

Change: Retirement in Japan and the Resulting Challenges for Japanese Adult Education

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(ABSTRACT)

The population of Japan is aging faster than any other country in the world. By the year 2020, one in every four people in Japan will be 65 years or older. Because of this demographic shift in society, a new era is emerging that will see far-reaching changes in adult educational initiatives. As this post-World War II generation retires from the workforce, these retirees and older adults of Japan must meet the challenge of living productive and active lives for a possible twenty to thirty years beyond retirement. Many are healthy and active, and want to continue to participate in educational or lifelong learning activities and to enjoy new leisure pastimes and hobbies. They are self-reliant and do not want to become burdens to their families or society. As one of the most education-conscious countries in the world, one way that Japan must meet the challenge of this aging population is by expanding adult education programs. These programs must meet the needs and goals of retirees and older adults and must assist them in transitioning and adjusting to the challenge of continuing to learn, of maintaining a high quality of life, of achieving self-fulfillment, of remaining active, and of being a contributing member of society. Meeting the challenge of change is a significant opportunity for both aging individuals and providers of adult education in the future.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Todd H. Repass, whose encouragement was continuous throughout this research and to my grandchildren, Todd H. Repass III and Rebecca Diane Repass, who are my encouragement for continued learning in the future.

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Chapter 1

Background

1.1 Japan is Aging

As the 21st century nears, the population of Japan is not only aging, but also is aging faster than any other country in the world. In 1997, the Japanese population aged 65 years and older exceeded the number of children under 15 years of age by 50,000 (Kawanishi, 1997). Although 50,000 is a relatively small number in populace terms, this occurrence advanced Japan to the forefront of many countries that are experiencing an increase in their aging population (Japan Insight, Population, 1999). Japan and other countries are now recognizing that this increase in the aging population will create a new era that will have a far-reaching impact on social, economical, and adult educational initiatives.

Soon Japan's population of over 125 million (Japan Times, 1998, August) will see even more demographic changes. First, there is a declining growth rate that dropped to 0.25 percent in 1999 ("Population Grows," 1998). Second, life expectancy in Japan has greatly increased due to the drop in infant mortality, advances in medicine, and a general interest to maintain good physical fitness (Campbell & Campbell, 1991; Japan Insight, Background, 1999). Immediately after World War II, few Japanese could expect to live past the age of 55. Now a Japanese woman's life expectancy is 83 and a Japanese man's life expectancy is 76 (Kawanishi, 1997; Japan Insight, Population, 1999; Campbell and Campbell, 1991). By the year 2020, these emerging population trends will result in a society where one out of every four people in Japan will be 65 years or older (Japan Insight, The Graying, 1999).

According to a prediction in 1998 by the Japanese Ministry of Labor, one in four workers in Japan will be over the age of 55 by the year 2000 (Japan Insight, The Graying, 1999). This presents new corporate problems including: (1) higher labor costs, (2) fewer senior positions, (3) greater financial demands for severance pay of retirees and pension benefits after retirement, and (4) lack of employment opportunities for older employees who want to continue to work. Many companies are extending the retirement age of 55 to age 60 and beyond and are initiating new hiring methods in order to eliminate some of the workforce problems (Japan Insight, The Graying, 1999).

Although many traditions and lifestyle preferences of the Japanese society remain constant, retirement issues in the 21st century will bring changes to all aspects of daily life. This retiring Silver Society, a reference that is used in Japan for the older population, includes retirees who have worked diligently throughout the post-War era and who have been instrumental in building Japan into one of the world's leading industrial countries. Most have lived through the phase of urbanization that developed with massive post-War migrations from the rural areas of Japan to the cities. As a result, these workers are the first generation oriented toward urbanization (Japan Insight, Background, 1999). They also have been exposed to many societal changes influenced by Western ideas and lifestyles (Japan Insight, A Quick Overview, 1999).

Following retirement, this post-War generation of retirees and older adults have lives uninhibited by the past routines of working, commuting, and rearing children. Many are active, healthy, and can expect to live at least 20 years after retirement ("Population Grows," 1998). They now have the freedom to enter a new phase in their lives that offers opportunities for new societal roles, new adult educational choices, new community involvement, and changes in personal lifestyles.

The Role of Adult Education

Japan has been an advocate of adult education for many years. Now as the leader in the world's aging demographic scenario, Japan has the challenge of assuming another leadership role. That role is to join other countries in addressing present and future needs of adult education. With the surging growth of the Silver Society, a diversity of adult educational programs that are designed to meet these needs and interests of an aging population is becoming increasingly important.

Dr. Takamichi Uesugi, Professor of Adult Education, Kyoto University, states that one of the main tasks of adult education programs today is to raise people's ability to express their own will and to participate in the decision making of educational affairs (Uesugi, 1997). Dr. Shuichi Shimada, Professor of Adult Education at Chuo University, also advocates similar objectives in that learners themselves must participate, gain autonomy, and create programs that address their needs. He feels that these are essential elements for the program development of adult education (Shimada, 1987).

Other industrialized countries such as the United States, Canada, and England are entering a similar era of an aging population and are experiencing related adult educational issues. The United States refers to its aging population as the Golden Age or Graying Society in contrast to Japan reference to a Silver Society. Whatever descriptive term Japanese use, a new epoch is approaching. Japan must look toward adult education's expanding learning opportunities in the prevailing evolution of a maturing society.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Japan holds a unique position in providing educational opportunities for a growing number of retirees and older adults. By leading all other countries demographically in which one in four people will soon be 65 years or older, the need is critical. Most of these older adults are people who held workplace positions under the traditional corporate culture of employment by only one company throughout their careers. Their lives have been mainly group-oriented rather than self- or individually-oriented.

The problem investigated in this study examines the new societal roles of Japanese retirees and older adults and reviews their choices of educational and learning activities following retirement. Specifically, this study explores opportunities for adult education programs provided by different organizations in Japan. It also provides insight into specific programs currently provided as well as those projected for the future.

The following questions guided the overview and inquiry:

1. How are changes in the aging Japanese society affecting adult education?
 - a. Societal changes – What have been some recent major influences of change on the society of Japan? How have internationalism and the Information Age influenced retirees and their future role in society? How will the age factor correlate with these changes?
 - b. Workplace Changes – How is the retirement age affecting the adult population? If more and more older employees continue working, how will the workplace environment change? What problems will companies encounter? Will training or retraining be necessary?
 - c. Lifestyle Changes – How are the Japanese changing their approach to new lifestyles after retirement? How has the economy been a factor? What do

older adults consider to be major concerns in life following retirement? How are health issues important and how do they affect choices of educational and learning opportunities? What is the general outlook on life after retirement? What are their plans for the future?

- d. Educational Changes – What has been the background of adult education in Japan? What organizations provide adult education programs and what will be their future approach in meeting the needs and requirements of retirees and older adults? How have workplace and lifestyle changes affected these factors? What will be the role of adult education in the future? How does adult education and lifelong learning interrelate in Japanese terms?

This information will provide valuable insight into the future trends of educational opportunities for Japan's aging society. An overview of changes occurring in the lives of this aging generation will contribute to understanding potential educational needs for all retirees and older adults in the future.

1.3 Outline of Chapters

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 presents the background and overview of the thesis with an explanation of the significance of the study as well as the limitations. Since this information involves the study of a different country and thus a different language, a glossary is included to provide a list of definitions used throughout the text. Chapter 2 provides a description of the qualitative study of the five components of research. Chapter 3 presents a discussion concerning the structural changes that are occurring in the Japanese society and the impact that these changes are having on the role of adult education in Japan. This discussion emphasizes changes in society, workplace, lifestyles, and adult education.

Chapter 4 presents an overview of the history of adult education in Japan, of educational institutions that provide adult education programs, and of information on future older adult participation. Chapter 5 presents five case studies that provide viewpoints of Japanese participants who will soon retire or have retired within the last five years. Discussions focus on their lifestyles, their plans for further education, and their learning choices. Chapter 6 summarizes the overall findings concerning the future role of adult education in Japan and discusses conclusions drawn from the research. Recommendations are presented for further study and investigations on the role of older adults and adult education.

1.4 Background of Author

While living and working in Japan during the 1980s, the author had the opportunity to talk with many Japanese co-workers and friends about life in general and also about their lifetime goals. Career objectives were foremost in the conversations, but discussion also included subjects pertaining to the work environment, the future, and lifestyles following retirement.

Since that time, the author has maintained both professional associations and personal friendships with Japanese associates. Through conversation and personal communication, an interest was initiated to study the similarities and differences in viewpoints concerning life in the pre-retirement time span and the time after retirement. As a student in the field of adult education, the author developed a specific interest in educational opportunities in Japan for those who will soon retire or have already retired.

With opportunities provided by intermittent travel to Japan, the author found that each trip created more awareness of the concerns of an aging population. Traditional Japan is still very much alive, but a new societal and economical momentum was observed that included changes in daily lifestyles, in work environments, and individual needs after retirement.

In 1998 while working and conducting research in Japan, the author talked with several persons who had retired or would soon retire. Of particular interest were discussions with two adult education professors, Dr. Takamichi Uesugi and Dr. Shuichi Shimada, concerning future roles of aging men and women. Through the cooperation of Dr. Shimada, a visit to a *kominkan* (citizen's community center) was arranged that provided an opportunity to talk with the center's administrators and a group of older students. This visit also provided an opportunity to observe adult classes. Additional insight was gained during a visit to a government-sponsored elder facility that provides in-house care for the elderly and holds adult education classes for those who reside in the facility as well as for those living in the community nearby.

In 1986, the author conducted a research project that required interviewing and surveying 100 Japanese women who had lived or were currently living in the United States. The subject of the study was their adjustment to life in America. Through this project, the author discussed issues such as lifetime goals and differences in lifestyles and made further observations concerning Japanese culture.

Since the early 1980s, the author has been a student of *Chanoyu*, the Japanese tea ceremony. Through this traditional study, the author has gained many insights into the Japanese culture. One significant concept is that learning can continue throughout one's lifetime.

1.5 Significance of Study

The evolution of an aging society is a popular and critical subject in many countries where the older population is fast becoming the majority of the population. Golden Age, Silver Society, Graying Generation, retirement age, the Age Age, and the Third Age (Laslett, 1991) are only a few examples of terms given to this generation. The Baby Boomer Generation, those individuals born between 1946 and 1963, is rapidly approaching retirement age.

This study will be of interest to those who are concerned with adult learning opportunities and adult education programs for the present and future aging populations. Discussions are presented concerning changes in educational organizations and institutions; the role of society, the role of the workplace; and, most important, the role of the participants in their choices of lifestyles, their needs, and their interests.

This study also provides valuable information gained from a survey of literature written in English about Japan, a country that is leading the world in aging issues. Japan has an important role in finding solutions and providing choices as to how adult education can best meet the needs and interests of a predominant older population and how retirees and older adults can best be motivated to assume participatory roles in adapting to retirement through transitions of change. Adaptation can provide lifelong learning opportunities leading to a better quality of life, personal fulfillment, productive community involvement, and better mental and physical health.

1.6 Limitations of Study

The limitations of conducting research in a country other than the United States, which included both language and cultural differences, were carefully considered before this study was begun. Because the author lived and worked in Japan in the 1980s, she realized that language complications could be a factor and that intrinsic and in-depth interpretations could be involved when dealing with cultural issues. Although the author has worked in the international environment with Japanese companies and has numerous Japanese friends, this study is written with the realization that the interpretation of information is from the viewpoint of a Westerner.

Pursuit of this research was felt to be important since sometimes an outsider's observations can be helpful and result in new outlooks from those who are close to a problem. This research was limited to literature written in English or translated from Japanese into English. Conversations and interviews were conducted in English. Those who gave assistance and cooperated in the case studies were most generous with their time and explanations when issues were discussed in English rather than Japanese. At times this required in-depth explanations to determine the exact meaning or feeling to be conveyed. Sometimes the relationship of *honne* (what is felt inwardly) and *tatamae* (what is said outwardly) were possible factors of misunderstanding (Matsumoto, 1988; March, 1988).

In the conversations and interviews, a pre-determined set of questions was not strictly followed. Although a similar focus of discussion topics was pursued in the case studies, the varied interests, careers, and personal experiences of the individuals required a flexible format.

Distance to research resources and people involved in the study was an additional limiting factor. To lessen this limitation, the author made several trips to Japan. Interviews were also conducted with Japanese residing in the United States. Extensive literature research was conducted in libraries both in the United States and Japan. Telephone conferences and communication by facsimile and electronic mail were also used in data collection.

Finally, consideration was given for the factor of country-specific educational concepts and government processes designed to establish and support educational goals that may differ from one country to another.

1.7 Definitions

<i>Bonsai</i>	The art of shaping miniature trees
<i>Chanoyu</i>	The Japanese tea ceremony
<i>Go</i>	A Japanese board game similar to checkers or chess
Golden Age	Term used in western societies to describe older adults; also graying society
<i>Haiku</i>	A type of Japanese poetry
<i>Honne</i>	Relating to the private self or what is felt inwardly
<i>Kaisha</i>	A Japanese company or business
<i>Kominkan</i>	Educational facility for citizens in Japanese communities
Liberal Education	Educational programs similar to liberal arts and humanities
Lifelong Learning	In Japan, a concept that emphasizes the continuous process and need for education over a lifespan
MESSC	Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
<i>Mobusho</i>	Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture
NHK	<i>Nihon Hso Kyokai</i> (Japanese broadcasting corporation)
Perfecture	Geographic and governmental division in Japan similar to a state in the United States
<i>Rojin Clubs</i>	Neighborhood clubs for older adults
Silver Society	Term used in Japan for older adults
Social Education	Term used in Japan for adult education; youth may be included in a few social education programs
<i>Tatamae</i>	Public actions or words are spoken outwardly
<i>Teinen</i> system	Pre-determined retirement age
Ward	Geographic and governmental division in Japan similar to a county in the United States

Chapter 2

Methodology

This study is descriptive and qualitative. It synthesizes the most recent literature concerning adult education and learning opportunities in Japan. An overview is given concerning educational and societal changes associated with the rapid increase in Japan's aging population. Of particular interest is the number of retirees who are entering the 21st century. This segment of the population has a growing influence on the educational, societal, and economic status of Japan. Their interests and needs are a significant topic to study.

This study's research integrates four equally important components: literature review, on-site visits, interviews, and case studies. Supportive data has been incorporated throughout the text of the study as it applies to the subject being discussed rather than by addressing all issues in a single chapter devoted to a review of literature.

2.1 Literature Review

The first component of the study was the literature review. In order to bring concurrence and convergence to the subject of Japanese retirees and their participation in adult education and learning opportunities, the review of literature focused on the following areas as they relate to Japan:

- Education issues, with specific emphasis on adult education
- Retirement issues
- Lifestyle issues
- Workplace issues
- Adult education and lifelong learning opportunities.

In the study of educational literature, research subjects include: adult education; adult learning; lifelong learning, educational laws and policy; governmental influences; curricula; providers of adult education; and the participants.

The review of retirement and aging issues in Japan includes changes and influences in retirees' and older adults' lifestyles as they relate to their educational wants and needs and their methods of coping with these new lifestyles.

The study of changes in the workplace environment includes job market opportunities for retirees, rehiring procedures for retirees, and educational opportunities. The study also reviews past and present workplace issues as they relate to pre-retirement and post-retirement.

A general study of Japanese lifestyles reviews the past, present, and future roles of men and women; the aging society; and adaptation to retirement.

Literature on aging and the increase of the elderly population is an important element in this study. The review of literature concludes with a study of adult education programs that offer learning opportunities for retirees and the aging generation's participation in programs that meet their needs and requirements. Included is a discussion of the different institutions and educational organizations that presently offer adult education programs.

2.2 Interviews and On-Site Visits in Japan

After developing the research plan for this study with a preliminary review of related literature, site visits and interviews were conducted during a trip to Japan in May and June of 1998. Meetings and interviews were conducted with case study participants; with persons who would soon be retiring or have retired; with non-retirees representing the general views of the population; and with persons from institutions and organizations associated with adult education.

***Kominkan*, Citizen's Public Hall**

Education and learning opportunities for the adult population are important in Japan. The *kominkan*, or citizens' public hall, is one of the facilities that provides varied programs for adults in their own community. Many municipalities have well organized and structured *kominkans* that are staffed with trained personnel in adult education. Students come from the surrounding area and participate in courses of interest on a part-time basis.

Because of the *kominkan*'s significant role in adult education, a site visit was made to the Shinagawa Ward to observe the programs offered at an adult education center that is organized on the structure of a *kominkan*. Although this facility is not based on the Social Education Law of 1949 (Thomas, 1985), the curricula offered is similar to that of a *kominkan*. Accompanied by a Japanese adult education professor and three adult education students, the author was given a tour of the facility by a teacher and the curriculum director. Following the tour, a group discussion was held with the director concerning curricula and the program's participants.

An informal discussion session was also conducted with three of the adult education students, two women and one man, who had all recently retired. Discussions topics included the reasons why they participated in adult education programs, benefits of the programs, their viewpoints of life after retirement; and the interests and needs of retirees.

Government-Sponsored Elderly Facility

Another facility that was visited was a government-sponsored, health care facility for the elderly. This facility provides both adult education programs and health care support. One section of the facility provides programs for nearby community residents as well as for those who live within the facility. Another section of the facility provides long-term care for the elderly who can no longer live independently in their own homes. A third section provides education for mentally challenged individuals who range in age from teenagers to the elderly. Supervised employment within the facility is arranged for some of these individuals in order to provide appropriate learning experiences and socialization opportunities.

Following visits to all sections of the facility, an interview was held with the director of the facility. Discussions included lifestyles of the elderly; changes in the resident's physical condition and how these changes impacted living and learning opportunities; needs of mentally challenged adults; and adult education programs provided by the facility.

A discussion session was also held with teachers and assistants concerning their teaching roles and the curricula.

Academia

On-site visits to a college and a university provided exposure to the academic environment in Japan. Individual interviews with three college professors were held at sites both on and off campus. The author's previous employment at a Japanese college during residency in Japan provided a background of reference for discussion of past, present, and future educational environment. Discussions topics also included education in general and recent changes in the Japanese educational system.

Homes and People

Social interactions during visits in Japanese homes and through conversations with Japanese people provided further insight into Japanese lifestyles, aging issues, and educational needs. For the most part, individuals interviewed were nearing retirement age or had previously retired. These home visits gave an opportunity to observe a broader perspective of lifestyles and permitted a more relaxed setting for discussions. Topics discussed included life after retirement, preparation and plans for retirement, health issues, family issues, future travel, and learning opportunities.

2.3 Interviews with a Cross Section of the General Population

To gain a wider perspective of Japanese life in general, interviews were conducted with a variety of people from different backgrounds and stages in life. Interviews were held with a race car driver in his late 20s, a medical researcher in his 40s, a housewife in her 20s, and three housewives in their 50s. Discussion topics included future plans for their careers, present lifestyles, interests, societal roles and obligations, and educational aspirations and needs.

Following the visit to Japan and as research questions developed, discussions continued with the individuals previously interviewed via electronic mail, telephone, and facsimile.

2.4 Case Studies

In-depth interviews were conducted and observations were made of five persons who represent Japanese men and women in the pre-retirement or post-retirement stage of their lives. Discussions were held over a one-year period and focused on their preparation for learning activities following retirement. Each voiced concern about aging and retirement issues and how they would be affected by this stage of their life. They also expressed interest in the viewpoints of peers from their own country as well as from those outside of Japan. The case studies present a profile of each individual as to their background, interests, and lifestyle.

Case Study 1: The first case study profiles a woman who retired several years ago from a lifetime career with the U.S. Navy in Japan. In addition to her Navy job, she taught *Chanoyu*, the traditional art of the Japanese tea ceremony, and has continued this profession since retiring.

Case Study 2: The second case study is a college professor who retired in early 1999. He taught classes and conducted medical research at the same college throughout his career.

During his career, teaching and research were his major focus. He has mixed feelings about his new lifestyle and adaptation to the new world of retirement.

Case Study 3: The third case study is a former company vice-president who retired in 1998.. He is a lawyer and worked for only one company throughout his career. During his lengthy career, he worked in the United States for several years. He returned to Japan and worked for an additional three years before retiring. After his retirement, he moved to America to work as a business consultant.

Case Study 4: The fourth case is a company executive who will be retiring in 2001. His life has been totally focused around the company where he works. Recently, in his preparation for retirement, he has developed other interests, including activities with his family and hobbies. He is looking forward to retirement.

Case Study 5: The fifth case is a retired executive who worked for only one company throughout his career. He began in the lower ranks of the company and gradually moved upward into the managerial staff. He was assigned to America for several years and returned to Japan to continue his work. He retired in 1996 but continues to work at his company in an advisory position.

Topics covered in the interviews included: personal feelings about retirement; before and after stages of retirement; changes felt and observed in the individual's outlook on life in general; new interests; concerns and problems associated with retirement; family involvement; and changes and adjustments to their new role in society and within their family.

A follow-up assessment was sent to each individual via electronic mail or a telephone conference was made to further discuss current and future plans. Two specific dimensions were explored in the follow-up sessions. The first dimension was an expression of self-satisfaction and an indication of readiness to participate in a learning experience, including either group-oriented or self-directed educational program. The second dimension was their outlook for the future.

Through the synthesis of the case studies, an in-depth examination of educational or learning opportunities for persons in retirement stages was conducted. Each case study offers an interesting viewpoint of personal learning choices and individual lifestyle changes that occur in pre-retirement and post-retirement stages of life.

Chapter 3

Retirement and the Aging Population of Japan

Presently Japanese retirees and older adults find themselves in the midst of a rapid revolution of technological and social changes that are encompassing the world. The quality of their futures relies on their successful transitions and adjustments to these changes. Japan has experienced this course of changes during two major periods in the past fifty years ranging from post-World War II to the present.

Following the war, Japan began a high growth industrial period that successfully established the country as a powerful economic world player and a strong competitor in the global marketplace. Incorporated in this industrial period were the factors of mass production and automation, coupled with an intense work ethic based on a philosophy of hard work as the basis in the search of a good life (Naisbitt, 1997).

Japan has now entered into the post-industrial period, also called the information age or the info-sphere (Spear & Mocker, 1989), which is more service- and information-oriented. People in all stages of life, both workers and retirees, are examining their quality of life and questioning how to cope with these changes. As a result, interaction among people has become more important in society. Jimmy Lai, founder of the magazine *Next*, described this social development as an evolutionary process whereby: “Information offers choice; choice motivates interaction; and people’s interactions form the network of society. This new society extends far beyond local physical boundaries.” Changes in lifestyles and new social trends are transforming all of Asia with unprecedented speed (Naisbitt, 1997) in this post-industrial era.

Because of this evolution, Japanese retirees and older adults today are finding that their responses to change are influencing their fundamental day-to-day lives. What people learn, think, and believe as they adapt to these changes, and how they interact with one another are critical factors for the future. Furthermore, how adult education programs contribute to these adaptations is of great importance to the future role of adult education (Spear & Mocker, 1989).

The following discussion focuses on four major areas of change in the Japanese society: societal, workplace, lifestyle, and educational changes. All have direct impact on retirees and, therefore, impact the field of adult education as retirees incorporate learning experiences in their retirement years.

3.1 Societal Changes

Internationalism

Several noteworthy trends have escalated Japan into the international arena. First, as a resource-poor nation, Japan chose to become one of the most powerful industrial nations in the world. With the importation of raw materials, Japan manufactured products for the strict purpose of exportation. “Made in Japan” became a slogan that created a strong economic base for a post-World War II Japan. With this economic growth, basic education and technical studies were expanded in order to educate workers and raise the quality and standards of the labor force (Makino, 1997).

As manufacturing increased, the Japanese yen grew stronger and by the 1980s, Japan became immersed in the “bubble economy.” Japan’s economy flourished as companies made foreign investments and Japanese manufacturers moved production sites to foreign countries (Makino, 1997). In the 1990s, the economy has slowed, making new international initiatives vitally important for the economy.

A new wave of internationalism is currently being experienced as many foreign workers arrive in Japan to secure jobs. Along with the influx of foreign workers, there are also thousands of Japanese who have worked or are working in other countries. Others have studied or are studying in Western colleges and universities (Naisbitt, 1997). Thus, workers have become sophisticated in world issues as they experience different cultural norms and workplace values.

The Information Age

The evolution of the Information Age is characterized by the growth of information technology and communication. The development of the silicon chip, satellites, and computer expertise instigated changes and the expansion of Japanese relationships with people all over the world. Japan’s manufacturing-based economy has changed to an information-based economy where an organizational system of top-down management may not be as applicable. The information-based society is oriented more toward individual input and the efficiency of each worker (Makino, 1997). Managers, who traditionally are the older and more senior employees, have had to adjust to the wave of information technology or have had to adjust their management approach to a more individualistic workforce.

Most managers previously relied on a support staff to perform the company's communication requirements. Computer literacy was not mandatory for job performance. Now many managers are finding that in order to communicate with clients or staff throughout the world, they must have computer skills. Computer literacy has become a requirement, not a choice. Computer communication is rapidly eliminating past communication methods of conducting international business via telephone calls and facsimiles.

Also, senior managers must now apply new management skills to a computer-literate, younger staff. These changes bring more requirements to prepare and upgrade the workforce in order to compete internationally and to meet the demands of future jobs. As employees follow career paths created in the post-industrial era, adult education programs must adapt to these major challenges (Spear & Mocker, 1989). Both the expansion of training programs and the retraining of workers within companies are increasing and more programs are becoming routinely necessary.

Retirement and the Aging Society

At no time in modern Japanese society has there been a greater need to prepare for the retirement needs of a growing aging population. Each year this segment of the population is not only increasing in number but is also commanding greater power and influence on societal changes. As Japan approaches the 21st century, the population of 55 years and older falls into this influential category. Emphasis on changes occurring in society is evident from increasing government programs, media coverage, health facilities, and support organizations for the elderly.

The era of the aging society is today; it is no longer a prediction. By the year 2025, more than 27 percent of the Japanese population will be 65 years old or older (Makino, 1997). Today's retirees are healthier; they are better educated and more affluent; they are politically aware; and they are free of the many constraints that were established in previous generations (Spear & Mocker, 1989). Peter Laslett (1991) describes a similar stage of life as the Third Age. Usually assumed later in life, it is an era when one sheds professional responsibilities and begins the pursuit of personal fulfillment and achievement.

Interestingly, Laslett maintains that the Third Age can only appear at the time when the average life expectancy begins to be long enough to allow such pursuits to occur. Dr. Laslett

contends that it takes time for people to become aware that they can expect a longer future and begin to conduct their lives accordingly. This could be said to be the stage of recognition. With its record of longevity, Japan has met the requirement to enter the Third Age but is just commencing the stage of recognition.

With the recognition stage, retirees find a radical break in their lives. Literally, the day one retires, the person is cut off from the past and must adapt to a new status (de Beauvoir, 1970). Although previous work can be viewed as a time-consuming and restrictive necessity that dominates one's life, it is also a source of stability, focused interest, and an established role within society. In 1680, Saint-Evremond wrote, "Nothing is more usual than old people yearning for retirement; and nothing is so rare than those who have retired and do not regret it" (de Beauvoir, 1970).

Usually people retire for one of two major reasons: they have reached the mandatory retirement age or they have poor health. In either case, the decision has been made for them, not by them. Many new retirees feel a deep loss of personal value in that their biological age seems to differ significantly from their chronological age. Self-esteem also becomes an issue as patterns of living change and the possibility of inactivity and boredom arises. De Beauvoir (1970), in her study of retirees, noted that value can be directly associated with state of mind as one approaches retirement and then after one retires. Morale can drop year by year and is most markedly observed between ages 64 to 69, or in the five-year period directly after retirement.

It is crucial that retirees have a plan for life after retirement; it is also important for them to have choices for this plan. In Japan as well as in countries throughout the world, adult education programs have the opportunity to contribute to these choices and to give value and purpose to post-retirement lifestyles.

A Cultural Dichotomy

Traditionally, Japan is a country where respect for the elderly is a strong and famous component of its culture. It is assumed that when one becomes an elder or has reached "old age," he or she has automatically gained the status of great respect that continues to increase with the aging process. The Japanese government has strengthened this role by enacting the National Law for the Welfare of the Elders in 1963. The law states, "The elders shall be loved and respected as those who have for many years contributed toward the development of society, and

a wholesome and peaceful life shall be guaranteed to them. In accordance with their desire and ability, the elders shall be given opportunities to engage in suitable work or to participate in social activities” (Palmore and Maeda, 1985). Further, the Respect for Elders Day (*Keiro No Hi*) was made a national holiday in 1963.

Families pay special attention to their elders. Honorific (respectful) language is used when making reference about or speaking to elders. Within the home, they are seated in positions of honor and are usually given first preference in different family roles. Special birthday celebrations are held when one reaches the ages of 70, 77, 88, and 99 (Palmore and Maeda, 1985).

Although Japanese traditions of respect for the elderly persist, changes are occurring as new societal roles emerge, new workplace environments are established, and general public opinions become “westernized” or “modernized.” A cultural dichotomy surrounding respect for the elderly is being observed. This dichotomy has developed gradually and is a cause of concern to many Japanese. Studies by Japanese gerontologists have shown that negative public attitudes toward the elderly do exist, even though overt expressions of respect may be exhibited (Palmore and Maeda, 1985).

One theory asserts that modernization has caused a lowering of status for the aged due to the nation’s transformation from an agronomic society to an industrial society (Cowgill and Holmes, 1972). Industrialization decreases the importance of the extended family, increases geographical mobility, and changes technology, social structure, and cultural values (Palmore & Maeda, 1985).

Terminology that refers to the elderly can also be an indicator of changes in levels of respect. There are several Japanese words of reference to the aged that express honor. Two examples are *Otoshiyori*, translated as “the honorable elders,” and *go-inkyō-sama*, an “honorable retired person” (Palmore & Maeda, 1985). *Rōjin* is a frequently used word for old or the elderly or, translated in more graphic terms, a white-haired, stooped person. In 1985, in an effort to create a better image for the younger elderly, the Ministry of Welfare invited the public to contribute new alternative terms for the word *rōjin*. As a result, the terms *Jitsu-nen* (the ripe age) and *Juku-nen* (the mature age) have recently become popular (Narushima, 1995).

However, negative terminology does exist. Many negative terms used in the workplace refer to older workers and those who are potential retirees. *Sangyo-haikibutau* (industrial waste),

nureochiba (wet, sticky fallen leaves), or *sodai gomi* (waste refuse of large size) are terms used for a man who relies upon their wives too much after retirement. A post-productive, negative image of retirees is perceived by many in the working population because they feel that retirees create a burden to society after their mandatory retirement (Narushima, 1995). After retirement, many Japanese men face the stigma of “rolelessness” and are described as experiencing “social death” (Narushima, 1995).

There are complaints that Japanese young people are not as respectful of elders as in the past. In 1988, an opinion poll on the image of Japanese society in the 21st century showed that 43 percent of 7,577 randomly selected subjects across Japan had a negative image of the aged society (Palmore and Maeda, 1985).

Even as traditional forms of respect for the elderly are lessening, upcoming retirees may demand a new form of respect. The increasing elderly population of Japan, those 65 and over, will soon be the majority of the population and, therefore, will have the power to influence society positively rather than negatively. They will have the power to become exemplary roles models for the future generation.

3.2 Workplace Changes

Japanese retirees of today were recruited as new employees in the 1960s. They graduated from colleges or high schools and became the workers and salaried employees that have been devoted to the *kaisha*, “the company,” throughout their careers. The *kaisha* offered security with lifetime employment and became the pivotal focus of their lives. Japan is known for its lifetime employment system and many people have regarded it as the ideal situation. With this system, the company takes care of its employees, and both the employee and the company give total commitment to each other. Dedication is more than contractual; it is also emotional (Narushima, 1995).

Companies that follow the lifetime system provide their own training and career development programs. These programs are focused on contributions the employee makes to the company. The possibility that the worker would ever leave to work for another company is not considered. Following comprehensive on-the-job training, the company gives various assignments as needs arise or positions open. By following this plan, employees become trained in a variety of tasks and responsibilities and also become familiar with the company’s total organization.

Besides lifetime employment, other elements of the company’s responsibilities include seniority-based wage systems, promotions systems, and enterprise-based union structure. These benefits create an organization that has a dependable, programmed compensation plan; a step-by-step career advancement system; and total dependency of employees on “the company.” Long hours of work, lengthy commutes to and from work, and “after hours” socialization among workers are all viewed as part of being loyal to the company and as a means of building social relations that Nakane (1973) refers to as an extended family.

Dramatic changes have recently occurred in the traditional concept of lifetime employment by the *kaisha* and continue to influence the business environment. Kobayashi (1996) describes the changes that are currently occurring throughout Japan as a paradigm shift from the traditional models of organizational structure to a new employability model dictated by today’s economic conditions. The prolonged recession of the 1990s and the weakening of the yen have greatly impacted Japanese companies and Japan itself is experiencing changes in organizational rules. Some of the short-term and long-term changes include: accelerated globalization; a shift to a knowledge-based and service-oriented economy; rapidly developing

advances in information technology; changes in consumer behavior; employees seeking a better quality of life that does not totally involve the work environment; and an increasing older working population (Kobayashi, 1996).

Because of these changes, Japanese businesses can no longer continue in the traditional lifetime employment model. Recent graduates of colleges, universities, and high schools cannot depend on lifetime employment as did the previous generation. New graduates persistently search for employment but are finding that fewer jobs are now available and part-time or temporary jobs may be their only choice. Many businesses are now organizing with: (1) a core long-term group of employees, (2) a professional specialist group that does not fall under benefits of the lifetime category, and (3) a flexible, or part-time, worker group. In contrast to the lifetime model which offer job benefits, companies now have different compensation packages, different plans of career advancement, and more competition. The workers are less dependent on the company. Greater emphasis is also being placed on job performance, ability, and competence (Kobayashi, 1996).

Middle-aged and older employees are finding that horizontal transferring from department to department may be impossible, and those in upward mobility or career advancement roles find securing managerial positions more difficult, if not impossible. Traditionally, companies created positions for those at a career plateau by corporate growth that created new positions (Suzuki, 1996). However, with the state of today's economy, companies are downsizing rather than expanding. As Japan approaches the 21st century, new company policies are affecting every part of the organization. Employability and employees' specific skills as they relate to the company's needs are crucial factors for permanent employment or advancement.

Issues of Retirement

As changes occur in the workplace environment, the aging population of Japan has a direct impact on the Japanese work force. The Ministry of Labor projects that by the year 2000, one in four workers in Japan will be over 55 years of age. Because of this aging factor, companies are experiencing (1) higher average labor costs, (2) a lack of senior positions, (3) financial demands for severance pay for retirees when they retire, (4) financial demands for

pension benefits after retirement, and (5) lack of employment opportunities for the older workers (Japan Insight, Graying, 1999).

Many larger companies are now encouraging early retirement in order to prevent some of these problems. Occasionally companies engage in “shoulder tapping” (*katatataki*) to encourage employees to resign voluntarily. Those who remain may be called “window gazers” (*madogiwazoku*) or “marginal employees” (*genkai shain*). Because they continue on the payroll even though their job has decreased, they are considered to be redundant (Suzuki, 1996).

Retirement or *teinen*, meaning “prescribed years,” is a major issue in the workplace for many companies. The *teinen* system refers to age limits that are set by an organization and is a method used mainly by larger companies. Small companies, farmers, and the self-employed may not have the same rules (Campbell & Campbell, 1991).

Companies which have subsidiaries often transfer older workers to these firms with the idea that the transferees will serve as a liaison between the company and the subsidiary. However, problems often pass to the subsidiary companies as the transferred employee waits for the formal retirement age (Japan Insight, New Ways to Work, 1999). These employees who come from the parent company are described by the subsidiary staff as “descending from heaven” (*amakudari*) and many times cause frustration if top positions are assumed by these older employees (Suzuki, 1996). On the other hand, many parachuted employees have positive experiences in the subsidiary company and often develop new workplace initiatives.

Many companies are making efforts to accommodate the older employees. Some older or retired employees are asked to remain as consultants or to assume training positions. Others may be rehired, hired on a part-time basis, or designated as a non-regular staff member. Even though their wages and benefits decrease, many retirees find this to be a role they enjoy. At times, companies may assist employees by establishing private businesses, developing training programs for new employees with older employees or retirees serving as lecturers, or contracting with outplacement companies to assist in finding them other employment (Suzuki, 1996).

Some companies offer early retirement incentives. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Labor in 1996, twelve thousand employers reported that 33.5 percent of retirees aged 50 or over had left before retirement age, and 9.3 percent had taken advantage of early-retirement packages. This was twice as many as the previous year (Japan Information Network, Old Hands, 1999).

The establishment of a mandatory retirement age has been a political issue in Japan. In the 1970s, the mandatory retirement age of Japanese workers was 55 or younger. In 1980, approximately half of Japanese corporations had 55 as their mandatory retirement age and half had 60. During the 1980s, the older employees expressed the desire or the need to continue to work past age 60. In 1986, the government enacted the Law Concerning the Stabilization of Employment for the Elderly People in an effort to encourage companies to retrain or hire older workers. Incentives were offered if the mandatory retirement age was raised from 55 to 60. By 1991, 70 percent of the companies had raised their retirement age to 60 or over. Ninety-five percent of companies with over 5,000 employees had initiated the 60 or over policy, but only 67 percent of companies with 100 employees or less had adopted the 60 or over policy.

In 1994, more legislation was enacted and in April 1998, the mandatory retirement age in Japan became 60. This action also brought the retirement age closer to the age when pension payments would begin (Japan Insight, Graying, 1999). Eligibility for pensions will be raised from 60 up to 61 in fiscal 2001, and to 65 in fiscal 2013. Employees who leave work prior to that age will not receive income until they reach the specified age (Japan Information Network, 1997).

Although many older workers look forward to retirement, others regard the pension policy with concern and express a need to continue working. Personal financial requirements are the first and major concern of retirees, but others enjoy working and want to remain active and independent. Overall many retirees do continue to work in some capacity of employment or in “second-chance” careers.

Currently, retirees are becoming more self-directed in their approach to learning and many are seeking educational programs to prepare them for employment in a field that may be totally different from their previous job. With the expanding number of retirees, adult education programs are expected to become increasingly popular and, more importantly, much needed to accommodate the rapidly expanding, older population.

3.3 Lifestyle Changes

The information age and the demands of everyday life are creating lifestyle changes throughout the world. Along with other countries, Japan is changing rapidly as personal preferences, desire for convenience, and economic necessities dictate (Dazai, 1981). The Japanese Silver Society (older generation) of today is the generation with the most direct experience in both Japanese and Western lifestyles. They grew up in the traditional culture of Japan but, with the abrupt changes following World War II, they are the generation whose lives have been most affected by the post-industrial era (Japan Insight, Values, 1999).

The men and women currently retiring or eligible to retire are of this generation. For over fifty years in the workplace, they worked in an atmosphere of evolving technology and they incorporated modernization in both their work and personal lives. Westernized furniture styles within their homes, international foods, travel throughout Japan and to foreign countries, and modern trends have all been factors that have influenced their lifestyle changes.

This generation has worked hard, saved, and built retirement security. However, with today's economic downturn, many are concerned for their future. The *Daily Yomiuri* newspaper, on February 25, 1999, reported results of a twelve-year study conducted by the Japanese Ministry of Economy to assess major concerns for retired people. The participants were people between the ages of 55 and 70 who had retired or were going to retire in the near future. Out of 5,000 people surveyed, 96.5 percent responded.

The three top issues that caused them the most concern for the future were (1) living expenses, (2) medical expenses, and (3) health care in the future (who would care for them). In the twelve-year time span of the study, the anxiety factor steadily increased. In 1986, there was an anxiety factor of 45.4 percent; in 1998, the anxiety factor had risen to 73 percent. All three of the top concerns were associated with finances and with rising costs.

Health care and medical expenses are escalating for retirees. Because of these impending costs, their financial security typically depends on past earnings (social security and pensions), savings, accumulated assets, and job earnings after retirement. Despite the constraints regarding mandatory retirement age, more 55 and older Japanese workers are choosing to stay in the labor force in whatever capacity that may be available. Their choices include positions in the company's subsidiary, part-time work, temporary work, family businesses, or a new work area previously not pursued.

Increased cost of living expenses creates the need for more married women to work in either full-time or part-time positions. This change in the “wives-stay-home” role brings new dimensions to traditional family lifestyles. For many years, the norm for Japanese housewives has been to stay at home to rear their children. If more women do enter the job market, an influx of day care centers will become necessary. It will also impact health care requirements since daughters and daughters-in-law have been the main caretakers of older family members.

In Japan, a three-generation household is common with the majority of Japanese people over 65 living with their children. In 1988, 62 percent of the three generation families lived in one house. However, that number is down from 82 percent in 1960 (Campbell & Campbell, 1991). The proportion drops on an average of one percent per year (Campbell, 1992).

In the traditional Japanese family lifestyle, when the eldest son married, he and his wife lived with his parents. The daughter-in-law was expected to learn household duties from her mother-in-law and care for her husband’s parents if they became ill. The son inherited his parents’ assets and, if he and his wife had no son, the oldest daughter’s husband would be adopted by the family and would assume the role as the eldest son (Palmore & Maeda, 1985).

Today many younger Japanese are moving to urban areas to search for higher paying jobs. This trend is causing the number of older Japanese living with their children to decrease. Many young couples opt for separate households and are renting apartments and establishing separate housing from their parents, even though they may choose to live nearby. However, many families are still choosing the traditional style of cohabitation. A multiple family setting provides more income for everyone and grandparents can support and care for children, particularly if the younger wife wants to work. This living arrangement also provides care for the older adults along with tax incentives and the possibility of larger housing due to mortgage incentives (Campbell, 1992).

Surveys show another interesting change in traditional lifestyles. The Japanese retirees and older generation of today are less inclined to fit into the stereotypical role of the “stay-at-home” elderly. They are healthy, active, and social. Retirees have free time and enough money to enjoy leisure activities and to study. Men want to enjoy their family and participate in the community since these are opportunities they feel they have missed because of their previous demanding careers. Women are interested in traveling and developing a social life outside the home (Japan Insight, Overview, 1999; Values, 1999).

Retired men find that they have lacked communication with their families and their community. One survey showed that 76 percent out of 3,000 salaried men living in urban areas had only exchanged greetings of acknowledgement or had infrequent conversations with their neighbors regardless of how long they had lived in the neighborhood (Narushima, 1995). Because of this distancing from community and family for approximately thirty years of their career lives, men are described as possibly feeling that retirement is “social death.” Most retirees have been totally identified with their *kaisha* (company) and have devoted many years of service to their work. Immediately upon retirement, they lose the social ties they have experienced and their extended work family is gone. They are then forced to find alternatives and to focus their interests and energies on other pursuits.

A large number of Japanese elderly belong to “*Rojin Clubs*” or old people’s clubs that are located in their neighborhoods. Some clubs are very active in the community and provide services such as volunteer work. Other clubs have limited activities that may only sponsor biannual trips. The majority of club members are women, but many of the leadership positions are held by men (Campbell & Campbell, 1991). There are approximately 130,000 local *Rojin Clubs*, but recently there has been a trend of declining membership. More older people are joining *Silver Jinzai Centers* (Senior’s Manpower Centers) and are participating in self-improvement courses offered by various places including *kominkans*, colleges, community centers, private culture centers, and senior universities (Narushima, 1995).

The most popular activity of Japanese elders today is watching television. Reading, traveling, and gardening are also popular activities. However, surveys have shown that Japanese elders participate in fewer hobbies than do elders in other countries. This is thought to be because of career work schedules that offered little opportunity for hobbies (Palmore & Maeda, 1995). Some change is being seen in this area with a recent increase in participation in Japanese cultural hobbies such as composing *haiku* (a style of poetry), *bonsai* (shaping miniature trees), *go* (game similar to checkers), folk dancing, and calligraphy. Others are visiting shrines, scenic spots, and spas.

The lifestyles of retirees today offer new societal, workplace, and personal changes. As they make transitions and adjustments, retirees and older adults are finding that they need to be more aware of and make plans for their post-retirement years. With Japan’s average life

expectancy in the 80 year old range, older adults must address issues that will provide opportunities for them to remain active members of society.

Chapter 4

Adult Education and Learning Opportunities in Japan

Japan is one of the most education-conscious countries in the world. Much of the history of Japan has revolved around educational events and their effects on the Japanese society. History has shown that traditions involving philosophies of life and lifestyles are also closely associated with the people's belief in the need for a strong educational system. Because of these influences of history and tradition, the role of education in Japan commands a respect from the people that borders on reverence (Ofreneo, 1996). Traditionally, the Japanese are strong advocates of education through the concept of lifelong learning. The concept of lifelong learning has been an important element of education as a method to provide freedom of thought and as a way to achieve personal fulfillment. To separate societal and cultural influences of Japanese tradition, history, education, and the concept of lifelong learning is impossible; each has contributed to the other.

This chapter addresses four specific areas that influence Japanese education and that specifically influence adult education today. Background information is included to assist with the interpretation of concepts, chronological history, and changes in the educational system that have shaped the role of adult education, adult learning, and lifelong learning in Japan. These areas have predetermined some of the educational choices and opportunities that are presently available for retirees and older adults. Limitations to this study exist, particularly when addressing areas and issues that are mostly referenced in the Japanese language and, culturally, require different or difficult “western-eastern” interpretations.

The four areas addressed are the following:

- 4.1: Concepts of Japanese education and learning
- 4.2: Historical background of the evolution of educational concepts
- 4.3: Providers of adult education and learning opportunities
- 4.4: Participants: who are doing what, when, for how long, and why?

4.1 Japanese Education and Learning Concepts

Adults in Japan, especially those in the pre-retirement and post-retirement stages of their lives, are experiencing change. Many of these changes described in Chapter 3 can be influenced

to some degree, but not controlled by individuals. They are the societal changes that are affecting not only Japan, but also the world. Some of the changes are associated with the self-realization of personal needs and interests. Older adults and retirees face the challenge of developing their purpose for living and their personal philosophy for learning. These challenges may be met by participating in educational opportunities and establishing personal goals for lifelong learning.

There are many concepts that can be explored in a thorough review of educational opportunities for older adults and retirees in Japan, but three of the most often observed concepts are adult learning, adult education, and lifelong learning.

Learning

Learning is an ageless phenomenon that affects all people of all age levels as they adapt to their roles in society and the world in which they live. Many adult educators and theorists discuss and define the concept of adult learning but find difficulty in determining an all-encompassing definition, particularly when addressing cultural differences worldwide. However, there is one element that appears in the many definitions of learning: change.

Boyd, Apps, and their associates (1980) define the term of learning with emphasis on the person in whom change occurs or is expected to occur. They addressed learning as a process or act by which behavioral change, knowledge, skills, and attitudes are acquired. Crow and Crow (1963) state that learning involves change and the acquisition of habits, knowledge, and attitudes that enable individuals to make both personal and social adjustments. Burton (1963) further states that learning is change in the individual, caused by the interaction of that individual and his environment. This change makes one more capable of dealing adequately with his environment. Lastly, Haggard (1963) defines learning as a change in behavior as the result of experience.

Another important factor associated with learning is the learners themselves. Over seventy years ago, Lindeman (1926) identified five key assumptions concerning adult learners in general, regardless of nationality or culture. They were as follows:

- (1) Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy.
- (2) Adults' orientation to learning is life-centered rather than subject-centered.

- (3) Experience is the richest source for adults' learning.
- (4) Adults have a deep need to be self-directing.
- (5) Individual differences among learners increase with age.

It was not until the early 1970s that Knowles introduced in the United States the concept of andragogy, the education of adults. Knowles' principles of adult learning in the andragogical theory include the following elements:

- (1) Learner's need to know
- (2) Self-concept of the learners
- (3) Prior experience of the learner
- (4) Readiness to learn
- (5) Orientation to learning
- (6) Motivation to learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998).

Both of these approaches to adult learning and the adult learner emphasizes the importance of the individual's needs, interests, and experience. They also include motivation as a significant element for the initiation of the learning process.

Another factor that must be considered in the study of adult education in Japan is the cultural patterns associated with learning methods. Cultural backgrounds are strong influences that can affect individual learning and application of the learning process. J. E. Thomas, past Director of Adult Education at the University of Nottingham, England, has conducted considerable research in the area of adult education in Japan. He maintains that educational methods and the learning process of Japanese adults can only be understood through an awareness of the structure of the country's society and the historical background by which education has been shaped (Thomas, 1985).

Education

The discussion of learning requires an understanding of the word "education." For the purpose of this study, education is defined as a process or activity of producing change. Knowles (1998) defines education as an activity undertaken or initiated by one or more agents that is designed to effect changes in the knowledge, skill, and attitudes of individuals, groups, or communities. In his definition, he emphasizes the role of the educator, the agent of change who

presents stimuli and reinforcement for learning. This agent also designs activities to induce change.

Education, in general, has a powerful influence on all aspects of the Japanese population. Historically, adult education has been used to both implement and to deter traditions and ideologies (Thomas, 1985). Formal education begins at an early age in Japan. Extraordinary emphasis is placed on children to excel in their studies, and they spend many hours in tutorial schools (*juku*) in order to meet stringent examinations for acceptance to certain schools, colleges, and universities. Japan has a high literacy rate, and many laws and governmental initiatives have been established to promote education for the people.

As education policies have developed for older citizens, adult education terminology has emerged. For the past fifty years, adult education in Japan has been referred to as “social education” (Yamaguchi, 1997). To many, this term is equivalent to Western “liberal arts education.” However, Shuichi Shimada (1987), Professor of Adult Education, Chuo University, states that it is often difficult to decide which term should be used, adult education or social education.

Social education, which may also include youth-oriented programs, usually does not lead to vocational or professional qualification as in “formal education” (that is, instruction or classes with a teacher and a specific curriculum). Social education implies nonformal, out-of-school programs designed for adults or youth held mainly for the benefit of the community (Uesugi, 1996). The main emphasis of social education includes subjects such as cultural enhancement; sports; improvement in one’s quality of life; mental satisfaction and fulfillment; and courses taken just for pleasure (Yamaguchi, 1997).

Another term that is often used in Japan is “liberal adult education” or “liberal studies.” This is similar to social education in that it is provided for adults and does not usually lead to professional qualifications. Courses may include literature, history, art, environmental problems, health, and international relations (Uesugi, personal communication, February, 1999). Liberal adult education is pursued by those interested in learning and whose goals are to promote a wiser society (Thomas, 1985).

The Japan Society for the Study of Adult Education, founded in 1949, is an academic society established to specifically study adult education. Some researchers feel that “adult education” refers to an independent human being who is free to participate in independent

learning activities (Shimada, 1987). Shimada (1987) states that “self-learning activities” or “self-directed learning” should be the core of learning and education for adults. Shimada also states that social education includes a variety of educational activities that may or may not be organized by the people themselves.

“Self-education” is another phrase that has been compared to adult education. Some people prefer the term “self-education” because of its independent connotation. Shimada (1987) defines self-education as separate from “self-learning” or “self-directed learning” and interprets it to include several aspects of self-directed learning: how to learn, how to organize learning activities, how to maximize learning conditions for oneself, and how to support people’s efforts for educational independence.

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning and lifelong education are two concepts that has been studied for many years and is becoming more accepted in Japan. In 1981, Japan’s Central Council of Education on Lifelong Education published a report that emphasized the need for a continuous process of education. In 1984 and 1987, an *ad hoc* advisory committee and the National Council on Educational Reform was established. In 1988, the term “lifelong learning” was introduced. Previously, the term “lifelong education” had been used. The idea behind the change was that lifelong learning seemed to be more student-controlled rather than teacher-directed (Thomas, Uesugi, Shimada, 1997).

In Japan, the area of governmental education is under the direction of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture (*Monbusho*). The emphasis on “learning” led to the establishment of a Lifelong Learning Bureau within *Monbusho*. As stated within the National Federation of Social Education in Japan’s report (1992), the Lifelong Learning Bureau was created to serve as a liaison among the Bureaus of School Education, Social Education, Athletic Activities, Cultural Activities, and other smaller bureaus (Thomas, Uesugi, Shimada, 1997).

Prefecture and municipal social education offices also have adopted the term “lifelong learning” within their name. Concern has arisen because, through these governmental actions, proposals have surfaced that encourage private businesses to cooperate in providing education programs and to be allotted funds. It has also been proposed that the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) should become involved. Critics feel that this could result in more

centralized control from the national government and a lesser role of the municipal or citizen-controlled entities.

The ideal concept of adult education and of lifelong, self-directed learning is that an individual can continue throughout life to gain fulfillment and achieve a better quality of life socially, mentally, physically, and educationally. Takamichi Uesugi, Professor of Adult Education, University of Kyoto, Kyoto, Japan (1997) states that one of the main tasks of adult education is to raise people's ability to express their will through participation in the decision making of educational affairs. He feels that this is vital for freedom and democracy. Gelpi (1985) further states that there is no universally accepted concept of education or of lifelong education. He states that lifelong education means making full use of society's human resources by meeting both individual and collective aspirations and needs. The end is the action to do so (Gelpi, 1985). His philosophy is that lifelong education needs to be for all and by all.

4.2 Important Events in the History of Education in Japan

Before World War II

During the ruling period of the Togukawa shoguns from 1603 to 1868, formal education stressed morality and included both military and literary studies for the samurai. Commoners were taught basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, with emphasis also given to other educational areas such as etiquette, calligraphy, tea ceremony, and the use of the abacus (Japan Army Area Handbook, 1999). The goal of "liberal arts learning" was to give adults an understanding of human relations and of the influences of nature (Shimada, 1992).

Within this era, Japan was regarded as a "closed" nation with little or no influence from the outside world. Commodore Matthew Perry's visit in 1853 is noteworthy in that it served to open the doors to trade with other countries. In 1867 the last of the Tokugawa shoguns resigned. The new Meiji era that followed, the Age of Modern Japan, began in 1868 (Thomas, 1993). The Meiji leaders set Japan on a rapid course of modernization and established a public education system to accelerate the accumulation of knowledge of the westernized world.

The fundamental belief was that education served as the foundation for the building of the nation. Missions were sent abroad to study the educational system of leading Western countries. When they returned, they brought with them suggestions for government decentralization, local school boards, and teacher autonomy (Japan Army Handbook, 1999).

Through trial and error, an educational system with a conservative and traditional orientation evolved by the 1890s. This system was more reflective of Japanese values based on Confucian precepts that concerned human relations, service to the state, the pursuit of learning, and morality. In 1890, an Imperial Rescript on Education was disseminated throughout Japan and a strong centralized government control on education generally guided Japanese education until the end of World War II (Shimada, 1992). These years were of great significance in the development of education for adults in Japan.

In the Rescript, the people were strongly advised to respect “the glory of the fundamental character of our Empire, and herein also lies the source of our education.” Authority was to be obeyed and the historic respect for authority became a cornerstone for education. Liberal arts education was mostly eliminated and the curricula became more oriented toward loyalty to the Emperor and State, filial piety, and obedience to social order. Adult education was developed with similar themes with little or no emphasis on liberal education (Thomas, Uesugi, & Shimada, 1997).

Educational Influences after World War II

Following transitions and chaos throughout World War II, by 1945 the Japanese education system was in disarray. During General Douglas McArthur’s Occupation, his policy makers began to establish order in the Japanese education system. The 6-3-3 grade structure (six years elementary, three years middle school, and three years high school) was established, curricula and textbooks were revised, the nationalistic morals course was abolished and replaced with social studies, locally elected school boards were introduced, and a teacher’s union was begun. The Occupation’s goal was to establish more democratic roles in the educational system and to lessen government centralization.

In 1947, the Fundamental Law of Education was passed and became the core of Japan’s education system (Thomas, Uesugi, & Shimada, 1997). It included the statement that “Education shall not be subject to improper control but it shall be directly responsible to the whole people” (Fundamental Law of Education, No. 71). It was followed in 1949 with the Social Education Law that referred to education for adults and the “right to learn” by the people. Article III of the Law stated:

The state and local public bodies shall assist in maintaining a congenial environment in which it is possible for individual citizens to engage at

sundry times and places in cultural and educational activities which shall assist in daily living, by providing various kinds of facilities, sponsoring meetings, and making available information materials necessary for social education (Uesugi, 1996; Shimada, 1992; Thomas 1985).

As a result of the Social Education Law, *kominkans* or citizens' public halls were established in many of the municipalities. The *kominkans* soon became and still remain today central locations for Japanese social education or adult education programs.

The Lifelong Learning Promotion Act of 1990

Beginning in the 1980s, the term "lifelong learning" (*shogai-gakushu*) began to be used more frequently in Japan and is frequently cited today in local papers, magazines, government publications, and other media resources. The concept of lifelong learning advocates a wide spectrum of learning opportunities for each individual over the course of one's lifetime. The overall goal is to create a society of people who can freely choose learning opportunities at any time during their lives and to be recognized for those learning achievements (MESSC, 1997). Many agencies, both profit and non-profit, are now interested in promotion of lifelong learning strategies and programs that will appeal to older adults. Some of these agencies include educational institutions such as universities and colleges; governmental bodies including The Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture (MESSC) and local government boards of education; community sectors such as citizens' groups and volunteer associations; and private businesses.

Awareness of the lifelong learning concept continues to rise each year. A public opinion survey, conducted by the Prime Minister's Office in 1992, showed that the percentage of people who had heard the phrase, "lifelong learning," had risen from 58 percent in 1988 to 64.5 percent in 1992 (MESSC, 1997). Interestingly, in view of the growing awareness of the term, a firm definition or interpretation of "What is lifelong learning?" has not been established (Makino, 1997; Sawano, 1997). Some people believe that it targets certain individuals such as the older population. Others feel that lifelong learning has a leisure-oriented connotation or denotes hobby or special interest activities. Some view it as activities geared to participants who are mainly housewives or retirees. However, the fundamental concept is intended to cover all ages throughout a lifetime.

The Government has been an active advocate of establishing the concept of lifelong learning for the 21st century. In one aspect, because of the Ministry of Education's ambiguous definition of lifelong learning, there is flexibility in interpretation, particularly relating to educational laws (Makino, 1997). The goals of the National Council on Education Reform, an *ad hoc* organization established by the Prime Minister from 1984 to 1987, were to explain lifelong learning as a process of:

- Reducing preoccupation and over emphasis of academic credentials;
- Expanding learning opportunities in response to a growing demand for educational opportunities designed to broaden personal perspectives and provide fulfillment to life. These demands are emerging because of the aging society, higher incomes, increased leisure time, and general maturation of the Japanese society;
- Providing for programs that support citizens in coping with social, economical, and technological changes in society (MESSC, 1997).

To some extent, overall acceptance or understanding of the lifelong learning concept is still more of a realization of what *can* happen, as listed above, rather than what *is* happening (Sawano, 1997).

In 1988, the Lifelong Learning Bureau was established within MESSC and several reports were made on recommendations of lifelong learning objectives. Because of this interest, in June 1990, the Japanese government enacted a law for the "Development of Mechanisms and Measures for the Promotion of Lifelong Learning" (Law for the Promotion of Lifelong Learning). This law was to assist in promoting action in support of lifelong learning to:

- Establish Lifelong Learning Councils at national and prefecture levels comprised of specialists from various fields of the private sector;
- Provide a system to promote lifelong learning at the local level;
- Form a lifelong learning liaison for municipalities and prefectures;
- Develop criteria for projects at the prefecture level.

Further, in accordance with this law, the National Council of Lifelong Learning was established within MESSC (MESSC, 1997).

The Council's role is to facilitate and implement lifelong learning policies and to oversee other councils at a lower governmental level. Since the establishment of the Council, approximately 85 percent of the prefectures have implemented planning systems to coordinate

prefecture boards of education and other public departments. Additionally, many municipalities have advocated lifelong learning through promotional conferences or activities (Sawano, 1997). MESSC has also given subsidies to prefectures and municipalities that have sponsored “model” programs. Although the Law for the Promotion of Lifelong Learning is bureaucratic in nature, it has provided for development of strategies that promote and support lifelong learning activities (Sawano, 1997).

Since the Law was established, many difficulties and precautions concerning the Law have arisen. Uneasiness and controversy have occurred because of the Law’s general ambiguity and lack of clarity as to the exact objectives (Thomas, Uesugi, & Shimada, 1997). There are questions concerning the expansion of the governing roles of prefectures over cities, towns, and villages as well as the promotion of cooperation between educational entities and private companies. Educators and citizens voice concern as to who will assume the governing roles for the municipalities in the future. Concern is also voiced for the continuation of programs designed to promote citizenship and the development of self-directed learning (Uesugi, 1997; Shimada, 1993).

The Bureau of the Management and Coordination Agency of Japan conducted a survey in 1995 and identified the following problems:

- Local public authorities do not eagerly promote lifelong learning activities.
- Coordination between public and private sectors is limited.
- Reorganization of nonformal education into the lifelong learning concept takes time.
- Administration of promotion projects often is incomplete.
- National subsidies have been ineffective in guiding local authorities.
- Uniformity and implementation differ throughout Japan.
- Volunteer training often is not effective.

Additionally, a major concern is related to a centralized top-down administration and budgetary system (Sawano, 1997).

The concept of lifelong learning has become more focused in the last few years, but ambiguity is still present. People tend to apply their own individual interpretations to the intent and the designated goals. There are questions that still need to be addressed such as who assumes the authority to develop and implement programs and to what limits does this authority extend. Educators, government agencies on all levels, private educational organizations, and

citizens are all involved in the changes that are being made toward the future of lifelong learning and the adaptation to the process. Ultimately, the promotion and acceptance of the concept by the Japanese public may prove to be easier than the actual implementation of programs and the actual participation of individuals in lifelong learning programs.

4.3 Providers of Adult Education or Social Education Programs

Adult education programs in Japan have undergone numerous changes and many of the programs have developed under the area called social education. Social education is generally defined as programs designed to provide learning activities or opportunities for adults. Youth programs may also be included in social education as informal or non-school related events (Uesugi, 1996). The 1949 Social Education Law, Article III, confirmed the principle of adult education as a right to learn by all people regardless of age.

As Japan approaches the 21st century, more and better opportunities for adult learning are becoming available and people are having more educational choices. Since the number of potential participants, both retirees and older adults, is increasing, more focus is being given to how this population will want to direct their interests and needs. If educational and governmental organizations are going to promote the concept of lifelong learning and adult education, they must provide appropriate programs to accommodate these individuals.

Participation will be enhanced if programs are free or if fees remain minimal. Locations of the educational facilities need to be convenient to transportation or near to their homes. Class schedules need to be at appropriate times when most adults can participate. Choices of programs need to be made by individual preference and qualification for entrance to the program needs to be based on participants' past educational backgrounds or experience (Uesugi, 1992).

Because they are a growing population with a fairly comfortable financial stability, retirees and older adults are becoming more important in the educational market. Examples of educational programs that are currently being offered to retirees and older adults include *kominkans*; *Inamino Gakuen* (University for the Elderly); private or in-house business resources; universities and colleges; and multimedia resources.

In-House or Business Educational Resources

The training or retraining of older workers in Japan is becoming a more acceptable idea and, in many cases, has become an acceptable part of workforce changes in Japan. This concept has gradually gained support and is helping to change the view that only young workers are trainable. This gradual change has been caused by the graying of the workforce and the extension of the retirement age to 60 at the majority of Japanese enterprises (Osako, 1989). Managers are realizing that in order to meet new technological requirements and continued productivity, older workers are key factors to profitability. However, they must be retrained or taught new skills that are now required for today's technology in the workplace.

More companies are joining the demand for educational programs and are finding that the worker's desire for employment after age 60 remains strong. The government is advocating a lifelong career development plan that each company designs for its employees. The recommendation is for training or educational programs to be implemented within a long-range development plan. Larger companies are sponsoring training programs designed for the older worker, but smaller companies are having difficulty sponsoring such programs because of the added expense and time away from work.

The Ministry of Labor has initiated the National Business Development Center where the government has approved approximately 150 private organizations to be providers of educational programs. Those in the private sector who are providing this service include private universities and colleges; vocational schools; trade and consulting associations and organizations; and media-related educational institutions (Kobayashi, 1996). The MESSC (1997) survey conducted in 1992 found that of the companies that sent employees to off-the-job training, 74.1 percent used industry or private organizations. Only 6.4 percent chose universities or special training colleges.

Businesses who do provide training and educational instruction for workers recognize several constraints. Software and hardware need to be updated; programs are not consistent; needs assessments should be performed in order to meet the learning requirements of the client; standardization is lacking; and financial support is lacking (Kobayashi, 1996).

Surveys show that although the concept of workplace educational programs is growing and being implemented in many companies, the majority of Japanese workers are not offered training opportunities. Those who do participate in programs usually are employees of larger

companies. Many feel that an enormous potential is being neglected due to the lack of training or educational opportunities for workers, particularly those in the over 55-year-old category.

Kominkans (Citizen's Public Halls)

Kominkans or citizen's public halls have offered adult education programs since 1946 (Uesugi, 1996; Shimada, 1987). In Chapter V, Article XX, of the Social Education Law of 1949, the legal basis for their organization was given:

The object of citizens' public halls is to perform various activities for the cause of education, science, and culture by providing the people in a city, town, village, or other specific area with certain types of education fitted for daily life to improve their attainments, improve their health, enable their sentiment, elevate their cultural life, and in general, increase the social welfare of the community (Thomas, 1985).

Three very important prohibitions established for the *kominkans* were that they could not promote programs primarily for profit; they were not to engage in or support activities for a specific political party; and they were not to support a specific religion, denomination, or sect. However, the importance of their establishment was what they were projected to do in the field of adult or social education, not what they could not do (Thomas, 1985).

Following World War II, *kominkans* were described as facilities that provided the following services:

- A educational center where people of a community can meet together, teach and guide each other, and promote culture for each other.
- A center where people can deepen mutual friendships and build foundations for the promotion of self-government.
- A central meeting place where learning and guidance will be given to promote industry in the community.
- A center designed to train people for a democratic life (Thomas, 1985).

From the beginning, the *kominkan* network spread quickly and since 1946 *kominkans* have provided communities, villages, and rural areas a place for residents to participate in learning activities and to meet for other public activities. The *kominkans* have been organized within the municipalities through the efforts of the citizens in the surrounding area and

administered by a managing board or committee consisting of representatives from the local residents. Most of the activities and educational programs are free and require no examinations or pre-qualifications for participation. Programs are developed to accommodate the needs of the particular area. Prefectural boards of education and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture assist through establishment of suggested criteria, guidance, subsidies, and grants (Uesugi, 1996).

By 1957, 80 percent of all cities, towns, and villages had a *kominkan*; by 1967, 91 percent of the municipalities had one or more. During this period, crucial changes occurred within rural areas and towns. Because of economic conditions, many people were moving from rural areas to the cities and the population was becoming urbanized. Reevaluations and determinations were made as to the importance of a *kominkan* in a community. By adapting to the changing needs of the community, *kominkans* continued to grow into the surrounding municipalities as towns became incorporated within cities.

Kominkans remain a vital source of community involvement today but changes have continued to occur through the years. One change that has been of great concern to the citizens is the trend to allow decisions about programs and activities to be made by professionals (Thomas, 1985). Also, changes have occurred in both government policies and society's influence on the *kominkan's* educational objectives.

Other issues facing the *kominkans* include the acceptance of financial support from the government and the effects and influences this can make on the programs' directions. Social educators express concerns about the role of *kominkan* advisory committees and their appointments. Finally, with the current stagnant economic conditions of Japan, expenditures on social education are being questioned. A debate exists as to whether vocational education for adults should be offered in addition to liberal education programs for adults. The idea is that vocational training, which is now mostly offered by employers or private agencies, will alter the *kominkan's* designated purpose of social education (Thomas, 1985).

In 1993, there were 17,562 *kominkans* in Japan, mainly located in the municipalities. In 1992, a total of 8,732,654 persons participated in 179,484 courses at *kominkans* (Uesugi, 1996). Generally classes are offered in literature and history, with two of the most popular courses being the history of Japan and local history of the area. In addition, cultural courses are offered in *shogi* (chess-like game) and *go* (board strategy game), calligraphy, art appreciation, *ikebana*

(flower arranging), and drama. Community involvement courses discuss town and community improvement projects. Job-oriented programs assist in refinement of job-related skills and computer instruction. Presently, some of the most popular programs include self-improvement courses that stimulate both mental and physical health and incorporate the lifelong learning concept. These courses offer instruction in how to enhance one's enjoyment of life, fitness and health care, and physical exercise (Kawaobe, 1995; Yamaguchi, 1997).

In addition to instructional benefits, *kominkans* also offer a source of socialization that is often difficult to achieve for those who work long hours and commute long distances. Retirees and older adults express the fact that participation provides them with socialization opportunities which they have previously not been able to enjoy. This, along with the opportunity for continued learning, lends support to the total concept of *kominkans*.

Shinagawa Ward's Adult Education Center, Shinagawa, Japan

The Shinagawa Ward's adult education center, although not organized under the Social Education Law of 1949, is structured on the basis of a *kominkan* and has similar objectives and functions. The center is located in one of the oldest sections of Tokyo. The facility is a large four-story building in the middle of a congested, crowded Japanese community. It is well maintained with modern facilities and reflects generous funding and community interest. The administrators have academic backgrounds in adult education and focus on issues that are of particular interest to retirees and older citizens within the Shinagawa Ward.

Three of the students from the center who were interviewed, two women and one man, were retirees in their early 60s. They explained why they were attending and the benefits they gained. The gentleman said that he had little time to take such courses or to make friends during his working career. When he retired, he found he did not have friends or acquaintances in his local area and visiting previous work friends was impossible or inconvenient because of the long commuting distances. He did not want to sit home with nothing to do. He found that joining the adult education activities gave him a reason to study, to remain mentally stimulated, and to learn new information that met his interests such as history and computers. It also gave him the opportunity to meet and make friends within his community.

Both the women had been "office ladies" and, after retirement, had missed the socialization with others. This was the major reason for their decisions to participate in the

programs offered at the center. A second reason was for the enjoyment of the programs and the opportunity to learn. Their particular interest was toward health-oriented courses and Japanese history. The man and the women expressed that they had limited opportunities to study history during their early educational years because of the restricted government-influenced curricula and textbooks. They felt a need to extend their comprehension of internationalism and to better understand Japan's role in world events.

All three students were taking the history of Shinagawa, the area in which they lived. There were approximately 68 people taking the class, all in the 55 or older age group and about a 50-50 division of men and women. It was a three-month course with lectures once a week. A text and notebook were provided and open discussion among participants was encouraged.

Kominkans and adult education centers based on the structure and objectives of a *kominkan* are examples of learning institutions which have developed current goals for today's older citizens. These facilities create a learning system where the community and society work together with an emphasis on "learning to learn" and self-directed learning to meet lifelong educational goals.

Universities and Colleges

Currently, there are only a few universities or colleges in Japan that offer adult education in a credited, academic program; however, many are now making efforts to make collegiate education more accessible. A growing number is offering non-credit adult education programs. In 1995, 236 universities implemented a special selection process for the undergraduate level of study. Approximately 4,100 people were admitted. In 1995, 33 universities and 113 graduate schools offered day/evening courses and 11 national or private universities offered evening courses at the graduate level. Most programs in which older adults can participate are extension courses featuring health and medical issues, world affairs, and recreational subjects (Nishide, 1990).

Some universities offer the opportunity to become an "auditor" in an undergraduate or graduate course (Nishide, 1990). Tokyo University defines an auditor as a person who wishes to take one or several courses selectively or who wants to engage in research. The individual may be admitted provided his presence does not interfere with the regular class activities. An appropriate Dean grants admission on the basis of a qualification test and other considerations in

accordance to university regulations. In some cases, the qualification test may be omitted (Thomas, 1985).

Adult students enrolled in university or college courses remain few in number. The 55 or older student is almost non-existent. Difficult entrance examinations are a deterrent, if required. Other problems include costs, lack of adult education instructors, inadequate facilities, lack of interest by the institutions, and lack of interest in older adults in returning to a formal educational setting following retirement or in older years (Nishide, 1990).

Why is there such a low number of adult students interested in higher education? Two theories are: (1) there is a decrease in need for further education that is related to professional jobs, and (2) there is a cultural influence of group-oriented participation. Many people in Japan work after retirement, but usually they have jobs that are less professional than their previous careers and are not related to promotions or job enhancements. Older adults regard improving job skills or formal academic studies such as international relations or computer technology as hobbies.

The cultural influence of group activities and organizations are more popular as people age. Although self-directed or self-centered learning becomes more evident in later life, most prefer group-oriented activities. There are programs that can merge self-directed learning with group learning such as tea ceremony or calligraphy. These are Japanese cultural arts that demand individual learning and focus but are group-oriented in application and participation.

More institutions of higher education are considering programs that are directed toward older adults. Cooperative programs are being developed with *kominkans* and other community organizations and groups. As the older population increases in the coming years, adult education for individuals over 55 will be an issue that will require changes for the universities and colleges in the near future. The efforts may prove to be reciprocal. As the universities and colleges focus on programs that meet the needs and interests of older adults, more older adults will want to study at educational institutions.

***Inamino Gakuen* (University for the Elderly)**

Inamino Gakuen is the first educational institution in Japan that was specifically founded for older adult students with the goal to continue lifelong learning experiences. It was established in 1969 in the city of Kakogawa in Hyogo Prefecture at the site of the former

perfectural agricultural junior college. The college is located on a campus of over 45,000 square meters within a ten-minute walk to a railroad station. One of the major features of the college is the serene, natural setting in a forest-like environment. *Inamino Gakuen* provides a four-year undergraduate program and also a two-year graduate curriculum.

The construction of a university for the older adult was first proposed in 1968. After considerable debate, the Prefectural Board of Education budgeted 2,300,000 yen for the project. Because of the lack of managerial experience and previous institutional models, Mr. Takashi Fukuchi, the first appointed president, and a planning committee made plans to focus on cultural activities and to avoid courses that were only for entertainment. After approval by the governor and Prefectural Education Committee, *Inamino Gaken* opened on July 1, 1969. At first only a one-year program was offered, but soon due to the demand, it gradually grew to a four-year college for older adults. The two-year graduate program was begun in April 1977 to accommodate the interests and needs of many of the students and other older adult learners.

One of the main objectives of the college has been to make the courses challenging. Their philosophy has been that programs should not merely be created to “kill time” or just to do something for fun. Most of their students are eager to update themselves to current world events and to learn new ideas. There are three main objectives to the curriculum: to challenge the way students think, to develop students’ mental ability, and to promote a healthy lifestyle (Fukuchi, 1985).

Students are required to take general education courses with emphasis on liberal arts education. Prerequisites include literature, philosophy, history, economics, religion, and current events. The second part of a student’s curriculum includes major subjects and the third is to participate in club activities. Students choose a major upon entrance into the college in order to gain specialized knowledge and to encourage lifelong interest in the subject. Club participation is encouraged in order to gain new hobbies and to improve socialization.

A typical day in the life of a student at *Inamino Gakuen* begins at 9:30 a.m., usually following a commute that can be as long as two to three hours. Throughout the day students participate in calisthenics, lectures, club activities, and socialization. Classes are conducted one day a week for each grade level (freshmen attend on Monday, sophomores on Tuesday, etc.).

Most of the students are between the ages of 65 and 74 with some students over 80. One of the most popular majors is horticulture. Fees are kept to a minimum and, though not required in the beginning, have been necessary since 1977 (Fukuchi, 1985).

As more students expressed interest in the program, a correspondence program, The University of the Air, was begun in 1977. This education program utilizes Radio *Kansai*, a private radio station, and therefore has limited broadcasting range. Lectures are usually broadcast on Saturday mornings and follow a schedule outlined in an accompanying booklet. Participants respond by sending required reports to the lecturer and, at the end of the course, attend an overnight wrap-up session at the college.

Industries related to the program have evolved and craft shops sell the students' handmade products. In addition, several sister schools have been established that offer a less extensive curricula and hold classes in local public facilities.

Because of the model of *Inamino Gakuen*, there is a heightened awareness of the importance of education for the elderly. With its goals of lifelong learning, the school has had a major impact on citizens in the Hyogo Prefecture as well as throughout Japan.

Multimedia Resources

Educational and distance learning resources in the multimedia technology area of education are rapidly growing and expanding into many areas. Radio, television, and information technology production companies are increasingly interested in producing products that the older populations will purchase and use. Meeting the needs and interests of this audience is one concern; however, multimedia companies are also interested in ensuring continuing financial profitability by delivering products that will offer the most return.

The Japanese Broadcasting Corporation, *Nihon Hso Kyokai* (NHK), offers a wide range of distance educational products and programs at different levels of learning. Radio and television programs include subjects such as languages, music, arts, hobbies, as well as some vocational courses. Presently, these programs are usually offered in the least popular time slots of early morning and late evening since daytime educational programs are mostly geared to children and youth, the majority of the viewing or listening audience. However, as the older population continues to grow, the projections are that more adult educational programs will be

aired in daytime schedules and new channels will be developed with programs specifically geared to older adults.

As technology advances, multimedia educational opportunities will allow the learner to receive information and to actively respond. Computer-based training, web-based training, CD-ROMs, and other forms of non-classroom education can be linked to remote areas and will alleviate regional imbalances of learning opportunities. Multimedia is an expanding area of education in Japan with rapid growth seen for the near future.

4.4 Participants: Who are doing what, when, for how long, and why?

Recently there has been a steady increase in the number of adults who are participating in learning activities. In a public opinion survey conducted by the Japanese Prime Minister's Office in 1988, 40.1 percent of adults had participated in a learning activity in 1987. The next survey in 1992 showed an increase to 47.6 percent. *Kominkan* participation in courses and lectures rose from approximately 7.6 million people in 1989 to over 8.7 million in 1992. Another recent trend is the growing number of university students outside of the traditional age group (MESSC, 1997).

NHK also conducted a survey of adult learners in 1992. In both the NHK survey and the Prime Minister's survey, it was found that the primary reason for participation by learners was to enrich life and to enjoy learning for its own sake. Health issues and making friends were tied for second. Following those were reasons that included using experiences in work-related areas, acquiring skills useful for everyday life, and broadening one's knowledge.

The most popular health courses include health techniques, medicine, and nutrition. Sports include jogging, walking, swimming, and exercise. Hobbies include music, art, flower arrangement, dance, tea ceremony, and other cultural interests. Work skills; household skills such as cooking and dressmaking; and social issues such as history and literature were other choices.

More than 40 percent of the respondents to the surveys stated that they felt that they were enriching their lives and improving their physical and mental abilities through the process of lifelong learning. Twenty-five percent were learning for work-related reasons. The MESSC survey in 1996 showed that personal fulfillment was the most important objective with over 50

percent participating in learning through groups, lectures, courses, and culture centers such as museums and libraries (MESSC, 1997).

The MESSC reported that a private organization's survey conducted in 1996 revealed that books and magazines were the primary learning methods used most. Other methods that followed included group learning (classes), television, private lessons, friends, culture centers, lectures, newspapers, tapes, company trainings, radio, correspondence courses, videos, special training colleges, universities/junior colleges, vocational training schools, and the University of the Air (MESSC, 1997).

In the 50 year old and older age group, the most popular learning methods were through lectures and classes involving group learning. Approximately 52 percent enjoyed learning within a group. Over 60 percent also participated in lecture courses. The least popular methods of learning were formal educational classes at universities, junior colleges, and special training schools. The most often cited reason for participation was personal fulfillment and enjoyment; however, the older adults' choices of learning were definitely influenced by required entrance examinations, convenience of transportation or access, and socialization opportunities among peers (MESSC, 1997).

In the 1996 MESSC survey, some adults indicated they had been participating in learning for over ten years in various learning opportunities. Many of the adults surveyed expressed a desire to advance to higher learning levels and stated that they would definitely continue their learning process (MESSC, 1997). This growing interest in continued learning is an indication that research and studies need to be made and plans developed for the future expansion of adult education.

Chapter 5

Case Studies

5.1 Introduction

The five case studies that are described in this chapter focus on Japanese individuals who are retiring or have retired. All range in age from mid to late 60s and experienced the post-World War II changes in educational reforms following the Occupation of Japan. Each has had a varied background, and many of their life and work experiences have influenced their process of adaptation to retirement.

Two persons have been teachers and three have been businessmen. All have been devoted employees throughout their careers. Changing roles in their personal and societal lifestyles following retirement are addressed as well as their approaches for the future. The case studies of the individuals include:

- Past educational influences
- Transition and adaptation processes from pre-retirement to post-retirement
- Future educational and lifelong learning opportunities through group programs, self directed study, or both
- Opportunities for continued activity, both physically and mentally
- Desired quality of life after retirement
- Needs and interests for the future.

5.2 Case Study 1: Career Woman and *Chanoyu* Teacher

“As a little girl, I knew that learning English would be important to me for the rest of my life. I also knew that because I was a girl I would be limited in my career choices. English could open doors.”
(personal communication, Ms. A, 1998)

Ms. A has always been an avid learner and now at the age of 69, she still looks forward to new challenges and exhibits a great curiosity for life. Although her English skills are highly advanced, she worries that she needs to improve her English. She feels that there are doors still to be opened.

Born in Yokosuka, Japan, in 1930, she has seen Yokosuka grow from a small naval port town to a suburban city of Tokyo. Because of the town’s strategic location in the Miura Peninsula on Tokyo Bay, Yokosuka was the site of major naval commands and shipbuilding activities in the 1930s. In the early to mid-1940s, the town’s population was ruled by military authority and only residents of the area were able to enter or leave. High walls were erected near the naval base and Yokosuka became a major Japanese naval facility. By 1941, Yokosuka Naval Base was well known throughout the world for shipbuilding, and by the beginning of World War II, this area was a major player for support as a military command center (Thompkins, 1981).

Ms. A remembers growing up in this environment with most of the men of the town working for or being associated with the shipyards and naval base. Yokosuka was a bustling center of commerce with many stores, restaurants, and entertainment areas that catered to the naval employees and military staff.

Ms. A remembers that when she was a young girl, one of the most intriguing places she liked to visit was an old Japanese restaurant located in the downtown area only a few blocks from the naval base. She would go with her mother who worked there occasionally. Built in the mid-1800s, the restaurant had many *tatami* or straw-matted rooms that were partitioned from one another by sliding wood doors and walls. Within the restaurant was a large room with a stage where *geishas* would entertain the Japanese military staff with singing, dancing, and playing the *koto*, a Japanese harp-like instrument.

At this time of her life, Ms. A thought being a *geisha* was what she wanted to do in life. While she waited for her mother, she would secretly watch their performances and practice the dances when she returned home. She realized that a *geisha*'s life was demanding and that to be a good *geisha*, she would have to be dedicated, studious, and well versed in the cultural arts. Ms. A was most willing to follow in this career path, but her family had other plans for her. Both her mother and father vetoed any *geisha* plans, and because of her "good brain," she was destined to disregard the *geisha* life she thought she wanted and to pursue a formal education in the public schools of Yokosuka.

After Japan's surrender in World War II, U.S. Navy personnel occupied Yokosuka Naval Base. As the Allied troops arrived in Yokosuka, the citizens of the city were afraid that they would be targeted for revenge because of losses during the war. Propaganda depicted American sailors as murderers, rapists, and plunderers (Thompkins, 1981). Ms. A remembers thinking that all Americans were barbarians and feeling fear as more American servicemen arrived in Yokosuka. Gradually, the Japanese began to feel that the propaganda was not true and the people of Yokosuka gained confidence that Americans were not going to retaliate against them.

One of the major changes made by the Occupation forces was the elevation in the status of women. Military authorities felt that because the Japanese men were working to support their families and perhaps had more dislike for Americans, the Japanese women were better suited to lead reconstruction efforts. Women were thought to be more sympathetic to the plight of others and would assist in the occupational efforts with less resistance (Thompkins, 1981).

Because of this woman-oriented initiative, Ms. A had a "door" of opportunity opened for her. She had been a diligent student and learning was exciting to her. She had chosen "hard" subjects instead of "soft" studies ("girl-stuff such as cooking") in her education programs. With a talent for languages, she was top in her class in English. During the time of Occupation, the American military made major changes to the Japanese educational system as described in Chapter 4. Ms. A remembers that she was finishing her schooling when the 6-3-3 system was established.

Since she showed great English aptitude, she was introduced by one of her teachers to an American personnel representative on Yokosuka base. At the age of 20, she was temporarily employed by the base to work in the housing department. Later she was hired to be a negotiator-interpreter for American military staff and families who moved into the Yokosuka area. Because

of the lack of base housing, living quarters were often needed off base. Ms. A served as a “go-between” for Japanese realtors or individuals willing to rent to Americans and the U.S. Navy housing office in Yokosuka.

In her early years of employment, this was an almost impossible job and the position demanded much diplomacy for success because of suspicions between Americans and Japanese. However, through this job, she felt that she was able to learn many things. Although she never obtained a college degree, she was exposed to many learning and educational experiences. She relates, “My English skills became better and I learned a lot of American slang – good and bad. I learned much knowledge in psychology, communication, and international relations.”

Ms. A was one of the few Japanese women at that time who worked in a career-type position. She also is one of the few Japanese women who began her career as a young adult and continued working until 1988 when she retired at the age of 58, the mandatory retirement age at that time. She felt her job was very important and she chose not to marry.

Since the age of twelve, Ms. A has also continued another learning experience. This is the study of *Chanoyu* or the traditional Japanese study of tea ceremony originating in Japan in the 16th century. *Chanoyu* is based on a series of choreographed procedures that begin with the preparation of serving tea in a ceremonial manner. A step-by-step method of preparing and drinking tea is performed. This Japanese cultural art is based on oral instruction and is passed on from teacher to student through a method that cannot be learned through a textbook.

Chanoyu is described by many as a lifelong study because true perfection of serving tea is an art that can always be improved. Ms. A has become an accomplished teacher and has many students. Not only is she still teaching her own students, but she also continues to take lessons from her teacher of many years who is 93 years old. With this tradition of teaching and learning, *Chanoyu* is a true example of lifelong learning. Ms. A plans to always teach and always continue to take lessons.

When Ms. A retired from her job in 1988, she made plans for activities she wanted to accomplish soon after retirement. She wanted to move to a small apartment high on a hill overlooking Yokosuka. She wanted to increase the number of her *Chanoyu* students. She wanted to continue her own *Chanoyu* lessons. She wanted to volunteer to be a guide at a Japanese art museum in Atami, a couple of hours train ride from Yokosuka. She wanted to go to lectures concerning the tea ceremony that involve subjects such as ceramics, flower arranging,

poetry, cooking, calligraphy, and history. She wanted to learn to write poetry and to join a poetry class. She wanted to attend tea ceremony demonstrations as a student and as a teacher. And in her spare time, she wanted to be a good friend to her neighbors and family. She had an agenda.

Ms. A is currently doing all she set out to do. Her calendar is full and she says she does not know how she ever had time to work. She is healthy and maintains a healthy diet. She is careful of what she eats, walks many miles in a week, and socializes with her friends. Because of her limited pension, she is frugal with her expenses, but does not feel deprived.

During her discussion of learning and her life after retirement, Ms. A made more positive than negative references. She felt that being interested in people and keeping busy are two factors that have been important to her. She also felt that one should not be afraid to accept challenges and try new things. She expressed the feeling that retirement is a stage in life that requires adaptation to change and that an individual must accept responsibility for expanding his or her own learning environment. She felt that retirees must make a conscious effort to expand their world outside the walls of retirement and not only make plans, but actively do the tasks involved in the plans.

Adult education programs that provide a learning experience can prove to be a valuable resource for such educational activities. This is the reason she currently volunteers at a museum. In this setting, she feels she is still learning. Each time she conducts a group of visitors through the museum, she learns more about the items in the museum and their history. She is also enrolled in a community-sponsored poetry class. In this educational setting, she enjoys both learning to write poems and socializing with the group. She also attends a *kominkan* when there are courses being offered that are of interest to her.

Although her transition to retirement has gone well and she does not wish to return to a working environment, Ms. A does admit that there are definitely adjustments following retirement. In her case, her most difficult adjustment was to accept that she was free to make her own decisions as to how she would conduct each day. Having had a defined schedule for so many years, she stated that she experienced moments of uncertainty.

Culturally she has had a different retirement experience than most Japanese women. She never married and she worked outside of the home for most of her life; therefore, staying at home was an adjustment after she retired. She feels that because of her career and background

she now has the need to participate in learning opportunities within the community. She does not enjoy staying at home and prefers to be active and involved.

In the future, Ms. A plans to continue volunteering at a museum, teaching tea ceremony classes, taking poetry and piano classes, attending musical and drama events, and visiting friends. Recently after reviewing at her calendar and seeing few vacant days, she stated, “You see how much I am enjoying my life” (personal communication, June 26, 1999). She advocates staying active, both physically and mentally, and taking advantage of learning opportunities.

5.3 Case Study 2: Professor and Scientist

“Before you retire, your daily life is structured. Your work life is structured. The day after you retire, your daily life suddenly becomes unstructured. Your work life is unstructured. A major change in your quality of life has occurred.” (personal communication, Dr. B, 1999)

One of the first learning experiences that Dr. B feels made a major impact on his life was moving from his home in Tokyo at the age of twelve to the rural farm setting of his grandparents. This was an enormous change of lifestyle and one that a “city” boy did not particularly want to do. World War II was being fought and conditions within Tokyo were deteriorating. His parents felt that life would be healthier, safer, and more stable if he moved to his grandparents’ farm.

It was not until the end of the War that Dr. B returned to his home in Tokyo. During his three years absence from Tokyo, he had learned many things that formal education would not have provided. He had learned to do daily chores that are required on a farm. He had learned how to plant and maintain a garden and how important this was in order to have enough to eat. He had also learned more fully the value of respect from his grandfather.

Being born into a family who greatly valued education, Dr. B realized from a very early age that he would someday have a career in the educational world. His father was a professor and, as in the older Japanese tradition where sons followed in their fathers’ footsteps, Dr. B knew that he, too, would probably become a professor. He was intelligent and made good grades. He did not have to study long hours like others and developed a somewhat lazy attitude toward school. This was particularly true when he returned from the farm to Tokyo. The Occupation was underway and the educational system was being reorganized. During this reorganization of school schedules, Dr. B was in the age group that overlapped in grade levels. He related that for one year he repeated courses he had previously taken which added to his lack of a motivation to study.

Dr. B was accepted for undergraduate work at Tokyo University, considered one of the top universities in Japan. During his university studies, he became interested in science and chose a career path that led to both clinical and educational medicine. He became a doctor and a professor.

Continuing his studies as a postgraduate student in the United States, Dr. B began to do original medical research. It was during this postgraduate study that he realized his main goal for his profession was to be a medical researcher. This was an area he found challenging and in which he had great interest.

He returned to Japan and accepted a position on the faculty of a private medical college. Throughout his career he was active in international research and performed cooperative research with several colleges, universities, and research institutions in other countries. He traveled throughout Japan giving lectures on his research work. In his role as a professor, he taught classes and also served as an advisor to graduate and postgraduate students. As an educator, he was active in governmental educational committees at the national level.

Dr. B enjoyed his work and being busy. He worked long hours, leaving home in the early morning and not returning until very late at night. Many of his weekends were spent at the college or in the laboratory. His family life was limited to Sundays, the only day of the week that he spent at home. His family accepted this schedule because it was typical of the traditional Japanese way of life.

Recently Dr. B retired at age 68 under the mandatory retirement age at his college. Because the retirement age at some educational institutions in Japan is extended, he actually worked a few years longer than he would have in private businesses. He knew when he would be retiring, but he says that he was not ready to retire. Dr. B felt that there were still things to do and research to be performed. For the first time in his life, he has no definite plans for his future activities.

Dr. B expresses the feeling that adjustment to retirement is not the only major change in his life that he is experiencing. The other adjustment that perhaps is even more of a change to his lifestyle is simply becoming older. He has found the aging process limiting in a society that respects elders but also expects older adults to become less active.

Presently he is interested in becoming computer literate. During his career, he was never required to learn to operate computers and particularly did not learn any keyboard functions. With today's widespread use of computers, he finds it somewhat embarrassing that he is now in the non-computer user group. He has purchased a computer and plans to learn how to use it. Although there are computer classes available both in community groups and private computer

schools, he is somewhat hesitant to participate as a student. He is hoping to learn some of the basics before attending a class.

When asked about participating in adult education opportunities through his community or joining some hobby groups, Dr. B feels he is not ready at this time. His immediate plan for the future is to look for part-time employment although he feels that this may not be easy to accomplish. At the present time, he realizes that he has not adequately planned for retirement; it had always been something in the future. Because of this, he feels that he needs time to adjust to his new role in society and in his family. Being at home during the daytime has changed both his lifestyle and his wife's. He still does not know exactly how he will adjust to retirement and in what activities or educational programs he will choose to participate.

Because of his medical background, Dr. B is very interested in staying healthy and exercises daily. He feels that longevity is a result of an active daily life and of being mentally challenged. Looking back, Dr. B feels that the most critical impact on society during the 20th century was the discovery of antibiotics. Looking forward into the 21st century, he feels that a fulfilling life for older adults and retirees will not come scientifically or through a pill, but will be through one's active efforts to stay physically fit. As a past educator, Dr. B also feels that education and continued learning are critical in creating opportunities to improve and maintain a good quality of life.

5.4 Case Study 3: Lawyer and Company Executive

“I don’t want to retire. I want to keep involved. Work is very important to me and, although golf is my passion, I want to keep working.” (personal communication, Mr. C, 1998)

When Mr. C entered college, he chose law as his goal for a career. The main reason he decided to pursue a law degree was to study the actions of people. He always has found observing and interpreting people’s actions as a psychological study in human nature. He particularly finds the study of people from different cultures and their approach to living both interesting and challenging to understand.

From an early age, Mr. C has enjoyed challenges. Born in 1930 and growing up in Tokyo, he remembers that school was not drudgery; it was exciting. During World War II, he was also affected with changes in the educational system, especially during the Occupation. Curricula and schedules were changed and new policies were established.

After graduating from Tokyo University with a degree in law, Mr. C became a traditional Japanese businessman who is employed by a company directly out of college and works for one company throughout his career. Because of this traditional work pattern in the Japanese culture, individuals never have any thoughts about moving or changing jobs or joining another company. Dedication to the company remains constant throughout one’s total working career. The company provides security, stability, and lifetime employment.

As a participant in this lifelong career system, Mr. C proceeded through the standard steps of advancement and promotions within the company. Exhibiting managerial skills, he assumed a career track that led him into the executive level of the company. During this time period, his only education or on-the-job training came from coworkers or by observation and participation. There were no classes or formal educational programs.

One trait that Mr. C has always had is curiosity. “Why” has been an important word in his life. This curiosity led him to ask questions and to want to know more about the total business operations. One specific area was international business. After working for his company for many years, he decided to apply for an overseas position in the United States. After being selected for the position, he became a vice-president of the company’s corporate office in the United States.

When he first arrived in the United States, he felt he was in a classroom of cultural differences and surprisingly found his English to be much less proficient than he had thought. He began the learning process to adapt to the Western corporate environment, American's traditions, differences in business procedures, and cultural differences. He found there were many international issues that he needed to learn more about. Again, he found the learning process to be exciting rather than discouraging.

In addition to the on-the-job learning opportunities that Mr. C experienced during his five-year stay in America, he became an avid golfer and, through lessons and practice, improved his game very effectively. He and his family enjoyed the American lifestyles and adapted quite easily. After five years as the corporate vice-president, the normal overseas rotation for Japanese companies, he and his family returned to Tokyo where he assumed his previous position in his company.

Upon his return to Japan, he recalls he had cultural shock, not from American culture, but from readjusting to Japanese culture. Daily schedules were different, work hours were different, business procedures were different, and family lifestyles were different. He had to readjust to the Japanese lifestyle.

Soon after returning to Japan, Mr. C changed job positions and was reassigned as a corporate manager to a subsidiary company of his parent company. In Japan prior to one's retirement, this reassignment often occurs and is culturally acceptable and expected. As noted in Chapter 3 of this research, this action of reassignment is described by the subsidiary company as accepting employees who are "descended from heaven" and reference is made to the "parachuted" employees.

Again, Mr. C found new challenges and did not look upon this time in his life as a "downsizing" time. It was a leveling time, a time to look toward the future. Knowing that he would retire at the end of three years at the new company, he began to make plans. Being competent on the computer keyboard, he began learning more about computer skills by not only becoming more computer literate but also becoming acquainted with software and applications.

Mr. C knew that when he officially retired from his company, his next step was a new career. He wanted to return to the United States to work as a consultant. To do this, he had to remain current in all aspects of his profession as well as continue learning. His plans have

become a reality and after retirement, he has assumed a new position in a new career in the United States.

Mr. C looks at retirement not as a time to stop, but as a time to reassess and take action. Understanding that some people want retirement to be a reversal of busy schedules and work, he prefers not to assume this scenario of retirement. He wants to continue working and golfing. He feels that retirement means planning and making choices. With his interest in psychology, he feels that pre-retirement is a time for personal reflection to determine what is best for each person. Family, tradition, culture, health, and financial stability are all factors that influence one's decisions. But after assessing these factors, he believes that following a lifelong plan for the future is important.

Participation in adult education programs and self-directed learning activities is a step in developing a fulfilling schedule, keeping active, and learning new things. Mr. C continues golf lessons, attends concerts and lectures, volunteers in a mentoring program, and is looking forward to participating in educational tours to other countries.

5.5 Case Study 4: Executive and Grandfather

“I’m not looking forward to old age. I don’t want to be a grandfather.” (personal communication, Mr. D, 1992)

Growing up as a youth in a small rural village in northern Japan, Mr. D was interested in pursuing a career in business. Through the traditional steps of education, he graduated from college with a degree in economics. As described in the previous case studies, he too was affected by the reorganization of the Japanese education system in the 1940s as changes were implemented because of World War II and later by the Occupation’s reorganization. However, because his family lived a long distance from Tokyo, the impact of many elements of the War did not affect them directly.

Following the traditional process of becoming an employee in a company and proceeding to a lifelong employment relationship, Mr. D joined a large Japanese trading company and began a working career that involved business management. One of his job requirements involved traveling on business to many areas of the world.

Later in his career when Mr. D was offered the opportunity to move to England to assume a managerial position, he and his family eagerly accepted. He felt this was a step in his career that could lead to more professional advances in the company. During his three-year residency in England, he and his family looked at it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Even though he worked long hours during the week, they enjoyed weekends by actively exploring and traveling throughout Britain.

At the end of the three years after their return to Japan, Mr. D assumed his previous position and through his career has followed gradual advancement in managerial roles within his company. He has always had an office staff and has not needed to use a computer or to learn computer skills. His on-the-job training has been through learning new skills following promotions and advancements. He has participated in only a few formal educational programs.

Mr. D expressed concern for many of the issues that he is facing in the near future when he officially retires. He is hesitant to accept a position in the Silver Society or older adult status. A few of the issues he is facing involve what to do with his life, how to fill his days with activities that are of interest to him, and how to adjust to being at home fulltime. The last issue is

particularly worrisome to him because his normal daily schedule has been leaving early for work and getting home late. He feels that both he and his wife will have adjustments to make.

Mr. D is not particularly interested in computers or in learning how to use them. He is interested in golf, but feels the cost is prohibitive in Japan. He does not have many friends in his home community and his work friends are either still working or live long distances away. Because of his work schedule, he has been limited in developing hobbies and presently finds reading to be the most relaxing and satisfactory way to spend his leisure time. He is not sure that participating in either educational or volunteer programs is what he wishes to do immediately upon retirement.

In the introductory quote at the beginning of this case study, Mr. D expressed that he was not looking forward to aging or grandparenthood. Becoming a grandparent to him meant he was old. Both events have occurred since he made that statement. Interestingly, he still agrees with the first part of his statement. He is not looking forward to the aging process and has concerns about making the transitions to the elder role and adjusting to many of the required changes.

As to the second part of his statement, Mr. D finds that he has become enthusiastic in accepting the role of a grandfather. At the present time, he has two grandchildren who make him feel younger rather than older. He qualifies his statement by saying that he feels young mentally, but the energy level required to keep up with his grandchildren makes him feel old.

Mr. D will retire in a year. He is currently assessing his educational and lifelong learning options. He realizes that changes are going to occur in his life and he needs to make plans in order to minimize his adjustments.

5.6 Case Study 5: International Executive

“As a recycled company employee, I am balancing retirement with unretirement. This period of my life is retirement in slow motion.” (personal communication, Mr. E, 1998)

Mr. E has had a similar lifestyle and career as Mr. C and Mr. D. Within the Japanese traditional role of a businessman, Mr. E has followed the lifetime track of education, company employment, company promotions, and career advancement. His personal life has included a college degree, long work hours, little family time, and limited formal or on-the-job educational opportunities.

Two differences occur in Mr. E's profile. First, his job required frequent travel and he was away from Japan for many weeks or months throughout his career. He is internationally astute, having been on short-term assignments or recurring travel to many different countries throughout the world. The second difference is that he retired two years ago but is in the “boomerang” position where he is continuing to work for his parent company as a consultant. As referenced in Chapter 3, this style of rehiring former employees, particularly as consultants in managerial positions, is becoming more visible in Japan.

Mr. E enjoys his new position and, although his hours can still be long and some travel is necessary, the overall demands of his position have lessened and he is able to have more leisure time with his family. Extensive travel is not in his future agenda for life after retirement. He realizes his wife was not able to travel with him, and he hopes that they can enjoy sightseeing tours to other countries.

Through necessary job-related computer requirements, Mr. E has developed novice ability in operating a computer. He does not discount that improving his computer skills may be an educational option he will pursue when he permanently retires next year. He has not thought extensively about life after retirement. He feels that he will be able to share in the family obligations of providing care for his parents and parents-in-law. His wife has been mainly responsible for this obligation.

Mr. E feels that there will be major adjustments and changes in his life after retirement and after he assumes the elder role in Japanese society. However, he is pleased that he has had the post-retirement opportunity to serve as a consultant in order to mentally prepare for the

transition from full-time work to retirement. Two of the major changes he is looking forward to are (1) having flexibility in his daily life and (2) choosing learning opportunities that will be personally fulfilling for himself and his wife.

5.7 Summary of Case Studies

In the five case studies, the individuals share similarities and also major differences in the transitions and methods of adjustment to changes in their personal lives following retirement. For their mutual future goal of keeping mentally and physically active, all felt that some form of adult educational opportunities were important. They recognize that retiring from an all inclusive work environment and becoming older are turning points in their lives and require major adjustments in their activity patterns. Retirement and aging bring new rhythms into their lives that can create both positive and negative changes.

Chapter 6

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

6.1 Summary

Japan is changing and with change comes challenge. Today's generation of older adults is facing societal and lifestyle challenges that are different from any previous generation. This Silver Society of Japan, the 55 or older individuals, has worked hard to build the economy after World War II. They are postwar pioneers who have initiated new technology to meet the challenges of the 20th century.

The majority of this generation joined in a post-war exodus from rural surroundings to urban or suburban areas in the cities of Japan. This generation has adapted to Westernized innovations and technology and assisted in establishing Japan as one of the major industrial nations in the world. This 55 and older generation of Japan is now retiring from the work environment and is assuming a role referred to as that of an older adult, an elder, or a senior citizen.

Having experienced the changes of the past five decades, these retirees and older adults are now meeting new demands. One critical decision to be made by many in this generation is how they are going to spend the next three or more decades of their lives. The era of this aging society has created a new stage of recognition and awareness that healthy, vital people are living longer and now need to plan for life after retirement. They must choose personal lifestyles and activities that will allow them to remain contributing members of society. Adult education is one of the resources that will enable them do so.

Today at the beginning of the 21st century, Japanese men and women have life expectancies of 76 and 83, respectively. This fact places them into the position of having the longest life expectancies in the world and also highlights the fact that the population of Japan is aging faster than any other nation. By the year 2020, one out of every four people in Japan will be 65 or older. This generation of Japanese senior pioneers is redefining life after retirement.

Today's retirees and older adults are creating changes in society's stereotypical viewpoints of aging and are redefining the meaning of "old" or "elderly." Traditionally, "the elderly" in Japan remained home, living a quiet life after retirement, and accepted a passive role

that society expected and culturally accepted. Often living in a three-generation home setting, the post-retirement or aging person previously was relegated to a sedentary lifestyle.

Change now finds many retirees and older adults rejecting this traditional retirement role. Many are healthy and active and want to pursue new career opportunities, to work part time, or volunteer in community organizations. Most are more self-reliant than previous generations; they are more affluent and better educated; and they are ready to adapt to a more independent lifestyle. An increasing number want to participate in educational or lifelong learning activities, and to enjoy new leisure pastimes and hobbies.

Change and diversification are key factors in the values and lifestyles of this generation and are apparent in their attitudes. Culturally, older adults hold fast to traditional concepts and feel that society is changing too fast. They are concerned that many of the old ways are being cast off too readily. They fear that respect for the elderly and for the wisdom that supposedly comes with age is diminishing among the younger generation.

At the same time, they recognize changes in society's tendency to view older adults as post-productive, as creating a potential burden to health care issues and governmental programs, and as responsibilities to care for in their old age. All these factors are influencing retirees and older adults to become more self-reliant.

As changes have been occurring in personal lifestyles, societal patterns, and cultural attitudes, the workplace has also seen change. The rapid development in information technology, globalization, shifts to a knowledge-based economy, and employees seeking personal fulfillment have transformed the workplace into a new arena. The trend away from lifelong employment and dedication to one company, seniority-based wage systems, and promotion systems are other examples of more changes occurring in the Japanese business environment.

As retirees and older adults face the challenges of these changes, they must choose personal methods of transition. To postpone this choice only prolongs the adaptation process or ultimately results in unsuccessful efforts to meet their personal needs and goals.

The case studies provided in Chapter 5 illustrated five different approaches to preparing for and adapting to retirement. One approach featured an individual's effort to make plans in the pre-retirement stage of life; in others, plans and learning needs were not identified by the persons

until after retirement; and, lastly, the individual had not made any post-retirement plans and still had questions as to how to proceed.

Ms. A made pre-retirement plans and continues to make plans for her future. She remains active by teaching, volunteering, and taking classes. Dr. B is unsure as to what path he will follow in his adjustment to retirement. He finds the aging process limiting and feels he is not quite ready to participate in new societal roles or in adult learning programs. For the present, he is contemplating a more self-directed approach in computer proficiency. Mr. C was active in pre-retirement planning. He developed plans to begin a new career as a consultant in a foreign country several years prior to his retirement. He finds learning new technologies a challenge and one that he enjoys.

Mr. D is beginning to plan his future as a retiree. He is looking forward to spending more time with his family. He feels that his work schedule of long hours away from home previously deprived him of this opportunity. Mr. D is aware that he does need to make more focused plans for the future. Lastly, Mr. E retired but has delayed the full impact of retirement by being rehired in his own company as a consultant. Looking into the future, he feels having flexibility in his new lifestyle is important and he is making plans to participate in learning activities that both he and his wife can share.

6.2 Conclusions

As one of the most education-conscious countries in the world, Japan successfully developed and expanded educational programs after World War II that effectively produced well educated individuals who initiated and developed economic and technological growth. Many individuals who participated in these educational programs are the retirees and older adults of today.

As these individuals now retire and become members of the older population of Japan, the process of providing them educational opportunities has not stopped. In fact, as the number of retirees and older adults continues to increase, the need for adult education programs is intensifying. These individuals are seeking choices of how to meet their goals of continued learning, of maintaining a high quality of life, of achieving self-fulfillment, of being active and physically fit, and of making positive contributions to society.

Factors that will enhance adult education participation need to be researched. Conditions that influence choices include costs, convenience of location, interest in the curricula, flexible schedules, and fewer entrance requirements. Programs need to be convenient, accessible, and meet learners' requirements. An important factor often mentioned by retirees and older adults is socialization. They see adult education programs or learning environments as an opportunity to interact with peers or to continue expanding their social interactions.

Kominkans; national and local government facilities; colleges and universities; elder colleges and universities; private schools; and in-house business programs are some of the current providers of adult education programs. Some programs offer formal classes in technology or business so participants can prepare for new career paths. Other programs offer informal classes such as hobbies or physical fitness or a variety of programs with a more leisure-oriented focus.

Multimedia and information technology are expanding many of the choices available in adult education programs. Expanded television channels, educational radio programs, and educational videos offer an ease of accessibility. Computer-based learning programs are also an option; however, there are limitations with today's generation of older adults. Few Japanese retirees and older adults are computer or keyboard-literate, and the expansion of computer-based adult education may be several years in the future.

Just as change brings challenge, so does challenge bring new ideas and new initiatives. As the world's leader of an increasing aging society, Japan's method of meeting the challenge of providing adult education to retirees and older adults will be a model for programs throughout the world. Motivating retirees and older adults to participate in adult education programs and providing learning choices are two important goals for the future of Japanese adult educators and learning institutions.

Retirees and older adults also have a personal responsibility. In order to continue to be active, to meet personal goals, and to meet the challenges of change, their participation in adult education programs can expand their opportunities. Both educational providers and retirees and older adults have responsibility in an interdependent relationship. Each can provide reciprocal guidelines for the future of adult education. Change will continue as new challenges and opportunities in adult education enable post-retirement to be an age of opportunity, of growth, and of continued lifelong learning.

6.3 Recommendations

The following five areas address additional concerns and require further investigation:

1. The aging population is increasing and further observations and studies can be made to examine the retirees' adjustments to retirement. Further study is needed to examine how pre-retirement plans and goals affect their successful adjustment to life after retirement.
2. Additional study is needed to examine how a wife adjusts when her husband retires and assumes the new position of a "stay-at-home" husband. How do wives make plans for these adjustments? How does this new lifestyle affect her personally? How does it impact her activity? Does she participate in more or fewer adult education programs after her husband retires?
3. Adult education providers need to focus on the needs and interests of retirees and older adults. Further study could determine what adult educational programs the retirees of the 21st century will prefer and which programs will best meet their personal needs.
4. Insight into the retirees' and older adults' choices of group-learning activities, self-learning activities, or a combination of both would be beneficial to educators, educational institutions, and government organizations.
5. Finally, study is needed to determine what challenges or inspires an older adult to remain a contributing member of society. The older population has valuable experience and knowledge to share, but how can they best offer this experience and knowledge to benefit society?

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Vita

Mary Eva Repass has a varied background in business, education, and international relations. In 1982, Ms. Repass established R & R Global Communications and works with government agencies, international businesses, and educational institutions. She consults on human resource and communication issues in the workplace. In coordination with business management issues, R & R Global Communications provides training and educational programs for international businesses.

Ms. Repass develops training programs for the Department of Navy. She instructs Navy military and civilian staff who are assigned to Navy commands in foreign countries. Ms. Repass administers a program that focuses on the industrial, social, cross-cultural, and political infrastructures of the host countries. She also consults with the U.S. Department of Interior in communication programs.

Ms. Repass authors articles for magazines. She has written three books and numerous education and training manuals. She is a member of the National Press Club.

From 1991 to 1998, Ms. Repass has been appointed by the Governors of Virginia to be a delegate to the annual Japan-U.S. Southeast Association conferences. She has also participated as a delegate from Virginia to the Korea-U.S. Southeast Association conferences in Korea and the United States.

Ms. Repass has completed extensive research on the interaction and adaptation of foreign families relocating to America. Her research is described in the publication, *A New Home, A New Country, A New Communication Challenge*. The research document has been translated into Japanese by Toyota Motor Manufacturing.

Ms. Repass was an invited speaker at the 21st Annual National Convention of the Communication Association of Japan in Sendai, Japan. She has been a guest speaker for other international organizations and has completed speaking tours throughout the United States for the Japan-America Society. She has coordinated and chaired international business conferences and meetings.

Ms. Repass lived in Japan in 1981 and 1982. She worked at a Japanese college where she instructed business management and communication for international business; coordinated meetings and conferences in the United States and Japan; established an exchange programs for American and Japanese scientific researchers; and researched and prepared grants and cooperative research fellowships. Ms. Repass has traveled extensively in the Pacific area and has conducted business in Japan, Korea and Hong Kong.

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