

Transnationalism in Education: The Backgrounds, Motives, and Experiences of Nisei Students in Japan before World War II

(教育におけるトランスナショナリズム：
戦前に来日した日系アメリカ人二世学徒の
境遇、動機、および体験の分析)

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SUMMARY IN JAPANESE: 本稿では、第二次世界大戦前、特に1930年代に就学目的で来日・滞在した日系アメリカ人二世の動機および経験に焦点を当て、アメリカ人としての意識を保ちながらも祖先の土地で言語および習慣を身につけようとあがいた二世のトランスナショナリズムとはいかなるものであったのかを検証する。トランスナショナリズムという枠組みを用いることで、二世をある一つの国家にのみ属する集団としてではなく、日米両方から文化的・社会的影響を受けた複雑な存在として捉えることができる。しかし、北米の二世がすべて同じ条件下に越境教育の恩恵を享受できたわけではない。従って、どのような背景の二世が日本で就学することを選んだのか、彼らはいかなる動機を持っていたのか、そして実際の体験が彼らにどのような意識の変化やアイデンティティの形成をもたらしたのかについての詳細な分析が必要である。

本稿では太平洋戦争中に日系人収容所にて行われた統計調査を元に、二世の日本での就学経験の有無は、出身地域や語学教育へのアクセスによって左右されていたことを明らかにする。また、おもに一世の観点から見た、時代背景を色濃く反映するその他の要因についても論ずる。さらに、日本での教育を実際に体験した3人の二世の手記を読み解くことで、越境教育には苦労が伴ったこと、しかし、その経験の捉え方やアイデンティティ形成においては、来日時の年齢や性別等によって大きな違いがあったことも指摘する。

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Mass migration of Japanese immigrants to the continental United States dates back to the late nineteenth century. As first-generation immigrants, the Issei, settled in North America and started to raise the second generation, the Nisei, they encountered the problem of how to educate their children properly. The so-called “Nisei problem” haunted Issei parents. In order to solve this issue, many parents sent their children back to Japan for schooling. They did so increasingly in the 1930s on the eve of the Pacific War.

How can we understand the transnational educational experience of the Nisei—something that is peculiar to the children of Japanese immigrants? This paper focuses on the educational experiences of second-generation Japanese Americans in Japan before World War II, using primarily three kinds of evidence that are of importance in answering more specific questions, such as 1) what kind of people were educated in Japan?; 2) what were the reasons for their leaving?; and 3) how did their experience work in self-identifications? In answering the first, I chose to use statistical evidence so as to see the general tendency of families sending their children to Japan. But a simple trend does not adequately explain certain material conditions, nor the psychological motivation behind those families’ decision. Here comes the second inquiry—the reasons for going to Japan—for which I relied heavily on a book written by an Issei journalist who analyzed the issue in great depth. For the last question, I used three autobiographical essays and placed their experiences in historical contexts, along the way demonstrating how their perceptions of their years in Japan shaped their ambiguous and transnational consciousness.

I will argue that the motivation behind Nisei education in Japan was significantly affected by both material conditions and the transnational consciousness of the Issei and Nisei, but that access to such education had regional variations. I will also show that transnational education had its costs as well as benefits to the Nisei who received it, but that the degree of suffering and how they identified themselves varied depending on factors such as gender, age at departure, prior access to language instruction, and places of residence.

The Significance of the Transnational Paradigm

In the early 1990s, migration scholars found new significance in studying immigrant experiences from a transnational perspective. Transnationalism chal-

lenges the bipolar model of immigration in which immigrants leave their country of origin to settle in another country permanently. It emphasizes that migrants continue to move back and forth freely between different cultures as well as across international boundaries. According to Caroline B. Brettell, the idea generally refers to “a social process whereby migrants operate in social fields that transgress geographic, political, and cultural borders.”¹

The study of transnationalism, on the other hand, suffers from its fuzziness in both theoretical and empirical terms. Scholars often do not agree on an exact definition of the term. Moreover, different social scientists emphasize various aspects of transnational experiences, and scopes and levels of analysis vary significantly across disciplines.

In an effort to give some form to this chaotic situation, Steven Vertovec categorized different areas of inquiry into six distinctive types: transnationalism as 1) a social morphology; 2) a type of consciousness; 3) a mode of cultural reproduction; 4) an avenue of capital; 5) a site of political engagement; and 6) the (re)construction of “place” and locality. Transnationalism as a social morphology looks at social formations of ethnic diasporas while transnationalism as a type of consciousness is heavily influenced by cultural studies and concerned with dual or multiple identifications of individuals. “A mode of cultural reproduction” perspective emphasizes processes of cultural blending, syncretism, creolization, and hybridity, while “an avenue of capital” approach allows scholars to investigate the activities of transnational corporations that dominate the world’s economic system. Transnationalism as a site of political engagement examines transnational political activities of migrants, and lastly, “the (re)construction of ‘place’ or locality” approach problematizes the conventional understanding of people’s relations to space, and argues that there have emerged new “translocalities.” While each of the paradigms looks at different issues from variegated theoretical and methodological perspectives, these are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Many studies have used more than one of them, as José Itzigsohn notes.²

How does the study of the “return” of immigrants’ descendents to their ancestral land fit into the model of transnationalism? More specifically, how can we understand, from a transnational perspective, the experiences of second-generation Japanese Americans who went to Japan before World War II mostly for educational purposes? Even though Vertovec, together with Alejandro Portes, Luis E. Guarnizo and Patricia Landolt, describes transnationalism as a recent

phenomenon in the age of globalization by stressing “the scale of intensity and simultaneity of current long-distance, cross-border activities,” is it still possible to apply one or more of the theoretical frameworks in Vertovec’s typology to the historical experiences of Japanese American youths?³

While some may argue that it is anachronistic to explain Nisei experiences in Japan entirely in line with Vertovec’s arguments, a couple of his conceptual frameworks are useful, in illuminating the issues that second-generation Japanese Americans faced. The first two typologies, transnationalism as a social formation and as a type of consciousness are particularly of relevance to the inquiry of this paper. It is impossible to think about transnational educational practice without the existence of ethnic diasporas in the first place. More importantly, second-generation education in Japan was informed by a type of transnational consciousness of the Issei and Nisei. The Issei’s decision to send their children to Japan or Nisei’s interest in the country were a manifestation of such a consciousness, while the Nisei’s stay in Japan intensified their sense of belonging to two nations, because their encounters with Japanese people and society helped them realize their differences from Japanese nationals and brought to light the issue of their identity.

These considerations make clear that transnationalism is a useful framework to explain the Nisei experience because theirs is not simply a story about Americans visiting Japan; even with American citizenship, the Nisei eclectically tried to adopt Japanese ways in the United States by learning Japanese, but once in their ancestral land they could hardly contain their American-ness no matter how Japanese they looked. The examination of the Nisei in Japan poses an important question about who belongs to a nation in what ways.

The Nisei in Japan

Those Nisei living in Japan before the Pacific War are broadly categorized into two groups. A considerable portion of them were brought to Japan as infants or small children of elementary or early middle school age, while another large group came to Japan in their late teens, frequently after their graduation from high school, to receive higher education and learn Japanese. According to Yuji Ichioka, the first group constituted the majority of the Nisei from Hawaii, the continental United States, or Canada. Their parents either returned with them or sent them in

advance to be raised by their relatives. This group was specifically referred to as “Kibei” (returnees) and formed a separate group from their Nisei peers if and when they returned to the United States after reaching adolescence. The minority who arrived in their early adulthood came in search of better educational and employment opportunities. Unlike Nisei children who generally lived in their parents’ home villages in rural Japan, those who “returned” as grown-ups concentrated in major urban areas.⁴

No accurate statistics exist to show how many Japanese Americans lived in Japan before World War II. According to a Japanese government report, 18,000 Nisei were in Japan as of 1933. Ichioka speculates that the number of adult Japanese Americans was probably 2,000-2,500 out of a total Nisei population of approximately 20,000 in Japan on the eve of the Pacific War. A different source offers a rough estimate of a population of 40,000 Nisei that came as children, as of 1935. According to this source, such Japanese Americans settled in areas that had sent a large number of immigrants abroad. In 1931, about 13,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry lived in Hiroshima Prefecture and 9,000 in Yamaguchi. Both are southwestern prefectures that sent early immigrants to Hawaii in the late nineteenth century. Since Japanese Americans were not especially required to report their residence to local governments, however, there is no way of obtaining precise numbers.⁵

Even though no accurate numbers are readily available, suffice it to say that there were indeed a significant number of Nisei in Japan in the 1930s. Not all of them were in Japan for schooling, but statistical evidence shows that educating children in Japan was not uncommon in the Japanese community in the United States.

Backgrounds of the Nisei Who Went to Japan—Statistical Evidence

What kind of Nisei children actually went to Japan to attend schools? While anecdotal evidence is useful in drawing a broad picture of them, quantitative data from The War Relocation Authority (WRA) Form 26 Data Set helps us understand their profiles statistically. In February of 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued executive order 9066, which resulted in the mass removal of 110,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast of the continental United States. The WRA was established to run ten concentration camps in

which Japanese Americans were interned. The WRA conducted a census labeled “Form 26.” The computer tape that I used for analysis in this paper retains 98% of the 1942 records.⁶ One of the limitations of using this data set is that it does not include a large number of Japanese Americans in Hawaii, although it does include respondents who had been born in Hawaii and were interned in the mainland. Many Nisei from Hawaii went to Japan as students before World War II. Nevertheless, the WRA data set still allows one to examine the backgrounds of a significant number of Nisei who went to Japan from the continental United States for schooling.

General descriptive statistics of the data set are in order. Of 109,377 individuals that responded to the census, 65%, or 71,014, were born in the United States and either one or both of their parents were Japanese. Of them, about 14%, or 9,835 people, had some educational experience in Japan. The average age of this group was 26.25, and the ratio of males to females is 57 to 43.

Table 1 shows the relationship between respondents’ gender and whether they had any experience of education in Japan. The universe is those who were born in the United States and racially Japanese (one or both of their parents were Japanese). While this includes a small number of the third generation, about 90% are the Nisei:

Table 1: Education in Japan * Sex Crosstabulation

N = 71014

	Male	Female	
Not educated in Japan	84.7%	87.7%	86.2%
Educated in Japan	15.3%	12.3%	13.8%
Total	36506 100.0%	34508 100.0%	71014 100.0%

Source: WRA Form 26.

Note: The actual probability of .000 demonstrates strong association between the variables.

The table demonstrates that men were slightly more likely to have been educated in Japan than women.

Is there a difference between those who were educated in Japan and those who were not in terms of their fathers' occupations in the United States? Table 2 shows the relationship between respondents' fathers' occupations in the United States and whether they were educated in Japan or not. The universe is those who were born in the United States, racially Japanese, and whose fathers' occupations were known:

Table 2: Father's Occupation in US * Education in Japan Crosstabulation
N = 63063

	Not educated in Japan	Educated in Japan	Total
Professional & semi-professional	3.2%	1.3%	1900 (3.0%)
Managerial and official (except farm)	18.4%	16.7%	11479 (18.2%)
Clerical and sales	4.3%	1.9%	2538 (4.0%)
Service	4.9%	7.6%	3281 (5.2%)
Farm operators and managers	43.5%	46.2%	27656 (43.9%)
Farm laborers including foremen	14.6%	11.6%	8988 (14.3%)
Fishermen	1.7%	2.7%	1144 (1.8%)
Skilled craftsmen and foremen; semi-skilled operators (except farm)	8.2%	9.2%	5235 (8.3%)
Unskilled laborers (except farm)	1.2%	2.7%	842 (1.3%)
Total	55695 100.0%	7368 100.0%	63063 100.0%

Source: WRA Form 26.

Note: The actual probability of .000 demonstrates strong association between the variables.

Among those who were educated in Japan, children with fathers whose occupations were professional and semi-professional (1.3%), managerial and official (16.7%), clerical and sales (1.9%), and farm laborers including foremen (11.6%) are underrepresented. On the other hand, those whose fathers' occupations were service (7.6%), farm operators and managers (46.2%), fishermen (2.7%), skilled craftsmen and foremen or semi-skilled operators (9.2%) and unskilled laborers

(2.7%) are overrepresented. The finding indicates that the Nisei educated in Japan were most likely from working-class families. Intuitively, it appears quite surprising that blue-collar fathers were able to afford their children’s education in Japan as well as more willing than white-collar parents to choose this option. For working-class Issei, however, sending their children back home was probably cheaper than having them educated in the United States. They most likely sent the Nisei for compulsory education in the areas they originated from. In that way they could have avoided paying for room and board by leaving their children in the care of their relatives; they also did not need to worry about tuition as the 1900 Elementary School Order stipulated that “tuition may not be collected in the case of city, town, and village ordinary elementary schools.”⁷ Table 3, which shows the respondent’s age when he/she was in Japan, partially confirms the theory. The universe is those who had been born in the United States, were racially Japanese and educated in Japan (of whom more than 99% are the Nisei); those whose fathers’ occupations were unknown are not excluded:

Table 3: Age at Time in Japan

N = 9833

	Frequency	Percent
0 - 9	186	1.9%
10 - 19	904	9.2%
20 and over	94	1.0%
0 - 9 and 10 - 19	6167	62.7%
0 - 9, 10 - 19 and 20 and over	1917	19.5%
0 - 9 and 20 and over	15	0.2%
10 - 19 and 20 and over	513	5.2%
Unknown	37	0.4%
Total	9833	100.0%

Source: WRA Form 26.

The table shows that more than 62% of the respondents were in Japan both between the ages of 0 and 9 and between 10 and 19, although it is unclear whether they continuously stayed during all those years or moved back and forth across

national borders. This suggests that the majority of Nisei educated in Japan were there during elementary and middle school years.

Another source offers a different view of the occupations of parents of the Nisei educated in Japan. In 1939, a group of graduating Nisei students at Keisen Girls' School left a report based on their survey of the Nisei living in the vicinity of Tokyo. Table 4 is replicated from their study and slightly modified to include the total and percentage:⁸

Table 4: Occupation of Parents

N = 368

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	Total
California									147
North	9	25	5				7	7	
South	31	28	11	2		1	12		
Central	7	1	1						
Hawaii	15	39	26			3	11	10	104
Washington	12	29	5		1		3	4	54
Canada		6	3		3		1	1	14
Oregon	2	8					3	1	14
Utah	3	3	2					2	10
Colorado	4	2							6
Nebraska	3		1						4
Arizona	1								1
New York		3	1						4
Montana							1		1
Japan		5	2				1	1	9
Total	87	149	57	2	4	4	39	26	368
Percentage	23.6%	40.5%	15.5%	0.5%	1.1%	1.1%	10.6%	7.1%	100.0%

Source: Nisei Survey Committee, *The Nisei: A Survey of Their Life in Japan* (Tokyo: Keisen Girls' School, 1939), 5.

Note: (A) = Agriculture, (B) = Commerce, (C) = Profession, (D) = Fishery, (E) = Forestry, (F) = Industry, (G) = Retired, (H) = Deceased

As the table shows, 15.5% answered that their parents were professionals, and only 23.6% replied that their parents' occupations were in agriculture. About 40% of the parents of respondents held occupations in commerce. The disparity between tables 2 and 4—more than half of the fathers are in agriculture in the WRA data set while less than a quarter belong to the same category in the Keisen survey—possibly comes from the source bias in the report of Nisei Survey Committee. Their survey covered only the Nisei in the metropolitan area. Those students most likely enrolled in higher schools or private universities and lived in dormitories. Their living and educational costs must have been much higher than those for a large number of rurally educated younger children—a group missing from this survey.

Among those who were educated in Japan, is there a gender difference in their fathers' occupations? Table 5, produced from the WRA data set, offers an answer:

Table 5: Father's Occupation in US * Sex Crosstabulation

N = 7368 (Educated in Japan)

	Male	Female	Total
Professional & semi-professional	1.5%	1.2%	98 (1.3%)
Managerial and official (except farm)	15.6%	18.3%	1233 (16.7%)
Clerical and sales	1.9%	2.0%	141 (1.9%)
Service	7.7%	7.4%	558 (7.6%)
Farm operators and managers	46.2%	46.2%	3404 (46.2%)
Farm laborers including foremen	11.8%	11.4%	858 (11.6%)
Fishermen	2.8%	2.7%	202 (2.7%)
Skilled craftsmen and foremen; semi-skilled operators (except farm)	9.7%	8.5%	678 (9.2%)
Unskilled laborers (except farm)	2.8%	2.4%	196 (2.7%)
Total	4206 100.0%	3162 100.0%	7368 100.0%

Source: WRA Form 26.

Note: The actual probability of .087 shows that there is an 8.7% chance that the association between the variables is due to random error.

The daughters of managers and officials (18.3%) were more likely to have been educated in Japan than the sons of fathers in these occupations (15.6%). Conversely, the male Nisei whose fathers were skilled craftsmen and foremen or semi-skilled operators (9.7%) are overrepresented while the women whose fathers' occupations were in the same category are significantly underrepresented (8.5%).

Is there a correlation between Nisei's birthplaces and whether they had educational experience in Japan? Table 6 only shows the states with a significant number of Nisei:

Table 6: Birthplace * Education in Japan Crosstabulation
N = 71013

	Not educated in Japan	Educated in Japan	Total
Washington	85.9%	14.1%	8927
Oregon	87.2%	12.8%	2243
California	88.0%	12.0%	53789
Colorado	79.0%	21.0%	248
Idaho	74.0%	26.0%	204
Arizona	95.4%	4.6%	410
Utah	72.7%	27.3%	377
Hawaii, unspecified	53.4%	46.6%	208
Hawaii County	68.1%	31.9%	1351
Honolulu County	61.5%	38.5%	1623
Kauai County	72.7%	27.3%	443
Maui County	63.1%	36.9%	444
Total	61178 86.2%	9835 13.8%	71013 100.0%

Source: WRA Form 26.

Note: The actual probability of .000 shows strong association between the variables.

The table reveals that there is a regional variation in terms of Nisei's educational experience in Japan. The Nisei born in Hawaii tended to receive education in Japan compared to the Nisei from other parts of the continental United States. Interestingly, only 12% of Nisei in California received education in Japan. This is

lower than the average nationwide. Although California was a state where the largest population of Japanese Americans lived in the continental United States, the concentration did not necessarily lead to a proportionately greater number of Nisei who went to Japan from that area.

What kind of explanation is possible for such a regional variation? Does the difference have to do with access to Japanese instruction? Table 7 shows the relation between Nisei’s educational experience in Japan and their attendance in language schools:

**Table 7: Education in Japan * Attendance in Japanese Language School
Crosstabulation**

N = 70991

	Has not attended	Has attended	Total
Not educated in Japan	80.6%	19.4%	61161
Educated in Japan	97.0%	3.0%	9830
Total	82.9%	17.1%	70991

Source: WRA Form 26.

Note: The actual probability of .000 shows strong association between the variables.

As the table clearly demonstrates, a correlation exists between attendance in Japanese language schools and education in Japan. Only 3% of Nisei who went to Japan for education attended language schools while 19.4% of Nisei who were not educated in Japan attended language schools.

Finally, Table 8 shows the relationship between Nisei’s birthplaces and attendance in language schools:

Table 8: Birthplace * Attendance in Language School Crosstabulation
N = 70990

	Has not attended	Has attended	Total
Washington	84.2%	15.8%	8925 (A)*
Oregon	84.1%	15.9%	2243
California	82.3%	17.7%	53773 (B)**
Colorado	90.7%	9.3%	248 (A)
Idaho	93.6%	6.4%	204 (A)
Arizona	84.6%	15.4%	409
Utah	82.2%	17.8%	377
Hawaii, unspecified	95.7%	4.3%	207 (A)
Hawaii County	85.9%	14.1%	1351 (A)
Honolulu County	83.5%	16.5%	1621 (A)
Kauai County	81.5%	18.5%	443
Maui County	84.0%	16.0%	444 (A)
Total	58838 82.9%	12152 17.1%	70990 100.0%

Source: WRA Form 26.

Note: The actual probability of .000 demonstrates strong association between the variables.

*(A) Low attendance in language schools and overrepresentation of those who went to Japan.

** (B) High attendance in language schools and underrepresentation of those who went to Japan.

The highlighted rows include either the states with A) low attendance in language schools and overrepresentation of those who went to Japan, or B) high attendance in language schools and underrepresentation of those who went to Japan, compared to the average in the total row. Of California's Nisei, 17.7% attended language schools—a percentage slightly greater than the national average (17.1%). This could be one of the reasons for a relatively small proportion of Nisei in California who went to Japan for education because they did not need to cross the Pacific to receive language education.

Although any decisive conclusions based merely on these statistics are pre-

mature, it is still possible to draw a general picture of the background of those who were educated in Japan. They were most likely from farming or working-class families; their ages while in Japan indicate that they were primarily sent back to receive compulsory education in rural Japan, and if in metropolitan areas, to attend institutions of higher education; and they tended to come from the states with less chance of attending Japanese language schools. However, it is unclear from this evidence whether any personal motivation was at play other than simple material conditions. What kind of benefits did the Issei and Nisei exactly expect from education in Japan?

Motivation and Reasons for Going to the Ancestral Land

Why did those second-generation Japanese Americans who went to Japan decide to receive part of their education in their ancestral land? In the case of the Nisei who “returned” to Japan as children, their parents’ judgment no doubt played the primary part. Some parents left their children in the care of their relatives back home so that they would be brought up as Japanese rather than Americans. Others returned to Japan together with their American-born children, anticipating that they would not come back to the United States anymore. In both instances, it is hard to imagine that such young children acted on their own initiative.

Those who went to Japan for schooling as grown-ups, however, had either of the two reasons behind their decision. One group of students was self-motivated with clear goals in mind. The other group simply followed their parents’ orders. Although studying in Japan was not a new practice in the 1930s, it became particularly popular during that decade. Journalist Soen Yamashita viewed the Manchurian Incident of 1931 as the turning point. Earlier, he argued, only a minority with special intentions and conditions decided to study in Japan, and most of them were not necessarily encouraged by their parents. After the Manchurian Incident that resulted in Japan’s takeover of Mukden, however, Japanese immigrants became greatly proud of the land of their ancestors, which increased their interest in sending their children to Japan. Based on this observation, Yamashita believed that seven to eight out of ten second-generation students who went to Japan in the 1930s acted according to their parents’ wishes.⁹

If so many second-generation Japanese Americans decided to study in Japan

because of their parents' encouragement, what prompted the parents to favor Japanese over American education increasingly in the 1930s? Several explanations are possible, and they not only reveal practical necessities and material conditions surrounding the parents' decisions but also demonstrate the transnational consciousness of the Nisei.

The first explanation is economic. It was cheaper for Japanese immigrant parents to educate their sons and daughters in Japan than in the United States. As a Seattle Japanese noted, "Insomuch as an American dollar becomes nearly two Japanese y[e]n, by a difference in exchange, it is cheaper to send children back to Japan than it is to send them to the town or city schools, away from their parents."¹⁰ Moreover, a depression in Japan caused the yen-dollar exchange rate to plunge. At the beginning of 1932, the value of 100 yen was equal to 34.50-38.00 dollars. By November of the same year, it had dropped to 19 dollars. During the first half of 1933, the rate for 100 yen constantly remained below 24 dollars. Because of the depreciation of the yen, it became even more reasonable for Issei parents to send their children to Japan. For instance, it may have cost 70-80 dollars a month to attend college in the United States while in Japan the expense could be merely 18-25 dollars, including living costs.¹¹

Nationalist sentiments also contributed to the increased interest in education in Japan. As Yamashita noted, signifying events that marked Japan's rise as a world power aroused the pride of the first generation and a curiosity about Japan among the second generation. Especially, the establishment of Manchukuo and Japan's subsequent withdrawal from the League of Nations, which was referred to as "honorable independence," reinforced their conviction—particularly among the Issei—that "Behind us is our strong country." The Nisei may have been more intrigued by local events. The 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Games offered an opportunity for them to see Japanese athletes. The fact that those athletes actually performed well provoked a sense of pride in the Nisei mind, which helped intensify their interest in their parents' native country.¹²

Some believed that their education in Japan would lead to better employment prospects in the United States. Because of racial barriers, it was rare for Japanese Americans to gain employment outside of the Japanese community. It was also difficult for them to find jobs that matched the level of their training and education. Many Nisei helped with their family-owned businesses, held agriculture-related jobs, or worked in domestic service. Despite their wish for white-collar jobs, their occupations were heavily blue-collar. For example, 70%

of Nisei whose ages were 16 to 25 in Los Angeles in 1930 and 1935 worked in retail or wholesale produce markets. Others worked in businesses such as cleaning and laundry, nurseries, and gardening.¹³ By acquiring a good command of Japanese, many Issei parents believed, the Nisei would benefit from enhanced employment options, particularly because their chance of getting jobs in their ethnic community was high. Yamashita reported that around the middle of the 1910s, some second-generation Japanese Americans were ashamed of their blood because of the socioeconomic disparity between white Americans and Japanese immigrants, and refused to speak Japanese, follow Japanese customs, and mingle with Japanese friends. By the middle of the 1930s, at the time of his writing, the economic position of the Japanese community had improved, and the United States had increased its trade with Japan. Various occupations now required a knowledge of Japanese, and it was not uncommon for companies to seek applicants for clerical work with a mastery of the language. Hence an increased need for language education, which was more readily available in Japan.¹⁴

A less material but no less important need is related to the Issei perception of the Nisei as a bridge between American and Japanese cultures. The Issei realized the necessity to fill the psychological gap between them and their children's generation. The Nisei should respond, Yamashita argued, by recognizing their role as a bridge of understanding between the two countries. Aside from their American citizenship and fluency in English, he claimed, the Nisei should strive to attain a command of Japanese so that they could spread the correct knowledge about Japan. When Yamashita wrote this, he no doubt had in his mind the possibility of having the Nisei defend Japanese militaristic activities in China. He also believed that the second generation should appreciate the value and characteristics of the Yamato people—a name used for the dominant ethnic group in Japan. In the local context of racial subordination, it was no wonder that Issei parents had aspirations for their children's education in Japan in the hope that the Nisei could comprehend Japanese virtues and be proud of their heritage. Instruction at language schools was not adequate to fulfill such needs, which created a demand for education in Japan.¹⁵

A gender-specific reason came into play as well. This derived not only from the fact that pre-World War II Japan had different educational systems for male and female students, but also from the different expectations of the Issei for men and women in the Japanese community. The Issei especially viewed women as the center of home life and held them responsible for providing rest and morality

for their family members. According to Yamashita, when first-generation immigrants struggled just to survive in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were mainly concerned about their daily material needs and did not have the luxury of caring about psychological satisfaction. As their socioeconomic status improved, they suddenly realized that comfort at home was more important than any material gains. Such spiritual fulfillment was hard to attain, Yamashita noted, because of the lack of domestic education, the harmonious fireside, and the sound, warm and modest atmosphere of home created mostly by housewives. The second generation, as they grew up, increasingly thought little of their parents particularly because they were usually more educated, which additionally exacerbated the already dissatisfactory mood at home. They detested the physical labor that their parents had endured. They even despised their parents for having resigned themselves to exploitation. In order to recover the good home, the role of women was critical. Many Issei must have agreed with Yamashita's views. They no doubt believed that, since Japanese women were known for their modesty, their daughters could learn this kind of virtue besides the language and vocational skills in Japan, and contribute to the betterment of home life after they came back to the United States.¹⁶

The gendered expectations for female students were reflected in Japanese school curricula. Girls' higher schools (grade 7-10 or 7-11) placed special emphasis on "national morality and womanly virtues" as their educational goals. At Keisen Girls' School, for example, students in the Nisei program learned flower arranging, the tea ceremony, womanly etiquette, and the arts of Japanese sewing, dyeing and cooking. By acquiring Japanese virtues through such subjects, the students were expected to become good Japanese wives and mothers. According to the Nisei Survey Committee's report, 61 females compared to 25 males answered that they studied calligraphy. Fifty-three girls learned flower arrangement, surpassing five boys in number, while 54 females studied the tea ceremony compared to only four boys. Even if one takes account of the fact that a slightly larger number of female than male respondents answered the questionnaire, in terms of proportion more girls than boys sought to acquire Japanese cultural skills. Women's colleges had a specific kind of curricula, and they tended to offer fewer options compared to universities that male students attended. In 1937, there were 50 women's colleges in Japan, and they generally placed great emphasis on subjects such as language and literature, homemaking, and teacher training. Women were also able to attend classes offered at a separate "women's depart-

ment” in private universities.¹⁷

Aside from financial, psychological, occupational, social and cultural reasons for the increased enthusiasm for Nisei education in Japan, the role that religious organizations played in promoting transnational training was also significant. Some religious groups not only had their own schools in the United States but also kept close contact with Japanese organizations and schools that belonged to their denominations. As of 1935, there were 168 Japanese language schools in Hawaii, of which slightly more than 40% were managed by, or affiliated with, religious groups. In terms of enrollment, over 60% of the total student population of 40,000 attended those schools that had relationships with religious groups. Buddhist organizations especially did well in recruiting second-generation students into their denominational schools in Japan. A Buddhist educator named Konen Tsunemitsu particularly played a pioneering role in facilitating transnational education. He surveyed the conditions of Japanese residents in Hawaii and the continental United States in the late 1920s, and noted the Issei’s demand for Nisei education in Japan. Upon returning to Japan, Tsunemitsu established a boarding school called “Nichibei Home (Japanese American Home)” that exclusively catered to Nisei boys’ and girls’ needs. It served as a dormitory for those who commuted to regular Japanese schools in Tokyo, but it also had its own program coordinated by Nihon Beifu Kyokai (the Japan, America, Hawaii Society) established in 1932. A variety of Japanese educators, religious leaders and farmers in Japan, the United States, Hawaii and Canada supported Nihon Beifu Kyokai. Its own program was intended for those students who needed special preparation to get into Japanese schools or who wanted to learn the language and culture of Japan. The subjects taught in the program included etiquette, ethics, speaking, reading, writing, penmanship, martial arts or exercise, history and geography. Nihon Beifu Kyokai sought to inculcate in Nisei students the idea that they needed to be good American citizens and representatives of the Japanese race at the same time. This pedagogical goal was shared by community leaders and educators including Tsunemitsu, his patrons, journalist Yamashita, and Japanese consuls. Nihon Beifu Kyokai considered the Nisei to be specially commissioned to introduce American culture to Japan and to present the essence of Eastern culture to the United States. It also encouraged the Nisei to strive for better occupational opportunities by taking advantage of their knowledge of both Japanese and English. Although the total number of students who received any benefit from Nichibei Home was small, the efforts made by educators such as Tsunemitsu

and like-minded people should have played an important role in propelling transnational education.¹⁸

Inadequate instruction at Japanese language schools may have been another reason why so many Issei parents wanted their sons and daughters to go to Japan instead of, or in addition to, having them study Japanese at those schools. Language schools functioned not only as educational institutions that taught Japanese but also as adjuncts to American public schools for supplementing civic education. One of the most important goals for such schools was to indoctrinate their students with American values so that their non-English speaking parents could also be properly “Americanized” through their children. Teaching Japanese morals was not necessarily the foremost purpose of Japanese language schools. Therefore, language schools sought to teach Japanese narratives, literature, history, customs, art and religions in quite a detached manner. They deemed ideal those teachers who interpreted the language, philosophy and customs of Japan objectively. In other words, instruction at Japanese language schools was not enough to make the Nisei understand the “spirit” of Japan from the Issei perspective. Another problem with language schools concerned the quality of their teachers. Because a kind of Japanese used in the United States was a mixture of several dialects from parts of Japan where a large number of immigrants originated, even language teachers were sometimes unable to speak standard Japanese. Still another issue was physical access to language schools, as demonstrated by the statistical findings in the previous section. There were no such schools in rural areas where the Japanese were only sparsely populated. Understandably, Issei parents may have thought of sending their children directly to Japan.¹⁹

Finally, Issei parents could have given their children transnational education for less obvious reasons. Even if they could afford to educate the Nisei in Japan, they still had the option of not sending them there. Moreover, many parents did not necessarily share, with community leaders or journalists like Yamashita, the lofty goals of raising their children as a “bridge of understanding” between the United States and Japan or of having them spread correct knowledge about Japan. One of the negative reasons for parents to send their children back home could have been based on fear. Although they were now settled on American soil, anything could happen that might impel them to return to Japan in the future. It would not have been a bad idea to get their children into school in Japan beforehand so that they would be better prepared for such occasions. Allowing their sons and daughters the luxury of higher education in Japan also satisfied some

parents' vanity. They felt proud of simply being able to do it and wanted to show off to their relatives back in Japan. Their children also may have lacked respectable motivation. They could have been lured by the city life in Tokyo, or simply pressured to follow the trend of going to Japan. Konen Tsunemitsu observed such a tendency when he traveled to the United States and Canada in 1937. "If the Nisei go to Japan simply because they are influenced by the current trend," he averred, "their purposes will never be readily fulfilled. The recent tendency demands caution where some youths who went to Japan easily come back to the United States halfway."²⁰

The various reasons why the Nisei went to school in Japan reveal their transnational consciousness that was shaped by their parents' hopes and expectations. Renewed patriotism for the country of their ancestry demonstrates that the Nisei held dual identities that connected them to more than one nation. Even though their choice of jobs was limited by racism, a new generation of Nisei sought to make use of their heritage by acquiring language skills, unlike their seniors who appeared to follow the path of "assimilation" by distancing themselves from the Issei. They also tried to live up to the Issei's expectation of a bridge of understanding by striving to learn things Japanese while simultaneously using English and embracing American values. Japanese American culture particularly prescribed specific gender roles to women, which demanded a type of transnational consciousness; the Issei expected Nisei women to internalize Japanese values while helping men make their life in America better. All these reasons and necessities worked as the motivation for the Nisei to leave for Japan, coupled with other conditions such as world economic situations, educational promoters' passion, and adequate institutions that would receive them.

The factors that contributed to Nisei education in Japan were not mutually exclusive, and probably many second-generation students chose to study in Japan for more than one reason. Whether they wished to become a bridge of understanding between the two nations, sought better employment opportunities, wanted to spend their time usefully during the moratorium, or simply hoped to please their parents, the Nisei "returned" to their ancestral land with anxiety as well as expectations.

Experiences in Japan

The experience of second-generation Japanese Americans who received education in Japan varied for each individual. Multiple factors contributed to the difference, including the person's gender, age when he/she went to Japan, experience at language schools, degree of adaptability to American culture, living conditions in Japan, the kind of school he/she attended, whether or not he/she had relatives, siblings, or parents in Japan, and whether or not he/she was thinking of returning to the United States eventually. While no generalization is possible without further evidential support, even looking at a few accounts of these people's traumas and joy in living in Japan as Americans of Japanese ancestry helps one understand the complexity of their experience as well as some important issues that many of their peers may have had in common. Three biographical narratives—offered by three individual Nisei with different backgrounds and experiences in prewar Japan—illuminate some of the concerns that those people shared, or did not share.

Although they were sent to Japan at different stages of their growth, all three Nisei admit that it was their parents' decision, rather than their own, that placed them in Japan. Frank Hirata was born and raised in Spokane, Washington, until the age of nine. He enjoyed his early childhood in rural Spokane; he claims that he "spent a pleasant childhood free of racial prejudice" due to the small population of Japanese there. In 1934 his grandfather decided to return to Japan, and his parents sent him and his brother to receive their education there. "They [his parents] coaxed me to go to Japan," he remembers. Although it is not clear why his parents chose to send him to Japan, undoubtedly his father was enthusiastic about education. "My father had immigrated to the United States after he finished the 8th grade," Frank testifies. "He always strove to improve himself. While operating hotels, he took night classes at the Gonzaga University Law School. He valued education highly and wanted us to do well in school." Apparently, however, his father would not be satisfied if his children only excelled in American schools and forgot their parents' language. There were no Japanese schools in rural Spokane. That could be the primary reason why Frank's father wanted his children to go to Japan. As the statistical findings demonstrate, there was a strong correlation between the lack of language education in the United States and attendance at school in Japan (see Table 7).²¹

Mary Tomita, brought up in Central California, went to Japan in her early

twenties because that was her parents' order. "I went to Japan in 1939 because my parents had previously sent my older sister and brother there after they had finished high school," she states. Sending children for schooling in Japan after high school graduation, then, was a family custom for the Tomitas. Her reference to her father's purchase of land suggests that he was a land-owning farmer in a rural community that had only few Japanese people. Not only does her family profile match those of the majority of Nisei whose fathers' occupations were in agriculture (see Table 2), but the rural setting where she grew up suggests that she had little to no access to proper language education. She admits, at the same time, that the post-graduation time for her was a kind of moratorium. "I had finished Modesto Junior College and was wondering what I could do with my life," she remembers. Her anxiety was not without a reason. "[P]rospects were quite dim because Nisei were not accepted in any profession, even if they were well educated and qualified," she claims. Perhaps her parents hoped that Mary's education in Japan would add value to her college diploma and increase her chance of employment, as Yamashita indicated. Without hopes for employment opportunities, Mary decided to leave for Japan.²²

In the case of Nobuyo Yamane, the reason for going to Japan was peculiar, although again this was her parents' decision, not hers. Born in Tacoma, Washington in 1921, she moved to Japan in her early teens to take care of her sick aunt with her sister. She arrived in Japan in 1935. Although she grew up in Washington as Frank did, the area where she lived had a sizable Japanese community. "When I was a third grader, three Japanese boys, who had graduated junior high school in Japan, entered my class," she remembers. "These boys took special classes to improve their English, enabling them to advance to the upper grades. Many young Japanese immigrants started life in the United States in this way." Those boys were most likely Kibei with American citizenship, not Japanese nationals who had newly entered the United States, because the 1924 Immigration Act excluded Japanese immigrants with the exception of a small number of privileged individuals and former residents who had returned to Japan. Nobuyo was, in a sense, already exposed to the transnational educational environment through contact with pupils fresh from Japan, even before she went to Japan herself.²³

The places of residence and how they lived in Japan were significantly different among the three individuals. Frank lived in Okayama Prefecture with his grandfather, brother, and a few other children. "Their parents sent them to Japan

with our grandfather. That meant he had his hands full keeping his eyes on five kids: a teenage girl and four boys ranging from age eight to twelve,” he recalls. Okayama had a tradition of sending Japanese immigrants to North America. The parents of the children who lived with Frank in Japan should have been from Okayama as well, and since these parents probably did not have immediate plans for returning to Japan, they ended up leaving their children in the care of Frank’s grandfather. Such practice exemplifies immigrant networks that crossed national boundaries—a central feature of transnationalism as a kind of social formation. Mary Tomita, as a young adult student, lived in Tokyo. Her experiences varied from staying with a liberal Japanese family to living with other Nisei roommates. She enjoyed the night life in the metropolis and often went to restaurants, movies, and concerts. Although her experiences in Japan were riddled with difficulty and trauma, at least her exposure to urban life appears to have been a liberating experience since, according to her, “it was the first time that I was so far away from home.” Nobuyo’s life must have been much darker because she had to take care of her sick aunt. Besides, the place where she lived was rural Oshima, “an island of immigrants” which had produced a huge number of migrants bound for Hawaii and the United States since the late nineteenth century.²⁴

All three had some difficulty with Japanese, but their degree of mastery varied because their learning experiences and the extent of exposure to the language while in the United States were different. Frank’s native tongue was English. His parents wished to speak and practice Japanese at home, and he and his brother tried when they were behaving. “But we quickly switched to English whenever our tempers flared up in an argument or fight,” he confesses. “We felt freer and spontaneous using English.” Since he was reluctant to speak Japanese in the United States, he was not fluent. “I was so far behind in language proficiency that I had to join the 2nd graders who were a year younger than me,” he recalls. However, he was lucky enough to have a tutor. “[I]t did not take long for me to catch up because I had a private tutor for whom my father made arrangements,” he states. His father was also concerned about their sons’ English, so he made sure that they would not forget the language. “With the help of the tutor, my brother and I were able to keep up with some of our English.” Frank was fortunate to have a father who was careful about his sons’ education. At the same time, one of the reasons why he learned Japanese quickly could be his young age. Like Frank, Mary also did not speak Japanese frequently while she was in the United States. “I had to speak in Japanese to my parents; however, I was

never close to them, and we seldom had any long conversations,” she confides. Moreover, she was “never interested in talking to any Issei in Japanese.” Nobuyo went to a Japanese language school in the United States. “I learned about Japanese culture through my study of the Japanese language,” she remembers. “My experiences at the Japanese language school helped me to adjust to elementary school life in Japan.” Among the three, Mary was the least pressured—or simply silent about such pressure—to learn the language after settling in Japan. This could be due to the fact that she came to Japan as a grown-up; it makes sense that she did not feel much need to “adjust” to Japanese society because she possibly planned to stay only temporarily.²⁵

Frank and Nobuyo showed more concern about adapting to the Japanese way than Mary did. Frank recalls how he and his brother “looked strange in the eyes of the students and teachers” when they “first went to the village school to enroll” because they “had long hair and wore colorful sweaters, pants, and gloves.” “As our initial adjustment to Japanese school life, we had our hair cut short to look like other students,” he states. “We also adopted the Japanese custom of wearing black uniforms and caps with the school emblem on our forehead and of carrying knapsack on our backs.” However, he had the benefit of being a child of a family that originated from the village. “Most of the people in our village had been living there for generations. Our grandfather, uncle, and aunt were just like them, even though they had lived abroad. There were many families with the same surname indicative of a common ancestry,” he mentions. “They quickly accepted and absorbed us into their collective village identity.” Helped by favorable local settings, Frank spent a less stressful time adjusting to Japanese customs than he would have in an entirely new and unfamiliar environment. “Life in Japan was quite different from the United States,” Nobuyo testifies. She also confides that life was harder in Japan in general. “The most difficult thing was to sit on a *tatami* mat on the floor,” she recalls. “But following the Japanese custom, I eventually got used to it.” Even though adjustment to the Japanese way was not easy for her, she did not question the need for such accommodation at all. This was probably because she did not know when or whether she had a chance to return to the United States.²⁶

In terms of education, Frank was the most influenced by Japan’s militarism of the late 1930s. This is due to the fact that he was quite assimilated to Japanese society and was a boy of school age. He has a vivid memory of nationalistic education. The school activities included the celebration of national holidays

associated with the Imperial Household. “We sang *Kimigayo* on every holiday and important date on the school calendar,” he states. “The repeated singing of the Japanese national anthem inevitably influenced my conception of the Japanese nation.” He was also exposed to *shushin* or moral education that sought to foster personal character and good behavior in the nationalistic mold. Increasingly his experiences at school became more militaristic. “The Ministry of Education mandated that all male students participate in military drills from the seventh grade,” he testifies. “We wore gaiters and recited the Imperial instructions to the Army and Navy from a military handbook. The tenth and eleventh graders trained with rifles and even engaged in target practice.” Such an environment “gradually molded my brother, cousin, and me into the Japanese collective and nationalistic way of thinking,” he confides. He was reunited with his parents who had returned to Japan in 1941, possibly in anticipation of war between the United States and Japan. “We [he and his brother] used to argue with our parents over who would win the war,” he states. After the outbreak of the Pacific War, he noted a “new trend” that “evolved in the study of the Japanese language” that stressed the classics. Middle schools also extensively used Shumei Okawa’s nationalistic text *The Essence of the Divine Nation*.²⁷

Unlike Frank, Mary and Nobuyo are not articulate about militaristic education (although Mary remembers encountering a teacher who told the students about “the Japanese spirit in a high-pitched voice”); instead their recollections reveal more about transnational educational environments with many other Nisei students struggling in Japan. Mary at first attended Waseda International Institute that “prepared foreigners to enter Japanese universities.” “Most of the students in the school were Nisei boys from the States who had just graduated from high school,” she mentions. She was exposed to the transnational space in which like-minded peers with American citizenship shared the common learning experience in Japan. She was later admitted to Tokyo Women’s Christian University and continued studying until the war broke out. Nobuyo enrolled in the sixth grade even though she was supposed to be an eighth grader because her Japanese language qualification was not enough. Because of her attendance at the Tacoma Japanese Language School, however, she managed to catch up. Another boy from Seattle also attended her elementary school. Nevertheless, she had no chance to talk to him because “Girls were separated from boys in separate classes at the time” and “We [girls] were not allowed to talk to the boys.” “If he had been a girl, I would have talked to her a lot to relieve my sense of loneliness,” she confides. It

was more difficult for Nobuyo than Mary to make connections or to feel a sense of bonding with other Nisei students.²⁸

Despite their very different experiences, all three testify to their cravings at the time for things American, especially food. “I recall how much I missed the American food,” Frank states. Since Mary was living in Tokyo, she had the luxury of appreciating the taste of Western food in the prewar years. “We especially enjoyed going to restaurants to eat American food,” she remembers. Nobuyo did not know such enjoyment in the countryside. “I really missed pancakes and cold cocoa,” she recollects. “There was no oven either, so I also missed apple pies, custard pies and cakes.”²⁹

All of them experienced some kind of discrimination and harassment during the Pacific War due to their birth on American soil. “Since my birthplace was America, I personally experienced some anti-American hostility,” Frank testifies. “The teacher attributed my failure to do the homework to my being pro-American (*Amerika kabure*). He kept mocking me as an individualist and an egotistical maverick and branded me as *kokuzoku* or national enemy.” Frank’s personal experience differed from Mary’s and Nobuyo’s; the two were scared and annoyed by the authorities primarily because of their American citizenship. Mary was an American citizen and Nobuyo retained her dual citizenship while Frank obtained exclusively Japanese citizenship to receive graduation certificates from his elementary school. “The Japanese police asked me where I would go, but did not detain me because I looked Japanese,” Mary states. However, she continues, “I had to keep a low profile so my American mannerisms and conspicuous speech would not be obvious.” Her interpersonal conflict was even more shocking. She suffered from cruel treatment by a Japanese woman for whom she worked as a maid. “Mrs. Sakai used to lord over me and boast about how Japan was winning the war and looked down on me as the enemy.” Nobuyo was actually summoned by the police. “All Nisei living in Japan during the war were monitored by the police,” she recalls. “I received a police summons once to appear at the Yanai police station. . . . I was scared because the police had great power and was suspicious of the Nisei.”³⁰

How did these Nisei’s experiences in Japan affect the way they identified themselves? No generalization is possible, but different degrees of assimilation to Japanese society partially explain the variation in their perception of Japan and themselves. Overall Frank looks at his experiences in Japan in a positive light. “My experience and education in Japan were not completely negative. . . . I can

not only speak, read, and write Japanese well, but I understand the way the Japanese people speak, think, and behave,” he claims. It is not clear whether he identifies more with Americans than with Japanese now at the emotional level, but the fact that he reclaimed American citizenship after the war demonstrates his firm determination to live as an American. Nevertheless, he feels a sense of marginalization that other Americans would not be familiar with. “I feel marginal to two ways: as an American of Japanese ancestry who lived in Japan and as a Kibei-Nisei living in the United States,” he confides. “It was not easy learning to speak English and adapting to American ways. My English is still imperfect.” His limited ability to communicate in both English and Japanese is the cost of transnational education.³¹

Mary felt isolated while she was in Japan, because she identified more with Americans than with Japanese. She hated what Japanese culture appeared to represent even before her arrival in Japan. “I first got my negative impression about the Japanese, mostly due to our minister from Japan who tried to make quiet, submissive Japanese girls out of us tomboys,” she recalls. “We girls certainly disliked him and his subservient wife, and determined never to be like her.” During her stay in Japan in wartime, she experienced a paradoxical situation in which her looks saved her from trouble even though she was an American. “It never occurred to me to declare myself as an American citizen. I tried to become inconspicuous, and since I looked Japanese that was usually not hard to do as long as I kept my mouth shut. Once I spoke, my accent gave me away as being different.” Even though she could “fake” her Japanese-ness, however, Mary could not help but sense a keen feeling of loneliness. “I was all by myself in a foreign country,” she recalls, despite the fact that she was married at that time and living with her Japanese in-laws. After the war, the situation completely changed—favorably for her. Now she did not need to hide her identity as an American. “Our lives were completely reversed,” she states, “for in Japanese eyes we were no longer the hated enemy. Rather we were identified with the conquerors who had plenty of food, cigarettes, and other scarce things. What a joy it was to be liberated and speak in English as loudly as we wanted to and act naturally!” She even started to despise the Japanese openly. “Kay [another Nisei girl] and I used to speak of the native Japanese as ‘Japs’ in order to distinguish them from Japanese Americans.” It was now more obvious than ever that she identified with fellow Americans. “When the occupation forces came in, we immediately identified with them because they looked like the people we had

grown up with and spoke the same language. We felt at home with them. It was ironic since we had been insulted when we had been called ‘Japs.’ In some way, we were turning our anger against the Japanese by calling them the very pejorative name we had suffered from while in the United States.” Even though—or because—she was familiar with the harsh reality of racism in the United States, she could not stop distinguishing herself clearly from the Japanese.³²

Nobuyo also fundamentally considers herself to be different from other Japanese despite her long years of living in Japan, although her expression of “American-ness” is less conspicuous than Mary’s. Her sense of loneliness came mostly from limited opportunities to speak English and her disagreement over certain cultural values with her Japanese relatives. “Since I didn’t have any friend with whom I could speak in English, I felt lonesome,” she confesses. “But there were some relatives in Oshima who had been in the United States. They were just like my parents. I enjoyed talking about my family in the States with them. But it would have been much better if I had a friend with whom I could talk freely. I had several Japanese friends, but I could not express myself freely as a Nisei.” Her looks did not help much in her adjustment to Japanese life. “What was common sense for the Japanese was not so for the Nisei,” she contends. “Despite looking like a Japanese, it was not always easy to live in Japan for us.” Although she tried hard to accommodate herself to the Japanese way of living, she refused to conform to certain cultural expectations at times. “Japanese women generally quit their jobs after marriage, but I never thought of quitting,” she recalls. Consequently, she experienced some difficulties with her in-laws. “Because of my American background, I expected them [her in-laws] to talk with me. On the other hand, they expected me to obey them.” Overall, however, her perception of life in Japan is not too negative or too positive because she has “experienced the good and bad of both Japan and the United States.” “Over the years I have fully adjusted to life in Japan, but I have a strong sense of nostalgia for the United States. Life as a Nisei in Japan was not easy, especially for me as a woman living in the countryside. But my spirit of independence, rooted in my American upbringing, enabled me to endure and overcome all the hardships I encountered,” she concludes. She does not view herself simply as Japanese or an American. In other words, Nobuyo sets herself in a separate category that should be termed “transnational Nisei”—a group that does not neatly fit into the classifications based on one’s nationality.³³

The three examples of Nisei experiences in Japan before, during, and after the

Pacific War all testify to the formation of an ambiguous, transnational consciousness, albeit to different degrees. Because he was still a boy when he went to Japan, Frank was most easily exposed to Japan's militaristic and nationalistic education. He not only received military training in school but even got inducted into the army once the war began. Living with families in rural Japan further facilitated his adaptation to Japanese culture and society. Yet his transnationalism manifests itself in his way of dressing and desire for American food. Mary stands in the opposite direction regarding the level of assimilation, being almost completely American and only nominally Japanese. This is because she left for Japan very reluctantly as an adult who had no prior experience of language training, with only a little contact with local Japanese she did not quite like; once in Japan she entered a school in higher education instead of compulsory education that stressed nationalistic teachings; she also lived in urban Tokyo and was able to communicate with other Nisei; and she most likely considered her stay in Japan would be a short one. Nobuyo somehow stands in the middle between Frank and Mary, although her age at that time in Japan, prior exposure to language training, living conditions in Japan, and the kind of school she attended could have made her more Japanese than American. Looking back at her life, however, she reveals her ambiguous feeling of being used to Japanese ways but embracing American values simultaneously. In her case, the hardships she had endured as a woman living in a rural area may have particularly worked to intensify her nostalgia for the United States.

The range of Nisei experiences in Japan illuminates the complexity of their living and schooling as they were specifically contextualized in the late 1930s when the United States and Japan were on their way to war against each other. Although further research into their lives is necessary to draw any definite conclusions, even a brief glance at several accounts helps one understand the cost and trauma of transnational education—something that Issei leaders in the United States certainly did not expect.

Conclusion

Although the various transnational experiences of the Nisei can never be generalized, several conclusions are possible. The Nisei who went to Japan were more likely from areas in the United States where they had less chance of receiv-

ing language education. They were heavily from working-class families, but youngsters with high school degrees and with parents who were professionals or in commerce had a better chance of attending schools or universities in the vicinity of metropolitan areas. Once in Japan, these people did suffer as well as benefit from their transnational experience in a way the Issei would never have imagined. If they went to Japan as adults, they had more difficulty adjusting to Japanese society. If they crossed the Pacific at a younger age, they were more likely to forget English. Men and boys would have been affected by (or forced to subscribe to) militaristic ideologies while women and girls would have been expected by the Japanese to conform to traditional and constraining Japanese cultural norms especially within the household. Despite the good intention of their parents, the Nisei in Japan were affected by the cost of education in Japan. These hardships served to intensify their ambiguous and transnational consciousness. Even before leaving for Japan, they had already held a degree of multiple self-identifications that linked them to different nations, either feeling proud of, or forced to cope with, their Japanese ancestry at the same time as being treated by other Americans as second-rate citizens. Once in Japan, however, they not only learned that they were foreign in their ancestors' land but also rediscovered their American selves in the process of tackling discrimination by the Japanese and trying to overcome cultural differences.

The total picture of Nisei transnationalism is still incomplete. More anecdotal evidence including interviews with those people who went to Japan for education before World War II is necessary. A close reading of Japanese sources about those who did not return to the United States is another possibility. Research into the Nisei in prewar Hawaii would also shed a new light on the study of Nisei transnationalism. Further explorations of the problems that the Nisei as well as the Issei encountered would illuminate the complexity of their transnationalism.

Notes

- 1 Caroline B. Brettell, "Theorizing Migration in Anthropology: The Social Construction of Networks, Identities, Communities, and Globalscapes," in *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines*, ed. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield (New York: Routledge, 2000), 104.
- 2 Steven Vertovec, "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): 447-62; José Itzigsohn, "Immigration and the Boundaries of Citizenship: The Insti-

- tion of Immigrants' Political Transnationalism," *International Migration Review* 34, no. 4 (2000): 1128.
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Transnationalism in Education

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