

Reading Reflection #6

The article “Acculturation and Family Continuities in Three Generations of Japanese Americans” by John Connor discusses the organization of familial structures in the Japanese culture and compares them throughout the different generations of Japanese Americans. On page 160 Connor writes “Given the importance of the ie in Japan it would seem reasonable to assume that those first generation Japanese Americans (Issei) who immigrated to the United States would bring with them not only the belief that the ie system was the normal way to organize a family, but they would also have a need to create their own branch families and establish themselves as household heads” which is a fair assumption to make based on the cultural importance of familial hierarchy. In the study that John Connor performed however, each generation following the Issei did not hold traditional values as severely the Issei had.

As intriguing as Connor’s study is, it came as a surprise to me when I checked the publishing date of the article. It occurred to me that an article from 1974 feels like it would be rather dated, taking into consideration how now in 2018 in American society we are at the point where the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> generations are the ones who are what we expect a Japanese American citizen to be. So many 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Japanese Americans have passed on and are no longer able to share their own experiences, and it is with these experiences that we can take preemptive measures to ensure what they endured will never again happen to any future generations. I hope that the current generations will never forget what their ancestors did in order for them to have the life they live now.

In the chapter “Persistence and Change in Perceived Social Boundaries” in Stephen Fugita’s and David O’Brien’s book “Japanese American Ethnicity: The Persistence of Community” they discuss the results of their study on “how do Japanese Americans currently view social relationships in their ethnic group compared with those in the majority group? More important, to what extent do they feel comfortable operating in the two different social contexts?” (Fugita and O’Brien 165-166) and how these feelings may differ between the Nisei and Sansei generations. The results they found include that the Sansei generation and those following the Sansei are more accepting to the idea of embracing American culture, both the Nisei and Sansei agreed that they believed themselves to be more hard-working and much more reserved in comparison to white Americans, and that between both generations there was a need to feel a part of the community.

While reading this chapter I felt much more inclined to feel engaged in what I was reading in comparison to the previous reading I chose. Seeing the tables of data that Fugita and O’Brien comprised together felt like more tangible evidence of their research rather than just quoting multiple sources every other sentence as I noticed in John Connor’s article. Writing structure aside, the subject of the pair’s research certainly piqued my interest. I applaud them for so fervently going out and interviewing so many Nisei and Sansei individuals in order to help prove the correlations they were looking out for.