SES no. 80; Preface

journal or publication title	Senri Ethnological Studies
volume	80
page range	i-ix
year	2013-01-21
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10502/4960

Preface

Nanami Suzuki

National Museum of Ethnology
The Graduate University for Advanced Studies

Owing partially to heightened awareness of current societal trends toward fewer children and increased aging, interest has grown in both general and elderly care, beginning with the problems of finding the money and securing the personnel necessary for assisted living.

In fact, listening to the opinions of older adults responding to interviews about their daily lives, I sense that they are always gripped by a feeling approaching fear. Even many of those blessed with good health are considering moving, if necessary, to a new place where they can receive everyday assistance. And even if they make that move, they may need to move again if they fall ill or begin to need more intensive care. Even when people decide to receive lifestyle support in their own homes, they constantly worry about how to maintain that assistance. They frequently express feelings of anxiety when making major decisions and coping with change. Losing a spouse of many years may drastically change the rhythms of life, from habitual mealtimes to hobbies like taking walks.

Old age can be described as a period when one inevitably confronts the task of building new relationships, both in the case of moving and in the case of receiving lifestyle assistance. Just as people dread feelings of isolation and loneliness when alone, it is a heavy responsibility to break away from familiar things and be forced to build new relationships in a new environment. On the other hand, come to think of it, the prospect of change also offers people the chance to rethink life once they have passed its midpoint, in the sense of re-envisioning their futures. If that is so, we ought to begin with listening to the hopes of individuals.

An analysis of the various welfare systems being implemented worldwide under the framework of the nation-state reveals that research in many fields recently has endeavored to enlist the opinions of those who are receiving care (see Ueno 2008, for example). Such discussions tend to view older adult simply as "recipients of assistance," however, focusing only on the expansion and enhancement of that assistance. But if one is to consider the regular lives of people and their shared experiences with aging and various life stages, one must weave together thoughtfulness, consideration, and attention to relationships in ways that everyone can relate to (Suzuki 2005). This book begins from the perspective of people's hopes and wishes for "well-being" (*i.e.*, a comfortable lifestyle, good living, and happiness) so as to deepen people's understandings of what elder care really means. When exploring possible living arrangements for older adults, along with the structure and creation of various places of residence, We first surveyed older adults directly concerning their opinions on comfortable living and lifestyles, then proceeded to examine the cultural background of their thoughts on self-expression and the activity of "cooperating in life design."

Official and non-official translations of the English word "welfare" in Japanese have focused on the senses of "welfare" and "well-being" (Takahashi 1994: 151, 155–156; Hatanaka & Kimura 2006: 17, 19). However, back in the 14th century, the English word "welfare"

meant "good living;" only in the 17th and 18th centuries did it begin to refer to systems of assistance for the disadvantaged, with experts being trained within a national framework to help those "on the periphery" of society such as the sick, the old, and the urban poor (Terasaki 2000: 38, 42–43; Saguchi and Nakagawa eds. 2005). This shift reflects Michel Foucault (1926–1984)'s theory of "biopower" (bio-pouvoir) (*the set of mechanisms, techniques and technologies through which the basic biological features of the human species become the object of political strategies in modern Western societies*), namely, as a means to manage people's ways of life. From this change also emerged the foundations of modern police theory, first outlined in the West by such authors as Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi (1711–1771), who in his *Grundsätze der Policeywissenschaft* (1756) called for a "complete grasp of human nature" that "must be harnessed for social happiness" (Shirozu 2004: 20–33).

Meanwhile, the term "well-being," from its older meaning of "welfare," has broadened to mean a comfortable and hospitable condition—not just that of human beings, but also extending to the condition of communities and other things. The 2nd edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) (1989) cites examples of how the term has been used that way since the 17th century, defining it as "The state of being or doing well in life; happy, healthy, or prosperous condition; moral or physical welfare (of a person or community)."

In the 20th century, the draft proposal for the World Health Organization (WHO) charter (1946) referred to "well-being" when defining health in the sense of a favorable condition that transcended merely "not being sick," drawing attention to the search for such a "favorable condition" that is part of people's daily lives as a component of the "quality of life". Thereafter, the term "well-being" became incorporated in various treaties and declarations, such as the United Nations Children's Rights Treaty (1989) and the UN International Family Year (1994). Various factors contributed to these developments, including a greater awareness of human rights and the shift to a wellness model (as opposed to the illness model, which deals with problems in an ex-post facto manner) promoting preventative care and health for all (Takahashi 1994: 151; Griffin 2002; Kimura 2005: 31–39; Hatanaka & Kimura 2006: 17–19; Howarth and Hart eds. 2007). In addition, people are exploring self-actualization by unifying several elements of well-being—democratic values, government policy, social relations, and various mental and internal aspects—in order to create a "society of well-being" (Nomura 2010: 240–245).

However, this book does not merely treat it as self-evident that well-being consists of such elements as human rights, respect for the individual, autonomy and independence, quality of life, and self-actualization. We also contemplate the more complete image of well-being people seek in both their mental and physical lives, not limiting our inquiries to the narrower definition promulgated by welfare states considered "advanced" in modern times. We consider well-being not a universal goal to be achieved by all, but rather something individuals work toward in the context of their own regions and cultures.

The first aim of this book is to examine the lifestyles of senior citizens from the perspective of well-being. It starts out by deepening the current debate on human diversity and totality, then explores the possibility that well-being can expand by not confining people to fixed concepts of time and space.

An analysis of primary resources of researchers and practitioners in the field shows that

there is truly great diversity in the concepts and activities related to the well-being sought by older adults—the first theme—given the cultural background of various regions and individual life histories. The literature sheds light on the nature of human diversity and the "totality" of human beings that is composed of various elements (Suzuki 2002: 20–21; 2004: 172–175; 2006).

The second aim of this book is to consider methods of cooperative life design in a diversifying society comprised of people from various cultural backgrounds. These methods include honing the art of coexistence, and creating places where people can coordinate their diverse claims and hopes so as to live in harmony with one another.

One common definition of "well-being" is being able to live in a place that feels familiar and secure. That does not mean seeking life in a closed "community" devoted to a single culture, however. Old age is also a time when people are forced to build new relationships, sharing space and activities with others who may not identify strongly with them at first. They do this in order to take part in many activities despite limited mobility and to gain the convenience and safety of assisted living. If everyone sought well-being only according to his or her lifestyle, elder care would erect boundaries and create vectors of exclusion, deepening friction between people. The shared residences, frequently called "life-care communities," can also become spaces that are continually being created, step by step, through the common pursuit of livability and comfort for stakeholders.

The third aim of this book is to think about the meaning and vision of care facilities and spaces open to the outside world. Elder care does not exist in a vacuum; it involves cooperation with external parties and systems, including such practices as lifelong learning, deathwatches, and post-death care. These activities aim for inclusion in the world, illuminating individuals' life trajectories and current states. It is therefore absolutely necessary to integrate many types of knowledge in order to respond to questions that might emerge. Identity is perceived through the existence of "different cultures," it is said, and the search for that identity is related to the well-being that reconfigures an individual's life history. The words used in such instances are not necessarily those pronounced by experts. In daily life, the lives of older adults are supported by assistants and elder care specialists, so the use of vernacular language is indispensable in the joint action of asking and answering.

The analysis made in each chapter of this book will demonstrate that older adults do not exist at society's periphery as disadvantaged persons or as a minority, but instead weave relationships with the people surrounding them through the act of consideration. The well-being of older adult is deeply connected to the lifestyles and backgrounds of other generations (Thang 2001). Thus we need to keep in mind the total lifestyle of people, including those in other generations, as we think about our own well-being in old age.

Rethinking the current situation of senior care—in which we trap ourselves (or are trapped) in an isolated space and time, bound by stereotypes of generational and/or positional roles—will ultimately enrich our well-being. To do so would be to introduce the possibility of a new "circulation (*Verkehr*)" of older adult (Shirozu 2009: 67), encompassing actions related to people at different stages of life, enlisting the various people who interact with older adult as well as the resources (people/things/money) involved. In the processes of modernization and industrialization, the trend was toward organizing people's activities and the venues

for them on the basis of their specialized knowledge, with an eye on efficiency and productivity (Shirozu 2011). In contrast, addressing the issues of lives determined by age or situation will provide clues to the realization of a rich and abundant well-being. This book will emphasize the element of opening up channels to the outside, also referring to specific techniques (such as outreach) to achieve coordination between facilities, as it presents a wealth of material for discussion about the ways, channels, and forums open to all people.

A characteristic of this book is its focus on well-being as it looks for how to achieve cooperation in life design. In other words, it reflects on the ways in which people can share and enjoy care in the broad sense of the word, maintaining relationships with the natural environment and surrounding people[1]. That means deepening the consideration of "care as culture"—namely, getting a taste of the richness of "comfortable living" and examining it carefully—and revising ideas about how to achieve it through cooperation between stakeholders. Care, when viewed from this perspective, will be woven on multiple levels: those things that one can do by oneself, those that others provide, and those gained from the environment.

Of course, envisioning the future of well-being must entail a discussion of how best to distribute resources. Still, I would like to stress the need to consider this from the perspective of "sharing" rather than "distributing" things, including resources like time and urban environments[2]. This is because the practice of spending our time according to life stage—with those in the working generation unilaterally providing care to those needing assistance such as older adult and children—bottles everyone up in an assumed lifestyle, distancing people from the search for and creation of well-being.

I arrived at that perspective after visiting the spa town of Bad Ragaz in eastern Switzerland, for example. Though the town is a tourist spot best known for its spa, it is well forested outside the central section, with riverside walks. As part of its service assisting older adults living in their own homes, Bad Ragaz has developed a program that delivers meals made at a local senior's facility to those desiring them. The meals are delivered by neighbors and by children on their way home from school. In rural Switzerland, it is a custom even now for children and sometimes workers to return home for lunch. In Bad Ragaz, children going home for lunch on their bicycles first pick up meals at the facility and then take them to older adult. The method of exchange is left up to them, but both sides do meet over the lunchbox. Thus one can see people from several generations coming and going in this town on a daily basis. While the word "care" also means a relationship of caring or consideration, the type of care seen here is a fun part of everyday life.

That type of care begins with the flexible treatment of time and roles: taking the time to go home for lunch, making children responsible for lunch delivery. I was deeply impressed by the fact that care for well-being did not depend solely on policies and laws but was also grounded in the region's history, customs, and relationships, as well as in residents' everyday habits and grass-roots activities (Suzuki 2008).

Through my fieldwork, as I encountered people involved in such practices, I perceived the necessity of looking for ways to allow people of all generations in various situations—no matter how difficult—to continue to voice their opinions and participate in discussions about life design as a cooperative project, not only an individual one. By exploring the essence of

individuals' hopes and the ideological foundations of care, as well as addressing that which defines us, we can enhance the fruits of cooperative life design (Suzuki ed. 2009; Suzuki *et al.* eds. 2010).

This book carries out that attempt using fieldwork and primary source materials, emphasizing the places where older adults seek well-being. The question of what it means to live together is deeply imprinted in the temporal and spatial culture people inhabit, and we will consider this question from the perspectives of cultural anthropology, pedagogy, and sociology, among other disciplines[3]. Each chapter argues as follows.

Part I: The Meaning of Time and Space for Cultivating Life, focuses on the indispensability of time and space for "leisure" when people seek to cultivating life and place of living. Suzuki describes how elder care that is conscious of older adult's well-being, carried out in an isolated and graying town, has led to the creation of living places for people from diverse cultural backgrounds and multiple generations. It also explores the meaning of "leisure" as an element of the times and spaces in which people gather. The paper thus considers the significance of the ways in which the wisdom of community members is expressed and shared. Terasaki deepens our understanding of old age, which is viewed as a period of leisure free from everyday sustenance activities. Through an examination of the historical vicissitudes of the meaning of "leisure," this chapter redefines the concept of "cultivating life." Shirozu looks at an initiative to set up a social-welfare complex in a closed elementary/junior high school building in Okinawa. By looking at how time is shared in the facility, this chapter discusses leisure time, space, cuddling, and well-being.

Part II: The Regeneration of Living Places by Sharing Cultures, explores ways of cooperation among people of different cultural backgrounds in an effort to regenerate a region by disseminating and sharing local culture. It also examines older adults' well-beings as they reconsider their identities in encounters with different cultures. Taniguchi explores how elderly Japanese women living in a stricken area seek a sense of well-being by focusing on a revival of the area's traditions and crafts. The paper shows the importance of disseminating information so that various people can share in this cultural heritage, using vernacular knowledge and resources in order to celebrate local culture. Endo looks at several tourist sites visited by traveling seniors, as well as sites where older adults welcome tourists. From these examples, the chapter explores changes experienced by seniors and the interaction between many people through the conviviality of playing and eating in tourism. Yamada looks at the dreams of Japanese older adults who in recent years seek well-being through migration. The paper documents the experiences of those who choose a new lifestyle and environment, examining their sense of inclusion in new homes. Kanamoto analyzes the lives of elderly migrants, concluding that cherishing ties to two or more cultures is an element of well-being.

Part III: A Reflection on 'Time' During Life Stage Transitions, sheds light on people's activities and cooperation during transitions in life stage. Fujiwara investigates well-being in old age by tracing the practices of older adult at a pilgrimage site founded on the so-called "faith of dying quickly." Iwasa explores approaches to well-being by dying people as well by those who care for them, using as a case study a low-lying farming village in Laos and its concept of "a good death." Suzuki explores the cooperation that supports transitions between

life stages as people live their lives amidst change, along with the community design that weaves them together and includes them in the greater macrocosmos.

This book focuses on old age as a condensed version of human fate: birth, aging, sickness, and death. It attempts to find a path to a hopeful society: one in which everyone can enjoy "comfortable living" and inclusiveness, positioned within the broader universe and time while changing through dialogues and relationships.

Notes

1) The tendencies of anthropologists with regard to well-being have been summarized as follows (Thin 2009: 23–44; 2010: 712–713) "Explicit anthropological attention to well-being has tended to polarize into either naïve anti-modernist celebrations of non-Western well-being on the one hand, or gloomy and perhaps voyeuristic immersion into ill-being on the other." Balanced and careful enquiry into well-being has yet to emerge in anthropology, although three unprecedented anthropological collections on well-being begin to point the way (Jiménez, ed. 2008; Gough and McGregor 2007; and Mathews & Izquierdo, eds. 2009). Editor Jiménez (2008: 2–3) stated that "by examining what well-being means, or could mean, to people living in a number of different regional and ethnographic contexts, the collection takes issue with some of the presuppositions behind Western conceptions of well-being." Mathews and Izquierdo (2009: 12) write that the contributors of the book they edited "do believe that well-being can be ethnographically examined in a given society, and many believe that it can to some extent be compared across societies: not through "hard comparison," the statistical data of psychologists and economists and others, but through "soft comparison," on the basis of ethnography."

We consider well-being not a universal goal to be achieved by all, but rather something individuals work toward in the context of their own regions and cultures. A characteristic of this book is exploration of the possibility that well-being can expand by not confining people to fixed concepts of time and space. The book also considers methods of cooperative life design in societies comprised of people from increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds.

2) Edgar and Russell (1998: 12) introduced "anthropology of welfare" as an emerging subfield in social anthropology as follows: "The anthropology of welfare is concerned with the human face of welfare provision, the realities behind the rhetoric, the people behind the policies. It seeks to normalize such accounts in the practice of welfare worldwide."

We would like to consider well-being in life in this book, "*The Anthropology of Aging and Well-being*, focusing on the perspective of "sharing" resources such as time and environment rather than "distributing" things. In this book, we would start by reconsidering the meaning of well-being and welfare by examining precisely primary sources in our historical and anthropological studies, and we further explore how people share the time and space in their lives by focusing not only on the practice of care specialists but also on vernacular languages and knowledge.

3) Editor Infeld (2002; xvi) pointed out characteristic aspects anthropological researches would conduct as a disciplinary approach to aging by introducing the questions that Project AGE explored (Keith *et al.* 1994: xvii) to provide materials for our understanding of aging and culture as follows: "What is defined as a good life for older people, and by older people, in different social and cultural settings? How are older people's lives affected by broad characteristics of their social environment?

How are the influences of these social characteristics mediated by cultural norms and values? How are the implications of health or functionality shaped by attributes of the social and cultural context?"

Since we consider methods of cooperative life design in a diversifying society comprised of people from various cultural backgrounds and we think about the vision of places of care open to the outside world in cooperation with external parties and systems, including such practices as lifelong learning, deathwatches, and post-death care, we would integrate many types of knowledge provided by researchers of cultural anthropology, pedagogy, and sociology in this book.

References

Edgar, Iain. R. and Andrew Russell
  1998 *The Anthropology of Welfare*, New York: Routledge.
Foucault, Michel
  1976 *Sei no rekishi I: Chie no ishi* (*The History of the Sexuality* vol.1), translated by Moriaki Watanabe, Tokyo: Shinchosha (in Japanese).
Gough, Ian and J. Allister McGregor
  2007 *Wellbeing in Developing Countries: From Theory to Research*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Griffin, James
  2002 [1986] *Well-Being; Its Meaning, Measurement and Moral Importance*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Hatanaka, Soichi and Naoko Kimura
  2006 *Kodomo no Well-being to kazoku* (*Wellbeing of Children and Family*), Kyoto: Sekai Shisosha (in Japanese).
Haworth John and Graham Hart (eds.)
  2007 *Well-Being: Individual, Community and Social Perspectives*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Infeld, Donna Lind (ed.)
  2002 *Disciplinary Approaches to Aging Vol. 4 Anthropology of Aging*, New York: Routledge.
Jiménez, Alberto Corsín (ed.)
  2008 *Culture and Well-Being: Anthropological Approaches to Freedom and Political Ethics*, London: Pluto Press.
Keith, J., Fry, C. L., Glascock, A. P., Ikels, C., Dickerson-Putman, J., Harpending, H. D. and P. Draper
  1994 *The Aging Experience: Diversity and Commonality across Cultures*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
Kimura, Naoko
  2005 "Kodomo no Well-being": gainen to shihyōka. In S. Hatanaka (ed.) *Gendai no esprit* (*Present-day Esprit*): *Well-being of Children*, pp. 31–50, Tokyo: Shibundo (in Japanese).
Mathews, Gordon and Carolina Izquierdo (eds.)
  2009 *Pursuits of Happiness: Well-Being in Anthropological Perspective*, New York: Berghahn Books.

Nomura, Takeo
   2010   *"Seikatsu taikoku" Denmark no fukushi seisaku: Well-Being ga sodatsu jōken* (*The Welfare Policy of "the Country of a Rich Life" Denmark*), Kyoto: Minerva (in Japanese).
Saguchi, Kazuo and Nakagawa, Kiyoshi (eds.)
   2005   *Fukushi shakai no rekishi* (*History of Welfare Society*), Kyoto: Minerva (in Japanese).
Shirozu, Hironobu
   2004   *Police to shite no kyōiku: kyōiku touchi no archeology* (*Police and Education: Archeology of Governmentality*), Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press (in Japanese).
   2009   Kōreisha no jiritsu to kōtsū (Elderly People's Independence and Traffic) In N. Suzuki (ed.), *Life design to fukushi* (*Well-being*) *no jinruigaku* (*The Anthropology of Well-being and Life design*), Report of the International Forum, pp. 67–68. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology (in Japanese).
   2011   Kyōiku, fukushi, tōchisei: nouryoku gensetsu kara yōjō e. (Education, Welfare and Government Nature, *Kyoikugaku Kenkyu* (*Journal of Educational Studies*), Japanese Educational Research Association (in Japanese).
Suzuki, Nanami
   2002   *Iyashi no rekishi jinruigaku: herb to mizu no symbolism e* (*Historical Anthropology of Healing: Symbolism of Herbs and Water*), Kyoto: Sekaishisosha (in Japanese).
   2004   Iyashi no jinruigaku: "zentaisei (wholeness)" no kikyū (Anthropology of Healing. In I. Ebuchi and M. Matsuzono (eds.) *Bunka jinruigaku: bunkateki jissenchi no tankyū* (*Cultural Anthropology*), pp. 171–188, Tokyo: The Society for the Promotion of the University of the Air (in Japanese).
   2005   Kaki no ha wo tsumu kurashi: normalization wo koete. (Creating a New Life through Persimmon Leaves: Living More Than a "Normalized" Life). *Bunkajinruigaku* (*Japanese Journal of Cultural Anthropology*) 70 (3): 355–378 (in Japanese).
   2006   Iryō, shintai-ron. (Medicine and the Body). In T. Ayabe (ed.) *Bunkajinruigaku 20 no riron* (*Twenty Theories of Cultural Anthropology*), pp. 213–230, Tokyo: Kobundo (in Japanese).
   2008   Shin seishoku gijutsu heno taiou to kazoku: Swiss, France no giron wo chūshin ni. (A Comparative Study on Attitudes towards New Technologies of Childbirth and the Concept of Family: Focusing on the Discussions in the Swiss Confederation and the French Republic). *Seishoku kakumei to oya-ko* (*New Technologies of Childbirth and Family*) Vol. 2, pp. 72–106, Tokyo: Waseda University Press (in Japanese).
Suzuki, Nanami (ed.)
   2009   *Life design to fukushi* (*well-being*) *no jinruigaku: hirakareta care, kōryū kūkan no soshutsu* (*The Anthropology of Well-being and Life-design*), Report of the International Forum, Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology (in Japanese).
Suzuki Nanami (ed.), co-edited by Kuniko Fujiwara and Mitsuhiro Iwasa
   2010   *Kōreisha no well-being to life design no kyōdō* (*The Well-being of Seniors and Cooperation in Life Design*), Tokyo, Ochanomizusobo (in Japanese).
Takahashi, Shigehiro
   1994   *Welfare kara well-being e: kodomo to oya no well-being no sokushin: Canada no torikumi ni manabu* (*From Welfare to Well-being*), Tokyo: Kawashima Shoten (in Japanese).

Terasaki, Hiroaki
    2000   Fukushi, kyōiku, chian (Welfare, Education and the Police). In S. Hanai and K. Mikami (eds.) *Kyōiku no seido to shakai* (*An Educational System and Society*), pp. 34–44, Chiba: Azusa press (in Japanese).
Thang, Leng Leng
    2001   *Generation in Touch: Linking the Old and Young in a Tokyo Neighborhood*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Thin, Neil
    2009   Why Anthropology Can Ill Afford to Ignore Well-being. In Gordon Mathews and Carolina Izquierdo (ed.) *Pursuits of Happiness: Well-Being in Anthropological Perspective*, pp. 23–44, New York: Berghahn Books.
    2010   Well-being and Happiness. In Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd edition, pp. 712–714, New York: Routledge.
Ueno, Chizuko, *et al.* (eds.)
    2008   *Care sareru koto* (*To be Cared*), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten (in Japanese).