

Preface

journal or publication title	Senri Ethnological Studies
volume	87
page range	i-vii
year	2014-03-24
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10502/5281

Preface

Nanami Suzuki

*National Museum of Ethnology
The Graduate University for Advanced Studies*

In societies with aging populations and in which cultures and values are becoming increasingly diverse, where can people find common ground and the shared time and space required to transmit culture to the next generation? Especially in many advanced societies, there are many concerns about social changes wrought by the current trends toward an aging society with fewer children and the effects of globalization on the movement of people—including the isolation of older people, the friction between people from different cultural backgrounds, and the devastation to nature and the living environment that can result when sufficient care is not provided. Attention has also been drawn to the future of welfare, particularly the question of how the nation’s financial and personnel resources ought to be allocated.

However, the theme of “how to live in such a changing society” also gives us the chance to rethink the issue of care—namely, how best to interact with our surrounding environment, including people and things. “Care” not only refers to the consideration and services provided for people within a society in times of adversity, but also has broader meanings such as concern for oneself as well as others and the environment, and sometimes can even include believing in something in order to hold on to one’s identity and autonomy, based on a set of values (Suzuki 2012:95). It thus also offers us plenty of possibilities to expand our lifestyle in a variety of ways.

In this book, we will focus on the care and consideration associated with old age and childhood. One of the reasons we have pursued our research in this manner is that, as Giddens et al. have pointed out, the term “life politics,” which encompasses the way we think about the well-being of elderly people and children, is deeply involved in the life course and the lifestyle of people from all generations and includes such topics as employment, family life, and gender relationships (e.g., Giddens 1991:214–231; 1994:90–92; Miyamoto 2008:165–185).

Another reason is that the word “aging,” i.e., the process of growing older, can also refer to the way in which people recuperate and rejuvenate themselves and can enjoy simply being alive. In addition, taking care of oneself can also be presented as the very basis of “education”: having time to really think and reflect about how one would prefer to live, in keeping with those things that one values most (Suzuki ed. 2013; Terasaki 2010, 2013; Shirozu 2011, 2013). Thus, both aging and education provide access to the essential time and space needed for lifelong learning—allowing people to reflect on their ways of life, even while experiencing the constant change affecting each individual, as well as the world in which we all live.

Therefore, the issues related to aging and education are not limited to those problems we must solve in order to provide support for the elderly. Children should also

be considered as people in a vulnerable position. The critical themes which should be energetically and tirelessly pursued and considered a central subject for us all to work toward involve cultivating a suitable environment where we can think through our ways of life in peace and enjoy being alive while searching for the best way to coexist with others who may have different cultural backgrounds (Horio and Okuhira et al. eds. 1995; Gulløv and Olwig eds. 2003; Nihei 2009; Helgason and Lässig eds. 2010).

In this book, *The Anthropology of Care and Education for Life: Searching for Resilient Communities in Multicultural Aging Societies*, we present useful information on how people with diverse cultural backgrounds can coexist by examining those things that people care about and value in order to maintain their identity and autonomy, and how those values relate to their social inclusion and well-being within their community. This book consists of 10 research papers that explore the achievement of educational targets and social inclusion, focusing on education and care.

These papers will consider the well-being of older adults and children who are experiencing life in a multicultural situation and/or radical changes in their lifestyles. We will explore the kinds of lifestyles that older adults and children from different cultural backgrounds desire, as well as related issues, and discuss the possibility of developing local communities in which people of diverse backgrounds can successfully coexist. In these papers, we will examine the beliefs, practices, and issues concerning the well-being of older people and children living in the multicultural nation-states of Sweden, Denmark and Norway, Canada, Australia, the United States of America, Singapore, and Japan.

The first reason for the choice of the aforementioned countries was that they are all social-welfare states that have placed considerable emphasis on meeting the well-being-related needs of people from a variety of cultural backgrounds when organizing their own social security systems. The second reason is that they all foster the well-being of senior citizens by means of activities carried out by the older adults themselves, as well as through their daily contact with people from other generations, and do not simply rely on public services to provide care. The third reason is that these countries have all paid special attention to the way in which education can contribute to the well-being of people and society as a whole.

This collection of papers is based on fieldwork and primary source materials, concentrating on those places where older adults and children are cared for and educated. The question of what it means to live together is deeply imprinted in the temporal and spatial culture that all people possess, and we will consider this question from various cultural anthropology perspectives.

In Part I: Diversity of Cultural Background and Well-being in the Field of Care and Education, the papers presented analyze various cases in which care and education are generally considered suitable for elderly people and children in an advanced society, but where the cultural values of different peoples are in conflict (e.g., Appadurai 2006). When considering the different sets of values which lead to differences of opinion about the most desirable type of care and education, these papers do not just assess information on people's living environments or their history of immigration, but also include gender and the people's life history as a whole.

Feldman and Radermacher have both studied the anthropology of aging, examining the well-being of elderly men living in rural Australia, where the population is progressively aging. They will report on the health and well-being of elderly men from diverse cultural backgrounds amidst the backdrop of rapid social and economic change, as well as their relationships with their families and people from other generations. They will shed light on the well-being of an elderly man who desires to continue his work and live in the house to which he is accustomed—to live by himself and look after himself, even if he cannot receive full hospital care and social support or benefit from social inclusion in a larger community.

The next two papers explore such issues as why equality and autonomy have become the goals of Danish education, along with the related questions of how and whether those goals are actually being met in educational venues, and what other educational issues are being addressed in the process. The meaning of education has been thoroughly discussed and debated in Denmark, and the Danes have placed much emphasis on enhancing or developing each child's individual characteristics and sense of satisfaction (Anderson, Gulløv and Valentin 2011). These papers also explore the indices of a "well-being society" where education is clearly positioned as a method in which everyone—not just the next generation, but all people—share the same values as part of the sustainable development process within a Scandinavian-style social-welfare nation (e.g., Gullestad 1992). The problems associated with such an approach to education—namely, how to secure the well-being of people who cannot always share those values and, accordingly, do not experience social inclusion (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977)—are faced not only by those who are excluded, but also by the society that excludes them.

Eva Gulløv, whose field of specialty is educational anthropology, takes up the subject of early childhood education in Denmark in her paper, explaining how the educational concept of stressing autonomy and self-determination has also been applied in early childhood. She also discusses the meaning of an education which reflects the ideals of Danish society for immigrants and other people from various backgrounds.

Laura Gilliam, an educational anthropologist like Gulløv, takes a look at problems related to social inclusion experienced by the so-called "inclusive schools"—that is, schools that deliberately aim to include a wide variety of people when they attempt to adhere to the Danish educational line. She demonstrates how the problems of education in Denmark are also shared by other countries, and illuminates the role of educational anthropology in Denmark.

Second, in Part II: Development of a New Public Space for Coexistence by Embracing Different Cultures, we consider how best to create a "place of coexistence" by taking advantage of cultural differences. By examining the activities carried out in those places utilized for the care of the elderly and for education, we can hone in on the way in which we can enjoy cultural differences. The papers in this section explore the various ways in which caring and educational places can be made accessible to a variety of people by developing practical methods such as multistory social networks involving various participants (e.g., Melucci 1989), supported by outreach and other types of programs.

Thang has amassed a body of research concerning old age in Singapore—a society famous for being multicultural. She explores such issues as the desires and needs of older adults, the kinds of social activities and social support that are made available to them by cultivating social networks, and the relationship between ethnic groups and gender, set against the social backdrop of a rapidly aging population. In particular, she describes the development of a housing system where elderly people can become independent without being isolated, and how this is promoting and enriching exchanges with people from other generations.

Turning our attention to livelihood, many elderly Americans engage in voluntary activities that they describe as their “work,” despite the lack of monetary reward. By comparing them with elderly Japanese adults in similar situations and analyzing their daily interactions, Fujita-Sano, who has focused on elderly people’s well-being and activities, delineates the meaning of “volunteering” in old age. Further, this comparison shows how, in an aging multicultural society, volunteering can help make life worth living and foster social inclusion by helping to develop social networks based on a diverse range of cultures.

Chen, who has studied migration, ethnicity, and well-being, examines ethnic schools in Japan that have, in recent times, experienced dramatic changes caused by rapid increases in the transnational flow of people. The overall increase in the number of foreigners living in Japan has resulted in an upturn in the number of accompanying children. Therefore, a dramatic change has occurred in ethnic schools in contemporary Japan. Chen focuses on the transitions of Chinese schools in Japan, using participant observation and interviews to analyze the reasons parents prefer their children go to Chinese schools that concentrate on teaching the native language and educating the younger generation about the cultural background of China and the history of their home country. She also considers how such schools have become open educational spaces by including children from many different ethnic backgrounds.

Returning to the discussion of living arrangements, generally speaking, older adults in Canada do not live together with their children. Instead, depending on their ethnicity or religion, many tend to live in senior citizen housing. One challenge facing such facilities, however, is how to ensure that they remain open and accessible to their surrounding communities. Suzuki & Hui, who have carried out a great deal of research on the ways in which institutions can be opened up to people of different ethnicities, describe residential complexes built for older adults from specific ethnic groups, which also tend to be isolated from the community. They explore the developments of an outreach program in a facility built for elderly people of Japanese descent in Canada, as well as attempts by a facility for older adults of Chinese descent to fulfill the goals of multiculturalism.

Third, in Part III: Reconsideration of the Future of Civil Society that Cherishes Diverse Lifestyles, we examine the various agents and activities of civil societies that have played important roles in care and education in cooperation with the actions of the state or government. How various agents such as public services, nonprofit organizations, and private profit organizations cooperate is the key to continued provision and

development of care. The issues of balance and the division of roles between volunteer activity, which is one of the elements that constitute civil society, and the social welfare services provided by the state are also examined in the following papers. These also present the relevant data needed to reassess the situation that can arise when the sense of values currently thought of as important in order to maintain social well-being may actually prevent people from pursuing their own individual well-being.

Jeppsson Grassman points out in her paper that Sweden is considered to be an example of the Social Democratic or the Scandinavian regime type of welfare state, and it has often been assumed that the civil society in Sweden is weak (in comparison with the role played by the state). However, extensive research in Scandinavian countries over the past 20 years has refuted this assumption. Instead, it can be shown that Sweden has a civil society that is just as extensive and vital as that of many other Western countries. Jeppsson Grassman, who has studied the role of civil society and practices related to the care of the elderly, explores how older adults contribute as members of civil society in Sweden by focusing on examples of volunteer work in their communities. She also highlights the problem of older adults in Sweden tending to suffer a loss of well-being, satisfaction, and social inclusion when they are not able to carry on working for their communities after retirement.

Scandinavian welfare societies are often presented as the best environments in the world for children growing up. In her paper, Kjörholt, who has studied the well-being of children, argues that it is important to go beyond this idealized image and critically explore the cost, the lifestyle space, and the effects that Nordic welfare societies may have on both children and young adults. She examines the effects of the high degree of emphasis on participation rights, expressed as individual freedom of choice from an early age, on children and young adults and how they feel and act within such a society. She suggests that the high degree of pressure associated with being responsible for achieving their own happiness could make young adults individualize different kinds of social, mental, and emotional problems, rather than seeing them as rooted in society.

In her paper, Suzuki, who has carried out fieldwork on the way in which lifelong learning affects people's well-being by focusing on educational venues in Denmark, investigates the characteristics of flexible practices related to content and time allocation in the Danish education system. That flexibility is closely linked to the way in which education in Denmark is considered to be a lifelong process. Suzuki demonstrates how education is used as a way of sustaining a system of social welfare grounded on the idea of equality, aiming to encourage every citizen to share the same values. The venues used for lifelong learning function as places where people from a diverse range of backgrounds can reflect on and discuss the values and activities connected with one's well-being.

This collection of papers explores the challenges confronting people who want to retain some freedom in cultivating their lives, on the one hand, and the need to coexist, feel secure, and achieve social inclusion in those places where care and education are provided, on the other hand.

We have increased our understanding of human well-being and life design by exploring the various ideas on which the care of older adults and children is based, as

well as the ways in which they are put into practice and how they relate to ways of thinking about society and the community as a whole.

We need to carefully consider a variety of ways in which to develop public spaces as places of lifelong learning where people can take the time needed to think about their ways of life at any given age—young or old. This is only possible if people are open to new ideas regarding the causes of cultural collisions and are willing to move toward the creation of a new culture which can be shared by others. Settings in which people with a diverse range of values work together will enhance accessibility and communication for all, allowing them to participate in generating new ideas to help care for the places they live in, as well as helping to regenerate and rejuvenate themselves—in turn enabling them to reflect on and reassess what they value most in their future life designs.

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