

JAPANESE AMERICAN AND JAPANESE CANADIAN SCHOOL LEADERS
IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST: PERSONAL HISTORIES
AND LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS

By

DAN KIYOSHI SAKAUE

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of DAN KIYOSHI SAKAUE find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Paul Goldman, Ph.D., Chair

Paul E. Pitre, Ph.D.

Gay V. Selby, Ed.D.

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Abstract

by Dan Kiyoshi Sakaue, Ed.D.
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Chair: Paul Goldman

Do school administrators of Japanese descent hold traditional Confucian, Buddhist, and Shinto values and do they attempt to put these values into action in their professional lives? The author explores this question in an interview study with 16 Japanese American and Japanese Canadian school principals working in the Pacific Northwest. Each individual had a unique experience and outlook, and it was hard to generalize about them as a group. However, these educational leaders were marked by the experience of their parents, almost all of whom were relocated or interned as children during World War II. The parents conveyed traditional values and behavioral expectations, but most did not insist on their children learning Japanese or attending services at Buddhist temples. They wanted this generation to assimilate into American or Canadian society and that is what happened. At the same time, virtually all of the respondents acknowledged that they had, as a visible minority, a sense of being different and of being seen as different. Many of them experienced mild forms of prejudice and discrimination and this, they felt, made them more sensitive to minority issues than many of their Caucasian administrative peers. In general, they saw themselves as shy and unassuming and this had an impact on their leadership style. There were few real difference in what American and Canadian principals described, although the former generally had a more intense reaction to their parents wartime experience. Many of them only learned about relocation/internment in secondary school rather than from their families. The two principals raised in Hawaii, where more than a third of the population was Japanese American when they were growing up, had almost totally different childhood and educational experiences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Importance of the Problem and the Research Question	2
Rationale for the Study	3
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	5
Introduction	5
The Japanese Americans	5
Coming to America	6
Generational and Regional Distinctions Among Japanese Immigrants	7
The Mainland and Hawaiian Americans of Japanese Ancestry	8
The Values of the Japanese in America	9
Unique Experiences of the Japanese in America	11
The “Model Minority” Characterization and its Impact on Japanese American Attitudes	12
Assimilation and the Japanese American	14
Assimilation and Public K-12 Education	16
The Japanese American in the Workplace	18
Leadership Challenges for Asian American School Leaders	20
Conclusion	23
3. RESEARCH METHODS	24
Background of the Research Method	24
Phenomenological Interviewing	25
Interview Process and Questions	27

Study Participants	28
Validity and Reliability	29
4. PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW	31
The Americans	33
The Canadians.....	43
Summary	50
5. THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY: THE ISSEI, NISEI, SANSEI	51
Introduction.....	51
Parents.....	51
The World War II Experience: Internment (American), Relocation (Canadian, American), Nothing (Hawaiian), or Other (<i>Kibei</i> , American)	51
The Canadian Experience	52
The “Mainland” Experience	55
The Hawaiian Experience	57
Post World War II.....	58
Resuming Life.....	58
Identity - Ethnicity, Assimilation, &Language.....	59
Parent Background.....	60
Education & Religion	60
Marriage.....	60
Parenting Style... ..	61
Careers	63
Summary	63
6. DEFINING THE SELF: THE SANSEI/YONSEI.....	64
Family Life.....	64
Religion.....	67

School Experience	69
Learning About the Family World War II Experience	72
Identity and Difference	74
Childhood: You are Different	74
Childhood: I am Different.....	76
Early Adulthood.....	80
The University Experience	80
Traveling to Japan.....	84
Adulthood	87
Marriage.....	88
Offspring.....	89
Personality and Character	90
Summary	91
7. THE SCHOOL LEADER.....	92
Becoming an Educator.....	92
The Path to the Principal’s Office.....	97
The Professional Identity	100
Personality.....	102
Leadership Style and Approach	102
Professional Priorities	103
On Difference.....	104
Summary	105
8. CONCLUSION: RECONSIDERING VALUES.....	106
Summary of Findings	106
Professional Dimension	107
Ethnic Identity: Group vs. Individual	107
Values	110

Emphasis on Ethical Living	110
Care for Others	111
Family and Community	112
The Ethic of Hard Work and Education	112
<i>Gaman</i>	113
Final Reflections	114
BIBLIOGRAPHY	115
APPENDIX	120
A. GLOSSARY	120
B. INTERVIEW GUIDE	122

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother
for her unwavering support.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

What I feel like is . . . what I do get a lot from my African-American families who have a lot of concerns about Asian people in general . . . I get a lot of, ‘what can you do for my child? What can you teach my Black kid?’ The racial thing stands out most for me in the school setting, but the age and gender stuff is buried in there too (Asian woman principal quoted in Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

The quote above, possibly encountered by other Asian school leaders, serving in complex urban schools, conveys a reality that has, up until now, gone unexamined. There are multiple questions from multiple perspectives that can be immediately asked. If African-Americans are skeptical of Asians, who else might be? Why would one minority group be suspect of another? What do Asians do that promotes distrust? With questions such as these, deeper questions of personal and cultural beliefs and identity can arise, prompting this qualitative study that attempted to identify what, if any, collective perspectives and experiences exist for Japanese American public school leaders of the Pacific Northwest through phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 2006). As the research evolved, it became clear that the inclusion of Japanese Canadian administrators would enrich the value of the study.

In May 2007, with declining health and several “big” questions nagging at me, I resigned from my assignment as a public school leader. After ten years as a building level administrator and ten years as a teacher, I needed a break. After 15 years of education reform, two questions gnawed at me: I questioned the purpose of public education and wondered how I fit, or did not fit, as a public school leader within the larger political picture.

Recognizing that if I wanted to be an effective public school leader of the 21st century, I had to genuinely understand who I was and what I believed in. Reflecting upon my leadership experience, I recognized I was skilled at resolving complicated challenges in a short time. The problems I took on required innovation and Heifetz’s book *Adaptive Leadership* (1994), read early in our superintendent endorsement program, contributed to the questions I was pondering.

This professional reflection prompted me to ponder my identity. For the first time in my life I wondered if and how my race contributed to who I was, how I did things, and why I did things. Of the nearly 300 school districts in Washington State, I wondered, as a *sansei*, a third generation Japanese American from Hawaii, if and where I would “fit” as a school leader. That is how this dissertation emerged.

The journey to answer these questions meandered in various academic territory into the academic disciplines of ethics, ethical decision-making, ethical dilemmas, values-oriented, authentic and adaptive leadership, diversity, equity, the purpose of American public education, personal identity on professional identity, cultural differences, Asian Americans, Japanese Americans, the “Model Minority” myth, and political influences on American public education to name a few. What emerged from this academic wandering was a complete void of literature on Asian American public school leaders. Subsequently, a conscious decision was made to focus on Japanese American public school leaders in the Pacific Northwest.

Importance of the Problem and the Research Question

Especially in urban schools or schools near urban areas, diversity is a complex reality. For the most part, educators and families a school may serve share common belief about the purpose and function of schools. At times, especially when deep, second-order change occurs or is about to occur, individual and group beliefs will inevitably clash (Senge, 1990). This conflict is inevitable in American public schools, an institution where vastly different individuals come together on a regular basis, complicated by laws, policies, standards, rules, principles, and norms. When vastly different individuals interact with one another, internal and/or external conflict is likely and conflict resolution is unique and personal. Formally designated school leaders may find conflict resolution between various interest groups a challenge as they attempt to ensure “every” child they are responsible for receives the “best” education possible in this especially diverse institution.

The reflective public school leader recognizes the words “every” and “best” result in ethical dilemmas and conflict. Critical for leaders who are attempting to resolve adaptive

problems, those without easy answers, is a clear understanding of how personal beliefs and values contribute to leadership and problem-solving in complex, often unique circumstances (Heifetz, 1994).

Knowing many variables, such as age, race, generation, gender, and lived experiences contribute to an individual's personal values and beliefs, a professional inquiry of the Japanese American public school leaders, as a collective group surfaced. Hofstede (1988) defines culture, both in a national and corporate sense, as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category of people from those of another and for the most part, difficult to change. Scholars report that Japanese Americans share a number of values that originated in the Tokugawa Era (Kitano (1976; Wierzbicka, 1991). So, in our diverse environment, does one's upbringing continue through adulthood and how one approaches leadership.

Thus, to identify what, if any, collective perspective and experiences exist for Japanese American public school leaders of the Pacific Northwest provided the primary research question with the following four secondary questions: (1) Does ethnicity, lived experiences, generation, age, and/or gender contribute to a common identity and influence Japanese American school leaders? If so, how? (2) Do Japanese American school leaders share common views about leadership approach and style? (3) As a collective group, are there any commonalities in how Japanese American school leaders approach, frame, and solve problems and resolve conflicts? (4) Do Japanese American school leaders approach diversity and issues of diversity in a characteristic and similar manner?

Rationale for the Study

Asian Americans continue to be a misunderstood population in higher education (Museus & Chang, 2009). An extensive review of the literature on Asian American educational leaders located few research studies, suggesting a significant void in what we know about the topic. Museus and Chang (2009) found few articles addressing Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) faculty and administrators published in the five widely read peer-reviewed academic

journals in higher education over the previous decade. Similarly, Wrushen and Sherman (2008) found few studies outside of dissertations and self-reports on the topic of Asian American women and leadership. In a paper presented in 2000, Thatchenkery (citing Korn/Ferry International, 1999) noted that of the 8,403 studies on women and career development published between 1971 and 1997, 101 were on African Americans and only four were on Asian Americans.

The absence of empirical knowledge about Asian American educational leaders certainly created difficulties in framing research on the topic. Museus and Kiang (2009) stated that exclusion of AAPIs from scholarly inquiry in postsecondary education is in part due to the pervasive influence of the Model Minority myth, the popular belief that Asian Americans have achieved unparalleled academic and occupational success. Furthermore, federal agencies exclude the AAPI population in their definition of underrepresented racial minorities based on a conclusion they are not educationally disadvantaged.

In the occupational realm, despite similar levels of education, Thatchenkery (2000) found Asian Americans earning lower wages and held fewer managerial positions than their non-Asian American peers. Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women are consistently underrepresented in top positions in every sector (business, government, non-profit, and education) and in education, AAPI women hold less than 1% of the leadership positions at colleges and universities with few becoming principals at the K – 12 level (Ho, 2003; APAWLI, n.d.). Research findings to date do not indicate the extent to which these statistics result from lack of opportunities, self-selection, prejudice, values and habits of thought common to Americans of Asian ancestry, or a combination of factors.

Lastly, it would be responsible to clarify the use of the term underrepresented in this study. The term underrepresented is strictly numerical and should not be extended to encompass socio-economic disadvantage.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study of American public school leaders of Japanese ancestry and their grappling with conflict and ethical dilemmas began at the intersection between existing literature in Asian, or more specifically Japanese, studies, assimilation theory, values-oriented leadership, and authentic leadership. To provide context for readers, this literature review begins with an operational definition and contextual understanding of Japanese Americans, and continues with an overview of traditional Japanese values, unique historical experiences of the Japanese in America, assimilation and the Japanese in America, concluding with an overview of employment and leadership concepts that may have relevance for understanding Japanese American school leaders.

The Japanese Americans

No scholarly work of Japanese American, even more generally, Asian American, public school leaders was located. The literature on Japanese Canadians is even less developed. Thus, this literature review focuses almost entirely on Japanese Americans, although there has been some research on the evacuation of Japanese Canadian families in British Columbia during World War II. The United States of America, a nation whose citizens are mostly people with ethnic roots from other countries, has long used race as a group attribute that cognitively distinguishes individuals. White, Black, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, and Asian/Pacific Islander have long been the primary groupings America has used to code race. With increasing ethnic diversity in the U.S. and prevailing political sentiment, a racial group's common classification may change. People with Asian ancestral roots, with early immigrant groups from the countries of China and Japan, were first grouped together and called Orientals. As people from other Eastern, Southern, or Southeast Asian countries immigrated to America, the term Oriental evolved into Asian or Asian American. Now, the grouping of people of the Pacific Islands are included with Asians or Asian Americans and currently called Asian

American/Pacific Islander, or AAPIs, and is likely the most diverse racial groupings in America.

Hofstede (1988), a Dutch sociologist who studies international management, groups the Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans as Asians, or East Asians because of “common” behavioral patterns. This distinction is the primary definition for Asian American used in this dissertation. Additionally, since some scholars and publications base their studies on AAPIs, the more comprehensive term may be used. This blurry distinction may contribute to the confusion of Asians or AAPIs identified as America’s “Model Minority” (Petersen, 1966). The term originally referred to Japanese Americans, subsequently applied to second generation Chinese-Americans, and is currently is used more generally to refer to upwardly mobile Asian Americans.

Coming to America

After more than 200 years of isolation from the rest of the world under the Tokugawa Era (1600 – 1867), the Japanese economy was on the verge of collapse. Those commoners, numbering in the thousands, who had an opportunity to improve the quality of their lives, took advantage of Japan’s decision to reopen its borders and left for America. Between the late 1800s and 1922, male laborers, most of whom intended to return to Japan, arrived on the west coast and the Territory of Hawaii with big dreams and a moral code from the Tokugawa Era.

During the Tokugawa Era, *samurai*, educated warriors, ruled commoners by emphasizing mutuality and interdependence and *Bushido*, the Way of the Warrior. Based on the teachings of Chinese philosopher Confucius and the Indian philosopher Buddha whose teachings spread to East Asia, *Bushido* became the cornerstone of the deeply ingrained national morality of Japan. Confucius, the name given to Kong Fu Ze by Jesuit missionaries, was a civil servant in China around 500 B.C. promulgated non-secular pragmatic rules for daily living consisting of four key principles. First, the stability of a society is dependent on unequal relationships between people. Second, the family is the foundation of all social organizations. Third, live by the “Golden Rule” of treating others how you would like to be treated. Lastly, live virtuously in skills acquisition, education, hard work, frugality, patience, and perseverance.

As an island culture with limited natural resources, Tokugawa Era rulers established a

social and governmental structure designed to maximize human capital that resulted in subject – ruling class mutuality, much like family based patriarchy (Horinouchi, 1967; Maykovich, 1972).

Generational and Regional Distinctions among Japanese Immigrants

By examining generational and regional distinctions of the Japanese in America, generational as well as regional differences are noticeable. The first three generations in ascending order are *issei*, literally translated as the first generation, *nisei*, second generation, and *sansei*, third generation. The fourth generation of Japanese in America, *yonsei*, is where the ethnic generational identification appears to have attenuated, in some cases completely.

The *issei* were born in Japan. These immigrants brought with them ethical principles from the Tokugawa Era that focused on family, feudal lords, a nationalistic spirit, patriarchy and hierarchy, and family as the primary unit for social interaction. The Tokugawa Era values the *issei* brought with them were loyalty, group cooperation, adaptability, gratitude, mutuality, benevolence, obedience (to parents), selflessness (group orientation), duty to one's superiors, indebtedness, compromise, yielding to others, and being reserved (self-control), disciplined, and obedient. The *issei* also believed suffering and hard work were necessary to build character (Maykovich, 1972; Kitano, 1976; Horinouchi, 1967).

Despite parental expectations to “behave Japanese,” the *nisei*, children of the *issei*, were a conflicted generation as they experienced life outside of their personal, ethnic enclaves with conformity to conventional behavior and obedience to rules and regulations central to *nisei* socialization. At home and in the community, and also through *Shushin*, the Confucian-based course in morals used to impart these values to children in Japanese language schools, *nisei* learned again and again of their moral “duty” to respect parents, teachers, and all elders. At home, *nisei* were taught to implicitly respect and honor their fathers, the highest authority of the home, followed by mother and older children, usually male, no matter how unreasonable or difficult they were, ingraining a definite sense of hierarchy of status with *nisei*. Another value *nisei* were taught was “knowing one's place (in society and life)” in relation to age, gender (masculine superiority), class, caste, family lineage, and other variables of social status

(Wierzbicka, 1991; Kitano, 1976; Horinouchi, 1967). The lives of most *nisei* were deeply impacted by the relocation experience in World War II.

Two generations away from their immigrant grandparents are the *sansei*. With fewer direct ties with Japan, *sansei* often do not identify with their ethnicity or the color of their skin but with mainstream American values and culture. Interestingly, perceiving their difference from the American mainstream, *sansei* retained their hyphenated identity. Since many *sansei* were not “forced” by their parents to attend Japanese language schools, very few speak Japanese fluently. Most *sansei* did not experience World War II and internment camps first-hand. Perceived as somewhat subdued and conforming, *sansei* often chose job-oriented education and “secure professions.” *Sansei* were found to be fiercely interested in upward mobility, though more typical of someone aspiring rather than someone who is a fully acculturated middle-class American, establishing a professional class of Japanese Americans--lawyers, doctors, architects, engineers, and teachers (Spickard, 2009; Kitano, 1976).

Kitano (1976) found the personality of Japanese Americans included fear of power, insecurity, obedience, cliquishness, and an inability to make forceful decisions, markedly different from Caucasian Americans, especially in the areas of indirectness, conformity, compromise, success, aspiration, obligation, and dependency.

Regarding assimilation, Horinouchi (1967) found similarities between the *nisei* and the *sansei*. Those whose parents were most highly acculturated to American standard culture were closer to the dominant middle class cultural patterns while those whose parents were more conservative appeared closer to the mainstream *nisei* generation. As we will see in the workplace situation, indirectness can have both healthy and unhealthy consequences while avoiding direct attacks that often lead to irreconcilable differences, the potential for confusion, misinterpretation, and misunderstanding can also occur (Kitano, 1969).

The Mainland and Hawaiian Americans of Japanese Ancestry

The experience of the Japanese born and/or raised in Hawaii was dramatically different from those who resided on the continental United States. In 1970, 37% of the Japanese

Americans in the United States resided in Hawaii, and 37% of the Hawaiian population was Japanese American. Unlike the West Coast Japanese, who were a small, scattered minority and viewed as economic threats by some, the Japanese from Hawaii were more comfortable with their ethnicity, quickly acculturated and became a powerful and dominant group in Hawaii because of the size of their population. Because of the geographic proximity to Japan, the Japanese from Hawaii also maintained a stronger connection to Japan than those on the continental United States. Many Japanese from Hawaii express surprise when the topic of racial discrimination arises with their mainland counterparts (Kitano, 1976).

Despite the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which prompted the United States to enter World War II, only a few Japanese from Hawaii experienced internment as the Japanese were integral to the Hawaii economy and it would have been too difficult and expensive to move Hawaii's large Japanese population to the mainland internment camps (Kitano, 1976).

The Values of the Japanese in America

Issei parents passed a recognizable set of Japanese values onto their *nisei* children. Five particular values have been identified as scholars as significantly influencing Japanese American and Japanese Hawaiian cultures. These values, appearing to have originated in the Tokugawa Era and evolved during the Meiji Era, are *on*, an attitude of obligation and respect, *giri*, contracted obligation or honor, *ninjo*, humane sensibility, *enryo*, modesty in the presence of one's superior, and *haji*, shame (Neilson & Suyemoto, 2009, Wierzbicka, 1991; Kitano, 1976).

On, conveyed a lifetime obligation of loyalty, obedience, and reverence, unconditionally given to one's parents, teachers, school, superiors, and country. *On* manifested through the bestowing of goods onto another person, which would in turn, prompt feelings of gratitude and arouse a sense of obligation. During the Tokugawa Era, when a *samurai* received *on* from a lord, he repaid the favor by offering his military service. *Giri*, a sense of obligation, is the moral imperative to perform one's duties toward other members of one's group. *Ninjo* is to be empathetic and understanding of others by extending oneself. Having the ability to sense when another person might become embarrassed and helping to help that person "save face" is *ninjo*

(Wierzbicka, 1991).

Since *issei* valued indirectness and avoidance of direct conflict, *enryo* eased tension in competitive situations. *Enryo* is a form of politeness intended to maintain a certain distance from those one does not know well through holding back. Though originally used when interacting with one's superiors, Japanese Americans now regularly practice *enryo* with everyone. Another component of *enryo* is *hazukashi*, or shame. To promote public modesty with their children, *issei* and some *nisei* parents told their children "people will laugh at you" or "don't bring shame onto the family" when their children misbehaved or acted inappropriately in public.

By practicing *enryo*, rhetorically minimizing one's positive attributes and accomplishments and those of one's family despite working very hard to achieve and advance, *enryo* may have helped the Japanese's image with Caucasians while potentially compromising their full development and individual potential. This combination of an emphasis on "how to behave" coupled with *enryo*, the avoidance of direct confrontation, may have contributed to Japanese acculturation because of compatible Japanese and American middle class values (Kitano, 1976).

The Japanese are a culture that places high emphasis on norms – knowing "how to behave in situations." Conformity, obedience, and understanding power and position, were norms of this ethnic group. The high need for love and acceptance among many Japanese often leads them to pattern their behavior according to their perception of the expectations of those in authority. Two relatively common Japanese points of view were "I'll become an even better American and cooperate more than 100% to prove it." *Shikatanagai*, roughly translated to "it can't be helped," conveys the belief of Japanese that fate of an individual is tied to forces beyond one's control. Subsequently, those in power (e.g., the U.S. Army) were able to use this position to gain the cooperation of the evacuated population (Kitano, 1976).

In summary, Kitano (1969) identified politeness, respect for authority and parental wishes, duty to one's community, diligence, emphasis on personal achievement and long-range goals, a sense of shame concerning non-sanctioned behavior, and a degree of "outer-

directedness” as values shared by the two cultures. Furthermore, Xin (2004) reported perceptions that Asian Americans are diligent, agreeable, flexible, modest, polite, soft spoken, and non-confrontational. In their studies of Asian American leaders in higher education, Neilson and Suyemoto (2009) confirmed Kitano’s findings of Asians’ values of hard work as honor, legacy, and moral obligation specifically in how they approached their careers. If these assertions were found with higher education leaders, there is strong possibility that these conclusions could be made of Japanese American public school leaders.

Unique Experiences of the Japanese in America

Two events in U.S. history have significantly changed the course of experience for Japanese Americans. First, the mass internment of west coast Japanese Americans during World War II and secondly, the 1966 identification as a “Model Minority” have positive and negative consequences for the Japanese. Both of these events changed the course of history for this minority group and opened opportunities that might have taken longer to achieve.

Prior to and through World War II, lacking prominent Japanese public figures, the Japanese on the mainland were poor and politically powerless. The *issei* did not have citizenship rights and the *nisei* were just reaching voting age. Following endured racism and economic and psychological damage brought on by forced evacuation, the Japanese believed they were not the “ideal” immigrants. “Ideal” immigrants in the mind of the Japanese was someone white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, from a nation that has been “friendly” to the United States, who easily adjusts, adapts, acculturates, and easily merges into the “melting pot” of American culture with minimal difficulty. Feeling marginalized in every respect, the Japanese held low expectations for any compassion from the public at-large. The internment experience prompted the Japanese to consider their personal national and ethnic identity, especially for the *nisei*, which resulted in acculturation shifts for many. Though the daily regime of camp life was monotonous and self-defeating, some new opportunities and experiences dissolved long-standing institutions and cultural structure for the Japanese. Granted artificial, the Japanese experienced democracy and an American model of a small community few other Americans have ever experienced (Kitano,

1976; Spickard, 2009).

Camp authorities favored the U.S. born *nisei* over the *issei* by giving them the better paying, more responsible camp jobs exacerbating the brewing generational rifts and cultural value of hierarchy for the Japanese Americans. Furthermore, women were also income earning with some earning more than their husbands. This, as well, altered the traditional family structure of the Japanese. Aside from guarding and top-level decision-making, the *nisei* ran the camps and were the initial core of camp democracy. For the first time, young non-Hawaii *nisei* were part of the majority since ethnicity was a constant and status was now based on qualification and achievement, values that were culturally reinforced. *Nisei* had an opportunity to develop their leadership skills and recognized as athletes and political and social heroes, roles previously reserved for those in the dominant culture of their previous lives outside of the internment camps (Spickard, 2009; Kitano, 1976).

When inmates were permitted to leave the camps, at first *nisei*, who were heading to points east to complete their post-secondary education, were advised by remaining inmates, *issei* and other *nisei*, to act as inconspicuously as possible and not be offensive in their new environments. Family and friends said their farewells by reminding those leaving the camps to do good for not only themselves and their families, but also for the Japanese American community as a whole while proving loyalty to America, emphasizing the group-oriented culture of the Japanese in America (Spickard, 2009).

A separate but significant effect of the internment experience is that *nisei* have been characterized as striving desperately for acceptance and maintain a hyper-assimilationist. In many cases, this attitude has been passed onto the *sansei* generation, even though little or nothing is said about the internment camp experience. This residual psychological outcome reflects the cultural values and beliefs of fitting in, characteristic of the Japanese (Spickard, 2009; Kitano, 1976).

The “Model Minority” Characterization and its Impact on Japanese American Attitudes.

No other ethnic group in America with visible physical attributes besides the Japanese

has received “positive stereotyping.” In New York Times article, sociologist William Petersen compared the Japanese Americans against Whites, Negroes, Indians, Mexicans, Chinese, and Filipinos in crime rates, lifespan, delinquency rate, academic life, and hygiene to identify what makes Japanese Americans different. Petersen stated,

By any criterion of good citizenship that we choose, the Japanese Americans are better than any other group in our society, including native-born whites. They have established this remarkable record, moreover, on their own, almost totally with unaided effort. Every attempt to hamper their progress resulted only in enhancing their determination to succeed.

Thus, the concept of Model Minority began to emerge. A two-fold dilemma associated with this distinction immediately surfaced for the Japanese in America, the controversy and problems caused by the “positive stereotype” and the perpetuation of the myth by Asians themselves.

American society elevated the Japanese for its perceived embodiment of the American cultural ideals of hard work, perseverance, self-sufficiency and excellence and inadvertently created the “other” (Ho, 2003). Interestingly, since that time, the concept of Model Minority expanded to include all Asians, where the “myth” aspect of this “positive stereotype” arose.

For the past four decades, scholars such as Spickard (2009), Museus and Chang (2009) and Xin (2004) have refuted the conclusions made by Petersen in a strand of literature on the Model Minority Myth. These scholars contend that good evidence exist that the abilities and virtues of Asian spread across the bell curve in patterns similar to those of other ethnic groups, hiding those Asians who were poor or socially disadvantaged, or did not fit the stereotype.

Another unique experience of the Japanese American is friction between them and other people of color, because of the “myth.” The Japanese are at times looked upon with contempt and perceived as “honorary white people,” having all the privileges of whites, despite similar experiences of discrimination and exclusion. Other minorities believe the Japanese have “over-conformed” to the dominant White culture, even to the point of accepting white prejudices

(Hastings, 2007; Maykovich, 1972). Furthermore, Museus and Chang (2009) note that Asian Americans have been excluded from or used as a “wedge” by the dominant culture to divide minority interests in race-based debates to support the notion of meritocracy. Wrushen and Sherman (2008) found that opponents of equal opportunity policies and programs use Asians as evidence that racial discrimination does not exist, or worse, use them as a bludgeon to punish other people of color.

Finally, scholars such as Museus and Kiang (2009), Teranishi, et al, (2009), and Ho (2003) acknowledge the perpetuation of the myth. Asking “*Why can't you be content to be the Model Minority?*” and “*Is there something bad about a positive stereotype?*” they recognize how some Asian Americans perpetuate the model minority identity to gain prestige and commendation from others in their lives, creating an interesting paradox. To other Japanese American and Chinese-Americans, who have achieved a certain level of acculturation or assimilation in American society, the characterization of being a “Model Minority” is viewed as offensive since the basis of this recognition is solely based on genetic features instead of other noted qualities further discussed below.

Assimilation and the Japanese American

The simple idea of bringing diverse people, with unique cultural backgrounds and beliefs, together to function harmoniously in society, is complex. Some ethnic groups, for example Japanese Americans, despite visible differences, appear to have fit into mainstream American culture. Though assimilation is currently an unpopular and controversial idea, this concept appears to be significant for the Japanese.

Tracing the controversial lineage of the concept of assimilation appears to have originated in the early 20th century reflecting the tumultuous history of American immigration dating back prior to the 20th century. In 1908, Israel Zangwill’s theatrical production *Melting Pot*, describing America as a land where people from different places came and left aspects of themselves behind as they became Americans. Eight years later, in 1916, Horace Kallen, scholar of ethnicity in America, criticized the premise of the Melting Pot on ideological grounds. Kallen

believed that forcing new immigrants to shed their lifelong cultural identities for admission to American society was cruel, harmful, and unrealistic. “Cultural Pluralism” was then born. Cultural Pluralism, more commonly called multiculturalism, promoted ethnic identity and diversity in American by encouraging immigrants to maintain their cultural ethnicity and band together for social and political purposes and opposes assimilation (Gordon, 1964; Sallins, 1997).

After World War II, new issues emerged in academic studies of assimilation that questioned the accuracy and even the desirability of this concept. First, a definition provided by Warner and Srole, describing ethnic groups as "unlearning" their "inferior" cultural traits (from the standpoint of the host society) in order to successfully learn a new way of life necessary for full acceptance, cast the negative perception of assimilation that exists today (Alba & Nee, 1997). A second blow to assimilation came in 1954 when Cole and Cole published *Anglo Conformity* (Gordon, 1964).

During the 1960s, the decade of opposition, ethnic consciousness, self-righteous idealism, and the decline of national unity, many longstanding mores and the agents of authority were challenged and hysterical and often irrational views of race and ethnicity arose (Glazer, 1993). The upsides of the 1960s were greater race and gender understanding and tolerance, and new concern about the treatment of handicapped persons (Sallins, 1997). During this decade, liberals viewed assimilation as a means to impose cultural conformity on America’s minority groups. Sociologists Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan in *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963) submitted evidence that there was no actual melting pot and continuing economic, social, and cultural discrimination directed towards the descendants of immigrants (Sallins, 1997). Half a century later, the dialogue has changed.

Few scholars are still engaged in the discussion of assimilation. Those still engaged have reoriented the previously promoted race-based positions promoted by earlier scholars of assimilation toward a discussion of how people of difference are also part of the same national family. Richard Alba defined assimilation as “a complex, long-term processes that does not

imply obliteration of all traces of ethnic origins or every member of an ethnic group being assimilated to the same degree or way and at the same speed.” Sallins (1997) offers the idea of Assimilation, American-style, also the title of his book, as national and cultural unity instead of race. Based on three ground rules, immigrants would be welcome as full members of the American family if they agree to abide by the “precepts” or the “Assimilation Contract.” Newcomers had to (1) accept English as a national language, (2) take pride in their American identity and believe in America's liberal democratic and egalitarian principles, and (3) live by the Protestant Ethic (self-reliant, hard working, and morally upright). To seal the assimilation contract, immigrants were encouraged to become U.S. citizens, while being free to retain or discard as much or as little of their homeland cultures as they wish without compromising their assimilation and acculturation (Sallins, 1997). For the Japanese Americans, this particular view of assimilation seems especially applicable. As most *nisei* demonstrated during World War II, all three qualities were wholeheartedly maintained, despite mass internment.

Mirroring the values of Japanese Americans, the Protestant Ethic is a belief system that judges individuals on their achievements, rather than by the circumstances of their birth, making ethnicity less relevant, uniting all Americans in a framework of shared values. The downside of this ethic is people are judged on the grounds of work, when natural intelligence, talent, physical strength, muscular coordination, stamina and endurance for hard work, charm, ambition, luck, and how they relate to the swings of national business cycles varies so greatly. In America, anybody can get ahead but the bad news is that anybody can also fail (Sallins, 1997).

Assimilation and Public K–12 Education.

“The primary purpose for public education was assimilation, rather than learning,” asserted assimilation scholar Sallins (1997. p. 61). Looking at the history of American public education, there is evidence that beginning the Common Schools Movement, this position is legitimate. Beginning the early nineteenth century, American public education played a critical role in assimilating youth.

In the early 19th century, only a few children received formal education and what existed

was highly stratified. Upper-class children were educated at home, middle class and upwardly mobile parents sent their children to select private schools where parents incurred significant expenses, a minority of lower-middle class children attended religious schools, and poor children did not receive education. Instituting universal, free, and compulsory education was a radical idea with all children attending the same schools, taught in the same classroom by the same teachers, learning the same subjects, and reading the same books. Through the promotion of these ideals, American public education was determined to graduate classless and assimilated children would socialize with others from different backgrounds (ethnic, religious, and class), speaking and hearing the same version of English, thereby eliminating social barriers and beginning their vocational careers at the same level.

Promoting public education for the masses, the Common School Movement began in 1830 in Massachusetts and continued through 1852, an era of mass immigration into America. Since immigrant children were their primary clientele, reformers were committed to using the institution of public school as America's frontline for assimilation. The Common School Movement's position was that elementary and secondary schools would promote national solidarity, democracy, and egalitarianism while emphasizing reading, writing, and arithmetic. Three reform objectives were free, comprehensive, compulsory elementary education, establishment of separate secondary schools, and uniform state standards to ensure immigrant children assimilation through established norms of conduct, expectations, and attitudes that fostered inter-ethnic, inter-class, and immigrant-native socialization (Sallins, 1997).

Despite the need to educate and assimilate immigrant children, contentious disagreement ensued throughout the 19th century and continued into the 20th century. In the late 19th century, educators and lay members of local school boards, challenged by the growing number of immigrant children and believing the children were uneducable and came from barbaric home cultures, public school educators began rejecting the assimilation ideals and directed these children into "insultingly intolerant" programs of Americanization or nonacademic, vocational training. Children were required to give up their ethnic heritages and speak and hear the same

version of “American” English. Though some immigrant parents were pleased with their children’s assimilation to America, mixed reviews began to surface. This was especially popular in California with the Chinese and some Japanese children (Sallins, 1997).

The Japanese American in the Workplace

Mental programming of culture occurs from birth and continues throughout one’s life (Hofstede, 1988). If this is the case, one’s life experience and upbringing contributes to how individuals interact with and negotiate the world. Considering Confucian-based teachings and the Tokugawa Era values Japanese Americans experienced in their upbringing, it would be interesting to note if and what values are transferred between generations and how they may manifest with public school administrators in the Pacific Northwest.

In the early 1970s, using large-scale data from an international employee attitude survey, developed by U.S., British, Dutch, French, and Scandinavian researchers, administered to employees of the IBM Corporation, Hofstede (1988) found the employees responded to the questions along four dimensions. The first measured the extent to which the less powerful members of an organization and institution accept and expect power unequal power distribution within an organization, known as the Power-Distance dimension. The second measured the degree to which individuals integrate into groups, with the range measured on an Individual-Collectivism scale. The distribution of roles between the sexes, or the Masculine-Feminine dimension, is third. Lastly, the extent to which a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations is reported in the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension. People in uncertainty-avoidance countries are more emotional, motivated by inner nervous energy, minimize the possibility of unstructured situations by enacting strict laws and rules as well as safety and security measures.

Power-Distance and Individualism affect the type of leadership most likely to be effective in a country where as Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance affect a culture’s motivation. Fifty-three nations were surveyed. The comparison of the U.S. and Japan shows significant differences. On the power-Difference dimension, Japan ranked 33rd and the U.S. 38th. In the

Individualism, Japan tied for 22nd while the U.S. ranked first. On the Masculine dimension, Japan ranked first and the U.S. ranked 15th. Lastly, on Uncertainty Avoidance, Japan ranked seventh while the U.S. ranked 43rd.

Three of four dimensions resulted in significant ranking differences between Japan and the U.S.; first, Individualism, a dimension that affects the type of leadership effective in a country, as well as Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance dimension that affects motivation. A question arose whether Japanese American public school leaders might have characteristics more similar to the Japanese or the U.S. with respect to assimilation, generation, and gender.

Thatchenkery (2000) reported that White managers perceive Asian Americans as modest, polite, soft-spoken, non-confrontational, diligent, agreeable, flexible, well educated, hardworking, intelligent, quantitatively minded, complain less, keen on maintaining harmony in relationships, placing group interests over individual interests, dutiful at the expense of personal rights, accommodating, and conciliatory. Asian Americans also blend-in with groups rather than distinguishing themselves through either good or bad behavior, withhold expressing their feelings, refrain from openly challenging others' perspectives, and place high importance on obligation fulfillment and lack the dynamic interpersonal qualities needed for top executive positions. Xin (2004) reports a stereotypic perception of Asian Americans as nonassertive and lacking leadership qualities valued by the dominant culture, having high regard for work, and a tendency to defer to those in higher positions of authority since the respectful Asian American subordinate does not draw attention to himself or herself.

Woog (2009) and Spickard (2009) credit the perceptions to Asian Americans upbringing. Asian American parents teach their children not question authority or "rock the boat." Asian Americans then end up becoming an invisible and forgotten minority group not advancing beyond the middle management level.

There continues to be a remarkable absence of Asian American and Pacific Islander women in leadership positions in the corporate, non-profit, government and educational sectors. According to a 1993–1994 study, Asian American women represented just 0.8% of all principals

(APAWLI, n.d.). In that study a significant majority, 59%, of Asian American and Pacific Islander women working in the continental U.S. believe their ethnicity is a major challenge for advancement. Participants also identified the dominant black/white paradigm of race relations in America culture as hindrance to their acceptance as leaders.

Asian American women leaders' self-perception, beliefs, and reluctance to adopt traits and behaviors that conflict with their own sense of identity can lead to ambivalence about wielding power, the ability to influence behavior to change the course of events and overcome resistance. Asian American women leaders from Hawaii value a quiet leadership style by getting things done and staying in the background while continental US women leaders rarely mentioned this leadership style (APAWLI, n.d.).

Leadership Challenges for Asian American School Leaders.

The work of educational leaders has become more complex, much less predictable, less structured, and more conflict-laden. Leadership involves considerable amounts of decision-making and problem solving. Leaders influence how a problem is framed and resolved, who is included or excluded, and which values are good or bad. Through their given positional authority, leaders, with or without help from others, influence outcomes and attempt to overcome resistance as they frame, define, reject and select alternatives in the highly subjective problem solving process. Inherent to this process are values, conflict and power.

Values conflicts appear central to school leadership. Conflict can reside within the mind of the individual when the relatively non-negotiable personal core values of the individual compete with each other or run counter to professional or organizational expectations, the outcomes of interactions among two or more individuals, or an incongruence or incompatibility between one or more of the values arenas. That is, conflict occurring among or between the domains of personal values, professional values, and/or organizational values.

For some Japanese Americans, their traditional values may be in conflict or at least clouded by the definition of outstanding leadership in three particular areas. Impression management, authenticity, and values informed leadership may be of particular challenge for

some Japanese Americans as these aspects of leadership appear to be in contrast to cultural values and upbringing.

Impression management behaviors are those individuals employ to protect their self-images and influence the way they are perceived by significant others, or both (Xin, 2004). What Xin concluded was that Asian Americans might make too much use of impression management tactics that do not pay off for them. Asian Americans may be working too hard and obtain too few benefits. They may be trapped by their own cultural values of maintaining modesty and being passive when communicating with their superiors (Xin, 2004).

In Hofstede's (1988) Uncertainty Avoidance and Power Distance dimensions and some of the behaviors and values identified by Kitano (1976), authenticity may be difficult for Japanese Americans since school leaders must now often be satisfied with responding to a situation knowing there may be no solution that will satisfy all parties (Begley & Johansson, 2003). The Scholars and practitioners acknowledge the challenge for school leaders in making decisions that are in the best interest of all children, especially when many of whom may come from homes with vastly different values and beliefs (Kirby et al., 1992; Ashbaugh & Kasten, 1984).

What may arise for some school leaders is internal conflict. This internal conflict may come in the form of recognizing inherent power differentials, values conflict with oneself and/or the organization. When a school leader attempts to resolve these internal conflicts, psychological concepts such as identity and motivation may arise, and possibly marginality. Lumby and English (2009), Begley and Johansson (2003), and Duignan and Bhindi (1997) citing a series of other researchers promote the need to "know the whole self" through values clarification in order to understand intentions and purpose of people or groups to establish consensus.

Being authentic requires one to be reflective. Being reflective requires individuals to purposefully and deliberately inquire into their thoughts and actions through which a perceived problem is examined so that a thoughtful, reasoned conclusion might be tested out (Cooms, 2003). Duignan and Bhindi (1997) further added that this acknowledges our flawed and dark

selves, the masks we sometimes wear to protect our fragile self, and use our emotional strength to be authentic for the sake of conformity or impressions we wish to make. Furthermore, as Duignan and Bhindi (1997) point out, in order to become an authentic leader, it is important to know where one stands on important moral and professional issues and then act accordingly.

As Lumby and English (2009, citing Lopez, 2003; Rusch, 2004; Blackmore, 2006), concluded, leadership preparation and development programs in England do not generally accommodate difference. Whatever the ethnic background of a student, the training programs are based on the dominant culture. Furthermore, a candidate may suppress their gender, disability, sexuality, religion, and culture to adopt the role of educational leader (Lumby & English, 2009). As such, the leadership preparation and development experience will be profoundly different for those who perceive themselves or are perceived by others as of lower status, are less secure about themselves, and/or who feel that they do not belong (Lumby & English, 2009). Then consider being in a field where few look like you, whether they are the colleagues, students, parents, or the community one serves, feelings of isolation can arise for someone who takes the path of school leadership, the path for Japanese Americans may be lonely.

Another dimension of leadership that may be conflicting for Japanese American public school leaders is how their values compliment or conflict with the population and staff they serve. With complex challenges that require resolution and conflicting interests, negotiating the tensions may be challenging, especially with adaptive (Heifetz, 1994) and second-order (Senge, 1990) change.

There is no single term that researchers agree upon that encompasses ethical perspectives on school leadership. Burns (1978) proposed that transformational leadership is moral leadership because transformational leaders inspire their followers to look beyond self-interest and work together for a collective purpose. Heifetz (1994) discussed values as he promoted his idea of Adaptive Leadership. Adaptive Leadership requires providing a vision and influencing the community, in non-coercive means, to face its problems, mobilizing people to tackle tough problems (problems that often require an evolution of values) while adjusting to the expectations

of followers. Honoring diversity and respecting conflict while increasing community cohesion through norms of responsibility, and keeping social distress within a bearable range is the responsibility of an effective adaptive leader. Leaders must be skillful in exposing internal contradictions through orchestrated, negotiated conflict resulting in leveraging and mobilizing people to learn new ways of doing things, and mobilizing them to action. The goal is then, to diminish the gap between the values people stand for and the reality they face.

Begley (2001) found that in school leadership literature, the terms morals, values, quality and ethics used interchangeably. Particularly among North American scholars of educational administration, there is a pronounced tendency to adopt the word ethics or moral as an umbrella term for anything values related. At this time, Begley also introduced the concept “values informed leadership,” a sophisticated, knowledge-based, and skillful approach to leadership that acknowledges and accommodates, in an integrative way, the legitimate needs of individuals, groups, organizations, communities and cultures that adopts and applies values.

If the Japanese Americans are a culture that places high emphasis on norms – knowing “how to behave in situations” with conformity, obedience, and understanding power and position, as norms, and a high need for love and acceptance, might this disposition affect the public school leader’s effectiveness (Kitano, 1976).

Conclusion

To be an effective, innovative adaptive leader requires one to really know and understand themselves. Without models and a body of scholarly knowledge to draw from, it is fair to wonder if this research could potentially influence the experience of Japanese American public school leaders.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Background of the Research Method

This qualitative study uses phenomenological interviewing to obtain data. From focused, open-ended questions posed to American public school leaders of Japanese ancestry, reconstruction of their experiences and the meaning they make from their experiences through the personal thoughts, perceptions, and feelings they share.

Since the 1920s, sociological researchers have used biographical, life history, case study, case history, and ethnographic methodology. A biography, an account of someone's life, written by another person, studies others' lives, in an attempt to explain how individuals negotiate problems of coherence, the deep inner self, others, gender, and class, epiphanies, and truths (Denzin, 1989). As Atkinson (1998, p. 24) pointed out, "People telling their own stories reveal more about their own inner lives than any other research approach could ever accomplish."

Life Narrative Interviews as a method was used by Freud as early as 1910 (original not in English as cited by Atkinson, 1998). Life Narrative Interviews acknowledge individual voice by letting participants speak for and about themselves through a guided interview. Researchers have broadened existing conclusions and findings by including the perspectives of women and culturally diverse groups through life narrative interviews. Thus they have gained insight into the social realities of an individual or group of individuals as they define their place in the social order of things, the process they use to make that occur, and their view of the experienced world. Researchers are able to identify patterns or specific themes or issues regarding gender, class, and culture that emerge from gathered data (Atkinson, 1998).

What results is researchers gaining an understanding of a participant's life through the story they shared, though as Seidman (2006) points out, researchers can never fully understand someone else because doing so would mean experiencing what he or she had. Denzin (1989) further notes there is no clear window into the inner life of another person as there is always a filter through a glaze of language, signs, and the process of signification.

Phenomenological Interviewing

Phenomenological Interviewing, a method used by Seidman (2006), a combination of open-ended Life History Interviewing and focused, in-depth Interviewing, was the research method selected for this study. Phenomenological Interviewing facilitates participants to examine complex issues from the concrete experiences they share as they make meaning of their experiences. Skilled interviewers have the potential to increase participants' personal working knowledge of themselves, by illuminating important life themes, such as developmental paths, important influences and relationships, through the telling of their story from epiphanies, revelations, and/or awareness from particular life experiences through the participant reflection process (Denzin, 1989; Atkinson, 1998).

Seidman (2006) advocated that researchers conduct three purposeful 60 to 90-minute interviews, with distinct beginning, middle, and end to each and with the series spaced three to seven days apart. Inherent to this research method, the time for the interviews and the intervals between them facilitates participant reflection of the preceding interview, continuity between interviews, and reduces the impact of idiosyncratic interviews, participants having a "bad" day, being ill, or distracted in some way, and support participant and researcher relationship building. This structure provides a rational data gathering process that is replicable. The first interview establishes the context of a participant's life experience. The second interview asks participants to reconstruct details of their current experience in the context in which the experiences occurs. Finally, during the third interview, participants reflect upon and identify meaning from their experiences.

During the first interview, the goal for the interviewer is to gather as much information as possible, as it relates to the research topic, by carefully listening and asking open-ended questions to participants. The data gathered from participant's recalling and sharing of events and details about their early life experiences, family, school, friends, neighborhood, and work provides the necessary context for subsequent steps in the research process.

The purpose of the second interview is to obtain concrete details, avoiding opinions, of

the participants' present lived experience in the topic area of the study. During this interview step, through a reconstruction of a typical day and stories, researchers facilitate participant reflection and examinations, to help them uncover relationships and understandings from the myriad details of their current experiences.

Predicated on the information obtained and context generated from the two previous interviews, the objective of the final interview is to help participants make meaning of their experiences through reflective questions. By exploring and clarifying the previously shared concrete details of their past and present experience, the condition for deep reflection can occur. Meaning in this context is not about satisfaction or reward but rather the intellectual and emotional connections between participants' work and life. The goal of the interviewer is to help a participant make sense or meaning of their life through an examination of how life factors interacted, bringing them to their present situation.

Scheduling logistics and the busy calendars of today's school principals made carrying out a series of interviews impractical for most participants. That being the case, I endeavored to maintain the disciplined and intensive elements of Seidman's method. Achieving the goal was facilitated by three factors. First, as a Japanese American educator and former elementary and middle school principal, it was not difficult to establish rapport with interviewees. The major potential danger was over-identification with these colleagues and the need to avoid "hearing" what was "already known." Second, as building principals, most of these individuals had a clearly marked career path—family, school, university/teacher training, teaching, administering—which made it easier to sequence their lives than it might be for those in other professions. Moreover, their jobs required them to be attentive to details and retentive about them. Third, members of this group were, not surprisingly given their backgrounds and Japanese American/Canadian experience, reflective about their lives and practice. It was important to maintain a strict division between "sections" of the interview and to make sure that the session provided enough time for participants to reflect on their experience. That process, a thoughtful interpretation of their life history was the key element of the research. Readers of chapters 4

through 7 can gauge the effectiveness of the data collection effort.

Three noted challenges for interviewers are adhering to the purpose of each interview, so critical information for successive interviews is obtained, maintaining the delicate balance between providing enough openness for participants to tell their stories and enough focus on the interview process, and minimizing the effect they may have on how a participant reconstructs their experience. Three examples of studies that used interviewing as the primary source of data include Brunner (2000) who studied the experience of black female graduate students aspiring to be superintendents and also women who were superintendents and Fraynd and Capper (2003) who explored the experience of sexual minority K-12 administrators. Similar to the intention of this dissertation, these studies, through interviewing, capture the depth and subtlety of the experience of the groups being investigated, which only interviewing can achieve.

Interview Process and Questions

The initial interview questions provided an exercise in oral life history. It focused on both a chronological timeline and on an attempt to ask interviewees to talk about memories from different phases of their lives. Because of the unusual experience of (in most cases) their parents who were deeply affected by American or Canadian policies during World War II, the interview included what was and was not shared by parents with their post-war generation. This section of the interview included inquiry about significant events, pleasant or troubling, and the influence of key people on how they saw, and now see, the world. Of particular interest is how the past generally, and their parents' Japanese culture specifically affected them as public school administrators as they deal with issues of identity, motivation, power, conflict, and leadership. This phase of the interview built on each participant's life map to gain context for each individual which also allowed the researcher to clarify information and, in short order, plan the remainder of the interview. This was challenging and provided substantiation of Seidman's recommendation that the research have some separation to reflect on how to move forward.

The second phase focused on reconstructing concrete details (not opinions) of each participant's present day-to-day experience, personally and professionally, as public school

leader of Japanese ancestry focusing on identity, professional path, reconstruction of a typical day, and personal awareness. From the information shared in the first and second phase, the third and final set of questions address how the participants make intellectual and emotional meaning of their lives, without overly focusing purely on specific job satisfaction and/or rewards.

Through clarification and reflection of the details, stories, and events of their work and life they previously shared, participants will explore how all of the elements interacted and got them to where they are today as a public school leader of Japanese ancestry.

Although this process incorporated one rather than three sessions, the interviews were lively, intense, and detailed. Each participant received a transcription of his or her interview with a note that indicated that comments and additional information would be welcomed. In a few cases, there were unanswered questions and participants were willing to respond to follow-up email queries. A complete list of interview questions, not all of which were asked of each participant, is included in Appendix A.

Study Participants

Sixteen interviews were conducted with practicing public school principals of Japanese ancestry who hold various leadership positions and live and work in the Pacific Northwest, specifically Washington and Oregon and British Columbia.

Initial identification of study participants occurred in five ways. First, an e-mail message was sent to Japanese American public school administrators in Washington known personally and/or professionally to the study's author. Secondly, a general e-mail message asking for names of potential participants was routed to professional and personal contacts of the dissertation advisor. Third, the author contacted a representative from both of the primary state administrator organizations for public school leaders asking for potential contacts. Fourth, the author reviewed the public school directory for both Washington and Oregon, both of which list virtually all school principals and senior district administrators, for any Japanese sounding surnames. Finally, because the advisor had worked previously in British Columbia, a recommended search of the BC directory yielded additional names. The total number of potential interviewees was 27, each

of whom had current contact information.

An e-mail message was sent by the author to each of the participants informing them about the study, inquiring if they are of Japanese ancestry, and if so, whether they would be willing to participate in the study. A snowball approach—asking respondents for names of additional potential participants—was also used once initial contact was made. It was likely that a number of eligible participants may have been missed in the search by name, specifically women who may have taken the last name of a non-Japanese American partner, so that broadened the potential list. All were principals at the time of the interview; some had previously been district administrators but now were at the building level.

Validity and Reliability

The sample of Japanese American/Canadian administrators was not random. It is likely that the list of potential candidates in the urban Northwest—the I5 corridor in Washington and Oregon and the Lower Mainland of British Columbia—was relatively complete. However, the author worked through the list and stopped when eight Americans and eight Canadians agreed to be interviewed. Nonetheless, those 16 administrators probably do provide a reasonable cross-section of the total population. In any case, the depth and intensity of the interviews is a testament to the credibility of the data.

Seidman shares four elements of phenomenological interviewing that respond to research methodology validity and reliability. First, the short time frame in which interviews are conducted and participant comments are gathered, the number of participants, and the grappling with questions, as evidenced by pauses, groping for words, self-effacing laughter, and syntax during interviews, reflected in transcript notes, leads one to believe that truth is being shared. Finally, Seidman believes, “If the interview structure facilitates a participant to make sense for themselves and the interviewer, isn’t this validity?”

This dissertation mirrors and applies the elements of validity and reliability Seidman offered, although only a single interview was conducted with each participant. Each interview was electronically recorded and transcribed by the author. Coding consisted of developing

categories, generally independent of specific interview questions. Broad categories became chapters that were internally organized by sub-categories.

CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Sixteen school leaders agreed to participate in this study. Eight of the participants are male and eight are female. Ten of the participants are US citizens (five men and five women) and six are Canadian nationals (three women and three men). Of the ten US participants, eight are categorized as mainland of which five are women and three are men. The two remaining US participants are males who were born and raised in Hawaii (see Table 1).

The age range of the sixteen participants is 41 to 66 years old. Fifteen of the participants identified as *sansei* and/or *yonsei* and one male from Hawaii, who was 25% of Japanese ancestry, did not know his generational placement. Three of the mainland male school leaders are around the same age as two of the Canadian school leaders. While the mainlanders are all *sansei*, both of the Canadian males in the same age range are *yonsei*. Of the five mainland women, four are *sansei*, and one identified as *yonsei* and the three Canadian women were *sansei*, *yonsei*, and *sansei/yonsei*. Just under half of the participants were in their forties with three who identified as *sansei*, all mainland, and four as *yonsei*, all Canadian, and the fourth did not know. Five of the participants were in their fifties, two mainlanders identified as *sansei*, two of the Canadians as *sansei/yonsei*, and one mainland female identified as *yonsei*. One-fourth, or four of the participants were in their sixties. Three were females, all *sansei*, two of whom were mainlanders and one Canadian, and one Hawaiian male identified as *sansei/yonsei*. Generationally, it appears the Canadian school leaders are one more generation removed from Japan than their American colleagues.

Of the ten American school leaders, seven were elementary level school leaders, one was a middle level principal, one was working with pre-kindergarten through high school in the alternative education setting, and one was a director of language immersion and served as a principal of an elementary and kindergarten through eighth grade choice school. Of the six Canadians, three were elementary (kindergarten through seventh grade) level principals, one was

Table 1. Participant Overview

Name Age/Gender Generation	Citizenship, Place of Birth, Siblings/Birth Order	Current Religious Identification	Marital Status & Offspring	School Leadership Position(s)
James Sato 51/M <i>Sansei</i>	US Snow Mountain Only child	Buddhist	Married Japanese-Am. Two children	MS Principal 6 - 8 Snow Mt. SD
Robert Takahashi 48/M <i>Sansei</i>	US Gold Two much older sisters—identifies as only child	Catholic	Married Caucasian One child	Elem. Principal K - 5 Willamette SD
Michael Yoshida 48/M <i>Sansei</i>	US Discovery Youngest of three (older brother & sister)	Christian	Married Caucasian One child	Elem. Principal K - 5 Snow Mt. SD
Linda Ito 64/F <i>Sansei</i>	US Japan Oldest of two girls	Spiritual	Second Marriage (Caucasian x2) No children	Elem. Principal K - 5 Melrose SD
Patricia Johnson- Suzuki 53/F <i>Sansei</i>	US Snow Mountain Youngest of four	Buddhist	2 nd Marriage (Caucasian x2) No children	Alt. Sch. Dir. P - 12 Puget SD
Elizabeth Nakamura 67/F <i>Sansei</i>	US Denny Eldest female, one older brother (deceased), two younger siblings	Buddhist	Married Caucasian Two children	Denny SD
Mary Smith 42/F <i>Sansei</i>	US Plains Youngest of two sisters	None	Married Caucasian Two children	Elem. Principal K - 5 Smithers SD
Barbara Tanaka 56/F <i>Yonsei</i>	US Smithers Eldest of four	None	Married JA No children	Elem. Principal K - 5 Smithers SD
William Kealoha 42/M unknown	US Sunland Youngest of two brothers	Christian	Married Caucasian Three children (one + twins)	Elem. Principal K - 5 Willamette SD
David Kobayashi 65/M <i>Sansei/Yonsei</i>	US Sunland did not disclose	Christian	Married JA-H Two children	Elem. Principal K-5 Little Stream SD
Richard Kato 58/M	Canadian Coast	none	Married JC Two children	Elem. Principal K - 7 Coast SD

<i>Sansei</i> (f)/ <i>Yonsei</i> (m)	Eldest of two (younger sister Brown)			
Charles Saito 43/M <i>Yonsei</i>	Canadian Coast (unknown)	Christian, Buddhist	Divorce pending Two children	Elem. Principal K – 7 Coast SD
Joseph Yamada 49/M <i>Yonsei</i>	Canadian Coast Youngest of two brothers	Christian, Buddhist, none	Married Caucasian Two children	Sec. Principal 8 – 12 Coast SD
Toshiko Brown 59/F <i>Sansei</i> (f)/ <i>Yonsei</i> (m)	Canadian Coast Younger of two (older brother Kato)	none	Married Caucasian One child	MS Principal 6 – 8 Admiral SD
Jennifer Sasaki 42/F <i>Yonsei</i>	Canadian Fraser Older of two sisters	Japanese Canadian Christian	Unmarried No children	Elem. Principal K – 7 Fraser SD
Susan Yamaguchi 62/F <i>Sansei</i>	Canadian Coast Older of two (one younger brother)	none	Married Caucasian 0 children	Elem. K – 7 & Sec. Principal 8 – 12 Coast SD

a middle level principal, and two were secondary school (grades eight through twelve) principals. Interestingly, two of the six Canadian women were secondary level principals while none of their American colleagues served in that capacity.

The Americans

James Sato.

James Sato is an only child who grew up in Snow Mountain and has returned to his hometown and is currently serving as a middle school principal. Prior to his current assignment, he was principal at another middle school in Snow Mountain, and an assistant principal at the school he taught at. Between his first and second assignments in Snow Mountain, Sato temporarily left the district for a position in a neighboring district where he secured his first principalship. Sato is the only American participant who spent his entire career in secondary schools.

Sato grew up in a diverse, lower-income blue-collar community. Sato’s father owned a

cleaning business in the community and was an active member of the Urban League and leader at the Buddhist temple.

Two major dimension of Sato's life growing up were football and the Buddhist church. In college, he played as a walk-on player on his university's football team and was one of the first Asians to play in the Rose Bowl. In the sport, he met, played under, and worked with a number of legendary coaches who he cited as influencing his leadership style and philosophy. Whether coincidental or because of his ethnicity, he also had an opportunity to play, coach, and work in Japan.

Because of his varied friendships, values conflicts were inevitable. One such dilemma Sato recalled was about money and work ethic.

Trying to get things, make a lot of money, being better than everyone else conflicted with the Buddhist philosophy [I was raised with]. I saw how hard my parents had worked.

What (does) it takes to become a millionaire? What does it take to make me successful? I could be working hard for someone my whole life and I also see other people step over other people and get things by doing illegal or covert things, or you know, passive-aggressive type acts, or just being cut throat.

When asked how he eventually ended up resolving that tension, Sato stated, "Luckily I had sports. That kept me in the team framework. I had a lot of success in sports you know."

Robert Takahashi.

Robert Takahashi currently works in Willamette, Oregon a suburban school district west of Portland, Oregon with a large Hispanic population. Takahashi was one of two participants, both of whom male, who attended private schools for his entire K-12 education. In Takahashi's case, he attended parochial schools. Takahashi grew up in the Bay Area of California. He is the youngest of three children but states he was raised more like an only child as his two older siblings are 17 and 19 years his senior.

Takahashi, like the majority of other men were very involved in sports growing up. These experiences contributed to Takahashi's identity and how he responded to difference with himself

and his peers.

During high school, my father wanted me to play baseball with the JACL [Japanese American Citizens League] league. I didn't enjoy it because I didn't have any connection with the people. I also didn't see them as aggressive and competitive. Much of the time I was partying and playing. I'd rather party and play and when the dumb-dumb said something racist, I'd say, "Come on." That way I could laugh it off. I'm not tough enough to fight and be angry. If I'm going to take it out on someone, I'd rather, do it on the field than be angry.

Michael Yoshida.

Arriving around dismissal time, Michael Yoshida, an elementary school principal in Snow Mountain was observed quickly moving from place to place and having numerous conversations with staff, students, and parents in a short period of time. It was evident Yoshida was a "people person" who related well with others. As the interview began, the observation was shared and sure enough, Yoshida said, "I was hired to improve the morale of the staff and community at this school." This was Yoshida's second principal assignment. Yoshida indicated he was removed from his first principalship because of a "very poor choice" he made. "I was given a second chance and you can be sure I will not be screwing up again."

Another interesting aspect of Yoshida was how he contradicted himself on multiple occasions during his interview. On one hand, he described himself as someone who was not very ambitious but on the other hand, someone who was willing to "step up."

Just being honest, I became a teacher so I could have my summers off. I wasn't the young teacher who was the superstar. I wasn't outgoing, making connections and what not. I was not the go-getter, golden-apple teacher. I was done going to school. I had no aspirations of going back.

Later in the interview Yoshida said of himself, "I always step in a position where I could make the decisions, not the one following the decisions." Yoshida also said,

I chose to go into special education because I knew I'd be able to get a job. I knew if I

had a special ed[ucation] degree, I could write my own ticket. When I first started teaching, I wanted to become a Special Education Director.

Linda Ito.

Linda Ito is an elementary school principal in the Melrose School District, a large suburban school district on the “Eastside” of Denny. Ito’s school is considered one of the lower-economic, “less desirable” schools in this predominantly wealthy school district. Ito stated “this is the perfect school for me because of the diversity.” Besides the diverse community, this school also houses several classrooms for the district’s highly capable program as well as behavior disorder classrooms.

To put it mildly, Ito’s early life is intriguing. Ito’s life began in Japan because her mother, sister, and their parents got stuck in Japan because World War II broke out and they could not return to the Pacific Northwest. During the War, Ito’s grandfather was conscripted into the Japanese Imperial Army and the man who would eventually become her father, was serving McArthur as a language translator. Ito’s first language was Japanese but began speaking English out of necessity so she could play with the other children on the three-week voyage back to America.

At the age of six, a year and a half later, her family moved back to Japan where English was now her primary language. From that point until she returned to the Pacific Northwest for her post secondary education, she grew up amongst the Japanese in their community but attended American schools on US military installations in Japan. She shares tales of her “bi-polar” life being a Japanese American living amongst the Japanese but being educated on the military bases.

Ito is on her second marriage. Both times she selected Caucasian males. Ito met her first husband while she was in college. He was a pilot and they met when she was a student using her travel benefits as an expatriate. Ito shared the following story about meeting her first husband’s family.

This was before the whole, “Well, if you’re Asian you’re smart or you’re good or math

thing.” I went out to the Midwest to meet his [my first husband’s] family for the first time and recognized people viewed me differently. They were a very strong Catholic family and everybody talked to me really slow. That was very strange. It made me want to talk very fast. It just struck me, “It’s not like that on the West Coast.” I also learned he [my first husband] was told by his parents, “There may be places that you may or may not be able to live if you get married.” As it turned out, the only person of Asian descent that they had known, or had any association with was the maid that one of the families brought back from Japan. That was the first time I thought, “Wow! This is what America is really like.”

Patricia Johnson Suzuki.

Patricia Johnson Suzuki is the Director of an alternative school in Puget School District. Puget School District continues to be a school district serving predominantly white children. Johnson Suzuki completed her undergraduate degree at a small liberal arts college in Eastern Washington. She started out in medical science and quickly decided, “That wasn’t for me.” She stumbled upon teaching and started her teaching career in alternative education. She was unexpectedly and immediately drawn to this population because of the challenge and the circumstances these youths had to overcome.

I like challenges. I am motivated by challenge. They [the children she worked with] had all failed. They all hated science and saw no relevance. That became the challenge. After I was done teaching that summer school class, I knew who I wanted to teach and what I wanted to do. Fortunately, there was a job open at an alternative school in Snow Mountain.

Some highlights from Johnson Suzuki’s life that may have contributed to her passion for this segment of the population can be accredited to the home in which she grew up. Besides citing and valuing the Buddhist teaching of “helping those weaker than myself,” Johnson Suzuki’s grew up in a house directly across the street from the Buddhist temple in Snow Mountain. At the end of World War II, when families were leaving the internment camps to

reestablish themselves in society, Johnson Suzuki's family opened their home to families who were coming back to nothing. Numerous Japanese families temporarily lived in the home in the Suzuki home.

Elizabeth Nakamura.

Nakamura grew up in the Central District of Denny, a diverse community with few Asians. Like several other mainland school leaders, Nakamura's parents owned a cleaning business. Nakamura spoke about her father's frugality and not having any interest in becoming a teacher. Not doing well in science at the university ended her desire to become a nurse.

Nakamura started her career teaching at the same school she was doing her internship requirement. Shortly thereafter, she was invited by her then principal to become a part of a cadre of master teachers. This high profile opportunity provided Nakamura with multiple experiences. Eventually, an incident occurred that almost had Nakamura leaving the profession.

There was a position at a school where I knew the principal. He asked me to apply. I did and I interviewed. [After a few days, both of us not hearing the decision,] he called me to see what was going on. He did some checking and learned why I didn't get the job. Some administrator who was at a higher level, who was also Asian, reversed the scores and turned me into the bottom candidate so they offered it to someone else. He said for some reason, this woman does not want you to have the job. That was it. This really got me mad so I left the district for about a year and half and I took a leave.

After this brief departure from the profession and school district she was coaxed back by a friend who was a principal to become his quasi-assistant principal. Nakamura moved to be principal at several elementary and K-8 schools within the district, even being called upon to serve as a mentor to several principals. Eventually, Nakamura distinguished herself as a very skilled principal in language immersion schools and eventually being appointed as the director of language immersion in the largest school district in Washington State.

Mary Smith.

Dr. Mary Smith, Ed.D. is a young female principal in a suburban school district adjacent

to the city of Denny. This mid-sized school district serves an ethnically and socio-economically diverse population, with urban, suburban, and rural characteristics. At the time Smith was interviewed, she was in her first principalship. She became the principal of the school where she started her leadership career, taking over after the previous principal retired. Smith completed her internship as a teacher on special assignment where she was a quasi-assistant principal.

Smith was born in Palouse while her father, who grew up in Hawaii, was finishing a doctorate at Washington State University. Smith is the only participant with a parent with a Ph.D. Smith's mother, also of Japanese ancestry, was born in Snow Mountain. Smith mentioned at multiple times during the early parts of the interview that she was willing to participate but she was unsure how helpful she would be as her ethnicity was not a factor in her identity. Smith stated on multiple occasions, "I grew up in very white communities." Thus she oriented herself and identity in the host culture.

I joke that I'm not so Japanese, you know. I think it's more in the beliefs of my parents and how they raised me. They raised me a certain way because of their upbringing and their cultural background. It's hard to say race isn't involved or how much it is involved. Whether something is cultural or not it can be debated There are people of different cultures with strong work ethic and value education. I don't think race is much of a driving factor in my life.

Barbara Tanaka.

Barbara Tanaka is also an elementary school principal in Smithers, Washington. Barbara was once a student in this school district. In fact, though not the same home in which she grew up, her mother lives in a home in the attendance area of her school. Tanaka emphasized on multiple occasions how moral she was growing up. Doing the right thing was very important to her because, "I always wanted to make sure I maintained my parents' trust."

She connected her moral grounding to her father. Tanaka's father was eight-years old at the time of the War and spent the entire War in an internment camp. His life in camp mirrored the profile captured in the literature of young men who ran around camp in a "gang." Though

this lifestyle continued through much of his life as an adult, Tanaka was again quick to point out, “But he was a very moral person. He never did anything illegal.”

Even though he [my dad] was a wild man, this may sound like an oxymoron, he was always very moral. He owned a gas station and he would always say, “Do the right thing because it was the right thing to do,” especially in terms of how you treat people.

Though older, Tanaka identified herself as a *yonsei*, subsequently one more generation American, two stories Tanaka shared captured this perception.

Among the Japanese community, we were a family considered not culturally strong. My mom was not entrenched in being Japanese so by the time I came along, it just wasn't. She was raised and very much lived in that Caucasian world. She [my mom] was in drama and all of those kind of things. Also, I still get together with my friends from farm. We still meet once a month for breakfast. Our conversations focus what's going on in their lives, which is all very ethnic, but mine is not. They would tell me about what's going on in the Japanese community or Asian community or with Asian people. Another thing is if we were in a Japanese restaurant, I would ask for a fork. One interesting fact shared by Tanaka during her interview was, “My daughter works for one of the airlines and my daughter's picture is on their website. She doesn't answer the questions and that's not her voice, but she's the model.”

In her professional life, Tanaka's comments about her in-school relationships are worth noting. When working with staff, Tanaka stated, “I don't let things bother me with families and kids. I do internalize with staff because I have to work with them. I do feel badly if somebody on staff is angry at me.” When working with non-Asian minorities, Tanaka said, “Every once in awhile a parent would pull the race card on me. But, not as much as the other assistant principals who were Caucasian.” And regarding her thoughts when working with Asian parents,

This is going to sound odd, but due to the language barrier, most of our conversations are superficial. “Oh how are you?” “I'm fine.” I don't feel any pressure or implied expectations from them. When it comes to the parents and kids, I can be objective and

hold whatever the line is for the situation.

William Kealoha.

William Kealoha serves as an elementary school principal in the same school district as another participant in this study. He agreed to participate in the study per the request of his colleague. Mr. Kealoha's interviews were conducted in the Denny area while he was at a professional conference.

Kealoha is the only participant in the study who is not entirely of Japanese ancestry. Kealoha, 25% of Japanese ancestry, more closely associates with his Native Hawaiian background as he was, in his words, "fortunate to attend the school he did." He was one of two participants who attended private schools and the only one who attended an ethnic-specific boarding school. He also was the only participant who mentioned that his parents divorced. Kealoha started his career as a middle school science teacher in a suburban school district adjacent to the university he attended as an undergraduate. Mr. Kealoha, married, with three children, an older girl and twin younger boys, represented himself as a very humble man, who is a devout Christian, with a strong work ethic both by his actions and what he said.

[While I was still teaching] maybe a couple times a year my principal would say, "When are you gonna start your admin program?" I don't know what he saw in me. I was the person who didn't know how to say "No." I was working as hard as I could. I sat on all kinds of committees. I was a coach and science club advisor. I didn't see what I was doing as resume building. I just saw it as working hard. That's all I know how to do – work hard. Just immerse myself in the whole thing and just do it. Do it good and do it right. Cause I care about it. I was just working hard and doing my job.

At times during his interview, Mr. Kealoha moved himself to tears as he articulated his reflections. The impression Kealoha presented was consistent with the way he expressed his emotions. The following quote summed up his beliefs very well.

I don't anticipate that I'm owed anything or that I should have special favors just because I know somebody. It's not how I grew up. That's my upbringing. My parents never had

any power in society to get me a job or get me into a university. It was always hard work. Kealoha consistently conveyed a tremendous amount of gratitude, beginning in high school especially toward mentors.

I had an opportunity to try out for the varsity team. I wasn't going to blow it. I was going to learn as much as I could. I remember real distinctly during summer tryouts, and we I worked as hard as I could.

David Kobayashi.

David Kobayashi is the second of two participants in this study who was born and raised in Hawaii. David is currently an elementary school principal in a growing, wealthy suburban school district also east of Denny along the I-90 corridor.

It was difficult to pose questions to Mr. Kobayashi as he appeared to command the flow of the conversation in an effort to carefully broker any information that was shared. A telling comment came at the conclusion of his interview. What Kobayashi mentioned on several occasions was, "I do not want to make waves or share too much information about my or my wife's difficulties because I want to fit in some place . . . some place comfortable."

Kobayashi presented two contrasting impressions of himself and his style. One comment, "I strongly believe in a sense of community so a lot of things I do is to build a sense of community" left the impression relationships and people getting along are very important to him. But he frequently stated, a strong preference for singularity and independence from comments such as, "That guy (Kobayashi) thinks differently" and

I'm not one to do things just because everybody else does it. I do things because of what I believe in and a lot of them are great principles of any great leader or good leader but a lot of it is because that's the way I do things.

On a personal level, Kobayashi volunteered the following experience and thoughts based on his travels in an RV around America.

There are many places [in America] that I didn't see many Asians. When that happened, everybody turned their heads to look at us. I never got refused service. I could spend a

whole day somewhere and never see another Asian except [for] my family. I know there are many places in the country that has never had much experience [with people of Japanese ancestry] so [I believe] you can't base an understanding on a group of people when you don't know anybody [of Japanese ancestry] or have a relationship with them.

The Canadians

Richard Kato.

Richard Kato is Toshiko Brown's older brother. Kato grew up reaping the benefits of being the eldest son in a Japanese Canadian family.

When I was growing up, I was the oldest boy in the traditional Japanese Canadian family. I didn't cook. I didn't have to make my bed or clean my room. My mom did all of that for me because I was a boy. I could do whatever I wanted. I could go out and drink and do whatever I wanted but I never did because I was always busy training [judo].

Growing up, every year during fishing season, Kato, his sister, and their mother put their lives in *Sakana* on hold to be with their father. It was this regular migration northward where Kato lived an annual life of solitude.

Every summer my mother, my sister, and I would go up [north] on a steamer. My mom would work at a cannery near Prince Rupert. When I was old enough I ended up working in the fishing village and being the camp watchman. The camp was outside the fishing village in an even more isolated location . . . It's a little inlet by itself. So [I'd be] watching the camp while everyone else was out [fishing]. The cook was upstairs but he wasn't very social so he wouldn't even talk to me. I spent most of my time alone. I spent a lot of time entertaining myself. Some of the favorite times for me would be taking my rowboat out and just row around or read comic books. Whatever happened to be at that moment I did; whether it be rolling around, exploring things, or making up stories in my head about adventures I was having.

When it wasn't fishing season, Kato and his family would return to their home in *Sakana*. While at home, Kato naturally longed for friends and friendship. Since most of the other young

people his age didn't have interrupted lives, he found making friends to be a challenge.

Eventually he made friends who were members of a fundamentalist Christian church in *Sakana*.

A lot of my friends went so I ended up going there too. In the morning I'd go to the Buddhist church. After the Buddhist church, I'd go to the corner to wait for the bus to take me to the Christian church. I learned most of the Canadian stuff I know from the teacher at school who also ran the youth group at this church. He took us fishing for fun. Before that, I thought fishing was just for work. He taught us how to play hockey and the curling rink.

In reflecting upon the vast amount of time he spent alone in his early life, Kato concluded, "Most people would be surprised that I would become a principal -- including myself."

Charles Saito.

Charles Saito is a *yonsei* elementary school principal who continues to be the only Canadian participant still directly involved with the Japanese Canadian fishing industry. Saito finds the challenge of fishing both rewarding and something that shaped him.

My parents had a lot of trust in me. Obviously, going at quite a young age to work with my grandfather in a very dangerous job was something that hugely shaped who I am as a person. When you go on a fishing boat and you work the kinds of hours and the kind of work you do with no breaks and you work 24/7 for the whole time you're there, you quickly gain an appreciation for work and hard work ethic and every other job is easier.

Saito stated leadership was modeled for him from an early age by his parents and grandparents who were very active in the Japanese Canadian community doing and community-minded volunteering and non-profit projects. Saito's life changed while in secondary school due to sports injuries.

I was a football player. Football was my primary thing. I wanted to play college football. I had an opportunity to do that but I blew my knee out. I had two football injuries. I had five operations on my body from grade 11 and two years after high school. So I stopped

playing ball and started coaching. Since I couldn't do PE, had to do something else. I volunteered in the ESL room and I also helped out in the special education room. That got me interested in working with special needs kids and helping out. Now that I think about it, doing those things were instrumental in how I got here. I can't say I was thinking about it at the time because the original plan was to play sports and that obviously had to change. The injury also helped me realize the importance of school.

Joseph Yamada.

Joseph Yamada is in his second secondary principalship in the Coast School District. Like most of the other Canadians, Yamada continues to work in the same school district where he once attended school as a child. Yamada mentioned on multiple occasions how his style of leading was different, "not scary," and how proud he was of his school district leaders for valuing this new style of leadership. Indeed, his approach and disposition was compassionate and warm, different than the typical male secondary school principal. Though Yamada loved sports, he stated,

I was never a great athlete. I was a 'participant player.' If you look at my trophy case it read 'Joseph participated in . . .' Because of that I learned a lot about how to participate on a team. Very few people would have described me as a leader as I was growing up, maybe other than on a very personal level in small groups. Also, there was always this desire to coach and teach for me. I don't know if it was planned or purposeful. It wasn't leadership amongst [my] peers. It was really this passion for working with younger people.

During his interview, Yamada shared multiple examples of how his passion for working with young people evolved and grew. Yamada, the younger of two brothers, said of himself, "My younger son is just like me. He cares about the little ones; unlike his older brother and my older brother who could both care less."

As soon as I was six years old, my mom said I would talk about being a teacher. Maybe grade 2 or 3. Throughout my life I grew up working with kids and it's been a passion and

strength of mine. Honestly, I have these stupid memories of a kid who couldn't play baseball. People would make fun of this kid and I took it upon myself to help him so he wouldn't be made fun of.

Yamada chose to become a socials (social studies in America) teacher because of the of his grade 11 socials teacher. It was clear that Yamada is an individual who values relationships.

Interestingly enough, there is a connection here too. He was Caucasian and he married a Japanese woman. He did a lot of work in and around the Japanese Canadian evacuation and the multicultural impact of that. But, that wasn't the pull. He was a very soft spoken but very powerful individual who cared about kids. He was someone that I aspired to become. He was the most significant role model for me. He taught me about the internment. He was an outstanding educator.

Toshiko Brown.

Looking at her life in retrospect, Toshiko Brown, the younger sister of Richard Kato, another participant in this study, described herself as someone who was "singular" and "followed her heart or passion" rather than someone who was a "free spirit."

There is a difference being free spirited and being singular. I never thought of myself as a free spirit. I never thought that I needed to do things for the sake of doing them or for the sake of showing my independence or individuality. I had [an] internal drive to be me. I think I was perceived [by my parents] as a free spirit and rebellious when I left my community and maybe there was an element of that to it too.

Both Brown and her brother Richard Kato agreed their mother had different expectations for each of them simply because of their gender. Their mother, a *kibei*, did her best to raise her children and this Japanese belief system of favoring boys over girls influenced their family to this day both personally and professionally.

Whether a response to how she was being raised by her mother with traditional Japanese gender roles or other unknown factors, Brown provided numerous examples of her desire to

“follow her passion” or “be her own person.” Brown provided numerous examples from her childhood, adolescence, and early adult life that supported her description of herself.

She [My mom] was very embarrassed about what I would wear and the kids I would hang out with or the fact that boys on motorcycles would come and pick me up and I would leave the house on the back of a motorcycle. I was a shallow 15 year old, like any other 15 year old or 16 year old or 19 year old. I had no one telling me what was appropriate and there weren't a lot of other [Japanese Canadian] kids who shared my interests. I took drama. No Japanese [Canadian] kids ever took drama. I guess it's the performance aspect.

Brown and her mother were constantly in conflict. Brown, who fiercely opposed the role casting imposed by her mother, simply because of her gender, eventually “fled” to one of the islands, off the mainland of British Columbia, known for their artisan community, to create the life she desired.

I had a need to be out of that [*Sakana*] context for a while in order to discover who I was. In my mind, to be a Japanese [Canadian] housewife, married to a Japanese [Canadian] guy was death. And, at that time, I didn't have a vision of what I wanted to be but I knew that was too stifling. I don't think I had it thought through that deeply at that time. I just know I needed to be away. This [where I live now] was as much of a contrast of my life in Coast as you could get.

Now, a principal, with a distinguished career in educational leadership in her community, with one child and her longtime husband, Brown remains on the same island. Brown was insightful about how she ended up with the life she continues to lead.

I can't figure it out if it was a reaction against my mom really needing me to be a certain way or whether that spirit was always [in me]. I was unique. I thought *Sakana* and Coast were really ugly and there wasn't a lot going on. I really had to search for things that interested me.

As Brown concluded sharing stories of her youth, she was asked if she intentionally selected non-Japanese friends growing up since she appeared to push away anything remotely

Japanese Canadian. Brown replied, “Yeah, I guess so.”

Jennifer Sasaki.

The youngest Canadian female in this study is *Yonsei* Jennifer Sasaki. Though similar to the other five Canadian participants in that all were born and raised in suburban Vancouver, British Columbia, Sasaki has the distinction of being the only Canadian participant born, raised, and educated in Fraser, away from the Japanese Canadian fishing enclave of *Sakana/Coast*, British Columbia. Like four of the other Canadians, Sasaki returned to teach and now leads in the same school district where she was once a student.

Sasaki’s first job was a game hawker at the Pacific Northwest Exhibition (PNE). When asked why did she get into that line of work, being a carnival game hawker at the PNE, Sasaki replied,

I applied for a job at McDonald’s but McDonald’s didn’t hire me. They said I was over qualified. Baffled and determined, I saw an ad for the PNE. Since I was the only one who came [to apply for a job] with a resume that was dry, they hired me on the spot.

It was at the PNE where she literally and figuratively found her professional voice. Sasaki, described herself as “much quieter at the time” and was told after two days of employment she would be terminated if she continued to not make money at the game she staffed. Not wanting to embarrass her family, she was “forced to” speak up. Eventually, she was successful enough to become the youngest and first Asian female in a management position at the PNE. The experience with the other “carnies,” the promotion, and experiences as a manager provided Sasaki life experiences around race that she believes, “was far earlier than most.”

Sasaki, shared two additional situations where the theme of being a young, visible minority, female leader affected her professional life. Once when she was a faculty member at Simon Fraser University and currently in her role as a building principal. Sasaki discussed how she responds to visitors who do not know what she looks like in one of two ways.

Seventy-five percent of the time people come in to the office and say to me, “Excuse me, may I speak to the principal?” I would say, “I’m the principal.” It [then] takes them a

couple of seconds to respond, “What? Oh! Oh! Okay! I’m sorry.” Then they would address me at that point. At other times, I use this [same situation] to my advantage. When it is somebody I don’t want to talk to I can simply tell the person, “I’ll tell her you came by.”

Susan Yamaguchi.

Growing up in *Sakana*, Susan Yamaguchi described herself as bossy and independent. I was very bossy. (Laughs) I was very, very bossy. I did everything myself. In Grade One, I made myself a ham sandwich for lunch every day and I couldn’t eat ham again well into my adulthood. In Grade Two, my mom let me use the stove so I made a fried egg sandwich everyday so I avoided eggs for a while. In grade three, I volunteered at the library. I set that up by myself.

Yamaguchi recalled her parents’ desire to assimilate her brother and her through the food that was prepared for them, the utensils they used, and the once middle class practice of sitting down for dinner together as a family.

One of the things that my mother and father, father mostly, insisted on was for my brother and me to be very Canadian. We had *yoshoku*, non-Japanese food, [as opposed to Japanese style fare] and learned to properly use knives and forks [rather than chopsticks]. We sat down for dinner [together as a family], especially during the winter months when my dad was home [not out at sea]. He was out fishing a lot from April to October.

It is likely the child-rearing practices Yamaguchi’s parents used, coupled with her personality and life experienced influenced her professional and personal beliefs as an adult.

I don’t think my goal was ever to become a principal. I’m driven by challenges.

Whatever the next challenge would be. In order to do what I need to do [for students], I need to be at the next step, whatever the next step was. [Things] got to a certain standstill where, there were thing that couldn’t be done unless you had the support of the administration. I was deliberate about taking the next step because I’ve always wanted to make a difference.

Summary

It is clear the sixteen school leaders, all situated in the western parts of the Pacific Northwest in their respective countries, had varied life experiences. The greatest commonality was for five of the Canadian participants who lived in the ethnic enclave of *Sakana*, now annexed into the greater Coast community. One of the six Canadian participants mentioned how the families of three of the four participants employed in Coast knew one another very well and the one participant working in rural British Columbia knew one of these three individuals. This was not the case for the Americans. Only two of the ten American participants knew one another growing up. Subsequent chapters of this study will examine if any commonalities existed in the realms of family, personal and professional life experiences, personality, and gender.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY: ISSEI, NISEI, SANSEI

Introduction

On the whole, the Japanese American and Japanese Canadian population can easily be thought of as very assimilated. With their own unique history, including the abrupt termination of legal immigration and being the only ethnic group in American and Canadian history ever to experience mass internment in their own homeland due solely to their race, Japanese in North America nonetheless shared space with the Chinese and Korean communities in both the U.S. and Canada. Both differences and similarities often resulted in confusion and misunderstanding by the members of the dominant, mainstream culture. And despite, or perhaps because of, the World War II experience, a high proportion of Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians have established themselves solidly in middle-class occupations, such as education, of their respective societies making their story a unique one.

Parents

Parents who raise their own children generally have some influence on their child, most influentially during a child's early years when they are the primary cultural transmitter a child experiences. Often times, parents draw upon their personal backgrounds and life experiences as well as beliefs and values passed on by their parents. However, sometimes, due to certain significant events or situations they experience, what they pass on to their child may be different from what they've learned. A significant life experience that may have influenced a participant's parent values and beliefs is what they or their parents, the participants' grandparents, experienced during World War II.

The participants involved in this study shared where their parents were born, their generation as an American or Canadian, their level of education, and their beliefs. Table 2 provides a brief profile of each participant's parents.

The World War II Experience: Internment (American), Relocation or Evacuation (Canadian, American), Nothing (Hawaiian), or Other (*Kibei*, American)

Though none of the participants involved in this study were born at the time, it appears most were influenced to some degree by their parents' and grandparent's experience of World War II. The experiences of Japanese Canadians, Japanese Americans, and Japanese Americans from Hawaii (the term "Hawaiian" will be used henceforth in this study and should not be confused with "Native Hawaiians," the indigenous people of Hawaii) all appear to be different.

The Canadian Experience.

Like the Americans, World War II was a time of great financial loss for the Japanese Canadians. Besides the permanent loss of land and property, the experience the Japanese Canadians appears to be slightly different. At the time of World War II, all six of the Canadian participants in this study had family living in *Sakana*, a rural fishing community now incorporated into the City of Coast, a diverse suburb of Vancouver, British Columbia.

Four of the six Canadian participants, Sasaki, Yamaguchi, Yamada, and Saito, who had parents and/or grandparents living in British Columbia, Canada at the time of World War II, indicated their parents and/or their grandparents being "relocated" or "evacuated" as opposed to being "interned" like the Japanese Americans experienced. This distinction surfaced during the interviews with Canadians. The terms "relocation" and "internment," originally thought to be synonymous, actually had significantly different meanings for Canadians. Susan Yamaguchi, interviewed exactly at the midway point of the Canadian participants, explained the difference.

"They [my parents and their respective families] weren't interned. Because they "voluntarily" relocated to Grand Forks." [Grand Forks, British Columbia is roughly six-hours east of Vancouver, British Columbia along the Washington border.]

Toshiko Brown and Richard Kato, had *Kibei* parents who were living in Japan at the time World War II broke out and were unable to return to Canada. Both report their father, though a Canadian citizen, was conscripted in the Japanese Imperial Army. Also, exclusively English-speaking Charles Saito, conveyed, from the time he shared with his exclusive Japanese-speaking grandfather, he learned of his grandfather's experience directly from him. Saito, whose parents

Table 2. Parent Overview

Participant	Father			Mother		
	Generation Birthplace/ Nationality Language	Highest Level of Ed & Location	WW2 Experience	Generation Birthplace/ Nationality Language	Highest Level of Ed & Location	WW2 Experience
James Sato	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English/Japanese	High School Mainland	Father – yes. Finished high school while interned	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English/Japanese	High School US	Mother - yes. Finished high school while interned
Robert Takahashi	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Father & Grandparents – Yes. Married while interned	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Mother & Grandparents – Yes. Married while interned
Michael Yoshida	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Father & Grandparents – Yes. Married while interned	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Mother & Grandparents – Yes. Married while interned
Linda Ito	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Father – briefly (then interpreter for General McArthur in Japan) & Grandparents - Yes	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Mother & Grandparents – No (in Japan. Grandfather conscripted in Japanese Imperial Army). Some siblings – Yes
Patricia Johnson Suzuki	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Father & Grandparents - Yes	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Mother & Grandparents - Yes
Elizabeth Nakamura	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Father & Grandparents – Yes. Married while interned	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Mother & Grandparents – Yes. Married while interned

Mary Smith	<i>Nisei</i> Hawaii/US English	PhD Mainland	No – in Hawaii	<i>Nisei</i> Mainland/US English	AA US	Mother – no. Grandparents interned.
Barbara Tanaka	<i>Sansei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Father & grandparents - interned	<i>Sansei</i> Mainland/US English	High School Mainland	Mother & Grandparents Briefly relocated to MT.
William Kealoha	Unknown Hawaii/US English	High School Hawaii	Father & Grandmother - unknown	Hawaii/US English	Hawaii/US English	N/A mother not Japanese ancestry
David Kobayashi	<i>Sansei</i> Hawaii/US English	High School Hawaii	Father & Grandparents – No (in Hawaii)	<i>Nisei</i> Hawaii/US English	Hawaii/US English	Mother & Grandparents – No (in Hawaii)
Richard Kato	<i>Nisei/Kibei</i> BC/ Canada Japanese	Undefined Educated in Japan	Father –no (in Japan). Conscripted in Japanese Imperial Army). Parents - Yes	<i>Sansei/Kibei</i> BC/Canada Japanese	Undefined. Educated in Japan	Mother – no (in Japan). Parents – yes.
Charles Saito	<i>Sansei</i> BC/Canada English	Bachelors Canada	No – unborn. Grandparents – Yes	<i>Sansei</i> BC/Canada English	Some College Canada	No – unborn. Grandparents – Yes
Joseph Yamada	<i>Sansei</i> BC/Canada English/Japanese	Undefined Educated in Japan	No – in Japan. Grandparents - Yes	<i>Sansei</i> BC/Canada English/Japanese	Did not disclose	Mother & Grandparents – Yes
Toshiko Brown	<i>Nisei/Kibei</i> BC/Canada Japanese	Undefined Educated in Japan	Father –no (in Japan). Conscripted in Japanese Imperial Army). Parents - Yes	<i>Sansei/Kibei</i> BC/Canada Japanese	Undefined Educated in Japan	Mother – no (in Japan). Parents – yes.
Jennifer Sasaki	<i>Sansei</i> BC/Canada English	Bachelors Canada	No unborn. Grandparents – Yes.	<i>Sansei</i> BC/Canada English	Some College Canada	No unborn. Grandparents – Yes.
Susan	<i>Nisei</i>	High	Father &	<i>Nisei</i>	Did not	Mother &

Yamaguchi	BC/Canada English	School Canada	his parents - Relocated	BC/Canada English	disclose	her parents - Relocated
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were not yet born, indicated his grandparents were relocated to Alberta and lived in “chicken coops on a beet farm as part of [their] relocation.”

He [my grandfather] would tell me things about World War II and his experience. He would be able to communicate that to me [in Japanese] in a way that I could understand, not fully [of course], but mostly. These were stories that other relatives didn’t [get to experience or] understand. I really value that connection with him.

The “Mainland” Experience.

All of the American participants who were themselves either born and raised on the continent of North America or had parents who were born or living and raised on North American have been grouped together and referred to as “Mainland Japanese Americans” for the purpose of this study.

The Mainland Japanese Americans experienced Executive Order 9066, the internment of Japanese American citizens on the West Coast. The impact of Executive Order 9066 ranged from temporary and occasional detention in camps to experiencing internment for the entire length of the Executive Order which was suspended in 1945. The longest impact appears to be that of Robert Takahashi’s parents, who described it as,

My father’s father was in San Francisco [when the Executive Order was issued]. Sensing what was going to happen, they drove inland so they weren’t relocated with the other San Francisco folks. They thought they’d moved far enough in[land] but, obviously, it wasn’t far enough. They were in the Lodi area during relocation time. So, they were relocated to Arkansas. Because he [my grandfather] was a well-known plumber, they put my dad’s family in this early advanced group so they could set up the septic and sewer system at the Camp.

Barbara Tanaka indicated her mother and father and their respective families’ experiences to be vastly different. Her father, along with his siblings and parents, entered camp

at age eight and left at age 13. They were interned the entire length of the Executive Order. Interestingly, the life of Tanaka's father after camp, through adulthood, reflected the literature of "the young people who roamed in packs." The internment experience of her mother and her family lasted "only a year" because,

My father ended up getting a job in Montana working for the railroad. He was able to take everybody out there [to Montana] so my mom had her childhood in Montana where she learned to ride horseback and basically be a cowgirl.

Some participants shared stories of significant life experiences of their parents while in "camp." James Sato's parents met in "camp" while Robert Takahashi's and Elizabeth Nakamura's got married in "camp." Patricia Johnson Suzuki indicated her father's family got "fractured" by the internment experience, "My dad's family, they kinda got fractured a bit because some went to the East Coast or inland and didn't have to go to camp."

The term "Mainland Japanese American" was purposefully expanded to include Linda Ito. Ito, is an American born and raised mostly in Japan. When World War II occurred, Ito's father and his family were interned. Ito's father, a *kibei*, was born in the Bay Area but educated in Japan. He return to the United States and was initially sent to Tule Lake along with his parents, then to a camp in Utah, where he

left his parents to teach Japanese at the Naval Language School at the University of Colorado, work for the Voice of America, and eventually sent [back] to Japan to serve an interpreter for the US government under General McArthur. Therefore, my father was interned for [only] a short period of time.

Ito's mother's family's experience was vastly different. Ito's mother, sister, and their parents, were in Japan at the time. The day before they were to return to the United States, World War II broke out and they were unfortunately "stuck in Japan." Ito's mother's siblings who were still in Denny were interned. The Ito family lived amongst the Japanese at the time and Ito's grandfather, an *Issei*, who was still a Japanese national at the time of World War II, was conscripted into the Japanese Army since he was in Japan. At the end of the war, Ito's

grandparents remained in Japan and never returned to their home in Denny. They passed away shortly after the War ended. Eventually, Ito's parents met on an American military installation in Japan and eventually got married. Ito and her younger sister were born in Japan shortly after World War II ended where they were then raised for most of their early lives.

The Hawaiian Experience.

Two male participants in this study are part of the subgroup being called, "Hawaiians." Though one of the participants is actually three-quarters Native Hawaiian and one-quarter Japanese, this subgroup arose as the participants and their parents were both born and raised in the State of Hawaii and likely had no blood lineage that experienced Executive Order 9066. Not having this experience as part of their family history appears to set this group of Japanese American individuals apart from those who, were at the least, living on the mainland of North America and hence, this subgroup was established.

Like both participants in this subgroup, Mary Smith, whose father was born in Hawaii, indicated her father and his family did not experience internment. Mary Smith was excluded from the subgroup Hawaiian because she was born on the mainland and she stated,

I really have no relationship with them [my father's side of the family]. Because of the distance, water between them and us, as well as the prohibitive cost of long distance phone calls at that time, communication and contact with my [paternal] grandparents was very limited. I don't even think they sent me birthday cards.

All four of William Kealoha's, grandparents were deceased prior to his birth so his "Japanese lineage [from his paternal grandmother] was all gone so I don't know too much about my Japanese side." Kealoha said he had no knowledge of his paternal grandmother's (or her family's) experience of World War II. Kealoha, an ethnic Native Hawaiian strongly associates with the Native Hawaii culture by and part to attending a private boarding school in Hawaii for children with Native Hawaiian ancestry.

The sentiments shared by David Kobayashi is typical of most Japanese Americans who were born and raised in Hawaii and had family living in the then Territory of Hawaii at the time

of World War II. His family did not experience internment.

I just didn't understand the mentality of families who were born and raised on the West Coast [Primarily those whose parents got interned and the anger of why that happened] because it didn't happen to anyone that I knew of growing up. Nobody in Hawaii had that kind of experience. So, we were never angry. In fact, Franklin Roosevelt is kind of a hero because of his leadership through the War [World War II] but he was the one who signed the Executive Order to put people into internment camps. But in Hawaii, he was never regarded as the villain.

Post World War II

Introduction.

Again, since none of the participants in this study were born at the time World War II, and some of their parents weren't yet born, the impact of World War II is indirect. Meaning it is through their parents, their other relatives, such as their grandparents, aunts, uncles, and in some cases, their great-grandparents, who experienced the War themselves, and in a few cases, secondhand. From the interviews, there were situations following the War that the Meiji Era values were manifested.

Resuming Life.

Most Mainland and Canadian participants indicated their families returned to the area they were forced to leave prior to the War. The same participants also described their family's significant loss of property and land. The Hawaiian participant's on the other hand did not indicate any of the same losses as the Mainland and Canadian participants.

Elizabeth Nakamura's family lost their hotel in Denny's Japantown, now incorporated into the International District, ironically named, the Freedom Hotel. Canadian participants Jennifer Sasaki and Susan Yamaguchi indicated members of their family losing boats and agricultural land, never to be regained.

Furthermore, some of the Canadian and Mainland participants indicated helping or receiving help in the resettlement process. It was during this time that the Meiji Era values *giri* (a

sense of obligation) and *ninjo* (empathy and understanding of others by extending oneself), mentioned in the literature review, were manifested (Wierzbicka, 1991).

Robert Takahashi shared both his father and mother temporarily settling with family members upon their return to the San Francisco area. Patricia Johnson Suzuki's family lived right across the street from the (Japanese) Buddhist Temple of the urban community in which she grew up.

Because of this, our family helped. Families were coming back out of camp and had no other place to go. People coming back, there would be whole families in my house, my mom's house, the house I actually grew up in. One room would house a whole family.

Identity - Ethnicity, Assimilation, & Language

Of the fourteen Mainland and Canadian interviews that were conducted, about half of the participants oriented themselves in context of the dominant white community. Tanaka stated,

I was raised and very much lived in the Caucasian world. My mother was in drama and all of those kinds of things. My parents were very liberal and open and they never pushed Japanese.

Similarly, Smith indicated,

I grew up in very, very white communities. There were no people of color really. Asian, Hispanic, African American, just nothing. I think there was one Vietnamese family, a family that was Filipino-Hispanic, you know, mom was Filipino, dad was Hispanic, and us. I mean there were no African Americans.

Michael Yoshida said of his upbringing,

My parents raised me to fit into the white culture. When I was going to school, it was me and maybe one or two other people of color. The rest were white. When you think of the 70s, middle class white-collar neighborhood, that was it.

Along the same lines, Robert Takahashi said of his upbringing in the Bay Area of California,

It was pretty significant that there were like 800 kids at the school and there were three

Japanese, maybe five Asian. At that time, they counted the Filipino kids as Asian. So, me, maybe one other kid, and three Filipinos in one family and that was the Asian population in a [private Catholic high] school of 800. So, essentially, I was raised white. My dad wanted me to be white, at least at the start. There, my mom wanted me to be the same, the Model Minority. Just do your work, do your stuff.

This was the same story for the Canadian participants. For Sasaki, a *yonsei*, her upbringing, definitely influenced by her parents upbringing, indicated,

Yeah, so for my mom and my dad, with the internment came a real quest to assimilate into Canadian culture. And while they still held on to certain traditions, of the Japanese culture, they definitely tried to assimilate. You know, *hakujin*, Caucasian friends, they lost the language. My mom and dad speak very little Japanese. I don't know if they consciously knew that but definitely upon reflection, when I went through University, I spent time studying it. It was one of my areas of focus.

Parent Background

Education & Religion.

The majority of the participants' parents earned a high school diploma. Two of whom did so while interned during World War II. Several, mostly Canadian were *Kibei*.

My mom has held the really traditional [Japanese] values. You'll find when you talk to people in *Sakana* the culture and the understandings that came [to Canada] with that first group of pioneers in the late 1800s, the [Japanese Canadian] culture existed and developed [and remained] in a vacuum. The values, beliefs, and even the language stayed. It evolved as [the] English [language] came into it and the English [Canadian] culture came into it. I bet that culture was way more conventional than what is happening in Japan.

Marriage.

The parents of fifteen of the participants in this study married someone of Japanese ancestry. This, as you will see in an upcoming chapter, is significantly different than that of the

school leaders.

Parenting Style.

Several participants mentioned implicit or indirect means they learned about the values important to their parents. As Johnson Suzuki pointed out in her interview, “You know how Japanese are, they don’t tell you these things, they’re modeling these things.” James Sato illustrated the same means to transmit certain values.

My parents only had a high school education. They modeled and indirectly said, “That’s the only way to go - the best way to go.” How? In running your own business, you had to handle all of the emergencies, do all the labor yourself, the books, and all of that. Doing the job until you get it done. There were no hours so they worked seven days a week. We actually lived on top of the cleaners.

Three participants indicated their parents never pushed them to succeed in school. Patricia Johnson Suzuki stated, “My parents never said ‘Do well.’ In our family, I don’t ever recall my parents saying, ‘You gotta do this, you gotta do this.’ Maybe I did well enough.” Joseph Yamada indicated, “My parents led by example. They set very high expectations for themselves and what they did but they didn’t demand of us academically.” Robert Takahashi indicated his parents also approached academic achievement in a similar manner,

My parents never pushed me. My homework was done. I wasn’t [raised] an Asian A or Asian F, you know the A minus. I had a few fights with mom about my grades and my mom was more pushy but I was always a good student and school was relatively easy.

Assimilation was the prevailing desire for most of the Japanese Canadian participants. As Susan Yamaguchi pointed out, “My mother never imposed traditional values on me and my brother.” Kato, despite *kibei* parents, speaking on behalf of himself and his sister Brown, stated, “Even though my parents are traditionally Japanese, my mom and dad both wanted us [my sister and me] to learn English. I think she pretty much wanted for us to become Canadian. At least me. Maybe my sister less. But me for sure. She saw it as the way to build a life here – was to become a Canadian. Even though she went to the Buddhist

church and she is a big supporter of the Buddhist church, she didn't worry about us going to the other [Christian] church. Also, as I grew up, my mom didn't let me go fishing with my dad because she didn't want me to become a fisherman.

Like Kato, Yamada, also with *kibei* parents, shared similar parenting beliefs of assimilation.

Growing up as "living a mixed lifestyle." We had Japanese food, we had Caucasian food, and western food. We went to Little Lamb Preschool, which was a Christian preschool, but we also attended Buddhist temple. Also my mom seems to be a little farther removed from the Japan influence [than my dad], but she's the one who goes to the Buddhist church.

Despite the push for assimilation, the brother and sister participants, Kato and Brown, mentioned as they were growing up, their mother had traditional Japanese beliefs of gender roles as well as the group-oriented mindset. Kato indicated, "Because I was a boy, I could do no wrong. Whereas, my mom had expectations of how a Japanese girl should behave. My parents are traditionally Japanese."

Brown's perspective of her experience growing up, My mother felt she had certain expectations to uphold because we had some kind of family status, but it wasn't her family! It was the family she had married into! I think it was more important to her than it was to my father. I think what she saw was all the Japanese [Canadian] girls my age, who went to the church, fit her image of what a Japanese Canadian girl should be . . . docile and obedient. We really fought about my clothing. She would hide articles of clothing that she thought was inappropriate. When I think back on it, I would think, man, as a really strong person, and she was pretty intense, she could have just thrown those out or just forbidden me, you know, to wear them. She could have burned them. She never did that. She would hide them on me and then the game became I would unearth it and I would it on her so she couldn't hide it on me again and I would always leave the house the way I wanted to be dressed.

Careers.

Since most of the parents of the participants, ranging from newcomers, *Kibei*, expatriates, to third generations American or, did not have postsecondary education. Parent careers for most of the Canadian participants was in the fishing industry while about half of the mainland participants had parents who owned and operated laundry-cleaning businesses. One parent of mainland participant Smith, likely because of their dominant culture upbringing in Hawaii, appeared further assimilated in at least the academic realm, as he came to the mainland for educational purposes, pursuing a doctoral degree in the medical sciences field. His wife, was also more formally educated than the other mothers of the participants as she earned an associates degree also in medical sciences.

Summary

The parents of the school leaders appear to be *Nisei* and *Sansei* and the highest level of education they completed was a standard high school diploma. A number of mainlanders had parents who were business owners, namely in laundry/cleaning. The parents of the participants were conscious about having children assimilated into the dominant, host culture.

In an upcoming chapter, when looking at the difference between the participants and their parents, readers will notice the greatest differences in the ethnicity of whom they selected for their spouse, the level of formal education each pursued, the obvious career differences, and their identity and assimilation in the dominant host culture of their respective nations.

CHAPTER SIX

DEFINING THE SELF: THE SANSEI/YONSEI

Family Life

This chapter reviews and presents some similarities and differences participants experienced in their from the participants' personal lives, first as youths then as adults, so in order to build a possible profile of the Japanese American or Japanese Canadian school leader. Each section begins with similarities and then explores difference from each participant's perspective—awareness of difference internally, externally, and their response to the situations that they shared in common.

Learning the language of the host culture is a factor that reflects an individual's assimilation into the mainstream culture. All of the sixteen participants indicate that English as their primary language, and for more than half, their sole language. The parents of the two individuals, brother and sister, remain primarily Japanese speaking and are *kibei*. These two participants, brother Kato and sister Brown indicated they began speaking English upon entering kindergarten. Kato stated,

I spoke nothing but Japanese before I started kindergarten. At that point I must have been thinking, sleeping, and dreaming in Japanese. Somewhere along the way it turned into English and I kind of rejected the Japanese culture. That was at five, six years old already. My parents wanted us [both my sister and me] to learn English - at least me, maybe my sister less, but me for sure. She saw it [fluency in English] the way to build a life here – to become a Canadian. I did that probably because of the main culture. The culture of the school, the teachers and that kind of stuff because the teachers where white. And I started focusing in on all things white after that.

Ito's experience was different than Kato's. For Ito, a *sansei*, born and raised in Japan to American expatriate parents, shared that she learned English out of necessity at four years of age.

You know, I was always told I was an American. I was born in an American hospital in Japan. My dad and mom were both Americans and I was raised to be American. But for

me, I had to learn English out of necessity. Our family came back to the United States [from Japan] by ship and it took three weeks. I primarily spoke Japanese at home and I was forced to speak English if I was going to play with the kids on the boat. I think I understood English because my parents spoke Japanese and English. But, upon returning to Japan after two years of living in the US [and going to American schools], English became my primary language.

Of the mainland and Canadian participants, whether male or female and almost exclusively that of the *Sanseis*, it was a desire of their grandparents to have their children, the parents of the participants, to have their children assimilated into the mainstream American culture by expecting their children to speak and embrace the English language, the language of the dominant, host culture. Thus, by the time of the participants' generation, English was the primary and sole language. Smith shared something from her mother's upbringing,

When my mom was growing up, it really wasn't PC [politically correct] to speak Japanese. There was a fear so I think my mom was raised very American because of that so by the time my sister and I came along, we only spoke English.

Yoshida shared his parents' philosophy of English,

Even though my parents knew how to speak Japanese, they never taught us the language and that's something the three of us children have held against them. I can tell you, if I could also speak Japanese, I sure wouldn't be sitting in this room. I would have many other career opportunities.

For some of the participants, interactions between them and their grandparents was also a factor in the language(s) they speak or do not speak. Nakamura, recalled,

Grandma spoke to us in Japanese but I spoke to her in English. She understands English. My mom, can speak Japanese but my dad, is terrible at it. Both my dad and mom were born in the US so their Japanese was from their parents. The Japanese we speak is from a different era. We know the *Inaka* [old country] Japanese, not the Japanese really wealthy or well-educated people speak. If my parents were speaking in Japanese, we knew they

were talking about us and of course I understood everything they were saying.

The Canadian participants, several of whom had *kibei* parents, whether *sansei* or *yonseï*, appeared to have a more palpable rejection of the Japanese language and, often times, other “things Japanese,” and leveraged their ability to speak English in relationships with their parents. Yamaguchi remembered,

All of my girlfriends were Japanese. We all went to kindergarten together and have remained friends since. Only one of my friends’ mothers actually spoke English and my mother spoke English. My other girlfriend’s moms did not so I was always the assertive one to advocate for things for us.

Yamada mentioned his father specifically selecting a home that was just outside of *Sakana* and raising his family there. Whether it was for his sons to become assimilated in the mainstream culture or as Yamada put it, “My dad liked his privacy,” is arguable but, Yamada stated,

My parents are both fluent in Japanese and when they spoke to me in Japanese, I would pretend not to understand them. Eventually I got good enough at not understanding them. As early as elementary school, I remember my parents forcing me to go to Japanese language school and I begged and whined until they relented. I didn’t want anything to do with being Japanese. I didn’t want to speak Japanese and I didn’t want to eat Japanese food.

A different dimension of language and assimilation surfaced from the interviews with both of the Hawaiian participants. Both are male and indicated negotiating the issue of language after they graduated high school and they came to the mainland for their post-secondary education. As undergraduate students at their respective universities, both of the Japanese Hawaiians discussed consciously pushing away people from Hawaii because of language. Kealoha stated,

I remember in my freshman year thinking, I came up [to school on the mainland] for a different experience. I wasn’t looking to hang out with people from Hawaii 24/7. The

vast majority of people from Hawaii were members of the Hawaiian Club. I didn't want to do that.

For Kobayashi, who was very proud of his individualism throughout the interview, he disclosed,

I was a junior transfer student and recall I didn't want to hang around them [the students from Hawaii] all the time. In Hawaii, there is a dialect of English called Pidgin English and it was the predominant [language] they spoke when they all got together. Pidgin English actually hurts my ears. I always viewed myself as an American from Hawaii who happens to be of Japanese ancestry. That's my order of thinking. I'm American.

Religion

Growing up, religion was an integral part of about half of the participants' lives. A quarter indicated religion played no role their upbringing. About half of them indicated Buddhism was a component in their early lives, primarily because it was the faith practiced by their parents. One individual was raised as a Christian, part of the English speaking section of a Japanese Christian congregation. Interestingly, four of the six Canadians, all three men and one of the women, indicated attending both Christian and Buddhist churches as children.

Both before and after World War II, Buddhist temples served more than the spiritual and religious needs of the Japanese American community. Sato and Johnson Suzuki, who attended the same temple, indicated "the church was the hub of the Japanese American community when they were growing up." Activities such as a basketball league, that spanned the border up and down the West Coast, Boy Scouts troop, kendo, and a variety of other activities were sponsored by the Buddhist church.

From a religious standpoint, Johnson Suzuki and Sato also indicated Buddhist teaching was a major aspect of their lives starting in Sunday School as children and continuing through Young Buddhist Association (YBA) through high school. For Sato, it was the "middle path." For Johnson Suzuki,

One of the things we had to repeat in church was about protecting those who were weaker

than myself and I took to heart. So, personal success is where everybody is a winner. The church was really great.

Both of them continue to be involved in the Buddhist church. Besides being immersed in the Japanese American community by faith and community growing up, Johnson Suzuki elaborated on the implicit nature of the Japanese (American) culture.

There are just such great people there. The church taught me, just by watching, about community, helping others, and trying to be a good person to other people. These are the values we were taught [in church].

Some interesting life experiences led to a hybrid of religious influence for a quarter of the participants in the study. One of the participants grew up in Japan while two of the Canadian participants, Toshiko Brown and Richard Kato, the brother and sister principals, both attended Buddhist church in the morning and different Christian youth groups at other times. Growing up, Brown and Kato attended the Buddhist church with their mother and, with the invitation of friends, also attended a Christian church.

Brown recalled, "I didn't go to the United Church for any great religious thing. In *Sakana*, that's where you'd go on Friday nights, to youth group." For her brother Richard Kato, Even though my mom goes to the Buddhist church and is a big supporter of the Buddhist church, I think she pretty much wanted for us to become Canadian. That's probably why she didn't worry about us going to the other church.

Two more general comments of interest about religion and enculturation were shared in interviews. Both comments came from mainland school leaders, one female and the other male. Ito, who was born and raised in Japan, with a father who briefly attended Divinity school,

Though I'm not Buddhist, because I grew up in Japan, Buddhism and Shintoism was all around me. I think I absorbed that. My dad was a real spiritual man. Before he passed away, he attended the Japanese speaking section of the local Methodist church. Before the War, he was going to divinity school. He never pushed religion on my sister and me.

For Michael Yoshida, whose parents raised him on the outskirts of Denny, where the main Buddhist temple in the Pacific Northwest was situated, the same Buddhist sect that was previously mentioned by Sato and Johnson Suzuki, his experience with the other children at the Buddhist temple prompted the following reaction,

I felt like an outsider at the Buddhist temple my family attended. Since I didn't go to the same schools as the other kids, I didn't know them nor did I share common experiences so I stopped going to the Buddhist church since I had nothing in common with them. I felt like an outsider.

School Experience

Another common experience shared by all participants was the elementary and secondary education experience. Fourteen of the sixteen participants were products of the public school system. All six of the Canadian participants were entirely educated in the public school systems in town adjacent to the main city in British Columbia. Five of the Canadian participants attended the same school district and one attended a different school district. Currently, five of the six also happen to serve in the same school district they attended as children.

Of the ten American participants, two of the males, one from the mainland and the other from Hawaii, attended private schools for their entire compulsory education. The rest were public school graduates. Interestingly, only one of the American participants works for the same school district he attended as a child reflecting the widespread American pattern of assimilation and migration that is part of mainstream American culture.

Participants were asked about their lives in elementary, middle, and high school and whether they were involved activities that were culturally oriented, that is Japanese-centered, and/or exemplified leadership. Just over one-third of the participants, four mainland and two Canadian, indicated being involved in culturally oriented activities growing up. These pursuits were connected to the Buddhist churches in their respective communities and will be discussed in a following section.

The participant involved in this study appeared to respond to the question along gender

lines. The majority of the males described themselves as average students who were involved in sports with little to no leadership involvement. Athletics will also be discussed at a greater length below. Three of them discussed their experiences as follows. First, Kato, stated,

I did my best to get As and Bs and I was satisfied with that. I did not run for student council, a lot of those leadership things that people do. In grade 12, I was selected for the Canadian Olympic Team [in Judo].

Yamada, another Canadian, younger than Kato stated of himself, By-and-large, I was a pretty good kid. I didn't exert much effort [in school]. I didn't have the motivation or desire to be more successful. I wasn't as smart as my brother. I played some sports that my brother hadn't played and I had different involvements. I did some stupid things like other kids.

Similarly, American Yoshida, sharing the role sports played in his life growing up, I did okay in school and didn't need to be in leadership positions. I had my fun while I was in high school. I realized I wasn't smart enough to be a dentist. I was a "low-key" kinda kid. Sports and family took up most of my time. I played intramural softball. Sports was a big thing in my family. The American females, on the other hand, described themselves academically either as good students or as young women who were above average academically, but not excellent students. Unlike the males, the females' co-curricular activities varied greatly as the quotes below indicate. For Smith, now a highly academic and driven individual, she said of herself,

I was very involved in school activities, very social, and needed to work at being an "A" student. My grades were "decent. I was a "B average" kid. I did not work at it. I need to work at being an A student. School was an avenue for social. I kept my grades good enough so I had a 3.0 so that I could drive." That drove my parents crazy.

For Barbara Tanaka, her biggest ambition in high school was to become a cheerleader for her high school. She achieved this and indicated it was her "claim to fame."

I was a good B student. I worked really hard for my grades. I was a chatty talker. I just

wanted to be a cheerleader in the worst way. So that's what I worked really hard for that.

The next quote from Johnson Suzuki illustrates that a typically "American" high school experience also had an overlay of ethnic identity.

I did well in school so I felt pretty good. I felt insecure in other ways of course. I knew how to do school. Through junior high and into high school I was active in student government, band, and sports. My claim to fame is being the first [Japanese American] female student body president at my high school, which had been around for 75 years at that time.

A vast majority of the eight male participants indicated that athletics was a significant part of their early lives. The sports that the participants mentioned included football, baseball, rugby, paddling, judo, and kendo. One of the participants was on a national judo team and one played in the Rose Bowl. Football appears to have been the most popular sport of the participants, with many of these individuals being good enough to play at the varsity level in high school. For Takahashi, who attended parochial schools, he played for his high school and also in the community in the league organized by law enforcement in the city in which he grew up.

I played Pop Warner football with my friends and these were the guys I connected with, which is one reason I didn't seek out Japanese kids. In high school I played four years of football and two years of baseball. During my junior year, I played against Barry Bonds, who was a freshman.

For Kealoha, who was ushered into leadership by his dormitory advisor at the boarding school he attended, shared his sports of choice.

In high school I paddled [canoe] and played football for my high school. Playing football for [his high school] was my all time dream. From the time I was five years old and I went to my first game, I remember saying, "That's all I want in life." That was my childhood dream and goal.

For Joseph Yamada, he indicated he intentionally selected sports and activities that were

different than his older brother.

I played football when I was little. It was the only organized sport. I played community football. I played rugby in grades 8, 9, and 10 for junior high and then played football in grades 11 and 12 for high school. I also dabbled with basketball but never really connected with that.

One Canadian, Kato, had a different, more ethnically-connected experience with sports and athletics, noting that at least some exposure to traditional martial arts was part of a common experience of the children in his neighborhood.

Every kid in *Sakana*, either started in judo or kendo. All the kids did either judo or kendo for a while. That's how Japanese-sy it was. I had performed really well in the Canadian National Championships so I went to the Olympics. I've done judo my whole life. That was my thing.

Learning About the Family World War II Experience

Of the eight mainland American born participants in this study, only one indicated learning about his or her family's World War II experience prior to high school.

Johnson Suzuki's family owned the home, the one in which she was raised, located right across from the Buddhist temple. Subsequently, her family, whether asked or voluntarily offered, opened their home to numerous Japanese American families being released from internment camps.

The remaining seven Mainland participants did not learn about the internment until they were in high school or in some cases, college. Smith was a sophomore in high school when the movie "Come See the Paradise" was released. It was then that she became aware of her mother's family's history about the internment. Takahashi and his parents didn't discuss this phase of their lives until he graduated from college "It just wasn't a topic that was discussed. They would never bring it up." Other participants stated had similar experiences. Nakamura's family approached the subject in the following manner.

My family never really talked about it. Until we realized what it was, then they'd talk

about it. They never talked about it in terms of ‘We want you to know this.’ But if we asked him questions, we’d talk about it. It wasn’t something they wanted to tell us about. Michael Yoshida’s family handled the subject in a similar manner.

When we were growing up, my parents would periodically mention “We would do this in camp. We used to have this kind of meal.” But, it wasn’t until I was in college when I was doing a paper on that whole experience that they were willing to open up and talk about it. That’s when I was 21.

The experience of when the Canadian participants learned of their family’s experiences of World War II occurred when they were in high school or later and was consistent with their mainland American contemporaries. Brown’s and Kato’s parents were in Japan at the time of the War. Saito, a *yonsei* whose parents also didn’t experience internment because they were not yet born, learned about his family’s experience of World War II from his grandfather while he and his grandfather were together fishing as previously mentioned.

The other Canadian participants, Yamaguchi and Yamada, did not learn about the internment from their family but rather at school in grade 10 or 11 socials [social studies] class. Sasaki, a *yonsei* elaborated,

I became more aware because we were studying it in grade 10 about what happened with our parents being interned. Trying to get my head wrapped around that. My parents didn’t really talk about it. My grandparents didn’t talk about it. Even in grade 11 and grade 12 when I wanted to talk about it, my grandparents said, “Go play.” I asked them why and my grandmother said, “Why do you want to bring up old history? Canada is good to us, leave it alone.”

In regard to this attitude, the sentiments expressed by the American mainland participants about the War differed from their Canadian counterparts. Speaking of his mother’s reaction to World War II,

Still to this day, my mom is still bitter. Angry. She doesn’t like [a specific racial

group of people] . . . because that was the group that came in and were living in the homes of the Japanese folks in the Bay Area.

For Barbara Tanaka, a *yonsei*, her parents had two different experiences. For her father and his family, they were interned from the beginning of the Executive Order until the end.

Dad on the other hand, because he was there the whole time [interned] and he was entrenched with it, he felt resentful but not as much as his brothers who were all older than him [He was the youngest of five brothers].

Lastly, one of mainland American participants, Sato, said, “My dad had no regrets about the internment. He just didn’t want it to happen to any other nationality. He doesn’t want people to forget that this happened.”

Identity and Difference

Another dimension of identity occurs when individuals interact with others. Recognizing difference, being recognized as different, when the awareness of difference occurred, and how an individual responds to difference varied greatly. On the surface, it appears life experiences, personality, and a multitude of other factors appear to amplify the wide range of responses the participants provided as they pondered the significance of their Japanese ancestry.

Childhood: You are Different.

For some of the participants both mainland and Canadian, it was during their early childhood when they were told by outsiders “you are different.” Up until third grade, Johnson Suzuki didn’t recognize herself as different. Because of a school closure, she moved from a culturally diverse elementary school to a predominantly white elementary school. There, both students and teachers pointed out that she was different. Instead of feeling badly about herself, she recalled getting mad and thinking those people were ignorant.

I became aware that I was Japanese in third grade. Until that time it was never pointed out to me that I was, you know, different. Certain kids regularly pointed out that I had slanty eyes or they’d make racial slurs. I remember this one girl doing it a lot and I thought she was pretty ignorant. I don’t think she was necessarily trying to be hurtful.

Even my teacher would make comments. I remember she said something about the Bible and added, “You all know what that is, except for Patricia.”

For Nakamura, she learned about discrimination in the fourth or fifth grade when she and Her family were driving through the upper Midwest.

I will never forget it. We took a road trip to visit my cousins in Chicago. We stopped in Montana but we couldn't stay in the hotel. It said 'Vacancy' so my dad went up to the office and was told there were no vacancies. My dad just said, “I guess they don't want Japanese there. So as kids, we just thought, “That's not very nice.” We couldn't find a hotel so we had to sleep in our car that night. That was the first time I ever felt like something was wrong.

Robert Takahashi, who identified as white for the majority of his interview stated, I've been called so many racist names forever. I was teased all the time. Even my best buddies and coaches did it! Back then, there wasn't things like 'Be respectful of each other.' The thing I did when that was happening was laugh. I was mad but I laughed because the people doing it didn't call me out by my right nationality.

One Canadian male and two Canadian females shared similar stories from their educational experiences. Kato shared a story of an experience in grade four or five when he was playing tag and teams were being chosen at recess.

I still recall this one Caucasian boy saying to another Japanese Canadian kid, “Okay, since you're half white you can be on my team.” I'm thinking this is strange. When he got to me he said, “Since you're a quarter white, you can play too.” This boy was judging how much whiteness we had in us and making judgments about Japanese Canadians from his point of view. I'm not sure on what basis he was making his judgments. Maybe how well we spoke English or how we dressed. Of course, both of us were 100 percent Japanese Canadian.

Kato's sister Toshiko Brown indicated her first recollection of experiencing racism came in grade eight when the children from her “small community” were bussed to the “big secondary

school” in the Coast School District.

That’s the first time I was insulted because of my race. I still remember him. He was loud, boisterous and really insulting. He was one of those boys you were always weary of. I don’t even remember exactly what he said to me but it was loud and really overtly racist. I knew that that sort of thing was out there but I was surprised because it never had up until then. I stayed away from him from that time on. It was just shocking.

Susan Yamaguchi, also from the smaller community Brown previously referenced, likely attended the same “big secondary school.” But rather than a fellow student being part of the first recollection of a marginalized experience, it was one of her teachers.

My high school English teacher sat us in alphabetical order. For two years I sat at the desk that butted up against his desk and he couldn’t get my name straight! There were three of us girls who were short and kind of looked the same and those teachers could NEVER keep us straight! Then, a year after graduating I had to go on campus, he didn’t even remember who I was!

Childhood: I am Different.

Another common awareness when individuals interact with others is realizing they are different. Kealoha had an opportunity to travel to Michigan as part of an annual delegation his high school to attend an international youth leadership camp.

I remember distinctly. I was at a leadership camp in Michigan. I remember saying for the first three or four days, “Oh! I’m tired.” Then, the camp director said to me, “You know what, I think you don’t need to be tired any more. You’re okay over here.” I probably used tired as an excuse to be distant and go to my room and lay down and think about how different I was.

All three Canadian women explicitly stated they knew they were different. The Canadian women noticed and expressed the notion of difference in yet a different manner. Like Yamaguchi, Brown stated, “I was conscious of being a visible minority. You know, through adolescence, as you establish your identity.”

I think that I always knew that I was always part of a minority. I was always aware of that . . . especially when you have friends who are white. To begin with, whenever I went into my friends' homes, I remember thinking, "I wonder if their parents will react if I am Japanese."

Sasaki, like Brown, pondered her difference internally.

I remember being in home economics class, in grade eight, finding out there was actually a utensil called an eggbeater. I thought, "Why would you need one of those? You got chopsticks! I use chopsticks for all of that." Little things like that made me realize I'm not the same as everybody else. I've always been aware, meta-aware of how different I am and how I'm also the same as other people.

Amongst her Japanese Canadian friends, Sasaki identifies herself as a 'banana.' "I refer to myself as a banana. You know, yellow on the outside and white on the inside. I know it is a bit derogatory." Interestingly, Sasaki also made distinction on more than one occasion in her interview of being Japanese and not of another East Asian ethnic group as well as not confusing Japanese with Japanese Canadian. "Being Japanese Canadian is different than being Japanese and it's also different than being just Canadian. That's how we see ourselves." Sasaki shared a story that illustrated the Japanese vs. Japanese Canadian identity difference.

My mom came out of the church service one day. "Was that you being so noisy? Was that you guys?" Immediately my sister and I protested, "No, no. That was the Japanese kids." Then my mom said, "What are you?" We said, "Oh! Oh! I don't know. It's not us. It's them!" And what we meant was, it was the kids from Japan, who are different from us.

Sasaki continued,

When I was growing up, I was definitely a minority. In grade 2 or 3, some kids were talking about me being Chinese. I was adamant that I am Japanese. I told them there is a difference. I remember trying to defend myself and explain the difference. In secondary school there were more Chinese kids so it wasn't that we were a full minority. But, there

was only a handful of Japanese students and from that, fewer were Japanese Canadians. About two-thirds of the Japanese kids in my high school were born in Japan. They were international students. One-third of us were born in Canada. In my graduating class, there were only four of us who were Japanese Canadian in a class of about 175. I see myself as having values from both the Japanese culture that I bring into my everyday life. Examples are, you always write a thank you card for a gift and you never go to someone's house empty handed. Loyalty is huge. But, I also see some ways that I am also Canadian.

Though this identity is shared by several other participants, Takahashi being one of them, most did not explicitly state this identity in quite the same way.

For Tanaka, by middle school, she learned she was different in yet another way. Among the Japanese community, her family was known as “a family who was considered not culturally strong” as they were, by and part, an assimilated family. After spending a summer as a junior high school student picking berries with her friends from school, it was clear to her she was culturally less Japanese than her friends.

We worked for Nishimura Farms out in Fall City. A bus would come and pick us up. Everybody on the bus was Japanese. Well, maybe one or two Caucasians, but the majority [of the kids] were Japanese. We were going to a Japanese farm to pick berries. It was a big social event. You didn't go to pick berries or make money, you went because it was a big social event. It was an awareness point for me. I didn't feel culturally connected at that point.

Three male participants, both Canadian and American, indicated they overtly rejected their ethnicity at some point in their early lives. For Kato, he indicated he was in high school that he “Didn't want to be Japanese. I didn't like Japanese food. I didn't want to focus on being Japanese,” while Yamada was in middle school. Yamada remembers,

It was somewhere around grades 5, 6, or 7 that I became aware I was different. I wanted to fit in. That was important. I remember distinctly pushing away [my Japanese] culture.

As a kid, my ambition was not to be Japanese but to be Canadian and I just remember, I just wanted to be like everyone else. I didn't want anything to do with being Japanese. I didn't want to speak Japanese. I didn't want to eat Japanese food. I had a strong desire not to be perceived as different. It wasn't until it was much later that I realized that sense of loss as I now speak almost no Japanese.

For Brown, Kato's sister, she said,

To tell you the truth, Japanese [Canadian] boys were interesting to me . . . but not as a boyfriend. And the girls? They were just boring! That was the generalization I made at the time. I lumped everyone into a group of people who I determined 'weren't too interesting.'

Brown continued,

I didn't feel being in a Japanese Canadian community was a comfortable fit for me. I was different from all of those Japanese girls my age who went to the [Buddhist] Church. I didn't fit the mold very well. These kids were more conventional; and by conventional, I mean conventional in the Japanese sense. They were docile and didn't stick out. Good Japanese girls were obedient, quiet, and dressed a certain way. I had always felt not part of that for different reasons. I'm not sure if this was a reaction against my mother really wanting me to fit in and her expectations of me.

For Linda Ito, an American expatriate who lived with her parents amongst the Japanese and then attended school on American bases, life was confusing for most of her life growing up. She was in high school during the Vietnam era and recalls going on base and seeing lots of young American sailors. She attended school with children whose parents were in the military and whom she believed saw her as different because she didn't look "American." According to Ito, she believed to them, she looked like every other Japanese person. Then, there were the Japanese people in the community where she lived who treated her differently too.

It's really funny. And now, looking back, it's even more funny. It wasn't so much fun when you're in the middle of that. In high school, this was really confusing for me! I

remember feeling a bit insecure. I was always “*gaijin!*” Those soldiers and other people who came through the base, thought of me as “*girl-san,*” thinking I was not American, but Japanese. So I felt like I needed to identify with being American, whatever that meant. When I went to school, I wanted to wear clothes that were in fashion. I also wanted the right hairstyle so I could fit in. But, before I got home, I would have to change my clothes and hairstyle so I could blend in again—you know, be invisible--my skirts were longer and my hair was not teased so I looked like the other [Japanese] kids in our community.

Early Adulthood

From the stories shared, it appeared that the participants experienced significant awareness of their distinctive Japanese American and/or Japanese Canadian ethnic identity during early adulthood roughly between the ages of eighteen and their twenties. This is different than being Japanese and American/Canadian. During this period of their lives, separated from their parents, is when many respondents began forging and shaping their own individual identities. During this life stage, the participants had the opportunity to travel both to different parts of their respective countries and/or Japan and became aware of additional dimensions of difference as they formed their identity. The Canadians traveled to the United States as well. Brown, who moved from her Japanese Canadian enclave to a rural island currently known for artisans as a young woman, recalled,

There were no Asians here [the island that she continues to call home] back then. At that time, I was it. On one hand, it was kind of great to be seen as exotic . . . which I never thought. People would make reference to my ethnicity. To be seen as different and exotic when you're at an age where you're defining yourself was pretty cool to me. I remember people asking about my nationality. I would say “I'm Canadian.” But they would continue, “Really, what nationality are you? Where are you from?” I told them I'm from Vancouver. It was great being the “Token Asian.”

The University Experience.

Like the majority of Americans and Canadians who are fortunate to be able to continue their education beyond high school, the university experience for the Japanese American Japanese Canadian school leaders proved to be as significant. Here, individuals are able to experience a different world with different people, most often, the first time away from their parents. Yamaguchi, a Canadian woman, stated she wanted to experience living in a culture where there was another group that was a majority so in her sophomore year, after attending a British Columbia university, she applied to attend the University of Hawaii because she had heard the Japanese population was the dominant population there and she wanted to experience that. She recalled,

It was the *haole* kids who accepted me so I hung out with them. I didn't mix much with the local Japanese kids because I lived with a Filipino family so I mostly associated with the Filipino and *haole* guys.

As a freshman at Western Washington University, Smith got a random call saying "We have scholarship money that needs to go to a person of color who is going into education and you're the one." She laughed and wondered if someone looked through some list and there weren't many people who met the criteria so they offered her the position. "I just remember laughing with my parents about how funny that was - how there will be opportunities like that because I am a person of color," she recalled.

Another freshman year experience was shared by Yoshida.

This was a public university in the middle of our State in the late 80s and early 90s. Back then you knew you shouldn't go to these certain bars as a person of color by yourself.

We're talking redneck. It's not how it is now. Anyhow, the housing department plopped two of us together [to share the same dormitory room] because we were of Japanese ancestry. When we asked why, they said, "We thought you knew each other."

Ito returned to the United States to continue her post secondary education in a town near the Canadian border recalling,

[Growing up in Japan], For me, it was such a conservative, strange place. It was a small

town. People always looked at me as if I were foreign. I was very conscious about being different when I came back to the states to go to college. I quickly learned I needed to be more assertive because people in the United States are very much out for themselves. I also learned I needed to tell people what I wanted because no one was going to understand me if I didn't. Growing up in Japan, communication was different. People understood one another without speaking. There was so much innuendo. I didn't have to explain everything. [There,] It's the tone and the words I used. People in Japan understood what I was talking about [without me having to say anything]. It's not the case here.

Ito also mentioned a friendship with a girl from Hawaii who was also Japanese American during her undergraduate years. Besides commiserating about their loneliness, there was a situation that indicated the experience of those from Hawaii might be different.

Some of my Hawaii friends said, "Don't go to the Woolworth's 'cause the clerks there are prejudice and don't treat us very nicely." I knew there were places in America where people would be biased, or prejudiced so I wanted to test it out [for myself] since it was the first time I had to deal with that sort of thing. So, purposely I went to Woolworth's to see how the clerks would react to me. I did and remember thinking their experience wasn't my experience. I remember thinking how interesting that was.

For Nakamura, she recalled thinking, "Whoa! There were so many white folks here! I hadn't seen that before! Not that anyone was discriminating or anything. Wow! This is so white!" of the student body of the university she was attending. What makes this observation interesting is this university is the largest university in the state and also in the same city where Nakamura grew up.

For Kealoha, a Hawaiian both by race and geographic origins, he recalled a stronger identification with his culture when he left Hawaii to attend college on the mainland. Now in a position of being a minority, he described it as a need to "cling to my culture and express that [my ethnicity] more." Kealoha recalls starting to speak up during his third year of college. Prior

to that, he wouldn't say much in class because he was afraid. "I talk so bad pidgin I thought people would think I was unintelligent because I couldn't say it like they were saying it. You know, that my thoughts were below, less than, and invalid." Kealoha continued,

I think people looked at me as a quiet guy. Not big on the whole friendly scene. When I started speaking against ideas that the predominantly white university had, I think it solidified my reputation as an angry person. I was having a hard time understanding it and adapting to it, navigating it. All because you're saying it louder than everyone else [referring to those in the dominant culture] and you have the confidence to interrupt the discussion without raising your hand and being called upon by the teacher, that doesn't make you right. Why should a white person make the rules that the rest of us have to accept? Why is their perspective the truth because they interrupted everyone. They had no problem with cutting in on a conversation even though I had my hand up for minutes and minutes and minutes. That doesn't make them right because they spoke first and louder. I knew there was more than the white, middle class perspective. So pidgin and all, I started going [talking and sharing my perspective].

Furthermore, Kealoha's living arrangements in the university's dormitory also exacerbated his feeling different. Kealoha described cultural conflicts with his roommates and concluded, "It was not a positive."

I had three *haole* [Caucasian] roommates. They probably experienced the same kind of cultural conflict as I did. You know, they didn't know how to handle this kid from Hawaii. Instead of wanting to know about my culture, they put my culture down. Because a lot of us played for the football team, we were all thought of as violent. I think they were kidding but it didn't feel like it. I felt challenged. They weren't respectful and they weren't welcoming. It wasn't what I expected. They probably never realized how much what they were doing was bothering me. I think they saw it as just having fun but I felt racial tension. So, what did I do? I suppressed it all. You know, don't make waves. That's what I learned from my parents.

Kealoha decided to pursue a master's degree and simultaneously earn his teaching certificate at a university in Texas which brought up yet another dimension of difference.

This time I was more mature and handled being different better. Texas is a very segregated place. I walked into class and I did not fit in since I was not black, not Latino, not Vietnamese, not white. No one was calling me names or anything. They just never talked to me. Literally, no one talked to me. I would talk to people and they looked at me like I was weird. I tried using "the Hawaiian angle" that got me through that leadership camp in Michigan, when I was in high school but it didn't work.

Traveling to Japan.

As some of the school leaders negotiated their understanding of self over time, a common formative experience occurred for those who had had the opportunity to travel to Japan.

American school leader Tanaka took a trip to Japan at the age of 19 with a girlfriend, a Japanese American from Hawaii, and indicating she felt for the first time, "this huge connection (with her ethnicity)."

So we were traveling around for a month, having a great time. I felt culturally connected because I was spending time with relatives going to the cemetery where my grandfather's sister. I also saw pictures of my grandparents when they were young. But then, when we were traveling on our own, we made sure we asked questions to young [Japanese] people because most of the young people had some level of English [proficiency]. Many of them did and they were excited to practice English. We obviously appeared American because people would come up to us and ask if we were from America probably because of our stance and the clothes we wore. It was quite clear we were different.

Brown also traveled to Japan as a young adult. She was 25 years old when she visited. She recalled one of the first things that happened to her.

I was in Osaka wearing a summer dress without my backpack. Immediately upon boarding the train a young man stepped up to me and asked, "Can I practice my English? Excuse me, can I practice my English?" I asked, "How did you know I spoke English?"

He said, “Come on! It’s the way you’re dressed and how you carry yourself, of course! The way you walk, the way you entered the train, and the gestures you use.” Everything marked me out clearly. Later on in my travels, I remember not knowing the Japanese word for postcard and asking someone. He [the man I was asking] made some kind of oblique reference that I was Japanese but yet I wasn’t. That was really surprising to me. And you know, here I was thinking, “Yes! For once I will be part of the majority culture.” I was quite happy to experience and see what that felt like. I learned I was so not part of the majority.

Sato, one of the first Japanese Americans who played in the Rose Bowl, visited Japan first as a junior in college and then again upon graduating. He was recruited to coach a Japanese university and high school football team so in his early twenties, he chose to go to Japan to “learn about his culture better.” What he learned from his experience in Japan aligned with what the others experienced, being Japanese American was different than being Japanese in Japan.

I look the part, you know, being Japanese American. It was a perfect fit. I learned a couple of things there. First, the Japanese culture was very electronic heavy and very materialistic. We [in America] were ‘old-style Japanese.’ For New Years, we both do *mochitsuki* and *osechiryori*. In Japan, they’d use [electronic, automatic] *mochi* makers and buy the *osechiryori* from the department store. They didn’t do the traditional [*mochi*] pounding and they didn’t stay up all night making *osechiryori* like we still do! What I found out, I found what was funny we were more Japanese here than they were. I also learned about *kohai sempai*. *Sempai* is your elder. *Kohai* is the junior; the understudy. And so the *sempai* is always the boss. I was *dai sempai* since I was a foreigner. Everyone had to cater to me including my [Japanese] elders. Everyone! I was treated like a movie star over there. It was a man’s world [in Japan]. It was intriguing for me. I lived by that system, the man’s world, and I didn’t like that system. It [the experience of working in Japan] also solidified my understanding of why Japanese are so loyal. Once you are loyal to some faction, that’s it. There’s no changing. And you can’t lose face by changing sides

or anything like that.

After her first teaching assignment in Northern British Columbia, Susan Yamaguchi wanting to live and work in Japan did so for seven months while she was in her early twenties. Her experience was similar to Ito's. Combining her experience as a transfer student at the University of Hawaii and her employment experience with the First Nations people in Northern British Columbia, Yamaguchi recalled,

Japan was completely, completely foreign. The Japanese I spoke was viewed as "*henno nihonjin*" or weird Japanese by the Japanese. I learned the Japanese that we spoke back home [in British Columbia] was old country Japanese. I also remember seeing that blonde hunk standing at a bank [struggling to communicate with the teller] and thought, "Hey! Look at me! I can help you! I can speak English!" But he didn't see me! He walked right past me. I realized I was NOT white because these guys who are white couldn't see me. That was one of my big "Ah-has!" That's [the experience of living and working in Japan] what convinced me that I was not Japanese and the meaning of "visible minority." At that point, I was more convinced than ever that we [Japanese Canadians] were different than the Japanese of Japan. Very, very different!

The sharpest contrast to these stories came from Smith, one of the younger female mainland participants, did not travel to Japan. She is someone who strongly identifies with the dominant American culture. Smith stated, "I'm not really sensitive. I just don't really think I am of a different culture."

Kato, a Canadian male, talked about comic book super heroes and how those characters served as role models for him growing up. As the son of a fisherman, numerous summers were spent in solitude so he was able to find solace in comic books.

The values taught in comic book were huge [for me]. I remember Spiderman was a loner and a daredevil. A lot of the superheroes were loners. All those stories of superheroes with all their angst were the things I related well to.

For Kealoha, the only participant who attended a boarding school for his secondary

education, mentioned that his dormitory advisor played a critical role in his development as a leader.

I was lucky enough to have attended Kamehameha Schools from kindergarten through 12th grade. We were constantly told, “You are special. You need to make a difference in the Hawaiian community. We expect you to be a leader.” This was different from what my family was teaching me. The school culture pushed us to be leaders and step forward though I was never [explicitly] taught [how to be a leader or speak up] but I had good solid mentors. My dorm advisor pushed me in leadership positions and other opportunities. I never sought out to be a leader. Not sure if I didn’t have the confidence, motivation, drive, or the know how to navigate to the next step. (William Kealoha)

Adulthood

Identifying as different in both their personal and professional lives continues to coexist in the minds of some of the participants into the present. Participants spoke about situations of difference as adults and their responses. Linda Ito, who has always lived in the city of Denny but worked in the suburbs stated,

I love to go to the International District and walk around those places because I feel very comfortable there. Those places are a reminder of who I am. Those places also help me remember the disconnect I feel when I’m here at work [in the suburbs].

For Robert Takahashi, relocating to the Pacific Northwest less than ten years ago from the Bay Area to move closer so his wife could assist with the care of her aging and medically fragile mother, on a short visit just prior to his relocation recalled the following experiences.

Just before we [my family] moved here, we came up for Christmas, probably around 1996, 1997. I took the car to the car wash and this guy gets up in my face. There was some procedure and I’m sure I made a mistake and the guy is calling me a Chink and a Chinaman and what the hell are you doing in our area? Don’t you know what the hell is going on? Then, a couple of days later, we go to a Christmas Day party at my mother in law’s friend’s house and her dad, walks up to me and says, “You’re Japanese right? You

don't seem that bad. I haven't had that many good experiences with those Japanese people. At least you're not Chinese. I don't like those Japs much." We got in the car and I told my wife, "There is not a chance in hell that we're moving to this racist ass place and here we are."

Speaking about his, his wife's and their two daughters' travel experience, Kobayashi stated,

I can spend the whole day in the park and never see another Asian person except for my family. There are many places in the country that has never had the experience of dealing with Asians, so I think, "How can you base an understanding or relationship when you don't know anybody of Japanese ancestry?"

Marriage.

Who the participants selected as their partner illustrated how assimilated the Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians had become in one generation. Of the eight women in this study, seven are currently married and one was not married at the time she was interviewed. Among those who were married, only one married a fellow Japanese American while the remaining six opted for Caucasian spouses. Furthermore, two of these participants were on their second marriages, again to Caucasian men, and for unexplored reasons. Of the six married women, just over half kept and use their maiden names in (at least) the professional realm. Only one of the women opted to hyphenate her last name and another uses her Japanese middle name as her preferred name. For Tanaka,

When I looked at my cousins, the ones who were "more Japanese," they all married Japanese - all of them. They were all tied in more with their race. A lot of my friends' parents of this [*Yonsei*] generation pushed Asian or not African American but my parents never messed with or implied one or the other. All [four] of the children in my family married Caucasian.

By contrast, of the eight men in the study, half married spouses of Japanese ancestry and the other half married Caucasians. The four men who were married to women of Japanese

ancestry seemed to have a greater association with their ethnicity, transcending both third and fourth generations. *Sansei* Sato, married the daughter of a minister from the same Buddhist sect in which he was raised; Kato a *Sansei/Yonse*i, who was, according to his and his sister's accounts, raised as a "traditional" Japanese male by his mother; and Saito, a *Yonse*i, who, because of the extensive time he had with his grandfather and his Japanese Canadian colleagues in the fishing industry all married Japanese women from their respective countries. Interestingly, Kobayashi, who identified himself as *Yonse*i and very much an American, also selected a wife of Japanese ancestry, who, like him, was born and raised in Hawaii.

Offspring.

Of the 15 married school leaders, eleven had children. Of those, all eight men had one, two, or three children; seven women had none, one, or two. Noteworthy was more than half of the married women involved in this student had no children.

Furthermore, the obvious byproduct of an interracial marriage is interracial children. Though most participants explicitly indicated their race was a non-issue, several of them raised points about race and difference from the perspective of their child. For example, Tanaka views her son as being more Japanese and her daughter as more Caucasian. Other interesting comments came from both mainland and Canadian school leaders with children.

For me, it was never a question of what to mark. You know, I'm Asian. I'm Japanese. For them [my children] it would be interesting to see what they decide to mark. Do they mark Caucasian? Do they mark they're bi-racial? I'll be curious as they get older and I have those conversations with them, where they'll land. (Mary Smith)

Kato, who has two daughters noted,

So my youngest daughter's friends are mainly Asian Canadians of some kind because of the school she chose for secondary school. For her, she gravitated toward Asians and all the Caucasian friends she had in elementary school kinda fell to the sides because the school she chose was mainly Asian and more academic. My older daughter chose a different school with a predominantly white student body. Her friends are white. She's

struggled with her identity more.

Personality and Character

About a quarter of the school leaders used the word singular or some form of the word individual to describe themselves. Two of the participants, Kato and Brown, were in situations where they grew up in isolated circumstances because of their father's life in the Canadian fishing industry. For them, that reality, individual personality, and mother's parenting style appear to have influenced an identity of "singularity." Toshiko Brown stated of herself,

I was pretty singular. I made decisions for myself. I think I learned quite early on, if I was going to make decisions, it was entirely up to me to make them. While my parents weren't passive, they weren't supportive either so it was easy for me to decide that I was going to embark on a course of action and do it and put it into place. I feel being singular means you're driven by who you are and you follow that route because that's who you are.

Whereas for other school leaders, their singularity in the childhood and early adulthood appeared to be personality related. These participants, with no specific gender, age, or generational correlation mentioned they "did their own thing" several times during their interview. Kobayashi proudly stated at multiple times he did things on his own, especially when he left Hawaii to attend college on the mainland. He concluded, "I'm not a group follower. I do what I think. Even as a person growing up in Hawaii, I wasn't into what everybody else was in to. I want to do what I like to do." Sato mentioned something similar to Kobayashi.

All of my [life] experiences led up to who I am. I did a lot of different things. I had a lot of different friendships. I never stayed with one group and I had the ability to be open-minded and reach out to all different groups. I was one of the few Asians and wasn't locked into one group. I could be with my church group. I could be with my jock group. I could be with the gangs in my neighborhood, you know, the druggies. I had a lot of associations with different groups. I kinda have an open-mind and I'm going to try everything.

All three of the Canadian women described themselves as “bossy” or “assertive” in one way or another. Yamaguchi said,

I just learn, despite myself. I ran the roost at home. I was bossy. I was real, real bossy. My mother spoke English. My other girlfriend’s moms did not so I was always the assertive one to advocate for things.

Much like Yamaguchi, Toshiko Brown, roughly the same age as Yamaguchi, said of herself,

I’m quite driven. I don’t think that’s a quality that Japanese women are necessarily supposed to have. I think you can be driven but the outward manifestations of that are very attractive.

Finally, the youngest Canadian woman, Jennifer Sasaki, spoke of her perception of other’s perceptions of how a “good Japanese girl” ought to behave.

I feel I don’t match people’s stereotype of a “good Japanese girl.” Middle-aged white men see me visually and think, subservient, kind, gentle, and quiet. As soon as I speak, they realize, “Whoa! That doesn’t match!” I don’t know what to do with that. I think sometimes I’m confusing to people.

Summary

In one generation, it appears the participants in the study became increasingly more assimilated in the dominant culture of their respective countries as illustrated by the increased number of interracial marriages than that of their parents’ generation. The university experience and for those who had the opportunity to travel to Japan, that experience provided the participants greater clarity of their identity as Japanese American or Japanese Canadian.

Furthermore, what significance sports and athletics had in the young lives of the male participants was unexplored but noteworthy as nearly all of them mentioning sports or athletics playing a key role in their formative years. Lastly, how many participants described themselves as average students during their K-12 years is also noteworthy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SCHOOL LEADER

In the last chapter, aspects of the Japanese American and Japanese Canadian school leaders' non-professional lives was examined in the context of personality and personal identity. In this chapter, delving further into the question of whether any common qualities are shared by Japanese American and Japanese Canadian school leader, the professional lives of the participants will be examined. This chapter will begin with a discussion of reasons and conditions why they became educators and continue through their present lives as practicing school leaders.

Becoming an Educator

Transcending gender, nationality, and generational marking, the participants of this study once again shared a vast range of reasons why they became public school educators. Two of the younger female participants Mary Smith and Jennifer Sasaki indicated they knew they knew they wanted to be a teacher prior to starting their post secondary education. The American female was *sansei* and the Canadian was *yonsei* and both had at least one parent who was college educated. Furthermore, the Canadian female's mother was a practicing primary grade teacher in the school district she attended and continues to work for.

The younger male participants identified their thoughts prior to concluding their compulsory K–12 education but did not commit to the field until they began their post secondary education. Yoshida stated,

I'd taken home ec[onomics] classes, now called home and family living classes. One of the classes was working with the pre-school aged kids at the day care on my high school campus. That got me thinking about maybe going to Central Washington University and become a teacher.

For Canadian Joseph Yamada, helping people seemed to be something he enjoyed and was good at from an early age. Yamada mentioned choosing qualities and activities that differed from his older brother but interestingly, this did not seem like a factor for his choice in becoming

an educator because of the age his mother said his interest in education began.

I don't really know exactly. As soon as I was six years old, my mom said I would talk about being a teacher. Throughout my life I grew up working with kids and it's been a passion and strength of mine. I have this stupid memory of someone making fun of a kid who couldn't play baseball and I took it upon myself to help kid so he wouldn't be made fun of [anymore]. The only thing I worried about was getting to the university and not liking it because I didn't really have a Plan B.

Another common response from the younger participants was, "I never thought of becoming a teacher." William Kealoha was in his fifth year of his undergraduate education, on the road to graduating with a bachelor degree in physical therapy, a field "he had no interest and motivation in pursuing." For him, a series of events led him to public education. Kealoha was working at a "dead end job" as a night security guard and was recruited by a friend to coach football voluntarily at a local high school. A school security officer position opened at that high school and the person who recruited him convinced the school administrator to interview Kealoha for that position. Kealoha was hired. Serving as a coach and campus security guard, he quickly realized he found something he enjoyed doing. "From Day One, I wasn't looking at the clock to see when my shift was done. I loved what I was doing!" Kealoha then enrolled himself in a graduate program for teacher education. Other participants such as Johnson Suzuki shared similar serendipitous reasons for becoming a public educator.

I never planned on going into education. That was never my thinking. I thought it would be fun to be a teacher but, after leaving high school and through college, I had no plan to be a teacher. I got a degree, a science degree. I found that I really didn't want to be inside a building, in a lab, doing the same thing every single day.

American sansei Robert Takahashi was employed as a recreation center clerk while in college. But,

After doing cold call insurance sales for about three to four months, I remember thinking, "This was stupid. Sales was not my thing!" I decided to go back school to earn my

teaching credential. I recalled how much I enjoyed working with kids when I was a junior counselor at a summer camp while I was in high school. They [the male and female senior counselors] were caring, hard working, and funny as all hell get out. Those are the kind of people I want to be around.

Whereas, the eldest participants in the study, both male and female, stated in their interviews the limited options they had when they considered their post secondary education and career options. Susan Yamaguchi stated, “You know, I don’t know why I got into education. Maybe it was my mother. She wanted to be a teacher but didn’t.” A number of participants explicitly stated, they did not know why they pursued a career in education or did not originally plan on becoming an educator. For Kato, it appears his mother, wanting more for her son, supported his desire to continue with his education beyond high school.

Back then *Sakana* was very rural and a fishing and farming community. Very few of my classmates went to the university. I didn’t know of many career options and some, I thought, were out of my reach. [Besides fishing], it [public education] was the only other business I knew. Teaching looked like good work and knew I would be doing something positive. My mom said purposefully, “I didn’t let you go fishing with your dad because I didn’t want you to become a fisherman.

Another older participant, American Linda Ito, also mentioned the limited choices she believed she had for her life’s profession.

I went into education because there were three choices. Women could either be a nurse, a secretary, or a teacher. I graduated in 1971 with a degree in teaching but since positions were scarce, I took a job as an office girl. I remember people having me address envelopes while they were just sitting in their offices and I thought, “I’m too good for this. I’m not going to do this.” I left after three months thinking, “This is not what I want to do. I could do more than that.” I ended up teaching in a private school.

Similarly, American *sansei* Elizabeth Nakamura, also an older participant in this study mentioned something very similar to Ito in regard to role models and options Japanese American

had.

Thinking about role models and aspirations, I'd see women in teaching and nursing. You didn't see them doing other things. I didn't really want to be a teacher. All through, I thought I was going into nursing. But, I was not great at science so nursing was out. I never thought about becoming a teacher until I went to college.

Soon after graduating with their undergraduate degrees and entering into the professional world was another point in time where participants relayed life experiences that provided them opportunities to reflect upon their identities in the context of differences. For Yamaguchi, the experience of being with First Nations people opened her eyes and heart.

I took a position in northern British Columbia where there was a huge First Nations population there. That was my first experience with this population. I was at the hardware store and two First Nations women came up to me and said, "Cousin and started hugging me!" I recall thinking, "Holy smokes! Who are --?" They aren't related to me. I think I was the only teacher the First Nation kids' parents came to see on back to school night. For some reason they felt they could relate with me and weren't afraid of me. That's when I first became sympathetic to the plight of the First Nations people. I saw how they were being treated. and the residential schools or the Catholic schools and their sense of time.

For one of the Hawaiian school leaders, Kobayashi, in his mid-twenties at the time, recalls attending a conference in Washington DC.

I went to the National Association for Education of Young Children by myself. There was an Asian American caucus group meeting. I never seen such angry people. Asian people! They were talking about discrimination and rights and I could not identify with what they were talking about because I never experienced that being raised in Hawaii. I just didn't understand the mentality of families who were born and raised on the West Coast, you know, those whose parents got interned and the anger of why that happened. It didn't happen to anyone that I knew of growing up. Nobody in Hawaii had that kind

experience. So, we were never angry. In fact, Franklin Roosevelt is kind of a hero in Hawaii because of his leadership through the War [World War II] but yet, he was the one who signed the Executive Order to put people into internment camps. But in Hawaii, he was never regarded as the villain.

Now, schools, in or near urban centers along the I-5 corridor have diverse populations. As young teachers, and later as principals, many of these Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians served or are serving in buildings with these diverse student bodies and staffs. Besides the two school leaders who were students in Snow Mountain School District and the one school leader in Denny School District, the majority of others did not mention attending school or growing up with diverse populations but many are employed in districts with diverse populations. What challenges these multicultural schools proved to be for the school leaders was not discussed as this contrasted from their lives growing up. Mary Smith, who has a Caucasian spouse and orients herself in the dominant culture shared,

The school I worked at for my entire teaching career had a predominantly African American student body. There were very, very few Caucasian and Asian kids. I don't think I'm that sensitive to difference as other people who grew up in situations where they may have felt the discrimination. Maybe aware is a better word than sensitive. I don't think I'm always aware of [discrimination].

Her colleague Barbara Tanaka, also working in the Smithers School District, who did not believe race was or is a factor in her life stated,

When I worked in Kent, I was asked to serve on a panel of minority teachers and we did a panel discussion and when we each shared our stories, I thought, "Wow! I didn't have the same kinds of minority experiences of being discriminated against or being treated poorly or differently. It was an eye opener for me. I didn't know there were so many stories out there. Again, the people that I've hung with don't have those stories.

Crossing the Canadian border, Jennifer Sasaki, another participant who orients herself as a member of the dominant culture shared,

I was 30 years old and remember going to a retreat [for my new job at the university], to bond and to build community. We would be at camp for two-nights. I don't know if that's a Japanese thing or not but we do hotels. We do not camp. So, staying in a cabin was a new experience for me and I felt I didn't belong. I think there might have been one other Asian person and a few Aboriginal people. The rest were Caucasian. I've never been camping before and I remember walking toward the campfire and hearing people singing. "I don't know that song," I thought. I was getting more anxious as I got closer to the campfire. I kept wondering how all those people knew those songs. Eventually, I got to the campfire and immediately started giggling because everyone had songbooks! But for those moments, I felt very anxious.

The Path to the Principals' Office

There was again, a wide range of reasons why each participant opted to become a school leader. The only demographic variable that arose was gender. For whatever reason, all of the women participants, whether Canadian or mainland, stated, they never intended on becoming a school leader. American Patricia Johnson Suzuki said,

With all of the things going on in my [personal] life, I thought, "Maybe I'll apply for this job and see." I applied for a job to start a brand new alternative school. I got the job and moved. I was fortunate to be at the right place at the right time. I was never planning on being an administrator. See, my life is really about not knowing what I'm doing.

[laughter]

Another American, Barbara Tanaka, went into educational leadership after speaking with a female friend who was already a school leader.

A good friend, who was an assistant principal at the building where I was working at the time, and I were talking. I shared with her I was ready for the next step. She talked me into it in a way. I wanted to do something different. I was actually vying to be a mentor teacher for new teachers. You know, being a TOSA [teacher on special assignment]. She talked me into it.

This despite identifying themselves as “bossy,” even in Canada, the female school leaders indicated they, too, did not intentionally become school leaders. Sasaki began,

I really didn’t want to become a principal but since there are just few Asian, Japanese, administrators, I thought it was really important that we represent [laughs] and bring people to thinking in different ways. I knew leadership was in the cards for me. I just wasn’t sure where my path would be.

And for Susan Yamaguchi, in her pursuit to provide for students opportunities, becoming a school leader was something that she did so she could “make things happen” for kids.

I don’t think my goal was ever to become a principal. I never aspired to be a principal. It just seemed in order to do what I needed to do for kids, I need to take the next step, whatever the next step was. It just gets to a certain standstill where, for example, as a lead teacher, there’s some things you just can’t do.

The majority of males in the study, whether mainland, Hawaiian, or Canadian, were more willing to explicitly state their desire to become a school leader. Saito, a Canadian, one of the younger participants stated, “I wanted to be principal because I wanted to be a visible minority leader.”

The majority of male participants were athletic coaches prior to becoming a school leader. All three participants with secondary level backgrounds, Kealoha, Sato, and Yamada, were all coaches. Kealoha, now at the elementary level, started at the middle school level as an assistant principal but was groomed by his mentors, now working the human resources department, to become an elementary school principal. Sato stated,

After coaching football for a number of years, I thought school administration was the next career step. I was putting in the same amount of time, in fact, more time, than the assistant principal and they got paid more money. So for me it was a career stepladder. That’s ultimately, kinda where I saw myself. When the opportunity presented itself, I was allowed to be assistant principal of the school where I was already teaching. Converting to assistant principal was a natural transition for me. You know, it’s about the timing.

Hawaiian David Kobayashi reflected and recalled,

I had already spent 15 years as an administrator of programs for children although it was never in the school system and I never formally taught. I was a recreation director, community recreation center director, and owned my own preschool. I wanted to become a principal so I took a pay cut and taught for five years. While I was teaching, two things happened. The laws changed for childcare licensing so I was going to stop operating and the state passed legislation to make extended day programs available at all elementary schools, I was able to bring my previous experiences together and becoming the program supervisor for my school for the new after school program. It's all about timing.

The most interesting finding was the majority of participants, whether male or female, Canadian, mainland, or Hawaiian, who repeatedly brought up the notion of timing and being in the right place at the right time when they explained how or why they became a school leader. Whether this is cultural or personal modesty is unknown. Linda Ito was a school counselor and worked closely with the school administrator. "I didn't have my administrative credentials. But I thought, "Wow! These doors keep opening. How stupid would that be if I didn't take advantage of that?!" Toshiko Brown, stated,

I became the Professional Development Representative for the school and then I became the Professional Development Chairperson for the District. I was asked if I was interested in becoming the Curriculum Coordinator for the middle years. In that role I became very influential - not through trying and not through manipulating. I became a trusted advisor of the superintendent. It was very interesting. We were taking on more and more leadership roles. So instead of just the curriculum, we were helping the superintendent plan the District retreats. Again, it wasn't through manipulation or need for power or anything. We just fell into it. I remained the vice principal for a long time because becoming a principal was never part of my career path. That's how I defined myself. I didn't think I'd ever apply to be a principal and I wasn't looking for opportunities to be a principal. I was really happy teaching my English classes because being a teacher [and

vice principal] and having the connections with kids is really, really important to me.

The Professional Identity

A few of the participants indicated thoughts that they were different. Several participants who originally indicated ethnicity and race was not a factor that influenced their professional lives, later mentioned it was during their interviews. Doubt was something Ito, an American, mentioned that arose for her.

When I finished my administrative credentials, there were three elementary principal openings in our district and for some reason they had me interview for all three of those schools. This didn't happen for the other interns. I wondered, "Probably minority. But, I don't know."

Takahashi, a *Sansei* American, stated,

I don't bring my race to my job, but I bring myself personally. I don't wave a flag. It's who I am and how others perceive me. Part of carrying a Japanese surname, no matter what a crappy kid I was as a teenager, every minute, that's part of who I am. Until we help folks normalize that, you don't want to be just that Japanese guy.

Both of the participants originally from Hawaii, acknowledged difference. Kealoha, the only participant who is of Japanese ancestry but identifies with another facet of his non-dominant culture make up, stated,

I think there is an irony or paradox in how I got here as a school leader because growing up, as a native Hawaiian, even with Japanese heritage and background, I was not encouraged to really go out there and lead, you know, pushing to the front and being competitive. I grew up with a more quiet, humble type of upbringing. I didn't learn how to assert myself. It's what I learned growing up. You're supposed to be quiet, behind-the-scenes, and humble about things and you do not challenge the status quo.

Kealoha, sharing an experience from his early life as a teacher, continued,

I worked at the same middle school for the first eight years of my career. I only went to one staff party because it was at my house. I had friends on staff and did things with

small groups and though the staff was friendly, I avoided the staff room and socials because I had a hard time with conversation.

Another comment made by Kealoha, regarding a recent experience as a school leader with his new supervisor,

My new supervisor has a different style than me. I'm not a big eye contact person. She does this [flailing arms, bobbing head] to me to catch my eye. I finally told her, "Hey! If you need to have eye contact with me, tell me. I'm not a big eye contact guy. I'm not going to look you in the eye every single time we talk. It's not out of disrespect, it's not because I'm lying. I grew up, learning from my parents it's disrespectful to look into someone's eyes, especially your superior."

Kobayashi, who was very indignant that he was an American and race was never a consideration for him in his professional identity made two comments that were noteworthy. First, he stated,

I always wanted to be hired for my ability and not my ethnicity. Because I know that districts get to mark the Asian category for administrator because of me. I would hope I would never get hired because of my race. I also realize that I stand out as a member of a very small minority. It's been my mission, since I've been in the state of Washington, to act in a spirit of Aloha – of accepting people and their differences and understanding different cultures. I don't talk about it. I just do it.

At another point during his interview he stated,

I think I have influenced a lot of non-white kids. I think I've also changed the minds of many Caucasians who have never experienced having an Asian school leader. I want people to know you can be a principal or a teacher even if you're a minority. My conclusion is that people aren't prejudiced against you. It's just that they have been exposed to or have seen too many of you.

An interesting comment made by Mary Smith, whose father was a Hawaiian *Nisei*, who made a life in the Pacific Northwest was,

At one point in my career, I felt I was the “wrong race.” You know, having the advantage of being a person of color. My father would jokingly tell me, “You are the wrong race and gender. Because, if you were male and elementary ed[ucation], you would have a slight edge.

Personality

Brother and sister Kato and Brown, both of whom incorporate journaling and reflection as part of their professional practice and foundational to their professional philosophy noted an awareness of their personality from their reflective practice. Brown begins,

It’s funny. When I write. I always come back to a theme of singularity. It isn’t whiney voice. It’s a fact. Being Japanese Canadian in a fisherman’s family, we’re very hard working and sometimes lonely. When I look around, other people have people surrounding them and supporting them in one way or the other. I don’t. I wonder if I should be upset about that. Is there something in me that repels that kind of help or support and at the same time? When I’m feeling positive, I think I have friends who understand me. I’m a combination of my father’s deep thinking and my mother’s pragmatism and work ethic.

And Kato continues,

I think there are a couple of things. My dad gave me the part of the Japanese culture that cares about people and relationships. My mom gave me the hard work part. The *gambare*, get it done, work as hard as you need to part.

Leadership Style and Approach

Several participants, all males, bring sport philosophies to their position and use those strategies to lead their respective staff. James Sato, was privileged to have powerful football role models in college. At a major university in the state in which he grew up, he was a “walk on” player that then led to coaching opportunities at the collegiate level in both America and Japan. He became acquainted with other legendary coaches and their leadership styles. In his interview, he mentioned getting the most out of every player, overcoming odds, the head coach coaching

the coaches, who in turn made sure they would then coach the players. He elaborated on a coach who helped his players believe in themselves so much that they were able to beat more skilled players and teams. One specific strategy that Sato elaborated on the “double win.”

The “double win” is not about being the best but doing your best. Doing your best is better than being the best because there is only one best, right? There is only one champion making all the other teams failures. Wrong. There is always good in everything. The only thing you have control over is your effort. If you do your best then you’re a winner. I’ve always believed that. That’s what I teach my kids. I don’t care what happens on the field as long as you give 100%. The only time I’ll ever yell at you is when you don’t give 100% effort. If you’re doing your best, then sometimes the scoreboard will reflect that and that’s what we call a double win. You’ll always be a winner.

Kato, another noteworthy athlete, a Canadian who competed in Judo for the Canadian national team stated,

When I have issues with staff, parents, or kids, I think the softness part works well with my philosophy so I listen before coming to solution. In judo, softness overcomes hardness. As a judo practitioner, that part is a big part of me as well.

Professional Priorities

More than half of the participants explicitly indicated diversity or equity as their priority. William Kealoha spoke of underprivileged, under represented youth.

I could have served the most interested kids. That wasn’t good enough for me. There are many kids who already have opportunities, support, and guidance. Those kids will succeed. What about the other kids? Those are the kids I am concerned about, the underprivileged kids or underrepresented kids - so minorities and women or girls. My priority is equity or equality - raising the group up as a whole.

Johnson Suzuki, who grew up in “the house across the Buddhist temple” where numerous families re-entered life following life in internment camps stated,

How do you make education happen for a kid who is failing or has historically failed? I

am interested in helping those kids who had no interest in school. You know, those who had bad experiences. How can I make learning interesting and meaningful? Seeing the kids successful for the first time feels pretty good. Something had to change within them. That was pretty powerful. That is the ultimate challenge and that's what motivates me.

Yonsei Jennifer Sasaki, a young, vibrant, assertive Canadian woman school leader recalled from her recent life as a university faculty member,

I was teaching a university language arts course and there was a young woman in the class. Her dad didn't really want for her to be a teacher so I made a visit to the student's father and sat down with him and said, "There are two reasons why I think you should support your daughter. One, this is her dream and this is what she wants to do. And two, it's so important, because she is a positive role model for children who are of her culture to see her as a role model." I think that it is important to have different people in leadership positions to influence how we see things and do things.

On Difference

California transplant Robert Takahashi shared a story about a men's fraternal group in the community of his first administrative assignment here in the Pacific Northwest.

I was told by the outgoing principal, "You probably wouldn't want to join." I go to the meeting and hear, "They hired the new principal for North Plains. Great ---, what's his name? His name is incorrectly pronounced and he's from..." The leader continues, "What kind of name is that? Is he an Italian?" I ended up joining.

Also from the same school district, Takahashi's colleague William Kealoha stated a belief he holds because of his personal upbringing.

I think there is an irony or paradox in how I got here as a school leader because growing up as a native Hawaiian, even with Japanese heritage and background, I was not encouraged to be "out there" and I didn't learn how to assert myself. I was brought up to be quiet and humble, behind-the-scenes and not challenge the status quo. It wasn't a competitive nature of pushing to the front.

Several participants mentioned perceived expectations from other Asians. Canadian Sasaki stated,

When I was a teacher, I remember newcomer Asian parents seeing me. They appeared to relax right away. I got a sense that they [the parents of these newcomer children] thought “I know my child is going to be okay because I’m Asian.” Even though I only speak English, there was something about that visual of “someone who looks like me.”

Another comment made by Sasaki from her teaching experience,

During a meeting with a mother who was advocating for her son to get more time for help with reading, she said to me, “I don’t understand why you can’t give him more time to help him. That’s because of all of those Asian kids! They’re taking up all of the time. They should be back home in their own countries learning their own language.” I stopped her and said, “Look at who you’re speaking to.” She looked at me and was confused. She didn’t realize I was Asian!

Summary

The significant highlights regarding professional identity for the participants in this study were first, the eldest participants, whether male or female, Canadian or American, saw teaching as one of three viable professions as they were considering professional paths while about half of the younger participants mentioned they stumbled upon the profession. For whatever reason, the females in the study did not indicate becoming a school leader was part of their initial professional plans. Lastly, the vast majority of the participants were solid in their identity as someone who is part of the dominant culture as race was not a factor in how they defined themselves professionally.

In the upcoming chapter, the most interesting finding was only one of the Americans and none of the Canadians mentioned anything about the Model Minority Myth. Two of the younger Canadians did mention a desire to “represent” as a visible minority.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION: RECONSIDERING VALUES

Summary of Findings

Despite the small number of school leaders who graciously shared their valuable time to participate in this research project, it is clear from the research conducted and the analysis of data, making any generalization of Japanese American and Japanese Canadian school leaders proved difficult, if not impossible. The extensively varied life experiences and variation in individual personalities contribute to this conclusion. Though close in proximity to the US – Canadian border, similarities and differences between and among those of the same gender and generation marker on both sides are again so varied, to make any generalizations about school leaders of Japanese ancestry would be both irresponsible and unnecessary.

Personal Dimension

In regard to generational marking, from the life experience shared by the participants in this study, the further one is away from the first generation, the newcomers, assimilation into the values and belief systems of school leaders of the respective dominant country's cultural tapestry. Each of the sixteen participants, their parents, their grandparents, and possibly their grandparents, wanted to become assimilated into the dominant culture to some degree.

Learning about their family's experience of World War II did not start at home for most of the mainland and Canadian participants. Most indicated their first knowledge of the World War II experience occurred as part of their secondary education experience. As for the Hawaiian Japanese Americans, the learning of the experience of their mainland counterparts came later in life as something that occurred in history.

Growing up, for all but one of the eight American and Canadian males involved in this study, a major part of their lives growing up involved sports. For many, this dimension of their early lives contributed to their professional identities from the stories they shared. From the participants in the study, in both America and Canada, it appears the first generation of those who pursued post-secondary education and graduated with at least a bachelors degree came as

early as the third generation, or *Sanseis*.

For those participants who visited Japan, whether American or Canadian, they learned that they “were not Japanese,” meaning that they did not identify with the culture and people of modern day Japan. There was some sort of internal awareness that there is a difference between the Japanese and Japanese American and Japanese Canadian. Furthermore, participants, both those who stated they visited Japan or did not mention that, also made reference to the awareness that the values and cultural practices considered by current Japanese American and Japanese Canadian to be part of their cultural identity is actually “archaic or time locked” as the language and some rituals and traditions came with their grandparents or grandparents nearly a century ago.

Professional Dimension

Becoming a professional, or as this study focuses upon, educator, started with the *Sansei*. The older first-generation college graduates stated few options for various reasons. Furthermore, for those who are involved in this study and are currently school leaders, there appears to be a sense of comfort and shared identity with the dominant, host culture and an internalized sense of assimilation into the dominant, host culture.

The majority of the participants did not share experiences or thoughts that reflected the characteristics identified in “Model Minority” literature and research. Rather, both for those born in America and those born in Canada, identified with the dominant host culture and held beliefs and attitudes that reflected their “American-ness” or “Canadian-ness.”

Lastly, the priorities most commonly shared by the participants in this study, again both American and Canadian, were those involving equity and diversity. Most participants were involved and in the quest to ensure people of all races and cultures were given a voice and space for obstacle-free and equal access to opportunities in public education so they, too could potentially become fully Americanized or Canadianized.

Ethnic Identity: Group vs. Individual

The Americans and Canadians both had an understanding of diversity and sense of

community both as an ethnic concept and as a desirable feature of a good society. However, they differed in how they understood those terms and especially how they saw the balance between the emphasis on the group and the emphasis on the individual. During the interview of Canadian school leaders, several participants mentioned a law passed by Parliament in the early 1970s that mandated multiculturalism. Sasaki pointed on in her interview, “Right around the time I was born in 1970, people became more aware of including, or allowing cultures to come together as a “melting pot.” That’s when people started to be more accepting.” Kato also noted, “There was a big push toward multiculturalism, of respecting every culture, in a museum kind of way.” But, Yamaguchi disagreed, “I see the (United) States more as a melting pot. Whereas here (in Canada), you are accepted just because of who you are so it is never an issue. Whatever you do, it’s totally okay, and it’s accepted.” Other Canadian leaders made statements such as Saito, “I only work for the Japanese (fishing community),” which had ethnocentric overtones, which appeared to promoted an overt sense of ethnic pride that was group-oriented versus Americans who were more individual. This subtle difference appeared between the Canadian and American school leaders.

For Brown, the participant who fled the ethnic-based parenting of her mother, she also expressed some appreciation for the culture she spent much of her youth rejecting.

I hate to sound ethnocentric but the early Japanese Canadians overcame a lot of that. Everyone who I grew up with went from the cannery houses to earning their own homes. They owned their own boats. They were very successful. So I am confident that my background (as a Japanese Canadian) was a proud one. I didn’t have to be embarrassed about it. That gives me the confidence to accomplish whatever I want. Comparing my culture to say, the aboriginal people, I think, that’s what they lack because of the way the majority culture thinks of them, of course. I don’t think the Japanese Canadians came in thinking, “Ooh! I want to be part of the majority culture.” I think for me, there was that sense of ethnocentricity and the belief that Japanese are hard working.

Her older brother, Richard Kato, noted from his adult perspective, still continuing to live

in the same community where he and his sister grew up,

We [Japanese Canadians] are part of the community. We are part of the mainstream community. My group of friends and all of our neighbors are Caucasian, Chinese, and Japanese. I am part of the community. Now we're not separate but as a child, there was separateness.

The American school leaders on the other hand, with no overt, mandated government legislation on multiculturalism, though ethnic pride was evident, the confidence that was conveyed appeared to be more personal than that of the Canadians who expressed a more group oriented perspective of their cultural pride and identity which may differentiate the Americans more so as individuals being referenced as the Model Minority. *Sansei* Elizabeth Nakamura noted,

I am who I am because of my experiences growing up as a Japanese American. That's a big part of how I carry myself. That's always in my mind. I look in the mirror. I interact with different people. I'm always I am a Japanese American. I know what the stereotypes are (of Japanese Americans) and I feel a need to give the best image of I am who I am and I'm not my stereotype. If people viewed minorities in a negative way, I needed to be proud of who I am. I see myself as model for me that I carry myself a certain way. I am a Japanese American leader and I am proud of my heritage. I am a model. I have high standards of who I should be. I am proud to be a leader, and proud to be a Japanese American. I can walk into a room and feel comfortable in my own skin. The first thing people are going to notice about me is I'm Japanese American. Then they'll recognize my accomplishments or role. I know who I am. I must feel comfortable in my role, who I am, and I'm Japanese American. Doing so keeps me realistic of who I am.

Sansei Robert Takahashi was the only American who mentioned anything associated with the "Model Minority" research as part of their belief system and identity.

I'm given a little more leverage because I'm of Japanese ancestry. A Japanese is not [viewed by the dominant culture as] a trouble causer. Look at it mathematically. If you

think about it logically, I had a ton of time as a kid being thought of as “that minority.” Whether it be “that Japanese guy can play baseball,” “that one did this,” or “You can trust the Japanese. Look at Robert, he’s a great guy. He’ll do anything you ask. He can be trusted.” In baseball, “He’s a good baseball player. You know, those Japanese people are good baseball players.” I absolutely have to be personable and appear semi intelligent or at least I care about stuff because when anyone says, “That guy doesn’t care. I couldn’t live with that. I just don’t want them to say, “It’s all those damn Japanese.”

Sansei Mary Smith mentioned the “Model Minority” identity but dismissed it as a joke in the comment she made when she spoke with staff members.

I’ve joked about organization and math, you know, the typical stereotype of Asians being good at math. I am typical of that stereotype. I like math. I like schedules, organizations, and puzzles. But that’s just the way I am and the way I think so I’ll joke with colleagues that, “Yeah, it’s just that I’m Asian, you know.”

Values

It appears from the stories shared by these 16 school leaders, individual personality and life experience were the most important factors that contributed to the complexity and rich variation of each participant’s identity which made it difficult to draw conclusions about the impact of leading to this study’s ability to draw any conclusion on school leaders of their common Japanese ancestry.

A major aspect of this study, the values expressed by the participants, does have major commonalities. From a sociological and cultural anthropological lens, the traditional Meiji Era values mentioned in the literature has evolved. Despite their life experiences, personally and professionally, participants did in fact share many values in common. The values the participants held both encompassed the five traditional Meiji Era values identified by early scholars earlier in this document’s literature review, but has also “morphed” into new, common shared beliefs that spanned between mainland Americans and Canadians.

Emphasis on Ethical Living.

From the interviews, there was an emphasis on “ethical living.” This theme was discussed by nearly all of the participants involved in the study. Sasaki stated,

As I was growing up, my parents emphasized what’s appropriate. They also emphasized honor. Honoring elders, rituals, and ceremony. I don’t know if that’s Japanese Canadian or the way I was raised. I blur those two things.

Another Canadian, *Yonsei* Joseph Yamada, expressed it in the context of coaching and how he views himself in the greater cultural context of his Canadian-ness.

We have an award in our district for athletics. The award recognizes coaches who exemplify sportsmanship, high ethics, and a number of qualities that we should all aspire to. If I was continuing to coach and I’m not an awards person, that’s the type of award I would be very proud to be a recipient of. The interesting thing that the years the awards been presented, there’s [been] a huge disproportionate number of Japanese Canadians who have won that award as coaches. Probably 60% are Japanese Canadians and obviously, that’s not the number of Japanese Canadian educators in this District. Probably the percentage is less than 10%. But to me, it’s because some of the values we are attributing there, are values of the Japanese. I guess if my heritage was something different and my upbringing would be different and therefore, who I am would be different, I guess in a backhanded way, I attribute this desire to my cultural upbringing. But again, I wouldn’t know that being different than any other cultural upbringing because that’s who my parents were.

Care for Others.

The traditional values *giri and ninjo*, has evolved into the ethic of Caring for Others as shared by Ito, Tanaka, and Sasaki who mentioned that it was their responsibility to care for others. Whether this is a trait of socialization shared by women, or a quality shared by others in the helping professions, such as teaching, or if this is a cultural specific quality is unclear for Tanaka and Sasaki. From a very young age, this responsibility was drilled into all three women. Sasaki mentioned it was her “job” to ensure the safety and well being of her younger sister. Ito,

on the other hand, spoke about it using the Japanese term *kigatsuku* and elaborating upon the meaning.

I was always the *onesan*. Everything was *kigatsuku*, *kigatsuku* or ‘watch the little one.’

Be observant and be aware of other people’s needs. Watch. Be thoughtful. My [younger] sister is not that way at all. She’s a totally different type of person. That was not instilled in her. She was not the *kigatsuku* type person.

As a teenager, Barbara Tanaka, who on multiple occasions described herself as a “highly moral” person, remembered times growing up feeling a sense of obligation to look out for her friend, who happened to be Japanese American,

When she was off doing whatever it was that she was doing, you know, smoking or whatever, with the bad kids, I would sit and wait for her to finish because I was not going to participate and be a part of that and I always felt I had to be her voice of consciousness as well.

Family and Community.

Another shared value was that of family and community. More than one-half of the participants in the study, Canadian, mainland American, and Hawaiian American, shared the value of family of family and community. This characteristic is common among immigrant populations to North American, yet may have persisted more in this population. On two occasions Sasaki discussed these values, both of which were employment related. First, describing almost being terminated from her first job because she wasn’t making sales and then again when she was not able to land her first teaching job.

I could not let my family down. I knew I should not embarrass my family. I’d better show up! Failing was not an option as it would shame my family. My mom would always say, “If there was anything embarrassing, that stays in the family. You don’t embarrass the family in front of other people. We always knew that.

The Ethic of Hard Work and Education.

More than half of all the participants mentioned a solid work ethic and education as being

values associated with their cultural upbringing. Whether it was the “traditional” American and/or Canadian “Blue Collar Work Ethic,” as many of their parents and grandparents held blue collar related jobs, or if it was culturally oriented is, again, unclear. Sato, Smith, Walton-Kawasaki, and Nakamura, all of whom had parents, except for Smith, who all owned clothing cleaning businesses, emphasized this value emphasized by their parents.

I was brought up understanding the value of hard work, doing my best, and not letting my family down. A lot has to be said about work ethic and putting the time you put in to something. If I don’t put in the time, I’m not going to do well at things. I am the person who has to work hard to do well. I think it’s more the beliefs of my parents. Whether it’s cultural or not it can be debated. I think that there are people of different cultures who have strong work ethic.

Canadian Richard Yamada, again in the context of coaching, said of himself, Besides teaching, I coached every season so my life was pretty full. I was known as an extremely hard worker – someone passionate about the kids, someone who could connect with kids at a level that was professional and at the same time comfortable.

Gaman.

One value tied to work ethic, as well as general situations in life, *gaman*, a form of tolerance especially in the face of hardship and challenge. Canadian *Yonsei* Sasaki discussed the value *gaman*, “We’ll tolerate it, we dealt with it, now let’s move on” in the context of her grandmother’s response to the Internment.

First of all, I was born here (in Canada). Like my husband, your grandfather, we didn’t want to go back to Japan since Canada has always been good to us. We’ve been loyal to Canada. We’ve raised our children to be Canadian. Japanese Canadian. You know, it’s all around appreciation, gratitude, and a little bit of guilt.

For Sato, a *Sansei* American and Buddhist, he made a religion-oriented connection to *gaman* when he stated,

Hope and understanding that life is temporary. Life can change and you can make that

change through hard work and getting a good education. Those were beliefs that I grew up with. My parents modeled those values. Especially hard work.

For Yamada, also in the context of his family's experience with World War II, I did a lot of research on the Japanese Canadians' World War II experience. The third generation [*Sansei*] and fourth generation [*Yonsei*] kids are the ones who took a stand . . . it isn't the first generation [*Issei*] or the second generation [*Nisei*]. For whatever reason, they [the Japanese-Canadians] accepted a lot of blame for that [the internment] as opposed to being the outcast or people who were treated poorly. For whatever reason, they accepted a lot of blame for that [the relocation]. When you think about other ethnic groups that have been mistreated, my guess is this is a different response [from the Japanese Canadians]. That's one of the things I found that's so typical of the Japanese Canadian reaction of that black mark.

Final Reflections

The dissertation journey has proven that I am the outlier and I am at peace with that. The following poem was obtained during the literature review phase of this dissertation and used during the proposal presentation. It is included now as it amplifies the inconclusive findings of this study. Nearly half a century later, during decades of discourse in equity and civil rights, to find the sentiments captured in the following poem to still ring true, demonstrates the Japanese American school leaders in this study are assimilated and it would also be safe to conclude, the same rings true for our counterparts just across the Canadian border as well.

Who am I?

i sometimes wonder
am i Japanese? am i American? or just both.
to the whites i represent the yellow peril.
to the other minorities i am looked at with contempt as though i were white
to fellow asians i am American
who am i? i sometimes wonder.
i am me, a human being.

(Gidra, January 1970 as cited by Maykovich, 1972)

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APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

bushido	The way of the warrior, based on teachings of Confucius and Buddha; cornerstone of national morality in Japan.	kigatsuku	A command used to admonish a person to be observant and mindful of other peoples' needs.
dai sempai	Dai: Grand or higher. Sempai: A term of respect given to someone of higher stature in society to the kohai. Possibly that of age, position, education.	kohai	Junior, as in the junior of two individuals. The counter position is sempai or dai sempai.
enryo	Modesty in the presence of one's superior.	mochitsuki	An annual custom essential to the Japanese or Japanese American New Year's celebration that involves the pounding of <i>mochi</i> , a labor intensive activity.
gaman	A form of tolerance, especially in the face of hardship and challenge.	ninjo	Humility, empathy, and understanding of others by extending oneself
gambare	To do one's best; perseverance; exert stamina.	nisei	The second generation; in the context of the research, the second generation of a Japanese family after immigration to the U.S.
gaijin	From the Japanese perspective meaning foreigner, non-Japanese, outsider or someone who is different.	on	An attitude of lifetime obligation, loyalty, obedience, reverence, and respect unconditionally given to one's parents, teachers, school superiors, and country.
giri	The moral imperative to perform one's duties toward other members of one's group, contracted obligation, or honor.	oneesan	Older sister
haji	Shame	osechiryori	Traditional Japanese New Year's food
hakujin	A white person. Someone Caucasian.	samurai	Educated warriors

haole	Caucasian friends	sansei	The third generation; in the context of the research, the third generation of a Japanese family after immigration to the U.S.
hazukashi	Public modesty, or a sense of shame and embarrassment.	sempai	Elder, as in an individual who is older than another.
henno nihonjin	“Weird Japanese”, in reference to the way one speaks the Japanese language.	shikataganai	It can’t be helped
inaka	The old country	shushin	The Confucian-based course in morals used to impart Japanese values to children in Japanese language schools.
issei	The first generation; in the context of the research, the generation of Japanese Americans that originally settled in the U.S.	yonsei	The fourth generation in the context of the research, the fourth generation of a Japanese family after immigration to the U.S.
kibei	The moral imperative to perform one’s duties toward other members of one’s group, contracted obligation, or honor.	yoshoku	Non-Japanese food

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

I. Focused Life History

Goal: Provide context of the participant, in light of the topic up to the present. Begin by reviewing with participant their generated timeline to learn about the events from the different phases of their life.

1. Childhood

- Where were you born?
- Where did you grow up?
- Describe your family. (Who do you consider to be part of your primary family? What is the birth order of the child(ren) in your family? Extended family? Relationships? Interesting factors?)
- Who were significant people in your life as a child? What significance did they have?
- What, where, and from whom did you learn about race/ethnicity during your childhood?
- How did leadership show up at this stage of your life?

2. Please recall any significant events or messages you received in your childhood about ethnicity, conflict, leadership, education, gender, and/or birth order. What were the messages? From whom did you receive the message? Do you recall any thoughts around the messages? Teen Years

- Describe your life as a teen. Where'd you live? What were you like as a teen? How was your relationship with your parents? The outside world? With yourself?
- Where did you go to school? What was your experience with school?
- Who were the significant people in your life at this time of your life? *Relationship & significance?*
- Please recall any significant events and/or messages you received in your teenage years about ethnicity and identity, conflict, leadership, education, gender, and/or birth order. What were the messages? From whom did you receive the message? Do you recall any thoughts around the messages? *Why do you consider these significant?*
- Please elaborate on any messages, experiences or ideas that were in conflict with what you learned in your early life.

3. How did leadership show up in this stage of your life? Early Adulthood

- Where did you live at this stage of your life? (How and why did you end up there?)
- What did you do after you graduated high school? Why did you make that choice?
- Who or what were the significant people, events, and/or relationships that shaped your initial identity as an individual? *Why do you consider these significant?*
- Please recall any significant awareness or convictions about identity, race, conflict, and leadership at this phase of your life. What were the messages? From whom did you receive the message? Do you recall any thoughts around the messages? *Why do you consider these significant?*

4. How did leadership show up in this stage of your life? Early Adulthood to the Present
 - Who have been the significant people in your life who have shaped your personal and professional life?
 - What significant events shaped your personal and professional life?
 - How is your life similar to or different from your childhood?
 - How has your Japanese American ancestry influenced your professional and personal life up until now?
 - What messages, good or bad, did you receive about leadership?
 - What were your thoughts, good or bad, about leadership?
 - What motivations, good or bad, did you have as a leader?

II. The Details of Experience

Goal: Obtain concrete (not opinions) reconstructed details of the participants' present lived experience in the topic area of the study, through stories.

1. Personal Identity (in a Professional Context)
 - At this stage of your life, define yourself. Who is - ? (Which do you consider your primary identity?)
2. Professional Identity
 - How does your Japanese ancestry show up in your professional or personal life these days?
 - What is your current professional responsibility?
 - Describe your professional and personal path of how you got to where you are today. What are the significant events or experiences of your journey as a Japanese American (pleasant or unpleasant)? Why? Who have been significant people along this journey (pleasant or unpleasant)? Why?
 - Describe your typical day. Elaborate on your primary responsibilities and the groups of people you work with. Which of your responsibilities are easier for you to execute? Which are more difficult?
 - Do you recall any significant values conflicts, personal or professional, as a leader?
 - Describe a professional situation where someone has made assumptions about your professional abilities because of your race whether fair or unfair.
 - Describe a professional situation when you caught yourself feeling excluded.

III. Reflecting on and Making Meaning

Goal: Data, predicated on parts 1 & 2, concentrated on the reflection (intellectual and emotional connections) of the meaning between the participants' work and life and of their experience (NOT satisfaction or reward). Have participants look at how the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to their present situation. Look at present experience in detail and within the context in which it occurs. The combination of exploring the past to clarify the events that led participants to where they are now AND describing the concrete details of their present experience establishes conditions for reflecting upon what they are now doing in their lives. Make that meaning making the center of attention.

To bring closure to our conversations, let's consider what you've shared and reconstructed about you and your personal and professional life experiences in the first two conversations with your life today. What new awareness do you have about your life as not just a principal, but as a Japanese American school principal?

- How you perceive yourself as a school leader?
- Your leadership style and practices as a public school leader?
- How others perceive you as a school leader?
- How you solve problems?
- How you negotiate interpersonal conflicts?