NAVIGATING MULTIPLE WORLDS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: AUTHORING AND EDITING THE STORY OF ONE JAPANESE KID

By

Amy L. Damrow

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ABSTRACT

NAVIGATING MULTIPLE WORLDS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:
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Since the middle of the twentieth century waves of immigration have increased heterogeneity in American classrooms and contributed to new challenges and problems for both teachers and learners. These trends in the United States are, in fact, part of a global phenomenon of large-scale movement of people (García Coll & Marks, 2009; Suarez-Orozco, 2004). In the twenty-first century, children and their families cross borders for various reasons and under widely different circumstances, but all of them must learn to adjust to new expectations and find new ways to belong

This "ethnography of the particular" (Lughod, 1991) uses Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model to map one boy's experiences living and going to school in both the United States and Japan. I broadly use sociocultural theory and Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of communities of practice to examine those experiences. Although I consider the home, the neighborhood, and the school as important social and cultural settings, my primary focus is on school settings. The three-phase study centers the perspectives of a 10-, 11-, 12-year-old over a 15-month period. The focal participant discussed his views of friendship, his experiences in school, and his expectations of teachers. He also offers a comparative perspective as a participant in the final year of elementary school in both the United States and Japan. Interviews with his parents—primarily his mother—and his teachers as well as whole day observations at Lakeview Elementary School, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi *Shogakko*

supplement the child's standpoint. School documents were also analyzed in order to assess written expectations across settings.

Two story lines run through the dissertation. The first allows us to learn something about a boy as he goes to school and makes friends during a time of ecological transition; the other invites us to reflect on the systems of which he is a part in both the United States and Japan. I consider daily life in three particular schools, the ways that schools structure childhood, and the challenges border-crossing children face as they navigate implicit and explicit expectations. The study examines how friendships are conceptualized and experienced in different ways in different contexts. The research also allows us to consider how the child at the center of the study experiences and interacts with educational processes across settings while offering a student's comparative analysis of American and Japanese elementary schooling. Navigating multiple different worlds fosters the development of valuable skills and flexible ways of thinking, but it also presents challenges and includes "costs."

The study provides a fine-grained analysis of one kid's experience navigating multiple educational, social, and cultural transitions and allows us to see how a child exercises agency, develops competence and builds connections and relationships. Through identifying the processes of adjustment and authoring within contextual complexities, adults can learn to recognize and appreciate children's emerging identities within the ecological complexity of their lives. The study contributes to an understanding of how communities of educators, teacher educators, and researchers can better serve students as whole human beings by developing capacities to listen to children and discover their stories—from the inside-out. This study suggests that these stories are critical jumping off points for adults who influence the lives of children in classrooms and schools through their teaching, their research and their policies.

To all who are curious and to those who inspire curiosity

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Introduction

Seiji[1] lives with his younger sister, mother, father, and two cats in the Chubu Region of Japan. During the 2009-2010 academic year, he was a sixth grader at Kaichi *Shogakko*. Like most of his classmates, he walked to school every morning. Like other boys, he wore a yellow cap and carried a black *randoseru*, the typical leather backpack of Japanese elementary school students. Seiji's *randoseru*, however, did not carry the scuffs and marks of years of use and hundreds of trips to and from school. In fact, it had been brand new at the start of the school year in early April. On that first day, Seiji had gone up on the stage in front of the entire school and introduced himself saying, "'I'm from Detroit, and I like fishing'" (Interview, 05/23/2009).[2] Seiji is Japanese, but for nearly six years he lived with his family in the United States.

I open this chapter with scenes from Seiji's daily life in part because this dissertation is located in the daily, lived experiences of a Japanese kid[3] as he lived and attended school in the United States and then as he lived and attended school in Japan. His story is both ordinary and extraordinary. Like most kids, Seiji wanted to do well in school. Like most kids, he wanted to make friends. And like most kids, he had opinions and ideas about the events in his life—

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[1] All names of people and schools have been changed.

[2] Seiji introduced himself in Japanese, but our interviews were primarily in English. Thus, here he is translating what he actually said.

[3] I use 'kid' here because Seiji used the word 'kid' to refer to himself and his peers. Throughout the dissertation I intentionally alternate between kid/kids and child/children because while I recognize the conventions of scholarly discourse, research that focuses on the perspectives and life-worlds of children must also use language that reinforces that commitment.

including going to school. Seiji's story is also one of seemingly effortless adaptation to various distinct linguistic, cultural, and social expectations in and across American and Japanese worlds. Interweaving the ordinary and the extraordinary while centering the perspectives of a 10-, 11-, 12-year old allows us to consider how one child experiences diverse processes of schooling. The research also reminds us that young people are whole and complex social individuals who participate in and construct relationships across multiple contexts.

Throughout the study, Seiji left home in the morning and went to school. Millions of children around the world make the transition from home world to school world every day. Thus, participating in multiple worlds is not unique to internationally mobile children. In a sense, all children "learn" to go to school (Peak, 1991). However, whereas for some, transitions between home and school are relatively seamless, for others the discontinuity can be distressing. Multi-cultural scholars (Banks & Banks, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1999) have drawn attention to the demographic differences between teachers and students and the problems that such divides create. Since the middle of the twentieth century, waves of immigration have increased heterogeneity in American classrooms and contributed to new challenges and problems for both teachers and learners. These trends in the United States are, in fact, part of a global phenomenon of large-scale movement of people (García Coll & Marks, 2009; Suarez-Orozco, 2004). In the twenty-first century, children and their families cross borders for various reasons and under widely different circumstances, but all of them must learn to adjust to new expectations and find new ways to belong.

Although these global shifts impact societies and communities in profound ways, educational institutions are asked to shoulder most of the responsibility for communicating acceptance and helping young newcomers develop linguistic, social, and academic competencies

(Adams & Kirova, 2007). Thus, around the world teachers face enormous challenges as they strive to meet the needs of all the children in their classrooms. The role of schools as sites of socialization and acculturation is clear. And yet, this process is complex. In classrooms, adults and children, teachers and students, act and interact in particular ways. Stories of global migration are important because they invite us to consider how schools and teachers "might allow space for the expression of people's ideas, languages, social behaviors, ideologies, and ways of seeing [and being in] the world" (Adams & Kirova, 2007, p. 2).

This dissertation uses an ecological approach to understand what it means for one kid to cross literal and figurative borders in a complex, interconnected world and builds on scholarship that seeks to include the views and voices of pre-teen, internationally mobile children (for example, see de Block, 2007; Kirova, 2007; Kirova & Emme, 2007; Rao & Yuen, 2007). As a twenty-first century kid, Seiji's story offers insights into the adaptability, dexterity, and keen navigation skills that are demanded of these children in their social and cultural worlds of home, school, and neighborhood. Within the research narrative, I explore Seiji's authoring style in his lived worlds and identify the particular meanings that he attaches to the roles of friend, student, and learner, because as teachers and researchers we should not lose sight of kids as whole "beings" even when our responsibilities and focus are in classrooms and schools. In order to establish this commitment, in what follows, I provide a sense of Seiji's relationships and his activities outside of school as I introduce his daily routines in both Michigan and Japan.

Seiji left Japan for the United States when he was four years old. He attended Lakeview Elementary School from kindergarten through almost the end of fifth grade. He rode a yellow bus to and from school. "*Tadaima!* [I'm home!]," Seiji and Emiko, his younger sister, would call out as they opened the front door. "*Okaerinasai!* [Hello/Welcome back!]" their mother,

Aya, would enthusiastically chime. After a snack or a drink Seiji usually began his homework. Afterwards, he would watch television and spend time on the computer playing games or searching the Internet. Some days Aya would drive the kids to extra-curricular activities—English and *soroban* (abacus) classes for Seiji, ballet and piano for Emiko.

Weekends in Michigan also had a routine for Seiji. On Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. and with nearly 1000 other children, he attended *hoshuko*, a full-day supplementary school based on the Japanese national curriculum. In fifth grade this meant one hour of social studies, two hours of mathematics, and three hours of *kokugo*, or Japanese. Aya drove him to the large high school where fourth through twelfth graders met; then she chauffeured Emiko to a nearby elementary school where kindergarten through third graders attended classes. On Sundays Seiji often spent time with his family. In the winter, he and his father enjoyed downhill skiing, and in warmer months the family sometimes drove to a nearby park where they went fishing or rode their bikes. Throughout the year, Seiji liked to play board games with the entire family. Most games were Japanese and had been purchased at the garage sales that many families had before they returned to Japan. On March 15, 2009, after living and going to school in the United States for over five years, Seiji's sojourn in the United States ended. Within a few weeks of returning to Japan, Seiji began a new school year with new routines at Kaichi *Shogakko*.

As we saw in the opening scene, in Japan Seiji walked to school with his neighborhood *han*, or group. He usually arrived about 25 minutes before school started and played and talked with his classmates. After school, he walked home with a friend. "*Tadaima!* [I'm home!]," he would call out as he opened the front door. "*Okaerinasai!* [Hello/Welcome back!]" Aya would enthusiastically chime. After school, as in Michigan, his activities varied based on the day of the

week and the time of year, but in Japan he made his own social appointments and could get to all of his extra-curricular activities on his own. His schedule was busy, but he was accustomed to this. In Japan, he relished his new autonomy and the fact that important worlds were easily accessible. The summer was a honeymoon phase filled with new discoveries. Sometimes he had a snack at home; sometimes he got a snack with friends at the *conbini* (convenience store). On some days he played with friends at home, at a park, or on school grounds. Sometimes they rode their bikes to *Amako Jinja*, a small shrine in the neighborhood. In summer 2009, Seiji's extra-curricular activities included track and field club, *juku* (cram school), and English class. In the in-between times, he did his homework and watched television.

In Japan, Seiji spent weekends with family and friends. He enjoyed fishing with his father. Sometimes the entire family spent an afternoon playing at a big park or going shopping. Sometimes the family visited Aya's mother in a city about an hour away. Sometimes they stayed home and relaxed, playing Wii and other card or board games and watching television.

In spring 2010, Seiji's daily routine began to shift as he prepared for another transition. His *juku* now met on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. On March 19, 2010, Seiji graduated from Kaichi. A few weeks later, in a new school uniform he began a new school year and new routines at Higashi Middle School.

Purpose of the Research

Standardized tests and mandated curricula, global competition, and ever tightening budgets are realities for American schools and teachers. Increasing diversity in the classroom presents both opportunities and challenges. One of the challenges of "teaching other people's children" (Delpit, 1988) is having the curiosity, disposition and skills to recognize alternate ways

of constructing and being in the world, making sense of content knowledge, and interacting and communicating (Adams & Kirova, 2007; Ballenger, 1992; García Coll & Marks, 2009; Heath, 1983; Lareau, 2000). Children make (and are compelled to make) all sorts of transitions that vary in intensity and scope. Whereas all children transition to new grade levels and new schools, only some children are faced with significant linguistic and cultural transitions between school and worlds outside of school. In telling Seiji's story I hope to provide a fine-grained analysis of one boy's experience navigating multiple educational, social, and cultural transitions. This work is important because it allows us to see how a child exercises agency, develops competence, and builds connections and relationships. Identifying the processes of adjustment and authoring within contextual complexities enables us to recognize and appreciate children's emerging identities within the ecological complexity of their lives. One aim of this dissertation is to argue that a more holistic view of one child across social and cultural spaces and over time helps us see the contextual richness of children's lives in the twenty-first century and the unique, if not always easily recognizable, strengths that individual children possess. This "seeing" is the first step in "taking action" to create better circumstances for children—especially in the classroom.

Several characteristics distinguish this study. First of all, the study takes an ecological approach to thinking about a child's experiences in multiple historically, socially, and culturally situated contexts. Over the fifteen months of this three-phase study, as the research unfolds, we come to know Seiji as a kid participating in particular American, Japanese, and hybrid worlds. Graue and Walsh (1998) have argued, "We must be fiercely interested in individuals, particular individuals" (pp. 8 – 9). Seiji's story is an "ethnography of the particular" (Abu-Lughod, 1991)—a particular boy, in particular places, during particular slices of time, in the company of particular others, and written by a particular researcher. The interacting particulars of daily life

contribute to our understanding of how children interpret and construct social and cultural worlds as they navigate complex circumstances and expectations. Furthermore, through narrative I hope readers will become more curious about the particulars in the lives of the children with whom they work or interact.

Second, this study brings together child-focused interpretive research and a child's own phenomenology. In other words, my goal is to integrate an "outside in" understanding of Seiji's "*perceptions, experiences, and actions in the world*" with an "inside out" version of Seiji's perspectives of his "*experiences, perceptions, and understanding in* [his] *life-world*" (Sommer, Samuelsson, Hundeide, 2010, p. vi, italics in original). Teachers and parents primarily assisted me with the former, whereas Seiji was my main collaborator with the latter.[4] Although Graue and Walsh (1998) write that in studying children in context "the meanings sought are kids' meanings, not adults'" (p. xvii.), for this study, such dichotomies are neither useful nor tenable. Meanings are created within interactions and relationships that are culturally and socially situated. The contrast is not always between kids' meanings and adults' meanings. Seiji's "inside out" perspectives are key to the study, and yet his perspectives remain "wrapped" in my interpretations of his life-world (Sommer, Samuelsson, & Hundeide, 2010). I contend that it is this interplay of perspectives that provides a vision of how adults might capitalize on children's perspectives in order to structure institutions and institutional processes that optimally serve young people.

Third, as a full participant in the final year of elementary school in both the United States and Japan, Seiji is uniquely positioned to offer an insider's perspective on his daily experiences

[4] Interviews with Seiji's teachers and parents—people who interacted with him regularly—also helped me understand and interpret my formal and informal interactions with Seiji. As Garbarino and Stout (1992) suggest, "the more sources of information an adult has about a child, the more likely that adult is to receive the child's messages properly" (p. 15).

within both systems. This research responds to the call to pay attention to "the points of view of the very persons who are the first-level consumers of educational services" (Erickson and Shultz, 1991, p. 481). The design of this study created a unique opportunity for a twenty-first century kid to reflect on and offer insightful comparative analyses based on personal experiences in American ***and*** Japanese elementary classrooms. This is important because cross-cultural comparative analyses of young people's experiences in Japan and the United States have typically been the domain of adult researchers (LeTendre, 2000; White, 1993). Seiji's standpoint provides an important perspective because it contributes a child's sensibilities to our understanding of life in classrooms.

Situating the Research

In this dissertation, I looked closely at Seiji's experiences transitioning between educational, social, and cultural worlds. I chose an ecological approach because of my training in child development, my commitment to understanding kids and their experiences holistically, and my desire to learn about how kids navigate complex and interconnected worlds.

My decision to conduct this study with a Japanese child was not arbitrary. Both my professional experiences in Japan and my belief that important insights can be gained through cross-cultural comparison were key considerations during the design of the study. Back in the mid-1990s, after graduating from college, I had accepted a job offer in Japan at a private English conversation school in Nagano Prefecture. I was the first foreign teacher at my particular branch school and was also the first foreigner that most of my students had met face-to-face. However, a few of my students had recently returned from sojourns in the United States and Australia. Although at the time I was unfamiliar with the word *kikokushijo*, it was these students and their

families who I kept in touch with after leaving Japan. My personal connections with *kikokushijo*, combined with my own experiences as an adult sojourner in Germany, Japan, and rural North Carolina, sparked my interest in investigating how a child experienced transnational migration as a kid and as a student.

For readers in the United States, understanding Seiji's transitions between school and life in the United States and school and life in Japan requires background knowledge about Japan's national education system, a brief introduction of the *kikokushijo mondai* (returnee children problem) and its relationship to this study, and a sense of Seiji's family within the Japanese community in Michigan. This framing links education and globalization in a Japanese context and allows us to locate Seiji's story in relation to the stories of other internationally mobile children.

Glimpses of Japan's National Education System

My goal here is to outline elements of education in contemporary Japan that help us understand and thoughtfully interpret Seiji's actions and his parents' educational decisions as discussed in the remainder of this dissertation. Highlighting broad features of the Japanese schooling system reminds us that this is the system within which Seiji began as a preschool student and to which he will return and eventually take entrance exams and earn credentials that will influence his life course. As previously discussed, Seiji experienced Japanese pedagogy and teaching while living in the United States. He attended the Japanese School of Michigan immediately after arriving in the United States in August 2003 and throughout the five and a half years of his sojourn. In addition, during the summers of 2005 and 2007 he returned to Japan and attended four weeks of regular Japanese school. I include details about these experiences in subsequent chapters. Here I make the point that Seiji—like many other Japanese children living

in Michigan—purposefully participated in activities designed to maintain and build knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies for eventual reintegration into the Japanese school system.

One feature of Japan's national education system is that it promotes understandings about the process of schooling that are broadly shared from the southern islands of Kyushu to the northern island of Hokkaido. This is in part because the Japanese approach is highly centralized and marked by uniformity in major resources and procedures (Cummings, 2003; Hendry, 2003). Thus, basic routines in compulsory education (kindergarten through middle school)—such as small-group discussions, cooperative tasks, and peer pressure to manage disturbances—serve as "foundations for the basis of instructional order ... in high schools, university clubs, and company training programs" (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996, p. 7). In other words, through the process of schooling Japanese come to embody routines that they will use in social relations with friends, neighbors, and colleagues throughout their lives.

A broad overview of the "developmental expectations and ideals of learning" (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996, p. 6) at the compulsory levels of education offers general insights into the features that characterize preschool, elementary school, and middle school in Japan. "Ideals of learning" clearly do not describe the diversity of daily life in Japanese classrooms where real adults and children come together and interact. Nevertheless, for those who are unfamiliar with Japanese education, it is important to present key features that are widely recognized in the literature. Occasionally, I highlight features that may seem trivial but that will reappear in later chapters. I begin with preschool, and remind readers that Seiji initially "learned to go to school in Japan."[5]

[5] This is the title of Lois Peak's (1991) book: *Learning to go to School in Japan: The Transition from Home Life to Preschool Life*.

Preschool in Japan serves as a transitional experience from home life to school life where children are gradually infused with the rules and expectations of *shudan seikatsu*, or group life (Hendry, 1986; Lewis, 1995; Peak, 1991; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). Important attitudes to support group life include, "enthusiasm, openheartedness, enjoyment of being with other children, and identification with classroom standards of behavior" (Peak, 1991, p. 185). Children also learn and practice basic self-sufficiency skills such as changing shoes and clothes quickly (Peak, 1991). Tobin, Hsueh, and Karasawa (2009) have noted that even in the absence of codification in training manuals, preschools across the country seem to follow a "deep cultural logic" as they consistently support children's development of traditional values such as "*omoiyari* (empathy), *kejime* (the ability to change one's behavior according to the context), and *shudan shugi* (social-mindedness)" (p. 240). These values continue to be encouraged when children move on to elementary school.

A significant feature of Japanese elementary schools is an emphasis on educating the whole child (Cummings, 1980; Lewis, 1995; Sato, 2004). Lewis (1995) writes, "Children's intellectual development is taken seriously – but so is their need for friendship, for connecting to a caring classroom community, for wholehearted involvement in sports, music, and art" (pp. 36 – 37). Another way to view a "whole child" approach is that it focuses on what children value and invites them to "be" children. Throughout the dissertation I play with the idea of children as "beings" and children as "becomings." I would argue that Japanese elementary schools, in part through a continued emphasis on *kejime*, or the ability to change one's behavior according to context, emphasize both. The other feature of elementary school life that builds on the whole child concept is the use of *han*, or small fixed groups, for activities ranging from eating, working,

playing, and having discussions. These groups provide opportunities for feelings of belonging while also training children to work as groups (Lewis, 1995; Sato, 2004).

Although emphasis on group life, egalitarian participation, and whole-person education continues when students enter middle school, educational paradigms shift. According to Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001), most Japanese middle schools seek to "balance predominantly lecture-style, academic classes geared to transmitting knowledge as efficiently and equally as possible against large doses of separate nonacademic activities—moral education, open time, art, music, home economics/shop, and a variety of special activities" (p. 8). In Japan, middle school students are no longer seen as children. This is marked in part by school uniforms and higher bus fares, but it is also apparent in the classroom where lectures, drills, and reviews gradually replace the more interactive teaching practices of elementary schools (Fukuzawa & LeTendre, 2001). Transmitting knowledge efficiently is critical primarily because students will take important competitive entrance exams for high school and many later for university. In addition, "teacher –centered lectures to large classes of students engaged in note taking for the purpose of passing exams" (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996, p. 7) is a hallmark of teaching at the secondary level. Thus, the centralized national curriculum produced by Japan's Ministry of Education[6] serves as the driving force of instruction during middle and high school.

Schooling in Japan is a 12-year process of teaching and learning that continually builds. In high school the routines and central values of preschool, elementary, and middle school education are in play. In other words, it is important to understand Japanese education as a relatively closed system that presents challenges and potential difficulties to those who leave and return. As Rohlen and LeTendre (1996) comment the "topography of instruction gradually shifts

[6] Currently, the full title is the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

as exams approach, but the underlying geology does not change" (p. 8). Before turning to an overview of the *kikokushijo mondai*, I offer commentary from Seiji's parents on the circumstances of their return and their sense of the challenges their son might face.

Seiji's parents, Shinichi and Aya, chose to return to Japan so that Seiji could participate in the final year of elementary school. When they talked about his re-entrance into the Japanese school system they discussed both social and academic aspects. Shinichi, Seiji's father, reported that it was "good timing" to return to Japan so that his son could make friends in the "elementary generation," experience school life with them, and "learn and improve his Japanese skills." He continued, "Mathematics, science, social studies, maybe it's not so big problem. Maybe it's not so big problem for him and also [making] friends, *kana* [maybe]"[7] (Interview, 07/05/2009). Aya wanted Seiji, during his final year of elementary school, to learn culturally appropriate listening skills. She explained:

> ***Aya:*** So sometimes I listened to Seiji and his friends talk. So Seiji said something strong. I'm not sure his mind, but I think he [the friend] feels not so good, or a little bit sad, but Seiji doesn't know [recognize] the feeling. So sometimes say strong or again, again, again same thing, but Seiji doesn't understand his mind. So I'm paying attention [to] somebody's attitude or mind.
> ***Amy:*** How will he learn that, do you think?
> ***Aya:*** So, I, I say sometimes, but— [we laugh]
> ***Amy:*** *Sou, ne*. [It's a difficult situation]
> ***Aya:*** Not, not stop his mind. But my husband said stronger than me. So that time Seiji feels 'Ok, I understand.' 100% is probably 10 % he understands, but 90% goes out, goes away, but 10 %, 10% 10% again, again, again, again, again. Someday he will completely understand, I think (Interview, 07/06/2009).

Here, Aya refers to the traditional Japanese value of *omoiyari,* a blend of sympathy, compassion, and thoughtfulness. However, as I heard throughout the study, although a child might have an underdeveloped skill or approach, over time and with effort that child would improve. She also

[7] Interviews with Seiji's parents were conducted primarily in English. In order to clarify meaning, I have edited their responses primarily by removing words. Added words are placed in brackets. I elaborate on issues related to language in Chapter Two.

expressed concern about his level of *kanji,* or Chinese characters, and his ability to write them accurately. Although while in Michigan Seiji had studied *kanji* diligently, keeping so many characters in his head and remembering how to accurately reproduce them had been a challenge in the absence of daily reinforcement. Now that we have a general sense of Seiji's parents' perspectives on issues related to "returning," I briefly discuss the *kikokushijo mondai*.

The Kikokushijo Mondai (Returnee Children Problem)

The word *kikokushijo*[8] was created by the Japanese Ministry of Education in the late 1960s when the government began to draft policy for returnee children (see Goodman, 1990 for a detailed discussion of how the word was defined). As the number of children living overseas grew, extensive research on the perception, status, and experiences of *kikokushijo* was conducted in sociology, linguistics, psychology, education, and anthropology (Goodman, 2003). Goodman (1990, 2003) provides an in-depth look at the Japanese and English research and demonstrates the complexity of the relationship between mainstream perceptions of *kikokushijo* over the years and the diversity of their actual lived experiences. The important point for this study is that there never was one *kikokushijo* experience.

Japanese children living abroad clearly have different experiences from those who remain in Japan. However, the Japanese Ministry of Education reaches beyond national borders and ensures that most Japanese children living overseas are exposed to Japanese pedagogy and instruction in the Japanese language either through full-time or part-time schools. In 2005, according to MEXT data, 55,566 Japanese children of compulsory education age were residing

[8] The word *kikokushijo* is written 帰国子女. Individually, these four Chinese characters have the following meanings: 帰, *ki*, or 'return'; 国, *koku*, or 'country'; 子, *shi,* either 'child' or 'boy'; and 女, *jo*, or 'girl'.

abroad; 18,445 of these were living in North America.[9] Japanese families who are transferred to developing countries usually enroll their children in *nihonjingakko*, or full-time Japanese schools. In the United States, however, dual enrollment in the local public school and *hoshuko*, Japanese Saturday school, is the more common experience. Since there are only four *nihonjingakko* in the United States—Chicago, Illinois; Greenwich, Connecticut; Oakland, New Jersey; and Guam—attending one is not feasible for most Japanese sojourners living in the US.

Although the history of the *kikokushijo* issue is important to debates in Japan about migration, re-migration, and what it means to be Japanese, in regard to Seiji's story as it emerged, this history has little to contribute. In some ways, since I had used the term in both my recruitment materials and Internal Review Board (IRB) forms, the research was perhaps initially framed as a "*kikokushijo* study." However, my interviews with Seiji, his mother, and his teachers suggest that deconstructing the category is a worthier goal than reifying the label, because words used to classify people tend to encourage partial and inaccurate understandings. In fact, neither Seiji nor I actually used "*kikokushijo*" in either formal interviews or informal conversations. Aya, Seiji's mother, was familiar with the *kikokushijo* discourse, but it is difficult to know to what extent participation in the research heightened her awareness. Comments by Matsumoto Sensei, Seiji's sixth grade homeroom teacher at Kaichi, suggest that *kikokushijo* have become less visible over the years. She reported, "If children return to Japan, into my class, I understand that they are *kikokushijo*. However, if they return to Japan before they come to my class, then I do not know" (Interview, 05/20/2009). In other words, children, especially in elementary school, tend to assimilate over the course of a school year. Perhaps more relevant for the discussion here, is her remark that "*kikokushijo* and students who transfer into a school from

[9] Downloaded from http://www.mext.go.jp/english/statist/06060808/pdf/116.pdf

another prefecture are the same" (Interview, 05/20/2009). Matsumoto Sensei, a 30-year veteran teacher, believed that newcomer status at the school in general was more prominent of an identifier at the elementary level than whether or not one had lived in a foreign country. Finally, my interactions with Emiko, Seiji's younger sister, demonstrated that even within the same family the experience of sojourn and return can be very different. Upon return, Emiko encountered more puzzling and difficult adjustments to school life than her brother did. The possible reasons for this are complicated and will be briefly addressed in Chapter Seven. Now I turn to broadly situating Seiji's family within the Japanese community in Michigan.

Japanese in Michigan

As stated previously, the presence of Japanese and others from outside the United States in the Midwest is part of the larger narrative of globalization. Seiji's sojourn fits within the broad discourse on globalization since Shinichi worked as an engineer for a large multinational corporation. The family's journey to Michigan materialized because Shinichi had expressed interest in and was granted an overseas posting. Although clearly spoken American English and the reasonable cost of living were important considerations, the presence of a large Japanese community in the state and the goods and services consequently available were also appealing factors. Within Michigan, Seiji's parents chose to live in Middleton for its convenient location in relation to work, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Japanese restaurants and grocery stores. They had avoided certain cities because of their high numbers of Japanese. For example, they had heard that some of the elementary school classrooms in these communities were saturated with Japanese youngsters. According to Shinichi, some were "probably two-thirds Japanese" (Interview, 07/05/2009). In these situations, children were likely to easily lapse into speaking their first language. Instead, Seiji's parents had sought a school with neither too few

nor too many Japanese: "One is so so tough, but two or three would be the best. In 25 to 30 students in a class. Probably near 10% or less is better. *Etto* [um]. Lakeview Elementary School looks very good" (Interview, 07/05/2009). Shinichi and Aya consulted Japanese colleagues who had lived in Michigan as well as Michigan-based real estate agents in order to select a home that would meet their needs and a school that would provide a good experience for their children. In what follows, I provide an overview of the Japanese community in Michigan and an overview of Seiji and Emiko's Saturday supplementary school.

In 1993, in order to support Japanese nationals living and working in Michigan and Ohio and to enhance the relationship between Japan and the United States, the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit was established. At the time of the study there were approximately 10,000 Japanese citizens residing in Michigan, primarily in the suburban Detroit area. According to a survey conducted by the Consulate, in 2009 there were 484 Japanese facilities operating in the state, most of them in the manufacturing sector.[10] Even amidst the national and state economic downturn and challenges in the automotive industry, a strong Japanese corporate presence remained. Nevertheless, impact from the global recession is clear when looking at changes in the number of Japanese school-aged children living in Michigan; this number dropped by nearly one third between 2008 and 2010. Fluctuating numbers of students is one of the challenges faced by the Japanese School of Michigan, the *hoshuko* that Seiji and Emiko attended while living in the US.

Back in the early 1970s, as the number of Japanese companies and Japanese workers with accompanying children increased, a need for educational supports for employees' school-age children was identified. As discussed in the previous section, this was a response to the

[10] http://www.detroit.us.emb-japan.go.jp/pdf/en/pe/JDI_MI.pdf

kikokushijo issue. In 1973, several companies founded the Japanese School of Michigan. At that time there were only a couple dozen students and the primary goal was to provide supplementary materials so that students could have a smooth transition back into the Japanese educational system when they returned to Japan. As the presence of Japanese companies increased, the school expanded. Although this number has dropped, at the time of the research, approximately 1000 children from kindergarten through twelfth grade attended the school on 42 Saturdays throughout the year. Most, about 80 percent, were kindergarten and elementary school students. In part, this reflects the real and perceived academic and social challenges of returning to Japan as a teenager.[11]

The Japanese School of Michigan, like *hoshuko* around the world, maintains strong ties to the Japanese education system both through use of the national curriculum and as a result of leadership from administrators assigned by the Ministry of Education in Tokyo. The curricular focus is on Japanese (two to three hours a day for all grades) and mathematics (two hours a day for grades first – tenth). For these subjects, teachers plan to cover an entire week of the national curriculum. Thus, the pace is intense, and commitment from administrators, staff, parents, and students is essential. The school also uses various strategies to strengthen communication and understanding with students' American teachers. These include English language newsletters, the Educators to Japan program, a handbook for American teachers of Japanese students, and an Open House for students' American teachers. Although students live in dozens of communities throughout the southeast corner of the state and the children attend schools in more than a dozen districts, the Japanese School of Michigan serves an important role of bringing together Japanese children and their parents on Saturdays throughout the year and over the course of their sojourns.

[11] Yasuko Kanno (2003) examines the experiences of high school and university returnees in her book *Negotiating Bilingual and Bicultural Identities: Japanese Returnees Betwixt Two Worlds*.

As discussed above, in Japan, the *kikokushijo* issue was directly connected to globalization and initially emerged as a conversation about the boundaries of "Japaneseness." In the twenty-first century, Goodman (2003) argues, "The boundaries of what it means to be Japanese have stretched to include *kikokushijo*, at the same time as they have been set up to exclude migrant workers such as *Nikkeijin* [foreign population of Japanese origin]" (p. 189). Compared to other industrialized nations, the number of foreign migrants in Japan remains fairly small: 1.2 percent of the total population (or 1.6 million) compared to 9.8 percent (or 26 million) in the United States. However, in a country where "immigration policy has been explicitly governed by an ideology of cultural and racial homogeneity" (Goodman, Peach, Takenaka, & White, 2003, p. 1), an increase in the number and diversity of new migrants creates challenges for Japanese society and for the Japanese education system. In Japan and around the world, emigration, immigration, and transnational migration have created complex patterns of movement where border crossers present different ways of thinking, being, acting, and interacting.

Seiji's story is part of this large-scale movement of people, but it is also the story of a boy who got up in the morning, ate breakfast, and went to school so that he could learn and play with his friends. Seiji is a twenty-first century kid with an impressive set of navigation skills. Through learning about his experiences in the social and cultural worlds of American and Japanese elementary schools, readers are exposed to ideas about how to approach the complex process of schooling "other people's children." The comparative elements of the study—including Seiji's analysis of his experiences at Lakeview and Kaichi—invite us to think about different paradigms in elementary education and the cultural values underlying school processes.

In their study of preschools in Japan, China, and the United States, Tobin, Tsueh, and Karasawa (2009) argue "culture acts as a source of continuity and as a brake on the impacts of globalization" (pp. 224 – 225). Seiji's story includes examples of the continuity of culture, and yet, it also demonstrates how culture is disrupted as new ways of being learned in another place interact with accepted ways of being. School is a central place in children's lives. When educators strive to understand children in richer ways, they create spaces to appreciate and strengthen children's ability to move between social and cultural worlds of home and school.

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Frameworks, Methods, and Methodology

Introduction

> Silence about the East-West binary or the male-female binary in our writing does not mean those binaries are inactive in the readings that are made of what we write.
>
> Davies and Kasama, 2004, p. 122

One of my goals in this study and in the writing up of the research is to deconstruct the binaries with which I inevitably dance—structure-agency, East-West, female-male, child-adult. Binaries tend to focus our attention on seeing simple differences as defining features. "The East" is group-oriented; "the West" is individual-oriented, and so on. There are, of course, differences—interesting differences—which this research explores and analyzes. However, these and other differences are always more complicated than simple binaries would lead us to believe. One of the other problems with labels and binaries is that they quell our curiosity and our ability to recognize, understand and appreciate complexity. For me, in the field and at the laptop, my research on and with Seiji induced me to consider how the stories we tell at particular moments in time are amalgamations of our prior experiences in the world, our psychological and biological features, and our thoughts about the future. All students and all research participants have engaging tales of their life adventures even though we can never hear or even listen to all of them. Nevertheless, my goal with this research is to contribute to a "growing mosaic of understanding" (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 14) of kids' experiences navigating multiple worlds in the twenty-first century.

The research questions that framed this study were:

1) How does a Japanese boy navigate in and between social and cultural worlds in both the United States and Japan?
2) How does a child author his story of transition?

By referring to social and cultural worlds, I draw attention to social and cultural aspects of the particular settings within which the focal child acts and interacts. I have organized this chapter into four main sections: theoretical frameworks and key concepts; participants, settings, and researcher positionality; data generation; and data analysis. I begin with a discussion of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model as a starting point for the research. The strength of the model is that it places the individual within sites of interaction such as home, school, and neighborhood and then within the increasingly broader systems that influence interactions and meaning making within those sites. The model also includes a temporal component that recognizes both the passing of time and historical time. Next I introduce my perspective on culture and frame the study as an "ethnography of the particular" (Abu-Lughod, 1991). Sociocultural and practice theories (Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991) complemented my ecological mapping, helped me find the particulars, and framed my understanding of how structural forces, especially schools, shaped Seiji's circumstances and his "active, situated, and open-ended engagement in everyday life" (Thorne, 2005, p. 85). Then I explain how the concepts "navigating" and "authoring" are helpful metaphors in investigating the experiences of a twenty-first century kid in motion.

The remainder of the chapter focuses on methods and methodology. First, I discuss finding (and implicating) participants. Although most ethnographic studies describe the setting in detail in order to orient "readers to the place, people, and situations to be examined" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 201), in this study, given the multiple critical contexts such an approach seemed unwieldy. Instead, I chose to introduce settings throughout the research narrative. I then discuss my ever-shifting positionality in the field and weave in issues related to language. The third section focuses on data generation in Michigan and in Japan, primarily

within school settings, but also in Seiji's homes and neighborhoods. In the fourth section, I focus on data analysis and the structure of the research narrative. I conclude with an overview of the remaining chapters.

Theoretical Frameworks: Designing Research to Explore a Child's Worlds

> Showing the actual circumstances and detailed histories of individuals and their relationships would suggest that such particulars, which are always present (as we know from our own personal experiences), are also always crucial to the constitution of experience.... [R]econstructing people's arguments about, justifications for, and interpretations of what they and others are doing would explain how social life proceeds. It would show that although the terms of their discourses may be set (and, as in any society, include several sometimes contradictory and often historically changing discourses), within these limits, people contest interpretations of what is happening, strategize, feel pain, and live their lives.
>
> Abu-Lughod, 1991, p. 476

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

Ecological approaches to human development provide a bridge between psychological and sociological views of children and encourage a systemic approach to understanding children's everyday lives. Human ecologists acknowledge children's "active role in their own development while at the same time showing that development is also influenced by broader social and cultural forces, as they have developed over historical time" (Tudge & Hogan, 2005, p. 106). Thus, for a study interested in the experiences of an individual child over space and time, the model provides a map for thinking about how the individual is embedded within social and cultural contexts. My choice of an ecological model also reflects my understanding of the way the world works, my epistemological commitments, the methods I chose, and how I used them. Finally, privileging a systems approach of one child's experiences in two countries allowed a more comprehensive examination of his navigation skill across contexts and introduced limitations regarding the extent to which I could study individual contexts.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) book, *The Ecology of Human Development,* was remarkable within the field of developmental psychology because it persuasively argued that research must take place in real life settings and seek to explore relevant experiences in children's lives. In other words, research must have what he referred to as "ecological validity." He articulated his theory as follows: "The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 21). He used the metaphor of the Russian nested doll (*matrioshka*) to delineate the interconnected set of systems he referred to as the microsystem (an immediate setting such as the home or the classroom), the mesosystem (relationships between single settings), the exosystem (events occurring in settings where the child is not present), and the macrosystem (the broader culture or subculture). The passage of the child through historical and developmental time is represented by the chronosystem. See Figure 1 for an adaptation of the model. Thus, an ecological approach draws attention to both "proximal" (e.g. child-parent, child-peer, and child-teacher relationships) and "distal" (e.g. government and company policies, parent-teacher relationship) influences on the child's development as well as how these influences interact (Hamilton & Luster, 2005).

In a reflective essay, Bronfenbrenner (1995) wrote about how experiences from his own life course, including immigration to the United States from Russia with his parents at the age of six, contributed to his theoretical approach and his interest in ecological transitions, or the "shifts in role or setting, which occur throughout the life span" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 6). In this study, I used the model to recognize Seiji's experiences as nested within a set of interacting

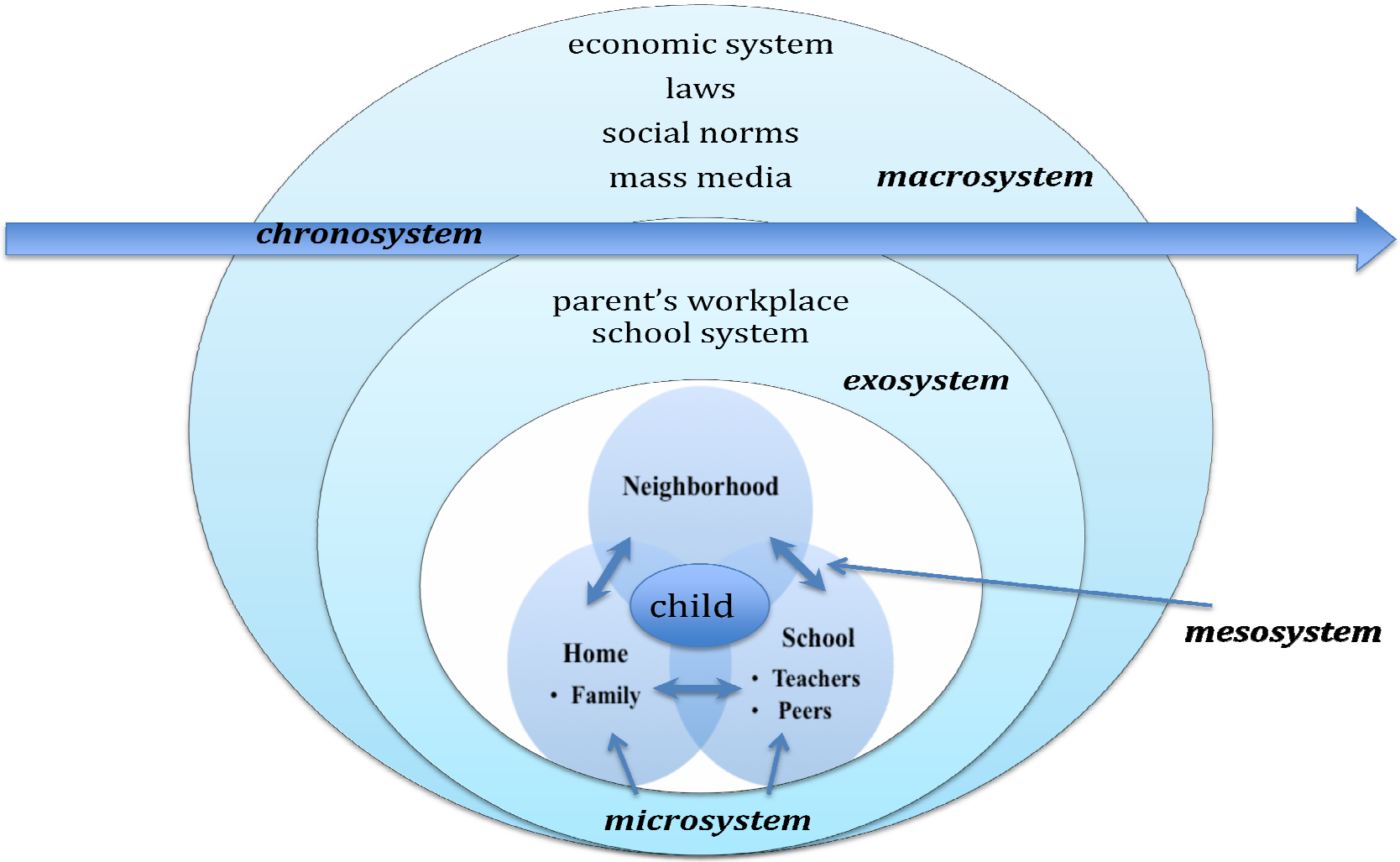

Figure 1: Adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model. For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

systems in both the United States and Japan. Although the ecological transition that this research focused on was Seiji's return to Japan after living in the United States for five and a half years, as the fieldwork ended Seiji began a new transition as he took on the role of being a middle school student.

Figure 2 shows how I used Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model to map the American and Japanese worlds that Seiji travelled between over the 15 months of the fieldwork for the study. The model helped me identify important sites of interaction, consider connections between those sites, and locate all the sites within a larger system. Seiji's father's workplace is an example of a relevant exosystem. Shinichi's employment at a multinational corporation generated the opportunity for sojourn. In addition, while in the United States, Shinichi worked fewer hours per week and travelled less than he did after returning to Japan. Thus, Seiji spent more time with his father in Michigan than in Japan in part due to changes in the exosystem.

Figure 2 identifies important microsystems and indicates mesosystems (relationships between settings) by overlapping the circles that represent home, school, and neighborhood. Aya's relationship with Lakeview is an example of a mesosystem. Thus, looking at the figure identifies setting categories, but it does not tell us anything about school or home as particular sites of social interaction. In addition, while the left side of the figure distinguishes school as a microsystem, it actually misrepresents Seiji's world of school since while he was in the United States he attended both Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan. It is this aspect of Bronfenbrenner's model that Thorne (2005) finds problematic. She writes, "[The] framework tends to constrain rather than facilitate understanding of the complex and processual dynamics of social life" (p. 63). I agree. However, for me, the model provided a helpful map for examining one child's experience in ecological transition.

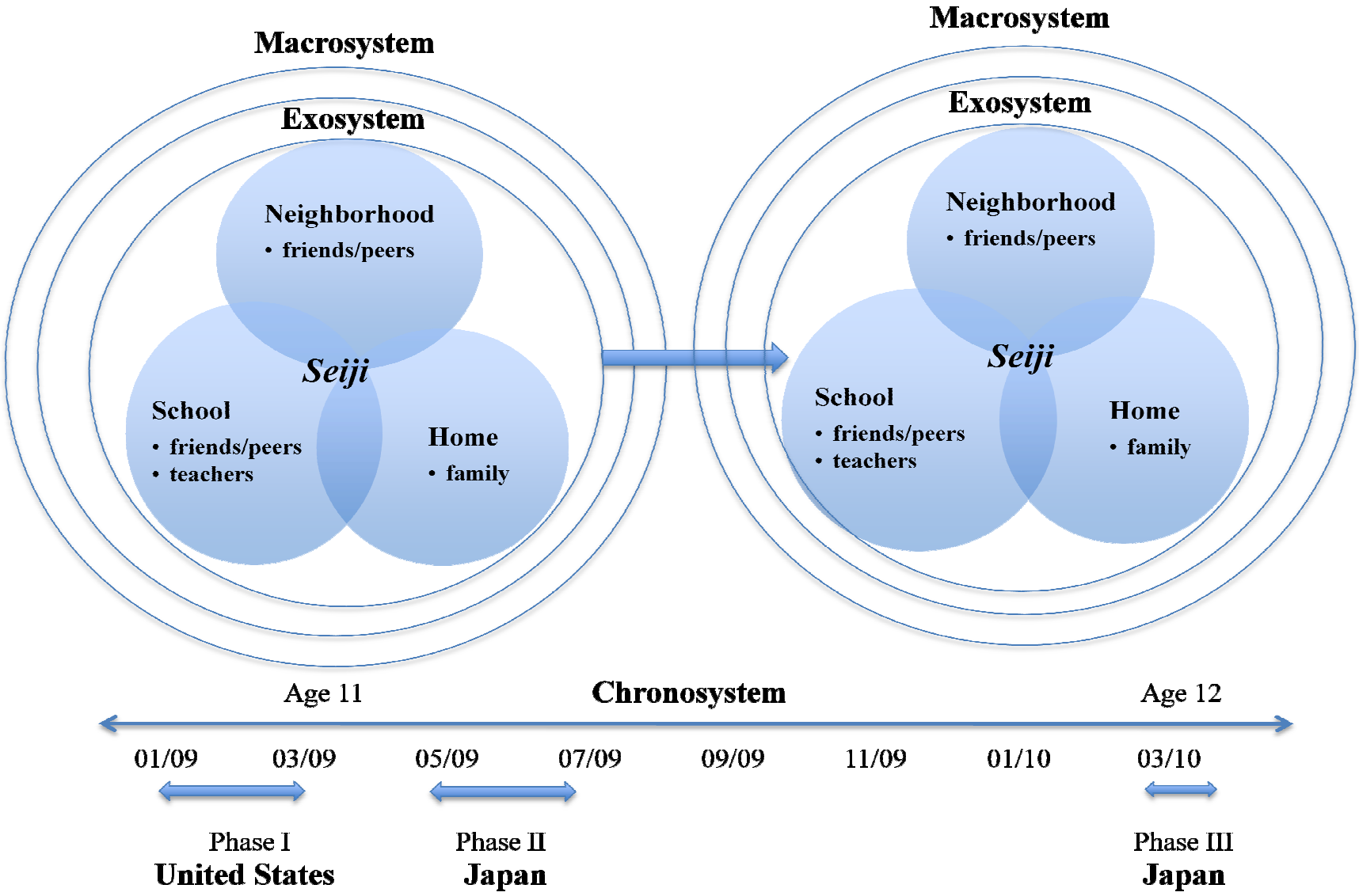

Figure 2: Mapping Seiji's Return: An Ecological Transition

I offer another example to clarify how the model helped me see. In this study, I define neighborhood as the area surrounding Seiji's home. Figure 2 provides little insight into Seiji's particular neighborhoods, but the model reminded me to consider both neighborhood and the connections between home, school, and neighborhood and the relevance of it all to Seiji's experiences transitioning between living and going to school in the United States and living and going to school in Japan. The structure of neighborhoods reflects broader cultural ideas about "neighborhood" as well as physical and spatial realities related to geography. The model also reminds us that the "neighborhood" will change as Seiji continues along his developmental pathway and gradually gains greater access to a wider world as he grows older.

Culture and an "Ethnography of the Particular"

The design of this study illuminates both the utility and the challenge of thinking about "culture" in the twenty-first century. Creating a research narrative about the daily, lived experiences of a child moving between two countries demanded consideration and analysis of the formative roles culture and society have in shaping individual experiences and development. Chapters Three and Four build on the idea that schools are sites that transmit both cognitive and cultural knowledge. Cultural knowledge includes both "what people must know to act competently (in accord with expected standards) in routine situations of everyday life" and "ideas about human nature and the place of humans in their physical and social environment, aesthetic preferences, values and affective patterns, [and] beliefs about time and causality" (Hansen, 1979, p. 25). This definition of cultural knowledge is located in Bronfenbrenner's macrosystem. Thus, one way to view schools is as institutions that "both reflect and impart their cultures' core beliefs" (Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009, p. 1). However, when we consider the experiences of individuals crossing borders, these views of culture and cultural knowledge

seem static and inflexible. As I examined Seiji's experiences as a Japanese kid in an American school and as a Japanese kid in a Japanese school after five years of schooling in the US, concepts of culture and cultural knowledge were concurrently helpful and problematic because they served both explanatory and exclusionary functions.

Another way of conceptualizing culture recognizes flux and reminds us to consider individual interpretation and performance. In his introduction to *The Anthropology of Experience,* Bruner (1986) writes: "Selves, social organizations, and cultures are not given but are problematic and always in production. Cultural change, cultural continuity, and cultural transmission all occur simultaneously in the experiences and expressions of social life" (p. 12). Understanding the ways that macro-level ideas about culture interact with micro-level performances of culture is a productive tension that is central to this study. Schools are by definition focused a great deal on performance. And this cultural analysis I've undertaken thus attends to how "culture" and meanings get performed and constructed by and in the various schools and school contexts Seiji moved between.

I began the section on theoretical frameworks by citing Abu-Lughod's argument and rationale for examining the lives of individuals. If, as Abu-Lughod (1991) suggests, culture is "the essential tool for making other" (p. 143), writing "ethnographies of the particular" works against such othering in part because it challenges our stereotypical views by introducing complexity. This dissertation is an ethnography of the particular.

Sociocultural and Practice Theories

Sociocultural theory focuses attention on the sociocultural context in which individuals act, "instead of examining single individuals trying to make sense of the world on their own" (Graue, 1993, p. 26). Thus, although the focus of this study is on an individual, my unit of

analysis was Seiji in interaction within the multiple contexts of his daily life. In order to understand the actions of individuals one must understand that they exist within social interactions that are culturally, historically, and institutionally situated (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Because sociocultural theory crosses disciplinary boundaries—anthropology, history, sociology—it encourages a systemic approach that, in my view, is highly compatible with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model which sought to locate the (psychological) individual within settings and contexts.

Practice theories highlight both the structural forces that shape the circumstances in which children live and children's active and situated engagement in their daily lives (Cooper & Davis, 2005; Thorne, 2005). Lave and Wenger's (1991) discussion of the relationship between practice, the individual, and the social world, their broad views of learning, and "a robust notion of 'whole person'" (p. 53) resonated with my own commitments as a researcher. They write:

> Painting a picture of the person as a primarily 'cognitive' entity tends to promote a nonpersonal view of knowledge, skills, tasks, activities, and learning. As a consequence, both theoretical analyses and instructional prescriptions tend to be driven by reference to reified 'knowledge domains.' ... In contrast, to insist on starting with social practice, on taking participation to be the crucial process, and on including the social world at the core of the analysis only seems to eclipse the person. In reality, however, participation in social practice – subjective as well as objective – suggests a very explicit focus on the person, but as person-in-the-world, as member of a sociocultural community. This focus in turn promotes a view of knowing as activity by specific people in specific circumstances (p. 52).

This study also takes a broad view of learning that includes but extends beyond "knowledge domains." In choosing to highlight movement across and participation in multiple settings, newcomer and old-timer status was relevant. However, explicating the ***process*** of having and gaining membership in particular communities was not the focus of the study. While the issue is an interesting one, the query did not inform the design of the research. In other words, although the study might have focused on participation in the particular worlds of math, literacy, or

friendship, or entrance into these worlds after he returned to Japan, I chose a wide-angle lens that adopted a more biographical approach as I considered his participation in these and other worlds in both the United States and Japan. This allowed me to gain comparative insights and see dynamic movement across space and time. I contend that it is insufficient to ***recognize*** that Seiji and other border-crossing children actively participate in multiple communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Instead, we must also gain appreciation for and learn how to foster the dexterity and skill that such participation demands. The theories are helpful because they illuminate the complexity of lived experiences and practices that are socially and culturally situated in multi-dimensional structured settings.

Socio-cultural and practice theories and scholars who frame research with these theories frequently address identity and identity formation (Holland et. al. 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Thorne, 2005; Wenger, 1998). In this study of this particular kid, I decided not to frame the study using identity discourses. This was primarily because it did not emerge as a compelling lens through which to explicate Seiji's experiences. In addition, early in my fieldwork I detected dissonance between my understanding of "the multiplicity of selves" (Kondo, 1990) and "selves in practice" (Holland, et. al., 1998) and Seiji's proclamation on the day we met: "I'm not that different in both schools [Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan]. I talk a lot, I'm very active, and I'm creative" (Interview, 1/23/2009). Amidst shifting contexts Seiji seemed to maintain a remarkably stable sense of self. Thus although identity is not absent in the research narrative, in this ethnography of a particular 10-, 11-, 12-year old boy, the concepts of "navigating" and "authoring" were more useful than "identity" and "multiple selves" in part because both embody agency.

Navigating and Authoring

> We are learning how each child's evolving constellation of individual, relational, institutional, and cultural experiences becomes that child's unique life trajectory.
>
> Cooper, García Coll, Bartko, Davis, Chatman, 2005, p. 2

I found "navigating" to be a powerful construct in thinking about Seiji's experiences living and going to school in two countries. This is in part because "navigation" incorporates action and adventure while suggesting prowess of the captain. The metaphor also invites us to think about challenges located beneath the surface. In a quickly changing and unpredictable world the ability to adapt is an increasingly valuable skill. Work of the McArthur Network Successful Pathways through Middle Childhood (McMCN) scholars provided especially helpful insights and approaches to thinking about interactions between cultural and social contexts, everyday experiences, and developmental pathways for children in middle childhood. As Prout (2005) explains, the McMCN uses the concept of "pathway" to "emphasize the active participation of the traveler in the construction of the route" (p. 319).

In thinking about Seiji's experiences constructing his route, the concept of "authoring" pushed me to think about how Seiji might "write" his story. I had initially located the concept as the "space of authoring" in Holland and her colleagues' (1998) work *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*. However, I came to use the concept in a more literal way as I thought about the relationship between adult researcher with theory and questions in hand and child participant with ideas and goals of his own. Thus, in the study, I analyze how Seiji "authors" his story using a particular style and voice in the service of the plot that he has arranged while recognizing my role in editing that story.

When considered holistically, the frameworks and concepts I have discussed above have clear implications for the design of the study, the identification of sites, and the form of the data. In turn, since frameworks and concepts allow us to see the world in particular ways, we are able

to "know" some things better than others. In other words, the data I generated have limitations. Bonfenbrenner's ecological model compelled me to identify these sites of interaction: neighborhood, school, and home. For various reasons, I was able to access commensurate data at the school sites—Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi. Thus while I considered features of neighborhood and home, I focused on schools. Conceptualizing classrooms and schools as social and cultural worlds where children practice, participate and perform allowed me to think about these institutions in particular ways and to present them in particular ways. Schools are, of course, places where students learn and engage academic content. I background that role in this study, but remind readers that learning math or music or science ***is*** a cultural and social endeavor within a community of practice. Metaphors of navigating and authoring recognize Seiji's agency and beckon a narrative approach to understanding his experiences transitioning between school and life in the United States and Japan and school and life in Japan.

Methods and Methodology

This section provides a general overview of the approach and methods used to study one child's navigation of social and cultural worlds in the United States and Japan. I designed the study in three general phases between January 2009 and April 2010. In the first phase (January through March 2009), Seiji and his family were preparing to return to Japan after having lived in Michigan for five and a half years. The second phase (May through July 2009) marked a period of adjustment and settling in soon after the family's return to Japan. The final phase of the research (March through April 2010) marked one year after return and included Seiji's graduation from elementary school. I used the same basic process during each phase: a

combination of interviews with Seiji, Aya, and his teachers; classroom observations; and analysis of documents. In Japan, I had additional opportunities to interact with Seiji and his family. I explain the particulars below and provide an overview of fieldwork including dates and locations of interviews, classroom observations, and significant events in Table 1 found in Appendix A.

In considering methodology, it was important to locate the research between studies that focused on pre-school-aged children and studies with adolescent participants. For example, "interviews" with 4-year-olds, 10-year-olds, and 16-year olds can all be productive, but developmental differences require researchers to frame questions and interact with participants in different ways in order to "hear" what is being communicated. In the preface to their book *What Children Can Tell Us*, Garbarino and Stott (1992), advise, "The only credible approach is to start with openness toward the child as a communicator and a good grounding in child development" (p. xvi). Developmental differences as well as individual differences require researchers to "continually find new and different ways to listen to and observe children, and to collect physical traces of their lives" (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 95). In what follows I articulate my efforts to build a relationship with Seiji and the methods I used to learn about his daily life in both the United States and Japan.

Identification of Participant(s)

Initially, I sought to recruit four or five participants—boys and girls—because I wanted to examine the experiences of Japanese sojourners and *kikokushijo* using gender as a primary lens. I delineated the following criteria, which I subsequently explain:

(1) child is attending fourth, fifth, or sixth grade at a Michigan elementary school or seventh grade at a middle school during the 2008-2009 school year
(2) child's parent is employed by a Japanese company
(3) child's sojourn in Michigan will be at least three years and not longer than five years
(4) child attends the Japanese School of Michigan on Saturday, and
(5) child will be returning to Japan in March 2009.

I selected these parameters for both practical and strategic reasons. Fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh graders who had spent several years in Michigan were likely to be fairly proficient in conversational English, and I had decided to establish my relationship with my focal participants in English. I anticipated that the children would find it more natural to speak to an American in English especially since the research began in the US. However, I was also aware of limitations in my Japanese language skills and the challenges I would face creating closeness in relationships based in the Japanese language. I recognized that parents might see the research as an opportunity to create an ongoing connection with English, and, to some extent, their lives in the United States. I decided to target children of company employees—rather than children of students or academics or a combination of the two—in order to maintain relative consistency in regard to parental employment. The March return date was chosen for practical reasons; I wanted to follow students who began the school year in Japan at the same time as their classmates.

I first met Seiji's family electronically when his mother responded to my post soliciting research participants on an on-line Japanese information bulletin board. Although we had no prior relationship, a Japanese family[12] who had lived in Michigan for three years provided a critical, if indirect, introduction. In January, I conducted initial interviews with Seiji and his mother and began to seek entrée to his schools and classrooms. However, my efforts to recruit additional children were unsuccessful and time was marching on. *Sho ga nai*, I thought. Sato (2004), citing personal communication with psychologist Hiroshi Azuma, describes *sho ga nai* as

[12] In summer 2008, I had been in the Tokyo area taking a 6-week intensive Japanese course. One of my contacts at the Japanese School of Michigan had introduced me to the father of this family through e-mail. He had worked as an assistant principal at the school and had recently returned to Japan with his wife and their four children. He invited me to spend a weekend with his family, and I had gratefully accepted.

"an important psychological mechanism" that allows "an acceptance of and an accommodation to a situation that enables a person to continue and move on" (p. 209). Thus, I reframed the study as an "ethnography of the particular" and soon realized that what I would lose in breadth I could easily gain in depth.

Given the study's ecological framework, Seiji was both the focus of the research and my tour guide into the salient contexts of his life in Michigan and in Japan. In other words, all settings and secondary participants—members of Seiji's family, his teachers, and his classmates and friends—were implicated rather than chosen.

Researcher Positionality

Although this research does not directly engage issues of gender, the scholarship of feminist social scientists including Mary Catherine Bateson (1987), Lila Abu-Lughod (1991), Margery Wolf (1992), Dorrine Kondo (1990), and Sandra Harding (1987, 2001) has influenced my approach to research and writing and my commitments as a researcher. Their scholarship thoughtfully recognizes the complexities and various shades of gray that are our lives and the lives of those we research in ways that are both authentic and productive. Research is a project of ethics in part because it inevitably involves both people and power. This and every account of lived experience is partial (Kondo, 1990; Wolf 1992). Feminist principles that guided this study include acknowledging positionality, engaging in research for a positive change, discerning ambiguity, validating women's [and children's] experiences in everyday life, recognizing the importance of context, and reminding readers that all knowledge is created not discovered (Harding, 1987; Kirsch, 1999; Usher, 2000). Where I locate myself as a scholar and who I cite in my research positions me in particular ways. In what follows, I discuss my positionality in relation to the study participants.

As Graue and Walsh (1998) argue, "[Data] come out of the researcher's interactions in a local setting, through relationships with participants, and out of interpretations of what is important to the questions of interest" (p. 73). The nature of my relationship with Seiji and his family is critical to understanding the study. An ecological study of one kid requires a certain closeness both with the child and with the child's family. My relationship with teachers also warrants attention, because it serves as a reminder that the study focuses primarily on Seiji in relation to his teachers and his classmates rather than on his teachers and their pedagogies. My goals during classroom observations were to understand settings as sociocultural spaces with particular tools, norms, and values and to observe how Seiji participated in each setting. Throughout the study my positionality shifted in complicated ways as I travelled to new settings. First, I examine and elaborate on my relationship with Seiji and his family. Then I identify my location within Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi.

Seiji and his Family at Home

Recruitment materials and consent forms for this study were drafted in both English and Japanese. There were numerous consent forms; I include the youth assent form in Appendix B. In my recruitment fliers I presented myself this way: "Ms. Damrow taught at Amity English School in Matsumoto, Japan for two years. She has a Masters degree in child development and is a doctoral candidate in the College of Education at Michigan State University. She is currently studying Japanese." Seiji was the focal participant, but my relationship with Aya was also important. Aya and I were about the same age, and as we scheduled interviews and discussed the logistics of school visits and their upcoming return, I increasingly enjoyed our communications both because of the insights I gained and because of her warmth and

friendliness. Aya was an important secondary participant and her perspectives complemented and supplemented what I learned through conversations with Seiji and his teachers.

I would describe my relationship with Seiji as friendly, genuine, and joyful. Almost all of our communication and interactions were in English although our interviews sometimes included discussions about Japanese words and concepts. Occasionally, he formed sentences that followed a pattern that was informed by Japanese word order. He peppered our conversations with "um" and "like." Although I did not interview any of his Lakeview classmates for comparison, his use of "um" and "like" probably reflected the linguistic patterns of his American peers. Unlike his mother, his father, and his sister, Seiji never used Japanese fillers such as *etto* (um) when we were speaking English. This suggests that he was proficient in and completely comfortable with his second language. In Michigan, we met in his home for interviews and at school during observations. At school, he did not hesitate to talk to me, and he seemed to enjoy introducing me to his friends. However, after my initial visits to Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan, during the in-between times of the day, his focus was primarily on friends and having fun. In other words, there were limits to my knowledge of Seiji's experiences and interactions at school and in all other settings.

In Japan, circumstances changed as I became both a researcher and a visitor. While still in Michigan, Aya had invited me to stay with her family when I came to Japan. I enthusiastically and gratefully accepted her offer while recognizing both the advantages and potential downsides for the research and for the personal relationships. I did a "home stay" with Seiji's family—interspersed with short trips and stays at a business hotel—during both phases in Japan: for fourteen days in Phase Two and for sixteen days in Phase Three. I gave Aya *ichi man en* (ten thousand yen), or a little over one hundred dollars, during each phase as a stipend for incidentals,

primarily food. I also brought gifts and specific requests from the US including maple syrup, Reeses peanut butter cups, Swiss Miss hot chocolate, microwave popcorn, Lindt truffles, and the latest book in a series Seiji was reading: *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*.[13] As a guest, I cooked a few meals, washed dishes, baked birthday cakes and generally tried to be helpful and stay out of the way on particularly busy days. Seiji and Emiko were generally fun to be around. Sometimes I walked with one of them to English class or the grocery store. During the week, their afternoon and evening schedules diverged, and so I frequently ate dinner with one of them either early or late.

My interviews with Aya were primarily in English although on a few occasions she expressed her views in Japanese. I strove to balance the research and the personal components of this relationship. This was a challenge in part because I really enjoyed her company and her friendship and was staying as a guest in her home. However, I was also conscious of how a close friendship might influence the research. I did not know how the research narrative would unfold, and I was concerned that the eventual report I produced might some day be experienced as a form of betrayal (Wolf, 1992). In addition, the research design created intense weeks of fieldwork, and so many evenings I excused myself so that I could type up field notes and memos. Drawing attention to my role as a researcher probably created some tension for Aya. I think, at times, the relationship was tricky for both of us.

The dissertation does not focus on home settings to the degree that it focuses on school settings primarily for two reasons. First of all, an ecological approach does not require

[13] It was fascinating to watch Seiji read this book in his home in Japan. The series is steeped in white, middle-class American kid/boy culture. In the book, kids mow lawns for extra money, but in Japan a tiny fraction of less that one percent of the population have lawns, and, generally, Japanese elementary and middle school students do not hire themselves out. In addition, the protagonist protests the back to school signs emerging two months before the start of the school year, but in Japan, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, there is no "back-to-school season."

researchers to fully examine every layer of the system and my central focus was on school contexts. Readers must judge for themselves, but my goal was to offer a sufficient sense of Seiji in his family context. Secondly, I had presented the study as one where I was interested in transitions between school and life in the United States and school and life in Japan. Although home life is clearly a part of "life," I was quite certain that Aya had not invited me to stay with her family so that I could put Seiji's home life under the research microscope. Thus, for me this decision had an ethical component. It also means that readers have less access to Seiji's home world.

Teachers in Schools

In school settings, I identified myself as a graduate student from Michigan State University. One of the most challenging and potentially risky components of the research design was that once Seiji became the focal participant the settings and the other participants were predetermined although not necessarily predisposed to engage in the project. Since my unit of analysis was Seiji in the various contexts of his life, at Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi I needed to negotiate entry into the schools in general and Seiji's classrooms in particular. In a sense, it was a child- and family-centered approach to doing educational research. Rather than seeking access to children through the school, I sought access to the school through the child. Aya played a key role here. She was an adept communicator and had positive relationships at all schools, especially at Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan where she had regularly volunteered. At all three schools she initiated the process—I viewed this as parental support for the project. All three schools and all of Seiji's teachers agreed to allow three or four days of classroom observations. My presence in the classrooms was generally one of a visitor, and I usually sat at a table or in a chair in the back of the room.

Conversations with teachers during the in-between times of the school day primarily revolved around Seiji and the phenomenon of sojourning or returning Japanese students. Although I initiated conversations at the end of the day, during the day I viewed teachers' responsibilities to be to their students. I interviewed Seiji's teachers at both Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan in English, although with all Japanese participants I encouraged them to use Japanese if they thought it would help them communicate their perspectives more clearly. At Kaichi, I conducted the interviews in Japanese using an interview schedule. In both of my interviews with Matsumoto Sensei, Seiji's homeroom teacher, she requested to look at the questions before we began. In addition, she invited another teacher at the school to join us and assist with translation and clarification as needed. Both Matsumoto Sensei and Ueda Sensei, Seiji's math teacher, were gracious and patient with my Japanese, even when in searching for the right words, I occasionally failed to produce the appropriate polite speech forms.

Classmates/Friends in School

My interactions with Seiji's classmates varied. Even though I only spent a few days in each setting, the children seemed largely unaffected by my presence. When Lakeview students asked me what I was writing in my little red notebook, I told them that I was interested in knowing what it was like to be a fifth grader in Mrs. Matthews' class and so was taking notes about the classroom and the lessons and what happened over the course of a day. Several girls gave me valentines during their Valentine's Day festivities, and I also received treats when a child celebrated a birthday. The first day I visited Lakeview, Mrs. Matthew's wrote my name on the white board. During subsequent visits, students took the initiative.

Seiji's classmates at the Japanese School of Michigan seemed to largely ignore my presence during lessons. However, they were interested in my exchanges with Tanaka Sensei,

Seiji's teacher—especially if they were in English. I felt the most invisible at this school, perhaps in part because these classes only met once a week and so the social relationships among students and between teacher and students seemed comparatively undeveloped.

At Kaichi, I was clearly positioned as Seiji's guest. All of his classmates knew that I was from the United States and that I had known Seiji when he lived in Michigan. In addition, I had met seven or eight boys from Seiji's class at his house. Toward the end of the fieldwork a few of the girls in Seiji's class expressed interest in what I was writing down in my notebook—perhaps in part because they spotted my drawing of their school mark. I showed them the page in my notebook that was open and explained that I wanted to understand Japanese school life for sixth graders. I chatted with students at lunch and during breaks—sometimes in Japanese and sometimes in English. Once, a group of girls invited me to join a card game over the long break. Another girl spontaneously offered her hand warmers to me during a pause in practice for the graduation ceremony in the chilly, unheated all-purpose room. In many ways my interactions with Seiji's classmates at Lakeview and Kaichi were quite similar. Everyone was generally kind and polite. Some were mildly interested in what I was doing. A couple expressed particular interest in my notebook. A number seemed to be largely unaffected.

Data Generation

> Data are not out there, waiting, like tomatoes on a vine, to be picked. Acquiring data is a very active, creative, improvisational process.
>
> Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 91

Everything began with Seiji, but it was the interactions between interviews, observations, and document analysis from which I created the research narrative. Graue and Walsh (1998) suggest, "The key to generating valuable data is to link them interpretively to relevant audiences so that they can understand the data's meaning" (p. 73). The data set I generated through my fieldwork reflects a holistic approach to thinking about children. In school settings I was

interested in interactions as social, cultural, and cognitive events without privileging content learning. This is in part due to Seiji's academic successes and my decision to explore days at school rather than learning in a particular subject area such as mathematics or language arts. However, the approach also clearly reflects Seiji and Aya's perspectives on what was valuable within elementary school life. Learning science, *kokugo* (Japanese), and English were important, but other valuable lessons were contained in the social interactions with friends, classmates, and teachers. In the following sections I discuss interviews, observations, participation, and document analysis.

Interviews

My approach to interviews varied depending on the participant. My interviews with Seiji were semi-structured and included open exploratory questions. I used active interviewing, or the idea of a co-constructed conversation in which the interviewer actively positions the interviewee to consider other perspectives and even challenge his or her own stated beliefs (Holstein & Gubrium, 2002). Due to the power differential, this approach would clearly be untenable with some 10-, 11-, and 12-year-olds. However, the strategy was helpful in my interviews with Seiji. Edmond (2005) writes, "[Ethnography, w]ith specific regard to children, requires us to suspend our sense of 'superior' knowledge and to learn the practices and perspectives of those under study" (pp. 136 – 137). I have previously referred to Seiji as a "tour guide" of his life. By giving him this title I acknowledged that I, the adult, valued his role as collaborative data generator. The research narrative includes numerous excerpts from our interviews in order to situate Seiji's comments and allow readers to learn about our joint meaning making. This strategy also gives a sense of power relation dynamics between adult researcher and child

participant (Kellett & Ding, 2004; Mayall, 2000). Perhaps, in part because he was a Japanese boy, I did not presume to know how he was experiencing any aspect of his life.

My initial interview with Seiji focused on everyday experiences, school life, activities outside of school, and views about the future. Subsequent interviews built on previous interviews and observations. Other research tools I used during interviews included asking him to create drawings of his neighborhood and eco-maps that reflected where and with whom he spent his time. In addition, I used socio-metric questioning where I asked him to select classmates for hypothetical activities, sentence completion, and identification of important personal items (Kellett & Ding, 2004). These methods "primed the pump" (Graue & Walsh, 1998) and allowed me to understand Seiji in more complicated ways than if we had only worked in a question and answer mode (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). During Phase Two I interviewed Emiko, Seiji's younger sister, and used semi-structured questions and drawing to invite a visual form of expression. This interview offered a compelling contrastive glimpse with Seiji's experiences, but there were limitations to presenting Emiko's data in this study in part because my interactions and conversations with her were limited.

My interviews with Aya, Shinichi, and all of Seiji's teachers were semi-structured interviews. Interviews with Aya and Shinichi were between 45 and 90 minutes. Interviews with Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson at Lakeview were about 20 minutes each. Interviews with Tanaka Sensei and Alexander Sensei at the Japanese School of Michigan were 60 minutes and 90 minutes respectively. Interviews with Matsumoto Sensei and Ueda Sensei were between 20 and 45 minutes. Interviews with Ishimura Sensei, Emiko's third grade teacher, were about 45 minutes. I include the interview schedule for Seiji's teachers in Appendix C. All formal interviews were audio-recorded. I transcribed all of the interviews except the ones with the

Japanese teachers at Kaichi. For these six interviews, I recruited a Japanese colleague for transcription and translation. However, I also listened to the tapes with the transcripts and followed up with the transcriber/translator as questions arose and clarification was needed.

Observations

As discussed in the section on positionality, I observed Seiji within his school contexts during each phase. This included four full days at Lakeview, four full days at the Japanese School of Michigan, and seven, mostly full days at Kaichi. In addition, I spent two days in Ishimura Sensei's third grade classroom at Kaichi. I also attended a Japanese Tea Ceremony at Lakeview, an open house for American teachers at the Japanese School of Michigan, and an open house for parents at Kaichi. I observed graduation ceremonies at the Japanese School of Michigan in 2008 and 2009, and Seiji's graduation from Kaichi in 2010.

Shadowing Seiji through entire days at Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi allowed me to observe teaching and learning across the curriculum at each school. A sampling of subject areas includes language arts, social studies, math, music, and art at Lakeview; math, *kokugo*/Japanese, social studies and music at the Japanese School of Michigan; and chemistry, computer lab, math, *shosha*/handwriting/calligraphy, swimming, and home economics at Kaichi. Just as central were observations of transitions, lunch, recess/breaks, and periods before and after school. During these times I had opportunities to talk to Seiji and his friends/classmates. I took detailed field notes throughout my observations and focused in ways that helped me think about each classroom as a social, cultural and academic context (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). For example, I paid attention to pedagogical and social interactions within the classroom, documented expectations and Seiji's interactions with those expectations. I also wrote down detailed descriptions of physical settings and their significance to the "doing

of school." I jotted down exchanges between teachers and students and noted phrases verbatim. Sociometric questioning during interviews delineated Seiji's perceived social links with friends and classmates, although initial observations were without this information. I also used observations to better understand the perspectives that Seiji, Aya, and his teachers shared during their interviews.

Participation

Asking Seiji to draw eco-maps, or graphic representations of his connections to significant people and places helped me identify additional contexts, although it frequently proved difficult to enter these spaces. In Michigan, this was primarily because as Seiji prepared to return to Japan he stopped participating in his extra-curricula activities. In addition, during the first phase of the research spontaneous interactions with Seiji and his family were not possible in part because we lived in different communities, but also because I did not know the family very well in Phase One.

In Japan, I had hoped to visit Seiji's *juku*, or cram school, but the school's policy only allowed visitors in the classrooms during a special open house week. However, I did tag along to Seiji's English lesson a couple of times. In Phase Two, I sat outside the classroom and listened in. In Phase Three, I joined a semi-private lesson Seiji had with another returnee. I had numerous opportunities to interact with Seiji—mostly within the context of his family life but occasionally with his friends as well. I took daily fieldnotes of events, interactions, and conversations in addition to the notes I took while observing school life at Kaichi.

Documents

The documents I examined were primarily related to school. They included school handbooks, newsletters, and websites. Aya gave me access to Seiji's kindergarten through fifth

grade report cards from Lakeview, Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) scores, school essays and drawings, and his report card from Kaichi. In addition, at both schools in Michigan, Seiji's teachers usually gave me worksheets and handouts related to the day's lesson.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was an on-going complicated, and non-linear process, which began with my first interactions with Seiji and Aya and continued into preparation of the final document. The three-phase design of the study had advantages and disadvantages regarding data analysis. One advantage was that I could transcribe interviews, type up fieldnotes, write memos, begin analytic induction and read and re-read everything before the next phase began. One disadvantage was the constant moving in and out of the field and the need to carefully maintain and sometimes reestablish relationships between phases. However, in some ways, such a struggle is apropos in research that analyzes the experiences of a kid on the move.

Interviews with Seiji and Aya were the foundation of my data record. After transcribing interviews, I open-coded them by writing themes in the margins. I looked for both patterns and breaks in patterns across these interviews. Then I drafted both descriptive and analytic memos that examined how, where, and when themes were emerging. In order to deepen analysis, I wrote detailed descriptions and preliminary interpretations of chunks of my interactions with Seiji. Lineham and McCarthy (2001) write, "Part of the difficulty with taking an interpretative approach is the need to balance as 'open' inductive contextualised account of the discourse with the often reductive process of trying to produce a coherent 'reading' of the data" (p. 328). I sought to take on such tensions through writing memos and then reading through my data record to test emerging themes. I used both the interview transcripts and memos to guide my classroom observations. Some of the memo topics for my interviews with Seiji included the following:

responding to academic expectations, reconciling inconsistencies, defining friendship, I like school, and I like learning.

I analyzed teacher interviews individually, within each school, and then across schools in order to learn about each classroom as a particular learning and schooling context. I looked across these transcripts to get a sense of teacher-student relationships and each adult's perspective of Seiji as a student and as a learner. Triangulation was applied among interviews, classroom observation fieldnotes, other fieldnotes and artifacts. I looked for themes that emerged in both talk and action, and verified the themes in the data through analytic induction (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

I found it helpful during analysis to think about the content of images and text as the internal narrative and the social context in which the data were generated as the external narrative (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). Part of this social context included interpersonal relationships during interviews and creation of images. I provided detailed description of my positionality because I viewed it as important for understanding both data generation and analysis (for indepth discussion of analytic methodology, see Appendix D).

Overview of Chapters

I thought deeply about emerging themes that would help me understand Seiji's navigation of diverse social and cultural worlds. In conclusion to this chapter, I discuss the structure of the dissertation and the logic behind it. In order to create a sense of what the task of navigation encompassed I wanted to juxtapose these rich and complex worlds. With that goal in mind, Chapter Three is written from my perspective as a researcher and a newcomer to each setting. It provides a sense of the rhythm of the school day through description and details of the micro-

interactions between and among adults and children. This chapter foreshadows themes that will be elaborated on in Chapter Four and woven throughout the dissertation. Chapter Four examines tempos of school life, educational goals, and school rules at each setting. Patterns emerged at Lakeview about "comfort and choice" and at Kaichi about "responsibility and human relations." These explanatory themes facilitate our understanding of how Seiji navigated school settings and occasionally encountered rough waters.

Both comparative studies and research with children enhance one's ability to view the world in new ways. My interviews and conversations with Seiji were saturated with references to friends. However, his use of the word initially puzzled me. In Chapter Five I use Seiji's views as a springboard to develop a comparative analysis of friendship in the classroom and a way into seeing his social worlds. In other words, Seiji was the stimulus for exploring and analyzing broad cultural ideas about "appropriate" social relations in classrooms. This chapter also demonstrates how Seiji's experiences with and views of friendship facilitated his transition between life and school in the United States and life and school in Japan. Chapter Six continues to build on previous chapters as I focus in on the kid at the center of the ecological model and his experiences in and interactions with educational processes across settings. Through extended excerpts of our interviews, I collaborate with Seiji to present him as research participant, student, learner, comparative analyst, and kid. Chapter Seven examines both the promise of "giving voice" to children and the challenges related to interpretation and presentation. I suggest how Seiji's story as an enthnography of the particular contributes to how we think about, educate, and conduct research on, for, and with children.

This dissertation, like Dorinne Kondo's (1990) *Crafting Selves, "*makes use of writing strategies that attempt to enact its theoretical message, in service of an argument that would see

'theory' as more than the discussion of texts in an introduction and a conclusion" (p. 304). Taking an ecological approach to examine a child's lived experiences within and across borders required an approach to data generation and analysis that worked against linearity. I sought to avoid "a collection of puzzle pieces that [could] not be put together again"[14] (Wertsch, 1991, p. 121) and instead produce a narrative that described, explained, analyzed, and invited curiosity. This approach germinated from my commitment to child-centered research and understanding a kid's worlds and experiences from the "inside-out."

[14] Here Wertsch references the risk of "disciplinary fragmentation" introduced by drawing attention to the cultural, historical, and institutional dimensions of sociocultural settings.

CHAPTER THREE

A Day at Three Schools

> Viewed inclusively, the world of learning is rich in practices and understandings that vary in historical time, cultural space, and institutional context. The range of "things" to be learned is enormous – facts, endurance, maturity, peace of mind, empathy, physical coordination, judgment, persistence, morality, faith, concentration, trust, and so on. How these things are taught differs greatly from society to society and reflects basic understandings about such matters as human nature and the nature of knowledge.
>
> Rohlen and LeTendre, 1996, p. 1

Introduction

Seiji, like most children living in industrial societies, spends a lot of time in school. When he lived in Michigan he attended school six full days a week. Monday through Friday he rode a yellow school bus to and from Lakeview Elementary School. On Saturdays, his mom drove him to a large suburban high school where he attended the Japanese School of Michigan. In mid-March 2009, the day after the last day of school at the Japanese School of Michigan, Seiji and his family returned to Japan. He regretted that he would miss Lakeview's end-of-the-year school trip, but he was excited to return to Japan for the beginning of the school year. In April he began a new routine. Monday through Friday he walked with his neighborhood *han* to Kaichi *Shogakko*. As sixth graders, he and another boy were responsible for safely leading the younger children to school.

In part, learning to go to school entails noticing the unwritten rules, values, and expectations of particular settings. Encounters with adults influence how children come to think about appropriate behavior in the classroom, while eating lunch, during recess and other in-between times. Parallel to this influence are interactions with peers who, in late childhood, play an increasingly influential role (Hartup, 1984). The daily experience of schooling invites

reflection on broad cultural beliefs about the self, human development, the individual and the group, as well as teaching and learning.

I have two goals in this chapter. The first is to provide a version of Seiji's educational worlds by taking readers into his schools and classrooms and introducing them to his teachers and his classmates. Because I am primarily interested in social processes in particular contexts, it is important to get a sense of people, places, and the rhythms of school days. The micro-interactions between and among teachers and students provide insights into relationships at Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi. My second goal is to provide a broad descriptive landscape that simultaneously includes the "concrete particulars" (Erickson, 1986) of daily school life. Both goals inform subsequent chapters.

There is some risk in introducing educational contexts from the perspective of the researcher alone. However, the focus of the study was not on the complex endeavor of teaching. I gained insights about these teachers and their pedagogies through observations and an interview, but Seiji was the focus. He was the constant in each setting and in that sense he drew my attention in particular ways and influenced how I experienced each school and each classroom. I chose to reflect my first full day of observation at each school both because there was greater consistency in what I paid attention to during initial visits, and because I was equally new and unfamiliar to Seiji's teachers and most of his classmates.[15] Introducing contexts by juxtaposing them invites us to notice what we find familiar and what we find strange.

Explanatory notes and details of the physical settings—posters on the walls, classroom jobs, and arrangement of the classroom—have been added from notes from other days of observations. However, overviews of particular lessons, descriptions of verbal exchanges, and

[15] One of Seiji's classmates at Lakeview was also a classmate at the Japanese School of Michigan.

portraits of micro-interactions are based on fieldnotes and artifacts from initial observations. I intentionally wrote each description in first-person present tense and include the date of the observation and where the day is located within the school year.

As a lead-in to each school, I offer Lakeview's mission statement, the Japanese School of Michigan's educational goals, and Kaichi's motto.[16] This strategy provides an opportunity to think about written goals and intentions in connection to daily school life. Complete school days give us a sense of "the range of things to be learned" as well as the "underlying geology" (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996, p. 8) of schooling. I forego analytic commentary here. Chapter Four, however, builds on these descriptions while extending our understanding of schooling in each setting. Themes explored in that chapter include comfort and choice, converging worlds, and responsibility and human relations.

Lakeview Elementary School
Wednesday, February 11, 2009 (second trimester of fifth grade)

> The main goals of the Lakeview School Community are to prepare students 1) to be lifelong learners, and 2) to have productive futures through fostering the growth of knowledge and skills, communicating respect for diverse ways of thinking and being, and accentuating responsible citizenship and democratic ideals.
>
> Altered version of Lakeview's mission statement[17]

My journey to Lakeview Elementary School is dark and intensified by the thick fog emanating from large amounts of snow and 50 degree temperatures. I exit the interstate onto a

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[16] Mission statements, educational goals, and mottos are different types of expressions. Here, the differences are also key indicators of each school's orientation toward educating children/students.

[17] In order to avoid identifying schools, I paraphrased strings of words from all school documents, even though I would have preferred verbatim excerpts. This was an unfortunate necessity, because specific language communicates particular messages. Nevertheless, even with these alterations we get a sense of how, through formal written documents, these schools communicated expectations to parents and children and structured children's schooling experiences.

bouncy five-lane road lined with restaurants, gas stations, strip malls, and various big box stores. I pass the road I would turn on to go to Seiji's home and know that Lakeview is just a couple miles away. It is still dark as I pull off the 2-lane road and into the school's parking lot around 7:30 a.m. Lakeview is a 1950's one-story, brick building surrounded by grassy fields. Residential homes line the back of the school grounds. The road in front of the school has a 45-mile per hour speed limit when school children are not present.

I enter the school through the front doors and follow the signs that guide me to the main office. A large colorful image of the school's mascot is painted in the entryway. I pass the counselor's office, the teacher's lounge, and the all-purpose room on my left; a hallway that leads to classrooms is on my right. I enter the office, introduce myself, and ask if the principal, my primary contact, is available. The secretary tells me that she is out and asks if I have an appointment. I respond that I have arranged to observe Mrs. Matthews' class today. Within a couple of minutes Mrs. Matthews, Seiji's homeroom teacher, arrives, introduces herself, requests a school map for me and leads us toward her classroom. At Lakeview classrooms are not grouped by grade level and so the nearest classrooms are two fourth grade rooms, the music room, and the art room. Lockers and colorful student work line the hallways.

Mrs. Matthews tells me she has two Japanese students in her classroom this year: Seiji and Mariko. Mariko, a relative newcomer, arrived in Michigan and began school at Lakeview in August of 2008. At the beginning of the year, Mrs. Matthews purposefully sat Seiji and Mariko next to one another, but now she usually separates them. "I don't know if he's giving answers or what," she adds. "I don't speak any Japanese." Then she shares quite matter-of-factly: "He tells me what I'm doing wrong." She finds this both challenging and distracting.

Wednesdays and Fridays are casual days, and Mrs. Matthews is wearing jeans, a cotton shirt, and a fleece jacket. She tells me I am welcome to move around the classroom and generally make myself comfortable. The room accommodates 24 student desks and chairs, a wall of cabinets/bookshelves, the teacher's desk, five computer stations, a recliner, a small table with three chairs, a sink and an open space large enough to seat 24 fifth graders. The entire room is carpeted and is equipped with a television and an Elmo—a document camera that allows projection of just about anything onto a large screen. Three windows look out onto a grassy courtyard. The walls are covered with various posters that contain specific information about the Electoral College, mathematical place values, and key dates in human history. Another reads, "Protect the Earth and our natural resources." There is also a poster that lists the six character traits encouraged at Lakeview: responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, respect, citizenship, and fairness. These are the ethical values promoted by Character Counts!, a widely implemented approach to character education.

Mrs. Matthews directs me to sit at the small table in the back corner. On the wall near where I am sitting there is a list of various classroom jobs: teacher assistant, Safeline (these children wear bright yellow sashes and monitor the halls at lunchtime and at the end of the day), banana box (a student later informs me that this is where lunches are kept and that it got the name because they were banana boxes and they smell like bananas—and sandwiches), librarian, board washer, computers, communication box, and floater. Each student has a number, and different numbers are written next to different classroom jobs.

The desks are set up in four rows facing the front, generally alternating girl-boy. Both chairs and desks are uniform in size and color. Seiji's desk is in the fourth and last row from the front. The day's schedule is written on the front board: Bell work (Time for Kids worksheet on

Abraham Lincoln), Science (Solar System test), Social Studies, Math (Fractions), Lunch/Recess, Language Arts, and Dismissal. Just before 8:00 a.m. students begin arriving. Several approach me and ask who I am. The first bell rings at 8:02. Seiji seems surprised to see me and asks when I am coming back to his house again. The second bell rings at 8:10.

As students get settled, I hear Seiji call out to a classmate, "You got gum!" Mrs. Matthews doesn't raise her voice but reminds students, "If I see it, it's going in the garbage, and that's being wasteful."

The day begins with bell work. Today's bell work is a Time for Kids worksheet on Abraham Lincoln. Approximately one third of the class seems to be working on it. Others are discussing last night's University of Michigan—Michigan State men's basketball game. Mrs. Matthews says, "You need to stop the visiting and get focused. Do yesterday's bell work first." A few minutes later, Mrs. Matthews tells students they have a choice for the next 10 minutes; they can either do bell work or review individually for the science test. She states, "The rule is no talking. Three times and we start the test." At 8:45 a.m. Mrs. Matthews announces, "If you have a snack, you can eat it." Mrs. Matthews then asks Seiji to deliver something to the office.

A paraprofessional enters the classroom and leads Mariko out into the hallway. Mrs. Matthews tells students that they have one minute to be ready. Then she asks what the rules are for taking a test. "No talking," says one student. If they are talking, she will ask them to put a check mark on their paper indicating a 5% reduction of their grade. "Eyes on your own paper," adds another student. If students have an emergency and need to go to the bathroom usually they are told to turn their test over, but since this test is double-sided she hands out another sheet of paper so that they can cover their work. Mrs. Matthews says, "If you have a question, raise your hand, and I'll get to you as soon as I can." She then reminds students of test-taking strategies

such as answering the questions you know first. She also suggests that they write out the words "true" and "false" because their Ts and Fs often look alike. "You have as much time as you need," she announces. "Please be quiet when you're finished so that everybody has the same opportunity to do their best." The tests are distributed. Mrs. Matthews gives me a copy of the test. It includes vocabulary, short response, true/false, and multiple-choice. About 30 minutes later, Seiji finishes his test and is the first one to hand it in. He quietly begins reading a book at his desk.

During the test Mrs. Matthews is paging through students' science binders. A student asks her neighbor a general question about the test; the neighbor answers. Mrs. Matthews suggests, "Next time don't answer, just smile." When most of the students have finished, she begins to walk slowly through the rows. "Do the ones you know," she reminds them. "Look over your work." When there is only one student who is still working she directs him to go into the hall to finish.

Mrs. Matthews introduces me as a student from Michigan State University who is interested in observing the classroom and who will be returning on Friday. Several students cheer when they hear that I am affiliated with Michigan State; they tell me that I will love Mrs. Jackson's room because she has all sorts of "MSU stuff." Mrs. Matthews transitions back to school and tells students that they "won't be returning to science for another week and a half or so." Then she announces a five-minute break. During the break I overhear several conversations about the University of Michigan and Michigan State University; many of them focus on last night's basketball game. A very energetic girl approaches me and asks about what I am studying. When she learns that I am a teacher educator she summons one of her friends who "wants to be a teacher." The break stretches into 10 minutes.

Social studies is next. Mrs. Matthews individually places students in the open space on the floor. Essentially they are in rows in specified spots. She tells students that she thinks they get distracted when they sit next to their friends; she asks them to raise their hands if they agree. About two-thirds do. "Put your legs like a pretzel," she directs. "We have to have our personal space. Eighteen inches is allowed."

Each student retrieves a thick, hardbound textbook from the shelves on the sidewall. The title of the chapter is "The Search for Gold and Riches." Mrs. Matthews asks: "What are some reasons people take actions that involve risk and danger?" Students give various answers, and Seiji, perhaps taking a cue from the textbook, offers, "For money." Mrs. Matthews says that today they will be reading for the gist. She calls on an individual student to begin reading; that student will select the next reader. "I like to alternate boy/girl," she says, and it is unclear to me whether this is a reminder to the students or explicit explanation of the process for my benefit. I think it is probably a combination of both. Before they begin reading, Mrs. Matthews identifies titles, introductions, captions, and headings, and discusses how these assist the reader. This chapter is about the Spanish Conquistadors. Students practice saying conquistadors with difficulty. After reading a couple of pages the students return the books to the shelves and return to their desks for math.

Students begin class by putting together new math workbooks: an 11 ½ by 17-inch piece of colored paper with six or seven pieces of plain white paper stapled inside. Mrs. Matthews has selected hot pink for the cover. A boy comments on the color and the following exchange ensues:

Mrs. Matthews: It's just a color.
Boy: It's a girl color.
Girl #1: It's NOT a girl color.
Girl #2: I don't like pink.

Mrs. Matthews: Pink is not just for girls. That's stereotyping.

Students chatter as they staple their folders together. "Jane, why do you have gum in your mouth?" calls out Mrs. Matthews. "You need to spit it out." And then to Seiji, with a hint of exasperation in her voice, "Was that a good choice? I prefer that you not do that. What if he sat down, his chair was not there, and he hurt himself?" Seiji doesn't respond.

A different paraprofessional enters the classroom, and when each student has a stapled folder, Mrs. Matthews begins the lesson. She directs students to look at the math message projected on the front board: "Write five fractions on your paper. Circle the greatest fraction and the least fraction in your set of fractions." Some students grab a clipboard and sit in an open area in front of the Elmo. Seiji remains at his desk. The paraprofessional is looking over Seiji's shoulder and quietly calls out, "Mrs. Matthews, do you want whole numbers upstairs and downstairs?" She looks at what Seiji has written and says, "No, no decimals." After a few minutes Mrs. Matthews draws sticks with student numbers to call on students to share their work. Students report out.

It is 11:30 a.m. and time for lunch and recess. Children have 20 minutes for lunch and then 20 minutes for recess. Today they will be inside. Mrs. Matthews tells me that she usually eats lunch at her desk, but that today she can eat with me in the teacher's lounge. I tell her that is not necessary and she should feel free to do whatever she needs to do.

I walk toward the front door of the building to retrieve my lunch from my car. Mrs. Matthews is talking to the principal. She introduces us. Mrs. Matthews shares the chair-pulling-out incident from the morning. They also discuss Seiji's participation as a member of a design and build team that Mrs. Matthews leads. The program involves a competition where team members work together to build something or solve a problem. Mrs. Matthews and the principal

discuss his need to develop teamwork skills; at first, he expected his teammates to carry out his ideas.

I eat lunch in my car and write notes on my introduction to the principal. Time passes quickly; indoor recess is probably already underway. I approach the front door and press the button. After visually identifying me on the video monitoring screen in the office, the secretary buzzes me in.

A paraprofessional and Mrs. Matthews are both in the classroom when I arrive. They lament the onset of headaches from indoor recess. Seiji is on the floor playing Battleship. Some students are playing Twister or Uno. Others are drawing or engaged in other individual activities at their desks. Several are in the back of the room, at Mrs. Matthews' request, organizing materials from the recent design and build competition. The paraprofessional asks me about my research. She knows that I am focusing on Seiji today because he is the only student in Mrs. Matthews' class who will be returning to Japan in March. "He's a talker," she comments. Indoor recess ends and the children line up to head down the hall to Mrs. Jackson's room for language arts.

Desks are set up in pairs of three columns and four rows. The room is slightly smaller than Mrs. Matthews' classroom and appears to be older—perhaps it is part of the original construction. One wall is lined with windows that look out onto the grassy field behind the school. Seiji sits behind Mariko in the left desk of the third row in the middle column. I sit down at a table by the windows in the back of the room.

Class begins as Mrs. Jackson introduces the books they will read next: Marden Dahlstedt's (1972) *The Terrible Wave*, Ivy Ruckman's (1986) *Night of the Twisters*, and Miriam Schlein's (1992) *The Year of the Panda*. "All three books were written by female authors, " she

points out. Shizuko, a Japanese fifth grade girl, is standing in the doorway. Mariko gathers her belongings, and Mrs. Jackson says, "Thank you, Shizuko, for coming to get her." The two girls leave. Mrs. Jackson tells the class that she is going to give each of them one of the books, and that she has made her selection based on her assessment of what will be "appropriate, enjoyable, and manageable" for individual students. After distributing books Mrs. Jackson asks, "Are there any questions about the book or life in general that I can help you with?"

Spelling is next, but before the spelling lesson begins Mrs. Jackson talks about the Michigan-Michigan State basketball game. Her team was victorious, but she also reports that one of the University of Michigan basketball players is a former student and that although she didn't want the University of Michigan to win, she wanted this student to play his best.

Mrs. Jackson reviews spelling rules and instructs, "People judge you by how you speak and write. Through writing people demonstrate that they are capable individuals." She recalls her interview with the principal 14 years ago: "One of the ways I demonstrated that I would be a good teacher was through being able to write well."

It is time for the spelling pre-test. A student points out that one of the words is on the board. Mrs. Jackson responds, "If someone's resourceful enough to look up there, then good for them. Whoo-hoo." Several students call out, "Whoo-hoo!" Mariko has returned to the room, and Seiji appears to be clarifying something in Japanese. While students are checking their own tests Mrs. Jackson comes over and talks to me. She mentions that both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees are from Michigan State.

Next students work on writing thesis statements for their non-fiction essays. Mrs. Jackson explains the difference between "done" and "well done" and the importance of patience. Mrs. Jackson gives me a copy of the assignment. She offers the class an example of a thesis

statement: “Williamston is the perfect place for families to live.” Then she demonstrates how this statement might be improved: “The sign said ‘sold,’ the moving truck rumbled down the tree-lined street, and the boxes were stacked four miles high. This house was mine, all mine. Moving to Williamston is the cherry on my hot fudge sundae.” Mrs. Jackson turns on music in the background—a solo clarinet playing classical music—and students get to work. Seiji explains the task to Mariko in Japanese; Mrs. Jackson seems to approve of the assistance. She communicates with Mariko about the task using animated gestures. Mariko smiles.

After about ten minutes Mrs. Jackson asks students to work in pairs and to share a sentence they feel good about and one with which they are not yet satisfied. She emphasizes how long it takes to write something that expresses how they feel in words that are their own. She shares something from her own writing that she feels good about: “boxes of fun”—referring to dates of festivals and other events on the calendar. “Collaborating is important and it’s important to be nice to people,” she says. “I’m not shy about sharing my opinions, but if I’m in a staff meeting, and I don’t agree with a colleague I cannot say, ‘That’s a stupid idea’ because it is neither nice nor professional.” She offers a suggestion for what students might say to their reading conference partner: “I’m going to think about your idea.” The students get to work.

After about 15 minutes, Mrs. Jackson gathers the children on the floor in the front of the classroom to read aloud from Jerry Spinelli’s (1997) *Wringer*. It is the story of Palmer, a ten-year-old boy who may soon gain the “honor” of strangling pigeons who are shot in the annual Family Fest Pigeon Shooting Day. Afterwards, she says, “It’s important that we have reactions to the texts we read.” The children return to their desks and continue working on character trait posters of a main character in a novel they have read. They have already drafted the posters in

pencil on an 8 ½ by 11-inch piece of paper. One of the goals of the project is to help students think about how significant events can result in significant individual growth.

The students and I return to Mrs. Matthews' room for dismissal. Valentine's Day is approaching. She reminds students that if they bring Valentines, they need to bring one for everyone.

It is shortly after 3:00 and most students have left. A few are still in the classroom as Mrs. Matthews and I discuss my research. We continue talking as we walk several students out to catch their busses. Then we walk with Mrs. Jackson back toward the classrooms. I thank them both. I ask if they are interested in knowing more about particular aspects of Seiji's classroom experiences once he returns to Japan. Mrs. Jackson states that due to the economy and the troubles in the auto industry, numbers of Japanese students will decline significantly. Mrs. Matthews and I continue down the hallway to her classroom. She has heard that at the Japanese School of Michigan children shout out answers. "I don't think I could deal with that," she says. I thank her for allowing me to observe her classroom and tell her that I am happy to answer questions at any time.

The Japanese School of Michigan
Saturday, February 14, 2009 (third trimester of fifth grade)

1) Development of independent and enthusiastic attitudes toward learning.
2) Development of the ability to make decisions and act assertively so that children can adapt to various circumstances.
3) Cultivation of the capability for meaningful interactions and mutual respect.

Altered version of the Japanese School of Michigan's educational goals

There are a couple of inches of snow on the roads as I make my way to the high school where Seiji attends *hoshuko*, or Japanese supplementary school. I pull off of the interstate onto a five-lane road that eventually whittles down to a two-lane road that winds through a residential

neighborhood with large homes on spacious lots. I pass between a public golf course and one that is part of a private country club. Although this is my first observation of Seiji's class, I have visited this school prior to today—both during the week and on Saturday. The occupants change the "feeling" of the place. As I arrive, parents are dropping off their children in the circle drive. I park my Ford Contour in a sea of Japanese vehicles and walk to the entrance.

The school is a sprawling three-story building with a newly reconstructed gymnasium and natatorium. I pass the community education office, classrooms lined with lockers, and the media center, and descend the stairs. The Japanese school library—the one that houses Japanese books, periodicals, and videos—is down the short hallway on my left. I head in the opposite direction toward the administrative offices of the Japanese School of Michigan and the workrooms for teachers and parents. The children, mothers, fathers, and teachers I pass in the hallway are all Japanese. Parents wearing armbands are serving on active safety patrol. They monitor the halls and are equipped with hand bells so that they can signal the beginning and end of each class period.

I check-in at the office and am led to another wing of the building. We take the elevator to the third floor. Classrooms and lockers line one side of the hall. The other side is a cream-colored, cinder block wall. We pass a woman sitting in a chair reading a book. Her bell is on the floor. The silence in the halls confirms what I already know: I am late. I arrive at 9:05 at the end of the morning meeting. Tanaka Sensei is talking, and the students are quiet. She is wearing a black and white plaid knee-length skirt, black shirt and cardigan, and high-heeled shoes. I walk through the students toward the back of the classroom.

After finishing the morning announcements, Tanaka Sensei comes to the back of the room and asks if I would like to introduce myself. I say yes. As I head to the front of the room,

she announces that they have a guest today. I am in an American high school classroom on a Saturday morning speaking English to 22 mostly Japanese[18] fifth graders. My introduction is slightly awkward because although the words are English, what I say is influenced by the pattern of a Japanese *jikoshoukai,* or self-introduction. I say something like, "Good morning. My name is Amy Damrow. Thank you for letting me join your class today. I'm a student at Michigan State University, and I'm interested in schools and teaching. I lived in Matsumoto City in Nagano Prefecture for two years." I end with a Japanese, "*Yoroshiku onegaishimasu*"—a standard phrase meaning, "I humbly ask you to be kind to me." I return to my desk.

I recognize three students from Lakeview: Seiji, Mariko, and Shizuko. Both girls began their American sojourn in August 2008. Mariko is in Mrs. Matthews' homeroom. Seiji is sitting in the front row next to the door. The desks are arranged in a traditional pattern of rows and columns. Students sit one behind another. Every child has a pencil case on his or her desk. Each contains a collection of basic learning tools: pencils, colored pencils and pens, erasers, rulers, and extra lead.

The first class session, *kokugo*, or Japanese, begins. Each student has an 11- by 17-inch double-sided color handout with text and graphics. "fifth grade, III, 12" is printed in the upper right hand corner indicating that it is for fifth grade students, in the twelfth week of the third trimester. Tanaka Sensei writes text on the board. Seiji points out her mistakes. Tanaka Sensei makes corrections and thanks Seiji. A student asks permission to check his work with a neighbor; the teacher grants it. Other children continue to work. One boy is sitting on his knees. As Tanaka Sensei passes, she speaks to him; he sits with his feet on the floor. Later in the lesson he is sitting on his knees again.

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[18] Not all students enrolled at the Japanese School of Michigan are *kikokushijo*. Some children have one Japanese and one American parent and will not "return" to Japan.

I hear a hand bell ringing in the hallway. Children stop what they are doing. The day's student leader calls out "*Kiotsuke* [stand at attention]." When everyone is relatively quiet and standing beside his or her desk, "*Rei* [bow]." Tanaka Sensei, the students, and I bow. This routine begins and ends each class period. A five-minute break begins. Seiji and another boy immediately come and talk to me about the Japanese lesson. They tell me that aliens learned Japanese from talking to children and have consequently written their message to humanity using plain form. The task for the fifth graders is to re-write the message using polite form. Tanaka Sensei gives me the day's schedule.

A hand bell is being rung; children gradually return to their desks. The hand bell is rung again. "*Kiotsuke. Rei.*" The lesson begins with Tanaka Sensei re-writing the message from the aliens using polite form. As she writes on the board half a dozen children engage in quiet conversations. Tanaka Sensei asks a boy sitting near me to read a sentence.

> ***Student:*** *Nan de?* [Why?]
> ***Tanaka Sensei:*** *Sensei ga kiite kara.* [Because I, the teacher, asked you to.]
> ***Student:*** [silence]
> ***Another student:*** *Ganbare.* [Do your best.]

Second period is a continuation of Japanese although now the focus is on different *kanji*, Chinese characters, that have the same readings. The examples they work on include: *sensei* 先生(teacher) and *sensei* 先制(initiative), *sansei* *賛成* (agreement) and *sansei* 三世(third), and *saishuu* *採集* (collection) and *saishuu* 最終(the end).

The hand bell rings. "*Kiotsuke. Rei.*" Seiji tells me that he is going to the library; he asks if I want to join him. I do, but there is another teacher in the room. I tell him that I want to introduce myself and confirm permission to observe her class. I remember this teacher from my visit to the school the previous year. She tells me that she used to have her own classroom but

that this year she is team teaching. Several children tell Tanaka Sensei and Alexander Sensei in Japanese that their English is very good. Both women seem surprised.

I exit the classroom and head toward the library. As I begin to descend, Seiji and other children fly up the stairs. Seiji stops to show me the three books he has checked out. One is *Doraemon*, a popular Japanese *manga* series about a robotic cat who travels back in time from the twenty-second century to provide assistance to young Nobita-*kun*. Seiji tells me that another book is about how to survive in the wilderness. I look through all three books. He asks if, maybe, I can select one [to look at and return the other two to him]. We are back in the classroom; Seiji sits on the far side of the room and begins to read intensely. Some boys are playing cards; others are running tech decks, finger skateboards, along a small ledge in the back of the room. Girls are talking with one another or running around. A couple of them are drawing on the blackboard. Some children are reading at their desks. During this break the children cluster in groups of girls and boys.

The hand bell rings. "*Kiotsuke. Rei*." Third period is mathematics. Today they are learning about circumference, diameter, and radius. Alexander Sensei's voice is firm and kind. She reminds one child that he has not handed in his math homework for the last two weeks and that this will have a negative effect on his grade. Other children instinctively call out, "*Ganbare!* [Do your best!]." He responds, "*Ee—?* [Huh?]" She reproaches, "*Ee—?! Sensei desu*. [Huh?! I'm a teacher]." The child responded to her, as a teacher, in too casual of a manner and so she brings this to his attention.

The math lesson begins. Alexander Sensei has attached a hand-made poster with a large circle to the board. She has labeled circumference, diameter, and radius. Every child has a round object—a PET bottle, a paper plate, a Tupperware container—a piece of string or ribbon,

and a ruler. Alexander Sensei takes out an aerosol can and demonstrates how to measure it. She asks students to raise their hands if they understand what to do. Three hands go up. She asks again; everyone raises a hand. Children measure their objects with the ribbon and then the ribbon with the ruler. Alexander Sensei records students' measurements in a table on the board. One child has measured a circumference of 37 and a diameter of 11.5. Alexander Sensei asks about the relationship between the numbers. Students note that the circumference is about three times the diameter. They discuss how to test this; Alexander Sensei asks children to divide the circumference by the diameter. 37 divided by 11.5 is 3.17; the teacher writes the answer on the blackboard. She walks around as children do hand calculations. A few children use calculators. The calculations range from the high 2s to the low 3s. Alexander Sensei instructs children to open their small paperback textbooks. They discuss the formula: π x diameter = circumference. Then children begin to work on problems. Alexander Sensei encourages, "*Yatte mite* [Try it and see]."

The hand bell rings. Alexander Sensei closes the door and the children keep working. One child calls out, "*Sensei, dekita!* [Teacher, I did it!]." Another announces, "*Wakkata!* [I got it!]." We wait for everyone and then "*Kiotsuke. Rei."* The children are set relatively free for the 45-minute lunch break with the other elementary school-aged children in the building: fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. The large cafeteria is located two floors below. Children bring their lunches and sit at any of the round tables. Two or three adults are also in the cafeteria. Children eat at their own pace and then begin to disperse. Some return to the classroom, others go to the library, and others explore.

A dozen children are in the classroom when I return. A few boys are playing with tech decks in the back of the room. Several girls are trying to cram themselves under the teacher's

desk; a tall girl with curly hair is trying to squeeze into the podium. Shizuko, the relatively new student at Lakeview, calls out, "*Ganbare, ganbare, gaijin!* [Do your best, do your best, outside person/foreigner]."

Fourth period is a continuation of the math lesson. Students request a longer break since third period went into their lunch break. Tanaka Sensei grants five more minutes. "*Kiotsuke. Rei*." Class begins and Tanaka Sensei asks students to sit with both feet on the floor. Two visuals are on the board. One shows nested circles with diameters of one, two, three, and four. The next image looks like a racetrack. The length of the straightaway is 40 and the straight edge of the half circle on each edge is 24. Several students are confused even after Tanaka Sensei explains. Seiji speaks up and asks his classmate if he can see. He replies that he can, but that he does not understand what the 24 is measuring. Tanaka Sensei clarifies the visual. Then she calls on a boy to read aloud from the text. However, he has not been paying attention and reads from the wrong place. Tanaka Sensei says, "*Jyaa, koko de wa arimasen* [No, we aren't there]."

After working on problems on a worksheet, children return to their Japanese lesson from the morning. They are working in pairs with dictionaries or electronic dictionaries to identify words that sound the same but have different *kanji* and therefore different meanings. For example, *tatte* can be 建って(to build), 立って (to stand) and 断って(to sever, to cut off, or to suppress). Tanaka Sensei writes on the board. Students regularly call out "*Sensei, mienai* [Teacher, I can't see]". She ducks and continues to write.

"*Kiotsuke. Rei*." Fifth period is *shakai*, or social studies. Tanaka Sensei returns an 11-by 17-inch handout with a map of Asia and Japan upon which children have attached images of flags to appropriate countries. They discuss the highest mountain (Fuji-*san* at 3776 meters), the longest river (Shinagawa at 367 kilometers), and the largest lake (Biwako at 670 km^2).

There is no sixth period today because the teachers have a meeting. Homeroom is held, and homework, books, *kanji* practice, and the weekly newsletter are distributed. Seiji distributes or returns papers from a 1-foot high stack. Tanaka Sensei begins to pack her small suitcase of class materials; children pack up their backpacks.

I thank Tanaka Sensei for allowing me to visit her class and head to the office to check out. As I leave I pass many parents. Fathers say "Thank you" as I hold the door open for them.

Kaichi Shogakko (Kaichi Elementary School)
Tuesday, May 19, 2009 (first trimester of sixth grade)

- A child who studies seriously (knowledge)
- A child who is vigorous and healthy (body)
- A child who is honest and follows rules (virtue)

Kaichi's school motto as elaborated on the cover of student report cards

Seiji leaves his house at 7:45 a.m. He will play handbase[19] with his friends at school before lessons begin. Handbase is like kickball except that the pitcher throws the ball and the batter hits it with his arm. He invites me to go with him. Aya recommends that I go a little later so that she can take me to the teachers' room for more formal introductions. Seiji and Emiko meet-up with their other children from their neighborhood *han* and walk to school. Aya and I have a cup of tea.

Around 8:20 we leave the house. The school is about a 5-minute walk through a residential area. We walk through the school gate and onto the school grounds. Kaichi has a north wing and a south wing. Both are three stories tall. The north wing includes an addition that was not a part of the original construction. The two wings are connected by two

[19] When Seiji first explained the game to me he referred to it as "handbase." The word is formed by combining the English words "hand" and "base." In Japanese it would be pronounced *handobesu* and written as ハンドベース in *katakana*, the syllabary for transliterated foreign words. I was not able to find handbase in Japanese dictionaries.

breezeways. It is May and everything is in bloom. We walk past herb gardens, rabbit cages, and vegetable gardens. Kaichi has a large open space made up of hard-packed sandy earth, the *undoujyou*. This area is used before school, during physical education classes and breaks, and for after-school sports clubs. There are also soccer goals, a baseball backdrop, and an outdoor swimming pool. Around the edges is metal play equipment including a jungle gym and exercise bars of various heights. Seiji's fathers' company buildings are visible from the school.

We enter the school through the visitor's entrance and remove our shoes. I don slippers I have brought from home. Aya and I enter the teachers' room, bowing and saying "*Ojyamashimasu* [I am disturbing you/may I come in]." Every teacher has a desk in this large open room. Matsumoto Sensei is expecting us and we walk over to her desk by the window and engage in brief formal introductions.

Aya returns home; Matsumoto Sensei leads me down the hall to her classroom. Her hands are straight as she seems to semi-march down the wooden-floored hall. We pass the entrance for first, second, and third graders. There are boxes for shoes, a rack of adjustable stilts, and pink and blue unicycles. On the left we pass a teacher-student consultation room, the nurse's room, a room for special needs students, and classroom 6-1. The right side of this hallway has several troughs of sinks above which are windows looking out into the open space between the north and south wings. A clock is attached to the ceiling at each end of the hall. All rooms have sliding doors and windows. We enter classroom 6-2 through the door at the back of the room; all children are quietly reading at their desks. There is a small folding chair set up for me in the back of the room. To the boy who will be sitting closest to me, she says, "*Tanomu yo* [I'm counting on you]."

Matsumoto Sensei walks to the front of the room and begins taking attendance. She calls out boys' names and then girls' names. "*Maruyama, Takako*." "*Hai, genki desu* [Yes, I'm well]." Matsumoto Sensei asks me to come to the front of the room and give a simple introduction in English. I say, "My name is Amy. I lived in Matsumoto City in Nagano Prefecture for two years. I like Japanese food." Matsumoto Sensei invites the children to ask me questions either in Japanese or in English. At this point Seiji enters the room and is delighted to serve as a translator.

There are 35 children in Matsumoto Sensei's class. They sit in four columns. I am sitting in the first column behind six boys; the middle columns are boy-girl pairs; the fourth column, the one furthest from the doors, is a single column of girls and boys. Seiji is sitting in the first row of the third column—right in front of the teacher's desk. In the front of the room there is a large blackboard with 35 small magnets—each with a child's name attached. To the right of the board is a list of classroom tasks and who is currently responsible for particular tasks. Jobs include organization, distributing handouts, blackboard, caring for flowers and living things, making sure the electricity is turned off, and nametags. The school motto (*honki, genki, shoujiki*—seriousness, vigor/vitality/health, honesty), the daily schedule and the clock hang above the blackboard. There are two small multi-purpose, table-like pieces of furniture in the front of the room: one is used by teachers during lessons and the other is used during lunch.

The classroom is bright and the many windows contribute to a feeling of almost being outside. One wall is all windows and overlooks the school grounds. There are floor-to-ceiling beige curtains; the opposite wall has a sliding door at each end and sliding windows in between. Along the back wall are open wooden shelves/boxes for students' backpacks. At one end dozens of thermoses stand—Seiji's is filled with *mugi-cha,* or barley tea. Next to where I am sitting

there is a small closet with cleaning supplies. Directly behind me are several clear plastic folders with grade-level and school newsletters. There is also a large blackboard. Permanent bright yellow lettering is used to label different sections of the board such as daily and weekly goals, class or school events, postings from committees or the student in charge, the next day's homework, special clothing needed, and the daily calendar. Above this blackboard children's graded *shosha*, or *kanji* from handwriting class, are hanging. To the left is a classroom collage. Everyone, including Matsumoto Sensei, has created an image of him or herself and placed that image within an origami rocket upon which they have also written a goal. The rockets are then combined to form a unified image of Matsumoto Sensei's 6-2 class. Seiji wrote, "*Genki ni minna to mainichi zenryoku de tanoshiku benkyou shitai desu* [I want to do my best and enjoy my studies with everyone, every day]."

All of a sudden, we are leaving the classroom. I recognize a few of Seiji's classmates in the hall and tag along with them. As we head up the stairs I locate Seiji. He tells me that this activity is like Book Buddies. Then he adds, "But I don't really know." We are on the third floor in a classroom with children from different grades. Over the public announcement system I hear the "Mickey Mouse Club Song" as well as "Everyone's Special." The homeroom teacher for this classroom remains, but it is a boy-girl pair of sixth graders who explain and lead the *jikoshokai,* or self-introduction, activity. In preparation, all children work together to push the desks and chairs to the back of the room. Everything slides easily on the wooden floors. Children are to introduce themselves to and gather the names of as many children as possible. They should approach another student and play *janken*, or rock-scissors-paper; the winner introduces him- or herself first. After exchanging introductions they sign their names using roman letters, *hiragana*, the Japanese cursive syllabery, or *kanji*.

Music announces the break, and the children disperse. I check the daily schedule posted on the wall to see when the next class period will begin. Over the break several children approach me. Some enquire about my marital status. Others ask my age. I tell them that I am not married but do not share my age. I make my way back down to Matsumoto Sensei's classroom on the first floor for the start of the second period.

As the history lesson begins, a girl with curly brown hair is called out of the classroom. Matsumoto Sensei says, "*Gomen, ne* [I'm sorry]." The other children watch as she goes. Matsumoto Sensei's area of expertise is history. She has attached small, magnetized boxes with the names of historical figures to the blackboard; arrows are used to connect boxes and show relationships between people. Matsumoto Sensei asks for children's views. After someone offers an idea, class members indicate whether they agree or disagree. Next we listen to a multi-voiced dramatic audio reading about the historic figures the class has been discussing. Matsumoto Sensei has illustrations that go with the tape and when the story ends everyone claps. She writes something on the board, and the children copy it down. Chimes ring at 10:30 and class is over.

This break is from 10:30 to 10:55. Seiji plays *handobasu* with a group of about 12 boys from his homeroom. I stay inside and observe from the classroom. I talk to the curly brown-haired girl. She tells me that she can't speak Japanese well, that her mother tongue is Spanish, and that she lived in Peru until she was five years old. Chimes indicate that the break is almost over and that the children have five minutes to return to their classrooms and be seated at their desks.

Period three is *shosha*, or handwriting. The handwriting teacher enters the room. This class begins as many others do: teachers and students exchange greetings of "*Onegaishimasu* [a

phrase used to express mutual good will, literally 'please']." Next the teacher checks to see if individual children have their *shosha* sets—ink, brushes, charcoal, plastic mixing tray. When she asks Seiji, he calls out, "*Hai, arimasu* [Yes, I have it]." Next she holds up children's previous work and announces, "OO-*san no sakuhin desu* [This is so-and-so's work]." Responses vary from "Ohhh!" to "*Umai*! [Well done]" to "*Maa maa* [Fair]."

There are four posters on the board. The poster on the far right shows a boy sitting at a desk, holding a calligraphy brush, and demonstrating proper posture. I sit up a little straighter. Next is the character of the day: 湖 (lake). There is a special board for practicing brush writing with water. After about ten minutes the water dries and completely disappears. The poster on the far left shows individual strokes and their proper order. The teacher asks individual children to come up to the board and demonstrate their writing on the special board. She comments on each child's work. Then she asks them to practice a few times. Seiji's boxboard encased *shosha* set is slightly different from his classmates' plastic sets. The teacher approaches Seiji and encourages him to be more careful with where he places strokes. She specifically addresses proper proportion and spacing of lines. The teacher encourages me to walk around and look at children's work. After they have practiced a few times, they complete an official version. Down the left side of the paper they write their grade, class, and name. Then they hand in their work and proceed to clean their brushes and desks.

There is a 10-minute break before the next class. Most of the boys, including Seiji, are in small groups playing a simple game with erasers at their desks. There are six such groups right now. In this version, an individual tries to shoot an eraser through thumb posts using the flick of a finger. Many of the girls are talking in small groups. Fascinated by my blondish naturally curly hair several children somewhat cautiously reach out and touch it.

At 11:50 a new teacher arrives in the classroom. She specializes in *katei ika,* or home economics, and is one of the sixth grade homeroom teachers. She introduces the task and then children form groups of three or four. Each group has a beaker and three pieces of fabric. One child fills the beaker with water from the sinks in the hallway. The teacher writes five laundry symbols on the board and explains their meanings: appropriate temperature for washing, whether bleach can be used, how the garment should be dried, the temperature for the iron, and whether an item should be hand-washed. I glance over at Seiji, and, like most of the other children, he appears to be attentively listening to the teacher. She asks the children to write down how the material feels, looks, and what happens when they put it in water. After the children have experimented, the class discusses the results and the specific implications for doing laundry. The children begin to examine the tags on their own clothing.

It is 12:35 and time for *kyuushoku*, or Japanese school lunch. Those children with lunch duty have donned their white gown-like aprons, caps, and masks and either leave to get the food and eating tools for their class or remain in the room to set up. The other children instantly move the desks into *han*, pre-determined clusters of five and six, and put on white masks that cover their noses and mouths. Everyone will eat with those who sit near them in class; all groups have both boys and girls. Several students wheel in a large tray of rice, a container of fish, and a pot of soup. Each container is marked with a large 6-2. The food has been prepared at an outside facility and brought into the school.

Today I have brought *onigiri*, or rice balls. Matsumoto Sensei sends a student to the teacher's room to retrieve them. Children line up by group to get their rice, *miso* soup, and fish. Each child also gets a carton of white milk and a pair of washable *hashi,* or chopsticks. The trays and bowls will also be washed and used again. Once all have their food and are seated, a

collective "*Itadakimasu!* [an expression of gratitude said before meals]" rings out, and everyone begins to eat. Matsumoto Sensei sits with a *han*; I join Seiji's group. Seiji gets a second helping of fish. Matsumoto Sensei approaches us with her *denshi jisho*, or electronic dictionary, in hand. While gesturing toward Seiji, she says, "He is all mouth." She teaches his neighboring classmates that they can say to him, "You are all mouth." She types in other words and then reads off "talkative" and "chatterbox." Later she again comes over with her *denshi jisho* and says, "He is a clever boy." After finishing lunch, children take their dishes to the front of the room, scrape leftover food items into a bin if necessary, and then stack according to item. Chopsticks go into a utensil bin. Milk boxes are opened and flattened. Straws and their plastic wrappers are placed in a small box.

During the lunch break children are asked to copy the next day's schedule into their planners; a child has written the new schedule on the blackboard calendar in the back of the room. There are also spaces to list homework, items to bring to school—such as a paint set, swimsuit, chisel—communications between school and home, and a short diary entry. At about 1:20, the children with lunch duty return the lunch carts. The rest of the children put the desks back into their regular rows, and place the chairs on top of the desks.

At 1:25 cleaning begins. I look around but cannot locate Seiji. Matsumoto Sensei asks a student to take me to his work spot. As we begin walking down the hall, Seiji comes running toward us. Since the beginning of the school year Seiji and a classmate have been responsible for cleaning the stairs and landings between the second and third floor of one of the five stairwells in the school. His partner is a quiet, tall, athletic boy who was praised for his handwriting skills earlier in the day. He sweeps and then Seiji follows up with a cloth. "One

Little Elephant Went Out to Play" begins to play over the loudspeakers indicating that the cleaning period is almost done. A 15-minute break follows.

Music brings the children in from their break. At 1:55 all of the children are at their desks, and Ueda Sensei enters the room. He will be teaching math. Matsumoto Sensei is not the lead teacher, but she remains in the room and quietly walks up and down the columns looking at student work. It is a geometry lesson. Ueda Sensei uses the same questioning pattern that Matsumoto Sensei used earlier in the day. He asks students what they think, a child raises her hand to explain, and then classmates respond as to whether they agree or disagree. Next the teacher passes out wooden manipulatives in shapes of cylinders and triangular columns. Ueda Sensei instructs students to draw these objects on graph paper using their rulers. Dotted lines can be used for the sides that cannot be seen. Ueda Sensei writes *furigana*[20] over the *kanji* he has written on the board. Towards the end of class Matsumoto Sensei approaches me. During class Seiji had inquired about the bases of the manipulatives; he suggested that any of the sides of the triangular block could be considered the base. Matsumoto Sensei tells me that this is an interesting comment and that it pushed other students to think more deeply. After class there is a 10-minute break.

At 2:45 Matsumoto Sensei begins the final period: *kokugo* (Japanese). Each child has a short article from the newspaper. They are to be writing memos in preparation for giving short speeches on their articles. The noise level in the room prompts Matsumoto Sensei to say, "*Ima chotto urusai* [It's a little bit noisy now]." Children become quiet. There are four fans on the ceiling of the classroom and they have been turned on.

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[20] *Furigana* shows the pronunciation of Chinese characters and is especially prevalent in children's books and learning materials. Children may, for example, know a word, but not yet know how to read or write the *kanji*.

From 3:30 to 3:40 the *kaeri no kai,* or meeting before returning home, takes place. After school today, clubs are practicing. Seiji is in the track and field club and his event is the long jump. The *undoujyou* is filled with girls and boys in red caps, white shirts with blue trim, blue shorts, and gym shoes and socks. They are participating in a variety of activities. The softball and soccer clubs are also practicing. Matsumoto Sensei, the home economics teacher, and the handwriting teacher are assisting the 20 or so children who are practicing the long jump. Some of the teachers have volunteered to assist because of the upcoming field day and tournament. The club practices until just before 5:00. All children change back into their regular clothes. Then Seiji and I walk home together.

CHAPTER FOUR

Structuring Childhood: Educational Experiences

Introduction

> Culture is the relationship between structures, ideas, values, and action.
>
> Alexander, 2000, pp. 176 – 177

In order to understand Seiji's transition between school and life in one country and school and life in another, it was important to journey with him across space and time and experience day-to-day life in the classrooms where he spent so many hours. My representation of a day at Lakeview Elementary School, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi *Shogakko* in Chapter Three provided a description so that readers might develop a general sense of how cultural values are embedded in "doing school." Of course, these descriptions were one version of what happened on each of those days from the standpoint of a particular researcher who was focusing on a particular kid. A different researcher or focus on a different kid would have produced a different representation of each day.

This chapter builds on and extends the descriptions in Chapter Three. In what follows, I examine calendars and schedules; school-level goals, rules, and guidelines; and teacher goals and actions in order to understand Seiji's schools as social and cultural contexts where values are taught and learned (Alexander, 2000; Austin, Dwyer, & Freebody, 2003; Dreeban, 1968; Jackson, 1968/1990). I also examine how teachers interact with students, encourage students to interact with one another, and articulate expectations in pursuit of particular educational goals. In essence, culture is also constructed in the classroom as particular values are both embedded and embodied through daily routine. While the aim of this study was not broad cross-cultural comparison of elementary schooling in the United States and Japan, the design of the study

invites comparison in ways that help us understand the task of transitioning between worlds and gain insights into how one particular child navigated within and between these settings.

I begin by examining tempos of school life, because time and perceptions of time structure lived experiences in particular ways. Then I proceed from formal expectations to how worlds get created in classrooms—first in the United States and then in Japan. Finally, I look across settings as I explore ideas about comfort and choice, hybrid worlds, and responsibility and human relations.

Calendars and Daily Routines

In late July or early August, advertisements across the United States announce the arrival of the "back-to-school" season. From this point until early September, many American children and teachers prepare to return to the classroom after a 12-week summer holiday. At Lakeview, the school year began in September and ended in the middle of June. Throughout Japan and at *hoshuko* around the world, however, the beginning of a new school year coincides with the arrival of spring and the beautiful but ephemeral cherry blossom. Article 59 of the *Ordinance for Enforcement of the School Education Law in Japan* abandoned any possibility of a back-to-school season when it mandated that the "elementary school year shall start on April 1 and end on March 31 of the following year." In Japan, schooling is interminable.

Differences in the school calendar create interesting situations for children who are engaged in both systems. For example, children attending both an American public school and *hoshuko* are in two different grades during the months of April, May, and June. In addition, some children are elementary school students on Saturdays and middle school students Monday through Friday. Perhaps the constant beat of the Japanese school year provides a comforting

predictability to Japanese children who are living abroad. In addition, at the Japanese School of Michigan, children study the same *kanji* on Saturday that their classmates in Japan learned Monday through Friday of the same week.

Given the year-round school year it is perhaps unsurprising that Japanese elementary school students also spend more days in school than their American counterparts. While children at Kaichi are in school 220 days each year, children at Lakeview attend school only about 175 days of the year. The Japanese School of Michigan meets an impressive 42 days a year.[21] Differences in the school calendar, including the long summer break offered by most American schools, makes it possible for Japanese sojourners to return to Japan in late June and spend approximately four weeks experiencing "real" Japanese school life in actual Japanese schools. Seiji attended "trial school" at an elementary school near his maternal grandmother's home in the summers after finishing first and third grades at Lakeview. In this excerpt, Seiji and Aya explain "trial school" and reasons for attending:

> ***Amy:*** So what's a trial school?
> ***Seiji:*** It's like, it's like going to a particular school for like a couple of, not like a permanent student, like, like a, like that one.
> ***Amy:*** So why did you go to trial school? To find a good school, or—?
> ***Aya:*** Ah, no, no, no, no. Just trial.
> ***Seiji:*** To experience, kind of.
> ***Amy:*** To experience Japanese school?
> ***Aya:*** Yes.
> ***Seiji:*** So, because, like, how many months did we go to Japan last time?
> ***Aya:*** Two months.
> ***Seiji:*** Like, like doing nothing for two months.
> ***Aya:*** [laughs] Yes, yes, yes, yes. Big problem for me.
> ***Seiji:*** And I wanted to go (Interview, 02/25/2009).

[21] Thus, Japanese sojourners attending both an American elementary school and a supplementary school are likely to spend about the same number of days in school as their non-sojourning Japanese counterparts.

Aya, Emiko, and Seiji returned to Japan for extended periods during two summers. In addition to visiting family and eating Japanese food, Seiji also attended a Japanese elementary school. As indicated above, two unplanned months in the summer was appealing to neither Seiji nor his mother. On these return visits Aya also contacted the mothers of some of Seiji's preschool and kindergarten friends and arranged get-togethers. Thus, differences in Japanese and American school calendars provided additional schooling opportunities and the chance to meet and interact with a remarkably high number of children.

Daily rhythms and the management of time also varied across settings. According to the Lakeview handbook, the doors opened to students at 7:55 a.m. Mrs. Matthews and other teachers greeted students as they arrived. Instruction began at 8:10 a.m., and school was dismissed at 3:02 p.m. There was a 43-minute break that was divided evenly for lunch and recess. Lunch/recess, specials, and language arts with Mrs. Jackson followed the clock, but otherwise Mrs. Matthews determined length of lessons and breaks between lessons. In other words, time was both concentrated and elastic; officially, most of the day was spent in lessons, but teachers had flexibility in determining the boundaries of those lessons (Alexander, 2000). Sometimes it was difficult to determine whether a particular moment was lesson or break. Generally, students could take a break when they needed one. For example, Mrs. Matthews allowed them to sign themselves out to go to the bathroom—although during instruction or tests they needed to ask permission.

The schedule for fourth through sixth graders at the Japanese School of Michigan was similar to the Kaichi schedule. Children arrived in classrooms before teachers. Classes began at 8:50 a.m., and students were dismissed at 3:20 p.m. The day was divided into six 45-minute periods with breaks between every class and a 45-minute lunch break. Thus, time was dispersed

and rigid; there was frequent alternation between lessons and breaks, but the time of lessons was generally non-negotiable (Alexander, 2000). In addition, the entire school operated according to a fixed timetable. Children generally remained in the classroom at their seats during lessons.

At Kaichi a placard with the daily schedule was posted in every classroom. Although children began to fill the schoolyard, hallways, and classrooms shortly after 8:00 a.m., the official school day did not begin until 8:30 a.m. After a 10-minute silent reading period, Matsumoto Sensei arrived in time for the morning meeting at 8:40 a.m. Although school started at the same time every day, depending on the day of the week, the end time was different. On Mondays and Thursdays there were only five periods and school let out at 2:50 p.m. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays there were six periods and the day ended at 3:40 p.m. There were 10- to 25-minute breaks between every 45-minute lesson, a 15-minute cleaning period, and a 50-minute lunch period. As at the Japanese School of Michigan, children remained in their seats during lessons and only went to the bathroom during breaks.

While Seiji's Japanese schools clearly differentiated between lessons and breaks, Lakeview adopted more of a break-when-you-need-it approach. In a nearly seven-hour day, the American school only had one official break from instruction: a 43-minute period for lunch/recess. Throughout the day Lakeview students had opportunities to move about the classroom, but playing, socializing with friends, and running around were not recognized as important components of school life. At the Japanese schools children had more autonomy during breaks, and teachers were rarely present.[22] These times were designated opportunities for playing games and talking to friends. However, Seiji also regularly commented on the relationship between lessons and breaks: "When you have breaks maybe it's easier to

[22] During the shorter breaks, Tanaka Sensei and Matsumoto Sensei sometimes assisted individual children.

concentrate after that" (Interview, 06/28/2010). Thus, for Seiji, breaks between classes had both cognitive and social functions. His comments led me to wonder how many American elementary school students would frame recess as an activity that helped them focus on learning. Lunch is another part of the school day approached in radically different ways. In what follows, I describe lunch as a site of cultural and social lessons in both countries.

In Japanese elementary schools, lunch is an important opportunity for character development (Hendry, 1986; Tsuneyoshi, 2001; Peak, 1991). Food does not merely provide sustenance, it also invites implicit and explicit lessons about "proper etiquette, pre- and post-meal formalities, the use of chopsticks and dishes, mealtime organization, and the centrality of rice" (Ben-Ari, 1997, p. 109). In essence, Japanese children are socialized to become Japanese through *kyuushoku*, or Japanese school lunch. This training was not available for Seiji while he was in the United States.[23] That is not to say that he did not display proper Japanese etiquette or perform in socially appropriate ways at Kaichi; my observations suggest that he could and that he usually did. However, while his Kaichi classmates embodied years of *kyuushoku* lessons, Seiji's orientation to school lunch reflected an American approach.

Of course, in a sense, American children are also socialized to become American through school lunch. They eat fast and they largely choose what they want to consume—be it peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or Lunchables, carrot sticks or candy bars. At Lakeview, students had 20 minutes to eat. Seiji's perspectives on the temporal aspects of lunch varied significantly from my own. In a sentence completion exercise, he described lunch on Saturdays when he was in Michigan:

[23] The Japanese School of Michigan provided a 45-minute lunch period, but it was not *kyuushoku*. Children ate a lunch they had brought from home while seated around tables in an American high school cafeteria.

> ***Amy:*** Ok, at Japanese Saturday School, lunch is...
> ***Seiji:*** Lunch is something you want to do, um, you want to get done fast so you can play. Like, if the lunchtime, like, lunchtime and lunch break is the same time, so like if you eat slow you'll be done with your lunchtime, like all eating (Interview, 03/04/2009).

Five years of school lunch in the United States influenced how Seiji experienced this part of the day. In March 2010, he recalled the length of the lunch period at Lakeview in a way that surprised me:

> ***Seiji:*** Lunch was really long.
> ***Amy:*** At Lakeview?
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah.
> ***Amy:*** Really?
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah.
> ***Amy:*** I think lunch is much longer at Kaichi.
> ***Seiji:*** But you have to make it yourself. Sometimes it's like 10 minutes. Sometimes it's like 30 minutes (Interview, 03/13/2010).

From my perspective, lunch at Lakeview was 20 minutes and lunch at Kaichi was 50 minutes. From Seiji's perspective, lunch at Lakeview was longer than lunch at Kaichi because it was not tangled up with social training, proper etiquette, and group processes. Lunch at Lakeview was simply a time to talk to his friends and eat.[24] Examining Seiji's participation in the daily practice of school lunch highlights different cultural values and norms about eating.

Throughout the years Seiji lived in the United States he attended school year-round. I wondered if his keen interest in learning emerged in part because it was an activity with which he was always engaged since the role of student was ever-present. Examining temporal elements of schooling at the micro-level provides insights into how use of time influences

[24] Thorne's (2005) research on school lunch at an elementary school in California elaborates on the potential "lessons" within American approaches to lunch. She argues, "Students marked patterns of friendship and distance through two tiers of choice: (a) lunch-from-home versus school lunch (a decision sometimes coordinated with friends), and (b) once in the cafeteria or at the picnic tables, deciding with whom to sit" (p. 70). At Lakeview, children had these choices. At Kaichi, children did not, because everyone ate the same meal with the children in their *han*. Themes of choice and friendship are woven throughout this and other chapters and provide important points of cross-cultural dissonance.

perception of time. Both mind and body experience the structuring power of schedules and calendars.

School worlds are shaped by institutional goals and written guidelines, but they are created through interactions between teachers and students. By including Aya's perspectives on schools and Seiji's views on teachers,[25] I both enrich and narrow our sense of each setting. Because children interpret events and interactions differently and because they come with different sets of skills and interests as well as unique personalities, they experience classroom life differently (Stipek, 2005). And, as previously noted, the lens through which I viewed teachers and classroom life always included Seiji.

Goals, Rules, and the Creation of Classroom Worlds

In his 1968 classic *Life in Classrooms*, Philip Jackson commented, "The magnitude of 7000 hours spread over six or seven years of a child's life is difficult to comprehend" (p. 5). Today many children, including Seiji, spread these hours across multiple settings—sometimes in multiple countries. By the end of sixth grade, Seiji had spent nearly 6000 hours in an American elementary school, about 1200 hours in a Japanese supplementary school, and close to 1800 hours[26] in a Japanese elementary school. How does a child negotiate the linguistic, cultural, and social transitions between multiple settings? The vast majority of Seiji's classmates at Kaichi had spent more than 9000 hours not only in a Japanese elementary school, but ***together*** at the same elementary school. These numbers remind us of the enormous amount of time that children spend in school and the inevitable role schools play in shaping children's daily lives.

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[25] This chapter privileges adult goals and perspectives; Seiji's voice will be more prominent in Chapters Five and Six.

[26] This figure includes approximately 250 hours of trial school.

Randolph and Evertson (1995) observe, "Questions of organization and management are, ultimately, questions of what is valued in a particular setting" (p. 19). How do differences in organization reflect fundamental differences in how Lakeview Elementary School, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi *Shogakko* regarded children? What should we make, if anything, of references to "students" at Lakeview and to "children" at the Japanese schools? What did these schools expect from their young attendees and how did they communicate these expectations? In other words, how did these schools "reflect and impart" macro-level culture? (Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009). However, since culture is also produced through "doing school," how do children and adults interact to create particular spaces for learning where ideas about culture have opportunities to shift?

Multiple layers of data from each school elaborate the settings within which Seiji navigated. For each school I selected a document that provides insights about educational goals and expectations. The documents are not parallel, but they are similar. I include Lakeview's mission statement, the Japanese School of Michigan's educational goals, and Kaichi's motto. Although parallel documents did not exist, these documents reflect institutional and cultural views about students and children. I include school rules as indicators of the relationship between teachers and students in the classroom. Then I introduce Seiji's teachers and classmates. Interactions between and among adults and children create particular classroom worlds. I start in Michigan and alternate between discussion and analysis of Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan in order to give readers a sense of movement between the settings. Then we travel to Japan and learn about how school worlds are created at Kaichi.

Michigan

Lakeview Elementary School

As written declarations of intent, mission statements offer insights about broad educational goals and priorities. Lakeview's mission statement reads: "The main goals of the Lakeview School Community are to prepare students 1) to be lifelong learners, and 2) to have productive futures through fostering the growth of knowledge and skills, communicating respect for diverse ways of thinking and being, and accentuating responsible citizenship and democratic ideals."[27] The school looks beyond both a single school year and the primary school years in general, and, in some sense, frames students—rather than children—as future adults. The grammar of the statement further suggests that the Lakeview School Community acts upon students rather than necessarily in collaboration with them. Finally, there is an emphasis on broad cultural ideals, what Labaree (1997) identifies as the American educational goal of "democratic equality." Thus, important aims at Lakeview include cognitive learning, respect for diversity,[28] and preparation for the future.

One strategy schools use to reach goals is through communicating expectations to children and their parents through written rules.[29] At Lakeview, the Parent Handbook delineated

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[27] As in Chapter Three, I have paraphrased strings of words from all school documents in order to avoid identifying schools.

[28] Although fewer than 10% of Lakeview students were on free or reduced lunch, the student body was ethnically and racially diverse. According to demographic data, just over half were white, about a quarter were African American, a seventh were Asian, and there was a small percentage who were racially mixed, Hispanic, or American Indian.

[29] I recognize that written rules and expectations at the grade-level and classroom-level also exist, but the nature of my research design did not allow me to systematically examine them. I used school rules to locate macro-level expectations and interviews with teachers, Seiji, and Aya as well as classroom observations to identify the ways these expectations emerged in daily school life.

the three areas the school emphasized with its students: Attitude, achievement, and attendance. The school addressed attitude, defined as appropriate student behavior, through a *Behavior Program* and a *Modified Assertive Discipline Plan*. Lakeview viewed cooperation between school and home as an important component of success in implementing these strategies. Lakeview's *Behavior Program* tapped the Character Counts curriculum—respect, responsibility, caring, citizenship, fairness, and trustworthiness—and was a school-wide strategy that guided individual classroom management. The *Discipline Plan* attempted to improve student behavior through a system of rules, offenses, consequences, and positive reinforcements. I paraphrase them here:

1) You can follow directions promptly.
2) You can keep your hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
3) You can use school materials and equipment properly and bring required materials to class.
4) You can stay in designated areas.
5) You can use appropriate language and be kind to others.
6) You can line up without disturbing others, stay in line, and walk on the right side of the hall.
7) You can observe the special Lakeview signal - the peace sign.

With the exception of the second part of Rule 5, "be kind to others," there is a procedural emphasis. Each rule begins with the words "You can"—suggesting a focus on individual behavior, volition, and achievement. Students earn tickets for exceptional attitudes and achievement. Those earning the most tickets in a month are given special recognition, such as a pizza party or a sleepover. Individual short-comings have consequences and individual triumphs are rewarded. In emphasizing individual actions and compliance, these rules provide a floor rather than a ceiling for thinking about student conduct in the school and classroom. Before examining school life as a member of Mrs. Matthews' class at Lakeview, we travel to the

Japanese School of Michigan, a different school in a different town. There, I also provide a sense of the educational goals and rules at this "school between worlds."

The Japanese School of Michigan

The Japanese School of Michigan is operated as a non-profit and administered with the support of parent volunteers and Japanese businesses. The principal is accredited by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, and the school enrolls children in kindergarten through twelfth grade as determined by age on April first. Attending *hoshuko* is a common experience for school-aged Japanese sojourners living in the United States. The vast majority of students at the Japanese School of Michigan are children of Japanese businessmen (and their wives) who have been temporarily assigned to posts overseas. Since more than 90% of these children will return to Japan to complete compulsory schooling, the goal of facilitating smooth reentry into educational environments in Japan targets a fairly homogeneous group.

The hybrid nature of the school is unmistakable. It is a Japanese school held in an American school building, and an American non-profit managed and run by Japanese nationals. As an institution, the school strives to study, improve, and solve the problems of providing "more effective education in once-a-week class work." According to the school's handbook, the goals are to create learning opportunities through which children achieve better understanding and have fun, and to provide rich academic instruction that takes into consideration each child's character and background. These goals highlight both a message that I consistently heard from Japanese educators—school should be fun—and a commitment that was less typically Japanese—children should be recognized and instructed as unique individuals. In addition, these present-oriented educational goals were listed:

1) Development of independent and enthusiastic attitudes toward learning.
2) Development of the ability to make decisions and act assertively so that children can adapt to various circumstances.
3) Cultivation of the capability for meaningful interactions and mutual respect.

Here, attitude is connected to learning rather than to behavior as it is at Lakeview. The school recognizes the immediate need to help children—rather than students—as sojourners and as eventual *kikokushijo,* adjust to their changing circumstances. The final goal emphasizes social skills and good human relations.

Rules at the Japanese School of Michigan are written into the *Student Conduct Code*, a document divided into three sections: rules to follow as users of the rental facilities (seven bulleted points), general rules to follow at school (six bulleted points), and rules in order to "make your day worthwhile" (four bulleted points). As might be expected, the rules about using the rental facilities are primarily procedural. For example, students are asked not to run and to report any damage that may occur. The general rules are an eclectic mix ranging from instructions for high school students wanting to drive to school[30] to not bringing items that would disturb the class. The rules to "make your day worthwhile" remind children that they only have the opportunity to learn in the Japanese language once a week. I paraphrase all four rules in this section while attempting to retain their spirit:

1) Use time wisely in class, and do your best.
2) In order to maintain safety, behave appropriately both in and out of the classroom.
3) Pay attention so that you do not trouble others and the school.
4) Your words and actions should not harm anyone.

"Doing one's best" through perseverance and effort pervades Japanese life (Holloway, 1988; Kondo, 1990; Ben-Ari, 1997), and it was also a prominent theme in this study. As demonstrated

[30] Japanese high school students in both urban and rural areas throughout Japan would never drive a car to school.

in Chapter Three, the discourse of "*Ganbare!* [Do your best!]" was actively used by children. The other three rules emphasize consideration of others.

Some differences in the Lakeview and Japanese School of Michigan rules reflect how they are framed. At Lakeview, rules are nested within the *Modified Assertive Discipline Plan* while at the Japanese School of Michigan they are part of a *Student Conduct Code*. While *Discipline Plan* emphasizes unequal power, *Conduct Code* suggests entry into a contract. In addition, Lakeview rules measure acquiescence to behavioral standards through "You can..." statements. The Japanese School of Michigan rules, on the other hand, either provide specific directives about what students should or should not do or offer suggestions and polite commands about how to have an optimal learning experience on Saturdays. Differences in linguistic conventions account for some of these variations; alternative ideas about children and the goals of elementary school help to explain others.

Handbooks and rules provide insights about school-level goals and objectives. In what follows, I return to classroom life at Lakeview and then at the Japanese School of Michigan. I introduce Seiji's teachers and his classmates and provide a sense of how cultural values appear and are enacted in the classroom.

Lakeview Elementary School

Every time I asked Seiji's mother about Lakeview she told me, "Lakeview is so great!" (Interview, 01/23/2009; Interview, 05/21/2009). Aya appreciated the friendly atmosphere and the opportunity to volunteer during the school day. She also recalled the warm reception Seiji had received from both teachers and students when he had arrived as a 4-year-old with no English skills. "When he was a newcomer, everybody made him feel welcome," she

commented. Then she added, "*Atarashii hito wa amari ukeri irenai kara shinpai* [I have some concern because in Japan, newcomers are not well-received]" (Interview, 01/23/2009).

From Aya's perspective, most teachers at Lakeview were very kind. However, she detected a different tone in teacher-student relationships. While Lakeview teachers seemed to be authority figures commanding respect—"American school teacher is so respect person"—Japanese teachers were on "the same level as students" and "so friendly" (Interview, 2/25/2009). This point is both reflected in the literature and suggested in the substance and presentation of rules at Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan. Tsujimoto offers a historical comparison that elaborates this idea: "The image of the teacher in early modern Japan did not consist of, as seen especially in the cases of Western societies, a relationship between the teacher as a professional of instruction, who faces the children and teaches with authority. The relationship is, rather that of one proceeding before the other, where the teacher, as a model, walks one step faster than the child" (as cited in Tsuneyoshi, 2001, p. 6).[31] As I introduce Seiji's teachers, I elaborate on the ways each professional interacted with students in general and Seiji in particular.

Mrs. Matthews, Seiji's homeroom teacher, was in her eighth year of teaching at Lakeview. She also taught math, science, and social studies. Prior to earning her teaching certificate she worked as a special education paraprofessional at a nearby elementary school. Her primary motivation for pursuing a teaching career was an awareness that "individuals learn differently." She recalled a teacher who was "very pushy and bullied me and put me on the spot" as well as those who were "very helpful and made me feel good about myself and helped me to become successful." These reflections focus on her individual experience within the

[31] This view evokes Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, but in a slightly more playful way.

teacher-student dyad and suggest a desire to reject an authoritarian approach in the classroom. She explained why she chose teaching as a profession:

> I like to be able to give them the opportunity to be independent learners, to think on their own. [N]ow it's the generation of discovery, so in a way I got into it because of my fondness for working with children and my love of learning, but then again it's changed from when I grew up and what I remember. Because now it's more discovery, and it's more like we don't tell them everything, we let them kind of talk and tell us what they are discovering or what they see or what they realize (Interview, 02/17/2009).

Teachers were facilitators of independent learning and discovery. However, discipline and classroom management were also part of the job. "It's a tough love being a teacher, because you want to guide students. You want to keep them motivated, but you want them to start making good decisions," she commented. "And it doesn't mean that their decisions are necessarily bad, unless they're going to harm themselves or someone else." Mrs. Matthews wanted everyone to feel safe and comfortable in the classroom so that they would take chances and "try to learn" (Interview, 02/17/2009).

Mrs. Jackson, Seiji's language arts teacher, had been teaching fifth grade for 17 years—14 of them in the same classroom at Lakeview. The daughter of public school educators, she thought teaching would be an enjoyable career and that her personality was well suited to the classroom. She entered a teacher education program at a large university and was certified in elementary language arts. She explained:

> What's important to me as a teacher first and foremost is that the kids are comfortable in the room and feel good about themselves as people in the room. I feel like if kids are apprehensive and nervous and have anxiety in the room because that atmosphere of comfort hasn't been established, the chances of the child being able to readily learn and take risks as a learner is very much diminished (Interview, 03/09/09).

Mrs. Jackson spent a lot of time building rapport with her students and made full use of her easy-going attitude, patience, and sense of humor. She wanted to give students "unique opportunities

to shine." Thus, both teachers sought classroom environments where children felt at ease and could, therefore, learn. These Lakeview teachers assumed responsibility for children's sense of wellbeing in these classrooms. Kaichi teachers also wanted children to feel like they belonged in the classroom, but, as will be discussed later in this chapter, their strategies were different.

Seiji liked Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson and described them both as "nice." He had a propensity to speak kindly of others. Throughout our interviews and conversations not once did he make a mean-spirited or condescending remark about either an adult or a child. Nonetheless, he liked Mrs. Jackson better. The following excerpt provides insights into some of the qualities Seiji valued in his teachers:

> [Mrs. Jackson] knows that I like, um, are doing my best even if I don't get, didn't really get a good grade, or lost something, or forgot to bring it. She is good at explaining stuff. And she explains so I know it. And the other teacher [Mrs. Matthews], um, she, she is nice, but like she doesn't really teach it in a certain way. She just teaches it. She's not really fun (Interview, 01/23/2009).

Seiji liked learning and he valued instruction that was highly engaging and challenging. Here, he draws upon the Japanese cultural precept—also a Japanese School of Michigan rule—of "doing one's best." As a second language learner, Seiji appreciated when teachers used strategies that facilitated his comprehension in class. "Mrs. Jackson is like good at gesturing. It's easier for us to know. And sometimes she uses um like hard words when she speaks, like on purpose, and tells us the meaning. Well, she's good at teaching, kind of. Like when we don't know something she tells us. But, um, a lot of people like Mrs. Matthews, too, but, I like Mrs. Jackson better" (Interview, 03/04/2009). Seiji probably learned more in Mrs. Jackson's class, in part because English was his second language. Mrs. Matthews, on the other hand, had the more difficult task of teaching him math, a subject where he already had deep content knowledge.

Of course, learning is about more than writing effective thesis statements and understanding fractions. As Lave and Wenger (1991) state, learning implies "a relation to social communities" (p. 53). Seiji was a member of Mrs. Matthews' "social" and "very verbal" fifth grade class (Interview, 2/17/2009). Students enjoyed talking to one another, even when their verbal energy was not directed toward learning academic content. According to Mrs. Matthews they were "persistent" when they believed they were right and would engage in sparring with her over issues such as chewing gum:

> I have a rule in my classroom that there's no chewing gum. And they want to debate that rule. And I said there's no debating it. This is my classroom, this is my rule, and no chewing gum. And I've talked to them, like this is halfway through the school year. And I try to rationalize it, and I still find students chewing gum constantly. They think that no one's going to notice. But when you start chewing gum it's very visible. Not to mention other students are starting to say, 'Well they've got gum.' You know, 'I want gum.' So then it's like the pointing and so forth. 'If they can do it, can't I?' Getting back to my point here is that today a student said to me, 'Well, they can do it in middle school.' And I'm like, I'm not debating this; this is my rule. So I've worked it out with the principal that if they're caught chewing gum, and I can give as many warnings as I want, I usually give two or three, then they're gonna go have lunch in the office and they have to sit in the office and have their lunch and their recess. Well, I had a student that got caught after repeated warnings and she's a repeat offender, so this is not like the first time. And so she today, is very, you know, she's upset, she's in the office, and she's like in tears and all this because now I'm enforcing my rule, that is a pretty simple rule, but she chose not to follow it. So overall, you know, there are students like Seiji who wouldn't think that if that's a rule, he might say, 'Well, why is it a rule?" And then I would give my reasoning, and he would be satisfied with it. But other students— (Interview, 02/17/09).

"No chewing gum" was a classroom rule but not a school rule and so surprising amounts of classroom time and energy were spent discussing, debating, and rationalizing the behavior. Mrs. Matthews had rules and, in line with the *Discipline Plan*, there were consequences for choosing not to follow them. Seiji, however, remained on the periphery if this debate; sometimes he even played the role of spoiler—"You got gum!" In general, Seiji might question classroom rules and teacher expectations, but he usually listened to the reasoning and then

complied. Occasionally, he broke rules, a topic that will emerge in later chapters, but he was unlikely to argue with or debate his teachers.

Mrs. Matthews described Seiji as "just kind of like one of everybody else here." Mariko, on the other hand, was new and had arrived from Japan in 2008 at the start of the school year. Although Lakeview's Newcomer's Center provided support for English as Second Language (ESL) students in their first year, Mrs. Matthews had also relied on Seiji to serve as a translator and informal mentor. He took this role seriously and simultaneously seemed to enjoy a heightened sense of importance. And while Mariko was the only ESL newcomer, a student had joined the class in December and another had arrived in January. Thus, as is the case in many American classrooms, Mrs. Matthews and her students were required to adjust to shifts and changes in the membership of their classroom community.[32] Although Lakeview was a high-performing school in a well-funded district with well-educated teachers and parents, whether Mrs. Matthews framed student mobility as a challenge or as an opportunity probably also shifted—perhaps even from day to day. Seiji moved between educational worlds with impressive dexterity and resiliency. As an internationally mobile kid, he also served as a conduit for introducing ideas, behaviors, and actions from somewhere else. Both Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan were relatively open-systems where movement was expected; Kaichi was markedly less so.

Overall, Mrs. Matthews' class seemed to be a thoughtful and friendly group of students. Effortlessly, they followed the second part of Rule #5: "Be kind to others." On my final visit to

[32] Student mobility—especially when children are from low-income or migrant families—can be a significant challenge for both teachers and students. In comparison to some American children, Seiji's attendance at Lakeview from kindergarten through fifth grade suggests remarkable stability. E.D. Hirsch (1996) cites a statement from the United States General Accounting Office that "annually, about one-fifth of all Americans move" (p. 34).

Lakeview in March 2009, enormous, partially eaten, gourmet cupcakes piled high with purple frosting signaled the celebration of someone's birthday.[33] For the remainder of the day, sugar from the cupcakes mingled with awareness of Seiji's last day. "I'm not going to get emotional," commented Samuel to no one in particular. "Oh, my! We're going to miss Seiji," lamented Janice. "This is the worst day ever," Tony told me. "This is Seiji's last day, and you aren't coming back" (Fieldnotes, 03/13/2009).

Although there was a long summer holiday between school years, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:02 p.m., September through June, the Lakeview School Community created a comfortable space for the young people who attended school there. Warm 'Good mornings' were exchanged when the students arrived. Interesting and attractive bulletin boards lined the hallways and student work was creatively displayed. Birthdays were celebrations of the individual with special treats for everyone. The children were cool in the warmer months and warm during the long winter. In contrast to the future-orientation of the mission statement, Seiji's teachers emphasized students' well-being in the present.

The Japanese School of Michigan

The Japanese School of Michigan provided important opportunities for Japanese families to congregate and to contribute to a Japanese version of schooling in the United States. Aya appreciated the weekly chance her children had to spend a day immersed in Japanese instruction and schooling with Japanese age-mates. Teachers at the Japanese School of Michigan are Japanese nationals who may or may not have official teaching credentials for the subjects that they teach. Japanese citizenship, completion of "apprenticeships of observation" (Lortie,

[33] Birthdays at Kaichi were celebrated in a markedly different way. During roll call, Matsumoto Sensei read a child's name and then proclaimed, "*O tanjyobi omedetou* [Happy Birthday!]." Then she read the next name.

1975/2002) during their own years of schooling, and guidance from teacher manuals and colleagues provided adequate preparation for them to teach in the unique circumstances of *hoshuko*. In addition, these adults had their own experiences navigating various professional and personal settings as Japanese living in the United States.

Tanaka Sensei was Seiji's fifth grade teacher on Saturdays. She had majored in music education and was licensed to teach at junior and senior high schools in Japan. One influence on her decision to become a teacher was the "educational environment" her mother, a middle school teacher, created at home. In her first year at the Japanese School of Michigan she had taught first grade. "Actually, the first grade is the most difficult grade to teach, because they cannot arrange their stuff," she commented. "Especially for younger people, and then, you know, I have never worked at elementary school in Japan and other people recognized I had better teach at [a] higher grade like fourth, fifth, or sixth" (Interview, 04/04/2009). Trained as a music teacher, she possessed limited pedagogical content knowledge in Japanese, math, and social studies, even though she had responsibility for teaching these subjects.

Differences in the learning environment at *hoshuko*, a once-a-week-school, and a typical elementary school in Japan, where students and teachers met five days a week, posed unique challenges for teachers. Learning Japanese and mathematics was important, but Tanaka Sensei placed a high priority on student enjoyment of school. "If they cannot enjoy," she noted, "it's really hard to come to school every Saturday." She pointed out the particular challenges students faced in developing their Japanese writing skills and the importance of gaining students' interest so that they would want to study more at home. Since most students would return to Japan, she wanted them to be able to adjust to a Japanese school environment—especially listening to teachers and cooperating with classmates.

Classes at the Japanese School of Michigan appeared more homogenous than they actually were. At *hoshuko*, children are always at various stages of the sojourner experience and levels of English and levels of Japanese vary from student to student. Tanaka Sensei attributed these differences to length of time in the United States, support from parents, and variations in goals and reasons for attending. Some of Tanaka Sensei's beliefs reflected a focus on individual differences and helping students accept differences. For example, when asked about the challenges of teaching newly arrived students and those who had been around for awhile she responded, "It's really difficult to adjust to each student, but I'm trying to approach them individually." She was aware that some of her students might think, speak, and express their emotions in ways that classmates in Japan would find "weird." Thus, although she wanted them to be able to successfully re-enter Japanese schools, she also wanted them to understand that differences are part of one's personality and therefore something to maintain.

Tanaka Sensei was Seiji's primary teacher on Saturdays, but occasionally Alexander Sensei took the lead in her role as a team teacher. Team teachers supported the work of the homeroom teachers. Every week Alexander Sensei was scheduled to join a particular class at a particular time. In advance, homeroom teachers were to give her a note indicating the subject of focus, textbook pages to be covered, and the kind of support they needed in the classroom. Sometimes Alexander Sensei worked with individual students; in Tanaka Sensei's classroom she often taught the lesson.

Alexander Sensei was a dynamic woman with a colorful background. Her past experiences included fixing mines and torpedos and packing parachutes for the Japanese Navy and studying English at a university in Alabama. At the time of the study, she was teaching full-time in a Japanese immersion program at a public school. She was married to an American and

had worked at the Japanese School of Michigan for five years—four years as a fifth grade teacher and one year as a team teacher. She was deeply committed to teaching on Saturdays: "I like the Japanese, the students in Japanese School, because they really want to learn. The parents are always involved, anytime it will be beneficial for their children, you know they always support the whole school" (Interview, 04/16/2009).

Like her students, Alexander Sensei transitioned from being part of the American educational system during the week to being a part of the Japanese educational system on Saturdays. She observed childrens' behavior carefully so that she could identify difficulties they might be facing. She explained:

> You know some students have a problem with American school, you know, not communicating with other students, cannot express in English well.... Like, you know, fighting or arguing and they just toughen up. Let's say there was a quiet student. Everything is cool, but there's some arguing [with] students in the classroom [and] then you know with that student it's not happened before. What's going on? So I report it [to] the family and then find out they are not doing well within the American School or something. So academically I care but at the same time I have to care about [how they are doing in] another whole environment (Interview, 04/16/2009, edited for clarity).

For Alexander Sensei academics were important, but in order to help her students learn content she felt that she needed to know her students and be aware of the challenges they faced as sojourners. In many ways, her commitment to children's general well-being parallels Lakeview teachers' goal of creating a supportive and comfortable learning environment.

Like Tanaka Sensei, Alexander Sensei understood the ways of talking and being that would be expected when children returned to Japanese schools and classrooms. She identified some of the student behaviors that contribute to the foundation of Japanese educational processes:

- If the teacher is talking, then students should be quiet.
- Students need to remain in their seats and not walk around during class.
- No eating or drinking during class.

- Students should have all materials.
- Students must organize their desks[34] (Interview, 04/16/2009).

She also mentioned the importance of good posture and sitting with both feet on the floor. However, good posture is difficult to maintain when only practiced once a week in chairs designed for older, bigger, and taller American high-school students. Seiji did not struggle with this, but several of his *hoshuko* classmates did.

Beginning teachers face many challenges. Tanaka Sensei was no exception. Seiji initially reported, "She's still learning a lot of stuff [as a university student]. So sometimes she makes a lot of mistakes" (Interview, 01/23/2009). At both Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan when Seiji was neither engaged nor challenged in class, he preyed upon the mis-steps of his teachers—perhaps a strategy that enabled him to pay attention. Even though Seiji quickly drew attention to teacher errors, his approach was usually polite and to the point. Seiji's preference to socially engage while learning is reflected in his observation that she "hasn't taught a lot of classes, [so] she doesn't like look at the kids and teach a lot" (Interview, 03/04/2009). He tolerated teachers reading directly from books, but he favored a more interactive approach.

In contrast, Seiji described Alexander Sensei's ability to interact with children in meaningful ways: "It doesn't really feel like she's teaching. It feels like she's playing with people, but we're learning" (Interview, 03/04/2009). He elaborated, "Mrs. Alexander has some like magnetic things and she puts them on the whiteboard. And maybe when a person doesn't know, Mrs. Tanaka just goes to another person. Mrs. Alexander maybe tells that person things we did last week and like try to make them remember it and eventually they'll remember it."

[34] I judged Seiji's desk to be fairly neat at Lakeview. However, Matsumoto Sensei pointed out Seiji's lack of desk organization as one of his weaknesses. Lewis (1995) and others have written about what they find to be a somewhat stifling emphasis on putting particular items in particular places in Japanese elementary schools.

Finally, he reported that she was a good listener—vitally important for a talkative child—and that she was good at saying "'Good job!' or 'Wow! I didn't know that'" (Interview, 03/04/2009). Seiji's ideas about good teaching were consistent across settings; he wanted his teachers to deliver captivating lessons while exuding encouragement and patience and displaying enthusiasm for children's ideas. A comment such as "Wow! I didn't know that" demonstrates the friendly interactions between Japanese teachers and students who communicate with children on their level.

Classroom communities are difficult to create within the complex circumstances that surround *hoshuko*, even though social relations contribute to the foundation of Japanese school life. On Saturdays, the curriculum and schedule were Japanese, the teachers and students were Japanese, and the language spoken was Japanese, but something was different. Not only did Tanaka Sensei's class seem to have limited group cohesiveness, but throughout the day I also heard un-kind and exclusionary comments between children. I wondered if Tanaka Sensei's limited experience in the classroom left her ill-prepared to respond to such issues. The boldness her students exhibited in class sometimes caught her off guard. However, teaching a week's worth of Japanese and mathematics, creating a Japanese school culture, making learning enjoyable, engaging students for a full day of school on Saturday, and, encouraging students to do their best Monday through Friday was a lot to accomplish on a Saturday. These goals were inseparable, but striving to achieve them all was a monumental task.

Seiji's experiences point to another reason that social relations in the class were complicated. Although Seiji had friends in Tanaka Sensei's class, his closest buddies, the ones he looked forward to seeing every weekend, were in another fifth grade homeroom. Thus, although Saturdays were opportunities to meet Japanese friends, for Seiji it was primarily during

the in-between times of the school day that this happened. Saturday friendships were important, but there were unique challenges to fostering them outside of school since children and their families lived in geographically dispersed communities.

Sitting in a classroom at 2:00 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon when Tanaka Sensei was reading from the textbook, I sometimes wondered if the covert function of the lesson was developing *gaman*, a well-known cultural value encompassing patience, endurance, perseverance, tolerance, self-control, and self-denial. When children were engaged and inspired by the lesson, the excitement was palpable as they called out, "*Sensei, Dekita!* [Teacher, I got it!]" When they were not, silence and quiet fidgeting prevailed. Interacting with other Japanese children and maintaining familiarity with Japanese school culture and values—including *gaman*—were goals that were as important as learning content. Thus, enduring a challenging situation and learning mathematics in a Japanese way were equally essential skills and ways of thinking that needed nurturing.

Tanaka Sensei faced challenges engaging her students. However, she was cheerful, worked hard and had developed good relationships with most students. She accepted on-going corrections from students graciously. With a positive attitude, parental support and efforts by the children, the teachers at the Japanese School of Michigan, regardless of their experience and credentials, achieved important goals. Perhaps weekly reminders of sitting up straight with both feet on the floor, opportunities to learn Japanese content with friends, and being forced to remain in their seats for 45-minute periods provided "enough" cognitive, affective and physical cues to make re-entering Japanese schools a relatively smooth process.

On Saturdays from April to March, an American high school turned into a Japanese oasis. Vehicles built by Honda, Toyota, and Nissan dominated the parking lot. The halls were filled

with Japanese teachers, students, and parents speaking Japanese and communicating clearly through non-verbal strategies. It seemed to be a zone of comfort for the sojourning Japanese children and their mothers. Perhaps this was in part because it offered a degree of predictability that other contexts did not. Mothers met other mothers. Newly arrived children could relax in a setting where they could understand and be understood. Old-timers, like Seiji, relished the opportunity to meet Saturday friends.

In order to understand Seiji's experience transitioning back to school in Japan, it is important to understand his school experiences in Michigan and the worlds he moved between. Teachers at Lakeview were aware that Japanese students attended school on Saturdays, however, their knowledge of the Japanese School of Michigan, its philosophy, and its role as an important "in-between world" was limited. Shortly before Seiji's return, Mrs. Jackson commented, "All he knows is here at the American schools. So the whole idea of going to Japan, I think there's nervousness about that" (Interview, 03/09/2009). Seiji was a little nervous. However, Lakeview was not all he knew. He had enthusiastically participated in trial school and *hoshuko* throughout his sojourn, and he had attended preschool in Japan. These experiences, as well as years at Lakeview, fostered Seiji's flexible approach to performing the role of student across contexts.

Mrs. Matthews, on the other hand, had wondered if attending the Japanese School of Michigan on Saturdays contributed to how he engaged in her classroom. She began, "I don't know anything about Japanese Saturday School. I don't know what their philosophy is. He's confident. He knows it," she reflected. "[But] sometimes it seems like more of his learning is a competition [rather] than an enjoyment. It's like, 'Ok, I got 'em done.' And I'm like, 'We're not racing, it's not all about being the first one done.'" (Interview, 2/17/2009). Seiji did seem to like to turn things in first for whatever reason. However, he may have quickly tackled some of

the Lakeview worksheets because they were not particularly interesting, challenging, or enjoyable. Seiji, like most kids, would be unlikely to locate school fun or engaging learning in worksheets.

Seiji's last day at Lakeview was Friday, March 13, 2009; his last day at the Japanese School of Michigan was Saturday, March 14. On Sunday, March 15, Seiji and his family boarded an airplane at Detroit Metropolitan Airport and left Michigan. Tuesday, April 6, was Seiji's first day at Kaichi—the day he went up on the stage in front of his schoolmates and introduced himself by saying, "I'm from Detroit, and I like fishing."

Japan

Kaichi Shogakko

The three words that formed the foundational ideas of Kaichi's motto—*honki* (seriousness), *genki* (vigor, pep), and *shoujiki* (honesty/integrity)—reflect intentions that are similar to Lakeview's mission statement and the Japanese School of Michigan's educational goals. These three words were posted in every classroom, recited during formal ceremonies, and had been carved into a large rock in front of the school. In addition, they were written in elaborated form on the cover of report cards:

- A child who studies seriously (knowledge)
- A child who is vigorous and healthy (body)
- A child who is honest and follows rules (virtue)

The motto demonstrates both simplicity—even young children can remember three words—and a balance of mind, body, and spirit. At Kaichi, children—rather than students—are to work hard at their studies, enthusiastically participate in all aspects of school life, and follow rules.

Although Seiji and Aya mentioned a few rules in our interviews and conversations, I did not initially locate school-wide written rules. I contacted Aya and inquired about a rulebook or

handbook. She checked with Emiko's teacher and was given a piece of paper titled *Seikatsu no Kimari*, or Life Rules. She typed it up and sent it in as an e-mail attachment. Later follow-up confirmed that this page was the school's written rules. "They don't have any other rules," Aya explained. "Japanese school is not flashy" (E-mail correspondance, 10/13/2010). Kaichi may have had more extensive goals, policies, and plans, but they were not published for public dissemination.[35]

While a 1-page document is quite concise, the topic of life rules—even school life rules—is unquestionably broad. *Seikatsu no Kimari* is written in "plain form" Japanese, a level used for communication with children, family, close friends, and pets. The document lists 29 rules, primarily procedural, and divides them into five sections: 1) Attire, hair/head, 2) Personal items/property, 3) Road safety, 4) Life outside of school, and 5) Other. Although one section is titled "Life outside of school," all sections list rules that extend beyond the school grounds and the official hours of the school day. In order to give a sense of the rules, I list two from each section:

1. Attire, hair/head
    - Wear your cap when going to school or coming home from school.
    - As for your bangs, cut them or use a pin so that they are not in your eyes. As for your collar, tie up your hair so that you look neat.
2. Personal items/property
    - Take good care of your personal items and write your name on them.
    - Don't bring to school things you won't use or money you won't need.
3. Road safety
    - Look both ways before crossing roads.
    - Don't ride two on a bicycle or in other dangerous ways.
4. Life outside of school
    - When you go out, tell your family 'who, where, what you will do, and when you will return' before you leave.
    - Don't play in the following dangerous places: ponds or rivers, rail lines, construction sites, storehouses, tracks, highways, cliffs.

[35] In the two elementary schools that Nancy Sato (2004) studied, one school developed a 61-page document while the other school had a one-page handout.

5. Other
    - When going to the gymnasium go through the second story passage. Don't go in front of the staff room.
    - Always use correct words, and when you call out to your classmates, attach *kun* and *san* to their names.[36]

Readers unfamiliar with the Japanese school system may be most surprised by the section titled "Life outside of schools." Japanese teachers, however, have had culturally bestowed responsibilities for their students outside of school hours and off of school property for decades (LeTendre, 2000; Sato, 2004). For example, Sato (2004) reported that if a child was caught stealing, teachers, principals, and parents were required to apologize to store owners in person. In other words, in Japan, since teachers and schools have clear responsibilities for socializing children, they may also be held responsible for their social failures. The nine rules listed in "Life outside of schools" captures directives that most Americans would recognize. For example, children are told to come home before dark and to avoid playing with fire, trespassing, or going anywhere or accepting anything from strangers. It may be surprising to read them as a set of "school rules" but the rules themselves are neither strange nor unfamiliar.

At Kaichi, behavioral expectations for children were not included in the written school rules. This suggests that the school had other mechanisms for encouraging/compelling children to think, feel, act, and interact in particular ways. Several scholars have written compelling accounts of how authority, control, and supervision emerge in Japanese elementary schools (Lewis, 1995; Sato, 2004). My own observations in Emiko's third grade classroom at Kaichi made it clear that Matsumoto Sensei's sixth graders were, in some sense, final products of a 6-year process where children gradually took on more responsibility. Based on findings from two

[36] Matsumoto Sensei reported Seiji's impressive use of *kun* and *san* at the beginning of the school year. However, exposure to the less well-regarded habits of his Kaichi classmates led him to drop the endings.

years of ethnographic research, Sato (2004) concluded, "Issues of authority and control are set within a complex network of cultural values, norms, rituals, and interpersonal relations" (p. 68). Efficiency and smooth processes in the Japanese classroom emerge from subtle control systems that rely on self and peer supervision and are developed over time.

Aya also needed to adjust to schooling processes in Japan. After volunteering at Lakeview for so many years, she had gotten to know Lakeview and her children's school lives. However, at Kaichi there were no similar opportunities for parents. During the first few weeks of school, Aya would occasionally "pass by [Seiji's] class [on the ground floor] just to see a little bit." Initially, she felt like she no longer knew his school life. When she called Matsumoto Sensei to check in, the veteran teacher told her that there were not any problems and not to worry. Aya's friend was also reassuring. Her child had been in Matsumoto Sensei's fourth grade classroom and had insisted that the teacher was "'really, really, really good.'" In addition, through weekly letters a sense of Seiji's new classroom life gradually emerged. In an introductory letter to parents Matsumoto Sensei wrote that she was not fashionable, usually didn't wear makeup, and spoke the local accent. Aya admired her for showing her own character, for her friendliness, and for her ability to effectively interact with children on their level (Interview, 05/21/2009).

"I wish I could say it is because I like children, but actually, when I was in high school, I thought about which college to go to, and chose the one that was close and within reach of my ability," Matsumoto Sensei explained when I asked the 30-year veteran why she had decided to become a teacher. This was her fifth year teaching at Kaichi. As is typical of teachers in Japan, the Board of Education in each prefecture decides at which building a teacher will work; teachers work in several schools and at different grade levels over the course of their careers. Matsumoto

Sensei had taught at four different area schools and all six grades at the elementary level. She attributed her longevity at each school, eight to ten years, to her ability to get along well with parents.

As a teacher, Matsumoto Sensei believed that she needed to keep studying and always think about how she could give a class so that children would understand well. She identified consideration for others and kindness as important elements she intentionally built into classroom life. "I think kindness is strength," she explained. Sixth graders needed to learn *gaman*, or perseverance, and the strength to overcome difficulties. The most important thing that children learn in her class is *ningen kankei,* or human relations. Although children can study on their own by referring to books and the Internet, at school they can learn with classmates. "It's important for children to experience the joy of learning collaboratively with their friends," she stated. Although cognitive learning was important to Matsumoto Sensei, her most important goals were related to social interactions and the processes and pleasures of learning in the company of others and their ideas.

Seiji's homeroom usually split into two sections for math. Matsumoto Sensei taught the *jikkuri*, or slowly/thoroughly, course for students who were not good at math. Ueda Sensei taught the *harikiri*, or hustle/work hard, course for children who understood the basics and were ready to spend most of the class solving problems. Children selected a course commensurate with their needs and abilities, and, according to Seiji, could switch if the course they had chosen proved to be too easy or too difficult. Seiji and about 15 other classmates were in the *harikiri* course. Children usually addressed this teacher as Hiromu Sensei—using his first name, Hiromu, instead of his family name, Ueda.

Ueda Sensei had previously taught math for nine years at a junior high school, but this was his first year at Kaichi. He chose teaching as a career because of his experience in seventh grade with a young teacher who had just graduated from college. "I was greatly influenced by him," he recalled. "Perhaps it was due to the fact that he was young, but he listened deeply to us little devils. He did not tell us to do this or do that; he just said, 'Uh-huh, uh-huh' and listened to us" (Interview, 07/06/2009). As for goals in the classroom, Ueda Sensei first clarified that he did not have a class of his own, thereby indicating that homeroom teachers had responsibilities that he did not. In terms of math, he wanted his students to develop calculation skills and an ability to solve word problems by considering typical and alternative strategies. "As for human beings," he continued, "I guide my students to have their own opinions and thoughts. It does not matter how they come to form opinions and ideas; I support them to form one. Then we can share methods and ideas with other students. In the end, I want them to realize that there are many ways, but the one our teacher taught us is the most reasonable and efficient." One of the most important things students learn in his class is to work through problems whether they were difficult or easy. He wanted students to understand that sometimes it is okay to receive help from teachers and friends, but that they must also learn to complete tasks by themselves. Ueda Sensei and Matsumoto Sensei blended individual perseverance with collaborative social functioning in the goals they set for the classes they taught. Facilitating positive social relations with peers was essential to helping children feel comfortable at school. In addition, they interacted and communicated with children on their level as a strategy for encouraging them to take their studies seriously.

When I first asked Seiji about Matsumoto Sensei he paused for a very long time and eventually said, "She's half nice." I responded that it was better than a quarter nice. He replied,

"Well, maybe she's a quarter nice." He then reported that she spoke a little English and that I would like her (Fieldnotes, 05/17/2009). A few days later he commented, "When I first saw her I thought she was scary ... she just looked scary. Now she's not scary at all. She's like more funny, kind of ... She always teaches us like she isn't teaching us" (Interview, 05/23/2009). At the end of the school year, Seiji described both Matsumoto Sensei and Ueda Sensei as "very good" teachers. He appreciated that his homeroom teacher made learning in social studies fun by posing broad thought questions at the beginning of a unit—for example, "How might people have used this item?"—and then gradually exploring possibilities over the course of the term. Ueda Sensei was good at teaching because "when somebody doesn't know something he asks them until they know. And at the first of his class, you do a little bit of what you did last time" (Interview, 03/13/2010). Engaging students in content and assisting them as they tried to share their thoughts and ideas were ways that these teachers made classroom life enjoyable. Seiji's expectations and analysis of the qualities that made for a good teacher remained consistent over the study.

According to Matsumoto Sensei, Kaichi was located in a relatively homogeneous neighborhood marked by social stability. "Parents bring large incomes and there are not many foreign residents, such as Brazilians," she noted. "I sometimes heard about school districts which have a lot of delinquency or poor people, but we do not have any problems." Furthermore, since about 98% of Kaichi students continued on to the local public middle school Kaichi teachers did not have significant numbers of students who were intensively preparing for entrance exams to private middle schools and therefore distracted and exhausted during the school day. Matsumoto Sensei described her class as "immature" for sixth grade. They were kind to others, helped those in trouble, and cleaned up after themselves, but they did not take initiative. "They are waiting,"

she explained. "'Teacher, what is next? What is next? Tell us.' I'd like to correct this" (Interview, 05/20/2009).

Elementary school buildings in Japan are fairly standard, due in part to the strong national presence in the educational system. Most are 3-story, rectangular concrete structures with neither central heating nor air conditioning. Kaichi was a plain structure, but it was a child-friendly, educationally well-equipped,[37] and developmentally appropriate space where children had ownership and responsibility and could have rich sensory experiences. Children were constantly dragging and pushing desks around on the hardwood floors as they cleaned, formed *han* for small group work and lunch, and separated for test-taking. In the halls there were flowers in flowerpots, large fish tanks, artwork, and sinks for hand-washing.

Cleaning time at Kaichi was a flurry of activity. Children swept floors in classrooms, hallways and stairwells, cleaned bathrooms, and watered flowers. Older children assisted younger children. I commented to Matsumoto Sensei that cleaning seemed like a productive use of children's energy. She may have agreed with me, but her rationale was different: The children needed to take care of the school because it was ***their*** school.

In matters such as hand washing and organizing school materials, uniformity and efficiency were important. For example, one afternoon as I washed my hands, one of Seiji's classmates frankly informed me that the proper way to wash hands was to put water on them first and then add soap—I had squeezed out a dollop of soap and added water. As for organization, most everything had a designated spot. One of Matsumoto Sensei's criticisms of Seiji was that he was not organized. "For example," she explained, "his bag which is supposed to be hung in

[37] Kaichi had a music room with electric pianos, two libraries, an art room, an air-conditioned computer laboratory with more than 35 computers, a science laboratory where basic experiments could be conducted, a large all-purpose room, and an outdoor swimming pool.

the hallway, is on top of the locker." There was a "most efficient way" that everyone adopted for a variety of tasks. At Kaichi, bags were always hung on a hook in the hallway; one learned this in first grade and it still held true in sixth grade. At Kaichi, routines were remarkably consistent from classroom to classroom and from year to year even though new teachers joined the staff every April.

Kaichi teachers talked about subject content more in the classroom and during the interviews than did either their Lakeview or Japanese School of Michigan counterparts. Matsumoto Sensei modeled foundational qualities of lifelong learning when she articulated that the most important thing she should do as a teacher was to continue studying so that she could teach her students more effectively. Perhaps because he "only" had responsibility for teaching mathematics, Ueda Sensei talked at length in our interviews about developing his students' math skills. Based on my classroom observations at Kaichi, interacting with others—especially with the ideas of others—was viewed as critical to the learning process. Furthermore, both Matsumoto Sensei and Ueda Sensei frequently referred to learning with friends—not classmates or other kids but friends. Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson only mentioned "friends" a couple of times and never to describe students' relationships in a general way. I take up and explore this distinction fully in Chapter Five. Matsumoto Sensei explained that human relations included both kindness and consideration of others in a very broad sense. Efficiency in the classroom and in moving from routine to routine and from class to break and back again depended on consideration of others.

At Kaichi, children learned with friends and they played and socialized with them during breaks throughout the day. Most children arrived at least 25 minutes before the start of the school day in order to enjoy time with their friends before sitting down to learn. Children had

ownership of and responsibility for the school. They cleaned everything from the toilets to the stairwells to the classrooms. They fed the rabbits, watered the flowers, and tended the gardens. They endured hot July afternoons with only the breeze from a few fans mounted on the ceiling and managed through chilly March mornings with the heat from one kerosene heater in the back of the classroom. These experiences helped them develop *gaman*. I never heard a student complain about the temperature inside the classroom even though it ranged from 48˚ - 85˚. There were many situations like these where Kaichi students persevered in the company of friends.

Looking Across Educational Settings

In this chapter I have worked at several levels while explaining some of the salient features of Seiji's educational worlds. I began by exploring the rhythms of schooling at Lakeview Elementary School, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi *Shogakko*. For each setting I provided insights about how school calendars and daily schedules reflect an interplay between macro-level ideas and micro-level enactments. In other words, I sought to explicate the temporal realities that Seiji navigated. In the next section, I presented Seiji's school life in Michigan and in Japan. I framed these sections by highlighting the written expressions—the mission statement, educational goals, and the motto—that indicated the broad institutional goals. I looked at school rules as indicators of the tone of the relationship between teachers and students and as cultural strategies for achieving institutional objectives. I introduced Seiji's teachers and the particular communities of practice within which he acted, interacted, performed, and learned. Seiji is present, but in this chapter his views and perspectives are and will remain primarily in the background.

The documents, conversations, and observations upon which this chapter is based do not provide a comprehensive view of these schools or even of the particular fifth and sixth grade classrooms within which Seiji was an active member. My intention was to structure the reader's experience in ways that would invite reflection on the many ways that schools and teachers embedded in particular contexts and cultures structure children's daily experiences. In what follows, I gaze across the three school settings through these explanatory themes: comfort and choice, converging worlds, and responsibility and human relations. Each emerged in a particular setting, but was clearly present in the others. By explanatory theme, I mean themes that emerged from the data and work to advance our understanding of Seiji's experiences and his story as it continues to unfold in the remaining chapters. I begin each section by addressing the theme as it emerged in a particular setting; then I use it as a lens through which to view the other settings.

Comfort and Choice

Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson placed a high priority on creating classroom environments where individual students felt comfortable—a condition they both believed was a prerequisite to learning. Communicating respect for diverse ways of thinking and being was, in fact, part of Lakeview's mission statement. The Third Edition of the American Heritage College Dictionary defines the word comfortable as: "1. Providing physical comfort. 2. Free from stress or anxiety; at ease." Although these teachers were referring to the second entry, in comparative perspective, the school also facilitated "physical comfort." Three simple examples from the school data I have already presented illustrate this point. At Lakeview, 1) temperature was regulated and controlled through central heating and cooling, 2) the bathroom could be visited when needed, and 3) getting out of one's chair during lessons was generally acceptable. These circumstances, however, did not exist at Kaichi. Denial of these physical comforts is part of the

curriculum and reflects elementary efforts to build character and foster qualities such as *gaman* (perseverence) and *gambaru* (effort/doing one's best) (Cave, 2007; Lewis, 1995; Sato, 2004). These qualities are embodied through the process of schooling in Japan. As I sat in the back of Matsumoto Sensei's classroom on another chilly, rainy March morning, the one kerosene heater in the room seemed inadequate—particularly since the windows were open. During breaks a few students would huddle next to the heater warming their hands, and I would catch murmurs of "*Samui* [Cold]," but I never heard anyone complain about the temperature—except perhaps the voice in my own head.

Dialogue around "choice" and "choosing" was a recurring pattern that subtly emerged in the content of the lessons and in connection to rules and expectations.[38] Although there was only one sentence about choice in the parent handbook, it was part of the *Discipline Plan* and warned students: "If you choose to fight, you choose to go home." Was this a "real" choice? Did this use of the word "choose" help students learn to weigh viable alternative options or did it communicate a more implicit alternate meaning? In what follows, I explore both the rhetoric of choice and actual choices that children had as part of daily life in schools.

As part of her teaching routine, Mrs. Jackson read chapters of novels or other literary pieces aloud to students who gathered on the floor in the front her classroom. In March 2009, she read Kathy Ireland's "Putting My Best Foot Forward" from Jack Canfield's *Chicken Soup for the Kids' Soul*. The selection was in the section titled "On Choices." She began by reading the William Jennings Bryant quote at the top of the page: "Destiny is not a matter of chance; it is a

[38] In the lower elementary grades, "makes good choices" is the first item teachers should mark in the life skills section on report cards.

matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved."[39] In this story, Ireland shares personal experiences from her friendless fourth grade year when she was always the last one chosen for baseball games at recess. Mrs. Sween, her teacher, had changed her life by pulling her aside and helping her see that she had an obligation to make an effort to be friendly. The message of this story illustrates a fundamentally different way of thinking about human relations in the classroom. At Lakeview, children chose their friends. At Kaichi all classmates were *tomodachi*, or friends. In one setting friendship was about choice and volition; in the other it was about inclusion and belonging. I take up this theme as one of the foci of Chapter Five.

Mrs. Matthews also talked to students about making good choices. Over their usual Friday lunch together, the fifth grade teachers had developed a policy to address what they viewed as increasingly problematic student behavior. Mrs. Matthews reported that the teachers were developing a Problem Solver Sheet that would include space to list the homeroom teacher, the date, what choices the student made that required him or her to complete the sheet, and the strategies that would be used to address the problem. Students who were not asked to complete any sheets would celebrate good citizenship for making good choices and be rewarded with lunch, dessert and a video in the classroom. "What sort of behavior might require you to complete a Problem Solver Sheet?" Mrs. Matthews had asked. "Talking," offered Seiji. "Especially you," added another student. Students also mentioned chewing gum, tipping chairs back, running, and slamming lockers. The process was consistent with the disciplinary approach outlined in the handbook. There were school rules, consequences, and rewards. Students who chose to break rules would face consequences.

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[39] This quote offers a compelling contrast to the Japanese phrase *sho ga nai* (There is nothing more that I can do) introduced in Chapter Two.

When I was at Kaichi, Matsumoto Sensei also talked to her students about problematic behavior. In a survey about *ijime*, or bullying, children had identified incidents of gossiping, whispering and pointing, and name-calling. Matsumoto Sensei asked "offenders" to raise their hands. Several boys did. Then she facilitated a discussion on how to deal with bullying since a number of students had sought advice in this regard. She framed the conversation by focusing on how certain types of behavior were having a negative impact on *ningen kankei*, or human relations, within the classroom. At both Lakeview and Kaichi, student behavior was a problem, but the focus of the teacher-led discussions was different. Lakeview teachers sought to address the problem by encouraging individuals to make better choices for which they would be individually rewarded. Matsumoto Sensei, on the other hand, focused on the relations between students and how certain actions were having a deleterious effect on the classroom community. In addition, teachers identified the problem at Lakeview, whereas at Kaichi, Matsumoto Sensei led a discussion based on concerns raised by students in a grade-level survey.

At Lakeview, throughout the school day students did have options. Mrs. Matthews often decided who would work together for pair work, but occasionally she allowed students to choose a partner. Sometimes children could choose whether to learn at their desks or whether to grab a clipboard and sit on the floor in the front of the room. Students' bodies had flexibility in the ways they occupied spaces. They slouched at their desks and sprawled out on the floor even when Mrs. Matthews admonished them. At lunch, children could eat the school-provided hot lunch and salad bar or bring a packed lunch from home. Although they sat at tables designated for their class, they chose with whom they wanted to sit. Some of these options only emerged in comparison.

At the Japanese schools, dialogue about choosing and choice was largely absent. Children worked primarily at their desks during most 45-minute lessons. All students at the Japanese School of Michigan brought their lunches; all of the children and adults at Kaichi ate the carefully planned and nutritious *kyuushoku*. Although children might receive slightly different quantities and some requested second helpings when they were available, everybody was served the same dishes.

There were some situations when Kaichi students had choices and Lakeview students did not. Lakeview students seemed to have more options ***during*** instruction in the presence of their teachers. Kaichi students, on the other hand, had more choices during the many breaks ***between*** lessons. They could go outside, remain inside or alternate between the two. Many children played with rubber balls, but racks of unicycles and stilts were available in the entryway for easy access. Neither Matsumoto Sensei nor other adults were present during the breaks. Children were responsible for monitoring their own behavior as well as the behavior of their peers. Alternating between regimented routines in the classroom and wide freedoms during breaks allowed them to develop *kejime*, or the ability to change one's behavior according to the context. Sometimes children had choices; sometimes they did not.

Seiji and his classmates at Lakeview were a heterogeneous group representing various ethnicities, races, and socio-economic backgrounds. Opportunities for real choice can help teachers connect learning activities to individual children's personal interests (Weinstein & Mignano, 2007). Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson did give students choices in order to engage them in the curriculum. However, as shown in the examples above, Lakeview teachers also delivered a message that every moment students had a choice—at least in terms of behavior—and that there were good choices (following the rules) and bad choices (not following the rules).

So when Seiji pulled out a chair as a classmate began to sit, Mrs. Matthews reprimanded, "Was that a good choice, Seiji?" "Choice" might mean a real opportunity to choose among several options based on personal preference, but it frequently meant "Follow the rules or else." So while the idea of choosing implies freedom, at Lakeview the word was also closely related to control and restraint. It could be used as a discipline hammer.

Converging Worlds

As an American researcher exploring the experiences of a Japanese child as he traversed physical and cultural borders, I regularly encountered hybrid spaces where cultural habits, national identities, and physical spaces commingled. On Saturdays the Japanese School of Michigan was a Japanese language space, but physically it remained an American space. Culturally, it contained elements of both.

In his study of Japanese preschools, Ben-Ari (1997) argues that Japanese preschools like all other organizations have end products: "[T]he products are socialized students, children who know how to control their emotions and bodies" (p. 140). I wondered how a few years in the United States would impact the integrity of the Japanese children who attended the Japanese School of Michigan. For example, during my observations, one of Seiji's classmates was constantly admonished to correct his posture and sit with both feet on the floor. He responded, but often within a few minutes his body returned to a more comfortable position. The processes of schooling had formed his muscles and his body in particular ways. Years of sitting in American classrooms could compromise Japanese sojourners' ability to sit properly. Even when expectations are cognitively understood, bodies may have a difficult time remembering and maintaining.

The Japanese School of Michigan was a place where worlds met, but in these moments it was not Seiji who drew my attention. Seiji did not chew gum, he did not speak English (except to me), he did not have difficulty sitting properly, and although he also caught Tanaka Sensei's mistakes he usually did so in a respectful way. In other words, although Seiji experienced elements of two different worlds on Saturdays, the Japanese School of Michigan was primarily a Japanese world for him.

One event at Lakeview showcased a dynamic meeting of Japanese and American worlds. This event was part of the Rainbow of Culture, an ongoing recognition of the students and families at Lakeview from different parts of the world. In February 2009, the Japanese Women's Club presented a formal tea ceremony to fifth graders at Lakeview. Aya had personally invited me to attend. The demonstration took place in the multi-purpose room—the same place where students ate lunch every day. When the children entered, several students from Mrs. Matthews' class greeted me. Seiji smiled, waved, and bowed slightly. Perhaps the Japanese ambiance invited the subtle bow. Once everyone was seated, the students greeted the women with an enthusiastic "*Konnichiwa*!" One of the women asked where they had learned Japanese. "Seiji taught us," a boy responded. Two women wearing kimonos performed the ceremony while another translated and interpreted. Seiji sat in the back next to the teachers. Throughout the program his gaze shifted from his classmates to the ceremony and back to his classmates. He seemed to be eagerly assessing whether they were appreciating this well-known symbol of Japanese culture. The translator explained that during the tea, gossiping was inappropriate. Instead poetry, calligraphy, and art were discussed. "Please finish the ceremony," the guest stated. "I am ending the ceremony," the hostess replied.

After the ceremony the Japanese women brought around tiny *okashi* (sweets about the size of a sugar cube made primarily of sugar and corn starch) on zodiac-embossed pieces of rice paper. They worked in pairs to serve *macha* (a bitter green tea) in ceramic bowls. One would hold a shiny lacquer tray and the other would serve the tea properly—with both hands.[40] The women told them that it would be bitter, but I did not hear any negative or disparaging comments from the children as they sampled the brilliant green liquid. Throughout the ceremony and sampling the children seemed mesmerized by the grace and peace of the women. Approximately 50 tea bowls were washed twice to accommodate everyone. Mrs. Matthews was surprised that they were serving the tea in "real bowls," but it would have been unthinkable to perform a tea ceremony and then serve *macha* in paper or plastic vessels. I watched as Seiji interacted with the Japanese women in Japanese. He listened attentively, smiled, and nodded. They also listened to him. I wondered if Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson noticed his dexterity and adept interactions with Japanese adults. Seiji seemed to enjoy this coming together of his worlds.

Did worlds meet at Kaichi as well? Those who cross-borders bring worlds with them in subtle and not so subtle ways. Seiji's inquisitiveness and energy in the classroom initially impressed his teachers. Whether these traits emerged in remarkable ways because he lived in the United States for five years is difficult to know. Matsumoto Sensei and Ueda Sensei both described him as a smart boy who was willing to share his opinions and ideas. "Because he immediately makes remarks about things he notices," Matsumoto Sensei commented, "he raises the level of the class." Seiji took pride in his English skills and in his atypical life and educational experiences. He willingly assisted his classmates with their English and enthusiastically interacted with their ideas during discussions. He also brought his self-

[40] Etiquette requires using both hands to give and receive. This includes both handing in homework, giving or accepting business cards, and giving American children *macha*.

confidence. This enabled him to create opportunities to negotiate cultural expectations and push against the structuring mechanisms of school routines.

My presence at Kaichi and Seiji's role as my official host made his connection to the United States visible. Emiko, Seiji's younger sister, was much less comfortable with this connection. "Why are you here ***again****?*" she asked, when I visited her classroom during the afternoon break. At school, Seiji seemed to invite interactions that allowed others to see how he was different, while Emiko seemed to avoid connections to her life in the United States when possible. Sometimes she looked through me as we passed in the hallways. In English class, I dolefully listened as she dutifully repeated with her classmates, "It's a green circle. It's a blue square." At Lakeview she had been reading chapter books. Unlike her brother, Emiko did not want her worlds to meet at school.

Responsibility and Human Relations

As previously discussed, children had many responsibilities at Kaichi. Although not discussed here, leadership in classroom routines, a hallmark of Japanese schooling, was one form of responsibility; caring for the school during the daily cleaning period was another. Seiji's classmates had been cleaning Kaichi for five years. They knew what they were responsible for and got to work. Seiji, on the other hand, was less disciplined and sometimes neglected to adequately carry out his responsibilities. Matsumoto Sensei explained, "I assigned him a task during cleaning. But when another teacher asked another student to do something, he says, 'What is it? I want to do that, too!' He did not do his job and focused on that interesting cleaning task." Thus, while Seiji's curiosity could be an asset in the classroom, sometimes his enthusiasm put a strain on his interactions with others and led him to shirk his responsibilities to the group.

Children at Kaichi, and at schools throughout Japan, are expected to be responsible for themselves (Lewis, 1995; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). Although the first official activity of the day, reading time, didn't begin until 8:30 a.m., most children arrived shortly after 8:00 so that they could talk and play with their friends. At 8:25 chimes rang and the children made their way to their classrooms so that they could be silently reading at their desks by 8:30. I asked Seiji about the impressive and consistent punctuality:

> ***Amy:*** So, what if you are late coming back from a break?
> ***Seiji:*** Um. The teacher will be mad.
> ***Amy:*** So does that happen? Does that happen for you or for any other students?
> ***Seiji:*** No, because there will be a time to go back in.
> ***Amy:*** Yes.
> ***Seiji:*** Like 5 minutes early so, yeah, yeah.
> ***Amy:*** So nobody ever, they keep playing because they're having a good time?
> ***Seiji:*** No, no.
> ***Amy:*** So everybody's always on time?
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah, because everybody gets tired (Interview, 06/28/2009).

The sixth graders in Matsumoto Sensei's class were always on time returning from breaks. Children may have been tired after actively playing during breaks, but even this rationale could not adequately explain their punctuality. In his research on Japanese preschool children, Ben-Ari (1997) found, "The children are not only controlled but also come to feel comfortable in the parameters of such time reckoning. And it is this essential comfortableness—implicit, unreflective, mundane—which undergirds the power of the institution" (p. 143). Adults did not monitor the schedule or the children during breaks at Kaichi, because institutionalized control had been established through peer monitoring. Children were responsible for themselves, for their peers, and to their peers. Being responsible was intertwined with good human relations. A comment on comfortableness also seems opportune. While Lakeview teachers worked hard to make the classroom a comfortable environment for individual students, it was also a setting filled

with rules and constant reminders of those rules. On the other hand, Kaichi students may have found comfort in participating in steady unchanging routines.

At the beginning of the school year Matsumoto Sensei reported that the most important thing children would learn in her classroom was *ningen kankei,* or human relationships. This included getting along with others, thoughtfully considering the ideas of others, positively contributing to the classroom community, and honoring the needs of the group. Matsumoto Sensei insisted that school was a special experience because it offered children the opportunity to learn with their friends—a qualitatively better experience than learning alone from books. The message that relationships shape who one becomes was delivered to students throughout their years at Kaichi. During our interview a few days after Seiji's graduation ceremony, Matsumoto Sensei explained the importance of the event, "What is important in the graduation ceremony? To reflect upon their development for the past six years, no, for 12 years of their life, and to appreciate everyone that helped them to become who they are." Through the support of the group one became an individual.

Responsibility and human relations are valued in most Japanese institutions. On Saturdays at the Japanese School of Michigan advancing these characteristics was less important than developing and maintaining other skills. Geographically, the Japanese School of Michigan was not at all like a Japanese neighborhood elementary school. Children did not walk to school and they had limited, if any, sense of ownership of the high school where they met. Developing enthusiastic attitudes toward learning, acquiring Japanese language and mathematical content knowledge, and simply interacting with other Japanese children seemed to be more important than improving children's Japanese social skills. Furthermore, building a classroom community

was a challenge when everyone met only once a week and members came and went with greater frequency.[41]

The Character Counts curriculum embraced at Lakeview focused on six traits. The first trait is responsibility, however, even after my observations at Lakeview and my conversations with Lakeview teachers I did not have a clear sense of how responsibility was woven into children's daily experiences. Teachers at Lakeview had created a school that was a warm and inviting space for children to learn and spend their days. Adults created the space and adults were primarily responsible for cleaning and maintaining it. Some responsibilities were created for Lakeview students, but the school day was not dependent on the successful execution of these duties. For example, at the end of the school day several fifth graders donned reflective sashes and served as safety monitors in the hallways. These positions seemed more symbolic than actual. Afterall, Lakeview teachers and staff were legally responsible for the children during the school day. Perhaps Lakeview students—identified as students, rather than as children—were primarily responsible for their own academic achievement.

Discussion

In this chapter, I examined three remarkably different educational settings: Lakeview Elementary School, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi *Shogakko*. At Lakeview the school year started in September; at the Japanese schools, the first day of school was in early April. Temporal rhythms of the daily schedule also varied. The Japanese schools required children to remain at their desks during the 45-minute lessons but gave students breaks after every lesson. The American school permitted greater movement throughout the day, but only

[41] Most Japanese arrive in the United States in August for the start of the American school year; those returning to Japan often leave in mid-March at the end of the Japanese school year.

provided one official lunch/recess break. Important lessons were learned at lunch but only Kaichi considered it to be part of the official curriculum. Written goals and rules were also unique to each school. Teacher-student relationships were horizontal in the Japanese schools and more vertical at the American school. Each school reflected particular goals, priorities, and cultural values. All of these factors combined created distinct cultural worlds that required adjustment and navigation. At the beginning of the chapter I set out to examine how each school encouraged particular ways of thinking, learning, feeling and being. Most children spend thousands of hours in schools. Written and unwritten, spoken and unspoken, implicit and explicit goals, rules, routines, and expectations structure their experiences as children while simultaneously influencing the people they are becoming.

Lakeview encouraged students to feel comfortable as individuals, to make good choices, and to follow adult directions. The Japanese School of Michigan guided children to be enthusiastic learners who accommodated themselves to various circumstances and actively sought to maintain and develop their Japaneseness. Kaichi led children to take their studies seriously, persevere through challenging situations, accept their obligations and responsibilities to the group, and learn and play in the company of their friends. Seiji absorbed and selected messages from each setting and added them to his repository of knowledge, skills, and values. His actions and interactions reflected a curious amalgam of his experiences as an on-the-go twenty-first century kid.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Geography of Friendship

Introduction

For children around the world both in and out of school, friends are important. As the Cambridge Primary Review simply states in *Children, their World, their Education*: "For them, friends mean fun" (*Cambridge Primary Review*, 2010, p. 65). Although this statement may seem unsophisticated, trite, and unrelated to schooling, Japanese elementary school educators take this idea quite seriously because there are educationally productive reasons for teachers to facilitate children's desire for both fun and friendship in the classroom. For Seiji, the best part of school in both the United States and Japan was playing with friends. "My friends are funny and fun to be with," he added. Seiji was academically successful and he enjoyed learning, but what he liked most about school was the opportunity to interact with other children.

Puzzling out the relevant concepts for a discussion about Seiji's social relationships with other children in and out of the classroom in the United States and Japan is both essential and somewhat complicated. I propose that the heart of this complexity lies in where Japanese and American elementary educators locate children's friendships, the value they place on those relationships within the schooling endeavor, and the responsibility they accept for facilitating feelings of friendship. This claim simultaneously introduces a linguistic challenge because the word 'friend' has multiple translations.

This chapter is divided into two main sections that consider friendship ***in*** context at a macro-social level and friendship ***as*** context at a micro-social level. In "Geography: Implicit and Explicit Topographies" I consider how Seiji's movement from the United States to Japan illuminates different cultural logics in thinking about the role of friends in elementary school

classrooms in both countries. I link friendship and socialization, and, like Thorne (1993), recognize multi-directionality in the process. I blend perspectives from Seiji and his teachers with insights from the literature. Then I consider how changes in physical spaces and social worlds—schools, homes, and neighborhoods—inhibited or facilitated Seiji's interactions with agemates outside of the classroom. Finally, I examine the language of friendship. In "Seiji's Friends and Ideas about Friendship," I look at Seiji's social relationships with other children over time. I consider both how Seiji talked about friends during our interviews and how he interacted with children both in and out of school. Although I weave in perspectives from parents and teachers as well as my own observations and analysis, I privilege Seiji's viewpoint (as I understood it), because it makes an important contribution to our understanding of a child's friendships. Seiji's approach to making friends also contributes to our understanding of his sense of self over time.

Geography: Implicit and Explicit Topographies

As Seiji journeyed from Japan to the United States and back to Japan, various ideas about friendship were in play. Attending preschool in Japan gave him a solid foundation in Japanese approaches to social relations. However, while in the United States he had limited opportunities to develop and practice the values associated with that approach. In addition, his six-school-days-a-week schedule and car-dependent geographic location in the United States limited his opportunities to nurture friendships outside of school and other organized activities.

Friendship in Cultural Logics: The Elementary Classroom

In *Life in Classrooms* Philip Jackson (1968/1990) writes, "Learning to live in a classroom [in the United States] involves, among other things, learning to live in a crowd" (p. 10).[42] In contrast, Catherine Lewis (1995) reports, "[Japanese] teachers' investment in *gakkyuzukuri* (creating classhood) is meant to connect children to a larger entity – the class – that is meaningful and important to them" (p. 86). These views of the class group intimate a fundamental difference in thinking about relationships in schools. Jackson's comment implies that American children and teachers must learn to tolerate crowds. Lewis' statement, on the other hand, suggests that Japanese children learn to embrace the crowd while their teachers assist them in turning them into friends. In fact, the central argument in Lewis' (1995) book *Educating Hearts and Minds* is that "Japanese education succeeds because, early on, it meets *children's* needs for friendship, for belonging, for opportunities to shape school life" (p. 1, emphasis in original). The idea that schools could be successful in part because they foster feelings of friendship is an underlying theme in this chapter.

I have borrowed the phrase "cultural logic" from Takie Lebra's (2004) book *The Japanese Self in Cultural Logic*, because it highlights the subtle role of language and translation. The subject of Lebra's book is simply, "(Japanese) self as understood in (Japanese) cultural perspective" (p. 1). Similarly, I use the phrase to explore cultural perspectives on friendship in

[42] The endurance of this idea is revealed in Weinstein and Mignano's (2007) popular textbook *Elementary Classroom Management*: "The elementary classroom turns out to be an extremely crowded place. It is more like a subway or a bus than a place designed for learning" (p. 2). Of course, no elementary classroom in the United States is like a subway in Japan during rushhour!

the classroom.[43] I consider the interaction between macro-level ideals and micro-level experiences in order to lay the groundwork for the later, more focused discussion about Seiji's views on and experiences with friendship. Since numerous scholars outside of Japan have focused on classhood and social relations among classmates, the Japanese cultural logic of friendship initially seemed more obvious. I sought to discover what an American cultural logic of friendship might encompass. My focus here is on friendship in elementary schools and classrooms rather than on friendship in general, because it is within the school setting that the cultural logic of friendship emerged.

A Japanese Cultural Logic of Friendship: Mina tomodachi (Everyone is a friend)

Initially, I was puzzled by how Seiji talked about "friends" because his implicit definition seemed to me to be too inclusive. He reported that he had "a lot of friends" and indicated that "playing with friends" was the best part of school, but during our initial interview in January 2009, he did not mention any child by name. He had adopted what I came to think of as a Japanese cultural logic in which all classmates were friends—a view that was reinforced at home.

During our interviews Aya used the word "friend" in a similar way. She revisited a series of incidents from several years ago involving "very cute" Japanese pencils, Seiji, and some of his Lakeview "friends." Aya felt that what transpired was a misunderstanding due to differing cultural views regarding children's school supplies. "Japanese students think very important his

[43] Tobin, Hsueh, and Karasawa (2009) also reference the idea in regard to fundamental features of Japanese preschools that are "implicit, reflecting a deep cultural logic" (p. 239). They include values such as social-mindedness, liveliness, creativity, and perseverance.

school supplies,"[44] she explained. The tragicomedy began when Seiji loaned a Pokémon pencil to a classmate and it was not returned. After five pencils went missing, there were written exchanges between teacher and parent. Aya encouraged Seiji to use a normal yellow pencil, but, she reported, "He doesn't say 'yes.' He likes Japanese pencil [because American pencils are too hard]." For our purposes here, the next part of the story is particularly significant, "So next time he wrote his name on the pencil. So the friend has his pencil. [Seiji asked] 'Could you return the pencil?' But his friend said, 'It's mine.' [Seiji's] name was erased!" Seiji carved his name into the next pencil, but the "friend" simply carved it out. From this example, it is clear that Aya also followed a Japanese cultural logic when using the word "friend."

Cross-cultural research invites at least initial misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and misuse of words. Lewis's (1995) examination of how Japanese preschools and elementary schools build community presented a puzzle that foreshadowed my own struggle in understanding Seiji's references to "friends." She writes, "I was stymied in my attempts to ask about children's friendships until a Japanese researcher instructed me to ask about children's *personal* friendships (*kojinteki na tomodachi*) – a phrase that is amusingly redundant in English" (p. 24). While Lewis' conversations were in Japan in Japanese with Japanese children who had always lived in Japan, my conversations were in English with a Japanese boy who had lived and attended school in the United States for the latter half of his 10-year-old life. I had not anticipated that he would use "friend" in such an all-inclusive way.

Although both American and Japanese pre-school and early elementary teachers use the word "friends" or "*tomodachi"* to refer to all class members and not specifically personal

[44] It seems likely that this perspective emerged from Aya's own schooling experiences in Japan, since it is typically in first grade when teachers devote time and effort to the organization of school supplies and the importance of having various kits, supplies and uniforms that have been purchased by parents (Sato, 2004).

friends, in Japan this strategy is an integral part of the socialization curriculum and does not reflect individual teacher approach or preference. In other words, from a cultural perspective, Japanese elementary school teachers, especially in the early grades, consistently and purposefully use *tomodachi* to refer to all class members both because acquiring relational basics is itself a learning goal and because it facilitates teaching and learning academic content (Lewis, 1995; Sato 2004). Thus, the fundamental goals and pedagogic strategies of many Japanese teachers incorporate what in the United States might be referred to as a sociocultural model of learning (Cave, 2007). Using Wells (1999) concept of "community of inquiry," Cave argues, "In successful classrooms, the two elements work together; 'inquiry' helps to create 'community', as children learn from one another and appreciate other's contributions, and 'community' enables 'inquiry', as children feel confident enough in the supportiveness of their teacher and peers to voice ideas, doubts, and arguments" (Cave, 2007, p. 219).[45] In other words, feelings of friendship in the classroom can facilitate deep learning.

My fieldwork focused on a 15-month period during which Seiji transitioned from life and school in the United States to life and the final year of elementary school in Japan, however, Seiji's experiences in preschool and the first few months of kindergarten in Japan seemed increasingly relevant. After all, his initial experiences with friends and friendship were with

[45] Consider this perspective in parallel with Jackson's (1968/1990) portrayal of the role of peers in *Life in Classrooms*. Although the research was done several decades ago, the tone foreshadows elements of social relations in the classroom that endure. Jackson comments on peers passing judgment on both academic and nonacademic issues and responding to individual success and failure rather than ideas and perspectives. Jackson writes, "The student's classroom behavior contributes in large measure to the reputation he develops among his peers for being smart or dumb, a sissy or a bully, teacher's pet or a regular guy, a cheater or a good sport.... Classroom friendships and general popularity or unpopularity are based largely on such assessments" (p. 22). In other words, children choose whether they will be friends with their classmates. And more significantly, it seems that inquiry and exchange of ideas do not occur among children.

Japanese children and teachers. I suspected that he (and his mother) had simply translated the Japanese word "*tomodachi*" into the English word "friend," while maintaining the Japanese cultural logic of friendship. However, in Japan this logic is deeply embedded in the schooling process and is not simply achieved by using a rhetoric of friendship.

As discussed in previous chapters, all Japanese teachers use *han* to facilitate positive and productive relationships in the classroom. In Matsumoto Sensei's class these fixed groups usually contained five or six children. Students sat in columns of desks facing the front, however, in a matter of seconds they could turn their desks to form their *han* for small group work or for *kyuushoku*, or Japanese school lunch. This reality troubles dichotomous views of classroom arrangements suggesting that teachers must set up their rooms to facilitate ***either*** effective individual work ***or*** effective group work (Weinstein & Mignano, 2007). American children also work in small groups, however, the Japanese *han* is used more consistently than the American cooperative learning group. In Japan, students are taught to work ***as*** groups rather than merely ***in*** groups (Lewis, 1995).[46] Throughout the elementary years all teachers use *han* to achieve goals of individual expression and reflection and engagement with the ideas of others around academic, practical, and social tasks (Cave, 2007; Lewis, 1995; Peak, 1991; Sato, 2004; Tobin, Hsueh, and Karasawa, 2009; Tobin, Wu, and Davidson, 1989; Tsuneyoshi, 2001).[47] Therefore, most children become proficient at working ***as*** a group by sixth grade.

During my observations at Lakeview I did not observe Seiji, or any other students, working in collaborative small groups. Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson tended to interact with

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[46] Alexander (2000) notes that research in English primary schools has found "children everywhere worked *in* groups but rarely *as* groups" (p. 414).

[47] Lewis' (1995) chapter "The Small Group: A Home Base for Children" offers a detailed analysis of the role of small groups in Japanese classrooms.

either the whole class or with individuals. The most common arrangements were whole class work, pairwork, and individual seatwork. This is not to say that small collaborative group work was not used at Lakeview, but unlike at Kaichi, it was not part of the daily routine. Alexander (2010) argues that teachers need to develop "broader interactional repertoires." Highlighting both teacher-student relationships and learning, he encourages forms of interaction that "involve an exchange of information and ideas in which the teacher genuinely wishes to know what pupils think" and may require "a changed power relationship between teacher and taught" (Alexander, 2010, p.102). This is precisely the type of interaction that Seiji appreciated in the classroom.

According to Nakano and Oguma (cited in Cave, 2007, pp. 55 - 56) the class group is the key unit in Japanese pedagogy. Japanese teachers may use the word *tomodachi* (friends) when addressing or referring to their class in part because they are striving to create *nakama*, or a group of people who belong together. Cave (2007) delineates, "Being *nakama* is a relationship that demands that you give special help and support to one another, regardless of personal likes and dislikes. Calling the class group a *nakama* is thus to state that its members belong together in a special way—not out of personal volition but simply by virtue of having been placed in the same class—and that they have a special responsibility to one another" (p. 62). *Nakama* is not something Japanese children choose or choose not to be a part of; it is a concept that is rehearsed through verbal discourse and embodied over time. Overnight school trips,[48] human pyramids on sports day, and seemingly never ending preparation for graduation were all exercises in building *nakama*. Seiji was part of these activities in sixth grade, but he had missed five years of *nakama*-building activities with his Kaichi agemates.

[48] In contrast, but in alignment with the motivation system, at Lakeview the school trip was an end-of-the-year "reward" while the Kaichi school trip was a middle-of-the-year class-building exercise.

Although the Japanese School of Michigan aimed to re-create a Japanese school atmosphere and organized important cultural activities such as sports day, fostering *nakama* in the classroom was particularly challenging at a once-a-week supplementary school. As discussed in Chapter Four, many of the *hoshuko* teachers, including Tanaka Sensei and Alexander Sensei were not trained as elementary school educators. In addition, children and families came and went. Five days of the week students at Japanese Saturday School were working hard to learn a second language and culture and engage in social interactions that were appropriate in an American school setting. Building *nakama* would be an unrealistic goal under these circumstances.

Seiji was exposed to a Japanese cultural logic of friendship in Japanese pre-primary schools where he learned that everyone was a friend. Then he attended an American elementary school from kindergarten through fifth grade. How had Seiji's teachers at Lakeview approached social relationships and friendships in the classroom? I wondered if a parallel "American logic of friendship" existed. I examined both research on children's friendships and social relationships and books written for elementary school practitioners about friendship and building classroom communities. I also sought connections between the literature and what I observed in Seiji's fifth grade classroom.

An American Cultural Logic of Friendship: Choosing friends

When I first encountered the psychological literature on children's friendships, peer interactions, and groups, I was struck by references to "rejected children," "non-friends," "low-status children," "isolates," and "popular and unpopular children" (see the 2009 *Handbook of Peer Interactions, Relationships, and Groups*). My conversations with Seiji and with his Japanese teachers about friends and social relations likely exaggerated my visceral response.

Seiji did not reject his classmates, and he did not think of any of them as "non-friends." I understood that these psychologists were seeking strategies for operationalizing and measuring social functioning and its relationship to adjustment, achievement, and development, but I was bothered that the terms were so prevalent at the elementary school level. I wondered if fostering broad-based feelings of friendship in the classroom would diminish the number of children who were "rejected" and identified as "friendless" or "isolates."

While reading across handbooks, edited volumes, and texts on peer relationships and children's friendships (Chen, French, & Schneider, 2006; Erwin, 1998; Grusec & Hastings, 2007; Rubin, Bukowski, & Laursen, 2009; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2000; Schmidt, 1997), I identified potential key elements of an American cultural logic of friendship in elementary schools: 1) friendship is about children's choices (who is chosen as a friend and who is not), and 2) it is primarily the child's responsibility to develop his or her own social skills.[49] These points are closely related and reflect beliefs, or at least rhetoric, related to personal autonomy and volition. I examine both elements below.

In 2003, in a special edition of *The Journal of School Psychology*, Gifford-Smith and Brownell reviewed research in children's peer relationships, focusing on elementary school and middle childhood. They differentiated between group acceptance and friendship and defined the terms as follows: "Whereas sociometric status represents an individual child's acceptance within the larger peer group, friendships are dyadic relations between two children. Friendships are voluntary, intimate, dynamic relationships founded on cooperation and trust, while group acceptance reflects the perspective of the child's peer group" (p. 248). Thus, the peer group makes decisions on the likability of a particular child, while pairs of children enter into friend

[49] My point here is that children have responsibilities to develop these skills as individuals rather than as members of classroom communities.

relations by choice. However, who a child chooses as friends is as important as whether or not a child has friends (Bukowski, Newcomb, & Hartup, 1996) since children are free to choose peers with antisocial characteristics or violent and aggressive tendencies.

Texts aimed at teachers and students also focus on choice (Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2000; Schmidt, 1997). For example, *Making & Keeping Friends*, a ready-to use curriculum for Grades 4-8, explicitly informs children, "Most meaningful friendships are formed and developed purposefully, so it is important to think about how you choose your friends. Let us examine some of the factors that influence the choices we make regarding whom we want to be our friends" (Schmidt, 1997, p.14). This program places responsibility on individual children to create "messages" through their words and actions that invite friendships.

The focus on friendship choices begets research that focuses on those choices. For example, Newcomb and Bagwell (1995) completed a meta-analytic review of more than 80 studies in order to discern the differences between friend and non-friend relations. Other scholars (e.g. Epstein, 1989; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2000) work from the idea that children's friendships are largely determined outside of the classroom. These studies or texts focus on teachers' decisions about seating, uses of friendship pairings to complete difficult tasks, and whether they group children by ability or interest. Teachers' responsibility for shaping friendships, or feelings of friendship, between all children is deemphasized. This likely reflects prominent views in the United States that schools are primarily sites for cognitive learning and secondarily places for building positive social relations among all children. Of course, most American teachers do try to foster a sense of community in their classrooms and civility among students. Children were kind to one another in Mrs. Matthews' class, and I did not observe any incidents of teasing or even mild "rejection" during my days at Lakeview.

In his presidential address to the Society for Research in Child Development, Willard Hartup (1996), one of the most widely respected researchers and authors on peer relationships, concluded, "When children have friends, they use them as cognitive and social resources on an everyday basis. Normative transitions and the stress carried with them seem to be better negotiated when children have friends than when they don't" (p. 10). In other words, feelings of friendship contain important features. Gifford-Smith and Brownell (2003) speculate that some of the emotional features might include:

> The uniquely motivating quality of 'friendly competition' during collaboration, as well as the greater motivation to persist in the face of difficulty in the context of an emotionally supportive relationship; the mutual commitment and loyalty between friends which motivates children's concerted attempts to comprehend one another's ideas and perspectives, which may in turn stretch both the listener's understanding and the speaker's communication skills; the safety and security of airing one's untested ideas in a climate of acceptance, shared positive affect and good humor, and the corresponding lack of defensiveness that may promote thoughtful justifications, revisions, and elaborations of one's ideas (p. 259).

Nurturing friendship qualities in the classroom could lead to focused engagement, higher-level discourse, and a sense of belonging among all children. In fact, "persisting in the face of difficulty," or *gaman*, was a fundamental goal for Matsumoto Sensei because it fostered both individual self-confidence and feelings of being part of class 6-2.

Functioning adequately with peers ***is*** important because otherwise children may fail to develop the ability to cope with the demands of social life. Most children are eager to be liked and want others to treat them nicely. Researchers, school administrators, teachers, and parents would also probably agree that functioning adequately with peers is critical. However, it seems that developing social skills is largely perceived as an individual responsibility. In other words, children, and sometimes their parents, are primarily, if not entirely, to blame for the social

difficulties they face in classrooms. The opening statement in the final chapter of the 2009 *Handbook of Peer Interactions, Relationships, and Groups* states:

> "Based on empirical demonstrations that *children who are unable to function adequately with peers* are at risk for several forms of concurrent and subsequent maladjustment, clinically oriented peer researchers have recognized the need for the development of intervention strategies. Beginning in the late 1970s, social skill training (SST) programs, originally intended to remediate the deficits of clinic populations, were adapted to improve the social behaviors of children *who were unaccepted by their peers*" (Bierman & Powers, 2009, p. 603, emphasis added).

Although stated in the negative ("children who are unable to"), the grammar here parallels the grammar in the Lakeview school rules ("You can..."). In other words, children's volition is the key. However, the final part of the second sentence is written in passive tense ("children who were unaccepted by their peers") rather than active tense ("peers rejected [certain] children"). In these sentences, emphasis is placed on the responsibility of individuals to achieve good social relations. The responsibility of children as members of a group, however, to act and talk in ways that facilitate good social relations among the group is neglected. It seems that blaming "unpopular" and "rejected" children, especially young children, for their lack of social skills is unlikely to help them become more socially adept.

In this section, I sought to tease out an American cultural logic of friendship in the classroom. Friendships are special relationships, but in the United States they are relationships that are chosen because each party has the freedom to accept or reject the other party. When teachers encounter children with poor or undeveloped social skills and few friends, individual intervention, medication, consultation with parents and professionals are common responses. These are perhaps reasonable strategies for individual teachers since class disruption and violent behavior are clearly not conducive to academic learning. Nevertheless, I wondered to what extent American elementary school teachers consciously strove to encourage children to behave

in ways that optimized everyone's sense of belonging and ability to achieve and contribute to the learning endeavor. Matsumoto Sensei's top priority in the classroom was human relations because feelings of friendship in the classroom facilitated ***both*** academic and social learning. However, her commitment as an individual teacher would probably have been insufficient. Throughout the preschool and elementary years, Japanese teachers seek to develop skills in children so that they can intervene in disharmonious incidents—an in-the-moment, spontaneous, group conflict resolution that may be facilitated by teacher questioning but is not led by it (Hendry, 1986, Lewis, 1995; Peak, 1991; Tobin et al., 1989).

The distinction between *tomodachi* (friends) and *kojinteki na tomodachi* (personal friendship) suggests an interesting linguistic discrepancy. The American reader may argue that the Japanese cultural logic of friendship does not reflect "real" friendship. However, based on my experiences with Matsumoto Sensei's class, children did interact in ways that signified that they had "relationships founded on cooperation and trust" (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003, p. 248), although I would contend that they were indeed not fully voluntary relationships. Nonetheless, feelings of friendship and class belonging were palpable, and these emotional connections seemed to facilitate kindness and lively and respectful exchanges around academic ideas.

I sought to identify and examine cultural logics of friendship in the elementary classroom because there seemed to be fundamentally different ideas about teachers' roles in children's friendships. I wondered how these approaches influenced Seiji's views and experiences with friendship. In the next section I explore Seiji's enactment of friendship in context as well as the influence of context on friendship through examining physical spaces and Seiji's access to both school and other places in his community.

Propinquity: Physical Spaces and Community Maps

The previous section focused on friendship in elementary school classrooms, however, children's friendships develop both in and out of school. In this section I focus on the geography, or the location, of Seiji's activities within his neighborhoods and communities. In Michigan, Seiji's identity as a sojourner had particular implications for the physical spaces he occupied as a student. School occurred in two separate physical spaces in two different cities. In Japan, Seiji's identity as *kikokushijo* was less remarkable because he attended one school, the same school that the other children in his neighborhood attended. Seiji's daily, lived experiences in particular spaces influenced the networks of friends he created in both the United States and Japan. Physical spaces and the routes between them provide a sense of where Seiji interacted with peers. Seiji's actual social interactions will be explored in the next section.

Seiji's multiple school lives in the United States had a tangible influence on the logistics of his friendships. He enjoyed attending the Japanese School of Michigan even though he had additional homework to complete, additional tests for which to prepare, and one less day on every weekend. Saturdays offered a new network of friends in a new space. Monday through Friday, Seiji went to school by bus and learned with children who lived in his community or neighboring communities. On Saturdays, Aya drove her children to school, as did many parents from across the southeast region of the state. Thus, for five and a half years, Sunday was the only day Seiji did not attend school. This schedule lessened his opportunity to interact with friends outside of school while increasing his overall number of classmates and "friends."

Extra-curricular activities also provide a site for children to socialize. I will discuss Seiji's involvement in these activities in the next section. Now I focus on the route and physical distance between Seiji's home and extra-curricular activities in both countries. Various factors,

including the structure of suburban neighborhoods and communities, limited public transportation, and concerns about safety mean that many children in the United States are dependent upon their parents for transportation. Parent-as-chauffeur is a less common role in Japan. Aya reported that sometimes Seiji had wanted to play with friends, but that he had often declined invitations or refrained from initiating them, because she could not drive him. In the opening minutes of our first interview after they returned to Japan she commented, "He likes new school, new neighbors, and new friends, and new life. In Michigan, he couldn't go out by himself. Yeah, I had to drive" (Interview, 05/21/2009). In Japan, life was more geographically compact, relieving Aya of her chauffeuring responsibilities and enabling Seiji to meet "friends" and classmates spontaneously. In other words, new worlds opened up to him that beckoned an 11-year-old with a bicycle.

Children view the world through their own lens. I asked Seiji to draw community maps because I believed that he might create a perspective that could not be captured through photographs or detailed descriptions. These maps illustrate how physical geography interacted with Seiji's perception of where he lived and how he thought about and experienced those places. Seiji drew the map of his community in Michigan in March 2009 during our interview (Figure 3). We were sitting at the dining room table; Emiko was working on her homework in the living room.

> ***Amy:*** If you were looking, if you're thinking about here in Michigan, and I asked you to draw a picture of your community, what would that look like?
> ***Seiji:*** Um. Community?
> ***Amy:*** Umhm.
> ***Seiji:*** Maybe like, like a lot of trees maybe. I think there's going to be a lot of trees, like evergreen trees.
> ***Amy:*** Ok.
> ***Seiji:*** You can't really find like a lot of evergreen trees here in Japan so, maybe. And I like trees. And in America, we don't have a lot of fences, like we have a fence of like trees kind of, but kids can go through it.

[Seiji worked for a few minutes; I assisted Emiko with her homework]

> ***Seiji:*** I wrote lots of things nearby, like there's green nearby.
> ***Amy:*** Ok.
> ***Seiji:*** And there's lots of houses nearby.
> ***Amy:*** And this is your house in the middle?
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah. And I wrote the road, and I wrote like and I was going to write like a shop.
> ***Amy:*** Umhm.
> ***Seiji:*** Kind of. Maybe.
> ***Amy:*** Are there any particular shops that you think of?
> ***Seiji:*** Like food shop?
> ***Amy:*** So like a grocery store or restaurant?
> ***Seiji:*** Like a grocery store.

Figure 3: My Community: Michigan (March 2009) Drawing by Seiji. The reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation to view originals of this and all other drawings in color.

Seiji's house is on the left surrounded by a row of pine trees, grass, and other townhouses. "The road" cuts through the middle of the page and seems to symbolically and physically separate him from other spaces. On the right side of the road—inaccessible to him independently—are a generic mall, a grocery store, and a pond with fish. He tells me that there is a pond near Lakeview, but he cannot remember if it has any fish.

Seiji drew the map of his community in Japan one year later in March 2010 (Figure 4). We were sitting in the family's *tatami* room—the room I stayed in when I visited. There is no accompanying transcript since the map was not constructed during an interview. Perhaps the most striking feature is the level of detail. He noted that all of the buildings were gray. In addition, as he was working on the map he told me that he wanted to glance out the front door to make sure he "got the logo right" for the department store in the upper right hand corner.

Seiji's house is in the center. The upper left corner represents his cram school (*juku)*, a high-rise building near the train station approximately two kilometers from his house. In the upper right corner is Ito Yokado, a popular department store with locations throughout Japan. The store was about 300 meters from his house. In the lower right corner is Seiji's English school. In physical reality, it is located just beyond the Ito Yokado, perhaps 500 meters from the house. Finally, the lower left corner is Kaichi Elementary School including the green-painted sidewalk he traversed every day. Seiji accessed each of these places on his own or with friends either by bike or on foot.

Figure 4: My Community: Japan (March 2010) Drawing by Seiji.

According to Blanchet-Cohen and colleagues, "In child-created maps, a child offers a glimpse into his or her worldview, where the boundaries between the emotional, social, and cognitive perspectives merge" (2003, as quoted in Freeman and Mathison, 2009, p. 126). Each map offers insights into Seiji's perceptions of his communities, although we never explicitly discussed community as a concept. Nevertheless, a comparison suggests important differences in how Seiji viewed the places where he lived. I list four points of difference in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Community Map Comparison

Discussion Point	Michigan	Japan
location of home	left of center	center
accessibility	family car	all reachable independently by bike or on foot
specificity	generic places such as "mall"	named places with attention to detail; accuracy of logo for department store, green sidewalk near the school
social companions	primarily family members	primarily friends

When considered together, these points suggest that there were dramatic shifts in Seiji's physical spaces and social worlds when he returned to Japan. These maps offer an important blurring of emotional, social, and cognitive perspectives.[50] Whereas the physical geography of his community in Michigan served as a barrier to social interactions with friends outside of school, in Japan, the physical geography facilitated frequent and spontaneous meetings. Seiji's lived world comes into sharper focus and is more fully captured in the Japanese map, in part because it actually delineates the places where he spent most of his time. Neither Lakeview nor the Japanese School of Michigan—places where he spent an enormous amount of time—appear in the Michigan map. Seiji's perspective on his community as a physical space offers critical insights into his actual access to social relationships outside of school.

[50] The grass, the trees, and the lake in Michigan seemed to be important to Seiji. Lawns, yards, and evergreen trees in the backyard would be remarkable to most sojourning Japanese families. Although Seiji's family lived in a house in Japan, as was typical in their city, they had no "yard." Particular topographies and the cultural design of communities interact in different ways to create living spaces. Thus although parks in Japan were plentiful and easily accessible, they were quite different from the parks he came to love in Michigan. In May 2009 when I asked him about good memories from Michigan, not necessarily related to school, he told me that he liked the parks. "They're not close, but you can do anything," he recalled. "You can go on the bike, you can run, you can fish, you can go on a boat."

Traveling offers opportunities to experience both different ways of thinking about the world and different geographic features. In this chapter, I have discussed implicit and explicit shifts that accompanied Seiji's shift in location. I have suggested that elementary school teachers in Japan and the United States conceive of the definition, role and place of friendship in the classroom differently. In addition, I have provided a sense of the physical places where Seiji lived and how these differences challenged or facilitated his ability to meet peers outside of school. In the next section, I examine how Seiji talked about friends and the experiences he had with them.

Seiji's Friends and Ideas about Friendship

In the first section of this chapter, I compared Japanese and American approaches to friendship in the classroom. I suggested that, generally speaking, Japanese pre-primary and elementary school teachers actively construct inclusive ideas about friendship in the classroom in order to achieve teaching and learning objectives, while their American counterparts tend to think of friendship as less central to their professional responsibilities. In this view, children choose their friends and are mostly responsible for developing their own social skills. In other words, the teacher and peers play a less central role in individual development. In the second section, I focused on geographic space and Seiji's drawings of his communities in Michigan and Japan to show how they changed and how different settings offered different opportunities and limitations. I built upon and extended this contextual information by focusing on how Seiji defined words related to friendship. Here, I begin with a brief glimpse of Seiji's experiences with peers as a newcomer in the United States. Then I analyze Seiji's views and experiences with friendship during each of the three phases of the study. Formal interviews and informal

conversations with Seiji, observations of and interactions with him and his friends in a variety of settings, and interviews with his parents and teachers contribute to a richer portrait of Seiji's social experiences both in and out of school in the United States and Japan. Multiple sources enable triangulation. In addition, as Garbarino and Stott (1992) contend, "The more sources of information an adult has about a child, the more likely that adult is to receive the child's messages properly" (p. 15).

Before the Study

Even though Seiji had gone to school in the United States from age four to age ten, his views about his classmates were strongly influenced by Japanese ways of thinking about friends/classmates. Of course, Seiji's home environment was also Japanese. In addition, attending pre-school and the first few months of kindergarten in Japan likely shaped his general approach to social interactions. I did not have any information about Seiji's pre-primary experiences in Japan, but Aya allowed me to examine a variety of school artifacts—report cards, drawings, and essays—from Seiji's time in Michigan. These documents showed that Seiji was able to establish good social relations with classmates when he first arrived as a newcomer. Comments from his kindergarten teachers at both Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan demonstrate this.

In January 2004, his kindergarten teacher wrote, "Seiji is developing nicely in all academic areas. His reading skills are progressing—and he's very excited about it. His English is also developing—and he's becoming more confident as he speaks.... Seiji is a very friendly young man and is kind and liked by all. He's a delight to have in class!" He also seemed to enjoy kindergarten on Saturdays at the Japanese School of Michigan. In an end-of-the school year letter addressed to Seiji, his Japanese teacher wrote (in Japanese): "You were bright, loved

to talk, and liked to take good care of your friends (*tomodachi*)." Thus, it seems that Seiji was able to accommodate expectations at Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan early in his sojourn. All of Seiji's teachers described him as a bright student with an outgoing, sociable personality, and occasional mischievous tendencies. Next I shift to Seiji's perspectives in order to explore an inside-out perspective on friends and friendship.

Michigan (January 2009 – March 2009)

The landscape for children tends to consist of three main sites: the home, the school, and the neighborhood. These spaces are peopled by family members, friends, teachers and classmates, and neighbors. Friends often cross these boundaries and may enter all three sites. During our first interview in each phase, I guided Seiji in completing an eco-map, a graphic representation of a person's connections to other people and systems in their lives. My primary objectives were to identify Seiji's microsystems and to learn where and with whom he spent time. I also hoped to get a sense of his social relationships. Perhaps a favorite teacher or a best friend would be identified through the process. When I analyzed the interview and the eco-map together there seemed to be a dissonance between the many friends Seiji proclaimed and the number of children who appeared on his eco-map. Aside from family, only one person—a Japanese boy—was identified by name. Interpreting children's drawings is always challenging. In hindsight, I wish I had asked Seiji more about the map as he was completing it, however, we had just met and I was both gathering information and trying to establish a relationship. Even with these limitations, important insights emerged.

Seiji included all three sites—home, school, and neighborhood—in this eco-map (see Figure 5). I briefly discuss each. From Seiji's community map we know that he was dependent on his parents for transportation outside of his immediate neighborhood. Thus the only activity

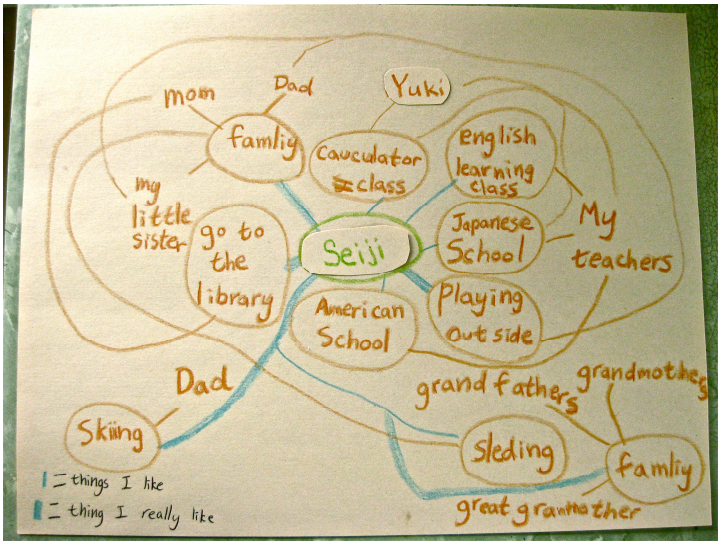

Figure 5: Eco-Map: Michigan (January 2009) Drawing by Seiji.

accessible to him on this map was "playing outside." In January 2009, Seiji's activities with family members included skiing with Dad, going to the library with Mom, playing outside his home with Emiko, and sledding with the family. Both the Japanese School (the Japanese School of Michigan) and American School (Lakeview) were listed and connected to the broad group of "teachers." Seiji's primary extra-curricular activities were *soroban* (abacus, or as Seiji translated, "ancient calculator") class and English class.[51] Aya drove him to these classes in a nearby community where he interacted with Japanese children and Japanese instructors. Although it may be surprising that Seiji was enrolled in an English class, he was preparing to take the *Eiken*, a popular English proficiency test that he would take after returning to Japan. Thus, during the months leading up to his return to Japan, Seiji's extra-curricular activities were academically oriented and primarily tapped individual skill and proficiency. Yuki, the one friend listed, was in Seiji's fifth grade homeroom at the Japanese School of Michigan and he was also enrolled in calculator class.

Although the eco-map gave me few leads on the children Seiji enjoyed spending time with, observations at Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan also provided limited insights about Seiji's close friends. He was like a dragonfly—zipping around and among what

[51] Although it is not relevant for this discussion, Seiji also included his grandparents who were living in Japan. I think he added them because I had erroneously mentioned my parents who were living in another state.

was interesting, pausing briefly to interact and socialize. On the day we met, I had asked him about his friends:

> ***Amy:*** Can you tell me a little bit about your friends?
> ***Seiji:*** Friends. Yeah, I have a lot of friends. And some friends are good at sports. My friends are like funny and fun to be with. And I don't really play around with them outside. I like running and so. And sometimes when I play with them they're left behind, and when I look back there is nobody (Interview, 01/23/2009).

I was initially puzzled by conglomerate statements such as these, because they flowed from thought to thought, beginning with a proclamation of having many friends and ending with leaving them behind. I also asked Seiji about his friends at the Japanese School of Michigan:

> ***Seiji:*** The friends that I have in Japanese School, I have a lot of friends and one week I play with a certain friend all the time. Another week I don't do anything with that friend maybe. So in Japanese school, we don't play all together, we play maybe in a group of three or two (Interview, 01/23/2009).

Seiji claimed many friends, but he did not name them. At the Japanese School of Michigan, he appreciated interacting with Japanese children of different ages. He pointed out that while Lakeview only had students in kindergarten through fifth grade, on Saturdays, students in his building were in fourth through twelfth grades. Seiji considered his network of friends to spread across geographic and age boundaries.[52] Anybody could be a friend. Broad inclusive views about friends and friendship could serve as a protective factor for children in transition, because it would encourage active engagement with new peers rather than passive waiting for invitation or inclusion.

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[52] As mentioned in Chapter Four, Japanese children sojourning in the United States sometimes return to Japan during the summer and attend what is referred to as "trial school." They join regular public schools that are in session during June and July. Children gain experience with the Japanese rhythms of schooling and are immersed in the Japanese language as well as academic and social learning. Seiji commented on attending trail school, "I liked it. I made a lot of friends . . . there was another girl that was coming from California." Friends could be created in a couple of weeks even if they were never seen again. These friends may not be kindred spirits, but they are nice children who are fun to play with.

In middle childhood, children usually interact with those who share interests and activities. Nevertheless, I wondered which children Seiji was especially drawn to. In our second interview, I used a form of socio-metric questioning because I wanted Seiji to identify and then describe particular children. Kindermann (1998) describes sociometry as the "study of people's 'choices' for affiliation with other people" (p. 55). The approach was initially used in studies of popularity and was criticized because it reflected desires for affiliation rather than actual social interactions. In this study, multiple data sources—socio-metric questioning, observations, interviews, and eco-maps—allowed me to explore desires, actions, and interactions. Would Seiji's classmates have listed him if I had asked them to complete socio-grams or answer socio-metric questioning? Although my research design did not make such an approach possible, based on classroom observations, I think other children would have selected him.

I extracted activities from Seiji's eco-maps and interviews in order to formulate questions that would help me learn who Seiji would choose to join him in certain situations or for certain activities. First, I asked him to identify three "best friends." He replied, "From Japanese School?" I told him that they could be from anywhere. He wrote down Brian, Suzuki, and Yamada[53]—one boy from Mrs. Matthew's class and two boys who were in his fourth grade class at the Japanese School of Michigan. Yuki, the boy in the eco-map, was not selected. After a short discussion with his mother he added a fourth boy, Andrew. The boys had met at Lakeview, but Andrew now attended a charter school in the district for high performing children. For me, this question illuminated the complexity of Seiji's social network, since the boys emerged from three distinct settings. Brian attended Lakeview with Seiji Monday through Friday. Suzuki, Yamada, and Seiji met during breaks on Saturday, but otherwise they attended three different

[53] Seiji referred to all of his American friends by their first names. As with these two friends, he often called Japanese friends by their family names.

elementary schools and lived in three different cities. Andrew did not attend any school with Seiji. Although divergent schedules and physical distances presented enormous challenges for me in accessing Seiji's close friends in Michigan, he did not see these logistical realities as "obstacles." He enjoyed each relationship for what it offered in each context.

I observed interactions between Brian and Seiji at Lakeview, but the other three boys were much less accessible. Suzuki and Yamada were not in Tanaka Sensei's class, and so Seiji's friendships with them were less apparent. On the last day of school at the Japanese School of Michigan, when I walked out of the classroom, Seiji called, "Amy, Sensei. This is Suzuki and Yamada." Two boys enthusiastically waved from down the hall. I had asked Seiji to point them out to me and was delighted that he had remembered, but one day later I would not have been able to match the names of these two boys and their faces. I also never met Andrew,[54] the boy who started at Lakeview and transferred to the charter school. My knowledge of Suzuki, Yamada, and Andrew and their role in Seiji's life emerged primarily from my interviews with Seiji and his mother.

Through the socio-metric questioning I invited Seiji to identify friends and classmates with whom he would want to spend time under particular circumstances or while doing certain activities (his desires), but I was also interested in observing social interactions between Seiji and the children he identified (his actions). However, these goals did not always converge since a number of the children he listed were neither in his homeroom at Lakeview nor his homeroom at the Japanese School of Michigan. As the family prepared to return to Japan, Seiji dropped his extra-curricular activities. He hosted a sleepover with his Japanese buddies during the final

[54] Although I never officially met Andrew, during Phase Two I assisted Seiji's family in setting up a Skype call with his family.

weeks of his five-and-a-half years in Michigan, but I hardly would have felt comfortable asking if I could join.

Deegan (1996) describes children's friendships as "highly colorful, elusive, and unpredicatable phenomena" that have a "chameleon-like nature" (p. 5). However, as Deegan (1996) points out, this is an adult perspective and not one that children would be likely to express. Although his social networks were more complicated than I had anticipated, he did not seem to view them this way. He cheerfully interacted with other children in whatever context he found them and brokered relationships to have fun and to share mutually enjoyable activities. This approach was clear in his responses to the other socio-metric questions.

Although the question about best friends was open, for the other seven questions I asked Seiji to identify three children from Lakeview (part a) and then three children from the Japanese School of Michigan (part b). I asked Seiji to select companions for skiing and going to the library as well as children he would want to sit next to in class and with whom he would want to spend recess. A full list of the questions, the parameters we negotiated for responding to them, and the children Seiji selected are listed in Appendix E. Through this process, Seiji identified seven boys at Lakeview and seven boys at the Japanese School of Michigan.[55] In other words, the same three or four boys were not selected for every question. Because he was choosing all males, for two of the questions (team members for the engineering competition and who to be with if he got lost), I added a sub-question that specifically asked him to write down the names of three girls. He stated that he did not know the girls in his class at the Japanese School of

[55] Andrew, the boy Seiji met at Lakeview but who now attended a charter school, was also listed in the first question. Although this boy did not appear in later questions, the structure that emerged (classmates from Lakeview or classmates from the Japanese School of Michigan) may have influenced this.

Michigan very well and so his responses to these questions were for girls in Mrs. Matthews' class.

Seiji's penchant for strategic responses was apparent throughout the process. He valued many characteristics in his classmates and selected particular children for particular activities based on particular traits of individual children. For example, he selected a quiet boy named Christopher to go to the library because he was a "good reader." At the Japanese School of Michigan he had selected one boy to spend break with, but "I wouldn't want him sitting next to me because he always gets in trouble." When I asked him to select three girls to be on his team for the engineering competition he mused aloud, "Who would be a good combination?" He chose one girl for her good ideas, another because she would be quick, and Mariko because she is Japanese and "might have different thoughts than American people" (Interview, 03/04/2009). He reasoned that she might provide support for his ideas, perhaps reflecting his actual experience of having a number of them rejected by American teammates.

At Lakeview, the socio-metric questioning facilitated my observations of social interactions throughout the day. The questioning was less beneficial at the Japanese School of Michigan. Most of the boys Seiji had identified were in a different homeroom. Consequently, my opportunities to observe social interactions with children outside of Seiji's homeroom were limited. In addition, from a practical standpoint, Seiji sat in the front corner desk by the door, and at the end of class after exchanging appropriate salutations he always zoomed out of the room. Although Yuki, the boy from the eco-map, was selected for several questions (going to the library, spending recess, and sitting next to in class), I did not sense particularly close affiliation either in interviews or through observations. Seiji's close friendships at the Japanese School of Michigan were not friends of convenience but had developed over time. His

relationships with Suzuki and Yamada were embedded in family friendships. In fact, the evening before Seiji and his family left Michigan, they had gathered at Chuck E. Cheeses so that the Suzuki and Yamada families could bid them farewell.

Fostering Friendship in Multiple Contexts

In Michigan, Seiji's friendships reflected broad inclusive ideas in which everybody could be a friend. Social relationships were primarily developed outside of the home in part because Seiji went to school six days a week and participated in extra-curricular activities, but also because he lived in a neighborhood where adult transportation was needed to connect him with friends. Seiji's approach to friendship was heartfelt, inherently strategic, and practical when considered within a broader ecological context that considers past influences, present reality, and future goals.

One of Seiji's previous teachers at Lakeview had indicated that, in her opinion, one of the three challenges he faced was a "lack of close friendships with students of different backgrounds (he was well liked and friendly, but did not get together –to my knowledge with school friends of a different background outside of school)" (e-mail communication, 03/11/2009). This teacher seemed to place a high value on children developing close friendships with other Lakeview students outside of school. Lakeview friends were important to Seiji, but friendships were enjoyed wherever age-mates were present. He first learned this when he came to the United States as a four-year-old and successfully made both new Japanese and new American friends. At the Japanese School of Michigan, he had experienced friends returning to Japan and he knew that someday he would also go back. Shifting friendships are a feature of middle childhood (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987; Edwards, de Guzman, Brown, & Kumra, 2006; Erwin, 1998). Seiji's ability to make friends across multiple contexts was important, because his life took him

into multiple spaces. In response to a question about getting together with friends Seiji had told me: "When I meet them, I know I'm going to meet them." In other words, meeting friends was predictable. Either they met in scheduled activities such as school or English class, or they made specific plans to meet outside of these activities. His statement foreshadowed a stark contrast to the possibilities that emerged spontaneously in Japan where he could go to the park or Ito Yokado by himself and realistically expect to randomly meet up with a friend.

Japan (May 2009 – July 2010)

Less than two weeks before returning to Japan Seiji had commented: "I don't want to go back to Japan right now because I don't know anyone; I won't know anyone in my school. I have to like start from one" (Interview, 03/04/2009). At the beginning of the school year, perhaps before the year had even begun, Matsumoto Sensei had also worried if Seiji, a new student returning to Japan after living in the United States for five years, would be able to get along with others. However, she quickly realized that it was not a problem. "His personality makes it easier for him to befriend other children," she commented. "And the children around him are childish for their age, so they immediately hit it off well" (Interview, 05/20/2009).

Figure 6: Eco-Map: Japan (May 2009)
Drawing by Seiji.

My instructions to Seiji for completing all of his eco-maps were to think about where and with whom he spent time. His Phase Two eco-map (Figure 6) is markedly different than his Phase One map (Figure 5).

Several points are particularly noteworthy. First, four boys (Mitsunobu, Daisuke, Yoshio, and Tetsuya) are named and each is connected to multiple places and activities. Second, aside from the "fishing area"—a place he goes to with his father—Seiji can access all other areas independently, either by bike or on foot. Third, Seiji included both extra-curricular activities (*juku* and English class) and three neighborhood locations that he explored and enjoyed with friends: park,[56] rocky place, and fossil place. As the map shows, some places were associated with a particular friend (e.g., Tetsuya and the rocky place or Daisuke and cram school). Finally, two of the boys listed, Daisuke and Yoshio, were Seiji's kindergarten friends and both of them were in Masumoto Sensei's homeroom. Seiji was, in fact, rekindling old friendships. Thus the physical geography of the neighborhood, cultural norms, and a more localized schedule of activities facilitated interconnections between people and places.

Seiji added one person and one place to the map after my prompting. "What about Emiko?" I had inquired. "Oh, yeah, I should put her," he responded. "Oh that's hard." Emiko had been a primary playmate in Michigan, but Seiji had other options now and so her utility as a playmate had diminished. At the time of the interview I was staying with Seiji's family and so I knew about his activities. "Where did you go last night?" I reminded him. "Last night? Oh, English class, yeah," he said and added it to the map. On the Phase One map, thicker lines indicated greater fondness for places and activities. On the Phase Two map, thicker lines represented more time spent at a particular place. "Home. How thick should I draw it? I'm always there," Seiji commented (Interview, 05/23/2009). Did he spend more time at home in Japan than when he lived in Michigan? Home was clearly more embedded in his perception of his community. Friends regularly visited and Aya always warmly welcomed them. Perhaps, as

[56] There were several neighborhood parks that Seiji played at; he told me that this circle represented all of them.

reflected in Seiji's community map, home was the center of the community and a place for spending time with both family[57] and friends. Once again, Seiji's map included all three sites—home, school, and neighborhood. In Japan, the places where he spent time were more interconnected, more accessible, and more social. His bike replaced his mother's car. In addition, routes between settings became social opportunities since they were usually traversed in the company of friends.

Seiji's access to his friends facilitated my access to his social interactions, especially since I stayed with his family during part of my fieldwork. Seiji's social network was still broad, but everyone was connected to one school and was geographically accessible. Once again I used sociometric questioning to explore how Seiji talked about his friends. I began by asking him to write down his three closest friends. He asked whether he should write their names in Japanese or English. I requested that he write them in *hiragana* (the Japanese cursive syllabery) rather than *kanji* so that I could read them. All *kanji* have multiple readings, and proper names are even difficult for Japanese adults to decipher. "I don't know the *kanji*," he had reassured me. I also asked him to include both first and last names since he would sometimes alternate between the two. Tetsuya, Mitsunobu, and Daisuke were the three names he wrote down as his closest friends. All three boys had been included on the eco-map he had drawn one month earlier. I asked him to tell me a little bit about each one. "I played with him yesterday, and I always play with him in the classroom and outside," he remarked about Tetsuya. Regarding Mitsunobu, he said, "He's the one I always come back with and he lives close. I see him going to school and from school." Mitsunobu, the other sixth grade boy in the neighborhood *han*, shared responsibility with Seiji for safely leading the younger children in the group to Kaichi every

[57] Interestingly, neither of his parents are directly connected to his home.

morning. Although the boys were in different homerooms, the daily stroll to and from school provided an opportunity for casual conversation and exchanges of ideas. "And Daisuke," he continued, "he sits in front of me, and I play with him a lot and cram school is the same with him, too." Seiji primarily thought about friends as those who were engaged in the same activity and with whom one enjoyed playing. He continued this line of thinking when I asked, "What makes each one a close friend?" This one lives close to me. This one I go to cram school with. His response for Tetsuya, however, was a bit different.

> ***Seiji:*** Tetsuya, I challenge to do new things with him.
> ***Amy:*** Oh. So you both challenge each other or he challenges you more or you challenge him more or...?
> ***Seiji:*** I think each other, or maybe together, kind of.

Tetsuya is the boy I came to know the best out of all of Seiji's friends. He came over to Seiji's house several times while I was there, and the three of us went on a biking adventure to the other side of town during Phase Two. One afternoon as I was walking through the neighborhood, it was Tetsuya's enthusiastic voice I heard from a passing car, "Amy Sensei!"

I followed a similar process in creating socio-metric questions for Phase Two (see Appendix E). Some were identical to the Phase One questions and others reflected activities I knew he liked to do in Japan, such as playing at the park. Although Seiji listed six different boys, these four names appeared most often: Tetsuya, Daisuke, Mitsunobu, and Kenji.[58] Tetsuya was selected first for every question. Daisuke's name was written down five times. The first question for which he was not selected was three friends to take on a two-week holiday to Michigan. "I think it's the same again," Seiji began. "Oh, maybe Daisuke, no. He doesn't want

[58] Since less than three months passed between socio-metric questioning in Phase One and Phase Two, Seiji's narrower selection of classmates likely reflected his new circumstances of being a recent returnee in Japan. All of the children he listed attended Kaichi and most of them were in Matsumoto Sensei's class.

to go there. He's not interested." He selected Yoshio instead, "Because he always asks me 'How was it?' Or 'What did you do there?'" Kenji, a boy who always wore all white or all black, was selected six times. "He's funny, smart, and we play with him a lot," Seiji noted. I once again asked him to select three girls for a few activities: spending break together, sitting next to in class, being on his team for the engineering competition he had participated in in Michigan, and getting lost. He chose the same three girls for each question and commented that they were active during breaks, had good ideas, and did not give up.[59] For the final question, the OQ or Original Question, I asked Seiji to write his own question. He selected "three boys to visit a country that had a lot of animals." One of the names he wrote down was new to the list. He did not yet know the boy's first name, but it was a kid who sat next to him who "liked animals" and "liked going places." It seemed he had created a question that would enable him to include this particular boy.

The eco-maps and the socio-metric questioning seemed to generally reflect Seiji's actual interactions with friends both at school and in the community during the summer of 2009. At school, Seiji's pattern of interacting with many children, including those not mentioned during our conversations and interviews, continued. Japanese elementary school life is structured to create opportunities for all children to interact academically and socially with a wide range of peers. In the days I visited Kaichi during Phase Two, children gave public oral feedback on speeches, evaluated their peers' calligraphy as the teacher held up a child's work, and responded to classmates' answers to math and science problems. Seiji actively participated in these exchanges and continued his tendency to talk incessantly—both when it was time to offer an opinion and when it was time to think silently.

[59] Although Seiji did not use the word, he is clearly referring to *gaman*.

Playing with Different Friends Everyday

During the second phase Seiji and I reflected back on friends in Michigan, and I asked who he thought of as his good friends from Lakeview. "Samuel, Christopher, Brian, Duncan, Nathan, Paul, Steve," he rattled off. "I think everyone." He continued, "I think there's not a lot of people." Although I was initially confused, Seiji went on to explain that one of the good things about Kaichi was having more people in class. At Lakeview there were 25 students; at Kaichi there were 35. "It's fun to have more people because you can play with different friends every day." Seiji still talked about everybody as a friend—especially in a school setting—but his eco-maps and responses to the socio-metric questioning suggested that he wanted to spend time and actually spent most of his time outside of school with a handful of boys.

When I asked Matsumoto Sensei about the most difficult challenges newly returning students were likely to face, she said, "The hardest challenge is whether they can break into established friendships." Matsumoto Sensei may have fostered feelings of friendship in the classroom, but established friendships developed over time, through shared experiences, and in the process of experimentation. Seiji's approach to friendship did not significantly change from Phase One to Phase Two. He wanted to have fun and he wanted to play with a variety of children. His cheerful, unabashed exuberance provided him access to numerous groups, but his primary goal was having fun and enjoying new experiences rather than gaining entrée into a particular group. As Deegan (1996) reminds, "the routines, rituals, activities, and values of children's social lives [are] dynamic processes" (p. 5). Seiji continued the friendship strategies he had adopted in Michigan as he adjusted to and found his way in a new neighborhood and new school.

In July 2009, I had the opportunity to join Seiji and Tetsuya on a journey to a snack shop in another part of the city. I was excited to interact with the boys in a different setting, observe the dynamics between them, and get to know Tetsuya a little better. The vignette is a jumping off point in thinking about Seiji's participation in friendships. Although Tetsuya is a playmate, in this relationship Seiji seeks something more than playing and having fun.

Omoiyari and the Bike Ride

> It is just past midday on a bright, hot Saturday in July when we set out for the snack shop that is "really far away" but "has cheap snacks." Aya has loaned me her bike and has given Seiji and me each a thermos filled with *mugi-cha,* or barley tea. As we set out, I ask Seiji not to lose me. He responds casually, "It's ok. You can find your way home." Then he shoots off ahead. I hear his voice from a previous interview, "*And sometimes when I play with them they're left behind and when I look back there is nobody*." It is nothing personal; Seiji simply likes going fast. Tetsuya, on the other hand, rides just ahead and occasionally turns around to ensure I am still there.
>
> Our route begins with a series of side roads; we also pass through several tunnels that go under some of the busier thoroughfares. We continue on narrow roads through lush green rice paddies and underneath the *shinkansen* tracks. One whooshes by as we approach. We continue through more fields and make a brief stop by a small river. We spot some tiny fish, large *koi*, or Japanese carp, turtles and a heron. Then we ascend a steep path with our bikes and continue riding on the sidewalk of a fairly busy street lined with gray apartment buildings and small shops. We turn left and a few minutes later arrive at the snack shop. With the brief stop at the river, the journey has taken about 35 minutes.
>
> Japanese bicycles usually have built in locks with either keys or codes. I am stymied by Aya's lock and neither Seiji nor Tetsuya are able to help. Seiji says, "It's ok." It probably would have been okay, but I try to imagine calling Aya, reporting that her bike has been stolen and asking her to pick me up. I eventually go inside but linger by the window so that I can keep an eye on the bike. I ask Seiji what Emiko likes; he suggests green apple chewing candy. We all make purchases and head outside. At Seiji's urging we check our lemon gum wrappers to see if they contain coupons for free gum. Seiji wins and heads back inside to collect another piece of gum. We go next door to the Circle K, and I treat for ice cream. I notice Tetsuya looking at his watch and wonder if there is a specific time he needs to be home. His father asked him to be home by 3:30. It is 2:57. We also have plans to stop at Amako *Jinja*, a local shrine, and so begin the journey back. Seiji leads us to an elementary school that has a cool playground. He announces that they will play for just a few minutes. It is 3:06 and we have a long way to go. I suggest that we continue on. "Just a few minutes," Seiji counters. Tetsuya has been quiet, but now he says that we should go. A few

> minutes later and we are once again riding through the rice fields. Tetsuya demonstrates riding his bike while standing on the seat; Seiji observes. Tetsuya would probably get a new bike before the start of middle school. Seiji has a "middle school bike" already. We continue on to the *jinja*. Once there we throw our one yen coins in, clap and bow. We mount our bikes and are soon back in Seiji and Tetsuya's neighborhood. Tetsuya is perhaps two minutes late. I thank him and tell him I had fun. He thanks me for the ice cream and says goodbye.

As discussed previously, *omoiyari* is awareness and sensitivity to other people's needs and feelings and response to fulfill those needs or accommodate those feelings. This vignette portrays a couple hours on a Saturday afternoon in the summer of 2009 at a point in time when Seiji was still a novice regarding *omoiyari*. He focused on his own desire to play rather than on Tetsuya's need to be home on time. In essence, he was unaware of the "unverbalized feelings of others" (Tobin, 1995), and—at least initially—even unresponsive to the articulated needs of a good friend. As we set out, Seiji had also shown little consideration for me. Although I was not unduly concerned about getting lost, Tetsuya was the one who ensured that I was not left behind. I felt an elevated moment at the elementary school with the cool playground, but it was a moment among many that afternoon. Seiji had selected Tetsuya for every socio-metric question I had asked, and I knew he valued this boy's companionship. Of course, it is interactions over days, weeks, months, and years that form relationships in particular ways. Perhaps Tetsuya would be a friend who helped Seiji recognize and develop the embedded and embodied cultural values that were beneath the surface. Perhaps it would be another friend.

Omoiyari is important in all Japanese social relationships—both in and out of the classroom. Tobin (1995) argues, "The Japanese are unlike us [Americans] in their notions of what constitutes appropriate modes of expressing one's feelings and needs" (p. 235). Whereas Japanese children learn to intuit and modify self-expression and behavior according to context and behavior, American children are encouraged to verbally express their feelings and needs.

Striving to understand the hearts and minds of others clearly goes beyond, and in some instances may be at variance with, American ideas about proficiency in speaking and listening skills.[60] Tobin (1995), drawing on the work of both Lisa Delpit (1988) and Cynthia Ballenger (1992), reminds us that the particular forms of self-expression encouraged in many American classrooms often reflects middle-class cultural beliefs and practices. In other words, gaining full confidence in verbal assertion can be both affordance and constraint for certain immigrant, migrant, minority, and sojourning children. Seiji may have been a "real talker" regardless of his experiences in the United States. However, he would have unquestionably had more opportunities to develop Japanese versions of empathy if he had lived and attended school in his home country.

Japan (March 2010 – April 2010)

In March 2010, Seiji completed his third eco-map (see Figure 7). I instructed, "You go in the middle. And then you think about where you spend your time and who you spend your time with." Seiji's first question was: "Can it be like school and cram school?" In this eco-map family faded to the background, and without my intervention it's likely that Mom, Dad, and Emiko would have been completely forgotten. While working on the map he paused to think, and I asked, "Anybody else?" "Not really," he responded. "Like your mother?" I queried. "My mom!" he said while chuckling. "Ok." Emiko and Dad were also somewhat reluctantly added. I do not interpret this as less fondness for his family but rather a focus on increasingly important peer relationships.

[60] First through fifth grade teachers at Lakeview assessed children every marking period on their speaking skills and listening skills.

The places Seiji included on this third eco-map are the same places he drew on his community map: his home, Kaichi, his cram school, the neighborhood department store, and his English school. This may be in part because Seiji completed both artifacts within a few days, but it also suggests that for Seiji his community is fully accessible and includes the places where he actually spends time. In this eco-map, all five boys are connected to Seiji's house and each boy has at least one strong connection to a particular place. Thus, Mitsunobu, the boy he walks to school with every day and who is not in Matsumoto Sensei's class, is most strongly connected to Ito Yokado because they frequently walk there together. They regularly run into Shogo and Endo at the department store and so they are also connected to Ito Yokado. Neither Shogo nor Endo were included in Seiji's Phase Two eco-map. Daisuke and Tetsuya have the strongest connection to school. Daisuke, Endo, and Seiji attended the same cram school and so they spent two-and-a-half hours every Wednesday and Saturday evening together. Although many of the places on this eco-map were also on his Phase Two eco-map, Ito Yokado has replaced the park, the rocky place, and the fossil place. This change can be partially attributed to the different time of year, but Seiji also indicated that once he entered middle school he would not have time to spend at the park.

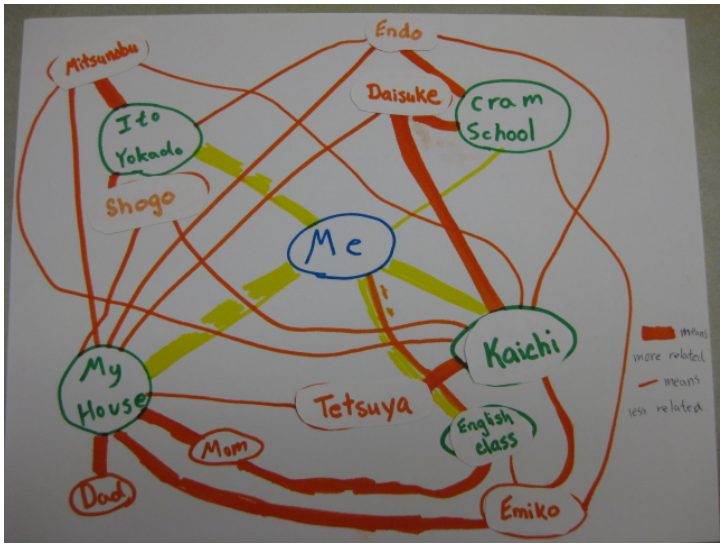

Figure 7: Eco-Map: Japan (March 2010)
Drawing by Seiji

Seiji's Phase Three eco-map and our conversation during its creation brought to mind Matsumoto Sensei's point that one of the challenges for *kikokushijo* would be entering already

established friendships. Friends lived close by but their routines and already secure friendships sometimes made meeting them difficult.

> ***Seiji:*** Daisuke is, yeah, I play with him a lot, but he's usually really busy.
> ***Amy:*** So what makes him really busy?
> ***Seiji:*** He's not open on the day I want to play.
> ***Amy:*** So he has something else? So sports, or—?
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah. [Laughing] He has a lot of friends so, 'Today I'm going to his house. Today I'm going to his house. Today I have learning' (Interview, 03/13/2010).

Daisuke was a friend from kindergarten. Even if they did not see each other in the neighborhood or at each other's homes very often, they saw one another in class every day and twice a week at cram school. Seiji enjoyed interacting with many different children and understood busy schedules. Children could be good friends even if he only saw them at school. Afterall, in Michigan, school had been the primary site for friendship.

I once again asked Seiji a series of sociometric questions to get a sense of with whom he wanted to spend time. All but one question was a repeat from a previous phase (see Appendix E). Seiji listed five different boys, but three names appeared most often: Tetsuya, Ohata, and Kenji. Seiji's responses reflected desire for social interactions that were not always possible. Seiji identified his three closest friends as Tetsuya, Ohata, and Kenji. In the second question I asked him to select three people he would want to play with at the park. "If they were all free?" he asked. He reported that he did not actually know where Ohata and Kenji live and that Tetsuya was "always on a tight schedule" because of soccer. It is perhaps unsurprising that neither Ohata nor Kenji were included in the eco-map. And three of the boys from the eco-map—Daisuke, Mitsunobu, and Shogo, the boys he indicated that he actually spent time with—were not named for any of the questions. Only Tetsuya and Endo appeared in the eco-map and were chosen for at least one of the hypothetical socio-metric questions. In Phase Three I asked Seiji to write two original questions. The first one identified the three people he would want to be left with on

Earth. In response to this question he selected the three boys he had listed for seven out of the nine questions: Tetsuya, Ohata, and Kenji. Our conversation around his second question offers insight into his slightly mischievous side:

> ***Seiji:*** I want to have a question that is not me and these three [Tetsuya, Ohata, and Kenji].
> ***Amy:*** Um. [I laugh as I read what he has written]. What did you do?!?!
> ***Seiji:*** I don't know. Ok.
> ***Amy:*** So how did you come up with this second question? Tell me about this one.
> ***Seiji:*** I don't know.
> ***Amy:*** So why wouldn't you pick, why wouldn't you pick them to run from the police with you?
> ***Seiji:*** Because I don't think Tetsuya would do something like that.
> ***Amy:*** I see.
> ***Seiji:*** Endo is really fast at running. Not running, but running away.
> ***Amy:*** Ok.
> ***Seiji:*** Ohata is smart and Yukihiro can reason.
> ***Amy:*** [We laugh]. If he got caught.
> ***Seiji:*** and he won't tell anything about us, even if somebody was like not letting him sleep (Interview, 03/13/2010).

Again Seiji wrote a question to be more inclusive. I surmise he sought adventure rather than criminal activity as he thought about running from the police. He was willing to bend or break rules that seemed senseless or impractical. For example, with the approval of his parents he journeyed to the snack shop and Amako *Jinja* even though technically school rules forbade it. Elementary school-aged children were not to leave the school district boundaries without an accompanying adult. Thus, even Ito Yokado was technically off limits.

Enjoying the Friends in Your Midst

In Japan, Seiji's social networks were a tangle of people that surged and faded over time. At times, there was a discrepancy between hopes and desires for social interactions outside of the classroom and the actual interactions that took place. In the classroom, however, everyone remained a friend. In July 2009, Shinichi had described his son as curious, friendly, positive and talkative; he was confident his attitude would help him make friends and fit in socially.

Nevertheless, the decision to return to Japan while Seiji was still in elementary school was intentional. "I want him to make Japanese friends here," he noted. "It's getting difficult to make friends if he doesn't have Japanese experience in elementary generation" (Interview, 07/05/2009). He was aware that children at Kaichi had been building close friendships over the years without his son, and that time would make it more difficult for him to enter established friendships. Childhood friendships change over time as children meet and interact with different children through different activities. Certainly, Seiji's open character helped him to make new friends wherever he found himself. His approach to social relationships may have been considered somewhat unconventional by his American teachers, but the strategy served him well in making the many transitions that were part of his elementary school years. As a four-year-old he had left Japan for the United States. In Michigan he went from Lakeview to the Japanese School of Michigan every week. As an 11-year-old he returned to Japan. Life is full of transitions and another one awaited him as he prepared to enter middle school. However, this one he would make in the company of friends.

Before discussing this chapter as a whole, it is important to unpack Seiji's thinking about the word "friend." I hypothesized that Seiji's exposure to a Japanese cultural logic of friendship in preschool and kindergarten in Japan strongly influenced how he used and thought about the English word "friend" during his sojourn in the United States. In what follows I explore how Seiji understood the language of friendship.

The Language of Friendship

The Japanese language has many words for friend although the nuance often differs. My interviews and conversations with Seiji were primarily in English and when Seiji referred to his peers he always referred to them as "friends." In other words, he did not talk about "classmates,"

"peers," "other kids," "best friends," "close friends" or "other students." When I asked him to name his "closest friends" he did, but otherwise when we talked, he did not emphasize his relationships with particular boys or make reference to "best friends."[61]

Below is an excerpt from our discussion of the words *tomodachi*, *nakama*, *yujin* ("similar to *tomodachi*"), and *shinyuu* ("best friend"). The conversation alternated between providing clarity and diving back into murkier waters.

> ***Amy:*** What are the different words in Japanese for friend?
> ***Seiji:*** *Tomodachi*.
> ***Amy:*** *Hai*. And I think like *yujin*.
> ***Seiji:*** Ohh! *Yujin*. *Shinyuu* is like best friend.
> ***Amy:*** Hmm.
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah.
> ***Amy:*** And *nakama wa*? [What about *nakama?*]
> ***Seiji*:** *Tomodachi* and *nakama* are not really the same. *Tomodachi* is friend. *Nakama* is like in your team.
> ***Amy:*** So who would be in your team? Is that your class?
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah.
> ***Amy:*** Is your whole class—
> ***Seiji:*** *Nakama*.
> ***Amy:*** *Nakama*.
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah. They're all friends. Maybe you have to be friends to be *nakama*. I don't know.
> ***Amy:*** Then everybody in the class is your friend?
> ***Seiji:*** Not actually that, but yeah, kind of.
> ***Amy:*** So is that maybe a difference between *nakama* and *tomodachi*. . .
> ***Seiji:*** *Nakama* is a little lower level, maybe, than *tomodachi* (Interview, 03/13/2010).

This conversation was somewhat circular. I wondered if Seiji was grappling with his own thinking about these terms as we spoke. The whole class was *nakama* and they were all friends but not actually. Seiji's view that *nakama* is "a little lower level" than *tomodachi* may reflect a lesser commitment to the un-chosen group. Teachers in Japan seemed to blur their use of the word *tomodachi* in order to create interdependence and feelings of friendship among children in

[61] While Seiji never used the phrase "best friend," Emiko did. During our interview in July 2009 I had asked her if there was anything she missed about Michigan, and she had replied, "I missed my—I had a best friend, best, best friend."

the same class because they were groups of people that did not choose to be together but nevertheless belonged together. Perhaps children learned how to interact, share, communicate, and endure joys and hardships together initially because of obligation. Over time and with a consistent message, some degree of affect emerged. "I want them to learn consideration for others (*omoiyari*) and kindness (*yasashisa*). I think kindness is strength," Matsumoto Sensei had reflected. As previously discussed after the bike ride vignette, o*moiyari*, a combination of *omou* (to think of) and *yaru* (to dedicate), has a richer meaning than is implied by the English phrase "to be considerate of others." A traditional core goal of Japanese education, *omoiyari* builds upon the ability to read and respond appropriately to implicit messages sent by others.

In March 2010, I asked Seiji: "What do you think are the most important qualities in a friend?" He replied, "Nice. Agrees on what I think. Isn't really normal."[62] I wondered if Seiji recognized that reciprocity was a critical component of friendship in both the United States and Japan. Mrs. Matthews had indicated that this was an area where he struggled, "Whenever he does group work his challenge is to be able to listen to others. He tends to want to do things his way. And he doesn't always want to listen to what someone else wants to suggest, because he thinks he knows the best way and the right way" (Interview, 02/17/2010). It seems that one year later listening to others remained a challenge. If he could not listen to others, it seemed likely that he would be unable to recognize, let alone interpret or respond to implicit messages. My final interview with Matsumoto Sensei, after the school year was over, offered a helpful perspective: "Speaking about friendship (*tomodachi kankei)*, his way of thinking is still immature, so he did not need someone (*nakama)* to trust and support him, or he did not become such a friend to anyone. He was not in a situation where he supported someone. He had many

[62] By "isn't really normal" he meant "sometimes goes crazy. . . thinks of really funny things. . . is weird."

friends *(tomodachi)* with whom he could have fun every day. I think there was no big change over the year." This assessment closely mirrors Seiji's comments about the important qualities in a friend. "Nice" and "isn't really normal" reflect youthful views and priorities that lead to fun for Seiji, however, "agrees on what I think" is not likely to build mutual bonds of trust and support that are usually an important component of adolescent friendships. Matsumoto Sensei seemed to suggest that although he had not yet encountered situations that had provided him opportunities to develop and desire reciprocal friendship, someday he would.

Discussion

In this chapter, I explored friendship through weaving together elements from macro-social and micro-social levels. I used the word geography to draw attention to broad cultural logics in the United States and Japan as well as how the physical spaces of Seiji's particular neighborhoods influenced his social interactions. In the education literature, it is clear that Japanese pre-school and elementary school teachers place a high priority on developing feelings of friendship at the classroom level because it is pedagogically useful and culturally important (Cave, 2007; Lewis, 1995; Peak, 1991; Sato, 2004; Tobin, Hsueh, and Karasawa, 2009).

In the United States, elementary school teachers may value friendship, but they generally do not see it as part of their responsibility to foster friendship, or feelings of friendship, in their classrooms. That is not to say that American teachers do not encourage amiable relationships among students. Both Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson clearly did. However, according to an American cultural logic, friendship is a matter of personal choice and therefore lies outside the professional responsibilities of teachers. In addition, failure to express social aptitude may be viewed as a child's shortcoming, weakness, or failure. In other words, he or she is held

responsible for making better choices. Unfortunately, such an approach seems to invite views of particular students as "isolates" or "rejected children." Perhaps paying greater attention to children's desires for friendship and membership in a classroom community are practical strategies for facilitating learning in and among children. Elementary school children do need to experience feelings of friendship in the classroom, because it has the potential to enhance their social and academic skills, their confidence, and their sense of belonging. This is particularly important as student diversity in classrooms remains a reality.

Spending time at Kaichi and interviewing Matsumoto Sensei and Ueda Sensei, Aya, and Seiji, altered the perspective from which I read the literature in developmental psychology on friends and peer relationships in school. "Friendships, and peer relationships in general, serve a number of important functions for the individual," writes Erwin (1998, p. 5) in an introductory text titled *Friendship in Childhood and Adolescence*. While I do not dispute the statement, I find the emphasis on individual benefit noteworthy. Drawing from the literature, Erwin (1998) lists these functions: fundamental need for social interactions, a training ground for relationship skills, exchanging and testing social knowledge, stimulating social cognitive development, companionship and social support, and emotional buffering against sources of stress (pp. 5 – 9). Framing friendship in this way neglects academically productive reasons for nurturing friendship—in a Japanese sense of the word—in the classroom. A socio-cultural model of learning explicitly recognizes the learning possibilities when children express mutual support and cooperation (Cave, 2007).

In Chapter Four, I reported that for Matsumoto Sensei *ningen kankei* (human relations) was the most important thing that children learned in her classroom. She had continued, "They come all the way to school, so learning means learning with their friends (*tomodachi*).

Experiencing the joy of learning collaboratively with friends (*tomodachi*) is important for school." Social interaction is fundamental to learning. Mrs. Matthews also wanted her students to "learn from each other," but providing opportunities for them to "be independent learners, to think on their own" was a higher priority.

All of the educators I interviewed valued positive social interactions among their students, but the commitment to creating an environment of mutual support that explicitly sought "individual and group growth, self- and peer development" (Sato, 2004, p. 244) was most prominent at Kaichi. Although Seiji's thinking about friends had emerged in preschool and kindergarten in Japan and was foundationally Japanese, during his five and a half years in the United States, Japanese social training among peers was on hiatus accept for brief pseudo-immersion on Saturdays. Of course, parents also socialize their children. However, in Japan both teachers and parents recognize the critical role peer groups at school play in socialization (Lewis, 1995; Peak, 1991). Seiji adapted the idea that everyone in the class was a friend, but his American teachers would not have provided the experiences that would enable him to develop the sense of reciprocity and mutual obligation that is so central to the Japanese elementary classroom. Socially competent children (and adults) in Japan are expected to intuit the emotions and feelings of peers. It is likely to be more difficult to acquire this skill in contexts that place a higher value on verbal expression of emotions and feelings.

Seiji did not talk negatively about other people. He may have been frustrated when other children or adults did not respond to his ideas in ways that he wanted or hoped, but during our interviews he always seemed to be seeking—and finding—the good in people. The following exchange occurred in July 2009:

> ***Amy:*** Is there anybody in your class who's difficult to get along with?
> ***Seiji:*** Um, not really, but sometimes there's like things that don't go together.

Amy: You mean, people's ideas don't go together?
Seiji: Yeah, or
Amy: Personalities?
Seiji: It's not that I'm not good friends with everybody (Interview, 07/06/2009).

A hint of disharmony perhaps, but overall, Seiji maintained his inclusive view of friendship.

As he graduated from Kaichi he seemed to be early in the process of understanding and developing the reciprocal relationships that would lead to closer friendships in middle school. His curiosity, individuality, and confidence in offering his views may have been nurtured when he was in the United States, but this unbounded energy and desire for immediate personal fulfillment sometimes led to what was viewed in Japan as selfish and irresponsible behavior. The biking vignette highlighted an example of Seiji's carelessness in social relations and his tendency to focus on his own desires (playing at a fun park) over a friend's needs (returning home on time). Matsumoto Sensei added several examples of how this tendency played out at school:

> The current sixth graders tend to think about themselves first, but among them, Seiji is very much so. When he has an urge to do something, he can't help doing it even when he breaks a rule. For instance, when we went on an excursion [to Kyoto], students were supposed to stay with their groups during free time. But, he wanted to go shopping and left his group. His group was dissolved. Also, when he was supposed to stay at his table and do an experiment, he heard excitement at the next table, then he went to that table, saying, 'What? What happened?' He joined that group, abandoning his experiment. As another example, I assigned him a task during cleaning. But when another teacher asked another student to do something, he says, 'What is it? I want to do that, too!' He did not do his job and focused on that interesting cleaning task. Thus, he has such a strong tendency, compared to other children (Interview, 03/23/2010).

And while all of these examples were probably both personally and professionally frustrating for Matsumoto Sensei, none of them was likely to disrupt the functioning of the group in a way that would lead to peer correction.

My view of development is an interpretive one where "children enter into a social nexus and, by interacting and negotiating with others, establish understandings that become

fundamental social knowledge on which they continually build" (Corsaro & Eder, 1990, p. 200). Seiji's social life in the United States, and in Japan prior to that, were part of the social knowledge he possessed. For example, in Japanese preschools he learned that everyone was a friend, and at Lakeview he learned to interact with children who had different cultural backgrounds and different skin color. In every setting he influenced and was influenced by group life.

The Japanese adults in this study understood and articulated the importance of peer culture. Matsumoto Sensei and other Japanese teachers facilitated positive interactions both through *han*, or small groups, and through interactive class discussions where children exchanged ideas with one another and responded to each other's ideas. These strategies supported their belief that children learn best in an environment that is supportive and collaborative.

I am not suggesting that the American adults in this study did not seek to establish a supportive and collaborative environment, however, as previously noted, students at Lakeview did not work either in groups or as groups during my observations. Comments from Mrs. Matthews clarify this point. She explained, "We don't do a lot of group work like we used to. It just doesn't work. You know, we used to do, and we have in the fall, with the centers. And when you're doing centers you're doing a group" (Interview, 02/17/2009). These comments reflect Lewis' (1995) finding that while Japanese children learn to work ***as*** a group, American students—when they do it at all—often work ***in*** a group. Mrs. Matthews' statement that "group work just doesn't work" would be inconceivable in a Japanese elementary school.

Jackson's (1968/1990) *Life in Classrooms* seems to assume a teacher-student dyad where a crowd of individual children are waiting to interact with their teacher. But there are other

possibilities. Seiji seemed to prefer opportunities to interact with teachers ***and*** classmates around ideas and new knowledge. There was a performative component of his engagement in class discussions at Kaichi that seemed to draw the attention of both students and teachers. However, while in the United States speaking and acting in accordance with one's beliefs and convictions can be a matter of integrity, in Japan it may be considered socially out-of-tune (Davies & Ikeno, 2002). According to Matsumoto Sensei and Ueda Sensei, Seiji's classmates were intrigued by the combination of knowledge, enthusiasm, and curiosity he exhibited, even though as a newcomer he was still learning how to navigate social interactions in the classroom. Matsumoto Sensei reported, "Sometimes he speaks too much and becomes an annoyance to other students" (Interview 03/23/2010). He was aware that he "talked too much," but in Japan this tendency clearly violated classroom norms that were accepted by both teachers and students. I wondered how Seiji would continue to negotiate *ningen kankei*, or human relations, both in and out of the classroom as he was consistently exposed to Japanese ideas about self-expression and social interaction.

CHAPTER SIX

The Authoring and Editing of Seiji's Story

Introduction

After having experienced a day at Seiji's three schools in Chapter Three, we examined Seiji's particular classrooms and schools as contexts for social and cultural interactions between and among teachers and students in Chapter Four. In these chapters I clearly distinguished spaces—Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi—and identified temporal relevance by including references to specific dates and phases of the research. In doing so, I reminded readers that the research was not timeless; events happened on particular days on a historical timeline. I privileged institutional rules and adult perspectives, including my own. Seiji was present and he was an informative guide, but in the course of making his worlds comprehensible to outsiders, his priorities and his voice as a 10-, 11-, and 12-year-old kid were inconspicuous. Chapter Five marked a shift as I focused on friendship, a theme that was important to Seiji. I explored adult framings of children's friendships in American and Japanese elementary classrooms within broad cultural logics, but then I offered insights from Seiji about his friends in the United States and Japan. I interpreted his daily experiences and interactions in reference to space and geography, and through his drawings and his words I represented Seiji's perspective on his life world.

In Chapter Six I continue to build on the previous chapters as I focus on Seiji's experiences in and interactions with educational expectations and processes in the United States and Japan. Through drawing attention to Seiji's role in authoring and my role in editing, I suggest that the research in general and this chapter in particular is a narrative that intentionally blends adult and child perspectives. Thus, I provide textual space for Seiji's voice while also

acknowledging my role in bounding and interpreting his story. I include numerous exchanges between Seiji and myself because these extended moments indicate the relationship from which the research was written.

Crafting multiple selves (Kondo, 1990) and negotiating identities (Kanno, 2003) present images of individuals who strategically act and interact with others in particular ways according to context. However, plurality in being did not quite fit the boy I came to know who had insisted, "I'm not that different in both schools [Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan]. I talk a lot, I'm very active, and I'm creative" (Interview, 1/23/2009). And while I did identify a prominent pattern of remarkably authentic consistency, focusing on that steadfastness may also conceal Seiji's impressive dexterity in adapting to changing circumstances and expectations (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003). Seiji, the captain of his experiences, navigated socially, culturally and linguistically diverse worlds over the course of the study. Although he had an internal North Star, a "true bearing," he also pulled from a vast repertoire constructed from active participation in various communities of practice (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Navigating is a helpful metaphor for thinking about Seiji's experiences in part because I think he would cast his story as an action adventure. As long as he had a crew of brave and determined buddies by his side and a stash of Reeses peanut butter cups, the open sea with its blurred borders and limitless possibilities promised excitement. The navigating metaphor is also appealing because it honors Seiji's "zest for life."[63] The literary metaphor of "authoring" is less compelling in this sense, but it is more effective in recognizing Seiji's words and actions and his creative style. Although my thinking about "authoring" initially emerged from Holland and her

[63] Mrs. Jackson, Seiji's fifth grade language arts teacher, used this phrase when describing Seiji during our interview.

colleagues (1998) work on "authoring selves" within "figured worlds," as I got to know Seiji better, my interest in explicating selves diminished. Whether this was due to Seiji's age, his personality, the design of the research or a combination of these and other factors, I became less interested in "identity" or "identities" and more interested in focusing on how Seiji was "authoring" his story. Ideas about movement percolate through the study. Seiji moved between Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan every week; his family moved from the United States to Japan. Yet, through these changing circumstances this 10-, 11-, 12-year old held a steady pen and never seemed to question who he was or who he was becoming.

Researchers produce ethnographic narrative based in large part on dialogic and other interactions with their "informants." I begin by delineating my research relationship with Seiji and suggest how it influenced the text as a product of our interactions. This approach offers a holistic overview of Seiji that goes beyond student, learner, and, as elaborated in Chapter Five, friend. Then I explore Seiji's interpretation of the "rules of being a good student" at Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi. Seiji's review of these performances is an indicator of his perspective on what was valued in each setting. Then I examine salient features of Seiji, the student, and Seiji, the learner. I make this distinction because learning superseded school for Seiji. As a student in the final year of elementary school in both the United States and Japan Seiji was an insider and positioned to offer unique cross-cultural comparative insights. This is important because it offers an inside-out perspective of schooling that reflects a kid's values and priorities. In this chapter, as I highlight what seemed important to Seiji, I invite readers to consider the stories that all children author amidst and sometimes against institutional, social, and cultural expectations.

The Research Participant

Seiji and I initially met at his home in Michigan. Aya and I had set up the meeting via e-mail after corresponding several times. When I asked Seiji why he was interested in participating in the research, he told me that he had read Jun's *sakubun* (essay) on my recruiting blog and had wanted to participate in a project that a good friend was also involved in. Jun and Seiji had attended the Japanese School of Michigan together several years ago; I had met Jun and his family in Japan in summer 2008. The title of the *sakubun*, "What Amy-san gave to me," reflected conversations between Jun and me about adjusting to school and life in Japan after three years of living in the United States. These conversations, Jun's written account of them, and his willingness to share his work publically provided the critical introduction from which my research relationship with Seiji and his family grew.

All of my interviews with Seiji took place at his home. In Michigan, we sat at the dining room table; Aya and Emiko floated in and out of the room. In Japan, most of our interviews were in his bedroom. This allowed us to discuss artifacts and photographs, but the comfort of the environment also lead to easy distraction. For example, during one interview I eventually convinced him that solving his Meiji chocolate puzzle was incompatible with simultaneously engaging in our interview. He noticed that I used rechargeable batteries, and was usually cognizant of the tape recorder. If I glanced down to see if it was working properly he would often ask, "Is it ok?" As we finished up an interview, I always thanked him. Once, he directly looked at the tape recorder and said, "Bye!"

During interviews, especially when he was completing an eco-map or writing down names for the sociometric questioning, he often asked clarifying questions about how I wanted him to proceed or if I wanted him to use particular colors or write down names in particular

ways. I clarified when necessary but often responded, "It's up to you." As he completed his first eco-map, he commented on balancing warm and cool colors. Perhaps he carried lessons from art class into the project.

Over the fifteen months of the research, Seiji and I engaged in a variety of activities. More traditional aspects of the process included interviews and informal conversations in institutional settings. However, my "sense of Seiji" in daily-lived experience grew as a result of my stay with his family on and off during my fieldwork in Japan. Together, Seiji and I played Mario Brothers Wii ("Amy-san, you should pick up the gold coins"); in the summer, we ventured out on bicycles to buy *kuwagata mushi* (stag beetles); we shopped at Ito Yokado for caramels, chocolate, and gum in preparation for the marathon hike with the circle club; and we chatted as he washed the breakfast dishes on a Sunday morning. In the company of family members we watched *Night at the Museum*, went out for *kaiten zushi*[64] and Chinese food, played mini-golf, Monopoly, a Doraemon board game, Holic 100, and Uno, and watched television. These activities reminded me that Seiji was also son and older brother. Staying with Seiji's family as a guest offered important experiences within the developmental context of the family. It also surely shaped what I saw, what I was able to see, and what I did not and could not see (see Chapter Two for elaboration on this tension).

The power balance between Seiji and me was complicated and ever-shifting. Age, gender, language, and nationality exerted themselves in different ways according to the context. Aya expected Seiji to address me (and other adults) respectfully, usually as Amy-san, and he did. While in every setting I had some degree of authority as an adult, in Japanese settings such as Japanese Saturday School and Kaichi the balance shifted both because of nationality and

[64] Different kinds of sushi pass by on a conveyor belt and customers take what looks good. Items can also be specifically ordered; these arrive by miniature *shinkansen*.

language. In these contexts I was an American newcomer marked by both a non-Japanese appearance and by non-native Japanese linguistic and social skills. Particularly in these spaces Seiji was my tour guide. At Kaichi, Matsumoto Sensei primarily viewed me as ***his*** guest, and so when he zoomed off without me she was dismayed. However, when Seiji remembered that he was my guide, he seemed to relish the role.

Matsumoto Sensei referred to Seiji as a "happy-go-lucky dragonfly," because he did not dwell on things (Interview, 05/20/2010). He apologized for chatting in class or for other behavior or mis-behavior when teachers brought them to his attention, but he did not linger over these affairs. Sometimes his behavior appeared to stem from insensitivity, but this trait can be a limitation in one situation and a strength in another. The morning of my first observation at Kaichi during phase three offers an example of Seiji in the midst of our research relationship. Under circumstances where a degree of discomfiture was perhaps warranted, Seiji's confidence remained impressively impenetrable. I recorded the following in my fieldnotes immediately after the incident:

> 2nd period was rehearsal for the graduation ceremony. I wasn't quite adjusted to efficient movement from one activity to another.
>
> **9:41** I ask and Seiji tells me they have break until 9:45. He begins to play the eraser desk game with his friends. I haven't checked the board, and so don't realize that they will have graduation ceremony practice in the all-purpose room; I head to the bathroom certain that these few minutes will be sufficient.
>
> **9:45** I return to an empty room; Seiji comes running down the otherwise empty hallway. He tells me they are in the all-purpose room. Not a good situation for either Seiji or me. Seiji hasn't taken good care of me, and I am disrupting the efficient flow. As we run down the hall, I apologize. We are there by 9:46, but we are late and everyone waits for us. Seiji runs to the corner to get his chair; he sets it up in the empty space amidst his peers. Everyone waits until he is seated. I think Seiji is ok, but Emiko likely would have been mortified in a similar situation. I recognize that because of me everyone waits. I wonder how they have moved so quickly and efficiently, but upon reflection I think that my surprise is only because it is my first day back. Glad I was conscious enough of the

> time to only make everyone wait a minute—a very long minute, but still "only" a minute (Fieldnotes, 03/09/2010).

In this passage, Seiji the kid and Seiji the research participant merge. In the research narrative it is an event worthy of notation, but in Seiji's story it was probably insignificant.

Seiji had opinions on the daily happenings of his life, and he was usually willing and eager to share them. Sometimes, there were topics that were of greater interest to me than to him. In these instances, he might respond '"I don't know." Whether this indicated 'I don't care about that topic' or 'I don't wish to share my views' or 'I don't know what my thoughts are' or 'I want this interview to end so that I can watch tv' or some other message was not always easy to decipher. If after careful re-phrasing, Seiji once again responded vaguely or with indifference I moved on to another topic. Inviting his detailed perspective was not the same as acquiring it. My commitment to Seiji's voice in the text means that there are gaps in what I was able to understand. When I asked him to elaborate or to give an example he often did, but there were times when I eagerly sought clarification and he did not oblige. All research requires interpretation, but that interpretation should be solidly based in the data one is able to generate. In March 2010, Seiji reported that he enjoyed his role as a research participant because he liked speaking English and he liked having someone else around. This rationale hints at Seiji's sociability and provides an effective segue into the next section.

The "Good" Student?

When I first met Seiji, I asked him what three words his friends would use to describe him: "Talking. Creative. Always talking. And active" (Interview, 01/23/2009). Five months later, during the second phase, these characteristics would surface again when I asked him to describe the "three most important rules for being a good student" at Lakeview, the Japanese

School of Michigan, and Kaichi. Seiji had attended Kaichi for several months and so routines were relatively new and perhaps still enthralling. His responses blend his values and desires and his views of appropriate behavior in the classroom. I have taken Seiji's comments and compiled them into three lists based on the three points he articulated for each school. Most of the rules are verbatim, but in presenting them in numbered lists I have extracted them from our conversation.

At Lakeview, a good student should:

1. Maybe not to talk a lot—never to talk too much.
2. Opposite of Kaichi, not to be so active. If you play too much you get sweaty and you don't really have time to drink anything.
3. Focus in on what the teacher is saying even if you know it.

At Japanese Saturday School, a good student should:

1. Not run.
2. Not go in places you're not supposed to go in.
3. Not be in the class at free time (so you can focus in the next class)

At Kaichi, a good student:

1. Raises their hands up a lot—some people know the answer, but they don't say it, because they might be wrong, they think.
2. To be active—to play, do what you want in free time so that you can concentrate in the work after.
3. Come to school on time (Interview, 6/28/2009).

Several points stand out when considering these rules in juxtaposition. I examine Seiji's rules for each setting as well as how these statements reflect his actions and interactions at each school.

According to Seiji, he was not a good student at Lakeview. His teachers, his parents, and Seiji himself consistently described his propensity to talk, but he only considered "talking too much" to be a liability at Lakeview. The first two statements ("never talk too much" and "don't be so active") are directly opposite of how he described himself. Concentration was important at Lakeview, but Seiji's phrasing ("focus in on the teacher even if you know it") channels Jackson's (1990/1968) concern with "the extent to which students are in or out of focus while sitting at

their desks" (p. 86). Seiji recognized that he should focus. He simultaneously argued the futility of concentration when the material was something he already knew, which was often the case in math class.

At the Japanese School of Michigan Seiji framed all of the rules negatively, or what children should avoid doing. He violated the first two rules (don't run and don't go in places you're not supposed to), but he complied with the third and was not in class during most breaks. Of course, the first two rules were actual rules that had been dictated by the local Board of Education. They were loosely reinforced by Japanese administrators, teachers, and parent volunteers, but they reflected the practical and legal implications of renting American facilities. Finally, Seiji draws attention once again to the role of breaks in helping children focus during lessons.

Seiji framed all of the Kaichi rules positively, and he followed them all. Based on classroom observations, Seiji enjoyed exchanging ideas and perspectives during class. Perhaps it was these regular openings to talk that compelled him to see his talkativeness in this setting as relatively unproblematic. He was active during breaks, and he viewed them as opportunities to socialize and engage in pleasurable activities of his choosing so that he could return to class ready to learn. Here and in previous interviews he explicitly stated that breaks from learning facilitated learning. Seiji's views of "rules for being a good student" at Kaichi reflect a vision of school where children enthusiastically participate and share ideas, adults provide breaks, and children are active during those breaks so that they can return to the classroom and focus on learning. He composed these rules shortly after he had returned to Japan, so they represent his initial impressions of Kaichi.

As discussed in Chapter Four, Seiji had clear expectations for his teachers. He appreciated when they were enthusiastic about the content and presented new materials in ways that were engaging and that "didn't seem like teaching." He wanted teachers to treat students respectfully, be curious about their ideas, and assist them to find an answer when they stumbled.

Seiji's favorite subjects were science, social studies, and math, and his least favorite subjects were language arts, *kokugo* (national language/Japanese), and *shosha* (handwriting). In the next section, I provide insights into how Seiji authored the role of student. I begin with portraits of Seiji as a math student and as a language arts/*kokugo* student at Lakeview and Kaichi. The Japanese School of Michigan played a critical role in preparing Seiji to be a math and language arts student at Kaichi, but separate analysis does not contribute significantly to the discussion below. I chose these content areas because I had interviewed the teachers who taught these subjects, they were prominent in the curricula, and they provide a contrast between a subject Seiji liked and one he did not.

The Student and the Child in School

Although Seiji was a high achiever in all of his math classes, this created some challenges for him and his teachers. At Lakeview, he reported that he did not learn a lot in Mrs. Matthews' math class, because "I know stuff already from Japanese School or my father." He continued, "You can't learn things that you already know" (Interview, 03/04/2009). During one classroom observation, Seiji attempted to make math class more challenging for himself but was foiled. Mrs. Matthews had asked students to write down five fractions and to circle the greatest and the least. Seiji's fractions included decimals. The paraprofessional who was monitoring student progress noticed this and brought it to Mrs. Matthews' attention. She had responded, "No. No

decimals" (Fieldnotes, 02/11/2009). Seiji may have been showcasing his math knowledge, but I think it is more probable that he created a problem set in order to push his thinking. Although we did not discuss this particular incident, Mrs. Matthews had indicated concern that students who struggled in math might get more confused by the complexity of Seiji's questions and the high-level problems he designed and attempted to solve. Two hours of Japanese math class every Saturday and his extra-curricular *soroban* class probably boosted his already high math skills. On his report card he scored top marks for all learning goals and basic skills in math, and he earned 'A's in both the first and second trimesters. Seiji's deep conceptual knowledge of mathematics and his attention to detail likely led to occasional frustration for both Seiji and Mrs. Matthews. With good-natured humor she had commented, "If he thinks you did something wrong, he's going to call you on it. 'But, but, but, but.' And I'm like, 'That's ok, Seiji. You're probably right, but we can't go there now'" (Interview, 02/17/2009).

In Ueda Sensei's math class at Kaichi, Seiji also learned very little new content even though he was in the *harikiri* course, the higher-level class where students primarily worked on solving problems. "Quite often he already knows what the class is covering," Ueda Sensei reported. In fact, one of Seiji's perceived weak points in math class stemmed from his thorough understanding. "He says, 'That's a bother to write so many formulas.' For example, 'Why don't we just write answers?' he sometimes says. However, when I say to him, '[I understand], but you should write [everything] down in your notebook,' he works hard to make good notes" (Interview, 07/06/2009). At the end of the year, Ueda Sensei's only concern was what seemed to me a very minor point. He commented, "Students copy what is written on the blackboard into their notebooks, but Seiji's letters are very small. It does not mean he skips taking notes. He takes notes but instead of using all of the given space of the notebook, he uses only a small part

of it. I wonder why, but that is my only concern about him" (Interview, 03/12/2010). These comments suggest that Seiji needed to and did adapt to the procedures of Japanese math class. At Kaichi, Seiji's report card marks were high for mathematical knowledge, ways of thinking, and expressions. Although he enjoyed opportunities to present his ideas about math to his peers during class, he only earned average marks in the category of interest and eagerness.[65] Perhaps Seiji required challenging, new material in order to be enthusiastic during lessons.

Seiji's least favorite subjects were language arts and *kokugo*. When he was in the United States he explained, "English is not my language so I'm not good at reading, writing, and spelling" (Interview, 01/23/2009). He told me he liked reading, but that comprehension was difficult, especially conflict in stories. In Chapter Five I suggested that American and Japanese elementary school classrooms operate within different cultural logics of friendship. Perhaps stories with an unfamiliar logic such as those about choosing friends or peer relations in the classroom caused internal dissonance and an inability to fully comprehend relationships and motivation. Another possibility is that since differences in Japanese and English grammatical characteristics serve different psychological functions (Kuno, 1986), Seiji was unable to consistently and effectively tease out these relationships. One simple example demonstrates fundamental differences in what Japanese speakers and English speakers understand to be knowable. For example, the Japanese language does not allow sentences such as "He is sad" or "You are hungry" or "Tetsuya wants to eat sushi" because the speaker cannot presume to know

[65] Elementary school children in Japan do not earn grades. At Kaichi, children earned marks of "full success," "success," or "a little bit more." Each content area—Japanese, social studies, mathematics, science, music, drawing and manual arts, home economics, and physical education—was divided into four broad categories, although Japanese was divided into six. In math, the categories were interest and eagerness, mathematical ways of thinking, mathematical expressions, and mathematical knowledge. In Japanese, the categories were interest and eagerness, speaking and listening, writing, reading, comprehension, and handwriting.

what is going on in the mind of another.[66] Such distinctions would likely be difficult to learn because they represent different belief systems. Thus, although Seiji earned 'A's and 'B's on his Lakeview report card in reading and communications (writing, spelling, and public speaking), comprehension of English texts remained challenging even after five years of schooling.

Seiji reported that *kokugo* class was "boring" (Interview, 05/23/2010) perhaps in part because it demanded a high level of individual work and rote memorization. "Time goes slow in language arts," he commented. "And I wouldn't really want to do [it] the whole day" (Interview, 03/13/2010). Nevertheless, his skill level was remarkably high indicating that even when he did not like a subject he persisted. In speaking and listening, and writing he earned top marks throughout the year. Matsumoto Sensei commented, "He did not have any trouble with Japanese. He acquired both Japanese and English very well and he showed strong command of both languages." However, she expressed disappointment in one aspect of his Japanese. "When he came to this school [Kaichi], he spoke beautiful Japanese. He used *keigo* (honorific language) and called other students with the titles *kun* and *san*. Other children did not use the titles, so he gradually adopted the custom and called others without *kun* or *san*. His manner of speech gradually has gotten worse. Yes, it did" (Interview, 03/23/2010). Seiji adopted the more casual linguistic conventions of his peers at Kaichi rather than maintaining the polite speech patterns he had acquired in Michigan. In the absence of daily, sustained interactions with Japanese peers while he was in the United States, his parents were likely his most influential linguistic models.

As a talkative individual who placed great importance on social engagement, collaborative learning suited Seiji. During our interviews he occasionally provided detailed

[66] Sentences such as "You look sad" or "I heard that Tetsuya wants to eat sushi" are acceptable, because one can observe physical manifestations and report on hearsay. Thus, although Japanese cannot ***say*** that someone is sad, they are expected to intuit and respond to that sadness.

reports of class discussions at Kaichi. For example, he elaborated on the "huge argument about the sun" the class had had in *sougou,* or integrated studies. In social studies class at Lakeview they "had a textbook, like a big, big, book and we just read, read, and read." At Kaichi, on the other hand, they "talk about stuff" like tools made out of rock and how they might have been used.

> ***Seiji:*** And we said how, how you used it, and like a lot of people, I, I said like you can just tie it on, tie it on like a tie it on a pole, a stick pole and use it.
> ***Amy:*** Uh, huh.
> ***Seiji:*** Or, another person said, um, tie it then use it as a bow and arrow, or like other people said like um like uh, what was it? Ah, slingshot, but um I said like there was no rubber back then
> ***Amy:*** Umm.
> ***Seiji:*** But maybe you can, if there was string you can just have the like string then um, what what, go like this then it will be handy, right? Then you put it here. Then you can just pull, and ohhh! Yeah, or people said to make like a hole, hole, and stick it on the bottom
> ***Amy:*** Umhm.
> ***Seiji:*** And like chase them, chase them in that they'll fall in and and kill it, yeah, like, like um like wild pigs, yeah (Interview, 05/23/2009).

In reporting these class discussions, Seiji excitedly expressed his own views and clearly articulated the perspectives of his classmates. He found learning in interaction with others to be socially and intellectually stimulating. School was a place to learn and somewhere to meet and play with friends.

As discussed in previous chapters, Japanese schools structure elementary school life so that friends and fun are integral parts of what it means to go to school. This is not mere rhetoric. Teachers at Kaichi encouraged children to work hard and engage with learning, but days were filled with opportunities to learn with friends during lessons and to play with and talk to friends during breaks. Seiji was a hard-working student, but school was as much about friends and fun as it was about learning. At Lakeview, young people are "students." At Kaichi, they are

"children." They are children who take their studies seriously and enjoy "being" children while they are gradually "becoming" adults. Seiji the student is also Seiji the kid at school.

Learning and playing were not distinct categories for Seiji. He always wanted learning to be fun, although he focused even when it was not. Opportunities to play, when used wisely, facilitated learning. Seiji's experiences at Japanese schools were often defined by the moments between the 45-minute lessons. For example, when I asked Seiji to "tell me more about school [Kaichi]" he replied:

> School, when you first go there, I play dodgeball. Then it's the first hour and then we have like a 25-minute break after the second period. And after the fourth period we have lunchtime and we eat. Then we do cleaning. Then we play for 15 minutes. Then the last two are one hour, you just do it. Some days you only have five periods and some days you have six periods (Interview, 5/23/2009).

When I asked him what he remembered from the Japanese School of Michigan, his response was similar: "I remember the breaks, and we played with each other. It was big because it was a high school, so we didn't even know the whole thing. We went to places [you shouldn't go in] and there was a [faster] path to go to these places." Once again, his first recollection is of the breaks and the opportunities they provided for play and exploration. At Lakeview, Seiji also remembered the fun times:

> ***Amy:*** Ok, and how about when you think about Lakeview Elementary [what do you remember?]?
> ***Seiji:*** Oh, Lakeview, it was fun. And school here you can't get out of your seat when it's time so—
> ***Amy:*** You can't get out? I'm sorry you can't get out of your seat when—?
> ***Seiji:*** When it's like working time or when it's like learning time, kind of.
> ***Amy:*** So is that, is that good?
> ***Seiji:*** No. [We both laugh a little]. Michigan we get to like walk around or something.
> ***Amy:*** But maybe you can't learn as much if you're walking around.
> ***Seiji:*** Well, I don't know.
> ***Amy:*** What do you think? I don't know.
> ***Seiji:*** Well, I think it's ok (Interview, 05/23/2009).

Here Seiji foreshadowed an embodied tension that he felt even more acutely by the end of the school year. The "cost" of having so many breaks in Japan was staying in your seat during lessons. Thus, while one might have expected Seiji to be critical of the sole 20-minute break after lunch while he was a student in Michigan, this was not the case.

> ***Amy:*** Do you think there's longer recess at Lakeview?
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah.
> ***Amy:*** Really?
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah. Because, like recess [at Kaichi] is 25 minutes, but we have to come back five minutes early so it's 20 minutes. And going and maybe coming back will use like maybe three minutes.
> ***Amy:*** But I always think that, I think you have many more breaks—
> ***Seiji:*** Smaller breaks. Like in Lakeview it's like all break (Interview, 03/13/2010).

According to official schedules, Kaichi had four or five breaks totaling 55 to 60 minutes every day, while Lakeview had one 20-minute recess. Seiji's description of Lakeview as "like all break" reveals differences between the two systems and possible implications for academic achievement. One system trains children to differentiate between working and playing and is more predictable; the other blends the borders between the two (Alexander, 2000). The flexibility created opportunities for children to engage in behavior that could be described as mischievous or perhaps even deviant. Seiji fondly recalled such an incident of minor sedition from when he was at Lakeview:

> Brian told me to come to the bathroom. After he went, I waited for like ten minutes. I [asked] my teacher if I can go—we're not supposed to go with two people—but in ten minutes she forgot all about Brian and yeah—. Andrew was always playing bubbles in the bathroom, and one point he didn't come back for at least thirty minutes, and he got in real trouble (Interview, 3/13/2010).

Such shenanigans were not likely at Kaichi. Students rarely had occasion to leave the classroom during lessons. One year after leaving Michigan, those moments evoked nostalgic memories.

The Learner

Seiji was an avid learner both in and out of the classroom. Both of his parents had university degrees and they emphasized the importance of education. While in the United States, they wanted Seiji to enjoy American school life and were committed to his happiness and wellbeing as a 10-year-old, but they also created and capitalized on opportunities that would academically prepare him to be successful within the Japanese system. As previously discussed, during the comparatively long summer holiday, twice he returned to Japan and attended trial school. Experiencing Japanese school life was preparation to return to it, and, from Seiji's perspective, they were opportunities to learn and interact with new friends. We talked a lot about Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi. We also engaged in conversations about sea fishing in Japan and carnivorous plants such as the Venus Flytrap and the Pitcher Plant. When I asked him about the mid-year sixth grade school trip to Kyoto, he listed the places they had visited and reported their historical significance. He then asked me if I knew Japanese historical figures such as *Shoutoku Taichi*, Prince Shoutoku,[67] and he probably would have elaborated, but I edited his story and returned to the topics I wished to discuss. We also frequently talked about his extra-curricular activities such as English classes and *juku*.

Seiji's participation in formal English lessons in both countries provided him access to vocabulary and subject matter that he would have been unlikely to encounter at school. He enrolled in these classes in preparation for the *Eiken* (short for ***Ei****go Shi****ken***, English exam), a standardized test he would take in Japan. He told me his best chance to pass the pre-1 level exam would be soon after he returned. In the following passage Seiji alternately takes on the

[67] According to Wikipedia, the Prince was an important political figure and a great intellectual in the Asuka period (538 to 710).

role of teacher and student as we discuss particular *Eiken* words and test questions. It exemplifies dual desires to teach and learn.

> ***Seiji:*** I like the word contradiction.
> ***Amy:*** How interesting.
> ***Seiji:*** Do you know what is contradict in Japanese?
> ***Amy:*** No.
> ***Seiji:*** Ah, *mujyun*, you say. Like something that doesn't go. I can't write it in kanji, but…
> ***Amy:*** I can't either.
> ***Seiji:*** Well, yeah [laughs]. You write it, the kanji is *tate* and *hoko*. *Tate* is like shield; *hoko* is like a sword.[68] One guy said, this sword can break through any shield, and one guy said this shield can block any sword. So when they go together it contradicts.
> ***Amy:*** Yeah, kanji's interesting. It's difficult, but I think it's interesting. I think these are difficult words [commenting on the *Eiken* practice sheet he is showing me].
> ***Seiji:*** Really? Um. Sometimes, I know like, I know like contradicts or expired but sometimes #3 I have to think a little bit.
> ***Amy:*** Umhm.
> ***Seiji:*** Like first I thought it was shattered, but I have the image of glass shattering,
> ***Amy:*** Umhm.
> ***Seiji:*** And plants won't shatter a glass of water and—
> ***Amy:*** I think this is probably really good for your vocabulary.
> ***Seiji:*** Really?
> ***Amy:*** For your English vocabulary.
> ***Seiji:*** And I knew #2, no, I knew #3, too, this means like too much water.
> ***Amy:*** So, when might you get drenched?
> ***Seiji:*** Um, I don't. . . how?
> ***Amy:*** So, you can also say, 'Ah, we got drenched!'
> ***Seiji:*** Oh, like wet?
> ***Amy:*** What might that mean? When might you get drenched?
> ***Seiji:*** Like one day, there was so much snow and it melted in one day, maybe a day, it melted in one day.
> ***Amy:*** Yeah, kind of, but if you were saying, 'I got drenched.'
> ***Seiji:*** Umhm.
> ***Amy:*** So, we were coming home from the store and we got drenched.
> ***Seiji:*** Oh, maybe there were rainy or. . .
> ***Amy:*** And you forgot your…
> ***Seiji:*** Umbrella or boots or…
> ***Amy:*** Right. So that's a way that drenched is commonly used.
> ***Seiji:*** So, I knew these two, so I picked these, and I just guessed.

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[68] 矛盾, *mujyun*, or contradiction, is made up of the characters 矛, *hoko*, sword, and 盾, *tate,* shield. When characters are combined they are pronounced differently than when they are separate. In addition, when characters are combined, as in this case, new, but not necessarily obvious words emerge.

Amy: Interesting.
Seiji: Yeah.
Amy: This is where reading, I think reading all of those books [that you ordered from Scholastic] will probably help you with this, too.
Seiji: Oh, yeah, it helped me a lot and sometimes it's the opposite. This helps me on the reading. Like some of the words in here come…
Amy: They help your Japanese?
Seiji: Yeah, [they] come in, in my reading, and I'm like 'Oh, this is the word that I did in my *Eiken* class' (Interview, 03/04/2009).

Eiken preparation was an interesting exercise for an upper-elementary school student who was highly proficient. The pre-1 level exam was designed for Japanese college students. During Phase Two, I accompanied Seiji to his private English lesson and sat outside the room. My jaw dropped as I listened to his tutor talk about in-vitro fertilization, factory farms and fish farms, and pre-meditated, first- and second-degree murder. I do not know whether these topics emerged from test preparation materials or from Seiji's twenty-something male tutor. In any case, according to the STEP, *Eiken* website,[69] passing both the written and the oral pre-1 level could be used for "international admissions to graduate and undergraduate programs." Seiji was disappointed that he did not pass the test in summer 2009, however, there was clear dissonance between Seiji and the typical Japanese young adult who would register for the exam. Seiji's knowledge and skills were rooted in five and a half years of immersion in American elementary school life, whereas older students sitting for the exam were more likely to have acquired their English skills primarily through six years of procedural language acquisition in middle and high school English classes. Preparation for the *Eiken* expanded both his English and Japanese vocabularies in interesting ways.

After returning to Japan, Seiji and his mom also sought out a suitable *juku*, or fee-based private cram school. Aya thought one-on-one tutoring would be best. Seiji opted for an

[69] http://stepeiken.org/grades

arrangement that was more interactive and a particular school where at least eight friends from Matsumoto Sensei's class were enrolled. At this *juku* children took an exam several times a year and sat according to the results. The student with the top score would sit in the front row in the first seat; the student with the second highest score would sit in the next seat. Thus in a class of 50 sixth graders the student with the lowest score would sit in the "last seat" in the back row of the B group. Aya had not recommended this *juku*, but Seiji had persisted. He was enthralled with the *juku* during Phase Two and photographed the high-rise building near the train station as one of three places that were important to him. He explained, "I go there two times a week" and "I like going to [this *juku*] because I think the learning is fun" and "my friends at [*juku*], I play with during free time" (Interview, 07/06/2009).

Initially, *juku* provided an opportunity for him to spend more time with his friends both playing and learning. At the end of the school year his intrigue had lessened. In preparation for the busier schedule of middle school students, his class met on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 7:30 – 10:00 p.m. He reported that although he did not like cram school when he was there, he liked it afterwards. Actually, Seiji told me he wanted to go to cram school on Sundays, too. When I asked why, he responded, "Because it's good for my future" (Fieldnotes, 03/14/2010). For Seiji, learning was also about cramming facts and bits of knowledge into one's head in order to lay the foundation for future successes.

The Comparative Analyst

As a daily participant in the final year of elementary school in the United States and Japan Seiji is uniquely positioned to offer comparative insights of his experiences. He liked both Lakeview and Kaichi and offered praise for and critique of both systems. Returning to Japan

might have been a grand climax, but Seiji did not have any big problems adjusting to school life at Kaichi. He spoke "beautiful Japanese," his report card marks for interest, skills, and knowledge were good, and he had made friends. His expectations of teachers and school learning had remained consistent. He wanted teachers to make learning fun and he wanted to be challenged with new, interesting materials. The three-phase component of the research design enabled me to assess Seiji's first impressions (Phase Two) and a more seasoned assessment (Phase Three) of life as a student at Kaichi.

The week before the Kaichi graduation ceremony I asked Seiji about the most difficult part of school. He responded, "You can't choose, like, what you want to do" (Interview, 03/13/2010). He explained that, for example, he did not like *shosha* (handwriting) and music. I countered, "You said you have to learn things even if you don't want to, but you've always had that, right?" At this point he launched into an earnest comparison of expectations regarding effort at the two schools.

> ***Seiji:*** Yeah, but Lakeview, it was better than here.
> ***Amy:*** In what way?
> ***Seiji:*** You were more free, kind of. You didn't really have to really, really do it.
> ***Amy:*** [I laugh] What do you mean?
> ***Seiji:*** Um.
> ***Amy:*** Give me an example.
> ***Seiji:*** Lakeview, if you, maybe, not really do a good job you will be fine [I laugh], and [he laughs] at Kaichi you have to do really well even if you didn't like or you weren't good at that subject.
> ***Amy:*** So maybe that's good.
> ***Seiji:*** No. [I laugh] Like calligraphy [handwriting], you won't, I don't think it will really do anything to my life when I'm older.
> ***Amy:*** But maybe it's appreciation of culture. I think in calligraphy [handwriting], right, you must pay attention to detail.
> ***Seiji:*** Well. . .
> ***Amy:*** Right?
> ***Seiji:*** Yeah, but not always if you pay attention you can do it (Interview, 03/13/2010).

In this exchange Seiji articulates a combination of values that are implicitly and explicitly taught in Japanese learning experiences. Rohlen and LeTendre (1996) write, "*Gambaru* (effort), *kuro* (suffering), and *gaman* (persistence) are words that are widely used in the spiritual or character-building contexts ubiquitous to Japanese learning" (p. 375). Japanese receive foundational training in these values during the elementary school years (Cave, 2007; Lewis, 1995; Sato, 2004). Prior to sixth grade Seiji's exposure to sustained and persistent expectations to the Japanese version of "doing one's best" was limited. In retrospect and after attending Kaichi for a year, Seiji felt that at Lakeview he could get away with doing mediocre work.

While most Japanese believe that with effort and practice perfection is always possible (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996), Seiji disagreed. This tension surfaced when I asked Seiji about being a sixth grader in Japan.

> ***Seiji:*** In sixth grade you have to be always perfect on everything. So it's very hard.
> ***Amy:*** So, what do you mean perfect?
> ***Seiji:*** Like, you can't, like when you're cleaning, you can't like talk to anyone. You're not supposed to, you can't leave dust anywhere. Yeah.
> ***Amy:*** So something else besides cleaning, or . . . ?
> ***Seiji:*** Or maybe, going somewhere you have to be the role models.
> ***Amy:*** So is that a good thing?
> ***Seiji:*** Uh, no.
> ***Amy:*** Why not?
> ***Seiji:*** Because, you can't be always perfect. It's impossible. The teachers are strict about something that's impossible.
> ***Amy:*** Like what?
> ***Seiji:*** Being always perfect, yeah, always being perfect (Interview, 03/13/2010).

Sixth graders at Kaichi had real responsibilities, including serving as role models for younger children, but Seiji was unprepared to take all of his responsibilities with the seriousness and striving that was expected. The weeks leading up to the graduation ceremony had been an exercise in practicing for perfection. Elements of the ceremony were rehearsed on a daily basis and Matsumoto Sensei usually used the last ten minutes of the lunch period to rehearse *Saigo no*

chaimu (The Last Chime). They practiced for perfection even if the performance was not perfect. In fact, according to Seiji, the previous year everyone had cried so hard during the ceremony that they could not sing the song at all. The teachers were probably strict about ***earnest striving*** for perfection rather than actually achieving it.

Discussion

Academically, Seiji was a high achiever at both Lakeview and Kaichi. He also generally enjoyed school life in both settings. He discovered good American teachers and good Japanese teachers. He made friends wherever he went. However, earnest striving for perpetual perfection in every activity was an expectation at Kaichi that Seiji was not yet fully prepared to embrace. In addition, his body struggled to remain seated during 45-minute lessons. Seiji readily learned the content of the Japanese curriculum, a relatively easy accomplishment in comparison to the challenge of learning deeply embedded values and expressing those values in culturally recognizable ways.

Seiji performed the role of student quite consistently over the course of the study. He was slightly mischievous and he wanted to have fun. This meant that he would try to get away with what he could and was generally quite saavy in his understanding of boundaries that could be pushed. At Lakeview, he might pull out a friend's chair as he was preparing to sit. At the Japanese School of Michigan, he might explore "forbidden" rooms and secret passageways. At Kaichi, opportunities for pranks seemed to disappear. I hypothesize that this was primarily because of several interconnected factors. First of all, alternating between breaks and lessons reinforced embedded lessons about appropriate behavior in different settings, or *kejime*. Seiji had fewer chances for misdeeds during class, both because Kaichi teachers had more control

during lessons and because his 34 classmates generally did not view schooling routines as malleable or negotiable.[70] In addition, in Japan, children's mischief is understood differently. As Tobin (1995) points out, Japanese schools provide "periods when children can express themselves and interact out of the reach of their teacher's eyes and ears" (p. 255). At Kaichi, Seiji had more opportunities to exert his energies. For him this might mean running in the halls and playfully messing around with friends during breaks. In other words, "misdeeds" at Lakeview might be labeled as "being a kid" at Kaichi.[71] However, I have argued that the focus on responsibility was an explanatory theme at Kaichi. Thus, when Seiji strayed from the cleaning task he was assigned or wandered off from the group on the school field trip such behavior was not viewed as mischievous but was instead contextually framed as careless and irresponsible. As a student, he was also genuinely dedicated to learning and acquiring new knowledge through social engagement in the classroom, and he worked hard. Finally, although he may have found it challenging to consistently and attentively listen to his classmates' ideas and perceive their true feelings (*omoiyari*), when he found their comments interesting he could recall them verbatim.

Matsumoto Sensei had wanted him to become more sensitive to how his actions affected others, but she saw limited progress over the course of the school year. This perceived insensitivity was showcased during a group presentation after the graduation ceremony. Seiji

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[70] This is connected to a point that Alexander (2000) makes regarding the relationship between how time is structured in schools—such as alternating between classes and breaks—and teacher authority. In the case of Japan, teacher authority is both absolute and largely invisible, in part because systems of peer monitoring and correction have been established. Whether this represents "genuine consensus or the hegemony of a single value system" (Alexander, 2000, p. 412) is debatable. Regardless, Seiji was positioned as a newcomer who was expected to adjust.

[71] As mentioned previously, Japanese peer monitoring can be problematic (Lewis, 1995) and has sometimes led to the serious problem of *ijime*, or bullying. However, bullying is, of course, not a uniquely Japanese problem.

had been one of the three students who were selected to present highlights from the school year to parents and classmates. Seiji had carefully prepared chart paper with results from the student survey, but it refused to be held to the blackboard by the magnets he had and repeatedly slipped to the floor. His initial plans went awry, and he could not make in-the-moment adjustments so that the presentation could continue smoothly. I thought the mishap was minor. For Matsumoto Sensei, it was yet another example of his insensitivity. In regard to this event, she reported, "Usually, a child thinks, 'Oh, it was not successful. I'm disappointed.' But Seiji thinks 'No problem'" (Interview, 03/23/2010). In contrast with the meticulously practiced proceedings of the graduation ceremony, Seiji's performance in the after-ceremony presentation offered a brief moment of impromptu slapstick comedy. Perhaps his classmates even enjoyed a fleeting lapse in procedural perfection. Thus, in Seiji's story, the incident was probably unremarkable. This, of course, points to a fundamental challenge in writing children's stories as they might author them—especially for a kid who simply "did not dwell."

Of course, what may have seemed like insensitivity was also a key factor in Seiji's ability to adjust to the new social, cultural, and linguistic expectations that he encountered as he traveled across visible and invisible borders. I was grateful for his "insensitivity" on a Tuesday morning at 9:46 a.m. as he set up his chair amongst his already seated and waiting peers. Matsumoto Sensei also seemed to recognize that Seiji's actions were often simultaneously strengths and challenges. She commented that throughout the year, "He could have been more discouraged, but he did not feel discouragement at all, and he was not intimidated. It was interesting to see," she added (Interview, 03/23/2010).

As a researcher, I was committed to presenting "the historical child," but for Seiji, "15-month period" and "three-phase study" were false borders. Participating in research blended into

daily life. The research narrative distinguished three schools and highlighted social, cultural, and linguistic differences between settings. In Seiji's version a boy simply goes to school because that is what kids do. As a researcher, I designed the study around what I thought might be a climax—Seiji's return to Japan after a five-and-a-half year sojourn in the United States. However, in Seiji's story the suspense of this climax was short-lived. Boys from preschool remembered him, and he had friends on the first day of school. In any case, he would have made friends with his new classmates. Friends were everywhere, you just had to approach them and strike up a conversation. They were important for social interaction and for social performance. For Seiji school was a convenient place to meet other kids and exchange ideas, trivia, language, kid culture, and knowledge. The really good teachers made learning fun by engaging kids in new knowledge and encouraging them to share their ideas. These teachers showed an interest in kids' thinking. Participating in research gave him opportunities to talk and share his views. He also enjoyed having an adult at his schools who was there because of him and an extra person at home with whom he could play games and speak English. I think Seiji would agree with what I have written in this paragraph. And yet this CliffNotes version is a poor rendition of Seiji's life world because it fails to evoke both the milieu of the socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse contexts within which he skillfully and boldly navigated. In addition, it shrouds the dexterity he developed and would need to continue to hone as he came to recognize how strengths in one setting might not necessarily serve him well in another.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Being and Becoming

Introduction

On a chilly Friday morning in March 2010, Seiji and all of the other sixth graders at Kaichi Elementary School participated in an elaborate and well-rehearsed graduation ceremony. The time and care that went into preparation for the ceremony and surrounding events signified both the end of elementary school and the educational importance of ritual. These events recalled and built upon fundamental values taught and learned in elementary schools across Japan including "interdependence, friendship, gratitude, the significance of age-roles, [and] the importance of memory" (Cave, 2007, p. 191). Throughout the ceremony the principal, teachers, and other officials referenced the 6-year period that most of the children had spent learning and growing together through particular events and shared achievements.[72] The sentimental music softly emanating from stringed instruments throughout the ceremony facilitated the emotional intensity of the day and manifested in the tears of mothers and fathers, teachers and students.

Seiji and Aya, however, experienced the morning somewhat differently. I had asked Aya how she felt about graduation day as we walked to Kaichi that morning, and she had replied, "Nothing special." Afterall, it was not like the last day of Lakeview which was "so sad" because they were leaving a school that Seiji had attended since kindergarten (Fieldnotes, 3/19/2010). Through music, rhetorical structures, prescribed actions, and formal dress, the ceremony was

[72] During an interview with Aya in Michigan she had suggested that Seiji probably could not "follow" physical education class at Kaichi because it was so different. For example, he had not learned how to use a vaulting horse, or *tobibako*, while at Lakeview. I recalled this comment in the weeks leading up to graduation, after listening to the sixth graders practice the song *Saigo no Chaimu* (The Last Chime) dozens of times. The words reflect on experiences throughout elementary school—including learning to use the vaulting horse. It was another elementary school memory that was recalled and reinforced, but one that Seiji had not experienced.

orchestrated to recall and create memories. Seiji performed well. He loudly and clearly articulated his lines in the long recitation,[73] properly accepted his graduation certificate,[74] dressed smartly in a suit and tie, and performed with his classmates as expected. Weeks of daily practice executing the choreographed details ensured uniformity. The sixth grade teachers had provided detailed instruction that covered the protocol for exiting, the need to walk slowly and with dignity, and the importance of singing with emotion (Fieldnotes, 3/9/2010; Fieldnotes, 3/11/2010; Fieldnotes, 3/16/2010). These types of lessons were relatively new for Seiji, but he was a quick learner, and, physically, he was able to perform. Such ceremonies are not unique to Japanese educational institutions, but instead might be considered as part of "a broad social landscape" (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996, p. 15) that prepares Japanese children to learn in

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[73] The *yobikake* was performed by the entire sixth grade in dialogue with all of the fifth graders. Each sixth grader had one or two lines to recite; some lines were spoken by all children. For a detailed description of two Japanese elementary school graduation ceremonies and surrounding events, including the text of a *yobikake* see Chapter 6 in Peter Cave's (2007) *Primary school in Japan: Self, individuality and learning in elementary education*.

[74] Procedure for receiving a certificate at the Kaichi graduation ceremony:

1. Matsumoto Sensei calls out a name—last name then first name.
2. The person responds "*Hai*" (yes), walks to a position in front of the podium, and turns toward the podium.
3. He/she bows with the person who has previously received a certificate; the principal head bows.
4. He/she steps to the left to be positioned in front of the principal who extends a certificate with both hands; the principal head bows again.
5. Recipient brings left hand up to certificate and then the right hand joins.
6. As number 5 is happening the next name is read.
7. Recipient steps to the left so as to be in a good position to bow with the next person; he/she holds the certificate in front while bowing.
8. Recipient tucks certificate under left arm and then turns to the right.
9. Recipient walks down the stairs in the center of the stage, through the seated 6th graders, to the back of the room, and back to his/her seat.

During one of the practices the teachers had talked to children about the five-second bow and how at the count of three they should be at the bottom of the bow. For this and other specified actions every child learned the form and seemed to perform with confidence during the ceremony.

distinctly Japanese ways. Cave's (2007) description of elementary school in Japan as the "first (compulsory) stage of initiatory training for life as a whole" (p. 192) invites reflection on Seiji's absence from Kaichi and his presence at Lakeview. He learned, and generally lived by, the rules at Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi. However, since each setting had vastly different expectations, the task of navigation included learning the boundaries and the extent to which they could be pushed.

I chose to introduce this chapter through the Kaichi graduation ceremony because it signifies transition and reminds us that Seiji's story and the stories of all children are ongoing. Furthermore, the ritual of graduation underscores the critical task of "becoming" for Seiji and his classmates. Thorne (1993) writes, "Children's interactions are not preparation for life; they are life itself" (p. 3),[75] but Seiji's interactions were both form and function. School was life, and it was preparation for life down the road.

I began this dissertation by asking how a Japanese boy navigated in and between social and cultural worlds in both the United States and Japan. I also wanted to know how he authored his story of transition. In this chapter, I look across the dissertation and make explicit my logic in structuring the chapters in particular ways. I also more fully develop my discussion of one boy's experiences navigating within school structures.[76] I recognize and make explicit the role his parents played in charting his course. I examine the affordances and constraints of the particular developmental pathway along which he travelled. Here, by developmental pathway, I mean the route Seiji took in retrospect (Prout, 2005). I suggest that learning in one setting

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[75] Thorne indicates that her wording relies on a phrase in Brian Sutton-Smith's *A Performance Theory of Peer Relations*, p. 75: "Peer interaction is not a preparation for life. It is life itself."

[76] The discussion comes here because now we have a more comprehensive understanding of both the school settings and the boy.

enhanced his repertoire of approaches and facilitated his ability to participate in other settings. However, as I have also pointed out, learning in one setting sometimes delayed or even conflicted with expectations in another. I have described Seiji's skill in navigating multiple contexts in detail. However, here I craft an argument about his navigation and what we can learn from one Japanese boy in transition. I conclude with comments as the author of the dissertation and the editor of Seiji's story.

Structural Logic

This study used Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model to broadly map the terrain of one boy during an ecological transition between the United States and Japan. I identified the settings of home, school, and neighborhood as potentially important sites of activity for a 10-year old. I anticipated that mesosystemic relationships—between school and neighborhood, school and home, and home and neighborhood—might offer important insights. Although the main focus of the dissertation was on school worlds, in order to understand Seiji's experiences moving in and between settings it was also important to recognize worlds of home, neighborhood, and school in interaction and within larger systems.

I focused on school worlds for a number of reasons. First, I understood schools to be institutions that "both reflect and impart their cultures' core beliefs" (Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009, p. 1) and sites for the creation and production of culture. Thus, children who attend school in a different country are required to figure out and respond to new rules, routines, and expectations. In other words, whether smoothly or with great difficulty, these children must transition. Second, when the study began, Seiji was attending school six days a week. Through participating in two worlds of school, Lakeview Elementary School and the Japanese School of

Michigan, Seiji had weekly opportunities to develop and hone his navigation skills. Finally, for Seiji and for his parents, school was a central site both for learning and for meeting friends.

In order to create a sense of what the task of navigating particular school worlds entailed, in Chapter Three I placed representations of a day at Lakeview Elementary School, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi *Shogakko* side by side. Chapter Four built on these descriptions and examined each school as a social and cultural setting with temporal rhythms, goals and rules, and relationships. I introduced the themes of comfort and choice, merging worlds, and responsibility and social relations in order to foreground and foreshadow some of the challenges that Seiji faced after returning to Japan.

Seiji liked to learn, and he was a good student. Much of his learning took place in and through social interaction both in and out of formal classrooms that had particular rules and particular ways of organizing school life. For Seiji, school was primarily about fun and friendship. In Chapter Five I took up friendship as a key theme and examined Seiji's friendships at school, at home, and in the neighborhood in both the United States and Japan. I identified different cultural logics of friendship in the classroom and located Seiji's understanding in the Japanese cultural logic. In other words, everyone in the class was a friend. Seiji had learned inclusive ideas about friendship as a preschooler in Japan, and then at Lakeview he had experienced kindness and support as a non-English speaking four-year-old Japanese newcomer. Fast-forwarding to the time of the study, Seiji's inclusive views about friendship seemed to serve as a protective factor. Finding friends everywhere was a reasonable strategy for a boy in motion. However, in the United States, Seiji had limited opportunities to learn, practice, and develop particular social and cultural skills such as *omoiyari*. In other words, his repertoire of Japanese social skills was not fully developed. In Japan, he generally maintained inclusive views of

friendship both in and out of the classroom. He began to develop friendships with children he could then meet at school, at home, and in the neighborhood. He was encouraged to make plans with friends on his own. Toward the end of the study, he showed signs of seeking closer personal friendships as he prepared for life as a Japanese middle school student.

In Chapter Six I focused on Seiji as the author of his (story of) transition. While recognizing my role as an editor, I created space to hear from Seiji from the "inside-out" throughout the chapter. I focused on his roles as research participant, student, learner, and comparative analyst, but I also sought to present Seiji as a kid with views and perspectives that adults—teachers, researchers, and those forming educational policy—can learn from. Chapters Three, Four, Five, and Six serve as stimuli for the ensuing discussion in which I examine Seiji's ability to navigate school worlds. I focus primarily on Lakeview and Kaichi because the contrast between these two settings is clearest. However, I recognize the Japanese School of Michigan as an important hybrid world.

While I am keenly interested in Seiji's navigation of school worlds, it is also important to recognize that Aya and Shinichi played a significant role in charting their son's educational course. Shinichi's interest in and pursuit of an overseas posting at his company created the opportunity for sojourn. Seiji's parents were personally excited about living in the United States, but they also wanted their children to learn English, learn another culture, and, as Aya put it, meet "other countries' friends" (Interview, 01/23/2009). Like many middle and upper middle class parents in the United States, they chose where to live in part because of the reputation of the schools. They had heard good reports about Lakeview and had also purposefully selected a school that had neither too few nor too many Japanese. Like the vast majority of Japanese

parents in Michigan with school-aged children they enrolled Seiji and Emiko in *hoshuko*, or supplementary school, and both parents supported the school through volunteering.

In addition to educational opportunities in Michigan, Seiji and Emiko were given the chance to attend "trial school" in Japan during two summers. Seiji enthusiastically participated, while Emiko enthusiastically said "no thanks." She was not interested, and Aya did not seek to persuade or compel her. Shinichi and Aya were committed to their children's educations and they planned intentionally, but there was also a relaxed component to their approach. Perhaps it was the influence of *sho ga nai*. For example, Seiji's mother was aware of Tanaka Sensei's inexperience in the classroom, but was not overly concerned about it: "She has a lot of mistakes sometimes. But Seiji really like[s] it, yes" (Interview, 02/25/2009). Seiji's parents, like many Japanese parents, viewed elementary school as a site of cognitive, social, and cultural learning. In other words, a *hoshuko* teacher who does her best and creates good relationships in the classroom is good enough.

Navigating School Worlds

I read Seiji's navigation within and between Lakeview Elementary School, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi *Shogakko* as an example of dexterity. According to Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003), "An important feature of focusing on repertoires is encouraging people to develop dexterity in determining which approach from their repertoire is appropriate under which circumstances" (p. 22). Seiji performed consistently well in a variety of contexts in both the United States and Japan, and he clearly possessed a repository of skills, strategies and approaches. However, he did not always act in ways that his teachers considered to be "appropriate." If school is a place where one learns to participate and perform, there were

glimpses into ways in which Seiji, while often very skilled, sometimes had not yet entirely mastered the local repertoire for what it meant to be a fifth/sixth grader in a particular world. This is an important point because Seiji's infractions provide insights into Seiji, his schools, and the broader cultural worlds in which they are embedded. I identified intentional acts of relatively mild insubordination and kid-like behavior, primarily in Michigan, and what I would generally characterize as unintentional mis-steps, usually in Japan. Mis-steps occurred most often as Seiji encountered new rules, routines, and expectations at Kaichi. I examine both below.

Seiji was aware of rules. In several of our interviews, the phrase "we're not supposed to, but..." emerged. He often used it to report undetected breaches at Lakeview or the Japanese School of Michigan. For example, when I asked how he first came to try a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, he had replied, "Well, um, we're not supposed to, but like at my school [Lakeview] sometimes people have like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and my friends are nice, and so they let me try a little bit, and I liked it" (Interview, 03/04/2009). Seiji knew there was a rule, but he viewed it as optional. There were also incidents when Seiji ran up to the boundary of expectation and occasionally crossed over. He might pull out a chair from beneath a friend who was about to sit or, to the chagrin of the paraprofessional in charge, slide across an icy patch on Lakeview's playground. These actions drew looks of dismay or verbal reprimands, but then the day continued. At the Japanese School of Michigan, he sought out adventure in exploring classrooms and corridors even though this involved "going in places you're not supposed to go in" (Interview, 06/28/2009). The examples above indicate relatively benign acts of breaking rules. From Seiji's perspective they were probably harmless shenanigans. In fact, Mrs. Matthews reported that he readily complied with many rules: "There are students like Seiji who wouldn't think that if that's a rule, he might say, 'Well, why is it a rule?' And then I would

give my reasoning, and he would be satisfied with it" (Interview, 02/17/2009). As previously noted, and on more than one occasion, Seiji was the nemesis of the perpetual gum-chewers. He evaluated the rationale behind rules and expectations in Michigan, and if they seemed reasonable enough, he complied. Usually his infractions were not connected to classroom instruction. In other words, during lessons, he often followed rules and was attentive.

Alexander's (2000) comparative study of primary education in five countries argues, "[I]n a teaching culture that espouses democratic values, routines not only will be negotiated and contested but by definition must be" (p. 385). Indeed, a day at Lakeview in Chapter Three is teaming with teacher talk related to rules, routines and discipline. "What do you have in your mouth?" "You need to stop the visiting and get focused." "What are the rules for taking a test?" "We have to have our personal space. Eighteen inches is allowed." "I'm waiting." "Feet down, sit up straight." "I'm waiting." Teacher talk at Lakeview was filled with explicit references to norms, although such comments were rarely directed at Seiji.

In Matsumoto Sensei's class at Kaichi, on the other hand, routines were non-negotiable and reminders and admonitions were rare. In Japanese classrooms, Sato (2004) contends, "When enough people are doing the same things, words are not necessary to teach and learn. Absorbed traits and peer pressure are effective forms of authority and control" (p. 189). Kaichi sixth graders had been absorbing the same general forms since the first grade. In this regard, Seiji had absorbed radically different forms than his peers. Thus, while he had been generally proficient at following basic routines in Michigan, he was ill-prepared both physically and attitudinally for Kaichi's regimented environment. A day at Kaichi in Chapter Three suggests that Matsumoto Sensei and the other Kaichi teachers focused their discourse primarily on the lessons and spent remarkably little time managing the class verbally. "*Tanomu yo* [I'm counting

on you, you know]." "*Ima chotto urusai* [It's a little bit noisy now]." Matsumoto Sensei used an intense but gentle gaze to compel children to adjust their behavior. I wondered if Seiji had learned to receive his teachers' non-verbal messages.

How did Seiji navigate the rules and invisible routines at Kaichi? Did he still intentionally break relatively minor rules? In regard to the second question, Seiji reported two cases. Once again, both of them were unrelated to lessons. The first infraction was in regard to a rule from the section "Life outside of school." Seiji, with full support from his mother, consciously broke the rule that forbade children to leave school district boundaries without an adult. Ito Yokado, the department and grocery store less than 300 meters from Seiji's house and included in his community map, was technically out of the district. Nevertheless, Aya occasionally sent him there to pick up a few items for dinner, and he regularly went there on his own. Seiji also reported breaking the rule of "no talking while cleaning." Although I did not inquire, I surmise that this was a Seiji-only rule devised by Matsumoto Sensei so that he would actually accomplish his cleaning task. On days when I visited Kaichi, children happily chattered away as they swept, fed the rabbits, and watered the plants.

As discussed in Chapter Six, Seiji did struggle with some classroom rules, routines and expectations at Kaichi. It was also clear from my interviews with Matsumoto Sensei that he did not—and perhaps could not—fully adapt to the wide range of procedures he encountered. Matsumoto Sensei reported, "When he has an urge to do something, he can't help doing it even when he breaks a rule." This comment reveals a Japanese belief in the inherently good nature of children (Yamamura, 1986). Whereas, Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson would have likely connected Seiji's misbehavior to bad choices, Matsumoto Sensei refused to attach intentionality. Nevertheless, examples of breaking rules or being inconsiderate permeated our conversations. In

fact, Matsumoto Sensei recounted a rather long list of Seiji's mis-steps over the course of the year. I included several of these infractions in Chapter Six and offer a few more here: He was not organized; he put his bag in the wrong place; he was slow at cleaning; he talked when he was not supposed to; he persisted in asking questions even when he was supposed to be thinking quietly; and he did not adequately plan in advance when he had a leadership role (Interviews, 05/20/2009, 3/23/2010). The ease with which she could rattle off his mis-steps is telling. Although Matsumoto Sensei made it clear that other sixth graders tended to think of themselves first and talk too much in class, Seiji was "very much so." In other words, the list above represents transgressions that were somewhat unique to Seiji at least in the extent to which they were expressed. She asked me:

> How about American schools? I wonder if teachers have students do things thoroughly. For example, in Japanese schools, when students want to do something, teachers would stop them if they want to do something else without finishing what they are supposed to do at that time. We say, 'Wait a minute. This is what we have to do now. So let's do this first.' How about American schools? Do teachers allow students to do anything relatively freely? (Interview, 03/23/2010).

This question suggests that in comparison to his Kaichi classmates Seiji did not do things thoroughly. Was this a struggle for Seiji as an individual, or as Matsumoto Sensei's question seems to suggest, did Lakeview teachers allow students "too much" leeway? During language arts class at Lakeview in Chapter Three: *A Day at Three Schools*, Mrs. Jackson explained the difference between "done" and "well done" and the importance of patience. In comparative contrast, at Kaichi, teachers went beyond "well done" and expected *kaizen*, or "perfection." Emphasis was on *gaman* (endurance/perseverance) and *gambaru* (effort/doing one's best) rather than patience. In addition, whereas these values were clearly articulated in the American classroom, in the Japanese classroom they were more implicitly embedded. In other words, in

the classroom, Matsumoto Sensei did not talk about *kaizen*, *gaman*, and *gambaru*. Nevertheless, Seiji understood that these were fundamental expectations in his new school life.

In Chapter Six, Seiji reported that being a sixth grader at Kaichi was hard because sixth graders were expected to be good role models and do everything perfectly. "Lakeview was better than here," he insisted. "You were more free, kind of. You didn't really have to really, really do it ... if you maybe not do really, not really do a good job you will be fine" (Interview, 03/13/2010). There may have been a difference between "done" and "well done," but both were acceptable at Lakeview. Seiji earned good grades at all three of his schools, and all of his teachers reported that he was smart. Given Seiji's consistent opinion that playing with friends was most important to him, it is perhaps unsurprising that he preferred a school where, from his standpoint, mediocre work was acceptable and *gaman* was not required. I highlight this point as an example of the challenges beneath the surface that Seiji navigated as he negotiated "being"—who he was and what he valued at a particular point in time—and "becoming"—balancing his own goals and beliefs with what others expected of and from him.

Consistency and Dexterity

Amidst vastly different circumstances and widely ranging expectations, Seiji showed remarkable consistency and dexterity. By consistency, I mean a logical coherence. In other words, he exhibited steadiness of character but not uniformity of approach. In what follows, I provide an overview of the signs of consistency Seiji demonstrated along the way. Then I point to the many examples of dexterity.

Matsumoto Sensei described Seiji as a happy-go-lucky dragonfly. The metaphor is apt for the boy I came to know over a fifteen-month period. Describing dragonfly flight, Wang

(2008) writes, “In air, the dragonfly dances in unpredictable steps, hovering briefly then quickly moving to a new location” (p. 1). Throughout the study, Seiji exhibited energy, curiosity, and, as Mrs. Jackson noted, a “zest for life.” He loved to talk at home and at school, in English and in Japanese, to kids and to adults. He sought opportunities to engage in school learning and appreciated teachers who both believed in children’s ideas and supported them when they stumbled. He was “impulsive” and he “did not dwell” on mis-steps or shortcomings. He was mischievous and got away with what he could both at school and at home. He liked to play with his friends; he was also a hard worker; and he was smart. He was always willing to help others both at school and at home. He struggled to listen to his peers’ ideas, but, according to Matsumoto Sensei, by the end of sixth grade he had made progress. Seiji’s parents, friends, and former teachers in both the United States and Japan would recognize the boy described above.

Chapters Three and Four described and analyzed Lakeview Elementary School, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi *Shogakko* in detail in part to make the case that Seiji exhibited impressive dexterity as he navigated within and between these culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse worlds. The research narrative includes no central climax because there was none. Seiji returned to Japan, quickly made friends, and achieved high marks on his report card. Adapting his mind and body to new expectations, such as remaining in his seat for 45 minutes, was not easy, but he did it. His approach to friendship served as a protective factor and reflected his ability to seek out the good in others. Broad inclusive views of friendship enabled him to appreciate the diverse qualities of individual kids—rule followers like Tetsuya, good readers like Christopher, and explorers like Suzuki, who knew secret spots. Seiji made friends, interacted with teachers, and studied academic content in English and in Japanese with seemingly little effort.

In recognizing Seiji's dexterity it is also critical to acknowledge the supportive environments that nourished him. Together, Seiji's parents and the Japanese School of Michigan envisioned a trajectory that included return to Japan and successful re-entry into Japanese school life. Matsumoto Sensei also played an important role. Although she was probably frustrated with her newcomer from time-to-time, she recognized that Japanese and American customs were different and told him and his parents not to worry. She consciously and deliberately sought to ease his transition. In addition, although she was clearly aware of his struggles, she also acknowledged and appreciated his strengths.

Seiji's story of navigating and transition offers hope that children who participate in multiple worlds do not necessarily have to subjugate one world in order to be happy and successful in another. Richard Rodriguez's (1982) autobiographical essay *Hunger of Memory* offers important differences as well as thought-provoking insights. First of all, Rodriguez is an adult reflecting back on a much longer developmental pathway located—as all autobiographical and biographical stories are—in historical time. The book begins in the 1950s when the author came to Sacramento, California as a "socially disadvantaged child" (p. 19). The essay focuses on assimilation and alienation from past, parents, language and culture while highlighting how one boy/teenager/man learned the lessons of public performance in American schools.

As an educationally, socially, and economically privileged twenty-first century sojourner and returnee, Seiji was positioned differently and therefore also faced different challenges. Since the 1950s, concepts such as "culture of power" (Delpit, 1988) and "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992) have focused attention on bridging the worlds of home and school and the pedagogical strategies needed to educate both voluntary and involuntary minorities (Ogbu, 1992). The Japanese concept of *kejime,* or the ability to change one's behavior

and language according to context, is helpful in thinking about the experiences of border-crossers, because children's skillful navigation of multiple worlds is rarely fully appreciated. I read Rodriguez's essay as an example of slighted *kejime* whereby unrecognized dexterity contributed to excessive pressure to choose between worlds and relinquish core beliefs. Can it be any other way? I think it is a matter of degree. Although Seiji understood something about changing language and behavior across broad national and cultural contexts, he still had something to learn about the finesse of *kejime* within Japanese contexts. Nevertheless, Seiji's story is an important example of how with support and encouragement children can learn a new language and culture while simultaneosuly maintaining skill and pride in the language and culture of their parents.

Affordances and Constraints

Throughout the dissertation there are indications that Seiji's five-and-a-half year presence at Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan and five-and-a-half year absence from Kaichi afforded him particular opportunities and experiences while simultaneously constraining him in other ways. Perhaps the most tangible direct result was Seiji's acquisition of English. Shinichi and Aya and all of his Japanese teachers recognized that his comfort speaking English and his high proficiency level were important skills for twenty-first century kids in Japan.

Living in the United States provided additional opportunities for movement. From their home base in Michigan, Seiji's family went on vacation to Costa Rica, the Canadian Rockies, and Alaska. They also enjoyed weekend trips to the Upper Peninsula and Sleeping Bear Dunes. In the summer they visited local parks with bikes and fishing gear. Seiji liked the evergreen trees

and the "green" that surrounded his house; when drawing his Michigan community map, he thought about trees first.[77]

Both Aya and Shinichi hoped that Seiji and Emiko would remember their friends from Michigan. Exposure to many cultures and "other countries' friends" provided experiences with forms of diversity that are largely absent in Japan. Seiji's positive experiences as a four-year-old newcomer in the United States led him to seek out, welcome, and help other newcomers. This was important because, according to Aya, newcomers in Japan are often pushed away. She also wanted her children to learn "other ways of thinking" (Interview, 01/23/2009). Tanaka Sensei and Matsumoto Sensei agreed. They both thought that Seiji's sojourn in the United States would enable him to think flexibly (Interview, 04/04/2009; Interview, 05/20/2009). From my perspective, Seiji also learned to navigate in a changing world.

Seiji gained a lot from his experiences overseas, but he also missed opportunities in Japan. Cultural values like *kejime, omoiyari, gaman,* and *kaizen*, or perfection, may be more difficult for a Japanese child to absorb after he has lived in the United States for five and a half years. In Chapter Six I reported that *shosha*, or handwriting/calligraphy, was one of Seiji's least favorite subjects. He commented, "Like calligraphy, you won't, I don't think it will really do anything to my life when I'm older" (03/13/2010). Here Seiji sounds like an American kid who is unable to appreciate the aesthetics and beauty of Japanese culture and art. And like an American kid, he speaks his mind.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the graduation ceremony ritual intentionally and repeatedly referenced *roku nen kan*, or 6-year period. In a very practical sense, Seiji missed

[77] In Japan, houses are close and trees and even small lawns are relatively rare. Seiji's Japanese community map includes only buildings.

out on five years of school with more or less the same 100 children.[78] This meant that some days he wanted to play with a particular child who was already booked up with baseball or soccer practice or a play date with another friend. When I asked Seiji what club he planned on joining in middle school, he mentioned the tennis club. This club was likely to have members who had not previously played. Seiji recognized that certain club sports—especially baseball and soccer—were not practically open to every 12-year-old (Fieldnotes, 4/8/2010). More significantly his absence meant that he did not have five years of learning ***through*** interactions with these kids. Thus, in some sense, he successfully "crammed" and learned the required math and Japanese language content during his sojourn in the United States. However, some of the learning that is required for participating in Japanese worlds may be learning that requires a collective, or the classroom "crowd." The Japanese School of Michigan helped in important ways, but a Saturday school with inherent mobility could not replace five years of 220 days a year with the same children. International mobility offered affordances and constraints.

Learning from a Japanese Boy

What can one relatively privileged Japanese boy teach us about the processes of schooling? How might this study contribute to improving the lives and schooling lives of immigrant, migrant, refugee and other children who are more marginally positioned in both schools and communities? Clearly, all border-crossing children are not happy-go-lucky dragonflies who "do not dwell." In what follows I remind readers of the two story lines running through the dissertation. The first allows us to learn something about a boy during a time of

[78] However, it is also important to note that when I asked Seiji's classmates if they were looking forward to middle school most of them reported that they were looking forward to making new friends.

ecological transition; the other invites us to reflect on the communities of practice within which he participated in both the United States and Japan. These two strands are inextricably woven together and suggest the inherent compatibility between Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model and "situated practices" with particular tools, norms, and values (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Thus situated practices are located in particular worlds that are embedded in larger cultural systems. Recognizing the complexity of the levels in comparative perspective allows us to appreciate Seiji's movement between and savvy participation in multiple situated practices. In the twenty-first century, scores of children navigate similarly complex systems in remarkable ways, and yet we often fail to acknowledge and encourage such dexterity.

In Chapter One, I referred to Lisa Delpit's (1988) journal article on "educating other people's children." This work is often used to highlight the power differential between white privileged teachers and non-white, non-privileged students. However, I use it in a way that more broadly draws our attention to different ways of being in the classroom. Fundamentally, Delpit's (1988) argument is one that advocates "careful listening to alternative points of view ... listening that requires not only open eyes and ears, but open hearts and minds, [for w]e do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs .... [W]e must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness" (p. 297). The careful listening described here is akin to my interest in inciting curiosity. Openness to alternative perspectives and realities—including the voices and values of children—is essential to creating the schooling systems needed in the twenty-first century.

Being and Becoming

Throughout this dissertation I have played with the idea of children as "beings" and children as "becomings." While in childhood studies, the distinction is of teleological importance (see James & Prout, 1997; Prout, 2005; Qvortrup, 1994), in this study the distinction is of practical importance because it highlights the verve with which Seiji sought to do both. He lived in the moment and was keenly aware of and actively engaged in preparing for the future, his future. Clearly, children—and, indeed, all of us—are "being" and simultaneously "becoming." Teachers and researchers need to be interested in children for who they are today and for who we and they might wish for them to become tomorrow, next year, and a decade from now.

Seiji was clear on his dual purposes, but what about his schools? How did Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi support Seiji in both "being" and "becoming"? Although Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson both wanted students to be comfortable in the classroom, neither insisted that it was important for students to have fun or enjoy learning with their classmates.[79] In other words, in comparison to their Japanese counterparts, they seemed less sympathetic to and less curious about students' views and what they valued as children in classrooms. As we have repeatedly heard from Seiji, playing with and talking to friends was the best part of school. However, Lakeview's daily schedule only officially marked the lunch/recess break as a time to socialize and play. In response to these limitations, Seiji improvised:

> ***Amy:*** At Lakeview Elementary School, lunch is ...
> ***Seiji:*** Lunch is time to talk with my friends
> ***Amy:*** And to eat? So what about the eating part of lunch?

[79] Clearly most American teachers do want students to ***enjoy*** learning; the distinction here is between learning with friends and learning for the sake of learning. Both are valuable, but I think Japanese elementary educators hope that the former will foster the latter.

> ***Seiji:*** Um, like, um, I, well eating is the main part, but um, but like today we had a lot of time to work with our partners so like we go in the corners of our classroom and talk a little, but um, sometimes we can't like talk with people like Brian[80] because he's far from me (Interview, 03/04/2009).

In the absence of regular breaks, Seiji used pairwork during lessons, or, as we saw in Chapter Six, rendezvous in the bathroom to socialize with his friends. Without official breaks, boundaries between learning academic content and purely socializing blurred. In fact, Seiji experienced classroom life at Lakeview as "all break." I wondered if in neglecting children's priorities for social interaction and in focusing primarily on the role of student, teachers might compromise their engagement with learning. Grappling with and honoring children as active, curious, and social beings may, in fact, facilitate teachers' efforts to equip children with knowledge and social skills.

All of Seiji's Japanese teachers in both the United States and Japan had a clear sense of the children in their classrooms as both "beings" and "becomings." Teachers recognized and appreciated children as "beings" who wanted to learn, socialize, and play with their friends. The provision of breaks throughout the day is one structural feature that acknowledges children's desire for fun and friendship at school and is fully compatible with Japanese cultural ideas about elementary school and what should be learned and experienced there. In addition, Seiji's teachers interacted with children and their ideas with a spirit of inquiry and created numerous opportunities for children to interact with each other's ideas. For Seiji, these approaches were powerful and engaging. Thus, Japanese teachers at both schools fully recognized and appreciated the high value that children placed on their interactions with peers and their desire to

[80] Seiji identified Brian as his closest friend at Lakeview, but in a relatively breakless day sitting in opposite corners of the room—literally—provided limited opportunities for social exchange.

have fun, but, as if part of a compromise or deal, they also expected children to work hard during lessons and take their responsibilities seriously.

Punch (2004) argues, "The structures of adult society limit children's opportunities for asserting their autonomy" (p. 94). While I agree that adult structures are powerful forces in children's lives, adults can learn new ways of viewing children and their needs. Newcomers and old-timers benefit from active participation in learning communities. As I sought to understand how Seiji navigated various school worlds, I endeavored to maintain a dual lens that allowed me to think about both "being" and "becoming." During elementary school, Seiji sought friendship, fun, and learning and learning processes that engaged. Thus, he offers an inside-out perspective, a child's perspective, on what school should be about that balances living in the moment and preparing for the future.

Friendship in Classrooms

Seiji's transition highlights the importance of friendship in the contexts of navigating school worlds. Friends were not simply playmates; they were partners in learning and companions in the various activities in and out of the classroom that compose school life. I turn now to several studies in order to present the case for schools to reconsider how they think about and approach friendship in classrooms. But first I remind readers of the potential emotional features of friendship:

> The uniquely motivating quality of 'friendly competition' during collaboration, as well as the greater motivation to persist in the face of difficulty in the context of an emotionally supportive relationship; the mutual commitment and loyalty between friends which motivates children's concerted attempts to comprehend one another's ideas and perspectives, which may in turn stretch both the listener's understanding and the speaker's communication skills; the safety and security of airing one's untested ideas in a climate of acceptance, shared positive affect and good humor, and the corresponding lack

> of defensiveness that may promote thoughtful justifications, revisions, and elaborations of one's ideas (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003, p. 259).

These attributes reflect what Matsumoto Sensei sought to create in her classroom through a focus on *ningen kankei*, or human relations. In fact, elementary school teachers throughout Japan intentionally seek to create these circumstances in their classrooms (Cave, 2007; Lewis, 1995).

I begin with an overview of a study on engagement targeting 660 urban minority students in "well-functioning" high poverty elementary schools (Blumenfeld, Modell, Bartko, Secada, Fredricks, Friedel, & Paris, 2005). The researchers used survey and interview data to examine student engagement using a multidimension construct encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The research is important for my purposes because it highlights engagement as as interplay of behavior, emotion, and cognition. The study found that high-engaged students were in clusters where "the work was seen as challenging, varied and thought-provoking, teachers and peers as supportive, and the environment as one where students are expected to stay on task, get work done and behave themselves" (p. 166). Seiji reminds us that even high-performing students attending good schools with good teachers and friendly classmates may also be bored or unchallenged in classrooms. Thus, the question may not only be about engaging struggling students but about changing the processes of schooling so that all children are optimally engaged.

Kirova (2007) and Rao and Yuen (2007) report that internationally mobile children frequently experienced loneliness and isolation as they adjusted to new schools, an unfamiliar language, and different social and academic expectations. Kirova (2007) reports the despair of Roxanne, an 8-year-old Chinese immigrant: "I have no friends here. Life has no meaning. I can't understand the teacher. I don't know how to ask for help. I want to go home" (p. 188). Perhaps friendship in the elementary school classroom needs to be rethought so that there is less

"choice" built into how one interacts with classmates. This is important because school adjustment and academic achievement are likely to be negatively affected by poor social relations. Perhaps we need to put more responsibility on the peer group than on the individual newcomer in forging positive social relations. Teachers undoubtedly must play an integral role here. In addition, economic constraints and an increasing student diversity call for approaches to schooling that maximize peers' abilities to assist one another while emphasizing that students have much to learn from engaging with the ideas of their classmates. In many schools, the teacher cannot continue to be the sole source of comfort and support for each child. Perhaps it is time for us to move away from thinking about "learning to live in a crowd" (Jackson 1968/1990, p. 10) and toward education that meets "*children's* needs – for friendship, for belonging, for opportunities to shape school life" (Lewis, 1995, p. 1).

Conclusion

At 9:45 a.m. on a Friday morning, I sat in the back row of the unheated all-purpose room at Kaichi with fathers and other relatives. Like everyone around me I had my camera out so that I might capture moments of the day. I video-recorded Matsumoto Sensei's class as they formally entered the room from the rear doors. I could see the lips of a few children move as they counted one-two-three-four-five-six. This ensured that they would step out and meet up with their partner at the appropriate moment. Seiji spotted me, nodded his head in recognition, and smiled mischievously; in the next moment his smile melted away, he focused, and then he performed. In one instant he was "being"; in the next he was "becoming."

My goal in this chapter was to look across the dissertation and weave together salient themes that reflect particular commitments to children. Through crafting child-centered

research, highlighting complexities in the life of an internationally mobile child, and facilitating reflection and curiosity through international comparison, I sought to inform and inspire readers. My central message is relatively simple and strait-forward. Communities of educators, teacher educators, and researchers can better serve students as whole human beings by developing capacities to listen to children and discover their stories—from the inside-out. These stories are critical jumping off points for adults who influence the lives of children in classrooms and schools through their teaching and their research.

[Authoring a Dissertation] and Editing a Story

Although the work of editors is rarely made explicit, I find it both necessary and expedient to do so. Through compelling narrative and an intriguing story line, I have cajoled readers into working hard in both intentional and unintentional ways. This is perhaps most conspicuous in Chapter Three where the reader is confronted with relatively decontextualized days at school. Of course, I also expose my own positionality and values through explicitly revealing the aspects of schooling to which I paid attention.

I have sought to balance goals of inciting curiosity, explicating particulars, and making the case that children's voices and perspectives provide new ways for thinking about and talking about priorities in schools and classrooms. Unanalyzed data do not "speak for themselves," but in juxtaposition they offer opportunities to consider the complexity of familiar and unfamiliar worlds in holistic ways. Presenting arguments in research includes providing evidence and persuading readers that the thinking, reasoning, and decision-making that contributed to one's arguments are both logical and a reasonable version of what transpired. Inevitably the wide-

angle lens[81] I used to frame my research questions led me to "foreground" Seiji, but the "expansive backgrounds" with their social and cultural components were essential as I sought to respond to those questions. The lenses I selected and used mean, of course, that some things are ambiguous or not clearly visible. Different commitments lead to the generation of different data. Graue and Walsh (1998) contend, "We fear that the world is becoming a tougher place for children and that this society neither knows enough about children nor appears to want to know enough to help children negotiate that world. A society that avoids knowing about its children has already made an ominous decision about its priorities" (p. xviii.). I share these fears and yet remain hopeful that stories such as Seiji's can invite teachers, researchers, and policy makers to take a more responsive interest in children's perspectives and their particular needs.

The concept of "ethnography of the particular" was an important tool for thinking about how culture can be used to simplify and explain in ways that dismiss the lived realities of particular children. Clearly, Seiji's experiences and perspectives did not fit neatly into discourses that articulate "Japanese" or "American" ways of thinking, doing, or being. For me, this was perhaps most apparent in the literature on friendship. Seiji's approach was informed by a Japanese cultural logic, but his experiences with and expectations of his friends suggested hybridity. In the twenty-first century, it is even more critical to recognize how labels and characterizations can distort our understandings of particular children. Because this is an

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[81] Consider this description from a photography tutorial: "A misconception is that a wide angle lens affects perspective, but strictly speaking, this isn't true. Perspective is only influenced by where you are located when you take a photograph. However, in practical use, wide-angle lenses often cause you to move much closer to your subject — which *does* affect perspective. This exaggeration of relative size can be used to add emphasis and detail to foreground objects, while still capturing expansive backgrounds. If you plan on using this effect to full impact, you'll want to get as close as possible to the nearest subject in the scene."
Source: http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials/wide-angle-lenses.htm

unresolvable conundrum, it is also an opportunity to eschew black and white and embrace shades of gray.

In regard to school worlds, throughout the dissertation I sought to balance what I found promising and troublesome as an American researcher positioned in particular ways with what Seiji found promising and troublesome as a Japanese kid who had actively participated in these worlds. Thus, the Japanese school year was interminable for me but not for Seiji. *Kyuushoku* contained important lessons for me but not for Seiji. Striving for perfection seemed admirable to me but not to Seiji. These were productive moments of tension that emerged from listening carefully and hearing the perspectives of a 10-, 11-, 12-year old.

Finally, I explicitly recognize the limitations of the research. The three-phase design of the study was intentional, and yet Seiji navigated and learned to navigate in-between phases and at times when I was not present. However, it is not simply a matter of when I was absent or when I was present. As Donna Haraway (1988) insists, there is no "god-trick"; all knowledge (and research) is situated, partial, and produced by positioned actors. I learned something about how a Japanese kid navigated in and between social and cultural worlds in the United States and Japan, but other explanations and layers of meaning exist. The title of this dissertation is "Navigating multiple worlds in the twenty-first century: Authoring and editing the story of one Japanese kid." I remain somewhat troubled by my choice to use the article "the" in the subtitle, because referring to "the story" may suggest to some readers that it is "the [***only***] story" or "the [***complete***] story" when it is more accurately "[***a reasonable version of***] the story."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Overview of Fieldwork

Table 1: Overview of Fieldwork

Date	Site	Activity	Detail
PHASE 1A	**MICHIGAN**		
2009.01.23	Home	Initial meeting; First interview	Aya and Seiji
2009.02.11	Lakeview	Observation	5th grade
2009.02.13	Lakeview	Observation	Art class; 5th grade
2009.02.14	Japanese School of Michigan	Observation	5th grade
2009.02.17	Lakeview	Tea Ceremony; Interview	Mrs. Matthews (homeroom teacher)
2009.02.25	Home	Second interview; also talked to Seiji	Aya
2009.02.28	Japanese School of Michigan	Observation	5th grade
2009.03.04	Home	interview	Seiji
2009.03.07	Japanese School of Michigan	Observation	5th grade; Music class
2009.03.09	Lakeview	Observation; Interview	5th grade; Music class; Mrs. Jackson (language arts teacher)
2009.03.13	Lakeview	Observation	5th grade (10:30 – 12:30) (2:30 – 3:00) ***final***
2009.03.14	Japanese School of Michigan	Observation	Fifth grade; ***final;*** graduation
2009.04.04	Coffee shop	Interview	Tanaka Sensei (homeroom teacher)
2009.04.16	Coffee shop	Interview	Alexander Sensei (team teacher)
PHASE 2A	**JAPAN**		
2009.05.19	Kaichi	Observation	6th grade
2009.05.20	Kaichi (Matsumoto Sensei's classroom)	Interview	Matsumoto Sensei (homeroom teacher)
2009.05.21	Home	Interview (part 1)	Aya
2009.05.22	Home	Interview (part 2)	Aya

Table 1 (cont'd)

2009.05.22	English Conversation School	Listening in	Seiji
2009.05.23	Home	Interview	Seiji
2009.05.27	Kaichi	Observation	6th grade
2009.05.28	Kaichi	Observation (through lunch)	6th grade
PHASE 2B	**JAPAN**		
2009.06.27	Kaichi	Observation/Participation	Open House for Parents
2009.06.28	Home	Interview	Seiji
2009.07.01	Kaichi	Observation	6th grade
2009.07.02	Kaichi	Observation	3rd grade
2009.07.02	Kaichi (Library second floor)	Interview	Ishimura Sensei (Emiko's homeroom teacher)
2009.07.04	Bike Ride	Participation	Seiji and Tetsuya
2009.07.05	Home	Interview	Shinichi
2009.07.06	Kaichi (consultation classroom)	Interview	Ueda Sensei (math teacher)
2009.07.06	Home	Interview	Seiji
2009.07.06	Home	Interview	Aya
2009.07.07	Kaichi	Observation	Emiko's English class
2009.07.07	Home	Interview	Emiko
PHASE 3	**JAPAN**		
2010.03.09	Kaichi	Observation	6th grade; graduation practice
2010.03.09	Kaichi	Observation	3rd grade; English class
2010.03.10	Kaichi	Observation	3rd grade
2010.03.11	Kaichi	Observation	6th grade
2010.03.13	Home	Interview	Seiji
2010.03.14	Ballet Recital	Event	Emiko
2010.03.15	Home	Interview	Seiji
2010.03.15	Kaichi (consultation classroom)	Interview	Ueda Sensei
2010.03.16	Kaichi	Observation	6th grade
2010.03.19	Kaichi	Event	graduation ceremony
2010.03.23	Home	Interview about memory book	Seiji
2010.03.23	Kaichi	Interview	Matsumoto Sensei
2010.03.23	Home	Interview	Aya

Table 1 (Cont'd)

2010.04.08 – 2010.04.09	Home	Informal conversations	Beginning of new school year
SUPPLEMENTARY CONVERSATIONS AND INTERVIEWS			
2010.03.29	Home (Nagano prefecture)	Interview (no tape)	Mother and young adult daughter/returnee in 2nd grade
2010.03.30 – 2010.04.02	Home (Nagano prefecture)	Informal conversations	Mother and young adult son/returnee 2nd grade
2010.04.02 – 2010.04.06	Home (Fukushima prefecture)	Informal conversations	
2010.04.05	Home (Fukushima prefecture)	Interviews	Mother/educator, 15-year-old daughter, 12-year old son, father/educator (Returned to Japan 2007)

APPENDIX B

Youth Assent Form

Dear _____,

We would like you to participate in a research study (Japanese Children in Transition) over the next 14 months. In this letter, we will tell you about the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. We want to know more about your experiences living and going to school in both Michigan and Japan. We would also like to talk to your parents, some of your teachers and others with whom you spend time.

If you want to be in this study, we will ask you to participate in 6 interviews over the course of 14 months in both Michigan and in your hometown in Japan. Each of these interviews will take between 45 and 75 minutes. In addition, when it is ok with you and your parents, Ms. Damrow would sometimes like to accompany you to various settings including your school and some of the places where you spend time outside of school.

The focus of this study is not your English skills. You can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. In addition, you can choose to skip questions during the interviews. Information about you and what you say will be kept confidential.

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Signature _____

Date _____

Print your name (please) _____

Date of birth (for example, May 2, 1998)_____

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.
Thank you very much for your consideration of participation in this study,

John H. Davis, Jr.	Lynn W. Paine	Amy L. Damrow
davisjrj@msu.edu	painel@msu.edu	damrowam@msu.edu
340 Baker Hall	317 Erickson Hall	301 Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824	East Lansing, MI 48824	East Lansing, MI 48824
517-355-5272	517-355-3266	517-374-9816

APPENDIX C

Teacher Interview Questions

Lakeview Teacher Interview (Phase I)

1. Could you tell me a little about your background related to teaching at Lakeview Elementary School?
2. How long have you taught at Lakeview?
3. Can you tell me a little bit about your teaching philosophy? Why did you get into teaching? What's important to you as a teacher?
4. Tell me a little bit about Seiji's class (the students in his class as a group).
5. Please tell me a little bit about your experience working with Japanese students.
6. Please tell me a little about your experience working with Japanese parents.
7. What 3 words would you use to describe Seiji?
8. As a member of your class what are 3 strengths that Seiji had? 3 challenges?
9. What do you think the biggest challenges that Japanese children face?
10. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Japanese School of Michigan Teacher Interview (Phase I)

1. Could you tell me a little about your background related to teaching at the Japanese School of Michigan (JSM)?
2. How long have you taught at JSM?
3. What grades have you taught?
4. In your role as a teacher at JSM, what is most important to you? What sort of experience do you want the students in your classroom to have? What are the most important things they learn in your classroom?
5. What are the biggest challenges you face as a JSM teacher?
6. Tell me a little bit about Seiji's class (the students in his class as a group). Please talk about the differences between newcomers and oldtimers.
7. What 3 words would you use to describe Seiji?
8. As a member of your class what are 3 strengths that Seiji had? 3 challenges?
9. What do you think the biggest challenges that Japanese elementary school students face while in Michigan?
10. What do you think are the biggest challenges that Japanese 5th and 6th graders face when they return to Japan?
11. How do you think living in Michigan for 3-5 years might benefit Japanese children either while still in school or later in life?
12. Is there anything else that I HAVEN'T asked about that you think is important in terms of thinking about the many transitions (local school to Saturday school and Japan to Michigan to Japan) Japanese children, like Seiji, make?

Kaichi Teacher Interview (Phase II)

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher?

    どうして先生になろうと思ったんですか。

2. How long have you been teaching at this school?

    この学校で何年ぐらい教えていますか。

3. Have you taught other grades besides 6th?

    六年生以外の学年を教えたことがありますか。

4. Can you tell me about what's most important to you as a teacher? So, what sort of experience do you want the students in your classroom to have? What are the most important things they learn in your classroom?

    ○○先生にとって、先生として最も大切なことは何ですか。先生のクラスで、生徒（せいと）達にどんなことを経験（けいけん）してほしいと思いますか。先生のクラスで生徒達が学（まな）ぶことで一番大切なことは何ですか。

5. Please tell me about some expectations you have of parents.

    生徒達のご両親との関係（かんけい）はどうですか。先生は親達にどんなことを期待（きたい）しますか。

6. What do you think are the biggest challenges that 6th grade teachers in [this area of Japan] face? Are the challenges the same in other parts of Japan?

    先生にとって、OOOOで６年生を教えることについて一番難しいことは何だと思いますか。日本の他の地方と比べて、どうですか。

7. Please tell me a little bit about your class (the students as a group).

    先生のクラスについて、少しお話ししていただけますか。先生のクラスの生徒達はどうですか。

8. What 3 words would you use to describe Seiji?

    せいじ君はどんな生徒ですか。彼を３つの単語を使って表（あらわ）してくれませんか。

9. As a member of your class what are 3 strengths that Seiji has? 3 challenges?

先生のクラスの一人として、せいじ君はどんな長所（ちょうしょ）がありまか。３つの長所を教えて下さい。それから短所（たんしょ）も３つ教えて下さい。

10. Have you had *kikokushijo* in your classroom before? How many? On average, how many *kikokushijo* do you have in your classroom each year?

先生は、今まで帰国子女を教えたことがありますか。何人ぐらいありますか。先生のクラスには、一年に何人ぐらい帰国子女の生徒がいますか。

Please tell me a little more about your experiences having *kikokushijo* in your classroom.

先生がクラスで帰国子女を教えた経験について、少し話していただけませんか。

11. Based on your experience, what are the biggest challenges that newly returning students face?

先生の経験から、帰国子女にとって一番大変なことは何だと思いますか。

12. How do you think living in the United States for 3-5 years might benefit Japanese children either while still in school or later in life?

日本人の子供達がアメリカで３年から５年ぐらい生活することは、学校やその後の人生（じんせい）でどんなメリットがあると思いますか。

13. Children like Seiji have made many transitions, right? From American school to *hoshuko* to Japanese school. Also from Japan to the US and back to Japan. Is there anything else that I HAVEN'T asked about that you think is important in terms of thinking about the many transitions Japanese children, like Seiji, make?

せいじ君のような子供達はいつもいつも違う環境（かんきょう）にいますね。アメリカの学校から土曜日の補習校、そして日本の学校。それから、日本からアメリカに行って、また日本へもどって、国も変わっています。私が質問したことの他に、せいじ君のような子供達の変化（へんか）を考える上で、先生が大切だと思うことはありますか。

Kaichi Teacher Interview (Phase III)

1. I think all of your students have changed over the course of the year. What changes in Seiji-kun have you noticed?

このクラスの子どもたちはこの一年ですごく変わったと思うのですが、せいじ君がどんなふうに変わったか、先生がお気付きになったことはありますか？

2. I'm particularly interested in Seiji's relationships with peers. Can you talk a little bit about that from your perspective as his teacher? Can you recall any particular incidents that you think are important?

私は、特にせいじ君がクラスメートとどんな関係を築いてきたのかに興味があります。先生からご覧になって、せいじ君のクラスメートとの関係はどうですか？
何か特別なできごとなどはありましたか？

3. Has he run into any difficulties with his classmates? How has he worked them out? (How has he managed these problems?)

せいじ君は、クラスメートと何か問題があったように思われますか？
せいじ君はどんな風に問題に向き合っていましたか？

4. I'd also like to hear your perspective on his most important friendships within your class. How have these changed over the year?

せいじ君にとって、クラスの中で特に大切な友人関係について先生はどうご覧になっていますか？
この 1 年で何か変化はありましたか？

5. When I was here in the summer, it seemed that the 6th graders in your classroom primarily socialized in same-gender groups. Is this accurate? Has this dynamic changed over the course of the year? Could you tell me a little bit about Seiji's interactions with girls?

私が夏にここにいたとき、先生のクラスの 6 年生は、同性どうしで（男の子は男の子と、女の子は女の子と）グループになっているように思ったのですが、1 年を通してこの関係性に変化はありましたか？
せいじ君がクラスの女の子とどのように関わっていたか教えていただけますか？

6. Can you tell me about Seiji's Japanese skills? Does he have any particular challenges/difficulties that may have emerged from his experience living abroad? (Does he have any particular struggles in Japanese?)

せいじ君の日本語についてはどうですか？先生から見て、せいじ君が外国で暮らしていたことで、彼が日本語で特に苦しんでいることはありますか？

7. In May, we discussed Seiji's strengths and challenges as a student in (a member of) your classroom (class). As you think about him moving on to middle school, how would you assess his strengths and challenges? Perhaps you could list 3 strengths and 3 challenges.

5月に来た時、先生とせいじ君がこのクラスの一員として過ごすうえでの長所と短所について話しました。せいじ君が中学校に入ることを考えるとき、先生は彼の長所と短所についてどのようにお考えですか？長所と短所を３つずつ挙げてください。

8. I have been trying to think of a metaphor that describes Seiji. I first used the word "floating" because he seemed to move about effortlessly, but his movement was more energetic and directed. You used gokuraku tonbo to describe him; and I think the image of a tonbo is a very compelling one. I've also read a little bit about the symbolism of tonbo in Japan. I wonder what you think about the comparison between Seiji and a tonbo. Is it a good metaphor?

私は、せいじ君を表す比喩(ひゆ)を考えていて、最初に思いついたのは「漂う(ただよう)」という感じでした。なぜかというと、せいじ君は難なく立ち振る舞っているような感じがしたからです。でも、彼の立ち振る舞いは、もっとエネルギッシュで意思が強いものだという感じがします。
先生は「極楽とんぼ」という表現を使われて、私は「とんぼ」というイメージが彼にぴったりだと思いました。私は少し「とんぼ」のイメージについて読んだのですが、先生は「とんぼ」の比喩がせいじ君のどんな特徴を表していると思いますか？

9. I wonder how his 5-year school experience in the US is having an impact on him. Have you noticed any habits or ways of thinking or doing that seem to emerge from his time living abroad?

5年間アメリカの学校に通っていた経験が、せいじ君の中でどんな風に残っていく（影響していく）のかなぁ、と思って、考えているのですが、先生は、せいじ君の教室での様子で、彼のアメリカでの生活が影響していると思ったことはありますか？それはどんな様子からですか？

10. I think mostly Seiji adapts to his new environment in Japan, but I think he also influences his new environment. What do you think? Have you noticed any small influences? (Do you think there are any changes which Seiji brought about for yourself or in your classroom?)

せいじ君は、大部分は新しい日本の環境に適応していると思うのですが、彼もまた新しい環境に影響を与えているとも思います。先生ご自身や、先生のクラスなどで、彼が新しく入ってきたことによって起こった変化はありますか？それはどのような変化ですか？

APPENDIX D

Analytic Methodology

Here I explain in greater detail how I analyzed my data throughout this three-phase study. Throughout analysis I was cognizant of the complicated issues related to language, culture, power, and positionality. The research design exacerbated the challenges I faced. Miles and Huberman's (1994) classic text is comprehensive and detailed and yet I often found it inadequate as I grappled with issues related to age, culture, and changing settings. I frequently wondered whether I was comprehensive and systematic "enough" as I sought to balance interpretive hunches, my commitment to centering Seiji's perspectives, and my efforts to generate a data record that provided insights into the decisions I made and my rationale for making them. In what follows I focus on the steps I took. Whyte's (1993) appendix from *Street Corner Society* served as a helpful model in explaining my work.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model located Seiji in the center of my study. This move gave the research a stronger biographical component than I initially realized. However, my unit of analysis was not Seiji, but rather Seiji in interaction within the multiple contexts of his daily life. I had intentionally designed the study so that I could look across all data from a particular phase before I entered the next phase. The entire process included a lot of movement between settings and between data sources. Part of the reason for this was that I was cognizant that there were many approaches I could take to analyze the data I was generating. In retrospect, more careful and deliberate documentation of my process would have been prudent. Using Bronfenbrenner's model led me to center Seiji's perspective, delineate site, and pay careful attention to time. This final point is reflected in my regular references to phases and my

attention to dates when I included excerpts from interviews and fieldnotes. In some ethnographic writing this is standard. For me, documenting time reflected Seiji's geographic location and his location on his developmental pathway. I came to view it as a critical part of understanding perspectives articulated in interviews at particular points in time.

While Bronfenbrenner's theory provided a map for the study in space and over time, Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Wenger's (1998) practice theory and concept of communities of practice broadly shaped how I examined Seiji's participation and performance in key social worlds of neighborhood, school, and home. All three settings were important in the study, but I chose to emphasize school worlds. I hypothesized that navigating different educational settings would prove to be the most challenging for a border crosser like Seiji, because I viewed classrooms as communities of practice where adults and children interacted in particular ways. In generating and analyzing data, I recognized learning as a socially and culturally shaped activity. Next I highlight specific decisions related to data analysis during and across each phase.

My fieldwork began with interviews with Seiji and Aya. On this first day, I also asked Seiji to construct an eco-map because I wanted to learn about where and with whom he spent his time. I transcribed these interviews immediately because I wanted to get to know Seiji and his mother quickly, and I thought that spending a lot of time with their interviews through the process of transcribing them would help me do this. My strategy was to build and extend themes that emerged in the first interviews during the second interviews. I asked Seiji and Aya about school and about teachers because I wanted the opportunity to contextualize their perspectives during my classroom observations. During the first interview with Aya, Seiji was present, and he regularly jumped into our conversation. "Too much talk," Aya commented when this

happened. I intentionally planned the next interview with her at a time when Seiji was still at school in order to avoid his interruptions. However, I made note that mother and son seemed to talk openly in each other's presence. In other words, in the presence of his mother, Seiji freely discussed such activities as exploring forbidden places at the Japanese School of Michigan. In any case, I cannot clearly know how Aya's interview responses may have been influenced by Seiji's presence or absence.

Although Seiji was my focal participant, I recognized Aya as a key secondary participant for a number of reasons. First of all, Aya was an important person in the home microsystem and in understanding mesosystemic relationships between school and home. In addition, I recognized that as a parent and an adult, her perspective would supplement Seiji and other participant's perspectives.

At Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi I observed a full day (the days highlighted in Chapter Three) before I interviewed the teachers. Although I had outlined teacher questions before I began fieldwork, I thought that knowing something about classroom contexts might make our conversations richer. Would Mrs. Matthews have talked so extensively about chewing gum if I had not observed those conversations? How might she have talked differently about particular students if I had not met any of them? If observations had not been part of the research design would she have responded to questions differently? I consider these questions because they remind us of the situatedness of all research. At Lakeview and at Kaichi (Phase Two) I had the opportunity to observe classes after the teacher interviews. As with my interviews with Seiji and Aya, I wanted to observe what the teachers talked about during the interviews.

Data analysis generally proceeded chronologically, although in Michigan I chose to examine Mrs. Matthews', Mrs. Jackson's, Tanaka Sensei's, and Alexander Sensei's classes by drawing from teacher interviews, observation fieldnotes, and excerpts from interviews with Seiji and Aya's that were related to a particular teacher and thus, classroom. In other words, I sought to understand each site and Seiji's experiences at each site by describing each site and delineating what each site emphasized, expected, and made possible. Then I looked across sites to understand how he navigated between settings. I chose to examine school level goals and rules both because they were indicants of expectations and because they allowed me to better understand how each classroom was nested in a school system. In addition, being formally written down, they were accessible public records. Since the research focused on Seiji rather than on teachers and their pedagogies, my research design did not afford a lot of time with teachers. I did not ask any of them about classroom rules although this layer of data may have enriched my understanding of expectations in classroom.

Corbin and Strauss' (2008) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* provided strategies for analyzing my interviews with Seiji and Aya. Teacher interviews were based in particular settings, but Seiji's and Aya's interviews traversed boundaries. Since I regarded these interviews as foundational, I spent the most time coding and writing descriptive and analytic memos from them.

In Phase Two, I followed a similar procedure with a few notable exceptions. First, although I listened to interviews and took notes on them while I was in Japan, I did not transcribe interviews until after I returned to the United States. Interviews with Matsumoto Sensei and Ueda Sensei were in Japanese. These interviews were transcribed and translated by a Japanese friend and colleague in Michigan. Second, now there was one school instead of two. And,

perhaps, most importantly, I was a guest in Seiji's home. This enabled me to learn a lot about Seiji's life, provided numerous opportunities for us to interact outside of school, and enabled me to join Seiji—and sometimes his friends—on outings to the grocery store or the snack shop. Thus in Phases Two and Three, I also had daily field notes from non-school interactions. As I described and analyzed the microsystems of school, neighborhood, and home and the mesosystemic relationships between these worlds, I recognized how both individual settings and the relationships between settings differed for Seiji in the United States and Japan. At this point, I began to compare his experiences in the United States and Japan within individual settings while also examining the relationships between settings. Of course, after living with Seiji's family in Japan I realized that the insights I had about Seiji's life in Michigan were limited because I had less direct observation of and participation in his daily, non-school time. Thus, for out-of-school contexts and worlds in Michigan, I was more reliant on what others, including Seiji, reported in interviews.

Following Phase Two, I began to formulate how I would broadly structure the dissertation. I thought about what readers would need to know and understand in order to make sense of Seiji's experiences moving between social and cultural worlds. I recognized differences in calendars and routines and wondered how they might reflect particular ways of thinking about schooling and education. Here I used my own observation of different temporal rhythms to launch the investigation. Examining schools was important because I assumed that in order to understand the contexts that Seiji navigated I would need to understand expectations in each setting. That interest in expectation led me to focus on handbooks, formal goals, and school rules, because I located school-level data in the exosystem. Here, Bronfenbrenner (1979) contributed to the process of broad mapping, but Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of

"communities of practice" and Holland and her colleagues (1998) concept of "figured worlds" led me to explicate school settings as places of learning (through participation)—broadly conceived—with particular rules, norms, and routines.

The theme of friendship, explored in Chapter Five, emerged as analysis showed it was important to Seiji. In interviews he talked a lot about friends and how they were an important part of school, but he did not name particular children in our first interview, and he only included one boy in his eco-map. In response to socio-metric questioning, Seiji identified many children. In other words, numerous sources of data pointed to a very inclusive view of friendship. I hypothesized that his ability to find friends wherever life took him was a protective factor that helped him navigate multiple worlds. As I sought to understand Seiji's perspective on friendship, I was led to examine "cultural logics of friendship" in American and Japanese classrooms. I conducted a literature review of friendship in schools during middle childhood and mapped data from Lakeview and Kaichi on to that literature. Cultural logics are macro-level understandings, but I also sought Seiji's micro-level understanding. I used eco-maps and Seiji's responses to the socio-metric questioning to create data displays of Seiji's "friends" and how he talked about them. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory helped me look at data in ways that allowed me to focus on friendship across microsystems in the United States and Japan. However, differences in how I was able to collect data in Japan and the United States does mean that my insights on friendship are not entirely comparable.

In Chapter Six I looked across settings and time in order to identify key roles that Seiji performed. Although other roles exist, my data allowed me to address Seiji as research participant, good student, student and child in school, learner, and comparative analyst; I examined his role as a friend in Chapter Five. Since Seiji was the focal participant I anticipated

that readers would want a more detailed description and analysis of my research relationship with Seiji. Seiji's perception of what it meant to be a good student at each school emerged from an interview where I asked him to articulate "three rules for being a good student." The contrast across settings was striking.

In documentation and conversation I noticed that "students" attended Lakeview and "children" attended the Japanese School of Michigan and Kaichi. I rechecked transcripts and found that Lakeview teachers used "students" almost exclusively, Kaichi teachers primarily used *kodomo* (child) or *tomodachi* (friend), and Japanese School of Michigan Teachers used both. For example, in Alexander Sensei's interview she translated, "...we only see the children, you know the students...." In any case, this category described Seiji's academic strengths and challenges.

The category of learner emerged primarily from my interviews with Seiji. He was a curious kid with broad interests; in some ways his views mirrored Lave and Wenger's (1991) comprehensive views of learning.

Finally, although I anticipated that Seiji would probably be in a position to make comparisons between Lakeview and Kaichi, I was a bit surprised when during Phase Three he did so without explicit prompting. I identified examples of comparison within my Phase Three interviews with Seiji and then returned to previous interviews and observations to contextualize his comments. For example, I noticed how his perspectives about breaks between classes changed over the course of the study and how his sense of time was different from my own. I also drew from a few memos I had written to myself between Phase Two and Phase Three about the process of doing research with a kid and Seiji as a particular kid.

In Phase Three I followed a similar procedure as in the other two phases. Comparative elements (for example, between Lakeview and the Japanese School of Michigan; between

Lakeview and Kaichi; between Seiji's neighborhood in Michigan and his neighborhood in Japan) were in all phases of the research. Sometimes the comparative work was done in my analysis; sometimes Aya or Seiji made explicit comparisons. In Phase Three, when Seiji made comparisons he focused on differences between Kaichi and Lakeview. In addition, I compared how Seiji talked about school, cram school, and other components of his Japanese life in Phase Two and Phase Three. For example, I noticed that he talked about school breaks and participation in *juku*, or cram school, in different ways. However, I also documented similarities and consistencies over time. I recognized that some shifts reflected different realities in the life of a kid who was about to enter middle school, but some of his comments reflected a more seasoned sense of school life. My analysis suggested that in many ways Phase Two was a honeymoon phase for Seiji as he enthusiastically explored the opportunities afforded by his new life in Japan. In Phase Three I only had one short interview with Aya. I was a bit disappointed in the conversation and hypothesized that at this point she was not interested in sharing in-depth perspectives.

After completing Phase Three fieldwork, I began to test out explanatory themes for Lakeview, the Japanese School of Michigan, and Kaichi. I examined teacher interviews, fieldnotes from classroom observations, and goals and rules from each setting and asked myself what seemed to be most salient in each setting. I sought themes that appeared across my data sources. These themes also helped explain the task of navigation and in the structure of the dissertation they highlight some of the challenges that Seiji faced. Initially, I selected "choice" as the theme for Lakeview because it leapt off the pages of my fieldnotes. I re-read my interviews with Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Jackson and added "comfort" as a Lakeview theme both because it emerged from my interviews with the teachers and because ideas about physical

comfort were also present. At Kaichi, I identified "human relations" as one of the themes, because it was what Matsumoto Sensei valued most as a teacher. The other theme for Kaichi was "responsibility." Teachers talked about children's responsibilities to self and others, and the school day was filled with children taking on real responsibilities such as retrieving and serving lunch, taking care or gardens and animals, and cleaning the school. The Japanese School of Michigan was a setting that reflected the lived experiences and needs of Japanese sojourners living in the United States. Teachers were aware of the challenges their students faced as Japanese children abroad and as relative newcomers—in most cases—to participating in American classrooms.

After identifying themes and writing analytic memos within sites I came to recognize that each theme was present in every setting. Although the rhetoric of choice was not used at Kaichi, the Japanese children had choices that Lakeview students did not. For example, they could decide whether to spend breaks inside or outside. I examined the themes across settings in order to avoid reifying themes as "Japanese" or "American." Thus, "social relations" were important at Kaichi, but they were not unimportant at Lakeview.

Although this discussion does not cover every decision I made as I analyzed my data and crafted a research narrative with grounding in that analysis, it allows readers to get a sense of the process I employed. Whyte (1993) states, "To some extent my approach must be unique to myself, to the particular situation, and to the state of knowledge existing when I began research" (p. 280). To this list, I would add consideration of how theoretical frameworks influence the research process. I hope I have provided some insights into "the actual process whereby the research was carried out" (Whyte, 1993, p.280).

APPENDIX E

Socio-metric Questions

Phase I (March 4, 2009)

I begin this part of the interview by saying, "I'd like to talk a little bit about your friends. Is that ok?" I tell him he will need something to write with. I say, "So, I'm going to ask you a question and I'm going to ask you to list three people." Seiji would write down children's names and I would ask him to tell me about the child and why he or she was selected. I include an excerpt from the beginning of the interview:

Amy: So who are your three best friends?
Seiji: Three?
Amy: Umhm.
Seiji: From Japanese school, or…?
Amy: From anywhere.
Seiji: Anywhere?
Amy: Umhm.
Seiji: Three. Should I do it small, or…?
Amy: We have more paper and we, um, not too big, but it doesn't have to be tiny.
Seiji: Should I write like #1, #2, #3, or…
Amy: Yeah. That'd be helpful.
Seiji: Or should I like bullet it?
Amy: No, numbers is good.
Seiji: He's from um, he's from um, Lakeview School.
Amy: Um, actually, so I'm going to have you list three people.
Seiji: Oh.
Amy: So can you write the other two over here?
Seiji: Ok. Oh, so what should I do with this?
Amy: No, that's fine, because they'll be a two.
Seiji: Oh, oh, like…
Amy: Yeah.
Seiji: Then, #1 and 1. Maybe that's better. [phone rings] Yeah.
Amy: So. Brian is in your class at Lakeview, right?
Seiji: Yeah, yeah.
Amy: And where does he sit? [Mother is talking on the phone in Japanese]
Seiji: Um, right now I think maybe the farthest or the second farthest from me.

For best friends, Seiji lists one boy from Lakeview, Brian, and two boys from the Japanese School of Michigan, Suzuki and Yamada (both last names), and a boy who attends neither school, Andrew. Suzuki and Yamada are not in Tanaka Sensei's class, but Suzuki, Yamada, and Seiji were in the same fourth grade class at the Japanese School of Michigan.

In the questions that follow, I first asked Seiji to select three people from Lakeview and then three people from the Japanese School of Michigan. Since he was selecting all boys, for a few

questions I asked him to identify three girls. He only selected girls for Lakeview because he said he didn't know the girls in his class at Saturday school very well.

1. Who are your three best friends?
2. What three people would you want to go skiing with? Ω
3. What three people would you want to go to the library with? Ω
4. What three people would you want to spend recess with? Ω
5. What are the three people you would most want to sit next to in class?[82]
6. Who would you want to be on the design-and-build team with you? ‡ Δ
7. Who would you want to eat at your favorite Japanese restaurant with? Ω
8. What three people would you want to be with if you got lost? Ω Δ

Ω Seiji lists boys that are not in Tanaka Sensei's class
‡ Seiji lists boys that are not in Mrs. Matthews' class
Δ Indicates questions where I asked Seiji to write down the names of three girls.

Phase II (June 28, 2009)

I begin this part of the interview by saying, "Alright, so now I think you will remember this part. I'm going to ask you some questions, and I'm going to ask you to write some people's names down."

1. Can you write down your three closest friends?
2. Who are three people you would want to play at the park with?
3. What three people would you want to go to the library with?
4. What three people would you want to spend your break at school with? Δ
5. What three people would you want to sit near in class? Δ
6. If they were going to have a design-and-build team here, what three people would you choose to be on your team? Δ
7. If you were going on holiday to Michigan for two weeks who would you want to take?
8. What three people would you choose to be with if you got lost? Δ

   Seiji's Original Question: What three people to go visit a country that has a lot of animals?

[82] Seiji responded, "But they're not in my class." I asked him to select kids in Mrs. Matthews' class, because I wanted to identify social relationships that I could also observe. I do not know who he would have selected. I include his response because it demonstrates his wide range of "friends."

Δ Indicates questions where I asked Seiji to write down the names of three girls.

Phase Three (March 15, 2010)

I begin this part of the interview by saying, "Now this is the part when I had you write on a piece of paper. And I think you've done it in marker before, but I think it's better if it's in pen."

1. So who are your three closest friends?
2. If you were going to play at the park, what three people would you pick?
3. What three people would you want to go to the library with?
4. What three people would you want to spend break with at school? Δ
5. Who would you want to sit near in class? Δ
6. If you were going to have a design-and-build team, what three people would you pick? Δ
7. If you were going to go on a two-week holiday to Michigan, what three people would you take?
8. If you got lost, what three people would you want to take? Δ
9. Who would you want to go to *onsen* [hot springs] with?

   This time Seiji writes to Original Questions:

   1. What three people would you want to be left on Earth with?
   2. What three people would you want to run from the police with?

Δ Indicates questions where I asked Seiji to write down the names of three girls.

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