga</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>3.00 p.d.</u>
<u>1-1907</u>	<u>12-1907</u>	<u>Mr. Burham, Baguio</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>3.00 p.d.</u>
<u>1-1908</u>	<u>12-1908</u>	<u>" Worcester, Baguio</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>3.00 p.d.</u>
<u>1-1909</u>	<u>12-1909</u>	<u>Anglican Mission, Bontoc</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>3.50 p.d.</u>
<u>1-1910</u>	<u>12-1910</u>	<u>Mr. Hira, Saw Mill, Baguio</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>3.50 p.d.</u>
<u>1-1912</u>	<u>12-1912</u>	<u>V.R.R.Co., Baguio</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>3.50 p.d.</u>

SERVICE RECORD.

Position.	T.C.	Province.	SALARY.		PERIOD OF SERVICE.		Why Separated.	Character of Service.
			Authorized.	Received.	From—	To—		
<u>Carpenter</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>Mountain</u>	<u>14 p.d.</u>	<u>14 p.d.</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1912</u>	<u>Resigna.</u>	<u>Protl.</u>
<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>4 p.d.</u>	<u>4 p.d.</u>	<u>1914</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>100 pm.</u>	<u>100 pm.</u>	<u>12-1-18</u>	<u>12-12-19</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>120 pm.</u>	<u>110 pm.</u>	<u>1-1-20</u>	<u>2-28-21</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
<u>Bridge Construction</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>120 pm.</u>	<u>120 pm.</u>	<u>3-1-21</u>	<u>5-24-27</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
<u>Foreman</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>130 pm.</u>	<u>130 pm.</u>	<u>5-1-27</u>		<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>

Date.	Location Preferred.	Character of Work Preferred.	Post Office Address When and Employed by Bureau of Public Works.
<u>Any date</u>	<u>Mountain</u>	<u>Carpenter, Bridge & Bldg. Fore-</u>	<u>Bontoc, Mt. Province.</u>

2-27

Figure 10. The work record of Naojiro Aihara (1887-1966), who was a building contractor in the old Mountain Province before repatriation to Kanagawa in 1945. He was a 17-year-old apprentice-carpenter in the Fort McKinley barracks in 1904 and rose to become foreman on government and mission projects in Bontoc. This rare document details his wage history and languages, schooling, and employers. (Aihara-Challongen collection).

The Furuya photographic collection and the Nihei maps of Japanese settlement

Among the important personal contributions of documentation to the book production, I would single out two that, because of the amount of information they covered, expanded the breadth of the research project immensely. A former Baguio resident now residing in Yokohama named Einosuke Furuya (古屋英之助) arrived in Baguio in the late 1990s with several hundred photographs that had been taken in Baguio and Trinidad in the 1920s and 1930s. Born in Baguio in 1933, E. Furuya was a primary school child at Baguio's Japanese School during the Japanese Occupation. Today he is a retired commercial photographer and has frequently returned to Baguio, to visit former schoolmates, to volunteer his services to the Northern Luzon Filipino Japanese Foundation, and to exhibit his photography of his old "hometown." E. Furuya's parents and brother survived the Second World War and surrendered to U.S. troops in southern Ifugao in 1945, when he was just 12 years old. His post-retirement activities in the Philippines exemplify the continuities between the pre-World War II Japanese community and its descendants in both countries.

The photographic collection was originally compiled by Einosuke's late father, Shonosuke Furuya (古屋正之助), who had run the Pine Studio on Session Road in the 1920s to early 1930s and later the Balatoc Golden Light Studio from 1933 until the onset of World War II. Furuya had arrived in Manila about 1916 and became an apprentice with the Sun Studio in central Manila. He also attended the University of the Philippines Fine Arts program about 1921.

Shonosuke Furuya's Pine Studio, which was a part of the Hayakawa family's Japanese Bazaar, was as well equipped as any major Manila studio of the 1920s. Numerous photographs from this studio of Baguio landscapes and scenic spots were sold as post cards from its counters until World War II. In addition to landscapes, Furuya documented celebrations of the Japanese community, including weddings, school activities, and visits by Japanese as well as eminent outsiders. He also designed several prize-

winning Japanese community floats for the annual July Fourth and Rizal Day festivities (Afable 2004c, p. 240-249)

The other information windfall came in the form of hand-drawn maps drawn by Toshiko Nihei (二瓶敏子), formerly Toshiko Sato (佐藤敏子), now 83 years old and living in Hokkaido. She graduated from the Baguio Japanese School and attended St. Louis Girls High School before World War II. Her mother, Magdalena Sato, came from Kadaklan, eastern Mountain Province, and her father, Tasaku Sato, came from Fukushima. They were farmers in the vicinity of Kilometer 4, in Trinidad. Magdalena died during World War II, but the rest of the family was sent to Fukushima from the U.S. prisoner-of-war camp at Canlubang.

Nihei's maps (Afable 2004a, p. 194-201) of the old Japanese neighborhoods in Guisad, Lucban, Trinidad, and central Baguio were drawn from the memory of her teenage years. In the 1990s, she corresponded with former Baguio residents in Japan to arrive at these meticulously composed guides that pinpointed Japanese families and their places of residence in the 1930s. Bright, outgoing, and multilingual in Ilocano, English, and Japanese, Toshiko Nihei also possesses a phenomenal memory, and she was instrumental in helping identify individuals, both adults and children, in numerous photographs.

Bringing textual, photographic, and oral historical materials together

Parts of the puzzle of what constituted the Japanese community began to fall into place as photographs, maps, and other documents stimulated expanded conversations with informants. Reminiscing about their parents' work and workplaces, friends, drinking partners, and work mates yielded more specific detail when they were connected to building sites, farms, sawmills, and trading places that appeared or were at least implied in photographs. People spoke knowledgeably about the seasonal rounds of crops, construction jobs, school activities, and celebrations. Narratives of making a living centered on the collective efforts of families,



Figure 11. The family of Shonosuke and Hideko Furuya of Yamanashi, with sons, Einosuke (in front) and Masao. Shonosuke managed the Pine Studio attached to the Japanese Bazaar and in the 1930s, the Golden Light Studio in the Balatoc mines. He attended the University of the Philippines art program in the early 1920s. Ca. 1940. (Furuya collection)

neighborhoods, school groups, and cooperatives. Immersion in family-by-family history and in place-by-place history was necessary for recreating, as closely as possible, the settings in which events took place, and in gaining some understanding of the circumstances and issues that most easily escape the researcher in structured interviews.

Photographs of old Baguio and nearby places were immediately useful for connecting life stories with various individuals, families, and their activities in space and time. Their importance was underlined by the fact that much of central Baguio was destroyed in the Allied bombing of early 1945. “We walked along this trail;” “I accompanied my mother to bring my father’s lunch to that building;” “We went to have our picture taken there;” “That was our cabbage harvest waiting to be cut,” and “That is where my father and his friends went to drink after work” —these kinds of statements were volunteered while pointing to faces, objects, and buildings in photographs and associating them with routes, daily and seasonal routines, and employment histories.

Photographs from the 1930s showing cabbage farms along the straight road connecting south and north Trinidad valley reminded Julieta Locano, daughter of Shosaburo Higashiji, of his habit of transporting his small children in a wheelbarrow while visiting fellow Wakayama farmers who lived near this dusty highway. Considering this same landscape, Rosalia Hano, a daughter of Fukuoka-born Jinpei Hano, reminisced about the times her older sister, Elena, and she vied for rides in ‘the family horse carriage when their mother drove it to deliver vegetables to the Baguio market. Jean Francisco, a granddaughter of the cabbage farmer, Tadahiko Sugimoto, described the long walk home from the Japanese School in Lucban to the Kilometer 6 mark in Trinidad and how her friends and she sang school songs and chanted their arithmetic lessons to make the time pass more quickly. This way, photographs of a well-traveled road and its associated farms, while evoking nostalgic scenes of family and childhood, could be put to service in reconstructing economic and social connectivities of various kinds.

The school photographs from the Furuya collection showing class groups, parent-teacher groups, and school activities, were a great boon,

for reminiscing about school was pleasant and brought descendants in Japan and in Baguio together. Identifying school friends, neighbors, and friends' parents was one of the most profitable activities for the project. When small groups of descendants gathered, they prodded and checked each other to reveal many details that would never surface in one-to-one interviews with individuals. As it turned out, childhood, long before the War, was a truly memorable time, and school was a large part of the fun. An especially valuable set of photographs of the Meiji Emperor's Birthday sports competitions and performances (Afable 2004b) elicited spirited retellings of these annual events.

Bringing back fragments of Japanese school songs, dances, and theatrical presentations, playground expressions, and even multiplication tables taught us much about the importance of song, mime, and performance in memory. To everyone's amusement, Einosuke Furuya, for example, recited for us rhymes and taunts in Ilocano that were common in the school playground when he was in first grade over 60 years ago. Talk about individual friendships and other relationships at school (in answer to questions like, Whom did you walk home from school with?), and gatherings on festive occasions (Which families did you join in making *mochi* rice cakes for the New Year?) made it possible to begin accounting for the membership of neighborhoods, work and friendship groups, prefectural factions, and other aspects of the community's social organization.

Throughout the conversations with descendants, especially those who were of school age during Baguio's most prosperous years before World War II, they expressed great longing for the special time and place of their childhoods. The accounts also discussed the authority of parents and their push for distinction through persistent hard work at home and at school. The emotional and sentimental reactions to the school photographs pointed to the overwhelming importance of the Japanese School in shaping the identity of many young people of Japanese-Filipino descent in Baguio in the 1930s. This had been the center of the community's civic activities and major celebrations, and descendants spoke of ideals of discipline and excellence as something that school had given them. At another level,

however, descendants' recollections of their childhoods must be understood against the profound dislocation that they experienced during and after the Second World War. They also present a personal aspect to the present-day economic and political contexts that have engendered claims of "Japaneseness" (see Ohno 2007).

To the descendants, the images of familiar worksites, of schoolmates, and of the city of their childhoods offered overwhelming proof of a life that their families had chosen to banish from their conversations. In 2003, I brought back to Baguio a small number of U.S. National Archives documents attesting to the presence of Baguio Japanese and Japanese-Filipinos in U.S. internment camps in late 1945. The fact of having documents in the United States, in Washington D.C. especially, that spoke of their fathers' lives, *even if only indirectly*, took on special meaning. The references to occupations, to places, and people in official reports gave authenticity to their experiences and their heritage. I had hoped that, minimally, U.S. National Archives documents and photographs would stimulate some remembering. Serendipitously, in the interaction among textual and visual documents and narratives, descendants came to look upon the documents themselves as affirming the identities that they had waited so long to express.

Outside of the authenticating function of textual and photographic materials, the search for ancestors' lives resonated with descendants in another culturally significant way. This had to do with the ritual importance of names and of naming in the southern Cordillera and their symbolic connection to emergent qualities of "community." At traditional prestige feasts, including curing rituals, the naming of ancestors and the recitation of genealogies occur within the most sacred moments of communicating with spirits of ancestors. In the calling out of names, celebrants summon their dead to return to their former houseyards and to dance and feast with their living kinsmen. The parallels between this practice and participating in this research were not difficult to see: by naming them and recalling their childhoods, people were bringing ancestors "back to their houseyards" to celebrate with their descendants. Especially because this also meant an end to the avoidance of their ancestors' names, a reconstruction of "community"

at a ritual level flowed from the research process in an unexpected way. There is little doubt that symbolic convergences of this kind have immediate importance for memory as well as for remembering.

Work, cultural convergences, and social adaptations in a multicultural Baguio

Japanese migrant workers seized opportunities within the American colonial sphere in the Baguio-Benguet hinterland as it began to fully participate in a national and global economy. Descendants' narratives, while focusing on the collective efforts of families and solidarity networks, also clarified the close link of identities to the realm of work. At the same time, they highlighted the challenges and the drive to succeed in the Baguio frontier of the early 1900s. Thus, they mirrored a similar enthusiasm for the life-changing experiences that were projected by American government reports in the early 1900s.

A number of cultural, social, and historical factors were relevant to Japanese success in the Baguio frontier, and I will describe a few here. The woodworkers initially benefited from a merging of American and Japanese carpentry traditions that came from collaboration in the earliest building sites. From Japan, they were familiar with pine lumber and its requirements; this was an advantage over lowland carpenters, whose skills and numbers were in any case not sufficient for the intensive construction of the first two decades. A prior technological background and the ability to "read" American architectural blueprints even without being literate in English, gave these small groups of competitively organized, well-motivated Japanese migrants a starting edge.

Similarly, most of the Japanese men had come from farming backgrounds and the move into an upland ecology of pine forests, seasonal rains, rice in flooded fields, and temperate vegetable cultivation presented no difficult adaptations. Studies of mid-latitude vegetable crops had been conducted by the Spanish and American governments in nearby botanical gardens and experimental stations, and the Japanese were able to take

advantage of this technological knowledge upon their arrival. The first Japanese vegetable gardens appeared before 1910 on lands leased from Ibaloy residents in northern Baguio. Slightly lower in elevation from the central Baguio district, the Ibaloy areas of Guisad and Lucban were sites of the first sawmills and the first school (Easter School) established by the Episcopalians for native children.⁷ Here, a neighborhood formed around a small group of Kagoshima and Hiroshima men who worked in the sawmill and the school construction, the American missionaries at Easter School, and recent converts among the local Ibaloy landowners and lessors. Within a few years, these small farms expanded beyond the kitchen garden level as the arrival of steamer trucks in Baguio allowed for the transport of small loads of cabbages and potatoes to the lowlands.

Hundreds of rural mountain people arrived in Baguio and Benguet to work on these farms and the first Japanese settlers found wives among the Ibaloy, Kankanaey, and Bontoc farm workers, small traders, and landowners. (The stories tell of how bringing newly harvested rice, fruits and other farm produce, and especially rice wine to sell around the worksites was an excellent way for a young woman to meet a prospective Japanese husband). Farming became a family industry as Japanese builders found the winning formula of combining vegetable farming with construction contracts. Often, families ran small stores from the farms and wives recruited laborers (usually from her extensive kindred) and managed them while the men took on contract work away from the farm during lulls in the cropping cycle. It was common for the laborers on a farm to come from the same region or language group. Again, farming was a sphere in which cross-cultural relations appeared to present few problems. The technological knowledge gained on highland vegetable farms was the most enduring legacy of Japanese interaction with southern Cordilleran peoples in the early 20th century.

Cognition of the landscape

Views of the changing Baguio landscape that emerged from the narratives showed other convergences with indigenous environmental

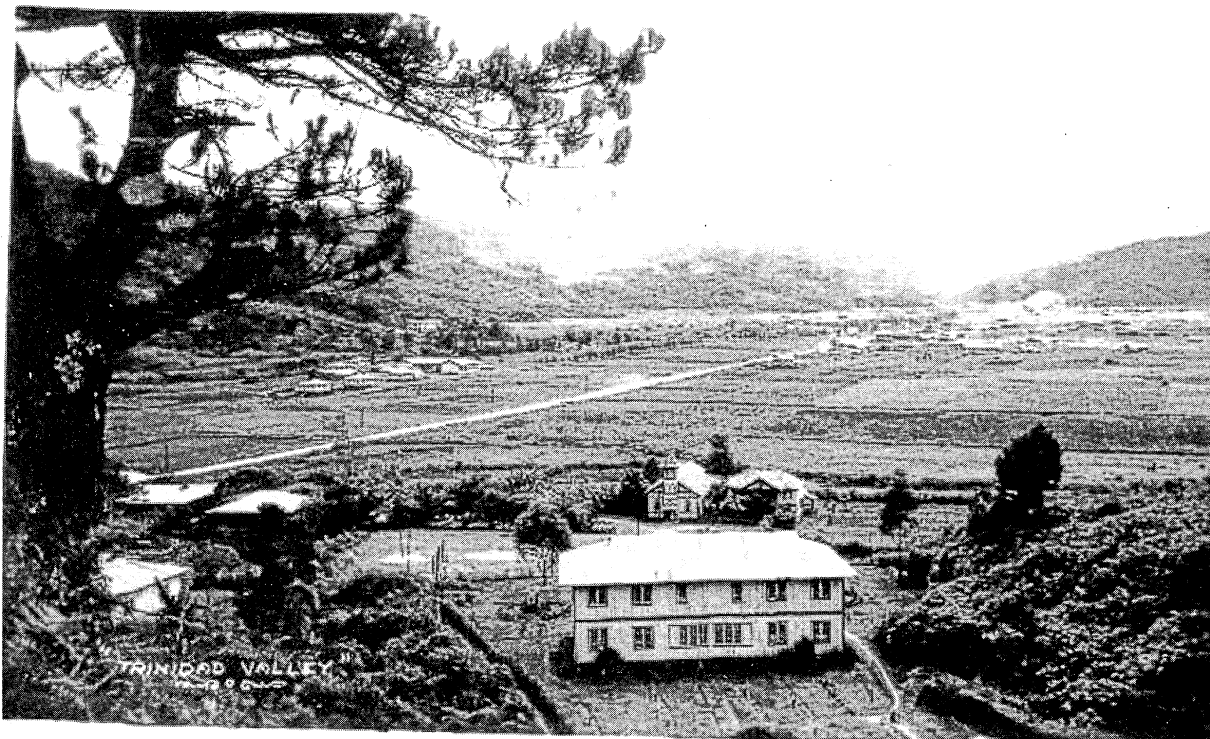


Figure 12. Trinidad valley looking south towards Baguio in the early 1930s. This primarily rice- and taro-producing area before 1920 was transformed into commercial vegetable farms in the 1920s and 1930s by Ibaloy, Kankanaey, and Bontoc farm workers under Japanese supervision. The Catholic mission is in the foreground and the Trinidad Farm School (now Benguet State University) is at left. (Syunichi Abe collection).

interests. One example was the strong focus on water resources: bodies of water and watercourses, their locations, their origins, and the ways of channeling them and exploiting them were among the things that mattered in this frontier. Not surprisingly, in the first discussions of the American exploring party to Baguio in 1900, water resources for the creation of a city also dominated. The large springs in the hills surrounding the “Minak” swamp of today’s Burnham Lake explain why an important Ibaloy settlement was located near today’s City Hall and why the American arrivals made this piece of real estate the centerpiece of the mountain resort town.

In 2004, one Japanese-Filipino descendant showed me the connection between her cognition of the landscape with the evidence in Baguio’s written history. The late Yoshi Otsuji, who was then about 80 years old, was the daughter of Rinzo Otsuji, a farmer from Kagoshima. Her mother was an Ibaloy-Kankanaey native of Atok. They lived on farms in lower Guisad, near Badihoy and the Easter School area, where her father also kept a blacksmithing forge and produced farming tools for sale. Both parents and Otsuji’s own child died during the long northern retreat into Ifugao in 1945.

Along with some friends, Otsuji and I took a slow jeepney ride together through the old Japanese neighborhoods in northern Baguio, armed with the detailed maps that her age-mate, Toshiko Nihei, had drawn from memory some years before. As we cruised along Ferguson Road into Guisad valley, Otsuji pointed out to me each of the streams that drained it from the west and south. As if transported to another time, she confidently described the locations of Ibaloy farms and Japanese houses, farms, and poultry yards, naming all the former occupants as we passed, all in relation to each stream that flowed into the Guisad River. This flows past Easter School and the Bureau of Plant Industry, sites of the earliest sawmills and Japanese farms, and joins other tributaries of the Balili River at Lucban. At the bridge near Easter School, she pointed to the bend in the river where they baited eels, and then traced her route to the Japanese School site on Trinidad Road. On our way there, she noted that, 70 years ago, schoolchildren gathered clay for their pottery projects along this stretch of the river.

As we wound our way through Lucban and Trancoville, Otsuji pointed upriver to the sources of the Balili River in Teachers Camp and further east in Bekkel. The sumo wrestling ring, the bathing and fishing places, the burial grounds, and the cabbage gardens near the old Ibaloy and Japanese neighborhoods were located on a bend of the Lucban River that is now much diminished in size and function. On this journey, as she recounted the sequence of moves of Kagoshima and Fukushima farmers out of the Guisad valley into Sanitary Camp, Kilometer 4, and into Pico in Trinidad, Otsuji laid out for me the panorama of Japanese settlement against the background of the Balili River, its watershed, and the springs that provided them with irrigation and potable water.

Settlement patterns in the American period and the Japanese move into agriculture

Baguio's settlement history after 1900 is most profitably viewed in relation to the exploitation of the region's environmental and geographical resources. The stratification in the early 1900s of its multicultural society comes through clearly in the records, but, as we shall see, the picture is necessarily simplified (see Fig. 13). After mapping out the city center to accommodate an international business district and the municipal and national offices and other public places, the first American officials zoned off the higher rolling portions of eastern Baguio for their own use. This section of the Baguio plateau, which once formed part of extensive Ibaloy cattle grazing grounds, is close to the gold mines and also has the grandest views of Mount Santo Tomas. It was divided into large lots for military reservations and for sale to corporations and wealthy Filipino and American investors. This area of Camp John Hay, Mansion House, Navy Base, and the Country Club is where the Agno River's heaviest gold-bearing tributaries begin before they flow into Antamok and Balatoc Mines. The springs that feed the Bued River in the south and the Balili or Naguilian River in the north also arise here.

The "Filipinos" (at that time, people called "Igorots" were not classed as "Filipinos"), the Christian lowlanders who came primarily to trade,

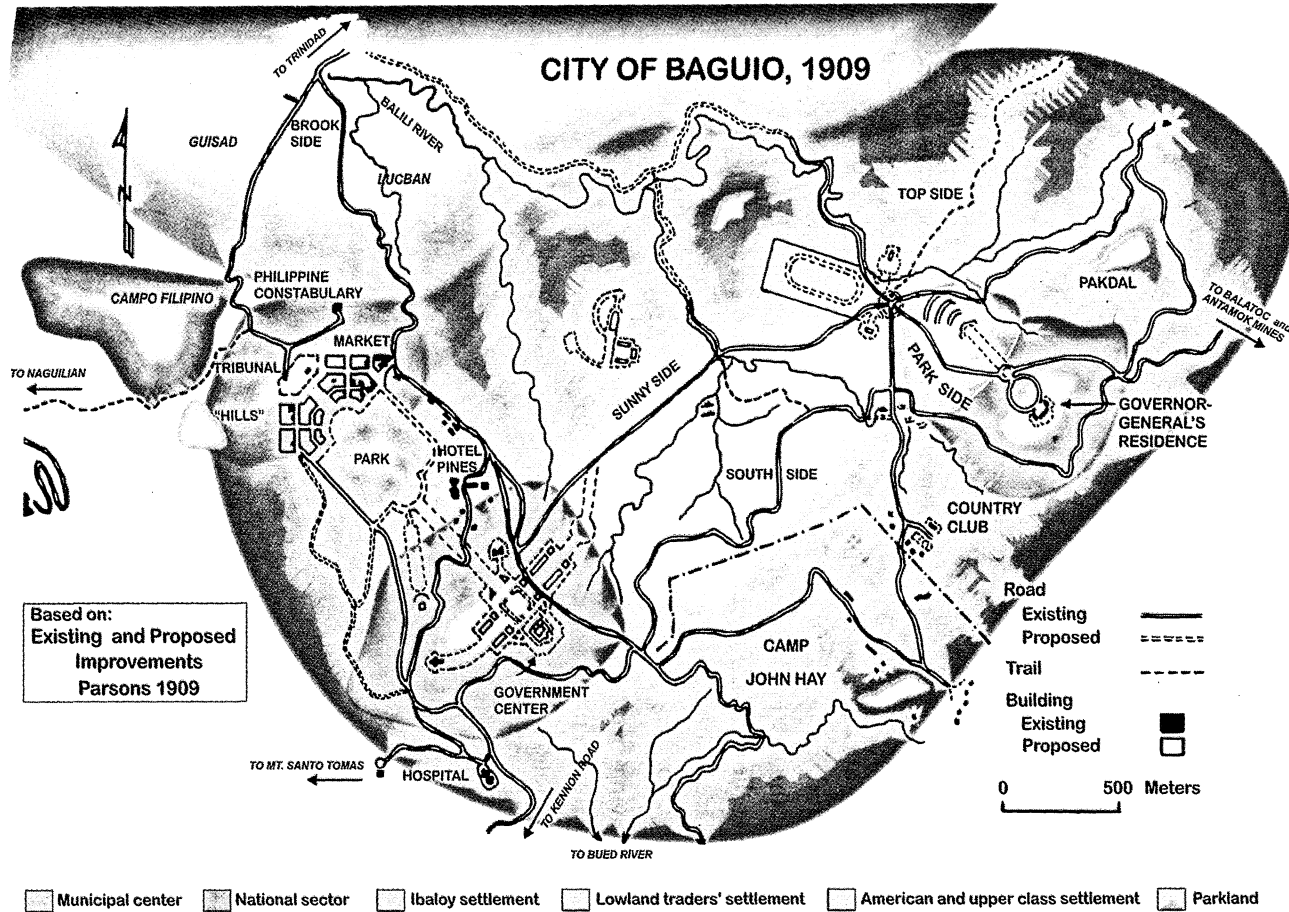


Figure 13. Map of City of Baguio, 1909

started settling in a cramped area in the west, at the upper end of Naguilian Road, in what came to be called Campo Filipino. They were here for wage work in the city and the mines, and for the clerical and teaching positions in the American government. In the 1930s, a flood-prone area next to the city quarry, called City Camp, took up the overflow of population from Campo Filipino.

The old Ibaloy-speaking population of Baguio and Trinidad occupied the lower valleys outside of Baguio's central plateau, especially in the north. While some Ibaloy had relocated to higher areas on the plateau to raise cattle, they lost these ranges to the American government after 1900, and retreated to the lower, rice-growing lands in Guisad, Lucban, and Trinidad. It was in these well-watered valleys of the Balili River that the first land-lease arrangements were negotiated between Ibaloy and the earliest Japanese migrants. Meanwhile, the areas to the south of Baguio were taken up by the forest concessions and sawmills that supplied the lumber for the building of the city.

Having been locked out of the lands reserved for the American elite and their Filipino associates, Japanese migrants turned to find an accommodation with the indigenous landowners. In effect, the exploitation of the Balili River tributaries also became a Japanese specialty, for neither the Ilocanos nor the Americans were interested in commercial agriculture. Cordillerans provided mutually sustaining alliances with the Japanese community; through them, Japanese farmers were assured of farm labor and were drawn into the ritual and solidarity networks that served them well into the darkest days of the Second World War.

The expansion of vegetable crops into Trinidad became possible only in the early 1920s, with the draining of the central Trinidad swamp. Baguio's Mayor Halsema, who was concurrently the Benguet provincial engineer, hired 200 Japanese workmen to build an irrigation system there (Halsema 1991). These momentous changes in the local landscape and economy are remembered in interesting social and ritual terms that celebrate the coming together of Ibaloy and Japanese in Trinidad. Descendants on both sides say that Clemente Laoyan, the mayor of

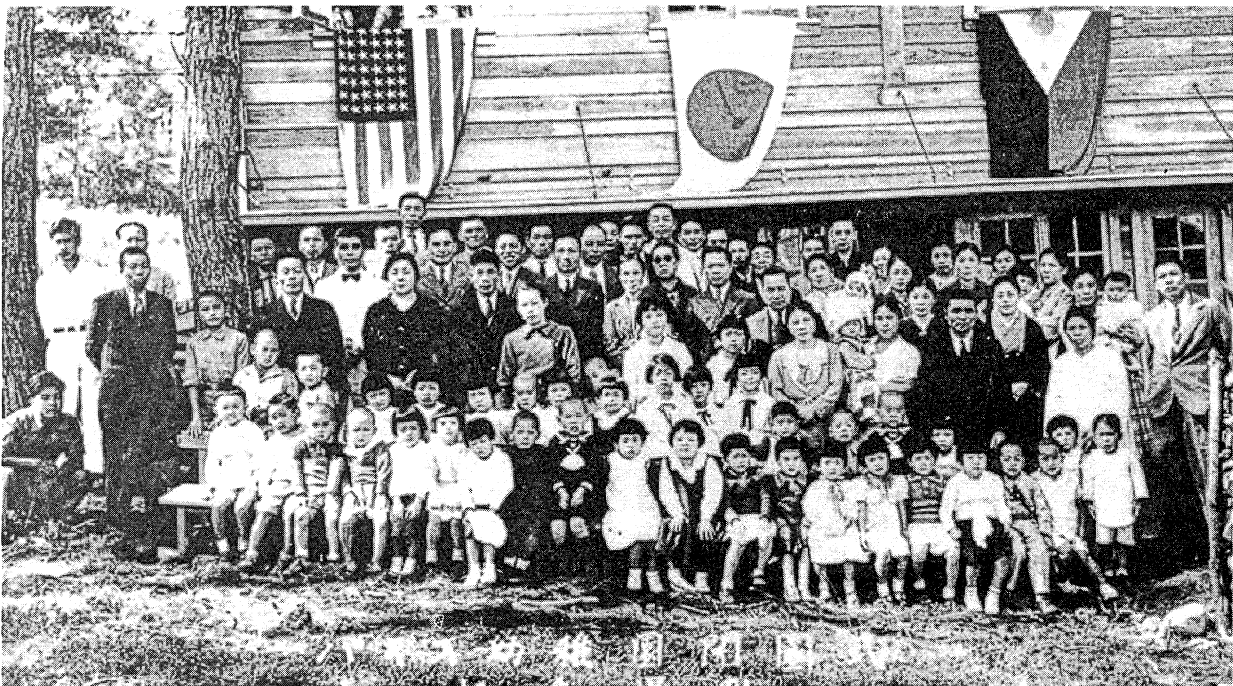


Figure 14. Beneath the flags of three nations, parents, teachers, and pupils inaugurate the Japanese School kindergarten annex, 1937. Charles Teraoka, its builder, stands at left in dark suit. The few surviving members of this class identified everyone in this photograph. (Furuya collection)



Figure 15. At an Ibaloy-Kankanaey feast near a Heald Lumber Co. sawmill, technician Minoru Ohta dances around two large stoneware jars containing rice wine offerings, while other Japanese employees join in celebration. Many Japanese men were drawn into the traditional highland rituals sponsored by their wives, co-workers, and neighbors. 1930s. (Furuya collection)

Trinidad and a wealthy Ibaloy landowner there, invited Tadahiko Sugimoto, a farmer who had settled in Guisad after the Kennon Road construction, to come to farm in the Betag area of central Trinidad. Laoyan had seen the lush and productive Sugimoto gardens and decided that his Ibaloy relatives should learn these new agricultural techniques. Within a decade, Laoyan's son married Sugimoto's eldest daughter. This was a celebration that, in retrospect, gave the thumbs-up to Japanese expansion into central Trinidad. From the Japanese angle, Sugimoto's success guaranteed that the largest regional group of Japanese farmers in Trinidad came from Kumamoto, his home prefecture.

The analogous landscape change in Baguio, the drainage of the "Baguio Plain" into the Balili River, followed that of Trinidad. This, too, stands out in the memory of descendants because of the excavation project's sheer size and the way in which it altered the central city landscape. (The culverts buried under the bottom of Session Road were said to be 14 feet in diameter.) The Nagatomi family construction firm began by a Fukuoka man, who arrived on the Kennon Road project, won the bid for this large contract in 1927.

Summary: Japanese occupational niches in relation to colonial and native peoples

In the early 1900s, construction work (including lumber production), and vegetable farming were the two work domains most closely associated with Japanese settlers in Baguio. In these activities, they formed their longest-lasting social and economic relations with Americans on the one hand (as builders, sawmill workers, and contractors) and with local indigenous peoples on the other (as farmers). Putting to work the technological advantages that they came with and drawing from the financial support and mediation of their own community's entrepreneurs, Japanese artisans participated in the transformation of Baguio into the country's foremost tourism and mining center.

In the north, with their Ibaloy, Kankanaey, and Bontoc farm workers and wives, Japanese settlers harnessed the Balili tributaries for irrigation all the

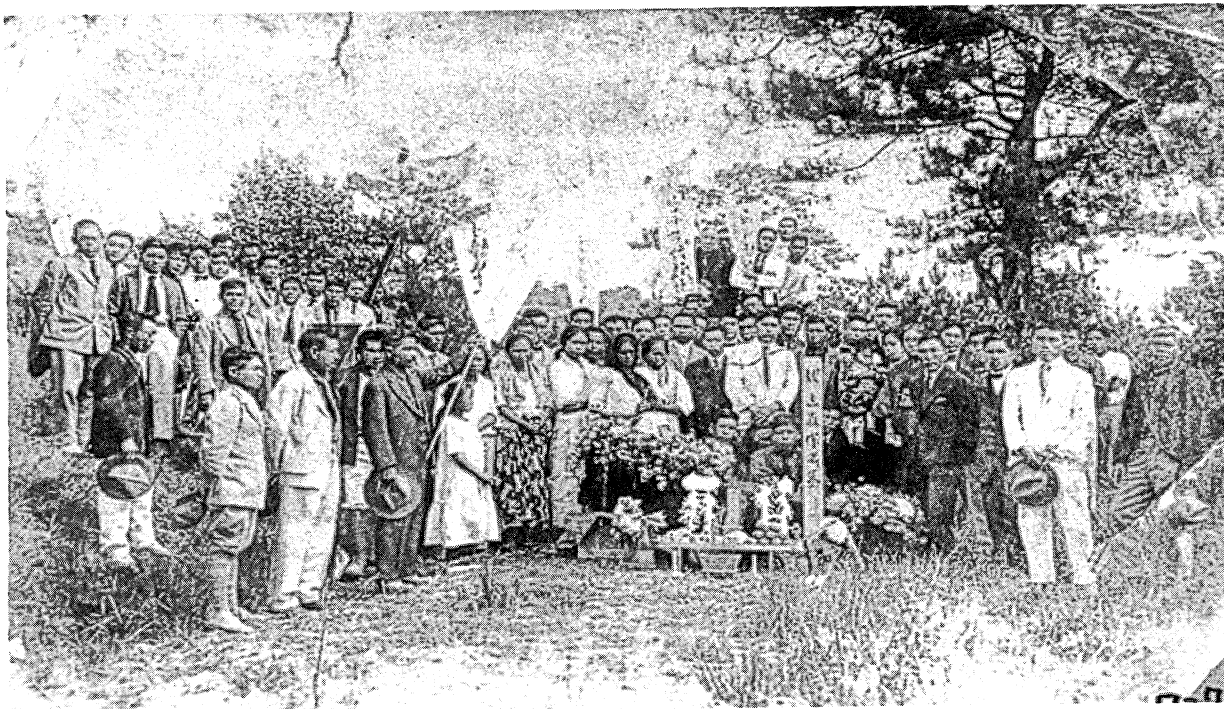


Figure 16. Filipino and Japanese mourners at the Baguio cemetery funeral rites for N. Tsuji, a Fukuoka-native and one of the earliest Japanese pioneers in Baguio. The Tsuji family were ironmongers and in the photography business up to the onset of World War II. (Furuya family).



Figure 17. Clemente Laoyan (center, seated), Trinidad landowner and town mayor, with members of his family in a Mountain Studio photograph in the 1930s. He encouraged his family to attend American schools and, in the 1920s, he invited Japanese farmers to introduce commercial vegetable farming methods to his kinsmen and neighbors in Trinidad valley. (Laoyan family collection).

way into the Trinidad plain. Together, they laid the foundations of what is now a multi-million peso industry in Baguio, Benguet, and nearby provinces in the production of mid-latitude vegetable crops. A farmers' association imported seed and other supplies and efficiently organized the marketing of crops in the Manila market. In 1932, the *Baguio Bulletin* reported that Trinidad's Japanese farmers were averaging P200,000 in profits annually.

While it is true that the differential access to water, land, forest materials, and minerals in this region was set in early American policies and commercial priorities, the Japanese managed to overcome the most serious of the colonial limitations on the distribution of environmental resources. This was achieved, first, through occupational niches that became indispensable to American interests. Crucial to the development of these work specializations was the early sponsorship of new migrants from among relatives and prefecture-mates as job opportunities in the construction and lumber industries became available in the Baguio building boom. The influx before 1920 of young men and their families into lucrative jobs in these work domains resulted in a pool by 1930, not only of capital, but also of technically proficient entrepreneurs. Mostly from Fukuoka, Fukushima, Hiroshima, and Yamanashi, these experienced settlers were able to move into contractual arrangements with the American businesses that capitalized and operated the tourism, transportation, and mining industries in the last decade before the onset of the Pacific War. Another equally important initiative, focused mainly on the commercial production of highland vegetables, brought Japanese into trade, marriage, and other ritual contracts with indigenous peoples and their lands. Between 1905 and 1940, these strategies evolved, for this small but vibrant migrant community, a remarkably diverse and well-coordinated range of social, technological, and organizational responses to the opportunities of the Baguio frontier.

Notes

- 1 I thank the Filipino Japanese Foundation of Northern Luzon, Inc. and its numerous supporters in the Philippines and Japan, for sponsoring the publication *Japanese Pioneers in the Northern Philippine Highlands: A Centennial Tribute, 1903-2003 (JPNPH)*. The original team of researchers for the project consisted of Geraldine Fiagoy, Irene B. Hamada, Kathleen T. Okubo, and Ann Loreto Tamayo. In its final phase, the research was expanded by Patricia O. Afable, Eilyn R.

Alcantara, the late Marie D. Teraoka Escaño, Einosuke Furuya, Toshiko Nihei, and Yoshi Otsuji. For this publication, my thanks also go to the anonymous reviewers for their comments.

The derivative photographic exhibition, *Haponés: The Early 20th Century Japanese Community of Baguio* opened at the Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center, University of the Philippines, on November 20, 2007. I wish to thank Ompong Tan (Colorworld, Baguio) and Erlyn R. Alcantara for the technical production of the exhibition and Michiyo Y. Reyes for coordination and logistical work. It was a great pleasure to work with the highly professional staff of the Jorge B. Vargas Museum. Loans of photographs for the show came from Syunichi Abe (for the Suda photographs from Fukushima), E.R. Alcantara, Einosuke Furuya, Tommy Hafalla, and Ompong Tan. Without the generous sponsorship of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, The Japan Foundation, the Filipino Japanese Foundation of Northern Luzon, Inc., and the U.P. Asian Center, the *Haponés* exhibition would not have been possible.

- 2 In this essay, the primary data and conclusions, unless otherwise stated, are elaborated in *Afable 2004 (JPNPH)*.
- 3 Manuel Scheidnager's 1878 report as a governor of the Benguet politico-military district (established in 1846) gave the first geographical description of Baguio and its climatic and mineral resources that became the basis for the Spanish plan for a sanitarium at this location. The further Spanish surveys for this project are summarised in U.S. War Department 1900 (Vol. 2:330-333) and 1901 (Vol. 1:162-221) and quoted extensively in Reed 1999, Chapter 2.
- 4 In this section, the approximations of conscription, mortality, and repatriation rates were arrived at by comparing the list of Baguio residents compiled by Akira Kodera (in *JPNPH*) against the oral reports of who died in the retreat to southern Ifugao, who returned to Japan before the onset of World War II, and the available archival records of military internment. Since none of these sources are complete and since much less is known in Baguio of the families that did not leave descendants there, only relative estimates are presented here. Furthermore, I do not discuss here the enlistment of some Japanese descendants in the Philippine-U.S. armed forces or their recruitment into the Philippine guerilla forces, an even less known subject. Kodera was a Japanese School teacher during the Japanese Occupation who continued, after World War II ended, to maintain interest in the pre-War Baguio Japanese community. I thank him for providing updates on this membership listing and also for offering (in personal communication) information and insights into the fortunes of the Baguio Japanese. My thanks also go to the late Marie D. Teraoka Escaño for her role of translator and interpreter in these unfortunately brief contacts with Japanese families who were former residents of Baguio.
- 5 An extended discussion of such activities, networks, and their results is found in Sugii 2007.
- 6 Ohno's (2007) study covers the history of Japanese Filipino descendants' claims for Japanese citizenship and "Japaneseness" in more recent years, in response to the opening up in Japan of employment possibilities for foreign nationals of Japanese descent.
- 7 The Episcopalian school for American children was in the "American," eastern part of town and was called The Baguio School. This is today's Brent International School.

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Labor Migration and Minority Group Empowerment: The *Nikkeijin* in Davao and their Association

ASUNCION FRESNOZA-FLOT

Abstract

After World War II, Filipino *Nikkeijin* suffered social and economic difficulties. As a result, they tried to conceal their Japanese origin to escape reproaches and teasing. Their shared experience of social discrimination mobilized them into associations that helped them to socially empower themselves. To explore the process of their empowerment, the present study examines the case of Davao *Nikkeijin* and their association, *Philippine Nikkeijin Kai Inc.* (PNJK). Looking at the different dimensions of empowerment, it shows how this association has helped some *Nikkeijin* acquire Japanese nationality and/or migrate to Japan to work there. Nowadays, *Nikkeijin* have good socio-economic status in the Philippines and are not a marginalized minority group anymore.

Starting in the 1980s, the dynamic performance of the Japanese economy has opened various opportunities for Filipinos, notably women, to come and work in Japan as *Overseas Performing Artists* (OPAs). The large number of OPAs entering Japan annually has overshadowed the parallel migration¹ of the so-called *Nikkeijin* (persons of Japanese descent)

from the Philippines. This group is composed of *Nisei* (having one Japanese parent, mostly their fathers), *Sansei* (children of *Nisei*), and even *Yonsei* (children of *Sansei*). Unlike the migration of Filipino women to Japan, that were pejoratively called *Japayuki* for their supposed prostitution (Suzuki 2000, p. 431), the *Nikkeijin*'s migration has acquired more positive connotations, such as return to the original homeland and reacquisition of a somewhat hidden identity. In this case, migration represents a means of social empowerment for such a minority group.

Existing studies on the global movements of people have shown how migration empowers men (Osella and Osella 2000, p. 120-121) and women within and outside of the family unit (Zentgraf 2002, p. 634; Barber 2002, p. 46). However, relatively less examined in this literature are the cases where migrants are minority in sending countries and the various ways they socially empower themselves (among which migration stands out as an ultimate means). The *Nikkeijin* in the Philippines fit in this frame: as they were socially discriminated and marginalized because of their biological link to the former Japanese rulers of the country, they developed a strong group consciousness and solidarity that helped them to improve their socio-economic condition. They fit well Louis Wirth's (1945, p. 347) classic definition of a minority, that is, "a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination".

In the years following World War II (WWII), there was a strong social stigma attached to children born of Filipino-Japanese couples in the Philippines, due to the Japanese exactions during their occupation of the country. According to Kawai Hiroyuki (2005, p. 97), "during the postwar days, [...] all left-behind *Nisei* in the Philippines, becoming target of scorn and hostility as they were called children of the Japanese assailants, were forced to live amid poverty and discriminations"². Even during the war, these children and their Filipino mothers had lived in constant fear because of the guerillas' death threats (Fresnoza 2003a). Luisa Mabunay's

study (1979) reveals the postwar sufferings of *Nikkeijin* and their strategies of hiding their identities to prevent reprisals from their town mates. *Nisei*, for instance, used their Filipino mothers' surnames instead of their Japanese fathers'. However, in many cases, their efforts to conceal their biological origin seemed futile, as their physical appearance and their family history known in their village and/or town betrayed them (Fresnoza 2003b). In his study of *Davao Nikkeijin*, Ohno Shun (1992, p. 1) explains that their experiences of discrimination and early exposure to Japanese culture drew second-generation Filipino-Japanese closer to the Japanese side than to the Filipino one in terms of identity consciousness. There are no statistics concerning how many of these *Nisei* experienced verbal or physical attacks due to their Japanese ancestry, but studies have shown that discriminatory actions as well as confiscation of their family properties took place almost systematically throughout the country (Ohno 1992; Ohno 2007; Kawai 2005; Fresnoza 2003a). The plight of these *Nisei* became known to the public in the 1980s, as the local anti-Japanese sentiment subsided alongside Japan's economic boom, with Japan's Official Development Assistance pouring over the Philippines, and with the Philippine government's promotion of its labor-export program as a solution to its economic problems. During this time also, *Nisei* started to mobilize and communicate their needs and concerns to the Japanese government through associations they had founded, Japanese citizen groups, the Japanese consulate office in Davao, and the Japanese embassy in Manila. Japan's economic progress and migration policies during this period gave them the possibility of migrating to the land of their forefathers, and eventually of improving their socio-economic position in the Philippines. Nowadays, Filipino *Nikkeijin* are estimated to be around 50,000 (Okushima 2005, p. 39), mainly in the province of Davao where, before the outbreak of WWII, a large Japanese immigrant population was found: more than 12,592 in 1930, representing approximately 64 percent of the total population of Davao at that time, and about 20,000 in 1941 (Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Trade Bureau 1930; Furiya 1993, p. 155).

The labor migration of Filipino *Nikkeijin* to Japan has had a big impact on the socio-economic status of their families left behind in the Philippines. Being legally recognized as Japanese descendants by the Japanese government, they and their children as well as grandchildren are enabled to work in Japan as a way to accumulate economic and symbolic capital. Their migration started as temporary, but *Nikkeijin* migrants now tend to prolong their stay in Japan as they receive long-term residence permits. Their actual migration to Japan would not have been possible without the assistance of *Nikkeijin* associations that have contributed to their eventual empowerment in Philippine society. How have these associations empowered them as a minority group? What are the *Nikkeijin*'s strategies of self-empowerment? How do they sustain and reaffirm their recently acquired "positive" social status? To find out the answers to these questions, the present article examines the process of social empowerment of the *Nikkeijin* in the Philippines, specifically those in Davao.

The data presented in this paper is mainly based on the unpublished results of a qualitative research I conducted in 1999 with five *Nisei* who were among the first Filipino-Japanese descendants to receive Japanese nationality and with the persons-in-charge of the *Philippine Nikkeijin Kai Inc. (PNJK)* in Davao, an organization established to serve the interest of *Nikkeijin* in this province. All the *Nisei* interviewed (2 men and 3 women) were married, had both Japanese and Filipino names, and ranged in age from 60 to 76 years old. These results were complemented with recent data on *Nikkeijin* and with historical data gathered during my three-year research in Japan on the migration of Okinawan people to the Philippines. Before exploring the case of the Davao *Nikkeijin*, I first take a closer look at the existing literature on minority groups, specifically their strategies of self-empowerment. I then present my theoretical tool of analysis followed by a historical discussion of the Japanese immigration to the Philippines before WWII. The final section of the paper delves into the issues revolving around the Filipino *Nikkeijin*'s migration to Japan, its implications on their social class status and identity.

Self-empowerment of minority groups

The definition of a minority group vis-à-vis a majority group in society is not based on numerical quantity, but rather on the existence of a differential treatment characterized by discrimination and most often social segregation. Such treatment stems from perceived, supposed or imagined physical, cultural and biological differences often reinforced by a history of either migration and colonization, or war and independence, as in the case of *Nikkeijin* in the Philippines. The experience of social discrimination has motivated minority groups in different societies to adopt strategies of resistance such as political participation, establishment of various associations, investment in education, engagement in different economic activities, and of course migration itself.

For some minority groups, the avenue of resistance and social empowerment comes first from active political participation. Political empowerment, as Lawrence Bobo and Franklin Gilliam (1990, p. 378) explain, is “the extent to which a group has achieved a significant representation and influence in political decision making”. In the United States, for instance, social mobility and empowerment of African-Americans in urban areas arose from their strong involvement in local politics (Gilliam 1996, p. 60). This also applies to women, who are considered socially marginalized when compared to their male counterparts due to their general ascribed status of “female” and to their special ascribed status of “wife”, “mother”, and “sister” (Hacker 1951, p. 62). Aside from their increasing direct involvement into politics, women and other minority groups also tend to rely on their own founded associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to change the local political atmosphere into one that favors social and gender equality. Political lobbying through such bodies represents one of the ways of “romancing the state” (Stromquist 1995a, p. 451) to uplift their interest often overshadowed by those of the majority population. The African-American civil rights movements in the 1960s and the women movements in the 1960s and 1970s are some of the examples of minority groups’ collective

mobilization towards self-empowerment. In these cases, empowerment is understood as a collective social and political action that engenders change and transformation of the status quo.

In the context of migration, empowerment of an immigrant population in a receiving society often takes the form of entrepreneurship. Engagement into the so-called “ethnic business” is seen as a form of immigrant social incorporation. The structuralist-materialist approach to immigrant entrepreneurship interprets the emergence of ethnic business as an answer to the social discrimination experienced by immigrants that limits their chances in the labor market (see for instance the study of Basu and Werbner 2001). It is also a strategy of social class mobility, as observed in the Cuban ethnic enclave economy in Miami where entrepreneurship appears to be a sort of symbolic capital (Portes and Jensen 1989, p. 945-947). Investing morally and economically in children’s education represents another strategy of social empowerment employed by most immigrant populations in both receiving and sending countries; it is seen by migrants as a key towards upward social mobility (Pessar 1984, p. 1197; Waters 2005, p. 369-370; Waters 2006, p. 188-189).

Remittances represent another way for migrants to improve their social status and eventually their influence in their country of origin. As Pauline Gardener Barber (2002, p. 43) points out in her study of Filipina migrant workers, “migrants are important ‘behind the scene’ actors in shifts in livelihood and class and cultural practices in their Philippine and overseas communities”. Studies on migrant remittances have shown the importance of money sent from abroad for sustaining the basic needs of a migrant’s household and the social reproduction of the family. Remittances also boost the value of local currencies and can help stabilize the economy of the migrants’ countries of origin. In the case of women migrants, migration and work abroad can represent a source of self-empowerment as it brings improved social status and power in the domestic and public spheres and increased personal freedom (Zentgraf 2002, p. 637-638; Mozère 2005, p. 187-190). However, when it comes to migrants’ rights and protection,

non-migrant and migrant NGOs are indispensable as a medium of expression and as a source of information in both the receiving and sending countries. Migrant NGOs' transnational networking has been playing an important role in migrant empowerment as they have made "the needs and rights of globalized workers more broadly recognized and ultimately attended to" (Ball and Piper 2002, p. 1030). Nevertheless, empowerment may have different objectives depending on the categories of the migrants themselves and the nature of their migration (Piper 2004, p. 226). Migration may empower or disempower migrants depending on the social context; but when it comes to a marginalized group, the act of migrating is more likely to be considered as a form of empowerment holding promise of economic and symbolic capital accumulation. This applies to the *Nikkeijin* population in the Philippines, which for many years experienced social indifference and economic difficulties.

Taking into account the different strategies of self-empowerment adopted by migrants both "here" and "there" as well as by other minority groups in society, empowerment appears to be a socio-political process that reveals the articulation between human agency and social structure. Nelly Stromquist (2002, p. 23) suggests that empowerment, as a social process, presents four dimensions enabling a minority group to act for their interest: cognitive, psychological, political, and economic. The cognitive dimension involves a critical understanding of one's situation of subordination and requires knowledge of one's legal rights, while the psychological dimension refers to the feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem to do something that could change one's condition (Stromquist 1995b, p. 14). Concerning the political dimension, it "entails the ability to analyze the surrounding in political and social terms; it also means the ability to organize and mobilize for social change" (p. 15). To strengthen the psychological and political dimensions, economic resources are an important factor, notably "the capacity to generate independent income" (p. 15). These four dimensions are pertinent in the examination of the process of self-empowerment of the Davao *Nikkeijin*, a socially and self-identified minority group. Their present social status has passed through

different phases of development, which cannot be solely attributed to the possibility of migrating and working in Japan: as we will see later, the Philippine and Japanese governments as well as NGOs have played a role in identifying and in promoting the rights of this minority group.

Japanese pre-war immigration to the Philippines

The massive Japanese immigration to the Philippines took place in the early part of the twentieth century as a response to the labor demands in the latter country and to the Japanese government's promotion of overseas migration as a solution to Japan's overpopulation and unemployment problems. It later became self-sustaining as migrants extended their stay and established social networks. The migration policies of both Japan and the US colonial Philippines facilitated such migration, which contributed to the economic dynamism of Japan, the Philippines and the United States. Policies of other countries (as shown below) that were unfavorable to Japanese immigration also exerted influence on the influx of Japanese nationals to the Philippines. This early period of the twentieth century is known as the "golden age of Japanese immigration" (Fresnoza 2003b, p. 27).

Japanese movements to the Philippines date back to a much earlier era, however, predating even the founding of the city of Manila in 1570 (Iwao 1943, p. 1). The earliest known Japanese migrants in the South sea region were fishermen, traders, domestic servants and sailors, and later established *nihon machi* or Japanese communities in Manila (see Foreign Service Institute 1998). After two centuries and a half, Meiji Japan sent trade missions to the Spanish-governed Philippines in order to improve their trading relations: these were the Kawakita and Minami missions. The 1886 Minami Teisuke mission noted a scarcity of native laborers in sugar and tobacco plantations that opened many possibilities for Japanese immigrants to work in agriculture. This observation led to the establishment in 1888 of the first Japanese consulate in Manila. The main mission of this consulate was to promote trade with the Philippines and to continue

exploring the prospect of sending Japanese migrants (Yu-Jose 1998, p. 280).

Attempts to encourage migration to the Philippines in the latter part of the 1880s were unsuccessful. During the first year of operation of the Japanese consulate, there were only 35 Japanese migrants in the Philippines, comprising four diplomats temporarily assigned, four businessmen, 12 clergymen and 15 sailors (see Sato 1994; Arakaki 1987). To recruit more migrants, the Japanese government created in 1891 an Emigration Bureau in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and promulgated an “emigration protection law” in four parts: the ordinance of 1894, the law of 1896, the regulations of 1907 and 1909, and the rules of 1907 (see Moriyama 1985). Private emigration companies (*imin gaisha*) also participated in encouraging migration to the Philippines, starting with the creation in December 1891 of the *Nihon Yoshisa Imin Goumei Kaisha* (see “Imin Gaisha” 1983, p. 238-239). In 1917, the Japanese government consolidated all emigration companies into one big company called the *Kaigai Kougyou Kabushiki Gaisha* (Overseas Development Corporation) to systematize and centralize the recruitment and management of migrants.

The first massive inflow of Japanese migrants to the Philippine started in 1899, one year after the start of the American occupation of the country. This migration resulted from an increased labor demand in the Philippines as the American colonial government embarked in infrastructure development projects (e.g., construction of asphalt roads, railroads, bridges, ports, and even military barracks). One of the famous projects was the Benguet Road (Kennon Road) construction in Baguio, a city located in the northern highlands (see Kanashiro 1995). The Filipino and Chinese laborers hired to work for this project could not stand the rigors of the mountain climate, so the American colonial government resorted to the importation of workers from Japan and other countries to fill the need for efficient labor. After the completion of the Benguet Road in 1905, many Japanese laborers stayed in the Philippines: around 500 of them remained in Baguio, and some of them developed highly successful farms and

nurseries in the fertile Trinidad Valley (Goodman 1967a). Other Japanese laborers went to Manila where they worked as artisans, cabinetmakers, carpenters, and in enterprises that needed skilled labor. A small number of laborers worked as minor construction workers at Fort McKinley in Makati and at Camp Overton in Lanao in Mindanao. Many Japanese migrants proceeded to Davao to work in hemp plantations.

Another factor that stimulated the Japanese movement to the Philippines was the prohibition of Japanese labor migration to Hawaii (as a result of the Gentlemen's Agreement in 1908 allowing only the family reunification or immigration of those who had already relatives in the United States), then to many other countries (e.g., Canada in 1908, Australia in 1909 and the United States in 1924). This encouraged Japanese to proceed to countries such as the Philippines that had less strict immigration policies. Later, the Jones Act of 1916 increased Philippine autonomy and granted the country the right to make its own immigration laws (to be approved by the President of the United States); moreover, the Lansing-Ishii agreement of 1917 signed between Japan and the United States to settle their disputes over China also facilitated Japanese immigration to the Philippines and indirectly inspired Japanese to go there by generating amicable Japanese-American relations. In fact, Japanese immigration was not regulated in the Philippines until 1940 when President Manuel L. Quezon approved the Commonwealth Act No. 473, also known as the Immigration Act, establishing an annual quota of 500 Japanese entrants into the country.

Sharp increases in the number of Japanese immigrants in the Philippines were observed during the abaca industry boom, at times of economic depression in Japan and other countries, and at the outbreaks of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1905), Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), and World War I (1914-1917). From 1907 to 1917, the Philippines had the highest concentration of Japanese migrants among today's Southeast Asian countries (see Yu-Jose 1996). In 1929, there were 4,535 Japanese in the Philippines; by 1939, their number reached about 29,000, exceeding

for the first time in Philippine history that of the Chinese immigrants (Yu-Jose 1992, p. 126). During this period of massive Japanese immigration, some Filipinos developed antagonistic feelings toward the Japanese migrants due to their refusal to adopt Christianity and due to their practices of importing Japanese brides. Despite these antagonistic sentiments, the Philippines continued to show receptivity to Japanese migrants, whose economic activities created employment opportunities for Filipinos and stabilized the Philippine economy (Suzuki and Fresnoza 2004, p. 260).

Davaokuo: the Japanese migrant community in Davao

Japanese settlement in the Davao area developed as a result of the coincidence of three factors: a) the need for hardy and industrious laborers to work in the abaca (hemp) plantations; b) the presence of unemployed Japanese in the Philippines who had originally been employed in northern Luzon by the American builders of the Benguet or Kennon Road; and c) the foresighted enterprise of Ota Kyosaburo (Goodman 1967b, p. 1).

Many Japanese workers employed for the construction of the Kennon Road decided to move to Davao afterwards. Matsuda Nagasuke, Ota Kyosaburo (who later pioneered as a leading plantation owner in Davao), and Oshiro Takazo assisted them. In 1903, Juan Awad, the Libanese manager of an abaca plantation in Lapanday, hired the first group of Japanese workers recruited in Manila by Matsuda (*Facets of Davao History* 1997, p. 71). In September 1904, Ota sent 180 Japanese laborers to Davao, and in 1905, he and Oshiro worked together in transferring from Benguet a second batch of about 170 workers. Davao historian Ernesto I. Corcino (1998, p. 85) describes the way the local population reacted to these migrants as follows:

The initial contact with the new breed of workers in white kimono sporting long hair was a curiosity to Davaoños. Their habit of bathing naked unashamed, however, elicited some kind of protest and this was corrected by admonishing them to construct walls for privacy in their bathing places. For their performance in assigned tasks, their

employer had no reason to complain. They were uncomplaining, dedicated and fast workers. Thus despite differences in cultural outlook and manners, the other planters interposed no objections to the bringing in of more Japanese laborers to Davao.

In 1907, Ota and Oshiro established Ota Development Company with the former as president and the latter vice-president. The success of this company stimulated the investment of new capital from Japan in the Davao region and the formation of a number of other Japanese-sponsored plantation corporations (Goodman 1967b, p. 3). By 1930s, there were 43 Japanese-owned agricultural corporations in Davao with a total investment of 20 million pesos; about 2,000 independent tenants with a total capital of ten million pesos; about 200 commercial and industrial enterprises with a total investment of five million pesos; and some investments in lumbering and fishing (Yu-Jose 1992, p. 67). By 1935, there were 307 Japanese-owned retail stores in Davao, servicing a Japanese population of 13,065. This large Japanese migrant population in Davao began to look like a transplanted Japan, popularly called *Davaokuo*, after *Manchukuo* (a state established in Manchuria and part of Mongolia by Japan in 1932 with a strong Japanese immigrant population). To meet the needs of this expanding community, Japanese migrants established schools for their children, and recreation centers, hospitals and ports for both Japanese and Filipino residents of Davao. Moreover, Japanese migrants began to accumulate large tracks of land, and many of those pioneer Japanese laborers became independent landowners, business proprietors, plantation officials or managers.

Various stories have been told in private about how the Japanese migrants were able to acquire the most fertile tracks of land through dummies, marriages with native women and suspicious arrangements with Filipino landowners (*Facets of Davao History* 1997, p. 66). The mother of three of the five *Nisei* interviewed for the present study were tribal women, and one explained that the Japanese married these women as a form of defense against the tribe's anger. This anger can be traced to the

fact that many tribesmen had lost some of their lands to Japanese migrants due to their ignorance of the existing land laws at that time. The expansion of Japanese landholdings caught the attention of the Davaoweños. Consequently, local politicians became alarmed about the concept of *Davaokuo* and they brought to the attention of national leaders the problems of the Japanese landholdings in Davao. To address this problem, President Quezon established areas reserved for Filipino settlers.

The migration of Japanese to the Philippines and their economic activities in the country were interrupted when Japan occupied it in 1942 following the Pearl Harbor bombing³ in December 1941. This occupation lasted for three years, during which a puppet government was established under President Jose P. Laurel. The 60-mile “death march” of about 78,000 Filipino and American prisoners of war from Bataan to Pampanga marked the beginning of Japanese occupation of the country. Due to the confiscation of different means of transportation and farm outputs, the agricultural productivity of the country decreased and food became scarce (Agoncillo 1969, p. 236). There were many exactions, including forced labor, rapes and sexual slavery imposed on “comfort women” (see Tanaka 2002, p. 47-52). During this period, out of fear of punishment and death, the Japanese residents of Davao participated in the war effort to demonstrate their loyalty, especially Okinawans, who were considered “inferiors” by the Japanese forces, and those married to Filipino women (see Hayase 1999). Some young Filipino-Japanese (including my five *Nisei* informants) also joined the Japanese military as soldiers, paramilitary personnel or civilian employees (Nishida 1995, p. 3; Ohno 2007, p. 247).

The arrival of General McArthur’s liberation forces in 1944 put an end to the Japanese occupation of the country: Japan surrendered to the Allied Powers in 1945, and as a result, “thousands of overseas Japanese from the former colonies and conquered territories, including the Philippines were repatriated” (Mabunay 1979, p. 114), including *Nisei* aged 16 and above. Younger children of Japanese-Filipino marriages were left in the country. For Filipinos, these second-generation Japanese

descendants became constant reminders of the massive Japanese immigration that preceded the war and of the Japanese military exactions during their occupation of the country. Consequently, during the post-war years, *Nisei* were being teased and called “anak ng hapon” (child of Japanese) or “hapon” (Japanese), names that carried negative connotations such as brutality and cruelty. They suffered economically and emotionally as “they had their assets confiscated, and faced the slaughter of their friends and relatives, persecution and discrimination” (Nishida 1995, p. 3; see also Fresnoza 2003a; Ohno 1992, p. 72-73). They lived at the margin of the Philippine society due to the stigma attached to their biological background, and for some to their physical appearance and distinctive manners of behavior.

Gambarou!* Individual and collective empowerment of Davao *Nikkeijin

Collective awareness of their disadvantageous social status and common experience of socio-economic difficulties united the *Nisei* even before Japan opened its door to *Nikkeijin* workers around the world. The founding of PNJK in 1979 showcases the Davao *Nikkeijin*'s collective effort to promote their common interest. The process of group empowerment concerning Davao *Nikkeijin* reflects the interaction of various factors at different levels from individual to group. Within these levels, we can observe the articulation of the earlier-mentioned four components of empowerment as proposed by Stromquist (1995b). In what follows, I illustrate these four components: firstly cognitive and psychological, secondly political, and thirdly economic dimensions.

Cognitive and psychological dimensions of *Nikkeijin*'s empowerment

What stimulated the Davao Filipino-Japanese descendants to advance their interests and mobilize into associations did not come from inside

their group but from outside. It was the moral support they received, either from a Japan-based association or from individuals, that inspired *Nikkeijin* to organize associations and reinforce their Japanese identity.

Among the five informants' Japanese fathers, three were abaca plantation workers, one taught Japanese, and another one drove a taxi. One of our informants, Roberto⁴, could hardly narrate any story regarding his Japanese father because his Filipino mother did not tell him anything about him except his occupation. All respondents, however, remembered their abundant and comfortable life that was abruptly destroyed upon the outbreak of the war.

During the war, the interviewees collaborated with the Japanese forces: Carmen served as a nurse aid and the others as dressmakers in a Japanese camp. When the war ended, four interviewees' fathers were repatriated to Japan whereas the fifth one died of disease in the Philippines. All interviewees knew easily why they were being looked down in their villages: their biological link to the ex-rulers and their collaboration with them during the war. This made their life miserable and they lost their self-confidence to assert their real identity as Filipino-Japanese children. Instead of nurturing the richness of their double origin, they employed various strategies to reinforce their Filipino identity and to conceal or suppress the Japanese one as a way to escape social reproaching: Celia and Roberto changed their Japanese surnames to Filipino, Maria and her family stopped using Japanese as family's medium of communication, and Carmen was forced by her family to marry a Filipino, so as to acquire a non-Japanese surname. At the time of the interview, all the respondents could still speak Japanese, but only three of them fluently.

Due to the confiscation of their family properties and to the social barrier they were facing, none of the respondents was able to obtain university education and only one of them finished secondary schooling. Three took up vocational courses despite their lack of high school diploma. Jirou and Roberto engaged in farming while Celia, Maria and Carmen became unemployed housewives. Despite the discrimination and poverty

they experienced, four respondents' families did not try to go to Japan: only Maria's family tried to follow her repatriated father, but failed in the process. All of the respondents confided that they did not receive any financial help from their Japanese relatives at times when they needed assistance. For many years, these respondents kept silent concerning their Japanese background, and only started to talk about it openly when they learnt about the existence of a *Nikkeijin* association in Davao – the PNJK.

Hence, the courage to finally come out of the public and be open about their Japanese background only became possible for Davao *Nisei* after finding existing structures that would back-up their interest as a minority group. As Nelly Stromquist (1995b, p. 15) argues, "one cannot teach self-confidence and self-esteem; one must provide the conditions in which these can develop". Similarly, the *Baguio Nikkeijin Kai* was founded in 1972 through the efforts of a Japanese Roman Catholic nun, Sister Tokoyo Unno from Shizuoka Prefecture, who encouraged *Nikkeijin* in northern Luzon to surface (Kawai 2005, p. 53). The strong anti-Japanese sentiment among the majority Filipino population probably explains why these *Nikkeijin* did not mobilize on their own initiative: Filipino *Nikkeijin* tried as much as possible to remain somewhat socially invisible in order to avoid direct confrontation with the majority group.

The courage of Filipino *Nikkeijin* to come out and be socially heard intensified in the 1980s, when Japan was at the peak of its economic development and rapidly starting to attract migrant workers from different countries in the world. During the same period, the Philippines was undergoing major political transformation and economic stagnation. As a result, the migratory wave of people became reversed: the Philippines became a country of emigration, and Japan a country of immigration for Filipinos and other foreign workers. Starting in the 1970s, Japanese war memorial pilgrimages to the Philippines in search of wartime graves resulted in the "discovery" of the plight of Filipino *Nikkeijin*. These visits raised public attention on the children born of Japanese and Filipino parents before the outbreak of the Pacific War. After two decades, in 1995, 1997 and

2004, the Japanese government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and in cooperation with the Philippine government, conducted a series of national investigations on the situation of these Filipino *Nikkeijin*. The Embassy of Japan in Manila opened a “*Nikkeijin’s desk*” after the 1997 survey in order to “fast-track the screening process for *Nikkeijin* applicants” who needed visa to go to Japan (Ohno 2007, p. 252). This government’s intervention gave the “go” signal to *Nisei* as well as to their children and grandchildren to assert and reinforce their hidden Japanese identity.

Filipino *Nikkeijin* associations throughout the country assisted the conduct of the 1995 and 1997 surveys that were financially supported by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the 1995 survey, 919 of the 2,125 people registered (1,054 men and 1,071 women) were Davao *Nisei* (Kawai 2005, p. 60). Considering that the survey was carried out in only a few regions, this figure is likely an underestimate, and the total number of Filipino *Nikkeijin*, including *Sansei* and *Yonsei*, could have been somewhere between 60,000 and 70,000 (*ibid.*, p. 64).

Kawai Hiroyuki explains that during the second national survey in 1997, all the registered *Nisei* were classified into three categories based on whether their names appeared in the family register (*kosekitohon*⁵) of their Japanese parent or not: Category A were those whose names appeared in the family register, Category B were those whose Japanese ancestor’s family register was found but did not bear their own names, whereas Category C were those whose ancestor’s *kosekitohon* was not located (*ibid.*, p. 66). According to Kawai’s research, 1,015 *Nisei*’s Japanese nationality was confirmed at the end of this survey. Regarding the third survey in 2004, Kawai explains that Japan’s Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) played a crucial role in the investigation and data collection about the Japanese background of 1,099 Category C *Nisei* (*ibid.*). Japanese civilian volunteers searched for the names and the permanent address of these *Nisei*’s Japanese parents in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs diplomatic archive, notably in the documents concerning passport issuance (*ibid.*). Finding the home address of the *Issei* parents meant finding the location of the family register where the Filipino *Nisei*’s names were possibly registered.

In 2003, a non-profit organization called *Philippine Nikkei-jin Legal Support Center* (PNLSC) was founded in Tokyo to provide *Nikkeijin* with legal and social assistance. The services it offers are as follows: a) “tracing Japanese ancestors to recover identity of *Nikkei-jin*”; b) “filing petitions with family courts for permission to create a family registry of *Nikkei-jin*”; c) “assisting *Nikkeijin* legally by providing necessary information and services”; d) “disseminating information on *Nikkei-jin* through newsletter, website and blog”; and e) “strengthening the network of Philippine *Nikkei-jin* in Japan and *Nikkei-jin* Organizations in the Philippines”⁶. The establishment of the PNLSC by Japanese shows a growing interest for Philippine *Nikkeijin* in Japan. As Rochelle Ball and Nicola Piper (2002, p. 1028) explain:

States have an important place in citizenship struggles and remain the central actors in the enactment and implementation of any progressive policies, but in the absence of a political will to do so, civic or NGO activism is required to target states.

At this moment, PNLSC has received support from Nippon Foundation in carrying out its project of family register restoration of 500 Filipino *Nikkeijin* over a period of three years. One of the PNLSC’s effective strategies is to invoke the 1997 Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of the Philippines in order for undocumented marriages of tribal women, or rarely men, to Japanese migrants to be recognized⁷, allowing Filipinos of Japanese ancestry whose parents were married through tribal rites to apply for Japanese citizenship.

Overall, the cooperation of the Philippine and Japanese governments, *Nikkeijin* associations, and Japanese NGOs/ NPOs has contributed to the rise of public awareness on the *Nikkeijin*’s difficult social situations, which in turn has boosted the self-esteem of the *Nisei* to finally assert themselves in the society. What is evident is that non-state actors have played a significant role in making *Nikkeijin*’s emigration to Japan possible. As the search for the past continues, Filipino *Nikkeijin*’s

associations play a central role in doing so, while championing the rights of their members who for a long period were socially neglected.

The PNJK as an avenue of political empowerment

Since the beginning of the 1980s, the voice of *Nikkeijin* in Davao has been well heard through the PNJK. Through many years of rallying for the cause of these war-displaced people, this association has inspired other *Nikkeijin* groups and organizations throughout the country to strive harder. This section reviews the political dimension of the Philippine *Nikkeijin*'s empowerment by focusing on the role of the PNJK.

In 1969, Davao *Nisei* established the *Nisei Kai* with the support of the Japan-based *Aidakai* (association of love for Davao) initiated by Japanese migrant returnees. The *Nisei Kai* was reorganized in 1979 as the PNJK, with Hagio Yukitoshi as its first president. However, its official operation began only on August 14, 1980 after it was registered in the Security and Exchange Commission (Interview with Benigno Tutor, Sr., 18 February 1999). Its establishment owes largely to Minamoto Keizo, an evangelical minister of the *Sekai Kyusei Kyo* (religion for the salvation of the world), and to a group of *Nisei* led by Rodolfo Tutor, Sr., president of the PNJK at the time of the interview in 1999. The PNJK has been aiming to elevate the socio-economic status of *Nikkeijin*, to bring them back to the mainstream of society, and to establish a well-organized Japanese descendants' community in Davao. Its initial activities included awarding grants to deserving teachers to go to Japan to study Japanese, as well as participating in the annual convention of overseas Japanese sponsored by the Japanese government. The PNJK's basic education scholarship program began in 1981, especially targeting young teachers, whereas the first batch of PNJK representatives to the convention was sent to Japan in 1982. In 1992, the PNJK discontinued its annual participation in the said gathering after finding out that its representatives were not registered in the convention's record book, and thus were not allowed to participate in the event.

Following this unpleasant experience, PNJK members decided to focus on sending teachers to Japan who would later teach Japanese voluntarily at the PNJK educational center. At the beginning, the PNJK offered Japanese classes exclusively for *Nikkeijin* who would migrate to and work in Japan. In 1992, it opened a nursery and kindergarten program with a 30-minute free Japanese class. Moreover, in order to communicate effectively with other *Nikkeijin* in other parts of the country, PNJK officials traveled throughout the country and encouraged *Nikkeijin* associations to join them in establishing a national federation of Filipino-Japanese descendants. The first national convention attended by *Nikkeijin* associations' representatives was held in Davao City on June 12, 1992 and resulted in the creation of the *Federation of Nikkeijin Kai Philippines Incorporated* (FNJKP) with Rodolfo Tutor, Sr. as president. As of today, the federation consists of 17 branches. The Davao chapter is the biggest one, with a membership of over 6,000 (JETRO 2008, p. 1), and serves as coordinating center for the other Mindanao chapters. As of 1999, the federation had more than 30,000 members. Currently, Carlos B. Teraoka, honorary consul-general of the Japanese embassy in Manila, acts as the present chairman of the federation.

The *Nikkeijin Kai* federation has been commissioned by the Japanese government to conduct investigation and research on *Nikkeijin*. The federation has also been helping *Nikkeijin* to apply for recognition, citizenship, and decent jobs in Japan. After locating *Nikkeijin* in the country, it has assisted them in verifying their records in Japan and in applying for Japanese nationality. Furukawa Shiromi, president of *Kigyō Kyōgi Kai*, a Japanese NGO of company owners, and Toyoguchi Osamu, vice-president, initiated this program that is open to *Nisei*, *Sansei* and *Yonsei*. Program applicants are categorized into A (those whose names appear in their Japanese parent's family register in Japan) and B (those who do not, mostly *Sansei* and *Yonsei*). In Japan, a human rights lawyer from a group of Japanese volunteer lawyers provides free legal assistance to the *Nikkeijin* program applicants. This program started in 1990 when the revised Japanese Immigration Control Law was implemented. The new law has offered *Nikkeijin* around the world,

specifically *Nisei* and *Sansei*; the possibility to migrate to Japan, to take up any kinds of jobs (skilled, semi- or unskilled) they like, to apply for a long-term resident visa of three years, and to obtain a permanent resident status after a certain period of time. This preferential treatment offered to foreigners of proven Japanese ancestry has boosted their immigration to Japan: from 8,000 in 1988 to 150, 000 in June 1991 and finally reaching 250,734 in 2004 (Goto 2007, p. 18).

In 1995, 32 *Nisei* from different parts of the country composed the first group of Filipino-Japanese descendants who went to Japan to apply for Japanese nationality. They attended a symposium at Tokyo's Nippon Seinenkan Hall to publicize their plight and to seek support and recognition. Attorney Nishida Kenshi, who acted as the Federation's adviser from 1993 to 1999, represented them and helped them pass their demands to the Japanese government: (1) that the Japanese nationality of those whose names appeared on their family register be recognized; (2) that the parents' marriage of those not listed on this register be entered based on the official record held in the Philippines; (3) that an investigation be conducted for those with unknown parents, as more than 70 percent of the war-displaced, to determine their identities; (4) that a comprehensive survey of war-displaced Japanese in the Philippines be carried out; and (5) that moral and material support be provided to the Japanese community in the Philippines that was disintegrated during the war, in order to facilitate its recovery (Nishida 1995, p. 3).

Only ten (six men and four women) of the 32 *Nisei* applicants were granted Japanese nationality ("War Orphans" 1995, p. 2). They were all from Davao, belonged to Category A (see above), and possessed supporting documents, such as birth or baptismal certificates, parents' marriage contract, affidavits of marriage or birth certificate destruction, or death certificate of their Japanese parent, to support their claims at the beginning of the application process in the Philippines. Among them were the five persons interviewed for the present study. The PNJK accompanied, supported, and assisted them: during the processing of their papers, only Jirou encountered a problem because he had used his Japanese name in the application whereas his birth certificate bore his Filipino name. To

solve the problem, he produced an affidavit stating that he had a Japanese name and that his birth certificate bearing his Japanese name had been destroyed during the war. It took less than three months for the five interviewees to be informed of the approval of their Japanese nationality.

Asked the reason for changing nationality, they all explained that they wanted to strengthen their “real identity”, i.e., their being Japanese; however, it can be assumed that they also considered acquiring Japanese nationality as a door to enjoy economic opportunities in Japan for them and their children. In fact, they had been wishing to go to Japan since long before the launching of the Filipino *Nikkeijin* survey in 1995. During the interviews, they put emphasis on them being biologically (i.e. having Japanese ancestry) and physically (the shape of their eyes, or for some the color of the skin) different from other Filipinos. This self-differentiation from the majority group in society constitutes the “founding act of identity” (Kozakai 2000, p. 33), and the very existence of the term “*Nikkeijin*” reinforces the supposed differences used to construct an imagined border separating Filipinos with Japanese descent from those without. I will discuss later the problematic of the “real identity” discourse in relation to economic empowerment.

The establishment of a *Nikkeijin Kai* federation attests the capability of this minority group to organize and mobilize its members for the group’s cause, which manifests their political self-empowerment, albeit with crucial contribution of external assistance. The federation’s activities (such as holding a national *Nikkeijin*’s convention every two years) as well as those of the PNJK have sustained this process of empowerment, as such activities are intended to elevate the *Nikkeijin*’s socio-economic status both in the Philippines and in Japan. The sustainable operation of *Nikkeijin*’s associations is not only attributed to the collective efforts of the *Nikkeijin* themselves, but also to the financial and moral assistance of some Japanese institutions and organizations. It appears that receiving political recognition from both the Philippine and Japanese governments facilitated the mobilization of *Nikkeijin* in the Philippines, which eventually provided them a social space for identity projection.

Labor migration and the economic dimension of Nikkeijin's empowerment

Nikkeijin's cognitive, psychological, and political empowerment would not have been possible without stable economic sources to back up and sustain their associations and activities. This section highlights the financial/ economic aspect of the Philippines *Nikkeijin's* empowerment.

The PNJK as an independent organization is not affiliated with any Japanese or Filipino associations and institutions except for the *Nikkeijin Kai* federation or FNJKP. The Japan-based NGO *Kigyo Kyogi Kai* financially supports its activities. The Japan Foundation Manila Office also assists it by supplying reading materials such as Japanese magazines and press releases. Moreover, the Philippine government supports it by backing *Nikkeijin's* petitions to the Japanese government to register Category B *Nikkeijin* in their Japanese parent's family register. In 1998, the *Nikkeijin Kai* federation established the *Philippine Nikkeijin Mutual Foundation* (PNJMF) to assist *Nikkeijin* in uplifting their standards of living and help the federation in carrying out its goals and duties. Through this system of assistance, *Nikkeijin* and their founded associations have been assured that their social existence would linger across generations. Recently, the Japanese government started to support logistically the PNJMF training center through a grassroots assistance project aiming at improving the "capacities of the foundation in providing free 40-day intensive lessons on Japanese way of life, culture, and matters related to Japanese employer-employee relations" ("Grassroots Assistance" 2000).

At an individual level, *Nikkeijin* in Davao enjoy economic empowerment through a program assisting them to get Japanese nationality, as well as a package service including pre-departure training. *Nikkeijin* who have been granted Japanese nationality (and have decided to work in Japan) may undergo a two-month Japanese language study in PNJK's office. Their prospective employers in Japan shoulder the expenses. A similar system is observable in all the chapters of the *Nikkeijin Kai* federation in the country. Furthermore, successful applicants choose a job to engage in

and a company to work for. With PNJK's assistance, they subsequently apply for their passport at the Japanese embassy. The PNJK also assists *Nikkeijin* without Japanese nationality (mostly *Sansei* and *Yonsei*) to obtain work visas for Japan. Both the head of PNJMF and that of PNJK monitor the labor contracts and working conditions of *Nikkeijin* workers. They also go to Japan yearly to check if *Nikkeijin* migrants follow their signed contracts. Hence, the main objective of the *Nikkeijin Kai* federation, which is to serve as a coordinator to link Japanese companies with prospective *Nikkeijin* migrant workers, is fulfilled (see FJDSA).

The migration of *Nikkeijin* from the Philippines to Japan is part of the large-scale movement of *Nikkeijin* from different countries, notably from Brazil and Peru. Most *Nikkeijin* migrants are young men below thirty years of age, mostly *Sansei*, working in the Japanese manufacturing sector (Goto 2007, p. 22). Given their comparatively older age, many *Nisei* cannot apply for such demanding jobs. The first group of Filipino *Sansei* arrived in Japan in 1999 as long-term residents through the collective efforts of the local government of Choushi City in Chiba Prefecture, of the companies hiring these migrants, and of *Nikkeijin* associations based in the Philippines and in Japan (Tutor 2007). At present, Filipino *Nikkeijin* are concentrated in the Japanese manufacturing sector as factory workers. This sector forms an economic niche for *Nikkeijin* migrants in Japan. Recently, the great majority of these migrants have found "indirect employment" or employment by labor contractors who dispatch them to production lines under three-month contracts or shorter ones; in this case, *Nikkeijin* migrant workers represent a reliable source of manpower that can meet the immediate demands of Japanese manufacturing companies (see Thranhardt 1999; Knight 2000).

My five interviewees revealed that some of their children or grandchildren were working in Japan, because "Japan is a rich country" and "it is easier to find jobs there than in other countries". Hence, economic motives appear to be their dominant reason for acquiring Japanese nationality, rather than their war-derived stigma of discrimination for years.

Even though they could have moved and lived permanently in Japan, they prefer staying in the Philippines. Celia, Maria and Carmen plan to spend the remaining years of their lives in Davao as they are used to the country's tropical climate and feel less pressured to work than in Japan. Jirou and Roberto have been working in Japan in order to be with their children, but they also spend extended vacations in the Philippines to be with their spouses and to look after their family properties. For these reasons, all of them applied for residence certificate from the Philippine government, in contradiction with their narrative emphasizing that their "real identity" was Japanese. The interviewees' choice of job and place of residence was more influenced by factors such as their age, the country where their family properties are located, the type of climate, and the duties to perform to extended family members in the Philippines than by their Japanese descent.

Issues concerning Filipino *Nikkeijin*

Nikkeijin today cannot be considered anymore as a marginalized group in the Philippine society since their collective efforts to empower themselves have turned their negative images into positive ones. The Japanese government's recognition of their existence by granting them Japanese nationality and allowing them to migrate to Japan has certainly played a great role in such a social image transformation. As I showed in the preceding sections through the case of Davao *Nikkeijin* and their association, the process of *Nikkeijin*'s social empowerment pictures a minority group's struggle and success. Nevertheless, issues and problems remain concerning migration, social class, and identity formation.

Since the launching of the program that assists *Nikkeijin* to get Japanese passport, the PNJK has encountered two major problems regarding Davao *Nikkeijin* working in Japan: instances of exploitation of *Nikkeijin* workers by Japanese employers (requesting them to work more or paying them less than stipulated in the contract), and these workers' sometimes irresponsible behavior (changing job or company in violation of their contract). Other chapters of the *Nikkeijin Kai* federation in the

country have also confronted the same issues. In their attempts to solve these problems, the *Nikkeijin Kai* federation in the Philippines that acts as an intermediary between the *Nikkeijin* and their employers has adopted specific measures. To prevent workers from changing employer, the federation now requires from them a cash bond that would be given to their Japanese employers once they leave before the end of their contract: at the time of the interview, a cash bond of 25,000 pesos was required from *Nikkeijin* workers before their departure to Japan. If they stay in the company as expected, this cash bond will be refunded to them at the end of their contract. PNJK also warns Davao *Nikkeijin* migrants that it will blacklist the names of those who violate their labor contract, as well as those of their wives, children, and grandchildren. Regarding labor exploitation, PNJK gives the *Nikkeijin* workers questionnaire of evaluation to be filled-up and sent back after two months to monitor their working conditions and seek immediate solutions in case of exploitation. According to the five *Nisei* interviewed, the living conditions of their children and grandchildren in Japan are constantly looked after by the PNJK and the FNJKP. The implementation of these measures has reduced the number of problems encountered by the PNJK.

However, recent problems of human trafficking appear more difficult to solve. The International Labor Organization reports that some “foundations” pretending to help *Nikkeijin* to work in Japan are in reality “trafficking fronts” connected with the *yakuza* (ILO 2004, p. 23). There is also the problem of false *Nikkeijin* who pretend to have lost their important records that could prove their Japanese origin. Problems such as these show that *Nikkeijin* migration, like those of other migration streams in the world, has turned into a complex social process and therefore has become more difficult to control. Moreover, the trafficking of “true” and “false” *Nikkeijin* into Japan put into question the capacity of “authentic” *Nikkeijin* foundations and associations to safeguard the well-being of their members against unscrupulous individuals and groups. As the *Nikkeijin* migration phenomenon becomes more common and immigration policy in Japan less strict for unskilled workers (as the result of the 1990 revised Japanese

Immigration Law), the assistance offered by Philippine-based *Nikkeijin* NGOs like PNJK to would-be migrants becomes progressively insufficient.

Another issue raised by *Nikkeijin* empowerment in the Philippine setting touches the concept of social class mobility. Migrating and working in Japan have improved the socio-economic status of the families in the Philippines of this minority group. In Japan, their social class position is generally considered higher than that of Filipino entertainers. Working in the manufacturing sector rather than in the entertainment industry has given *Nikkeijin* a positive image of Filipino migrant workers in Japan as a crucial work force sustaining Japan's economic development. Nevertheless, *Nikkeijin* in Japan remain a minority group considered internally and externally as "different". Even though their migration has provided them with a source of symbolic capital allowing them to access the higher echelons of the social hierarchy in the Philippines, the type of work they are engaged in, unskilled and manual, and their obvious cultural difference from native Japanese have put them in an inferior social class position in Japan. This "contradictory social class mobility" (Parreñas 2001, p. 150-196) of *Nikkeijin* migrants from the Philippines resembles more or less that of Filipino domestic workers: upward social class mobility "here" (in the Philippines) as they accumulate symbolic capital, but downward mobility "there" (overseas) as they perform socially less-valored jobs that do not please anymore the majority population in the receiving countries.

Furthermore, the Japanese government's granting of nationality to some *Nikkeijin* and the *Nikkeijin*'s desire to acquire such nationality raise the question of *Nikkeijin*'s identity. Are they Japanese by ancestry or citizenship but culturally Filipino? Or do they possess equally mixed Japanese and Filipino identities? These questions go beyond the scope of the present study but, as shown in the preceding sections on Davao *Nikkeijin*'s empowerment, it is obvious that the *Nikkeijin*'s claim of being Japanese or Filipino is contextual and negotiated. As a response to social discrimination after World War II, they adopted ways to reinforce their

“Filipino-ness” and hide their Japanese ethnic origin. When an opportunity to become Japanese arrived, they sought ways to acquire Japanese nationality hoping to insure the future of their children and grandchildren through long-term labor migration to Japan. That is to say, they have reinforced their Japanese identity acquired through blood as a strategy of family reproduction and upward social class mobility in the Philippines. These cases resemble those of Okinawan women migrants in the Philippines who displayed both primordial and situational identities: when they arrived in the country, they subsumed their primordial identity in order to be accepted in the Philippine society, but as Japan became an economically progressive country, they began to highlight their own “Japaneseness” allowing them to take advantage of the economic opportunities presented to them (Maehara 2001, p. 75).

Tsuda Takeyuki illustrates in his study of Brazilian *Nikkeijin* in Japan that they were “positive minorities” (1999, p. 147) in Brazil, socially respected and enjoying a socio-cultural prestige they believed to be resulting from their Japanese ancestry; consequently, they developed a strong Japanese identity. On the contrary, when they migrated to Japan, they became a “negative minority” or “a group that suffers from low social status, cultural disparagement, and discrimination” (Tsuda 1998, p. 321). As a result, most of them developed an ethnic counter-identity and eventually emphasized their Brazilianness as a form of resistance to the cultural pressures that Japanese society placed on them (Tsuda 2000, p. 60). Based on these studies, *Nikkeijin* migrants from the Philippines who are likewise concentrated in Japan’s manufacturing industry as their Brazilian counterparts presumably experience similar difficulties in fully integrating themselves into the Japanese society. Daniela de Carvalho (2003, p. 196-197) remarks in her study of *Nikkei* communities in Japan the problematic concept of *Nikkeijin* that challenges Japanese and non-Japanese identities:

The concept of “blood”, Japanese culture and Japanese language have become inextricably linked and have been used to determine who is (and can be) Japanese. The *Nikkeijin* as a category dismantle

this concept, since they share the 'blood' but not the commonalities of Japanese culture and mother tongue.

This remark points to the Japanese homogeneity myth: in the case of *Nikkeijin* migrants, their partial "Japaneseness" and their mixed cultural background impede them from being fully accepted as Japanese in the Japanese society. As for the Filipino *Nikkeijin*, the discourse of restoring their "Japaneseness" is likely to endure since it is the easiest way for them to justify their application for Japanese nationality.

Conclusion

This article has shown the process of *Nikkeijin*'s empowerment in the Philippines as viewed through the case of Davao *Nikkeijin* and their associations. The historical background of Japanese immigration in the Philippines, specifically in Davao and in the aftermath of the Pacific War, shows that "*Nikkeijin*" is both an internally and externally ascribed category that acquired negative, but later positive connotation in the country. Examining the cognitive, psychological, political and economic dimensions of empowerment, it appears that *Nikkeijin*'s social empowerment resulted from the dynamic interaction between external (Japanese government's initiative, Japan-based NGOs' actions, Philippine government's recognition) and internal (collective awareness and mobilization) forces. It is also evident that through the PNJK, *Nikkeijin* in Davao have played a great role in organizing a national federation of the *Nikkeijin* communities in the Philippines. Through its different activities, *Nikkeijin* have become a socially visible and accepted group, and migration to Japan has been a significant driving force in this process.

It is observed that the *Nikkeijin* migration to Japan has turned them from a socially displaced into a socially valued minority group in the Philippines. Their case affirms how descent can become a passport to social mobility, while allowing them to ensure the social reproduction or social continuity of their family and of their group. The acquisition of

Japanese nationality (for some *Nisei*) or of the right to work in Japan (for *Nisei*, *Sansei* and *Yonsei*) marks the end of their long years of social alienation, a kind of success to guarantee their better socio-economic status in the Philippines, because empowerment needs resources to continuously nurture it. Studying *Nikkeijin* in the context of migration could provide useful insights to understand profoundly the concept of empowerment and its relation to individual and collective identity formation. The discrimination they used to face in the Philippines seems over, but now it is in Japan that Filipino *Nikkeijin* appear to encounter discrimination, as evidenced by the cases of labor exploitation reported by the PNJK. Such recent issues have not yet been much studied and will represent an interesting topic of investigation in the future. The analysis offered in this article could serve as a point of departure for such studies.

Notes

- 1 Migration is understood here as the relatively permanent inflow and outflow of people from one place, country or region into another.
- 2 Translation by the author
- 3 American military installations in the Philippines, such as in Baguio, Pampanga, Tarlac and Cabanatuan were also attacked during this time.
- 4 Names of the interviewees have been modified.
- 5 It is the copy of one's family record bearing the names of all family members in a household and other pertinent information about them such as their permanent address, date of birth and death, and date and place of marriage. It forms the basis of Japanese nationality.
- 6 Details about this center can be found on its official website at <http://www.pnlsc.com/english/index.html>
- 7 This is in accordance to section 8 of the IPRA stating that "marriages performed in accordance with customary laws, rites, traditions and practices shall be recognized as valid" ("Rules and Regulations" 1998, p. 23).

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The *Iemoto* System in Japanese Performing Arts in Southern California: Its Transformation and Influences on the Diaspora Musical Practices¹

MINAKO WASEDA

Abstract

This study examines the transformation of the *iemoto* system as a cultural institution that has shaped traditional Japanese music in southern California. The *iemoto* system is a hierarchical structure of teachers and students within a school of an art. The system prescribes specific processes for transmitting the art, as well as special teacher-student relationships within the structure. In southern California, the *iemoto* system has transformed itself to cope with Japanese-American environments. This transformation involved the weakening of ideological principles as the foundation of the *iemoto* system and produced features distinctive in southern California.

1. Introduction

The *iemoto* system has played significant roles in the transmission of various Japanese performing arts. Sociologists have studied the *iemoto* system in its close historical ties with the Japanese feudalistic social structure as well as its continuity, prosperity, and problems in modern Japan. They suggest that the *iemoto* system continues to survive in changing Japan due to its deep roots in Japanese socio-cultural history and mentality

(Kawashima 1957; Nishiyama 1982a, 1982b; Shimazaki 1953; Ortolani 1969). As the *iemoto* system expands beyond Japan, one asks whether it can effectively function in societies outside Japan. If the system changes, one asks how that change will affect the Japanese arts that depend on the system. This study explores such questions overlooked in previous studies through the examination of *iemoto* system in southern California, particularly in *koto* (zither), *min'yō* (folksong), and *nagauta* (a vocal genre accompanied by *shamisen* or three-stringed lute).

Based on my fieldwork observation and interviews² conducted mainly from 1994 to 1997, I suggest that the *iemoto* system has transformed itself in Southern California to accommodate a different set of social, cultural, and psychological factors, and that this transformation has led to the transformation of various musical practices. Although ethnomusicological studies on culture change, particularly as a result of Western influence on non-Western culture, have largely focused on the resultant musical changes, I argue that cultural institutions involved in music, such as the *iemoto* system, also change through cultural contact, and that such an institutional change could become a key cause to produce transformations in musical practices. I also point out that the Japanese language is a key element from a linguistic point of view in the formation/transmission of the hierarchical *iemoto* system; in other words, the loss of the Japanese language is likely to undermine the system. The transformation of the *iemoto* system in southern California also suggests that the Japanese vertical society as exemplified in the *iemoto* system is not as static as so persuasively described by Nakane (1967), but can be adjusted to the needs and conditions of the people involved. Such a view of social structure/system supports the idea pointed out in recent socio-anthropological theories that individual agencies are not only controlled by the social structure/system, but also control it through rational choice of action to generate social/cultural change. In the following sections, I first explain what the *iemoto* system is, then I outline the historical background of the *iemoto* system in southern California, and finally I describe its transformation and influences on the musical practices.

2. The *Iemoto* System

Iemoto (家元) refers to the headmaster of a school of an art.³ The *iemoto* system is a hierarchical structure of teachers and students organized under the supreme authority of the *iemoto*. The *iemoto* system prescribes specific processes for transmitting the art, as well as special teacher-student relationships within the structure. Although the *iemoto* or *iemoto*-like masters have existed as early as the Nara period (710-784) in the world of *gagaku* (court music) (Hirano 1981), it was only around the mid-Edo period (the 18th to the early 19th centuries) that the “*iemoto* system” was established with the invention of the *natori* (名取) system (*natori* literally means “taking a name”) (Nishiyama 1982b: 474-5, 484).

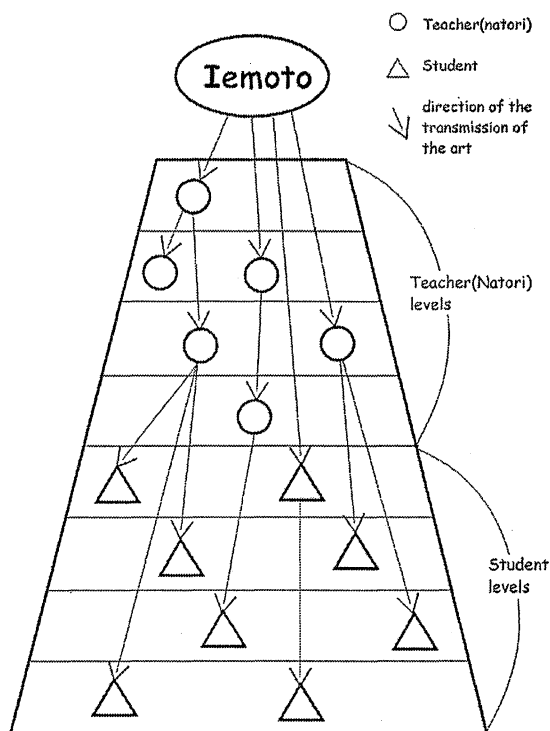


FIGURE 1 *Iemoto* System

The *natori* are licensed disciples who are given professional names from the *iemoto*. As licensed professionals, *natori* are allowed to teach lower level students within the school (see Fig. 1). However, they cannot issue *natori* licenses or any other licenses to their students. They can only request the *iemoto* to issue the licenses for their accomplished students. By separating the right to teach and the right to license, the *natori* system, thus, became a convenient means to reproduce and effectively disseminate the art of the school under the *iemoto*'s control.⁴

The teacher-student relationships and the ways of transmitting the arts within the *iemoto* system are very much prescribed by the moral values that have supported the feudalistic *ie* structure⁵ or the origin of the *iemoto* system. *Ie* (家), translated as "house" or "household," refers to more than a simple conjugal family in the customary sense found in contemporary Japan and elsewhere. It is a unit of several families, including both blood-related and non blood-related, that are hierarchically ordered and bound by a particular task or goal, such as agriculture, military affairs, religious rituals, and political administration. Through the process of its historical evolution, the *ie* structure has been combined with various moral values derived from religious beliefs, such as a Confucian sense of hierarchical loyalty, a Buddhist emphasis on patriarchal lineage in the transmission of tradition, and a Shinto view of the veneration of ancestry (Heine 1995: 34). Supported by these moral values, the *iemoto* system, a product of Edo feudalism, survives to the present day Japan, which is based on the ideals of capitalism and democracy. Far from declining, the *iemoto* system has even prospered and expanded its sphere of influence to various performing arts genres and other cultural practices that are not traditionally associated with the *iemoto* system.⁶ This means that the *iemoto* system is not static but is rather flexible and adjusted to different conditions to maintain its essential ideological principles (explained later) in contemporary Japan.

Sociologist Nishiyama attributes this continuity and prosperity of the *iemoto* system to the Japanese mentality of attachment to authority, particularly one with traditional and historical values (1982b: 425-7). This

mentality has been tenaciously maintained in Japanese society even with the onslaught of Western moral values, which have been only partially adopted. Today's *iemoto* system is not a relic from the past, but one of the various fictitious *ie* structures, which have been supported by this mentality and are still prevalent in Japanese society (Heine 1995; Hsu 1975, Kawashima 1957, Murakami 1979, Nakane 1967). *Ie*-ism continues to function "as a pattern or model of Japanese social behavior that is considered 'the basic principle on which Japanese society is built'" (Heine 1995: 33).

3. Historical Background of the *Iemoto* System in Southern California

In southern California, the Japanese community came into existence in the 1910s, and some immigrants who had some experience in Japanese performing arts such as *yōkyoku* (vocal music for *nō* drama), *biwa* (pear-shaped lute), *shakuhachi* (vertical bamboo flute) and *koto* (zither) started to teach their arts.⁷ At this early stage, there were already some teachers introducing themselves as belonging to specific schools of arts, such as Yamada and Ikuta Schools of *koto* and Kanze and Hōshō Schools of *yōkyoku*. Distinctions among the different schools based on the *iemoto* system were thus well recognized and maintained among the Japanese immigrants and their descendents. However, this does not mean that the constraints and rules inherent in the *iemoto* system were fully practiced. For example, there was a case where a former female itinerant entertainer from Japan who had settled in California visited Japan in the early 1920s for the purpose of acquiring a *natori* license. She directly asked the *iemoto* of the *nagauta* school where she used to belong to issue her a license. On the grounds that she had been performing for a long time, she was exceptionally granted a *natori* license without the formal examination usually required for it.⁸ As this episode reveals, the regulations for granting the *natori* license to the emigrants were looser. In pre-World War II California, the factional boundaries among different *iemoto* schools also

seemed to have been loose. A Nisei *koto* teacher, Wakita Kayoko (脇田佳代子),⁹ recalls that there were even some occasions where *koto* performers of different schools played together.¹⁰

Japanese performing arts transplanted by the first generation of Japanese immigrants (Issei) were eventually transmitted to the American-born second generation (Nisei), and in the period between the late 1930s and the outbreak of World War II, there appeared some Nisei who had studied Japanese classical dance in Japan under Japanese masters and returned to the U.S. with their *natori* licenses. Unlike the aforementioned example, these Nisei went through the formal procedures to become *natori*-licensed teachers.

During World War II, Japanese performing arts further prospered in the Japanese American concentration camps, where more than 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry living in the west coast of the U.S. had been interned under the pretext of national security. Recreational activities including music and dance were encouraged within the camps as an outlet for the internees' anger and anxiety in the abnormal camp life.¹¹ The prosperity of Japanese performing arts in camps established the basis for their recovery in the postwar Japanese-American community. With the amendment of the immigration laws in 1952, the postwar Japanese immigrants, the so-called Shin-Issei, began to settle in Los Angeles and its environs. Among them were quite a few teachers of Japanese performing arts. Together with the Nisei teachers, they have greatly contributed to the development of Japanese performing arts in the postwar Japanese American community and were also instrumental in bringing in the direct influences of the *iemoto* system in the U.S. through their intimate relation with the *iemoto* in Japan.

4. Transformation of the *iemoto* System and its Influences on the Musical Practices

The Nisei and Shin-Issei teachers, nevertheless, could not maintain the system as it was in Japan. They faced three main obstacles: 1) the shift

of the students from Issei and Nisei to Sansei (the third generation) and younger generations who are more Americanized in their language, moral values, and mentality,¹² 2) the American socio-cultural environment, which is different from that in Japan, and 3) the teachers' own recognition of the negative aspects of the *iemoto* system. These obstacles undermined the following four ideological principles pertaining to the *iemoto* system: 1) loyal obligations; 2) the absolute value of the authoritative ranks; 3) a teacher-student relationship that emphasizes hierarchical distinction; and 4) a teaching method that emphasizes imitation. In the following sections, I will illustrate each of the above issues.

4.1 Loyal Obligations

As a fictitious *ie* structure, the *iemoto* system involves moral values of obligation and loyalty. Within the system, students are indebted to their teachers and the *iemoto*; in return for their teachings of authentic art and repertoire, the students assume the following loyal obligations: a) personal attachment to one's teacher and the school, b) loyalty to the art and repertoire of the school, and c) monetary obligations (Kawashima 1957: 329-331). Theoretically these obligations are sanctified by the moral value of loyalty; they are "voluntary acts" but not duties. In reality, however, they often become inescapable burdens on the students in Japan. In California, the obligations taken for granted in Japan have been undermined, a development that can be analyzed as follows.

4.1.1 Personal Attachment to One's Teacher and the School

Within the *iemoto* system, a student should be personally and emotionally attached to one's own teacher and the school. The student must not switch his/her teacher even within the same school.¹³ It goes without saying that he/she must not be engaged in other schools or become independent. These rules do not work in California because: 1) the students in California – predominantly Japanese-Americans – value individualism

and democratic human relationship rather than attachment to a single authority, 2) less competition among teachers in California makes it easy to establish oneself as the *iemoto* of a new school, 3) less competition among different schools in California weakens one's feeling of belonging to a particular school, and 4) the linguistic and geographical distances of the Japanese-American students from the *iemoto* and the school in Japan weaken their sense of belonging to them. Below are two examples to illustrate these points.

In 1994, six among ten *min'yō* teachers in California were the *natori* licensees produced by Satō Matsutoyo (佐藤 松豊), the pioneer *min'yō* teacher in California; She had taught these students and intermediated between them and her *iemoto* in Japan for their licenses. However, only three of them still belonged to her school in 1994. Due to some personal troubles within the school, the rest became either the *natori* of other schools, or *iemoto* of a new *min'yō* school. Matsutoyo described such students as "infidel" (*susande iru*) with great disappointment.¹⁴ However, from the viewpoint of Western moral principles of democracy and individualism, there is no reason to stay with a single teacher. Students can implement their right to select and change teachers to effectively pursue their artistic goals. As Nishiyama details, it is not unusual, even in Japan, for a disciple to break off from a school and establish his/her own school (1982b: 448-459). This phenomenon has become especially prominent since the 1950s, and was called the "*iemoto* boom" (*ibid.*: 265). In California, becoming a new *iemoto* is even easier due to less competition among teachers.

The second example concerns the disciples of Kudō Kazue (工藤 和枝), the pioneer *koto* teacher in post-World War II Los Angeles.¹⁵ Within the Miyagi School where Kudō belongs, there is a sub-organization called Miyagi-kai (Miyagi Group), which consists only of the *natori* disciples. In Japan, once a student becomes a *natori*, it is mandatory for her/him to become a member of this group. The members receive the Miyagi-kai newsletters, and are allowed to perform in the concerts officially sponsored by the Miyagi-kai. For Japanese *natori* disciples, membership in the Miyagi-

kai also grants them certain social reputation. Following the Japanese practice, all *natori* disciples of Kudō belong to the Miyagi-kai for some time, but many of them eventually quit the group because firstly, they cannot read the Miyagi-kai newsletters, which are written only in Japanese, and secondly, they cannot perform in the Miyagi-kai-sponsored concerts anyway, which are held in Japan.¹⁶ Thus, they cannot find any benefit in maintaining the membership by paying the annual fee (5,000 yen in 1994, which was approximately \$50). Moreover, Miyagi School is the only school of *koto* currently taught in southern California. Without a rivaling school, learning the *koto* becomes more important to students than school competition.

4.1.2 Loyalty to the Art and Repertoire of the School

One of the most important objectives of the *iemoto* system is to preserve and maintain the arts and repertoire established by the *iemoto*. Disciples, thus, unite themselves as a faction and monopolize and protect the arts and repertoires of their *iemoto* within the school, while they become non-receptive to the arts and repertoire of other schools. Such loyal obligation to the arts and repertoire of the *iemoto* has been loosened in California for various reasons. In the *koto* genre, this loosening occurs because the majority of the students do not speak Japanese and tends to avoid vocal pieces, which are a major part of the traditional *koto* repertoire. The paucity of purely instrumental pieces within the traditional *koto* repertoire has led some *koto* teachers to expand their repertoire by borrowing pieces from rival schools and unauthorized sources. For example, many *koto* teachers in California who belong to the Miyagi School have incorporated contemporary instrumental pieces by Japanese composers like Sawai Tadao (沢井 忠夫).¹⁷ Sawai is a *koto* composer-performer, who originally belonged to the Miyagi School. Seeking creative activities beyond the confines of the *iemoto* system, he left the school and opened his own *koto* school as an independent *koto* professional. Thus, teaching and playing Sawai's compositions are not accepted within the

Miyagi School in Japan. However, teachers in California violate this rule to accommodate their students. They also frequently incorporate in their concert programs the *koto* arrangements of popular music such as the songs by the Beatles, as well as Western classical music such as the works by Bach and Mozart. Such acceptance is seen in Japan as well. What is unusual in California, however, is the domination of new compositions and arrangements over the traditional ones.

Expansion of repertoire has also occurred in *shamisen* music. There are various sub-genres within *shamisen* music, such as *nagauta*, *tokiwazu*, and *kiyomoto*, which are differentiated by the types of *shamisen*, repertoires, and performance techniques.¹⁸ In Japan, *shamisen* musicians specialize in one *shamisen* genre, and never play the repertoire of others, especially on stage. In California, there are only *nagauta shamisen* teachers,¹⁹ but they are asked to accompany Japanese classical dance, which uses a variety of *shamisen* genres as its accompaniment. Due to the lack of *shamisen* specialists other than in *nagauta*, the rule is ignored in California. For example, Kineya Kichisabuō (杵屋 吉三郎) learned and taught the *shamisen* repertoire outside of his specialty. And he even enjoyed cultivating the sounds of various *shamisen* on his *nagauta* instruments.²⁰

Expansion of repertoire has also occurred in the *min'yō* genre. Traditionally professional *min'yō* singers specialized in the songs of their native regions because articulation of the local languages (dialects and accents) is so important in *min'yō* singing.²¹ For example, Satō Matsutoyo specialized in songs of the western part of Japan where she is from. After living in the U.S. for 30 years, Matsutoyo now sings and teaches songs from other parts of Japan. She expanded her repertoire to accommodate her California students who emigrated from various parts of Japan and requested that Matsutoyo teach songs from their own home towns. Matsutoyo further expanded her repertoire by learning from her old Issei students the regional variants of the famous folksongs, which she had never known in Japan. She states that having been able to absorb such song

variants maintained by the Issei is the most grateful experience she has had in the U.S.²²

Performance techniques particular to specific schools can also be changed in California, demonstrating that loyalty to the *iemoto's* art and tradition is weak here. Several Shin-Issei who had learned *koto* from Kudō Kazue of the Miyagi School in Los Angeles pointed out that Kudō has developed her own performance techniques, slightly different from those employed by the Miyagi School in Japan. For instance, in the technique called "*suku*" (picking up), the performer picks up a string with the back of the thumb pick. The angle that the string and the thumb makes is somewhere around 45 degrees, because the performer uses a corner of the square pick. However, Kudō puts the thumb almost perpendicular to the string.²³ Another example is the technique called "*chirashi-zume*" or "*shu*" (rubbing). In this technique, the performer strongly rubs a string with the right side of the third finger pick. However, Kudō uses two fingers, the second and the third, for this technique.²⁴ Kawabata Saeko (川端佐枝子), a student of Kudō and a teacher for her institution, the Kudō Koto Music Conservatory, suggests that these techniques modified by Kudō produce stronger and clearer sounds than the original techniques of the Miyagi School.²⁵ Since Kudō has been the leading figure of *koto* music in Los Angeles in post-World War II, her influences have reached many local *koto* teachers and students. Kudō's performance techniques, although different from those taught in Japan, are now a mainstream in Los Angeles.

4.1.3 Monetary Obligations

In Japan, students accept their monetary obligations to their teachers. In addition to regular lesson fees, students give gratuities to their teachers, and pay all the required expenses for their staged performances called *osarai kai* (おさらい会). In California, these monetary obligations are not taken for granted, because it is often difficult for Japanese-American students to understand the concept of *osarai kai* as their Japanese counterparts do. In Japan, *osarai kai* is not considered a public concert,

but a staged rehearsal, to which the students' relatives and friends are invited to attend to witness their artistic progress. Thus, *osarai kai* is usually free, and oftentimes serves complimentary food to the audience. This system of *osarai kai* costs students tremendously. It is common that an *osarai kai* costs a student 100,000 yen (about \$1000) or even more.²⁶ For many students in California, such monetary obligations seem not only illogical, but also economically difficult to fulfill.

Kudō Kazue, the pioneer *koto* teacher in Los Angeles, understands the American viewpoint. To reduce the students' financial burden, she has adopted a concert style; she charges admission fees for her students' staged performances and opens them to the public. This new system has been very successful. For instance, her students' concert in 1993 was held in the Japan America Theater, with the admission fees ranging from \$10 to \$15. The theater with the capacity of about 800 people was filled with almost 700 members of the audience. The concert style of financing the staged performances has now been adopted by many teachers in California.

As the staged performances become concerts, appropriate preparation is needed. To sell tickets, the program has become more varied to entertain the general public, which consists not only of Japanese and Japanese-Americans, though predominant, including the students' family members and relatives, but also people of other ethnic backgrounds, such as the students' friends and people from the local community. For instance, the *koto* concerts by the students of Kudō and those by one of her leading disciples, Awaya Yōko (粟屋 陽子), include not only classical and contemporary *koto* pieces, but also *koto* arrangements of popular and Western classical music. They also explore special attractions such as performing the *koto* with the mandolin, *pipa* (Chinese lute), Japanese drums, or symphony orchestra, and combining the *koto* performances with flamenco dance, demonstration of Japanese flower arrangement, or shadow puppet theater. By successfully appealing to the general audience, the concert style performance not only reduces the students' financial burden, but also allows them more opportunities to perform on stage.

The concert style, thus, has various merits, yet some teachers are concerned with the decline of traditional repertoires caused by the system. How to balance transmission of tradition and economic feasibility remains a problem for individual teachers.

4.2 Absolute Value of the Authoritative Ranks

Authoritative and clearly defined titles and ranks within the *iemoto* system are highly esteemed and powerful in Japan due to Japanese respect for authorities (Nishiyama 1982b: 425-447). Suffice it to say, teachers with higher ranks automatically gain not only more respect and power, but also more financial rewards.

This practical value of the authoritative ranks has lost its effects in California. First, the Japanese-American students place higher importance on attaining musical proficiency rather than achieving ranks. Since the license fees are extremely high (in the case of *koto*, for example, ranging from \$400 to \$5,000, depending on the rank), there are even some students who refuse to apply for the licenses.²⁷ For them licenses or ranks are so-to-speak “degrees,” which should be given for one’s accomplishments, not for the money one pays. Second, the value of the licenses as teacher’s certificates does not appeal to the Japanese American students, because most of them do not aim at becoming teachers. They learn traditional Japanese music to maintain or enhance their ethnic identity and/or cultural heritage. Thus, in California, ranks or licenses are not established as a symbol of authenticity or as a teacher’s certificate.

The indifference to ranks is also clearly seen in typical concert programs in California. In Japan, *koto* concert programs list different ranks among the *natori* licensees, such as *kyōshi* (教師 teacher), *shihan* (師範 master), and *daishihan* (大師範 great master). In California, however, the *natori* licensees of any ranks are all equally given the title, “teaching degree,” on the programs.²⁸ This leaves audiences to direct their attention to ability instead of rank distinctions. From an artistic point of view, this is a positive change,

because as suggested by Nishiyama, too much dependence on authoritative ranks prevents people from cultivating their own ability of evaluation, and enables the incompetent to disguise as competent, abusing the authoritative titles to cover the reality (1982b: 436).

The reduced value of authoritative ranks in California, however, has a negative consequence too, that is, significant economic damage to the teachers of traditional music due to the decline of the number of students who become the *natori*. The main source of income for the teachers of traditional music is not the lesson fees, but the license fees and commissions paid by their students. As mediators between the students and the *iemoto*, the teachers receive part of the license fees as commissions. In California, the decline of students receiving the *natori* license has made it almost impossible to make one's living solely by teaching traditional Japanese music. This economic hardship leads to a vicious circle, discouraging Japanese-American students from joining the profession. In the late 1990s, it was already a concern of the Shin-Issei and older Nisei teachers teaching at the time that no professional teachers would be produced from the Japanese-American community to succeed their positions. With the aging and passing of these generations, the situation is becoming even more serious.

4.3 A Teacher-Student Relationship that Emphasizes Hierarchical Distinction

Within the *iemoto* system, the teacher-student relationship is defined by the moral value of hierarchical loyalty, a Confucian value combined with the traditional Japanese *ie* ideology. The hierarchical distinction between a teacher and his/her students should always be recognized and demonstrated by the student's prescribed modes of speech, attitude, and behavior. The students also feel an obligation to the teacher for his/her transmission of the authentic art and repertoire of the *iemoto*. Such a teacher-student relationship within the *iemoto* system has been justified

and maintained by the moral values of hierarchical loyalty, respect for authority, and feeling of obligations.

This hierarchical teacher-student relationship in the *iemoto* system has become loose in California. One of the main reasons is that such a teacher-student relationship contradicts the American ideology of democracy and egalitarianism. The *koto* teacher Awaya said, “The teacher-student relationship is ‘closer and friendlier’ in America. In Japan, students pay more due respect to their teachers” (もっと先生を立てる *motto sensei wo tateru*).²⁹ There is no doubt that American students, too, pay respect to their teachers, and have a sense of appreciation for their teachings. However, the teacher-student relationship in California is not restrained by those feelings of respect and appreciation. Rather, it is a “contract-based” relationship in a broader sense – that is, there are certain agreed-upon rules between teachers and students regarding what they can or cannot do in their respective positions.³⁰ The students, regardless of their respect and appreciation for their teachers, exercise their rights to the fullest based on those rules. Thus, they maintain a more democratic relationship with their teachers without unnecessary reservations or humiliations.

Another factor for the loosening of the hierarchical teacher-student relationship in California is the loss of the Japanese language among Japanese American students. Since Japanese is a rank-indicative language, this means the loss of rank distinction as expressed through the students’ language toward their teachers. Moreover, the use of English – a more status-neutral language – makes the student’s attitudes and behavior also more status-neutral.³¹ For instance, a Nisei *koto* teacher, Wakita Kayoko, explained that the manners and behavior of one of her Sansei (third generation Japanese American) students, who understands some Japanese, changed as the language shifted from Japanese to English in the lesson. As soon as English conversation starts, she acts and speaks much more informally. She can even say to Wakita, “Well, I’m tired today,” something a Japanese student would not say to his/her teacher directly and during lessons.³² Due to Japanese sensitivity to rank order, Japanese has developed

into a language rich and elaborate in status-indicative expressions, but poor in status neutral vocabulary, and thus, it “forces the actor to make a binary choice between respectful, formal behavior and disrespectful, informal behavior” (Lebra 1976: 70-1). This behavioral dichotomization forced by the Japanese language dissolves as the speaker switches his/her language to English.

The consequence of this change has two sides. On the one hand, it simply implies the separation of musical sound from its originally associated behavior, manners, and concepts. As Alan Merriam pointed out in his anthropological study of music, musical culture consists of not only the sound, but also music-related behavior and concepts (1964). Japanese-American parents often send their children to Japanese arts lessons (music, dance, martial arts, etc.) not only for cultural enrichment, but also for the Japanese moral and behavioral disciplines learned through the arts, such as how to politely act and show respect to their teachers, including the way of vowing. However, with the loss of the Japanese language, traditional Japanese manners and behavior are gradually being lost in the transmission of Japanese music in California, and thus, this musical culture is being learned only partially, with more emphasis on the sound.

On the other hand, the loss of traditional manners and behavior in the transmission of traditional Japanese music can realize more open relationships between teachers and students. Traditional obedience and reservation expected from the students of Japanese arts keep them respectfully distanced from the teacher, but this distance can often restrict the students’ access to knowledge and techniques. Establishing a more neutral relationship with the teacher, students can more freely ask questions and interact with their teachers.

4.4 A Teaching Method that Emphasizes Imitation

Traditionally, Japanese musicians learn their art through exact imitation of their masters (Kawashima 1957: 323-4). Unlike Western classical music, there is no systematic pedagogy. From the very beginning,

students learn the formal repertoire – not the exercises – through imitation (ibid.: 323-4). Teachers do not explain their art comprehensively. They rather grudge directly teaching their techniques, and expect their students to learn it by imitation and by trial and error. There is a common Japanese phrase, “the art is a thing to steal” (芸は盗むもの *Gei wa nusumu mono*). Here the word, “steal,” does not have a negative connotation as it usually has, but suggests that the students are not supposed to expect their teacher to teach them, but should learn the art from the teacher by earnestly listening to and watching him/her. As long as the acquisition of the art is confined in the imitation, the teachers as the sole source and model for learning can maintain their superiority and power of control over their students. Thus, the lack of organized pedagogy functions as a means to render the teacher’s control effective, and to maintain his/her authority.

Some teachers in California have discarded this traditional teaching method for the following reasons. First, Japanese-American students do not have the attitude of “stealing” the teachers’ art. They rather assume that teachers will teach because that is what they are paid for (the idea is based on the contract-based teacher-student relationship as discussed in the previous section). Second, most Japanese-American students learn traditional Japanese music as a hobby, not to become teachers or professional performers. Thus, they tend to be dependent upon the teachers’ leadership. Finally, some teachers who did not like the traditional method used when they were students in Japan are unwilling to use it now.

Because of these factors, some teachers in California have adopted alternative teaching methods. For instance, Awaya Yōko, a *koto* teacher, touches the students’ hands and fingers to teach appropriate positions. Traditional Japanese teachers would not touch, but rather let the students imitate.³³ A *nagauta* teacher, Kineya Yasofuji (杵屋 弥曾藤), tries to provide verbal explanations of the performance logics as much as possible. For instance, when the student cannot understand oral mnemonics traditionally used in *nagauta* lessons (口三味線 *kuchi jamisen*), she would show the beat by counting, “One and two and...,” and the like, and if there are certain tricks for specific performance techniques, she would explain them verbally. Yasofuji

maintains that although there are certain things that can be learned only by imitation, traditional Japanese teachers would grudge teaching what could be learned by explanation. Irritated by such a practice, Yasofuji rather avoids it.³⁴

Yasofuji also invented an original competency-level system to effectively motivate and guide her students to the higher stages. Unlike the ranking systems in such genres as *koto* and Japanese classical dance, there are no rank distinctions below the *natori* level in *nagauta*. Thus, the *nagauta* students' first objective is to acquire the *natori* license. However, this objective seems too far away for the beginners. Without knowing how much effort and time they need to devote to finally reach the *natori* level, students feel at loss and are discouraged. Yasofuji motivates and guides her students by giving them more viable, step-by-step objectives. In Yasofuji's original system, the students are required to progress through four different levels – beginner, intermediate, advanced, and master – before receiving the *natori* license. To pass each level, students have to master ten pieces specifically selected by Yasofuji for each level. The higher the level, the greater the difficulty of those required pieces. Thus, her students are to master forty pieces with a variety of techniques before receiving the *natori* license. These efforts on the part of the teachers are foreign to the traditional teaching method, which ultimately requires the students' own strong desire for learning.

5. The *Iemoto* System as a Tie between Southern California and Japan

In spite of the various changes discussed above, the *iemoto* system continues to exist in California, as teachers in California keep their ties with their *iemoto* in Japan. As a mediator of the *iemoto* system between the two countries, teachers in California, in a sense, have dual approaches to the system. On the one hand, they transform the system in their relation to the U.S., accommodating it to the local needs and conditions as well as pursuing their own policies. On the other hand, they maintain and respect the system in their relation to Japan.

I suggest the three main reasons that teachers in California maintain their involvement in the *iemoto* system. First, they need to belong to a particular *iemoto* so that their students can acquire the *natori* licenses. Although the value of the license as a teacher's certificate is less regarded in California, there are still students who wish to acquire it as a token of their accomplishments, if not as a certificate of teaching. The power of the *iemoto* as the sole authority able to issue the *natori* license is still in effect in California.

Second, since teachers in California are mostly those originally trained within the traditional *iemoto* system, they understand the system, and thus, tend to have an active sense of belonging and obligation to the *iemoto* than their Japanese-American students. For instance, a *nagauta* teacher, Kineya Yasofuji asked for her *iemoto*'s consent in introducing her own competency-level system of teaching. Another example is a *koto* teacher, Hashibe Hiromi (走辺 洋美), a "direct disciple" (直弟子 *jikideshi*) who had learned directly from the *iemoto* (or *sōke* 宗家)³⁵ of the Miyagi School before she began to teach in California in 1975. After more than twenty years of teaching in Los Angeles, she still teaches the traditional repertoire of the school and also performed in the centennial anniversary concert of the founder of the school (Miyagi Michio 宮城 道雄) in Japan in 1994.³⁶ In 1993, Hashibe began to perform contemporary pieces as a member of the fusion group, Kokingumi (古今組), together with a *shakuhachi* player, Yoshizawa Masakazu (吉沢 政和), and a Tsugaru-*shamisen* (a folk *shamisen* genre) player, Takahashi Tateo (高橋 建夫). When she performed with the group in Japan, she reported it to the *iemoto* because she considered it as her obligation to the school.

Third, teachers in California maintain their involvement in the *iemoto* system because their main musical resources including musical scores and musicians still derive from Japan. For instance, scores of newly composed pieces, as well as those of less popularized musical genres such as *hayashi* (flute and percussion ensemble) are not publicly available in either Japan or the U.S. Thus, if teachers in California do not have such scores, they need to make some arrangements with their colleagues or teachers in Japan

to acquire them. Such arrangements are difficult without their association with the *iemoto* system. The *iemoto* system is also an important route, through which teachers in California invite professional performers from Japan. These guest performers from Japan can raise the quality of the concerts, and also inspire the students in California. However, it is almost impossible to invite performers from different schools because of the exclusive and conservative nature of the *iemoto* system. Only within the *iemoto*-based relationship bound by the sense of loyalty and obligation, teachers in California hold the right to seek assistance from the school they belong to, while their Japanese colleagues and teachers have an obligation to provide such assistance.

As explained so far, the *iemoto* system functions as an important tie that connects the teachers in California with Japan, and this tie plays an important role in their activities in the U.S.

6. Concluding Remarks

This study examined the *iemoto* system in southern California in comparison with that in traditional Japanese context. It demonstrated that the *iemoto* system as transplanted in southern California has undergone significant changes, and in turn, generated various changes in musical practices. This development has essentially resulted from the loosening of the hierarchical teacher-student relationship that was derived from the *ie*-ideology of feudal Japan. Although the Japanese vertical society was described by Nakane as rather a static structure (1967), this study revealed its variability and adaptability to the needs and conditions of the people involved. The individual agencies engaged in the *iemoto* system were found to be not only the controlled, but also the controller of the system, making rational choice of action to generate changes. This study also proved that the loss of the Japanese language among the younger Japanese American students propelled the loosening of the hierarchical *iemoto* structure. Language not only conveys specific meanings, but also prescribes certain modes of behavior, which, in turn, affects personal relationships.

It should be noted, however, that the *iemoto* system has never been static in Japan either. Due to a variety of factors including rapid Westernization since the Meiji period (1868-1912), alternative ways of transmission have been attempted within and beyond the framework of the *iemoto* system in Japan.³⁷ Those changes were, however, only superficial or exceptional. The ideological principles as the very basis of the *iemoto* system are still tenaciously maintained in contemporary Japan. In southern California, by contrast, such ideological principles themselves have significantly been weakened, and this transformation, in turn, has greatly influenced the way Japanese performing arts have developed there.

The changes that have occurred in southern California overcome the conservatism and authoritarianism of the *iemoto* system, which have become subject to criticism in Japan as well, with the democratization and capitalist development of Japan. Such changes could, however, threaten the primary function of the *iemoto* system, that is, the preservation and transmission of arts, at the same time. For instance, emphasis on the instrumental repertoire of *koto* among Japanese Americans results in the exclusion of most of the traditional *koto* repertoire centering on singing. Moreover, such an imbalanced transmission of arts, combined with the rationalist, ability-oriented disinterest in ranks and licenses, makes it difficult to develop Japanese American professional teachers. This has become a very serious problem in southern California with the aging of Nisei and Shin-Issei teachers. Whether newly immigrated Shin-Issei take over the leading role, or Sansei (third generation) and Yonsei (fourth generation) teachers are somehow raised in the community, or without any successors, Japanese performing arts decline in southern California — the answer is yet unseen.

As a tentative conclusion of this study, I would like to address the following three points: 1) the *iemoto* system is subject to more radical transformation outside Japan once it is detached from the Japanese socio-cultural environment and mentality that support the system; 2) cultural institutions, such as the *iemoto* system, transform themselves to accommodate specific social, cultural, and psychological factors; and 3) transformed cultural

Cultural institutions, whether in the form of conservatories or traditional systems, exist in many musical cultures. The study of such musical institutions and their changes and effects on musical practices is an important key to understanding the transformation of musical traditions.

Finally, I propose the following two research possibilities to further develop this study. First, the large-scale Japanese diaspora communities exist in Hawai'i and some South American countries as well. Comparative study of the *iemoto* system in such diverse areas will provide further insights into the above-mentioned three points. Second, cross-cultural comparison and analysis of the ways traditional musical institutions (e.g. the *iemoto* system) have changed through immigration, colonialism, Westernization, tourism, technology, and the like, will greatly help us grasp the complex issues involved in the transmission of arts in contemporary world from diverse points of view.

Notes

- 1 This is a revised and translated version of the article originally published in Japanese (Waseda 2001).
- 2 All interviews were conducted primarily in Japanese.
- 3 The position of *iemoto* is either hereditary or non-hereditary depending on genres. When the *iemoto* is hereditary, but the blood-related disciples (usually sons) of the *iemoto* are considered incapable or inappropriate to succeed to the position, an alternative is sought among the non-blood-related disciples and adopted as an heir to the *iemoto*.
- 4 With the expansion of the *iemoto's* authority, the rank of intermediate teachers with the *iemoto*-like authority began to appear and was admitted as branch families. In this case, the *iemoto* as the head family to unify such branch families may be called *sōke* (宗家), which is originally a synonym of *iemoto* (Hirano 1981).
- 5 The *ie* structure here should be distinguished from the *ie* system (*ie seido*) established in the late 19th century as part of the Meiji civil laws.
- 6 Nishiyama points out the existence of the quasi-*iemoto* system in the worlds of religion, calligraphy, painting, and avant-garde dance among others (1982b: 289-309), while Kurokawa suggests the unmistakable influence of the *iemoto* system in the transmission of Hawaiian *hula* in Japan (2000).
- 7 See Waseda (2000) for more details on the development of Japanese performing arts in southern California.

- 8 A story narrated by Kineya Yajūrō IX (九世杵屋彌十郎), the ninth *iemoto* of the Yajūrō Branch of the Kineya School of *nagauta*, in an interview by author, Tokyo, Japan, 6 September 1995.
- 9 For the names consisting of Japanese surnames and given names, I use the order of the surname first, the given name last, following the Japanese practice. Also, Chinese characters of Japanese names, when available, are provided in their first appearance.
- 10 Wakita Kayoko, interview by author, Los Angeles, 6 August 1994.
- 11 See Waseda (2005) for more details on the performing arts activities in the Japanese American concentration camps.
- 12 The students of Japanese performing arts examined for this study were predominantly people of Japanese ancestry, including Issei, Shin-Issei, and their American-born descendants. The generational composition varied by genre. For instance, in *koto*, the students were mostly of younger generations, including children of the Shin-Issei, while in *nagauta* and *minyō*, the students were mostly of the Japanese speaking population of Issei, Shin-Issei, and Nisei.
- 13 The following situations are the only exceptions to this rule: 1) the teacher decides or agrees to send his/her student to another teacher, and 2) the teacher passes away.
- 14 Satō Matsutoyo, interview by author, Gardena, California, 11 August 1994.
- 15 Kudō Kazue immigrated to the U.S. in 1954, and began teaching in Los Angeles in 1955 as a Miyagi School *koto* instructor. She later established the Kudo Koto Music Conservatory (a *koto* school appointed as the Los Angeles branch of the Miyagi School) and the Koto String Society (a non-profit organization to support Kudō's disciples). She has also performed in the soundtracks of numerous movies and TV series, such as *Sayonara, Dr. Zhivago*, *Tora, Tora, Tora*, and *Mission Impossible*.
- 16 Kawabata Saeko, interview by author, La Crescenta, California, 14 August 1994.
- 17 Other contemporary Japanese composers whose *koto* instrumental pieces were adopted by the *koto* teachers in California include Matsumoto Masao, Nagasawa Katsutoshi, Hirai Kōzaburō, Fujii Bondai, and Matsumoto Tsutomu.
- 18 There are largely three types of *shamisen*: *futozao* (wide-neck), *chūzao* (medium neck), and *hosozao* (narrow neck). Each type differs in not only the width of the neck, but also the size of the sound box, thickness of the skin, and the weight. Moreover, within the same type (e.g. *chūzao*), there are several kinds varying according to the genre for which they are used.
- 19 According to my research in 1997, there were only three *shamisen* teachers in southern California at the time: Kineya Kichisaburō, Kineya Jōrokushō, and Lillian Nakano, all of whom were specialized in *nagauta*. Kineya Kichisaburō has passed away in 2004.
- 20 Kineya Kichisaburō, interview by author, Gardena, California, 4 August 1994.

- 21 Satō Matsutoyo, interview by author, Gardena, California, 11 August 1994.
- 22 *ibid.*
- 23 Awaya Yōko, telephone interview by author, 7 February 1999.
- 24 *ibid.* Kawabata Saeko, interview by author, La Crescenta, California, 14 August 1994.
- 25 Kawabata speculates that since Kudō was originally trained in the Yamada School, which uses a stronger touch than the Ikuta School, of which Miyagi School is a branch, her unique techniques reflect her Yamada School background (Kawabata Saeko, interview by author, La Crescenta, California, 14 August 1994).
- 26 Kawabata Saeko, interview by author, La Crescenta, California, 14 August 1994.
- 27 Kawabata Saeko, interview by author, La Crescenta, California, 14 August 1994.
- 28 *ibid.*
- 29 Awaya Yōko, interview by author, Gardena, California, 3 August 1994. The quote was originally in Japanese except for the English phrase, “close and friendly,” which was used by Awaya to express the teacher-student relationship. The interview itself was conducted in Japanese.
- 30 Nakane Chie explains that this contract-based relationship that clearly defines the limits of power from the top (teacher) and from the bottom (student) is typical in the West, while the Japanese relationship tends to become either authoritarian (infinite power from the top) or “democratic” in the Japanese sense (infinite power from the bottom) (1967: 141-145).
- 31 See Chapter 7 of my dissertation (Waseda 2000) for details of the aspects of language’s effect on the teacher-student relationship.
- 32 Wakita Kayoko, interview by author, Los Angeles, California, 6 August, 1994.
- 33 Awaya Yōko, interview by author, Gardena, California, 22 August 1995.
- 34 Kineya Yasofuji, interview by author, Sypress, California, Sep. 12, 1994.
- 35 See footnote 4 for the explanation of *sōke*.
- 36 Hashibe Hiromi, interview by author, Alhambra, California, 10 August 1994.
- 37 Changes within the *iemoto* system include diffusion of teaching method using musical scores and development of practice books in the fields of *koto*, *shamisen*, and *shakuhachi*. Transmission beyond the *iemoto* system includes teaching of traditional Japanese music in educational institutions and at the training institute of National Theatre.

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