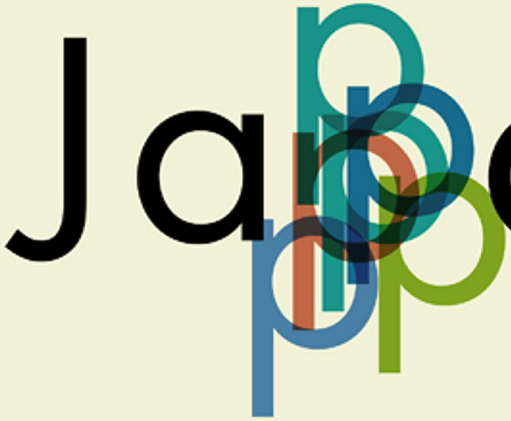
Immigrant Japan



Mobility and Belonging in an Ethno-nationalist Society

Gracia Liu-Farrer

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CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS ITHACA AND LONDON

Cornell University Press gratefully acknowledges receipt of a grant from Waseda University, which aided in the production of this book.

First published 2020 by Cornell University Press

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Liu-Farrer, Gracia, author.
Title: Immigrant Japan : mobility and belonging in an ethno-nationalist society / Gracia Liu-Farrer.
Description: Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019031541 (print) | LCCN 2019031542 (ebook) | ISBN 9781501748622 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781501748646 (pdf) | ISBN 9781501748639 (epub)
Subjects: LCSH: Immigrants—Japan. | Group identity—Japan. | Social integration—Japan. | Citizenship—Japan. | Japan—Emigration and immigration—Social aspects. | Japan—Ethnic relations.
Classification: LCC JV8722 .L58 2020 (print) | LCC JV8722 (ebook) | DDC 305.9/069120952—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019031541
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019031542

To Sage

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Acknowledgments

When requesting an interview, I always promise the person I sit down with that something, ideally in the shape of a book, will be the end result of our conversation. Such a promise, made again and again in the past decades, became a heavy debt that weighed on me as time passed. The urge to fulfill such a promise and to repay the debt kept me motivated to complete this book. My thanks therefore first go to the hundreds of immigrants who candidly shared their life stories with me. Not all stories appear in this book, but every single one of them informed it.

Over the past decade, it was my great fortune to have worked with a team of dedicated, talented, and multilingual graduate research assistants who helped collect interviews and transcribe them. Without them, I would never have had so much rich data and such a wide coverage of immigrants. My gratitude goes to Guan Shan, Zhang Mingqian, Li Jizi, Li Wenjin, Zhong Zhizhi, Wang Yi, Ni Chun, Wang Pengfei, Alexander Aniel, Dukin Lim, Atsushi Sumiya, Jocelyn Celero, Vanessa Macaraig, Stine Mosekjær Madsen, Mirai Ueno, Mira Lequin Malick, Jiang Chengli, Rafael Munia, Stephanie Karlik, Helena Hof, An Huy Tran, and Yao Dacheng. Most of them now have embarked on successful careers of their own, inside and outside academia. I wish them good luck. I also thank Jason Bartashius, who copyedited an early draft of this book, and Wang Xinyu for his incredible skill in locating and compiling references.

My colleagues and friends have given me much needed support throughout the process. Tetsu Motoyama helped me find informants. Glenda Roberts and Nana Oishi brought me important insights into Japan's migration policies. Karen Shire, Adrian Favell, Dave Leheny, and Kei Takata carefully read different chapters of the book and provided me invaluable suggestions for improvement as well as, in times of self-doubt, confidence. I also want to thank Roger Haydon from Cornell University Press for supporting this book project, offering suggestions not only on style but also on content. The encouraging and critical comments of two anonymous reviewers were invaluable for improving this book. Many flaws remain, but the book has greatly benefited from their input.

I benefited also from interactions with many intellectual communities around the world in the course of writing this book. My home institution—Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University—provided both the intellectual stimulation and the academic leave essential to finishing this work. The Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore provided me with a

fellowship and, together with the Asia and Africa Institute at the University of Hamburg and the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen, offered institutional bases during different stages of the writing process. In addition, I presented various parts of this book at the University of Birmingham, University of Duisburg-Essen, University of Hamburg, University of Zurich, and University of Sheffield. Colleagues at these workshops and seminars raised provocative questions and critical comments, helping me sharpen the conceptual angles and fine-tune the arguments.

Several research and writing grants provided indispensable financial support for this project. The data for this book came from "Migration from China to the Southeast Asia and Japan" (2010–2011), funded by Japan Foundation / Southeast Asia Studies Regional Exchange Program (SEASREP); "Is Japan an Immigrant Country? A Comparative Study of Immigrants' Citizenship Consciousness and Sense of Belonging in Japan and Australia" (Kaken B, 2011–2015); and "Beyond Multiculturalism: Organizational Logics and Cultural Practices at Japanese Workplaces" (Kaken C, 2015–2017), funded by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). In addition, the book project is supported by Waseda University's English academic research book publication grant.

The people who have really lived through the emotional journey of writing a book are my family. I want to thank James for being the most dependable partner who not only had boundless patience in responding to my ideas and smoothing out my frustrations but also read and edited the book manuscript, several times. This book has also grown up together with my daughter Sage. She has been a constant source of encouragement and a valuable informant and critic. The book is dedicated to her and the numerous other children of immigrants who have grown up in this extraordinary immigrant society.

IMMIGRANT JAPAN

JAPAN AS AN ETHNO-NATIONALIST IMMIGRANT SOCIETY

9:50 a.m., September 24, 2014. Tokyo Legal Affairs Bureau.

I found a chair at an unoccupied desk in the middle of the room and sat down with the A4-sized manila envelope handed to me by two women staff sitting at the entrance. The room resembled a typical classroom. A podium was placed in the front. Beside it stood a whiteboard with the day's agenda handwritten in blue marker. Three rows of two-seat desks and chairs were mostly filled. I looked around me. There were over twenty people in the spartanly furnished space. A few more were signing in. Most looked East Asian, and the one white man and one black man stood out. A couple of others might have been South or Southeast Asians. There were as many women as there were men. It was quiet inside the room, and the atmosphere was a little tense. People sat and checked the stack of forms and sample applications inside the envelope or stared at their phones. A few who came with their families were whispering to each other.

At 10 a.m., a man in a white shirt and tie came in, a nametag hanging against his chest. He introduced himself as an officer in the Citizenship Department, greeted the crowd, and proceeded to explain the agenda written on the whiteboard. A moment later, a man in a suit walked into the room and stood behind the podium. He was introduced as the head of the Citizenship Department. "Good morning," he said. "I will call out your names. Please come to the front to receive your citizenship notification." He then took out a stack of papers and started to read out the names—most were either Japanese sounding or the Japanese pronunciations of Chinese and Korean names. "Fua-ra- Gurashia sama." He called out my katakana name with an honorific suffix. I walked up to the front. He held out the paper with both hands, lowered his head a little, and said

"*Arigatogozaimasu*" (thank you). I gave him a slight bow, took it with both hands, and reciprocated with my own "Thank you" in Japanese. On the paper was a statement indicating that my application for Japanese citizenship had been approved by the minister of justice on September 11, 2014.

After the department head bowed and walked out of the room, the man in the white shirt approached the whiteboard. "Now you have all become Japanese nationals [*Nihon kokumin*]. What this means is that you will have the rights and obligations of Japanese citizens." He pointed at the whiteboard and explained that we would now be able to vote in elections, hold a Japanese passport when traveling abroad, and be protected by the Japanese state inside and outside Japan. He went on to explain the detailed administrative steps we needed to take after receiving this citizenship document, including registering with our own local city office and sending back our foreign resident cards within three weeks. It was then that I realized that the piece of paper I received was not a certificate to be held onto but an official notice to be delivered to the city office where I resided.

Without much fanfare and with no ceremonial speech or emotional pledge of allegiance, on September 24, 2014, along with the thirty-some people in that room and the hundreds of others in other rooms across Japan, I became a Japanese citizen.

I am one of the millions of immigrants in Japan. This book tells our stories. It explains why and how we have come to this country, how we have made our home and raised children here, the complex relationships we have built within and with it, and the different forms of attachment and belonging we have cultivated in this place. The stories of immigration in Japan are particular because they have taken place in a social and political context rife with contradictions, and in a country that for many people is still an unlikely destination of immigration. At a global level, however, these stories are also common because the normal destinations for immigration are increasingly those that consider themselves ethno-national societies. Immigrant lives in Japan, therefore, illustrate the forms and features of an immigrant society borne out of an ethno-national one, and the patterns of mobilities and belongings that can take place in such a previously nonimmigrant context.

Japan as an Immigrant Country

Most people do not associate Japan with an "immigrant country," for understandable reasons. Postwar Japan was considered an anomaly among advanced economies due to its reluctance to import foreign workers despite a significant

labor shortage. David Bartram (2000) argues that Japan in the 1960s and 1970s started to demonstrate labor force profiles similar to those in Western European countries a decade earlier. While countries such as Germany and France signed labor agreements to import foreign workers as early as the 1950s, Japan remained largely closed to labor immigration even at the cost of slowing down productivity and damaging small and medium-sized firms. This resistance to foreign labor marked Japan as a "negative case" of immigration for many years (Bartram 2000). The country has gradually let in more and more immigrants since the 1980s, but the 2.6 million foreign nationals[1] still stood at a little over 2 percent of the total population of 128 million in the country in 2018, a relatively low presence compared with most other industrial nations.

The Japanese government also studiously avoided defining an "immigration" policy. Although some researchers have started calling Japan an "emerging migration state," because it has taken "halting steps" toward a national immigration policy (Hollifield and Sharpe 2017, 386), it is not an official discourse. Instead, Japan's immigration policy is called by "*any* other name" but the "i"-word (Roberts 2018). On January 28, 2016, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, in a National Diet session, responded to inquiries about the necessity to increase the import of foreign labor to appease depopulation and labor shortages by affirming yet again that "we are *not* adopting the so-called 'immigration policies.'" Moreover, the image of Japan does not seem to match that of an immigrant country. Japan, to both its people and outsiders, is a racially homogeneous and culturally unique island country. Part of the lure of Japan lies in its distinctiveness, sometimes with a fantastic inflection.

However, Japan has become an immigrant country de facto. Starting in the 1980s, to stave off economic decline caused by labor shortage and in the name of internationalization, Japan has tried different programs to bring in foreign workers. For example, the 1989 Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (ICRRA) drastically changed migrant admissions procedures and added ten new categories of persons who might be considered eligible for resident status. In 2012, Japan became one of the most liberal states in its policies for granting permanent residency to highly skilled migrants.[2] On December 8, 2018, the Diet passed yet another Immigration Reform Act and for the first time in the postwar history allows individuals to enter Japan as uncredentialled manual workers. In other words, over the past three decades, Japan has opened its door wider and wider. People are not only allowed but also encouraged, recruited, and even coaxed to come to this country as workers or students or both (Liu-Farrer and Tran 2019). As a result, the population of foreigners has been rising for the past three decades and is likely to increase significantly in the near future. Japanese law provides people in most of these entry categories a path to permanent residency

and naturalization. In 2018, out of the 2.6 million foreign nationals, over 1.18 million were either permanent residents or special permanent residents.[3] On top of that, over four hundred thousand individuals have become Japanese citizens since 1980 (Du 2015).

Why, then, do both the Japanese government and people inside and outside Japan hesitate to accept the discourse of immigration and the reality of its transformation into an immigrant society? I believe this hesitation has to do with Japan's ethno-nationalist self-identity and the widespread myth surrounding its monoethnic nationhood, on the one hand, and the conventional, albeit anachronistic, definition of "immigrant country" and the difficulty for people to associate an immigrant country with an ethno-nationalist one, on the other.

An Ethno-nationalist Japan

This resistance toward immigration, before the 1980s in the real practice and since then merely the discourse of it, reflects Japan's struggle with its ethno-nationalist self-identity. Ethno-nationalism is essentially a superimposition of nationalism (a political program) onto ethnicity—a "readily definable way of expressing a real sense of group identity" (Hobsbawm and Kertzer 1992, 4). Japan identifies itself as a nation whose nationhood is founded on the ideology of a common descent (Befu 2001). Japan did not have such a unified ethno-based self-understanding before the modernizing movement known as the Meiji Restoration (1868). Rather, the Tokugawa regime's "rule by status"—a practice that segregates the ruled by groups—created segmented cultural traditions and practices. The Meiji Restoration invented interrelated family, state, and emperor traditions and related material symbols and memorial sites in order to create a unified nation-state and a new relation between the ruler and the ruled (Fujitani 1993).

Racial purity and cultural homogeneity are at the center of Japanese ethno-nationalist discourses. Often referred to as *Nihonjinron* (discourses of Japaneseness), these discourses emphasize that Japan's ecological features—namely, the geographic constraints of living on a string of islands—and Japan's subsistence economy (wet rice cultivation) led to its peculiar social formation, cultural practices, and national mentality (Dale [1986] 1990; Yoshino 1992; Befu 1993). In different historical periods, the relative positions between Japan and other countries led to subsequent changes in the discourses. An emphasis on Japanese inferiority in comparison with the West could be seen during the Meiji period and again during early decades of the postwar era. On the other hand, "when Japan defines itself in a strong position, as in the 1930s and in the 1980s, *Nihonjinron* positively defines Japan's identity and becomes a tool of nationalism" (Befu 1993, 125).

Historically sponsored and promoted by the government as Japan's state ideology (Yoshino 1992; Befu 1993), such ethno-nationalist discourses nonetheless became deeply entrenched in the postwar Japanese social consciousness because of their propagation by a plethora of actors, including government agencies (such as Japan Foundation), business corporations, intellectuals, and public scholars. In particular, a resurgent postwar economic prosperity emboldened various power holders in Japan to revive this ethno-national myth and to claim that the strength of Japan lies in its ethnic homogeneity and cultural uniqueness (Yoshino 1992; Lie 2000; Sugimoto 2010). Such nationalistic discourses seem to have resonated with "the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings, and interests of ordinary people" (Hobsbawm 1992, 10). Publications on Nihonjinron were widely disseminated and devoured by ordinary Japanese. Befu (1993) provided some statistics of the circulation of several typical Nihonjinron publications (by the time he did his research) to offer a glimpse of the popularity of this genre of writing. Doi Takeo's *Amae no Kōzō* (1971), the Japanese version of *The Anatomy of Dependence* (1973), was reprinted in soft cover copies 147 times. Nakane Chie's *Tate Shakai no Ningen Kankei*, which in English is called *Japanese Society* (1970), had gone through 79 printings.

After decades of such cultural dissemination, these discourses have become constitutive elements in "Japanese people's 'common-sense' or 'everyday knowledge', their 'taken-for-granted' image of national character. They reflect and determine social reality or what a people know about their world" (Burgess 2010, 4). Though academics inside and outside Japan have repeatedly critiqued Nihonjinron and made great effort in debunking the myth of Japan's cultural uniqueness and racial homogeneity, these ethno-nationalist discourses linger on in the national consciousness.

The expanding presence of foreigners in the country and the many (localized) efforts to integrate them do not necessarily challenge these fundamental beliefs about Japan's national character. This is because programs aiming to integrate immigrants, such as those under the directives of multicultural coexistence (*tabunka kyōsei*), do not refute but instead help reinforce an essentialized Japanese identity and culture (Tai 2007; Burgess 2012). Opinion surveys indicate as much. Using data from the International Social Survey Program, conducted in 2003, Nagayoshi (2011) shows that the majority of Japanese respondents are capable of embracing an ethno-national identity while at the same time voicing support for multicultural coexistence, at least in principle.

The past three decades have seen increasing involvement from advocacy groups in the fight for social and political rights for foreigners (Pak 2000; Shipper 2008; Milly 2014). Frequently wrapping their political activism in discourses of human and citizenship rights (Tsutsui 2018), such civil society involvement is

pushing Japan toward a more open and inclusive society. However, in what way such political action can or ever will shake the ethno-nationalist identity of Japan remains uninvestigated.

To summarize, the ethno-nationalist discourse is a major reason for Japan's reluctance toward immigration. In the minds of most people, Japan is, and should be, a monoethnic society (Kashiwazaki 2013, 42). Nonetheless, this ethno-national identity does not imply the urge to bolt the door. An ethno-national society can even welcome immigrants, although this welcome is premised on the implicit understanding of fundamental group differences and on the fact that there will always be an invisible wall separating us from them, even when "they" are among "us." The experiences of immigrants in Japan that are described in this book make it clear that this ethno-nationalist identity is at the root of Japan's many institutional and social dilemmas in dealing with immigration. Moreover, it is something internalized by immigrants themselves as well, and to a few, this aspect of Japan is even considered attractive.

"Immigrant Country" in an Age of Global Mobility

Aside from overcoming the unease of superimposing an immigrant country onto an ethno-nationalist society, there is also a need to combat the stereotypical image of the "immigrant country" in order to see Japan as one. In both official discourses and individual narratives, "immigrant countries" seem to represent a particular category of nation-states, those that were established by settlers who colonized the territories, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. These countries typically issue "immigration visas," which define one's (supposed) purpose of permanent settlement. For example, US immigration law divides entry visas into two types: immigration and nonimmigration. The term "immigrants" refers exclusively to those who arrive at the US border with "immigration" visas. Consequently, applicants from around the world often are denied visas to the United States on the ground that they show an intention to immigrate (Kraly and Warren 1992).

Because of such nation-building histories and legal frameworks, settler countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia are perceived as qualitatively different from a country such as Japan or those in Asia and Europe where immigration has not been considered a significant part of the national history and nobody upon entry is automatically granted the status of a permanent settler. However, this distinction was never clear-cut and has in the contemporary era become increasingly blurred. First of all, these so-called immigrant countries might have in the past promoted their openness and solicited immigration to recruit labor power. Nonetheless, the inscription on the Statue of Liberty has al-

ways been an ideal and not a reality. Throughout modern history, none of these immigrant countries have extended their unconditional welcome to everybody. In fact, we are seeing increasingly stringent controls over immigration. The lengthening wall along the US-Mexico border and the Australian refugee detention centers located in Nauru and Papua New Guinea fly in the face of both the "American Dream" and the "Australian Dream."

Second, in the age of globalization, people's mobility takes them to every corner of the world, and immigration increasingly takes place in nonsettler countries. For instance, many European countries now have higher percentages of foreign-born populations than the United States (OECD 2018). In terms of public opinion, according to a 2015 Pew Survey, Germans expressed a much more pro-immigration attitude (66% in favor) than Americans (51% in favor) (Krogstad 2015). In Japan, although foreign residents are but a small percentage of the total population, the absolute number, 2.6 million, is significant. Many of them have also obtained permanent residency, and some, like me, are no longer counted in the statistics after obtaining Japanese citizenship. Their presence, transient or permanent, has infiltrated every arena of Japan's economic and social life as they construct intricate social relations, from the intimate to the institutional.

Third, all migration researchers know that legal categories do not define individuals' intentions, let alone outcomes. My own experience illustrates the fickleness of intentions. When I stepped off the airplane at Narita Airport with my husband and four suitcases on September 2, 1998, I thought my stay in Japan would be temporary—two, maybe three, years. I had not foreseen that sixteen years later, I would become a Japanese citizen. Likewise, immigration status does not mean that one necessarily becomes an immigrant in the conventional sense of settling down and starting a new life in a new land. As the wealthy Russians and Chinese who hold multiple passports and permanent residencies have demonstrated, official immigration status does not, necessarily, make one a settler (Liu-Farrer 2016a, 2018).

In fact, the romantic notion of a definitive, onetime migration—a notion that feeds the imaginary of an immigrant country—has never represented the reality. Even in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many migrants arrived, stayed, and then returned home. As Massey and Malone (2002) point out, if such a circular mobility was common among immigrants during an era of steamships and telegraphs, it must be all the more prevalent in an era of jet airplanes and telecommunications. Indeed, the concept of immigration has become increasingly irrelevant in regions such as the European Union, where national borders for human mobilities within the region have largely dissolved, making many forms of migration temporary. The liberated "Euro stars" (Favell 2008) could move around the continent through their life course searching for

education, work, social circles, and lifestyles that speak to their particular desires and meet their specific needs. Every country in the EU has therefore become at the same time the country of origin and destination.

Because of such inconsistency, indeterminacy, and changes in the processes and trajectories of migration, I believe the concept of immigrant country should be adjusted. The term "immigrant country" should simply refer to any country that provides foreign nationals multiple legal channels to enter and legal paths and institutional frameworks for permanent settlement. There could be different types of immigrant countries depending on their nation-building histories, including historically embedded ethnic relationships, and legal frameworks, measured by different degrees of inclusiveness and different emphasis on conformity. For example, extending the common categorization of nation-states by civic versus ethnic (Kohn 1944), civic immigrant countries and ethno-nationalist immigrant countries could be two easy types. The traditional immigrant countries such as the United States and Canada are arguably the former, and Japan, Korea, Germany, and Italy are possibly the latter. Moreover, since ethno-nationalism operates at both discursive and institutional levels, countries in the process of accepting immigrants might adapt institutional practices to an immigrant reality that result in the changing discourses about the identities of the nation or the emergence of multiple and alternative discourses. Therefore, civic and ethnic nationalist components might exist in the same immigrant context.

To define a country such as Japan as an immigrant country, an ethno-nationalist one no less, suggests that in an age of globalization, patterns of migration have fundamentally changed, and that the experiences of migrants in the traditional settler countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia no longer represent the majority of the larger migration phenomena taking place in the world. With its strong cultural and ethnic national identity, Japan represents the type of immigration destination that is emerging in many parts of the world. Indeed, we might say that even traditional immigrant countries such as the United States increasingly see themselves in ethno-nationalist terms, making the perspective from Japan even more relevant.

Characteristics of an Ethno-nationalist Immigrant Society as Observed in Japan

This book details how the immigration process unfolds in Japan. The ways immigration takes place in Japan and the social, economic, and emotional lives of immigrants in this country illustrate a few characteristics that might be distinctive of an immigrant society that emerged out of an ethno-nationalist one.

DISCURSIVE DENIAL OF IMMIGRATION

The discursive denial of immigration describes the ethno-nationalist state that we have all witnessed. Adherence to an ethno-nationalist identity does not necessitate a rejection of immigration, not when the country's economic health and societal functioning depend on it. It does, however, mean that immigration often remains a taboo in political discourses. It becomes a semantic game the politicians in Japan play (Roberts 2018) and underpins a naive immigration policy that (still) expects most migrant workers to be just temporary manpower (Ruhs and Anderson 2010).

ANACHRONISTIC INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

Because of its reluctance to admit to the reality of immigration long after it has taken place, many institutions in Japan—from education and the employment system to banking and the housing market—and many administrative procedures, big and small, are often found unequipped to deal with the needs and expectations of an immigrant population. For example, despite its ostensible enthusiasm about global talents, an obstinate corporate Japan still tries to turn global talents into Japanese salarymen. In Japanese schools, "we the Japanese" (*ware ware Nihonjin*) remains a standard refrain, and in extreme cases offering English classes to third-graders is resisted by some parents for fear of jeopardizing children's ability to learn their national language.[4]

PRAGMATISM IN IMMIGRATION AND THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS

Because immigration is largely taking place without officially being recognized as such, as a large part of the book aims to illustrate, the process of becoming immigrants is best described as contingent and pragmatic. The notion of Japan as a "single race nation," an "island nation," and a nonimmigrant country with a strong cultural identity has influence on immigrants' expectations and practices. Immigrants tend to profess no prior intention to settle and usually hold a one-step-at-a-time approach. The settlement is contingent on the success of each of these steps in a restrictive legal path. Moreover, whether immigrants leave or stay depends also on a range of immediate existential conditions, including economic opportunities, the presence or absence of emotional attachments, and social embeddedness as well as the stage in their life course.

POSSIBLE (BUT DIFFICULT) NATIONAL BELONGING, IMPOSSIBLE NATIONAL IDENTITY

Japan being in many ways unequipped to accommodate immigrants does not mean immigrants are not capable of being attached to and building lasting relationships with this country. An ethno-nationalist society with its particular cultural and social practices still has its own attractions. Depending on how individuals interpret the particular concept, some immigrants do articulate a sense of belonging to Japanese society. Nonetheless, Japan's discourses of Japaneseness have been internalized by immigrants and used as an explanatory framework to make sense of their migration experiences as well as their identity. This has inevitably become an emotional hurdle for immigrants to identify themselves with the Japanese nation. A constant struggle over inclusion and exclusion at identification level appears among not only the first-generation immigrants but also their children. In other words, immigrants have difficulty identifying themselves as "Japanese," even with a hyphenated identity. For example, the Korean immigrants who have lived in Japan for generations have gradually shifted the location of their identity, advocating a new subjectivity for the younger generations (Chapman 2007). Nonetheless, this "third way" suggests that the third- and fourth-generation Korean immigrants identify themselves as *Zainichi*, which literally means "residents in Japan," instead of Korean Japanese.

These characteristics of an ethno-nationalist immigrant society are generated from observations made from immigrant Japan. The case of Japan might be unique in its specific characteristics, but the migration patterns into this type of destination are far from unique. The rapid expansion of global mobility has turned every single country in the world into a real and potential place of immigration. Like Japan, most such societies lack institutional frameworks, incorporation programs, or cultural narratives to support immigrant settlement. Therefore, observing how immigrants make decisions regarding mobility and settlement in Japan and what kinds of relationships they are able to establish within and with the host society provides insights into new patterns of immigration and integration.

Immigration after the Mobility Turn

Though in one sense provocative, a book titled *Immigrant Japan* might be seen as conceptually behind the times. Traditional "immigrant studies" were largely borne out of the American sociological tradition, with an analytical focus on

how immigrants adjust in the destination country. Their mobility outcomes are largely evaluated by their accomplishments in the host society. This analytical approach met its first challenge around 1990 with the emergence of studies on transnationalism. Although circular and return migration took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the revolution of transportation and communication technologies in the late twentieth century made migrants' transnational ties and activities increasingly visible. The introduction of transnational perspectives liberated migration studies from a largely receiving country perspective focused on migration outcomes. Consequently, the term "transnational migrants" took the place of "immigrants" and has since become a more appealing alternative as it conveys the image of migrants planting their roots in the host society without severing those in their homeland. Their social ties expand across borders, and through these ties they develop religious, economic, and political practices transnationally. Empirical and theoretical works on migrants' transnationalism have flourished since the last decade of the twentieth century.[5]

The diversifying patterns, expanding scopes, and accelerating speed of population movements in the twenty-first century have necessitated new analytical tools and conceptual frameworks. Stemming from research on tourism and transportation, a new line of inquiry that focuses on mobility itself has emerged. Celebrated as the "mobility turn" or "new mobility paradigm" (e.g., Urry 2000), mobility research pays attention to the institutional frameworks, material infrastructures, and social systems that give rise to diverse phenomena involved in physical and virtual mobility. It studies the conditions that create mobility and stasis, scrutinizes the process of movement, and questions the justice of the mobility regime. The "mobility turn" has both liberated and complicated migration research. The fact that mobility itself has become an object of examination has allowed for an expanding empirical scope as well as space for theoretical innovation. For example, migration research now needs to ask not only why immigrants move from one place to another but also how they manage to move. The materiality of mobility, the different power dynamics that affect unequal experiences of mobility, and the relationship between mobility and immobility have all engaged intense research attention. Concepts such as "migration infrastructure" and "production of mobility" (Xiang and Lindquist 2014; Lin et al. 2017) are but some examples of how such a turn has opened up new areas of inquiries and improved our understanding of cross-border migration. Moreover, along with the transnationalism research, the mobility scholarship no longer treats migration as a linear process to a particular end (i.e., settlement and integration into the host society).

The "mobility turn" has also expanded the range of objects of inquiries in migration studies. Those phenomena that were exceptional and peripheral to

migration research, such as mobile elites (e.g., Kiriakos 2014) and global nomads (e.g., D'Andrea 2007), have now moved to the center of the field. Moreover, by paying attention to the process of mobility, the indeterminacy of migration manifests more saliently. It has become evident to researchers that the trajectories of mobility are contingent on unpredictable conditions and unexpected events, and that the boundaries between different categories of mobile subjects are blurred. One type of mobility can morph into another. For example, research has demonstrated that tourism and migration overlap and are mutually causal (Williams and Hall 2000). Tourists might become settlers when they are enthralled by the lifestyle of the place they visit (O'Reilly 2003; Benson and O'Reilly 2009). Similarly, corporate expats can leave their original firms' internal career tracks and stay on in the place they are transferred to (Farrer 2010; Horiuchi 2015), and a large number of international students find jobs and gain permanent residency in the places where they study (Liu-Farrer 2011a). At the same time, however, depending on political climates, migration regimes, and economic opportunities, all of these "settled migrants" may still retain the prospect for further movements. Therefore, they do not necessarily commit themselves to one particular location.

With these complications and uncertainties, does the concept of "immigration" become irrelevant? I argue not. Immigration research implies particular research agendas. Despite the charges of being a "sedentary" social science (Urry 2007) or committing "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer and Glick Shiller 2003), traditional immigration research and its preoccupation with territorially bounded objectives cannot be completely done away with. As mobility researchers recognize, mobility and mooring are a reciprocal process—deterritorialized people reterritorialize in another place (Hannam, Sheller, and Urry 2006). The tradition of migration research generally presumes that individual migrants will play a structurally significant role in the place they move to—for example, as workers in the local economy and as members of the family and the community—and establish multiple meaningful ties with that place. Therefore, it can be said that while mobility might denote the action and process of moving from one position (spatial, social, or temporal) to another, an immigration lens focuses on how and where mobile subjects situate and embed themselves structurally, socially, and geographically.

Similarly, "immigrants" is still a relevant concept, but one that needs to be expanded beyond legal resident categories. In this book, "immigrants" is used to refer to those individuals who enter Japan with the intention to settle, who have attained permanent legal residency, or who have stayed in the country beyond the initially designated activities but with no immediate plan to leave. This book examines such immigrants' roles in Japan's economic and social life, and the

types of relationships they have established in Japan and with the nation itself. It also questions how Japan, with its specific migration regime and social cultural life, has shaped these immigrants' reterritorialization process.

Locating Belonging

A central inquiry of this book is how immigrants make mobility decisions, especially why they choose to stay in Japan and what kinds of relationships they are able to establish within and with this "nonimmigrant" society. It shows that migrants' decisions to move or to stay, on the one hand, have to do with the legal and institutional factors of sending and receiving societies, individuals' actual economic and social experiences, and their assessment of future promises in different locales. On the other hand, people's mobility trajectories are modified by their changing relationships with different places in the migration process—the places they originated from, the places where they have dwelled, and the places they are currently inhabiting. In other words, immigrants' migration decisions are strongly influenced by their sense of belonging.

To belong is a strong psychological imperative. People long for security, association, and recognition. In social psychology, belonging is defined as "a subjective feeling of value and respect derived from a reciprocal relationship to an external referent that is built on a foundation of shared experiences, beliefs or personal characteristics" (Mahar, Cobigo, and Stuart 2012, 102). It is a fundamental human motivation, closely related to a person's subjective well-being that directly influences one's practices and performances in the particular environment they are in (Hagerty et al. 1990; Baumeister and Leary 1995). Immigrants' sense of belonging is a window into their migration experiences and relationships with different places as well as social groups.

Belonging is a major theme emerging from classical sociology (Yuval-Davis 2006). Labels such as "marginal man" (Park 1928) and the "sojourner" (Siu 1952) have been influential concepts that depict the sociopsychological outcomes of migration and the conundrum of (non)belonging in the early twentieth century. With the expanding global population mobility as well as the increased awareness of the transnationality of migrant orientations, research on migrant belonging has been flourishing since the 1990s. Social scientists from different disciplines are actively engaged in exploring the nature of as well as the conditions for immigrants' sense of belonging. Research often analyzes belonging from two perspectives: as a form of territorial attachment and as a discourse of political membership. The former, also termed "place-belongingness," sees belonging as a personal and intimate feeling of being "at home" in a place (Antonsich 2010). Home in this sense

does not simply refer to the material space of a domestic abode, however, but rather stands for "a symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment" (hooks 2009, 213, quoted in Antonsich 2010, 646). The latter, described as a politics of belonging, is "a discursive resource that constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of social-spatial inclusion and exclusion" (Antonsich 2010, 645). It is often used interchangeably with identity and frequently tied to citizenship (e.g., Castles and Davidson 2000; Ehrkamp 2005, 2006; Hartnell 2006).

Place-belongingness recognizes that, first of all, human beings have a strong emotional need to attach to places. Nearly a century ago, the American sociologist Robert Ezra Park made an astounding claim that "the human creature is a good deal of a vegetable" (Park and Burgess 1925 [1984], 156). He then explained: "This is evident in the invincible attachment of mankind to localities and places; in man's, and particularly women's, inveterate and irrational ambition to have a home—some cave or hut or tenement—in which to live and vegetate; some secure hole or corner from which to come forth in the morning and return to at night" (156). Second, migration is essentially a form of "displacement" or "deterritorialization," and, therefore, examining the ways in which migrants reterritorialize is naturally one of the projects of migration studies. Places provide the physical as well as social spaces that can facilitate or disrupt the anchoring of one's belonging. Moreover, the places immigrants feel attached to vary on geographic scales, from one's own apartment (Walsh 2006), to the neighborhood (Ehrkamp 2005), to nation-states (Ho 2006, 2009). Indeed, sometimes it is the little physical details in one's environment that binds him or her to a place. Walsh (2012), for instance, described the case of a British woman from New Castle who claimed she felt at home in Dubai because of the feelings invoked by the stretches of beach she walked on, the malls she shopped in, and the morning sun that shone through her bedroom window.

Aside from "place-belongingness," the "politics of belonging" is the other analytical focus in migration studies. What kinds of immigrants are allowed to cross the border? Who can become members of the national community? How many and what kinds of rights can be conferred on immigrants? Such questions not only contest and transform legal and institutional frameworks but also challenge fundamental understandings of national identity and notions of citizenship. Much work on migration—especially legal studies and political science research—examines the legal frameworks and government policies of the receiving host country. Frequently wrapped in discourses on multiculturalism, they address the inclusion and exclusion of immigrants at the level of the nation, city, and local community (see, e.g., Joppke and Morawska 2002; Chung 2010; Nagy 2013). In particular, scholars point out that the different degrees of political membership

are often determined by the social locations individuals and groups occupy in "the multiple power axis of difference, such as gender, class, race, ethnicity, stage in the life cycle, sexuality, ability and so on" (Yuval-Davis 2006, 200). The "so on," in many countries, might also include religious and cultural practices.

However, "every politics of belonging involves two opposite sides: the side that claims belonging and the side that has the power of 'granting' belonging" (Antonsich 2010, 650). With accelerating population mobility, there is an increasing amount of concern over immigrants' lack of political belonging. In classic migration theories, political incorporation is the peak point of the assimilation process (M. Gordon 1964). As a result, immigrants' sense of belonging to the host society is often gauged through their inclination toward naturalization. With the globalized population movements and the expanding trend of transnational migration, however, there seems to be an "erosion of citizenship." Naturalization rates declined in major immigrant countries, and many long-term immigrants remain denizens in the societies where they settle (Hammar 1990). Several theories attempt to explain this phenomenon. Some researchers direct our attention to the cultural differences in the understanding of social and political membership. Ip, Inglis, and Wu (1997) argue that the concept of citizenship is based on Western political philosophy and a liberal democratic tradition that focuses more on individual rights and obligations. Many immigrants are from societies that embrace different types of "citizenship." Participation in civic society is therefore not a form of political culture familiar to them. The second argument focuses on the changing institutional framework of citizenship. Citizenship and the rights associated with it are traditionally tied to one's membership in a nation-state. As a consequence, many immigrants are satisfied with a long-term or permanent resident status, feeling no incentive to become citizens of the host country. "Denizens" or "quasi-citizens" are terms used to describe such tendencies (Hammar 1990). Chung (2010) shows that this is true for the case of Japan as well. Except for voting and assuming government positions, permanent residents in Japan have as many rights as citizens.

Not only is the naturalization rate decreasing, but research also shows that naturalization itself does not necessarily manifest a sense of belonging. Among immigrants who are naturalized, there is a decoupling between the political and legal aspect of citizenship (their understanding of the rights and responsibilities in the host society) and the cultural and identificational aspect of citizenship (their emotional relationship with the host society) (Soysal 2000; Gilbertson and Singer 2003; Brettell 2006). Similar situations exist in Japan. Asakawa (2003) found from a survey of several hundred naturalized citizens in the late 1990s that the main reason for pursuing Japanese citizenship was respondents' realization that they would stay in Japan and citizenship would secure their status. Moreover, in Japan,

institutional discrimination persists in areas such as housing and the labor market. Without Japanese nationality, immigrants are frequently denied access to rental properties and certain occupations. Some immigrants naturalized in order to remove those institutional barriers (Asakawa 2003).

These different analytical approaches, place-belongingness, and politics of belonging, as well as observations regarding the multidimensionality of belonging, indicate the complexity as well as the slipperiness of belonging as a concept. This book takes what Sarah Wright calls a weak theory approach to belonging that promotes "attention to affective assemblages, to the ways things, people, affects and places, with different trajectories, may come together, albeit in often tentative, inconclusive or evolving ways" (Wright 2015, 392).[6] Relying on data from immigrants' narratives of home, homeland, at-homeness, and their own descriptions of their relationships with Japan, belonging in this book is considered as both an emotional construct and a political discourse. It is used to understand immigrants' self-conscious social locations in Japanese society and their understanding of their relationship with the host country and its people. Through investigating their sense of belonging, including where and how they construct such emotional attachments and how they narrate them, this book aims to capture the conditions and the "things" that attach people to a place, a social group, or a nation.

This investigation is of particular significance for a study on immigration into Japan. As explained, Japan is not a traditional migration destination. Immigration does not feature prominently in its national autobiography. Its rigid migration regimes, distinct patterns found in organizational as well as social relationships, and ethno-nationalist discourses discourage the identification of this country as an immigrant society. Investigating whether, as well as how, immigrants achieve a sense of belonging in Japan and to where they attach themselves, therefore, helps illuminate the particular characteristics and processes of immigration into a relatively unexplored type of immigrant receiving context. It also allows us to understand the nature of their relationship with Japan as well as the places where they came from. This is of particular significance with the immigrant children who grew up in Japan—the 1.5 and second generations. Understanding their sense of belonging and desires for mobility allows us to examine and comprehend Japan as an immigrant society by giving us insights into both the promises it offers and the challenges immigrants face.

This investigation of belonging also has implications for migration studies outside Japan. In the contemporary era, mobility has become a sign of modern subjectivity signifying one's worth, and therefore it is commonly constructed as an aspiration (Chu 2010). The increasingly globalized and interlinked economy has also brought many practical opportunities for geographic mobility. As a result, mobility and immobility reflect not only immigrants' varied structural po-

sitions in the migration infrastructure but also an outcome of constant negotiations between the desire to move and that to stay. Understanding how mobile subjects make mobility decisions illuminates the social and affective dimensions of contemporary migration.

Immigrants in Japan and Those in This Book

By June 2018, there were over 2.63 million mid- to long-term and permanent foreign residents and 66,000-plus irregular migrants living in this country. In addition, over four hundred thousand people have naturalized as Japanese citizens since 1980. Except for Korean nationals, of which the majority are descendants of migrants who entered Japan during the colonial period (1910–1945),[7] over 80 percent of these immigrants came after 1980. Asians accounted for four-fifths of the total foreign resident population in 2018. China, Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines were the top sending countries. In total, more than two-thirds of mid- to long-term foreign residents in Japan were from these four countries. South Americans, especially Brazilians, also have a significant presence in Japan. Most of these Brazilians are *Nikkei*, ethnic Japanese, even though the majority of them are of mixed descent (Linger 2001; Green 2012). Numbering over 196,000, the Brazilians were the fifth-largest immigrant population in Japan in 2018. Nepal, Taiwan, the United States, Thailand, and Indonesia completed the top ten list of sending countries.

This book tells the stories of immigrants from different national backgrounds.[8] While it makes great efforts in presenting immigrants' diverse experiences and in illustrating the multiple dimensions of immigrant life in Japan, it does not claim to offer a representative sample of the various immigrant groups. Instead, this book uses individual narratives to understand immigrants' particular as well as collective conditions. The readers might find that the individuals staged in this book are often middle-class working migrants (appendix B), and therefore wonder why no more undocumented migrants and casual laborers are introduced here. This appearance, in fact, reflects both my methodological choice and the effects of Japan's immigration regime. I will explain both.

First, the book is on "immigrants," those potential or de facto long-term settlers. It explores their migratory trajectories and their decision making—their reasons for coming to Japan, how they make a living and establish themselves in this country, how they negotiate mobility decisions, and the reasons for forming certain relationships with this fabled monoethnic society. Therefore, I selected only immigrants who have lived in Japan for a substantial period of time, have

had more exposure to different realms of life in Japan, and were legally free to make choices. Because this is a qualitative study, I have also tried to find a wider range of experiences and perspectives and therefore did not follow the statistical distributions of the population. The majority of the interviewees had been in Japan for at least five years, had working experiences or were married. A few students' narratives are included in the section on student migration (chapters 1 and 2), but they are a minority in this sample. However, the reasons that I have few irregular migrants and casual workers in my data have a lot to do with Japan's restrictive migration regime.

Japan has implemented selective migration policies (see details in chapter 2). It welcomes students and skilled migrants and also allows spouses of Japanese nationals or family members of the students or skilled migrants to enter. It is, however, reluctant to admit what it calls unskilled (*mijukuren*) or simple labor (*tanjun rōdōsha*). The 1989 ICRRA includes fourteen employment visa categories. Thirteen of these visas are designated for typical highly skilled migrants, including such classifications as "engineer," "investor/business manager," "intracompany transferee," "specialist in humanities and international services," and "professor."[9] The only category that is truly skill based is that of "skilled worker" (*ginō*). Ninety percent of these skilled workers are cooks (MOJ 2010, 10). The demand for menial and low-wage labor is met by migrants in the categories of "trainees" and "technical interns," mostly from Asia, as well as Nikkei Brazilians who were brought back to Japan through transnational labor brokerage (Tsuda 2003). The latter are granted long-term resident status, which imposes no restriction on activities in Japan. In addition, the hundreds of thousands of international students in school are also a source of cheap labor (Liu-Farrer 2009). While beginning in April 2019 "specified skilled workers (SSW)" in different menial labor categories will be allowed to enter, the program had not yet started at the time this project was completed.

The migratory potentials are different for different categories of migrants. Those who hold one of the fourteen categories of visas, and who are students, spouses to Japanese nationals, or permanent residents, long-term residents, and dependents, can extend their stay, convert their visas to other categories, and eventually apply for permanent residency. Those who are in the categories of "technical interns" and "trainees," on the other hand, are usually not allowed to stay for more than three years.[10] Not only is their residency terminal, their visa categories are not convertible, meaning that they cannot apply for other visa categories without leaving the country. Moreover, their stay in Japan is tied to their employment with particular employers. They are not allowed to change jobs in Japan, and their presence is largely limited to the confines of the workplace. Very few of them have managed or have the prospect to remain in Japan, and therefore, with a few cases

who later on reentered Japan in other visa categories, few became the subjects of this book.[11]

Undocumented migrants are also underrepresented. Among the individuals I interviewed in the early 2000s, there were more undocumented migrants who worked as low-wage labor and lived in precarious situations (see Liu-Farrer 2008, 2010). However, almost all of them have been deported since 2003 when the Ministry of Justice started the campaigns against illegal stay, in the name of crime prevention (Yamamoto 2010). There were over sixty-six thousand individuals who overstayed their visas in 2018. The number has seen an increase in the past several years. Nonetheless, because of the tight police control, their presence is mostly clandestine, not visible in public. Their predicament is worth much research and humanitarian attention, but they do not have the types of mobility choices that are the interest of this book.

This book uses individual narratives to convey the conditions and experiences of immigrants in Japan as a whole instead of as defined groups. Individual narratives are again used to disclose the ways in which immigrants locate and attach a sense of belonging in Japan. This individualized approach resonates with Brubaker's (2004) and Pfaff-Czarnecka's (2013) recommendation to avoid treating groups, ethnic or national, as a priori. Of course, there are group differences. Immigrants' mobility trajectories often take on group characteristics resulting from their collective conditions in Japan's immigration regime. However, because of the recognition of internal diversities within the group as well as the intersectionality of these dynamics, this book avoids making generalizations about national characteristics. Moreover, this is fundamentally a qualitative study. Though I have conducted over two hundred interviews with people from diverse backgrounds, I do not trust that my data can lend accuracy to inferential statistical analysis. The research project was not designed for that purpose. However, class, gender, ethnicity, and nationality do play roles in every aspect of immigrants' lives. When it can be safely correlated, I link patterns of practices and outcomes to people's demographic profiles.

In What Follows

Except for the introduction and the conclusion, the book follows (more or less) a chronological order, following immigrants' migratory process from entering to settling. Chapter 1 asks what attracts people to Japan. Using narratives, it explains how Japan is positioned in migrants' imagined cartography of global mobility. It shows that, first of all, Japan is a land filled with opportunities. Japan provides economic incentives for some, and education opportunities and career

alternatives for others. At times it is a way to escape oppressive circumstances in immigrants' home societies. Second, Japan has also been a place imbued with fantasy. Japan attracts those who have genuine cultural interests in the country. Rising from the ruins of war, Japan dazzled the world with its rapid advances in technology and economic power. The economic miracle drew people in to explore Japan's social and cultural practices. Since the 1990s, Japanese anime, manga, and video games have gained worldwide fandom. Thus, for people with cultural interests, Japan is not merely one destination out of many; it is exactly where they want to be.

Not all who want to migrate can and will arrive in Japan. Chapter 2 emphasizes that migration is a collective action orchestrated by different actors, both human and nonhuman, that either facilitate or hamper mobility. This chapter presents demographic profiles of immigrants in Japan and categorizes the channels and processes of migration that have helped shape such particular demographic profiles of Japan's immigrants. These channels include side doors for the importation of "unskilled workers" (entertainers, trainees, students, Nikkei Brazilians) and selective talent programs for skilled migrants (such as the Japan Exchange and Teaching program), marriage migration, and the expanding networks of global mobility such as student exchange programs, research collaborations, and recruitment agencies. The logic of different dimensions of this migration infrastructure is used to explain the particular outcomes of different types of migration.

As a central part of adult life, work gives meaning, status, and identity to people. Furthermore, the workplace is where personal relations and social lives are developed. Work is even more significant for immigrants since, for many, it is the point of entry into Japanese society. Their jobs and career achievements often have a strong impact on their decision to either stay in Japan or leave. Chapter 3 maps the diverse patterns of immigrants' labor market participation and career mobility. It highlights in particular the strategies that immigrants employ to find their niche in Japan's economy—from occupational niching to transnational entrepreneurship.

Chapters 4 and 5 explore immigrants' mobility decision making. In a nontraditional immigrant country such as Japan, where a myth of ethnic homogeneity and cultural uniqueness constitutes its national identity (Burgess 2010), and where immigration as a concept and policy solution to the demographic crisis is shunned, settlement and mobility in and out of Japan take on a fluid and uncertain nature. Immigration trajectories are always contingent on many factors, ranging from job opportunities and economic stakes to degrees of life satisfaction and transformed emotional geographies. Moreover, staying or leaving is not necessarily a fixed outcome. In an age of mobility, people construct cross-border ties and try to main-

tain flexibility. To leave for another destination or return to the home country does not necessarily mean a permanent exit. On the contrary, it often leads to a more transnational and global mobility.

What does an immigrant's narrative of longing for home or belonging express? What does its opposite—the lack of a clearly defined home and belonging—suggest? Moreover, in the absence of an expectation of commitment to the country or permanent settlement, how do immigrants find their sense of belonging, define home, and construct their relationships with Japanese society? Chapter 6 engages these questions by analyzing the narratives of immigrants of various nationalities. It explores how immigrants' cultural backgrounds, migration experiences, socioeconomic circumstances, and social relationships as well as master narratives of nationhood and concepts of personhood affect people's conception of home and belonging, perceived relationships with Japan, and future mobility intentions. These findings help us grasp the social and psychological mechanisms of people on the move and understand the cultural repertoires from which they draw to interpret their situations.

Three decades after the onset of large-scale migration, Japan is seeing more and more children of immigrants who have grown up in Japan. If the experiences of North American and European countries are any indication, immigrant children's social mobility outcomes and whether they are able to identify themselves with the host societies matter to not only their own well-being but also the well-being of the societies they live in. The last two substantive chapters trace out immigrant children's education experiences and identity journeys. The Japanese national educational system, especially at the elementary and secondary levels, is ill designed for integrating immigrant children. Its monocultural institutional logic often alienates and marginalizes children of immigrants. However, parents' socioeconomic locations in Japanese society as well as in the global hierarchy have a strong impact on their children's mobility trajectories and sense of self. Though most children of immigrants have experienced some difficulty growing up in an ethno-national education system, their parents' ability to maneuver resources to ameliorate situations and overcome obstacles affects how their mobilities unfold in their life course. For example, while most middle-class Chinese children growing up in Japan are able to attain educational mobility and cultivate a cosmopolitan self over the course of a transnational childhood, most Nikkei Brazilian children are mired in the increasingly precarious low-skilled labor market and occupy a marginal position in Japanese society. Moreover, Japan's ethno-nationalist identity still stands in the way of integrating these children. Though immigrant children can develop their identity and eventually find their own individual biographies, Japan is at best a component in that biography, one color that constitutes the mosaic of their identity.

What kind of immigrant society is Japan becoming? The book concludes by revisiting the central issues that characterize immigrant experiences in Japan. Japan's transition into an immigrant society happens at a time when the rest of the world seems to be moving in the other direction and becoming increasingly ethno-nationalist. At the same time, migration is not slowing, and individuals' migration trajectories have become highly diverse. If Japan can shed its mono-ethnic and monocultural national identity and reform the outmoded institutions that reinforce such an identity, it could even emerge as one of the most attractive destinations for migrants.

1

IMMIGRATING TO JAPAN

[Japan] was not built on the same principles as a country like the US. There's no, what is it, quote, give us your poor, your hungry, on the Statue of Liberty. It's written on the base of the statue. Bring them on! Right? In Japan, it's not like that at all. . . . So, I don't think the reason people come here . . . there's no sort of American, err, Japanese Dream like there is an American Dream, right? If you believe the American Dream still exists. You cannot come to Japan . . . actually you can, but the idea is not that you come to Japan and suddenly you become the CEO of some major corporation because it's the land of opportunity, right. It doesn't work like that.

—Oliver, male, thirty-one, United States, game industry, freelance translator

Japan cannot be called immigrant country. Outside Shin-Okubo I hardly see foreigners. In the end, isn't it because they need labor that Japan accept foreigners. It is not like they really like foreigners and want you to come.

—An, male, twenty-seven, Korean, singer and student

Japan is not an immigrant country, or so they say. Japan, unlike the United States, does not offer a Japanese Dream, points out Oliver. Japan chooses whom it wants and lets in only those considered desirable, says An. Yet, Oliver, an American freelance game translator in his early thirties, came to Japan after graduating from an Ivy League college and had been living and working in Japan for over ten years. An, a twenty-seven-year-old man from Korea, enrolled himself in a Japanese language school after graduating from the university in 2012. While pursuing a singing career he made ends meet by working part-time jobs. Ever since I started researching immigrants in Japan in the early 2000s, I have run into numerous Olivers and Ans who do not think Japan is an immigrant country yet come searching for opportunities and the chance to realize their dreams. In 2018, over three million immigrants, including nearly half a million naturalized citizens, were living in Japan. The majority, over 80 percent, came in the postwar era with most arriving after 1980.[1] These foreign residents and naturalized citizens originated from every

corner of the world and have come to Japan for a wide range of engagements. Why do people migrate to Japan, a society that they do not perceive to be an immigrant country?

Needless to say, people move to pursue a better life. In the highly globalized and digitally connected contemporary world, mobility has become not only a generally desirable good but a freedom to be celebrated and positively valued.[2] People are willing to move if moving promises a better life and fulfills a dream. Migration has become a normative practice and sometimes a necessary strategy for economic betterment, career advancement, change of scenery, or adventure. The number of people who are on the move has increased dramatically since the 1980s. Between 1985 and 2015, the cross-border migrating population more than doubled from 105 million to over 230 million (IOM 2016). All types of people are moving. Skilled professionals move for better employment prospects; family members move to reunite with their loved ones; businesspeople move according to the dictates of global capitalism in search of better markets, more abundant labor, and cheaper supplies; students move to pursue more educational options; researchers move to accomplish their projects or advance their careers; and refugees and laborers move to survive and attain a better standard of living.

In the global migratory traffic, Japan is just one of the possible destinations to move to or a hub for staying over. Indeed, for many immigrants, it is a replaceable destination, one choice out of several, or even a second choice or a backup plan. For others, however, Japan exudes special cultural allures and presents unique opportunities for immigration. In the migration into Japan, economic incentives, career considerations, and cultural fascinations are meshed together. At the same time, mobility is made possible by the established and continuously expanding institutional and social ties. This chapter, through the relaying of narratives exploring varied motivations for coming to Japan, explains how the nation is represented in different people's "migration imaginaries" (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). To put it simply, what attracts people to Japan?

A Land of Many Opportunities

Having a reputation for being an ethnically homogeneous nation and a culturally unique society, Japan might not have been seen as a typical destination several decades ago; but for people who are looking for opportunities, it has been as good a destination as any. With an advanced economy and an aging population, it demonstrates a dire need for human resources while offering a desirable and safe social environment. It is a land of many opportunities. In the words of

Charlie, a Filipino migrant, "To be a country of immigration or not . . . is not their choice anymore as long as they allow people to come in. If people are allowed to stay . . . It's not about place. I would rather be here than Saudi Arabia."

The Economic Promise

Conventional migration theories take for granted that migrants move for economic interests, whether out of a desire to improve one's personal wealth or as a family strategy to ameliorate household finance (Massey et al. 1993). People move abroad in order to move up the social and economic ladder back home. Economic promise is undoubtedly the biggest motivating factor for immigrating to Japan, especially for people from countries that are economically less developed than Japan. Until 2010, Japan had the second-largest economy in the world and was considered the most developed country in Asia. As such, not surprisingly, it remains an attractive destination for many people.

Chinese make up the largest foreign resident population in Japan. Among earlier cohorts of Chinese immigrants who arrived in the 1980s and 1990s, economic incentives were so powerful that many midcareer professionals and bureaucrats were willing to forsake established careers in China to migrate as language students and start an entirely new chapter in Japan. Some succeeded and others did not. When I asked why they came to Japan, they invariably spoke of the economic gaps between China and Japan. Qiu Ye was a lecturer teaching computer science at a Chinese university before coming to Japan. In the early 1990s, Japan initiated training programs to recruit Chinese workers with university degrees. He was first assigned to a Japanese company as a software developer, and stayed on working in Japan. When asked why he came to Japan, he answered bluntly, "It was because we were poor, to put it simply. Now the college teachers in China might have been [financially] better off. Twenty years ago, incomes and other aspects of life were really not good. Japan's bubble started bursting in 1991, 92. But it was not yet bad."

Obviously, as a college lecturer, Qiu Ye was better off than the majority of the Chinese. But China in the 1980s and early 1990s was in the early stage of economic reform. For the first time after several decades of a planned economy, people could strive for prosperity on all types of markets. Emigration was seen as a ticket to a better life. Decades of restrictions preventing movement, including passport control and household registration, intensified the desire for outward mobility. Once the opportunity to go abroad was presented to them, a massive number of people left the country, giving rise to the "fever to go abroad" (*chuguore*) and causing the feeling of "displacement" at home among those unable to leave (J. Chu 2010).

Chinese nationals were by no means the only ones desiring to emigrate. Calvin, a Filipino engineer, quickly embraced an opportunity to come to Japan even though he had a stable job as a technician in the Philippines and did not speak Japanese. When asked how he made the decision to migrate, he explained: "Ah, yeah, when I said stable, what I meant is, not really high income, right? So we . . . It's like . . . When you say Japan, it's a progressive country, right? So . . . normally, when you get a chance to go to Japan, you just go. That's my point. Then, another thing I realized when I was there at my company, there were a lot . . . there were a lot of people there who went to Canada, Singapore . . . Normally, engineers don't really stay back there [in the Philippines]. That was my turning point. 'Oh, Japan, Canada, why not venture there?' Maybe you can find [a] good living there—something like that." Rapid aging of the population has made Japan the world's "oldest" country that is in acute need of manpower. The labor market demand has established the nation as an attractive destination for people who want to make quick cash as well. According to interviewees, it is relatively easy to find odd jobs in Japan that pay reasonably well. In the past three decades, a large number of immigrants—students, entertainers, and spouses of Japanese nationals—came primarily to make cash (Ballescas 1992; Liu-Farrer 2011a). Many developing countries in Asia lack an effective system that provides business loans and insures losses. People obtain initial capital by pooling family resources, borrowing through high-interest loans, and joining rotating credit associations. International migration, however, provides an alternative means for accumulating capital.

In my field research among Chinese immigrants in the early 2000s, I found the prevalent debt-driven migration phenomenon among the Fujian Chinese in Japan. More than one interviewee specifically pointed out that Japan was not the ideal destination for international migration because it was not an immigrant country and did not provide amnesty or opportunities to attain legal status. The United States, Canada, and Australia were more attractive places for long-term settlement. They came to Japan, however, because of their debts from failed entrepreneurial ventures. Japan was closer and thought to have more temporary jobs. Older male migrants were especially likely to come to Japan because of debts. They sometimes risked clandestine border entry due to desperation. Nian's case was typical. A forty-six-year-old man from Changle County, Nian landed in Japan with over RMB 500,000 (6.5 million yen) in debts. He had operated a pearl farm in the early and mid 1990s. In 1995, that coastal region of China experienced the biggest hurricane in over a century. In just hours, he lost everything. "A wave swept everything away. I owed people 200,000 yuan [RMB, about US$25,000 at that time]." Without any disaster insurance, he could not possibly stay and pay off the debt. He fled. After borrowing an additional RMB 200,000, he chose to

migrate to Japan by boat in 1996. The journey was not an easy one. In Zhejiang Province, their boat was detained, and they were fined RMB 30,000. Fearing debt collectors and not wanting to go home, he waited there for several months. Eventually he boarded a boat again but had to abort his plan several times over a two-month stretch. When the voyage finally happened, it took ten days to reach the coast of Japan. He worked at construction sites after arriving, and by the time I interviewed him in 2004, he had successfully paid off all his debts.

Economic incentives have also driven hundreds of thousands of Brazilians with Japanese ancestry to Japan. Commonly called Nikkei Brazilians, these migrants and their families did not perceive Japan as the "land of [their] ancestors" but as the "land of yen." They wanted to "make the maximum in the minimum [amount] of time" (Ishi 2003, 76). Most Nikkei Brazilians were placed in manufacturing jobs through labor brokers as soon as they arrived. For them, earning a monthly salary in Japan was a thrilling experience. Roberto, a young Nikkei man who did not manage to enter a university in Brazil, worked at a computer shop installing equipment after high school. His income was the equivalent of about US$250 a month. His parents ran a small grocery store, but it did not go well and they became insolvent. Because of debt, his mother and Roberto applied for the Nikkei recruitment program. He arrived in Japan when he was nineteen and worked on an assembly line at a factory that made parts for an electronics manufacturing company. Although he had no clue what he was making exactly, he was enthralled by the wages. "I made close to 30 man [about US$2,500] a month. That was ten times as much as I made at home! I was, 'wow.'"

Japan's economic promise has attracted not only people from developing countries but those from relatively developed countries as well. During the 1980s, the Japanese "economic miracle" and demand for language teachers drew many native English speakers to Japan to teach English. Tom, an Australian man in his early fifties, reminisced about the good old days as a language teacher in Osaka. "I didn't have to do anything. I just sat in the lobby at this reception desk and talked to whomever that approached me. I was making 500 thousand yen [around US$4,000] a month doing that!"

In the twenty-first century, Japan has also seen an increasing number of educated European youth. Along with the normalized practice of cross-border mobility, the stagnating economy and Europe's difficult labor market factored in driving young professionals to seek out opportunities in Asia. Japan, together with Singapore and China, attracted many of these individuals (Farrer 2010, 2015, 2019; Hof 2018).

Career and Education Alternatives

To better one's life involves much more than just money. Migration might not, necessarily, promise a greener pasture. It could, however, present attractive alternatives to many stuck in an unsatisfying education system, career track, or lifestyle in their home countries. Though many arrived seeking life changes, they did not all have a clear notion of what exactly they wanted to achieve in Japan. Lee Soojin, a Korean woman, migrated because she was unhappy with her job in Korea. She had studied Chinese in China for several years. Upon returning to Korea she found a job as a tour guide. She did not think it was a suitable job for her personality. Besides, after spending four years in China, she felt a bit out of touch with Korean society. She decided to come to Japan and enrolled in a language school. "When I decided to come to Japan, I just wanted to learn some more, experience some more, [so that] I might put one more item into my resume. My motivation was as simple as that," said Soojin.

Mirroring Lee Soojin, Chen Gang was a Korean-speaking Chinese tour guide back in China. He had worked for a travel agency for seven years before leaving for Japan. He left because his business was affected by the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and 1998.

> Our main market was Korea. The first country that was hit was Korea. The financial crisis caused the entire country to have an economic meltdown. . . . [The] Korean government was controlling the outflow of foreign currency. We expected that there wouldn't be any Korean tourists for some time. I didn't really think of coming to Japan to study. It was just that in those couple of years [it seemed the] Korean economy might not turn around quickly. A friend of mine wanted to go to Japan. . . . I didn't think much [about it], and wasn't particularly keen on going. We then sent in the documents . . . and [the visa] came down. I probably thought since [the] Korean economy wasn't good, I could learn a bit more Japanese.

Yao Ning's job in China was secure, but she was bored with it; and her boredom served as a motivating factor for her to come to Japan. She worked in a hospital upon graduating from a medical technician school. Her job was testing blood. She had just turned twenty, and most of her coworkers were older women. The work did not keep her busy. The blood tests were all done in the morning, so she often had nothing to do for the rest of the day. People just hung around to chat and gossip. She felt she had too much idle time and was merely wasting her life away in the hospital. She looked for an opportunity to leave the country for more

exciting experiences. When the opportunity of studying in Japan presented itself, she seized it without any hesitation.

In 2011 and 2012, several research assistants and I conducted in-depth interviews with two dozen Chinese students who were studying at the same second-tier private university in Tokyo. If they were not graduates, most had at least attended college for a while before they arrived. Due to a lack of interest in their occupation or major or an insufficient level of education to attain a desirable job, they decided to look for alternative career opportunities in Japan. For example, Bai Yun, a woman from northeastern China, was studying fashion design. After being in the program for some time, she started doubting her career choice. The fashion industry was competitive, and she was not sure she would have good job prospects. She was considering Italy because some of her kin were doing business there. Her parents had the resources and were willing to send her abroad. She quit the school in China to prepare to relocate overseas. In the end, she failed to get a visa to study in Italy. Because she was already using an agent that brokered overseas education, she was recommended to try Japan instead (Liu-Farrer 2014).

Studying abroad has become an alternative to domestic higher education for many Asian students, especially those from China, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam, where the competition to enter elite universities is fierce. China has reportedly seen a continuous decline in the number of students participating in *Gaokao*, the national matriculation exams. Although this is largely due to the declining population of this age group in China, statistics show that the number of students who have left to study abroad has increased.[3] In 2009, while 840,000 Chinese high school graduates skipped the entrance exams, the number of Chinese students who entered Japan reached a record high of 35,000 (Renmin Ribao 2010). Although Japan is not the most desirable study-abroad destination for Chinese students—the United States, United Kingdom (UK), and other Anglophone countries are more attractive—it is a well-known and familiar place that is easier to access. Furthermore, it is a country that has increasingly become popular as a cultural and consumer destination.

Escape to Hope, Migrate for Desire

Migration is an effective way to escape political persecution, oppressive regimes, or violent conflicts. It is also a strategy for individuals to pull themselves away from difficult personal circumstances or social environments. Labeling such phenomena "intimate mobilities," Mahdavi (2016) shows in her work on migrants in the Gulf region that individuals often wanted to migrate not out of poverty but

out of their families and communities. Some of them migrated to avoid unwanted or arranged marriages and social pressures for them to conform. Others migrated in search of love or adventure abroad, hoping to form new intimate bonds away from the watchful eyes of their families and communities. Still others feel that they can express their sexualities only when they are not in a space where they may bring shame on their families. Migrants we interviewed were similar. Japan, like many other destinations, provides a safe haven for some, and an emancipatory space for others.

Migrate to Escape

Ms. Sato married a Japanese man in order to keep her ex-husband in China out of her life. She was divorced when she was thirty. Her ex-husband worked for the state revenue bureau and she ran a business. They had a comfortable life. Sometime in the early 1990s, he was found to have embezzled half a million RMB when he was a department head. It was a huge amount of money then. Making several tens of thousands of RMB a year from her own business, she was doing all she could to help pay back the money. She learned, however, that her husband had lovers and squandered her hard-earned money on other women. It was a heavy blow. She could not take it and asked for a divorce. But her husband kept stalking her. She explained, "My ex-husband said that once you were my wife, you would always be my wife. He kept harassing me after we divorced. If somebody tried to get close to me, he would go and have a conversation with that person. Even after he got remarried, he still watched over me. When he got drunk at night, he didn't go home, but came to knock on my door. My neighbors started to have complaints. I couldn't bear his harassment anymore." A Chinese friend in Japan introduced Sato to her current husband. After he visited several times, they got married. She used the word *taobi*, meaning "escape and avoid," to describe her motivation to come to Japan.

Migration is sometimes used as a means to escape marital problems. Geographic distance allows immigrants to use de facto physical separation to cope with a dysfunctional marriage. Chang was a married man and an IT engineer working in a Japanese company. His feelings toward his wife had long dwindled after years of endless quarrels. He rejected the idea of divorce as a solution because he believed it would be detrimental to his teenage son as well as his finances. He had been the breadwinner in the family. Filing for divorce would entail sharing savings and properties with his wife. He found geographic distance the best solution to his marital problems. He sent enough money back so that his wife and son could afford a comfortable life. Twice a year, he visited Shanghai for one week

each time. The rest of the year he lived in his rented apartment in Tokyo and was free to date.

Ms. Kondo's plan to relocate to Japan was first prompted by hope, though as circumstances changed her migration ultimately transformed into an escape strategy. Saving her son was the reason for Ms. Kondo's initial decision to migrate. She was a divorced entrepreneur running a restaurant in southern China. Her son had a severe case of congenital heart disease and had gone through multiple surgeries. Recalling her decision to come to Japan in the late 1990s, she said, "Fifteen years ago, Chinese doctors really couldn't save my child, so I had been asking around, hoping maybe we could go to the US to get the treatment. My friend said Japan could save my child. Japanese techniques for treating the heart were more advanced than [those in] China." It was not easy for a Chinese national like her to travel to Japan then, and she had no clue how a person could get treatment in a foreign country. "I didn't know I could email people in order to save my son. The Internet wasn't so prevalent then. We were pretty closed up in China," she explained. When somebody suggested international marriage and introduced Ms. Kondo to her current husband, who was willing to help her with her son, she said yes. Romance, though, was the last thing on her mind. Her primary goal was to get her son the proper treatment he needed. They were ready to go to Japan in the summer when the school year concluded. Ms. Kondo took him to Hangzhou, a scenic city in eastern China, for the May Day holiday. His heart suddenly failed during the trip, and he died two days later. Ms. Kondo was devastated. "I decided to continue [with] the plan [of marrying the Japanese man]. My friends couldn't understand me. I was just too heart broken. I didn't want to stay in that heartbreaking place [*shangxin di*]. I needed a change of environment to heal my heart, so that I could live on." Kondo's case illustrates that a multitude of motivations can drive an individual's decision to migrate. Though initially the reason to migrate via international marriage was primarily instrumental, in the end the journey was a means to escape a dire situation and seek emotional healing.

David and Carlos left their home countries because of their disenchantment of the social or political environment. David, who grew up in a "working class town in the middle of England," had always wanted to leave that town. He had a university degree in filmmaking, but his job experience mostly consisted of working in pubs. Though he had relatives in France, he did not see job opportunities there. He was looking toward Asia. At that time, however, China was experiencing the SARS outbreak. Therefore, he chose Japan because all his friends who had been in Japan liked it. He arrived in Japan in 2004 to work for an English conversation school. Carlos, on the other hand, viewed the journey to Japan as an escape because he was discontented with his job and disillusioned by the political situation in his home

country in South America. Japan was chosen for no particular reason other than the fact that the company he used to work for had an open position here. He applied for jobs in different locations and ended up in Japan.

Migrate for Desire

For some individuals, especially sexual minorities, migration can be part of a strategy to assert sexual subjectivities and seek intimate relationships. Manuel Guzman (1997, 227) coined the term "sexile" to capture this phenomenon, in which migration is a form of "exile for those who have had to leave their nations of origin on account of their sexual orientation." According to Hirano (2014), sexuality has been a significant factor driving the international migration of gay Japanese men who move to the United States. Among those coming to Japan, the ability to express their own sexuality can similarly be a motivation for their migration. Okada (2013) reports that a number of transgender women from the Philippines chose to come to Japan as "entertainers" partly because it allowed them to perform in the gender of their choice.

Anh Dung was a Vietnamese student. As a gay man, he wanted to leave Vietnam for some time because, although homosexuality was not illegal in Vietnam, he felt constrained in the familiar social environment at home. He aspired for the freedom to express his sexuality. Japan emerged as an opportunity and an easier destination to reach. The threshold to enter as a student was relatively low, and there were also abundant part-time work opportunities to support his study. Although his desire to leave Vietnam was his primary motive, Anh Dung was happy to come to Japan because the country is known for having abundant queer establishments and flourishing queer pop cultural genres.

Sexual migration is by no means limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. Sexuality has influenced many heterosexual individuals' decision to migrate to Japan. This can be attributed to the self-perceived sexual capital a person believes he or she possesses in a different demographic group (Farrer 2010). But it could also be a form of specific sexual preference, similar to queer sexuality. Jamie Paquin's (2014) study examined how the sexual attraction of many men and women—of various racial backgrounds—to East Asians motivated them to migrate to Japan.

Among some immigrants we interviewed, it was a romantic relationship that kindled an interest in Japan that led to migration. Dmitri was a programmer working in Moscow. He had a group of friends he saw regularly and through them he befriended some Japanese students who were studying Russian. He started dating one of the students. When his Japanese girlfriend returned to Japan, he decided to follow and "see where she came from." A friend in Russia was also planning to

come to Japan. They went through the paperwork together and enrolled themselves in a Japanese language school. Initially he did not have any particular plan for his stay in Japan and thought of it as a long vacation. He kept his job in Moscow since he was able to work from a distance. After two years of language school, his visa expired. Although by then he had broken up with the Japanese girlfriend who drew him to Japan, he had nonetheless started a new relationship. Knowing that he probably would not leave the country for a while, he used recruiting agencies to look for employment. It took only a week before he found a job as an IT engineer. Dmitri thought of his migration for the sake of a relationship as a natural path. Talking about the group of friends with whom he hung out in Moscow, he said, "Everybody is in different countries now. Like one of my friends is now in Japan. Another friend went to Taiwan to study Chinese, I guess. I had a Japanese girlfriend, [so] I came to Japan. He had a Taiwanese girlfriend, [so] he went to Taiwan. And then another girl, she married an American. She went to the States. Everybody went somewhere."

"Japan or Bust": The Attraction of Japanese Culture

Considered by Huntington (1993) as a distinct civilization and by other scholars as an alternative or "co-eval" modernity (Harootunian 2011), Japan receives not only people for whom the country represents a generic developed economy or is an accidental destination, but also those who are genuinely interested in Japan itself.

Japan became an object of fascination in both the East and the West not long after the end of World War II. Rising from the ruins of the war, Japan dazzled the world with its rapidly advancing technology and increasing economic power. The economic miracle drew people into the country to explore its social and cultural practices. Japanese anime, manga, and games have also gained worldwide fandom. For those people, Japan is not merely one destination out of many; it is exactly the place where they want to be. As a young American man who spent a year as an exchange student in Japan explained matter-of-factly in his blog: "At the beginning of this year, I made a new year's resolution: Get to Japan. That's it. No fitness plans, no diet regimens, no new hobbies or habits. Just get to Japan. I especially felt the resolve in my heart that day as I left the embassy. It's not a question of whether or not I'm going to Japan this year; it's a question of whether or not it's through JET. It's time. I know. God knows. Japan or bust" (Falke 2015). Japan's cultural lure prominently featured in the narratives of younger Europeans and North Americans when they recounted their motivations for coming to the country. For many

of them, it is the anime, games, and manga that fascinate. Neal, a Canadian in his late thirties, had been in Japan for over eight years when we interviewed him in 2011. He was passionate about anime as a child, and during his teenage years he was exposed to various series, such as Robotech. He relayed how he acquired a special affection for anime because he found the style interesting and was fascinated by the culture it reflected. In Vancouver, he tried to learn more about Japan, including its culture and language. He did not feel, however, that his learning was adequate, and he had always hoped to come to Japan. He did not act on this desire, though, until he was thirty. "I then had a decision to make: I could either go down to California and take a position as a sales engineer at a company there, a security company, or I could take advantage of the working holiday system, which was my last opportunity. I was exactly 30 years old. At the end of your 30th year, that's the [age] limit [for a working holiday visa], so realizing it was a now or never proposition. I decided to make the jump and came out to Japan as a result of that, and undoubtedly [it was] one of the better decisions I ever made."

Helene's cultural interest in Japan was more traditional. She was attracted to the aesthetics of traditional cultural objects and practices, such as the kimono, tea ceremony, and calligraphy. She studied Japanese in college in the United States and also at a Japanese university through an exchange program. In addition to her fascination with the traditional culture, both the exposure to exciting contemporary Tokyo lifestyles and the kindness of her host family deepened her interest in the country. Upon graduating from college, she wanted to improve her language skills and experience more of Japan, so she returned to pursue a master's degree at a Japanese university.

Although cultural curiosity might be more predominant in Western migrants' narratives, it can also be a motivating factor for many Asians. The country is a center of cultural influence in East Asia, and Japanese popular culture, fashion, and consumer products are familiar to many within the region. Increasingly, Chinese and Korean students or young professionals are coming to Japan out of a fascination with Japanese TV dramas or a particular genre of manga or anime. Many Korean and Chinese immigrants we conversed with explained how their interest in Japanese popular culture, fashion, or consumer products instilled in them the desire to learn the language and eventually live in Japan. This passion for the culture led them to seek out opportunities to study, work, or even marry in Japan.

Yu Xin was a shy high school girl when I met her in China. She had gone to the best school in her hometown, an affluent city near Shanghai, yet she was not motivated to study for the matriculation exams to enter a Chinese university. Instead, she spent a lot of time watching Japanese TV dramas on the internet. She was also a fan of Arashi, a popular boy band. She asked her family to send her to study in

Japan. Although her parents preferred either the United States or the UK (her close cousin went to the UK for graduate school), they gave in to her wish. During her last year of high school, she basically withdrew from the school curriculum and stayed at home to study Japanese.[4] She progressed rapidly after arriving in Japan, passing the Level 1 Japanese Proficiency Test with near-perfect scores after the first semester in the language school, enabling her to enter a private university a year later. Taking a walk with me in the resident neighborhood where she lived, she smiled contently, "This is what I imagined an ordinary person's life in Tokyo would be like from watching those TV dramas."

Japan also fascinates the queer population in East Asia and beyond. Consuming Japanese queer literature—especially manga portraying boys' love—has aroused desires for Japaneseness among other East Asian gay men. Baudinette's (2016) ethnographic research in Shinjuku Ni-chome, the well-known gay district in Tokyo, shows that many gay men from China and Korea were lured to Japan by the romanticized relationships portrayed in manga. Their interest and idealizing of Japanese men led to an infatuation with Japan itself (Baudinette 2016).

Gaming and Dreaming in the Niche Industry

It was a quarter past 9 p.m. on a chilly Thursday in November. I had just finished interviewing Xavier, an American who worked in Japan's gaming industry. We walked toward an old-fashioned Japanese *izakaya* on a side street near Nakameguro Station. Paper lanterns were glowing warmly in the dark above the wooden doors. Through the glass panes I saw a well-lit restaurant packed full of people. Sliding open the doors, we walked into the smoke-filled space and down the central aisle. There were tables on both sides, occupied by the after-work drinking crowd—mostly Japanese men in shirts or suits. Xavier led the way. At the back of the restaurant a door opened to a tatami room, a wooden shelf stood beside it for removed shoes. Two groups of people sat around two long tables. At the shorter one sat several Japanese men in business attire. They were ready to leave. The longer table alongside the wall was surrounded by mostly Western-looking foreigners. Xavier walked in first and I followed. The man sitting at the center of the table with his back to the wall saw him and said, "Hey man, haven't seen you for a while." He glanced at me. Xavier pointed at me and said, "a friend." I nodded my head. He said, "*konbanwa*!" Several other people addressed me in Japanese.

This was the weekly gathering that Neal and a few other westerners working in the gaming industry in Japan had told me about. Surveying the crowd of about twenty people, I saw only a few women—one I guessed to be Japanese and all the

others were foreign, mostly westerners. They looked to be in their twenties and early thirties. There appeared to be a more diverse range of ages among the men. Most people were wearing jeans and T-shirts or hooded sweatshirts.

We sat down at the end of the table near the entrance. Xavier pointed out several people he identified as old-timers. The man whom Xavier greeted, John, was the organizer. He looked to be in his late thirties or early forties. A young blond man sitting diagonally across from me was talking to a woman beside him. He was saying something about his being a "creative director" and "software developer" and making a comment about the pay. A couple of people were looking at several game apps on their phones. As a person who has never played video games and had no knowledge of the industry, I felt out of place. But for others, this was "home," as George, an old-timer game programmer, later pointed out to me.

Japan dominated the global video game industry from 1980 to the 2000s. Most of the people in the *izakaya* grew up with a Nintendo Entertainment System or Sony PlayStation and had made a career out of their gaming. In order to play video games, some of them studied the language and then later became interested in Japanese society and culture more broadly. For these gamers, Japan was their mecca. Even though the industry has increasingly diversified and Japan's domination weakened in the mid-2000s, the country has remained a place of intense attraction where one's career needs to touch down, at least briefly.

Japan has also been a magnet for those with dreams of establishing careers in anime, manga, and fashion design. Heyin, a young Korean woman who worked as a graphic designer, was into anime. She studied Japanese in high school because Japan was the place she wanted to study. When asked if she considered studying in other countries, she shook her head no. "Japan was the only place I considered. I am studying anime. Japan was its home [*honba*], so my career in Japan would be recognized in Korea if I wanted to go back."

For those young people who are chasing dreams in these creative fields, which are usually highly competitive, Japan has an added benefit—the relative ease in finding part-time jobs to support themselves. An, a young man pursuing his dream to be a singer in Japan, had not been too thrilled with life in Japan because he felt people were not as warm as those in Korea. Nevertheless, he knew that only in Japan would he have a chance to progress on his career path. Korea, according to An, was hard for irregularly employed artists. "Human labor is too cheap there. Even if you work very hard [*isshōkenmei*] you can't really make enough to live on. In Japan, even a *freeter*[5] can pay rent, make a living, have a girlfriend, and do whatever he really wants to do. It is difficult to do that in Korea." When asked how much was the typical wage for a part-time job in Korea, he said "about 450 Japanese yen an hour. . . . But cheap labor doesn't mean things are cheap. In

Korea, a lunch that in Japan you might pay 1,000 yen for would cost you 800 yen. So, the prices are not that different." He further emphasized that in Japan one could find part-time work that was easy on the body, such as being a cashier at a convenience store. "You can't get paid much for those easy jobs in Korea, and it is difficult to live off of those. In that sense, it would be miserable to live in Korea [trying to make a music career]. So, we came to Japan."

Of course, An and his friend came to Japan not solely because of the ease of living as freeters. Korean popular culture, TV dramas, and idol bands all gained in popularity in Japan in the 2000s. Many ethnic Korean entrepreneurs rode on the *Hallyu* (Korean Wave) and tried to import talented Korean young people into Japan. An was one of many with aspirations to establish a career in Japan.

In the global age, cross-border mobility has become a normative practice; and for the younger generation, it is a rite of passage and a part of growing up. The whole world is now a possible destination. Why do people come to Japan? This chapter extracted from migrants' narratives complex motivations and rationales that include economic incentives, cultural fascination, and more personal and emotional reasons. In these immigrants' imaginaries, Japan can and does alternate in being a generic developed country, a land of opportunities, or a place embedded with fantastical cultural contents and practices.

In the existing literature as well as in our own research, there seem to be regional differences among people who enter Japan. Tsuchida and Takenaka's (2012) study of forty-nine international migrants who were either studying or had studied at a national Japanese university shows that it is more likely for North Americans and Europeans to report that they came to Japan out of an interest in experiencing living in a different culture. In contrast, East Asian students—mainly Chinese and Koreans—tended to link studying abroad with future career mobility. Similarly, the contrasts between cultural interests and career-oriented motivations are also reflected in Hof's (2018) study of European migrants in Asia. In her study, those who chose to come to Japan preferred talking about their cultural interests.

There were indeed regional and national differences concerning the motivations for migration in the narratives we recorded. The stories reflect the varying degrees of economic development among respondents' respective home countries. Japan's advanced economy is attractive to people from less developed countries in Asia because of the opportunities it offers. Economic factors drove Koreans and Chinese, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, to come to Japan as language students where they doubled as low-wage laborers (Liu-Farrer 2009, 2011a). Tens

of thousands of Vietnamese and Nepalese students, motivated by similar incentives, are now filling up Japanese language schools in the mid-2010s. In comparison, people from more affluent Europe and North America perceive Japan as a country that possesses distinct aesthetics and excels in design, the gaming industry, and various popular cultural genres, among other things fashion design, video games, anime, and manga. Since mobility within the EU and between developed countries is relatively easy, there are many possible destinations for European and North American migrants. The choice of Japan, for them, often involves a cultural lure.

Moreover, Japan's geographic proximity as well as its status as an early developed country and close, yet complex, historical, economic, and social ties with surrounding Asian countries makes it a regional center of learning in East Asia. While the histories of Japan's wars and colonization projects have inflicted injuries on East Asian sociopolitical relations, they have, however, also produced a type of intimacy unimaginable to those outside the region. For over a hundred years, China, Korea, and Taiwan have been sending large numbers of students and laborers to Japan. Culturally Japan is also more accessible due to its language. Japanese not only possesses a linguistic affinity with other regional languages, but it is also widely taught in East Asia—a phenomenon that can be attributed to colonial legacies and the economic and political importance Japan now enjoys. Capital and labor also go hand in hand (Sassen 1988). Japan's direct investments and offshore production in the region have induced migratory flows. Migration is cumulative. Once it begins, resources of all kinds are channeled through social networks to produce more human mobilities (Massey et al. 1993). For Europeans and North Americans, however, Japan, being an island country in the distant Far East whose presence in the public imagination has been relatively tenuous, is a less familiar place. As such, the country arouses curiosity through fragmented cultural representations.

However, over the past few decades, given the rapid economic development in East Asia, the increasing ease of travel, and the globalization of labor markets, people's migration decisions have become more complex. Though in interviews, when prompted, people tend to resort to some practiced narrative of economic, emotional, or cultural motives, in reality, those motivations are frequently bundled together in migratory decision making. Mobility involves complex desires, some of which people might not be conscious of, let alone articulate. Among those from less developed countries, in most cases, economic betterment is not the only concern that motivates people to come to Japan. Similarly, for many Europeans and North Americans, Japan will not be a feasible migration destination if their cultural fascination is not also accompanied with career opportuni-

ties. Migration has increasingly become a work-life pathway (Krieger, Haake, and Minter 2013; Hof 2018).

Regardless of individual motivations, Japan would not have become an immigration destination had it not opened its doors and created bridges to allow outsiders in. Although Japan has not been widely known as an immigrant society, it is facing a demographic crisis and is in acute need of labor. As will be elaborated in the next chapter, many channels exist for laborers to enter, either through the front door or the side door, into Japan.

2

MIGRATION CHANNELS AND THE SHAPING OF IMMIGRANT ETHNO-SCAPES

The previous chapter presented the different motives that immigrants narrated for coming to Japan. However, looking exclusively at individual motivations will not give us a full understanding of why and how people move. Migration is a collective action produced by different actors—human or nonhuman—that facilitate or halt mobility. Institutional and personal ties, technology, state policies, and brokers have all shaped distinct channels of immigration into Japan for various types of people. This chapter examines the demographic and residential characteristics of the major immigrant groups in Japan and explains how such a population makeup is shaped by distinct migration infrastructures (Xiang and Lindquist 2014).

Japan's Immigrant Profile

In Japan, Asians accounted for over 80 percent of the 2.6 million foreign resident population in 2018. China, Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines were the top sending countries. Nearly 30 percent of foreign residents were Chinese, and close to 20 percent were Korean. The population of Koreans has been gradually declining since the early 1990s while the number of Chinese and Filipinos continues to increase following a dramatic hike in the 1980s and 1990s (figure 2.1).[1] In the twenty-first century, the Vietnamese population has been growing the most rapidly. It increased from less than 20,000 persons in 2001 to nearly 300,000 (291,494) in 2018, surpassing the number of Filipinos to become the third-largest foreign

resident population in Japan. The Himalayan country of Nepal has also sent many immigrants. In 2018, over 85,000 Nepalese worked and studied in Japan, a tenfold increase from the 2006 figure of 7,800.

South Americans, especially Brazilians, also have a significant presence in Japan. Most of them are Nikkei (ethnic Japanese) and their families, although many are of mixed descent (Linger 2001; Green 2012). This population has shrunk following the 2008 financial crisis. However, numbering over 196,000, the Brazilians were still the fifth-largest immigrant population. In addition, the nearly 60,000 US citizens made up the seventh-largest foreign national population in Japan (figure 2.1).

The immigration patterns are gendered. Among the top Asian sending countries, except for Vietnam, women occupied the majority. Gender imbalance particularly characterizes the Filipino population. Three out of four Filipinos in Japan were women. In comparison, men from western countries (North America and Western Europe) and Oceania vastly outnumbered women. For example, there were twice as many men from the United States as women (figure 2.2).

Common among immigrants from the top national groups—with the exception of the Vietnamese—is a large proportion in the permanent resident category.[2] It demonstrates the quick process of immigrants settling down in Japan. However, beyond this commonality, different immigrant groups were very different in their residential statuses. Compared with other nationalities, there is a more even distribution of categories of residents among the Chinese. Students made up nearly 17 percent of the total Chinese resident population in 2018. Skilled and highly skilled workers (people in visa categories of engineer/specialist in

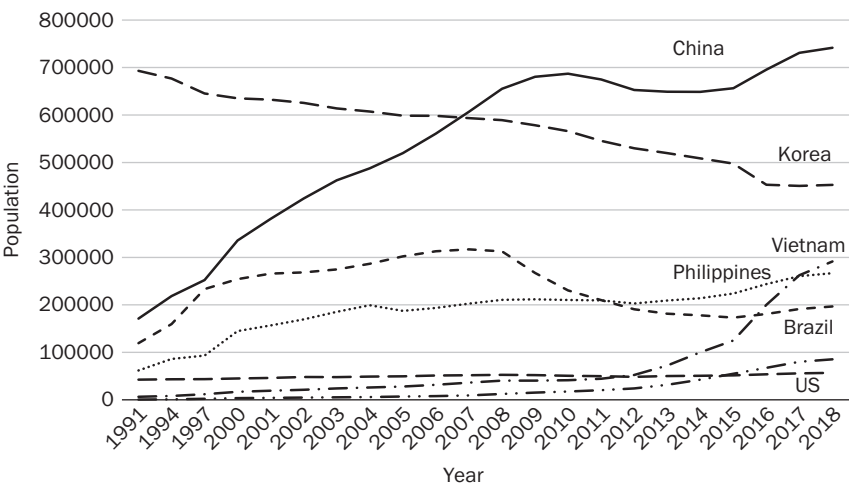

FIGURE 2.1. The major foreign population in Japan, 1991–2018

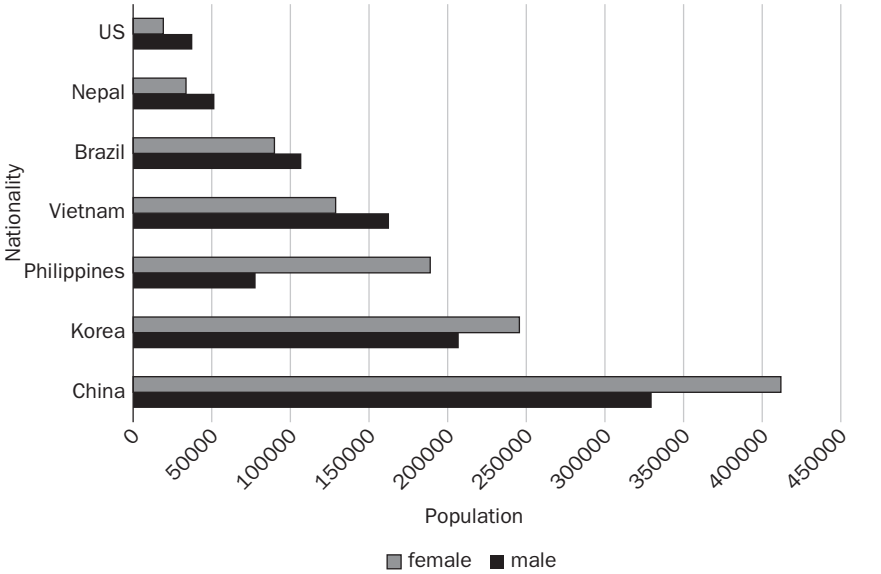

FIGURE 2.2. Gender ratio of major immigrant groups in 2018

humanities/international services, intra-firm transfer, and skilled labor)[3] made up 13 percent of the total while technical interns accounted for 10 percent. In addition, those who came as spouses or children of Japanese nationals (31,607), permanent residents (15,191), and other immigrants (76,752) accounted for 12 percent of Chinese population.

Among Korean immigrants, there is a large group of the so-called old-comers whose families arrived in Japan before or during World War II. Numbering 292,878 out of a total of 452,701 in 2018, they made up two-thirds of the resident Korean population in Japan.[4] Not counting the technical interns, Korean newcomers resemble the Chinese in having a wider distribution of immigrants in different categories including a large number of students (17,097), highly skilled migrants (exceeding 25,000), and permanent residents (70,023).

The majority of Vietnamese migrants were either international students (80,683) or technical interns (133,324). These two categories combined made up nearly three-quarters of the total Vietnamese resident population (291,494) in Japan. Although Vietnam sends a large number of brides to South Korea and Taiwan (Wang and Chang 2002; Lee, Seol, and Cho 2006; Wang 2007), only approximately 3,500 Vietnamese in Japan were "spouses or dependents of Japanese nationals." Many are highly skilled workers, with 28,722 working with an engineer/specialist in humanities/international services visa.

Marriage has been the major immigration channel for Filipinos. Over 26,000 people hold the spouse or dependent of Japanese national visa. The number of long-term residents is also large (51,097). Long-term residents are often divorced or unmarried Filipino women who are raising children fathered by Japanese partners (Ogaya 2016). Among the working categories, technical interns make for the largest group. The number of entertainers has dramatically decreased, with only 443 people in this resident category in 2018—previously this visa served as a primary channel for labor migration. There is also a visible increase of highly skilled migrants holding the visa status of engineer/specialist in humanities/international services or intra-firm transfer.

Marriage is a main channel for long-term residency among the American immigrants too. A little over nine thousand—or 17 percent—of the US citizens in Japan were married to a Japanese national. Unlike the Filipinos, the spouses were mostly men. It was also likely for an American to be an instructor, teaching English at various Japanese primary or secondary schools.

Compared with the other nationalities, the Brazilians are the least diverse in terms of residential categories. Most Brazilians in Japan arrived on a long-term resident visa (Kajita 1994). As reported in many previous studies, they primarily held manual labor jobs in Japan's manufacturing sector (Higuchi and Tanno 2003; Takenoshita 2015).

What shaped these national, ethnic, and gender profiles of immigrants in Japan? In the following sections, I borrow the concept of *migration infrastructure* and its different components (Xiang and Lindquist 2014) to illustrate how specific patterns of immigration into Japan have been produced and in turn how a specific immigrant ethno-scape has been shaped.

Migration Channels

The classic push-pull model of migration focusing on the dynamics of regional economic and population imbalances and the resulting wage differentials or employment opportunity discrepancies has never been able to fully account for the causes and directions of migration (Massey et al. 1993). In the twenty-first century, migration scholarship has increasingly granted attention to the act of migration itself by emphasizing that it is an orchestrated process involving the participation of a diverse set of actors, human and nonhuman, with varying motivations.

Side Doors as the Major Labor Migration Channels

Japan's immigration regime—the regulatory component of the migration infrastructure—dictates who is allowed to come and settle and on what terms. Thus, it has a direct impact on the stock of immigrants within its borders. In the immediate postwar decades, Japanese society struggled with its colonial legacy—a large number of Koreans and Taiwanese were still living on the margins of postwar Japanese society—while trying to redefine itself as a monoethnic nation (Weiner 2009). It hesitated to accept foreign workers until the 1980s, when the economic growth created an acute labor shortage. The need for foreign laborers and the ambivalence surrounding their acceptance resulted in selective immigration policies and distinct patterns of migration into Japan. The doors were open for skilled workers but closed for the so-called unskilled laborers (*mijukurenrōdōsha*). As a result, "side doors" were created in an attempt to recruit labor while maintaining the appearance of prohibiting low-skilled labor import.[5]

The major channels of migration that have largely shaped the particular migrant demographic characteristics in Japan were these "side doors" that allowed for the import of entertainers, the ethnic return of Nikkei Brazilians, and the entry of students.[6] Entertainers and Nikkei, respectively, helped suffice labor demands in service and manufacturing industries. Accepting international students, on the other hand, represented Japan's effort to be a player among the global powers even though students also became an important source of irregular labor (Liu-Farrer 2011a). These channels lowered the thresholds for aspiring immigrants to enter Japan, brought in large numbers of immigrants from specific sending regions with particular gender profiles, and allowed many the possibility of settling in Japan. Mobility would not have otherwise been available to these immigrants.

ENTERTAINERS

Entertainer visas provided the most accessible means for Filipino women to enter Japan from 1980 to 2005 (Ballescas 1992; Komai 1995; Douglass 2000; Takeda 2005).[7] This visa category—designated for dancers, musicians, artists, sportsmen, and people working in the entertainment business (MOJ 2019a)—became a channel to supply workers for the numerous hostess clubs and cabarets in Japan from the late 1970s on (Komai 1995; Douglass 2000; Takeda 2005). Because labor export has been a strategy of the Philippine state for revenue since the 1970s, Filipinos were encouraged to leave the country to work. Numerous promotion agents emerged to recruit, train, and prepare (in terms of both certifying and brokering) young Filipino women to become "entertainers" bound for Japan. According to several studies (Ballescas 1992; Douglass 2000; Tyner 2009), the import of entertainers was a reverse of the sex tourism trend involving Japanese men traveling to

the Philippines. As Filipinas came to Japan, the number of tourists bound for the Philippines significantly declined (Tyner 2009). From 1979 to 2005, 1,917,063 entries into Japan with an entertainer visa were registered, and the majority of them were Filipinos.[8]

Evangeline was one of them. A beautiful young woman from the Philippines with only a primary school education, Evangeline was a divorced single mother struggling to support herself and her children before she migrated. She arrived in Japan in 1986 at the age of twenty-two on an entertainer visa and soon married a Japanese man she met at work. When asked why she had chosen Japan as an immigration destination, she was puzzled by the question. "I have chosen it? No, because in the [United] States for instance, they mostly need nurses and doctors. For somebody like me who was not able to acquire [an] education, Japan's hiring of entertainers is an opportunity available to me. And because I have friends who go here, I was convinced to come. At that time, I thought I should grab the opportunity since it did not require a diploma. But, of course, you have to capitalize on your looks. And that was okay because I was very young at that time." Through migration, Evangeline was able to support her entire family, something she valued as an achievement: "especially for a single mother like me." She beamed proudly while we talked. Her accomplishments were impressive. She fed her family including not only her own children but also her siblings and two abandoned children her late midwife mother brought home. She sent all of them to school, even though not all of them managed to graduate. She paid for the placement fee to help her brother go to Saudi Arabia as a migrant worker.

It is undeniable that the Filipino entertainers were victims of many injustices, including, in many cases, severe human rights violations. However, if it had not been for this migration channel, those who desired to move to better their lives would have never had the chance. Entertainer visas were short-term visas that allowed the individuals to stay in Japan for six months or less. Many of these entertainers, including Evangelina, ended up marrying Japanese nationals and settling in Japan. This trend resulted in Filipinos becoming one of the largest immigrant populations, but one that was predominantly female. Amid concerns of visa abuses, with the intervention of the US State Department, this visa category became more strictly regulated and increasingly unavailable to Filipinos after 2005.[9] The number of Filipinos who entered as entertainers decreased drastically, especially after 2011.

LONG-TERM RESIDENTS AND THE RETURN OF THE NIKKEI

The Brazilians and the Peruvians—together numbering around a quarter million—made up around 10 percent of the total foreign population in Japan in 2018. These South American nationals consisted mostly of ethnic Japanese and their

family members. Most ethnic Japanese South Americans came to Japan as "long-term residents." This visa category was created through the 1989 ICRRA, which significantly revised Japanese immigration law to expand both working and residential categories. Long-term resident is a visa granted to the descendants of Japanese nationals (up to the third generation) and their families, legal guardians of children of Japanese nationals (e.g., divorced spouses of Japanese nationals who have custody of the children), or other individuals considered eligible by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ 1990).

Though technically not a category specifically for laborers, the creation of long-term resident status was aimed toward opening a channel for ethnic Japanese to work in Japan to supplement the country's shrinking manufacturing labor force (Yamanaka 1995, 2000). The process of ethnic Brazilian workers moving to Japan involved the coordination of regulatory and commercial actors of the migration infrastructure. Working with temporary work agencies in Japan, many Brazilian travel agencies actively recruited Nikkei people. Prospective migrants were presented with a long list of job openings to choose from in various places in Japan. The travel agencies would take care of the documents for immigration, including the proof of one's blood relation to Japanese (grand)parents. Meanwhile, the Japanese temp agencies were responsible for placing laborers in workplaces, arranging housing, and providing Japanese language support and transportation (Watanabe 1996; Tanno 2003, 2006; Sasaki 2013). As a consequence of this very structured migration channel, Nikkei South Americans, regardless of their educational backgrounds and professional experience, through the legal category of long-term resident, were directly placed on shop floors in Japan's manufacturing sector.

The government's reluctance to accept foreign labor resulted in the rapid increase of ethnic Japanese Brazilians and Japanese Peruvian migrants. According to Yamanaka (2000), although there were Nikkei that came to Japan out of a longing for their homeland or a desire to find their ethnic roots, most of the second and third generations were motivated by economic interests. Having suffered from the economic crises in Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s, they sought to make quick money in Japan in order to buy a house or to start or maintain a family business back home. Researchers found this desire to make quick money resulted in a pattern of circular migration among the Nikkei Brazilians (Yamanaka 2000; Sasaki 2013; LeBaron von Baeyer 2015). After making money via manual labor in Japan, they wanted to go back to Brazil to start their own businesses. When these business ventures failed, however, they reembarked on the journey to the factory floors in Japan.

The Brazilian population grew rapidly throughout the 1990s and 2000s until the 2008 Lehman Shock when the global financial market crashed. Many factories closed down. The Nikkei workers, initially recruited as shock absorbers for

the labor market, lost their jobs. Many left. The Brazilian and Peruvian combined population shrunk by 40 percent after 2008. Among those who had left were a large number of permanent residents. Many of the Nikkei Brazilians who returned home after the financial crisis were greeted by an entirely different economic situation. Not only had the Brazilian economy improved since they left, but there had also been an increase of Japan's offshore production in Brazil. Meanwhile, the labor market for Nikkei in Japan did not recover sufficiently to attract them back to Japan. The Nikkei Brazilians who were imported as workers for Japanese manufacturers two decades earlier now found themselves working for Japanese companies in Brazil (Sasaki 2013). Nonetheless, the majority of ethnic Japanese South Americans stayed on in Japan.

LANGUAGE STUDENTS: THE EDUCATION CHANNEL FOR LABOR IMPORT

The rapid increase of Chinese entering Japan in the late 1980s and Vietnamese entering Japan after 2010 was largely due to the availability of the legal category of "international student." Since 1983, when Japan instituted the Plan to Accept 100 Thousand International Students, waves of international students of various nationalities arrived in Japan, making the student visa one of the most accessible entry categories.[10] In 2008, the Japanese government started a more ambitious plan to recruit three hundred thousand international students by 2020.[11] Students have continued to make up the largest entry category of long-term migrants. Between 1984 and 2018, Japan accepted over 1.3 million overseas students, mostly from neighboring Asian countries.[12] Because a student visa permits off-campus work during the school year and can be changed to a work visa when a student finds professional employment, international education has become a channel for both unskilled labor during school and skilled workers thereafter, making it a "side door" for labor import.

International education in Japan, especially that in language academies, is heavily brokered. Japanese is not a language commonly taught in other countries' national curriculums, and thus the first landing place in Japan for international students tends to be the language school. The academic threshold for entering Japanese language institutions is relatively low. Only a high school diploma or its equivalent is required. Moreover, little prior language proficiency is necessary to study in language schools. This low entry threshold, coupled with the availability of a legal work permit that allows a student to work part time off campus, has turned language education into a lucrative migration business (Liu-Farrer and Tran 2019).

The top three sending countries of language students in the mid-2010s were China, Vietnam, and Nepal. Since the Association for the Promotion of Japanese

Language Education started keeping track in 1989, China has been the country of origin for the majority of students. From 1986 to 2018, over half a million Chinese entered Japan as students.[13] Although Chinese society has undergone dramatic changes during this period and the demographics as well as motivations of language students from China have changed (Liu-Farrer 2011a, 2013, 2014), Japan, due to its accessibility, remains a popular destination for Chinese students. In 2009, a year after the global financial crisis, while the Nikkei Brazilian population dropped by 20 percent, a record number of Chinese students (thirty-five thousand) arrived in Japan. From personal network-based brokerage thirty years ago, a large industry has spawned around Chinese students' mobility into Japan, ranging from language training and preparing documents and logistics to cram schools that specifically prepare Chinese students for entering Japan's higher education.

Vietnam became a main sending country of language students in 2013. The total number of Vietnamese students in Japan increased tenfold from 2011 to 2018. Many media reports attributed this trend to the increasing Japanese influence in Vietnam. Direct investment increased rapidly in Vietnam the second decade of the twenty-first century largely because of the rise of Chinese labor costs and the anti-Japanese sentiments that threatened Japanese businesses in China. In 2013, 1,077 Japanese firms were registered in Vietnam, and Japanese companies became desirable employers for the Vietnamese youth (Sunai 2014). At the same time, Japanese consumer products and popular culture also appealed to young Vietnamese people (NHK 2014). However, attraction alone does not move population. Language schools and the educational brokers were the primary agents in tripling and quadrupling the number of language students from Vietnam (Liu-Farrer and Tran 2019).

Nepal, a small Himalayan country that was torn apart by both a decade-long civil war from the mid-1990s till 2008 and the chaos thereafter and has a GDP that dropped to less than 800 dollars per capita (JASSO 2019), was the third-largest language-student-sending country in 2018. Since Nepal uses English as a medium of education in higher education and private high schools, traditionally Nepali students preferred studying abroad in Australia and other English-speaking countries. However, starting in 2013, Japan became the second most sought-after destination for Nepali students. Again, aggressive language schools and brokers were the main agents behind this change. Japan became a desirable destination because of the low threshold for getting a language student visa and the promise of earnings from part-time jobs. According to Kiyohiko Hamada, who worked for the embassy of Japan in Nepal, some language schools and brokers advertised, "Without speaking Japanese, you can still study in Japan. Even if you borrow loans to pay for the costs of travel and tuition fees, you can pay [them] back by working on part-time jobs in Japan" (JASSO 2014, 38).

In the close to thirty years since the studying in Japan boom started, a number of language students overstayed their visas and were later repatriated. Most language students, however, went on to pursue higher education in Japan. As a result, every year thousands, if not tens of thousands, of graduates enter corporate Japan and become important human resources in Japanese firms' globalizing businesses.

THE *TOKKU* MAIDS AND THE WORKERS OF "SPECIFIED SKILLS"

The labor shortage in many sectors in Japan has become so acute that the government was forced to come up with different schemes to import labor. For example, in the name of freeing women from domestic labor to encourage them to participate in the labor market, a special provision to allow the import of foreign domestic helpers (maids) was granted in 2015 on in so-called National Strategic Special Zones (*Tokku*) such as Osaka, Kanagawa, and Tokyo. However, the number has remained small. Six housekeeping service companies in Tokyo expressed interest in importing up to twenty-five hundred foreign workers for domestic services by 2021 (Nihon Keizaishinbun 2017).

Before the end of 2018, the Japanese Diet passed the amendments of ICRRA to accept specified skilled workers in fourteen categories.[14] In the official discourse, these workers are categorized as "middle skills," expected to be above the technical interns. If the workers attain appropriate skill credentials within five years, they have the opportunity to settle in Japan as permanent residents. It is the first time in Japan's postwar history that manual labor is allowed to enter.

The Invited Guests

Although Japan resists recruiting so-called unskilled (*mijukuren* or *tanjun*) foreign labor—and as a result has opened side doors, such as language education and the recruitment of ethnic Japanese Brazilians, to bring in manpower to replenish the shrinking workforce in its secondary labor market—the Japanese government has been actively accepting foreign people it deems desirable. These are often people with a higher education and technical or cultural skills.

THE GLOBAL TALENT

Japan has taken part in the global competition to attract highly skilled foreign workers (Tsukazaki 2008; Murata 2010; Akashi 2010; Oishi 2012). The nation's policies toward importing foreign talent have never been ambiguous. According to the sixth Employment Policy Basic Plan of 1988, the entry of unskilled labor (*tanjun rōdōsha*) is "to be dealt with extreme caution" (*jūbun shinchō ni taiō suru*); foreigners who have professional and technical skills are considered in the

plan as resources for revitalizing and internationalizing Japan, and thus it states "as many as possible should be accepted" (*kanō na kagiri ukeireru*) (IPSS 1988). In 1990, the revised ICRRA created fourteen employment visa categories. Thirteen of these visas are designated for highly skilled migrants, including such classifications as engineer, investor/business manager, intra-firm transfer, specialist in humanities/international services, and professor. Access to these visas is largely dependent on immigrants' level of completed higher education. In 2003, the E-Japan Strategy II, a national policy to improve development in Japan's IT sector, included a plan to accept thirty thousand highly skilled migrants (especially IT workers) by 2005 (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2003). It was the first time that the government set a clear numerical target for importing a highly skilled workforce. In response to this policy, the immigration law was revised in 2006 to facilitate the entry of IT workers from overseas. The Japanese government's attempts to attract highly skilled migrants continued. In 2012, the Ministry of Justice proposed a point system for highly skilled workers (*kōdojinzai pointo*) in which individuals are given points according to their level of education, employment situations, research outputs, and salaries. Foreigners with higher points enjoy privileges such as a shortened residence requirement for permanent residency. In 2015, the new visa category, highly skilled professional (*kōdosenmonshoku*) was established. Though ultimately a relatively small number, there were people that did qualify for this category and were granted a five-year visa and early eligibility for permanent residency along with other benefits, including permission to bring in caretakers, either their parents or household servants (MOFA 2015).

Many of the skilled migrants working in Japan were initially international students. Every year, around ten thousand graduates obtained employment visas to work in Japan. The Chinese have been the largest in this group. The majority of skilled workers, however, have been recruited overseas by human resource agents at various international job fairs and via intrafirm transfers.

Since 2009, the largest sending countries of engineers have been China, Korea, India, and Vietnam. China has been the largest sending country of engineers since the 1990s. In 2018, the total number of Chinese engineers and specialists in humanities and international services living in Japan was 80,825, or 38 percent of the total number of people having this visa status. Most Chinese engineers and IT workers were recruited from China. Although big Japanese companies would go to the job fairs on campuses of elite universities to directly recruit students, most of the recruitment is done by human resource agencies that dispatch workers. Many IT professionals we interviewed arrived in Japan via these companies. Three of them graduated from the same provincial university in a southwestern province of China. The IT dispatching company that recruited them in 2003 had been soliciting new graduates from their university and other academic

institutions in inland China for several years. Five of them from the same area were grouped together and underwent a six-month language training program before being sent to Japan. Upon entering Japan, they were "thrown" into different companies, as one of them explained:

> [We] had no idea what a dispatching company was in Japan. We were their employees, but they sent us out to other companies. The company was small. Altogether there might be 20 or 30 people. We were maybe the fourth cohort [they had recruited]. The company had been bringing in people from universities in China, including some very good universities, for several years. They just threw them out [*diu chu qu*] through dispatching and then let them be. After a year or so, we thought we had all more or less made [a] contribution to the company [*jin le li*]—we had paid off the debt, so we all gradually left, changed jobs and went our own ways.

Some early Chinese engineers soon learned the rules of the game and set up their own dispatching companies, called "soft houses" in Japan, and started to recruit people in China. Many of these soft houses are transnational in nature and can hire people in China using the category of intra-firm transfer to channel in human resources and dispatch them to companies in Japan.

The same process has taken place in India and Vietnam. Although Japan, being a non-English-speaking country, was not on the global mobility circuit for Indian IT workers (Xiang 2006), there has always been hundreds and sometimes over a thousand Indian IT specialists entering Japan every year either as engineers or through intrafirm transfers since the mid-1990s. The number accumulated, and by 2018 around 7,000 Indians were working in Japan as engineers.

Paralleling the spike in their compatriot students, there was a sudden rise in the number of Vietnamese skilled migrants. While there were only 197 Vietnamese working in Japan as engineers in 2004, 28,722 individuals were registered as either engineers or specialists in 2018. With the aspiration to globalize Japanese businesses and enlarge the global talent pool, Japan's major recruiters have been penetrating many countries' higher education institutions to search for talent (Conrad and Meyer-Ohle 2018).

"IMPORTED DIVERSITY"

For non-Asian immigrants, especially those from North America, Europe, and Oceania, the largest working category has been specialists in humanities and international services. Additionally, as mentioned above, the United States has the highest number of instructors in Japan—people working in education, especially as assistant language teachers at Japanese elementary and secondary schools. The

rising Japanese economy in the 1970s and 1980s elevated Japan to the rank of a developed nation. Thought of as an economic miracle and a society with distinct cultural practices, Japan piqued the interests of many in the West. However, what has turned many of those who had mere cultural interests in Japan into immigrants was a program called the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program.

The JET program started in 1987 and was part of Japan's effort to internationalize its local society while also expanding its influence around the world (JET Programme 2019). According to the official JET website, the number of countries Japan recruits from grew from four English-speaking countries—the United States, UK, Australia, and New Zealand—to over forty in 2015, including many European countries, China, Korea, Mongolia, and Russia. In its over three decades of operation, more than sixty thousand people from sixty-three countries have participated in the JET program. Most of them came from English-speaking countries and became assistant language teachers (ALTs). People from non-English-speaking countries became coordinators for international relations (CIRs), who were hired to assist the local government in organizing various international events. A minority of them became sports exchange advisors (SEAs). Thus far, two-thirds of the JET participants have come from North America, especially the United States. Some of them were interested in Japan, and JET became a gateway to their dreamland. Others were seeking an adventure upon finishing college. Being a JET teacher in rural Japan was not only exciting, it also provided the financial means to live adequately. Quite a number of JET participants fell in love with Japan and stayed on. Some became romantically involved; others started businesses or made Japan a lifelong intellectual project. The JET participants are typically granted the instructor visa if they are assigned to be ALTs. If they become CIRs or SEAs, they usually receive the specialist in humanities and international services visa.

The numerous private English-language conversational schools and centers have also been an entry point for many native English speakers. If it had not been for this entry channel, many of these individuals who had vague interests in Japan would never have found a way to spend extended time in Japan. Language teaching certainly provided Tina the means to come to Japan. Her family used to serve as a host family for international students studying in the Washington, DC, area, and every year they welcomed a new student. For six or seven years before she graduated from high school, every student was from Japan. She was intrigued by them. "I really just wanted to go [and] see what Japan was like for a year." In her senior year of college, she applied for various teaching programs and was offered a job by a private language instruction provider to teach in a small town "in the middle of nowhere on the sea." She has remained in Japan ever since.

The demand for English teachers, coupled with the existence of programs like JET, explains the larger presence of people from English-speaking countries such as the United States, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In addition, the working holiday visa allows young people the flexibility to explore a new country and decide whether they would be interested in residing there.

In short, Japanese immigration policies are selective. There are people who are deemed more desirable, and special programs have been created to attract and accommodate them. The skilled technical workers, mostly from other Asian countries, are considered important supplemental human resources to help Japan remain competitive in the global knowledge economy. The English teachers and "cultural ambassadors"—as some JET participants called themselves—on the other hand, reflect Japan's project of "imported diversity" (McConnell 2000), designed to create a more internationalized society.

Marriage Migration: For Love and Business

I was sitting with Meiyun, a slim woman in her mid-thirties, in an air-conditioned fast-food restaurant in Fuqing City, Fujian. Glaring sunlight filtered through the glass window and shone warmly on her bare skin, turning her dyed long hair into golden silk. I was there to give her a present, Japanese stockings, from her brother in Tokyo and to talk to her about his situation. Her brother A Qiang was an undocumented migrant I met at a Chinese church in Tokyo. He had been smuggled into Japan several years earlier. The smugglers were brutal with him. Upon his arrival in Japan, they locked him up and demanded RMB 210,000 (at that time the equivalent of more than 3 million yen) for the smuggling fee. The family had taken out high-interest loans and could come up with only half of the money. A Qiang signed a contract agreeing to pay the rest in installments when he started working. The snakeheads[15] had some internal disputes; one of them was just smuggled in and owed a lot of debt to the others. A violent conflict ensued, and the next day A Qiang was found unconscious on the sidewalk of the building he had been forcefully confined in. He had been thrown from the fourth-floor balcony. Miraculously he survived, but the trauma left him with permanent brain damage. He said he had no memory of what happened to him in that room. Meiyun and I were piecing together information and suspected that he must have been tortured. A Qiang was probably thrown out of the building because they thought he was either dying or already dead. "Those were really bad people. I hope they will pay for their evil deeds [*e ren you e bao*]."

Eyes still red, Meiyun suddenly beamed, "Oh, soon I am coming to Japan too." Seeing my puzzled face, she said, "No, no, I am not coming through smuggling

[*toudu*]. Several days ago, the 20th of this month, I was informed that a man is coming from Japan to meet me. He is the person I am going to marry." "Does your husband agree?" I asked, knowing that she was married with two children. "It is just a fake marriage," she explained.

As it turned out, the marriage was part of a carefully planned family migration strategy. Two years earlier, Meiyun's husband had contracted smugglers to go to Europe. At the time, he was in the process of applying for refugee status. The two of them filed for divorce before he left so she could be more flexible in deciding her future course of action. Meiyun asked a friend of hers who had succeeded in using a fake marriage to migrate to make the arrangements. "One person brings another [*yi ge la yi ge*]," Meiyun explained. "It cost more than 200,000 RMB, but it will give [me] a year's legal status. Besides, it is safer." Japan had started a campaign to crack down on those overstaying their visas and undocumented workers in June of that year. Marriage migration was also under scrutiny. There was no guarantee Meiyun's plan would succeed, but she did not have many other options. She noted that "the easiest way to go there is as a student. But, you have to have a high school diploma. Not many people in this region have a high school certificate. It used to be possible to fake a diploma. But now everything is in the computer. You can't buy a diploma anymore. The only means left was through smuggling. It is really dangerous." Meiyun told me her husband's income as an asylum seeker in Germany did not provide them the means to afford a comfortable life. She and her thirteen-year-old daughter lived with her husband's brother's family. Her family's household registration was in another village, but her daughter went to junior high in the town where they lived. "On September 1st, I have to pay 10,000 RMB for her school fees." An in-town student, however, needed to pay only several hundred RMB. "For the best high school in town, you pay 50,000 RMB and it is difficult to get in." Her sixteen-year-old son was boarding in her hometown high school and visited them on the weekends. "He needs at least 500 a month for pocket money. The child now really spends money. I don't allow him to go to play video games. If he goes, he will go in in the morning, and get out at midnight." Meiyun and her husband hoped their children could graduate from high school and enter a college so their lives would be different. Meiyun herself did not go to high school. She married at the age of eighteen and had never really worked regularly. The mounting financial pressure made the family decide that it might be easier if she could go to Japan via the channel of a fake marriage, especially since both her brother and her husband's brother were in Japan.

This conversation took place on August 25, 2003, when I was doing fieldwork in Fuqing and Changle, two towns in China's Fujian province. Going abroad was still in the air the people breathed. People talked about snakeheads and smuggling in the same tone that they talked about a street vendor peddling food. Marriage

was one of the less risky channels for migration. In the end, Meiyun did not manage to get to Japan, partly because Japanese immigration tightened inspection.

Undoubtedly, many international marriages are completely sincere and began from romantic relationships. Fake marriages—a purchased commodity—make up a small minority. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that marriage has become a major channel of international migration in Asia, especially for women from developing countries, when other means to enter a country are not available.[16] Between 1991 and 2017, over 110,000 Chinese and 90,000 Filipinos entered Japan with a spouse or dependent of Japanese national (*nihonjin haigusha nado*) visa; and the majority of them were marrying into Japanese families. International marriage serves as an important means for them to leave their country to look for a better life for both themselves and their families. At the same time, importing foreign brides had been considered a reproductive strategy for some rural Japanese households. In the 1990s, some local governments organized matchmaking tours to neighboring Asian countries, in hopes of finding young women for the bachelors in their villages.[17]

An infrastructure exists for international marriage migration. The nexus of different actors—including governments, matchmaking agencies, technologies, social and personal ties, and humanitarian organizations—together shapes this form of migration.[18] According to a survey conducted by Yoshitaka Ishikawa (2010), in 2007, over three hundred matchmaking agencies, mostly oriented toward China, were scattered in different parts of Japan. Most of these agencies were run by people who had themselves experienced international marriage. They operated by recruiting through the internet. The Immigration Bureaus of Tokyo and Osaka revealed that 70 percent of Chinese women who entered Japan via these urban centers as "spouses of Japanese nationals" in 2006 came through marriages arranged by matchmakers. The number of arranged marriages by agencies among Filipinas, however, was much smaller. Most Filipinas marrying Japanese men reported that love was the basis of their unions. Given that some of the Filipinas' regular residence was in Japan, Ishikawa (2010, 11) speculates that many romantic relationships leading to marriage commenced when the Filipinas worked as entertainers.

Significant regional and racial patterns can be detected in the international marriages in Japan. Japanese men and Asian women from the Philippines, China, Korea, and Thailand composed the majority of these relationships. The Microdata sample of the 2005 census shows that among cross-border marriages that involve a Japanese and a foreigner in which the wife is younger than forty, less than 30 percent of the marriages were between a Japanese woman and a foreign man. Among these foreign men, over half of them were Koreans, most likely Zainichi—Koreans who had lived in Japan since before the end of World War II.

Americans and British are among the top ten foreign nationalities that marry Japanese; they are much more likely to be male than female. More than five times as many men from the United States and England married Japanese women as women from the United States and England married Japanese men (Hanaoka and Takeshita 2015). It has also been noted that the age gap is particularly large in marriages involving Chinese and Filipino wives. Nearly 60 percent of Filipino and over 54 percent of Chinese wives under forty had husbands more than ten years older than them.

The Global Networks of Mobility

The infrastructure supporting migration into Japan involves many more channels. Aside from the patterns of migration that are particular to the Japanese immigration regime, discussed above, much of the infrastructure is part of the evolving global network of mobility. Institutional arrangements such as student exchange programs, social networks formed through homestays and travel, and the globalizing education systems and labor markets have all played important roles in increasing the stock of immigrants in Japan.

The flourishing exchange programs between Japanese universities and institutions around the world have built bridges for many young people to enter Japan. For example, my home institution, one of the largest private universities in Japan, has established exchange programs with over five hundred universities worldwide and receives more than two thousand exchange students every year.[19] Xavier, a US citizen, was a former exchange student. A gamer, he grew up fond of Japan. During his third year in college, he participated in a one-year exchange program. He had a great time during his year in Tokyo and hoped to stay longer. He was able to apply for a graduate program in Japan and has continued to live in Japan ever since. Many immigrants from Europe and North America, and increasingly also from China and Korea, are similar to Xavier. Those who enjoy their experiences in Japan as exchange students find ways to either stay on or return after they graduate.

Japan is just one node in the globalized education network. Student mobility has become part of an internationalized higher education system (Knight 2008). There were European students who, when looking at the different study-abroad destinations, chose Japan because it was a more unusual, cool, or exotic place than either other European countries or places in North America. As Thomas explained, "My sisters all went to the States. I just wanted to go somewhere different." He spent a year in a small provincial city and enjoyed it. Upon returning to Germany, he applied to enter graduate school in Tokyo.

The education market especially that of higher education, is globalizing. Japanese universities increasingly offer more and more degree programs that use En-

glish as the medium of instruction in hopes of training Japanese students to be global talent, on the one hand, and gaining the ability to recruit international students, on the other. The Japanese government also grants scholarships to international students. Thorsten, from Switzerland, had only a vague desire to go overseas to study in 2006. But Japan presented him an opportunity that was hard to turn down. Talking about how he ended up in Japan, he reminisced:

> I don't think I had a very clear reason why. It was more about the . . . I wanted to go overseas for my studies. But um . . . for me, like Europe and America wasn't interesting enough. I wanted to go somewhere different. So, I think Asia. And I had a few friends that heard about this university. And, also when I applied, I actually got the scholarship that covered all the tuition. . . . I didn't really have a very clear idea of like . . . Japanese culture. And the only reason why I came was because of the scholarship. . . . I knew a little bit about Japan, but . . . at the time I just knew it as the strongest economy of the world, or the economic world. And I wanted to know how that happened, in a way.

Not only is the education market globalizing, but so is the labor market. Japanese companies have been recruiting overseas for nearly three decades. The Career Forum, aiming to recruit university graduates fluent in English and Japanese, held its first job fair in Boston in 1987 and has since expanded to London, San Francisco, Sydney, and Los Angeles, in addition to those held in Tokyo and Osaka.[20] We encountered foreign professionals who found their jobs in Japan through one of these career forums. More and more Japanese firms have been looking toward Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries for talent and use Singapore as a gateway. Major Japanese companies have set up global human resource departments in Singapore, hoping to facilitate the channeling of global talent into Japan.[21] According to a human resource manager from a Japanese telecommunications company, Singapore has surpassed Boston in recruiting international employees in his line of business. The rapid increase in the entry of skilled migrants, especially engineers, from ASEAN countries such as Vietnam and the Philippines in the 2010s demonstrates the accelerating pace of talent recruiting by Japanese companies.

Technology increasingly plays an important role in facilitating global mobility by its ability to connect the world. Some individuals found jobs through Facebook or LinkedIn and were interviewed through Skype. Many among the generation who came to Japan in the twenty-first century used the internet to find information about schools, jobs, and other opportunities in Japan.

The Ties across Borders

In 2014, 927 Nepalese cooks arrived in Japan. This was the second year that the number of Nepali cooks entering Japan surpassed that of their Chinese counterparts, who had made up most of the imported foreign cooks for the past two decades. In 2016, 67,470 Nepalese were living in Japan, making the Himalayan nation the largest South Asian country sending people to Japan. What has led to this sudden rise in Nepalese immigrants, especially cooks?

According to Kharel (2016), it might have all started with the cook Tanka Gaire. India has been the traditional destination for Nepali emigrants, many of whom worked in restaurants. An Indian restaurant group, Nanak, started its first restaurant in Fukuoka in 1984, bringing with it the Nepali cook Tanka Gaire to Japan. An Indian curry boom took place during the bubble era in the late 1980s, creating a great demand for reliable restaurant workers. The Nepali immigrants I talked to emphasized proudly that Nepali workers were hardworking, trustworthy, and cheap. Indian restaurant owners preferred them over Indian cooks. They arranged for many Nepalese to come to Japan and work in their restaurants. Eventually they entrusted those Nepali cooks to recruit from their own village social networks. This chain migration created a community that has a concentration of migrants from several villages. Kharel (2016) estimates that over eighteen hundred Nepali cooks in Japan were from Malma, a small village near Kathmandu. The Japan-bound population accounted for three-quarters of the total population of young people in that village.

The first generation of cooks learned the ropes, opened their own restaurants, and then started recruiting more people from Nepal. As a result, over three thousand Nepali Indian restaurants emerged in Japan. These restaurants also double as migration brokerage agencies and have used the skilled labor category to import Nepali workers for a fee that runs as high as US$15,000 (Kharel 2016). Restaurant owners have been the pillars of the Nepali community. When I visited Everest International School, the first Nepali ethnic school in Japan, I was told that 80 percent of the Everest students came from families that ran restaurants.

Social networks, especially kinship and friendship ties, have always been considered crucial in producing and perpetuating migration (Massey et al. 1993) and are an important component of the migration infrastructure (Xiang and Lindquist 2014). Personal ties feature centrally in all migration patterns. Brokers need personal ties to recruit. As Meiyun's narrative, relayed above, shows, one person brought another. Institutional recruiting also relies on networks to disseminate information. Many people became migrants because of the recommendation or persuasion of friends and relatives. Huang Yan, a Chinese woman from the Northeast, said she "muddle-headedly" (*xilihutude*) followed her friends to Japan. She

worked at a hotel after graduating from a junior college specializing in hospitality services. "Going to work and getting off work like that everyday, [I felt] really bored, and thought I should study something to enrich myself [*chongshi ziji*]," she said. She and her friends enrolled in a Japanese language class in their town. It happened to be a class that dispatched students to Japan. "My friends were all dragging me, saying 'let's go together.'" Together, over a dozen of them came to Japan.

In East Asia, owing to historical ties, geographic proximity, close economic relations, and the high volume of transnational human mobility especially since the 1980s, a dense regional social network has been established linking individuals and organizations among Japan, China, Korea, and Taiwan. Personal connections are used in business arrangements and sometimes lead to the establishment of institutional ties. In many cases, the institutional and social ties are inseparable. For instance, many student migrants from China, Korea, and Taiwan relayed how their teachers provided them with the necessary information to study in Japan.

Personal relations also initiate and create more opportunities for migration in less connected regions. Short-term and long-term homestays for the purpose of language learning and cultural experience have been popular among Japanese youth, especially high school students. Masha was from Rwanda. She had her first encounter with a Japanese person when she was in junior high school. "There was this Japanese student that came to do homestay in our own family. And we stayed with him for a year. And then, we got to know about Japan from him and when we finished high school I came to Japan. I came to Japan to do undergrad in 2006." When she started studying in Japan, her younger brother also joined her. Their connections, thus, brought Japan closer to this African country.

Sometimes personal encounters leading to migration are accidental. Oliver, the freelance translator working in the gaming industry, made a friend during his short visit to Japan. The friend went to the same school and was a translator in the industry. He had translated a game that Oliver liked. "I was like, 'I really liked that game!' And he was like, 'I worked on that game!' And I was like, 'We should be friends!' So, we stayed in touch, and in college, I majored in Japanese and minored in music and probably was going to go on to a career in basket weaving, so it was like, 'What do I do?' And this guy mentioned they were hiring, and he was like, 'Okay. I'll make sure your resume gets seen.' And I did the interview and ended up getting my first job at that company." Oliver has continued living in Japan and in 2016 obtained permanent residency.

Not all roads lead to Japan. Yet, in the map of global human migration exist many channels that direct people to this island country. These channels shape the demographic contour of immigrants in Japan. Different actors are involved

in building and controlling these channels. The state bureaucrats decide who and how many are to be admitted across the borders; sometimes they modify the criteria and stipulations following the intervention of international humanitarian organizations. Businesses, such as language schools, labor brokers, and corporations, recognize that their profits, if not survival, are dependent on the promoting and expanding of flows of people. Social networks and institutional programs extend opportunities for mobility to a wider population. Technologies have functioned to make migration more accessible. These different actors have built and actively altered the migration infrastructure from the back alleys and the side doors to the welcome gate and bridges.

Observing the patterns of migration into Japan, several features are salient. The first important characteristic is that geographic proximity and historical links lower thresholds and pave the way for migration. East Asia has numerous historically developed, interlinked institutional, and social ties. When demands for labor and fee-paying students emerged, neighboring Korea, Taiwan, and China had been among the first countries Japan taps into. The majority of migrants in Japan are from China and Korea—most of the Koreans are descendants of migrants who entered Japan during the colonial period (1910–1945). The historical ties and close social and economic connections have continued to pull in new migrants through business operations, education programs, and low-wage labor import.[22] China surpassed Korea as the number one sending country of immigrants in 2007. Its economic reform starting from the 1980s and the sheer size of the population naturally made China the largest source of migrants entering Japan.

With the strengthening economies, China and Korea have become potential competitors in the geopolitics of East Asia. Japan now is increasingly looking toward Southeast Asia, hoping to tap into its labor pool and access the region's developing market. Japanese companies have rapidly expanded offshore production and marketing in Southeast Asian countries. These ties and Japan's increasing presence in the region have made Japan a familiar and convenient migration destination. The sudden increase of Vietnamese students and trainees, for example, testifies to the strengthening of such linkages.

Through years of occupation and the continuous presence of military bases, the strong US-Japan alliance is also reflected in the prominent presence of Americans in Japan. Many spouses to Japanese nationals were former JET teachers and military stationed in Japan. The United States has also been the sending country of the largest number of English teachers.

Second, Japan's reluctance to accept unskilled labor migrants—despite its urgent need for them—combined with resistance to change its self-perception of being an ethnically homogeneous nation has resulted in the immigration of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Brazilians and Peruvians and their families since the

early 1990s. Since this pattern of migration was de facto labor import disguised as ethnic return, an industry has emerged to direct this group of migrants to the shop floor of Japan's manufacturing industry. As will be shown in chapter 3, this particular pattern of migration has determined their economic locations in Japan and severely limited their geographic and social mobility.

Third, Japan's postwar economic development and urbanization have also had effects on its traditional household system in rural areas and the more general realm of intimacy, resulting in the immigration of hundreds of thousands of foreign women from mainly East and Southeast Asian countries. The demand for labor in the sex industry spurred the creation of the entertainer visa category. Women from Southeast Asia were the first group of workers imported into postwar Japan. The love that kindled in the nightclubs and karaoke bars eventually led to marriage and the settlement of many women in Japanese society. Meanwhile, the demand for reproductive labor made international marriage an accepted channel of migration. These trends created a feminized migration from countries such as the Philippines and Thailand.

Fourth, a distinct characteristic of migration into Japan is the role of migration industry–businesses that profit from facilitating population mobilities. Because of the gaps produced between the restrictive migration regime and the productive and reproductive demand in Japanese society, a transnational migration industry has risen to bridge the institutional gap (Liu-Farrer and Tran 2019). From international students' mobility and ethnic Japanese Brazilians' entry into Japanese industry to international marriages and IT recruitment, the brokers assume an indispensable role in channeling people into Japan.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that Japan is connected with the global mobility infrastructure. In the contemporary world, educational institutions and labor markets have globalized. Individuals' education and career mobility are no longer territorially bound. Movement across borders has become a normative and accessible practice embraced by the younger generation, who grew up in a world in which all kinds of information is easily available. The internet and budget travel have turned geographic distances into an afterthought. Many people who come to Japan are used to being mobile and have previous experiences abroad. Thus, for them, Japan was just one more place filled with adventure. As a result of such a global mobility norm, the origins of Japan's immigrants have become increasingly diverse and the new immigrants' patterns of movement and settlement have also become varied, sometimes to the point of being unpredictable. How do immigrants move within and through Japan? And how do they find mooring? These questions will be explored in the following chapters.

3

WORKING IN JAPAN

> ***After the earthquake, I escaped to Osaka immediately. It was so scary. I didn't know what was really going on. I thought I would go directly back to Korea from Osaka, but the ticket was difficult to get. [I] returned to Tokyo in about 10 days. I had a job here. I couldn't throw everything away and go back to Korea. But, I wouldn't say that I was all right [heiki]—I was truly frightened. . . . I thought again "I will go back to Korea." But, [I thought], "if I go back, there is nothing for me to do there." I still had unfinished work here, so, I decided to stay.***
>
> —Pak, male, thirty-one, Korean, employee of Japanese firm

For most immigrants, work is what led them to both come to and stay in Japan. And labor is what the Japanese government and various industries hope these immigrants can provide. However, work involves more than a simple economic exchange of labor for wages. As a central part of adult life, work provides people meaning, status, and identity. Workplaces are where personal relations and social lives are constructed.[1] Work means even more to immigrants because for many it is their primary point of entry into Japanese society. What they do and are able to achieve through work often strongly influences their mobility decisions about whether to stay in Japan or leave. This chapter maps the diverse patterns of immigrants' labor market engagements, explores how different legal contexts and migration circumstances shape their differentiated socioeconomic outcomes, and highlights immigrants' strategies in defining their own locations in the Japanese economy.

Immigrants' Differentiated Economic Locations in Japan

Generally speaking, immigrants in Japan occupy positions in several overlapping economic spheres along two dimensions: the structural differentiation of the labor market into primary and secondary segments; and business orientations, which can be roughly labeled as national, global, and ethnic. These different locations not only reflect the immigrants' structural positions in the host labor market and the

legal and institutional constraints presented by different entry channels, but also are the outcomes of immigrants' abilities to take advantage of opportunities presented to them to better their own socioeconomic standing.

The Primary and Secondary Labor Markets

This book adapts the concepts of primary and secondary labor markets, as proposed in the economist Michael Piore's (1979) dual labor market theory, to indicate immigrants' structural locations in Japan. Piore's original theory suggests that capitalist labor markets have an innate tendency to bifurcate into primary and secondary sectors. The primary sector produces jobs with secure tenure, high pay, generous benefits, and good working conditions. The jobs in the secondary sector, on the other hand, are relatively unstable with lower pay, limited benefits, and unpleasant or hazardous working conditions (Piore 1979). Inherent tendencies within developed societies tend to produce a shortage of workers willing to take jobs in the secondary sector, since there are few economic returns to experience, skill, or education. As a result, immigrants are needed to fill the lowest rank of jobs rejected by natives.

In Piore's theory, immigrants are generally seen as uneducated and unskilled labor, reflecting the kinds of jobs they are recruited to fill. They are also mostly temporary residents and will do whatever work is available to accumulate wealth, because jobs in host countries are instrumental for the sake of fulfilling goals they have for migration. If they settle, however, they will be assimilated to native values and would aspire to upward mobility. It is then that the conflict with the natives occurs (Piore 1979).

Compared with the supposed characteristics of immigrants in the US economy in the 1970s when the segmented labor market theory was conceived, immigrants' economic locations in contemporary Japan are much more diverse. The biggest difference is that the Japanese economy, as in most advanced industrial societies, needs immigrants in both the primary and the secondary labor markets. In particular, reflected at the policy level, highly skilled workers are more actively sought after not only for professional positions unfilled by the native workforce but also because of the need for Japanese firms to globalize. However, as a conceptual tool, the notion of a structurally bifurcated labor market remains empirically applicable in Japan because the main fault line of economic outcomes occurs, especially since the end of the last century, between individuals who are employed in so-called regular jobs (*seiki*) and those who are employed in irregular jobs (*hiseiki*) (A. Gordon 2017). Immigrants find themselves in both forms of employment.

International students who graduate from Japanese universities have a good chance to enter the primary labor market because Japanese firms tend to recruit

their regular employees directly from university campuses. At the same time, corporate Japan is itself internally stratified. The segment that international students are more likely to enter is the small and medium-size Japanese firms, which have a particularly acute demand for human resources. Recruit Works Institute's "College Graduates Job Opening Survey" of 4,504 Japanese companies in 2016 shows that the ratio of job openings to student applicants for companies with more than five thousand employees was 0.59. This means that for every job in a big company there were two applicants. Among companies with fewer than three hundred employees, however, the ratio of job openings to student applicants was 4.16, meaning that there were over four times as many jobs as there were applicants (Okubo 2016). As the Ministry of Justice's statistics show, in 2017, nearly half of international students who obtained employment visas were working in firms with fewer than one hundred staff (MOJ 2018c).

In addition to international students, every year there are also tens of thousands of engineers and technical workers who are recruited overseas in their home countries. After initial contract periods and job adjustments, many are able to become regular employees in Japan. Moreover, there is a visa category called intrafirm transfer that allows multinational firms to transfer employees from other company locations to Japanese offices. A wide range of people fall within this category, including expatriates with incentive packages and IT workers who are dispatched from China or India. Most are regular corporate employees.

Foreign employees in the primary labor market are increasingly being placed on career tracks similar to those of their Japanese counterparts. DISCO, a recruiting firm that conducts annual enterprise surveys, reports that over 80 percent of the 611 firms that responded to its survey confirmed that they would hire foreigners into the same systems (*waku*) as the Japanese (DISCO 2017). As one human resource manager from a prestigious Japanese manufacturer stated, "We don't even consider the nationality of the employees." These foreign employees are expected to adapt to Japanese organizational practices and slowly develop their careers within the internal labor market.

In the secondary labor market, characterized by contract employment and manual or service jobs usually of irregular nature, we find different categories of people: Chinese and Southeast Asian technical interns, ethnic Japanese South American contract workers, international students who have not yet graduated, marriage migrants and dependents of student or professional migrants, and sometimes skilled professionals. Although a designated technical training program, the Technical Internship and Training Program (TITP) has been used as a channel for importing cheap labor into Japan.[2] Until 2010, people who were brought in through this program were called trainees (*kenshūsei*). In 2010, a new title, technical intern (*ginō jishūsei*), was created to refer to the type of laborer

who goes through a short training session and is thereafter officially recognized as a worker. Trainees, on the other hand, now refer exclusively to those who enter for the purpose of training, usually through the sponsorship of either the Japan International Cooperation Association (JICA) or local governments.[3] In 2018, only 1,522 people fell into this visa category. In comparison, the number of technical interns was 285,776. Though an important presence in Japan's manufacturing, fishing, and agricultural sectors, technical interns are legally restricted from changing jobs or applying for other types of visas and therefore do not enjoy any social or geographic mobility in Japan. Their residence in Japan is predetermined and, in most cases, isolated from the larger society.[4]

The ethnic Japanese South American contract workers, with Nikkei Brazilians composing the majority, make up another significant group of unskilled and semiskilled workers in the secondary labor market. They are flexible workers channeled by labor recruitment agencies and contractors to fill just-in-time labor demand in Japan's manufacturing sector (Higuchi and Tanno 2003).

There are others. Research shows that many Chinese students, in order to pay tuition or living costs, work part-time jobs at restaurants or factories while attending school (Liu-Farrer 2009, 2011a). There were also Chinese students in the 1980s and 1990s who worked in nightclubs of various sizes. Some did this work temporarily while continuing school; others dropped out and became undocumented migrants (Liu-Farrer 2011a). Our fieldwork data further indicate that among spouses of Japanese nationals and dependent visa holders who accompany their spouses to Japan, those who want to work often enter the secondary labor market as part-time workers at, for example, dry cleaning companies, chain restaurants, and neighborhood supermarkets. With the passing of the immigration reform bill in 2018, Japan is expected to recruit an additional 345,000 blue-collar workers in five years. These workers will likely be placed on contracts and will therefore be a visible component in Japan's secondary labor market.

There are also skilled workers in irregular or contract employment. Immigrants working in professional jobs in the secondary labor market tend to be dispatched IT specialists, project-based engineers, or freelance programmers or people working in the high-tech or video game industries. Given Japan's welcoming policies toward highly skilled workers, recruiters look internationally for dispatchable human resources. Graduates of universities in China and Vietnam, for example, are sometimes recruited to work in Japan on a contract basis. Such contract or project-based employment is often an organizational choice to gain more flexible labor, but it might also be the choice of migrants who seek immediate monetary rewards or more career autonomy. Some migrants do not intend to stay in Japan long term and are thus unwilling to pay into the pension system. They prefer contract-based employment in order to be in control of their own

cash. There are also those who have technical or cultural skills that are in demand and/or have had difficulty fitting into a Japanese workplace as a regular employee and therefore opt for freelance work or self-employment.

The concept of primary and second labor markets captures immigrants' structural positions in the segmented labor market in the host society. However, in an era when both the production and the labor markets have become increasingly globalized, new dimensions of economic locations can be superimposed onto the existing labor market structure. The immigrants in Japan, as documented in many other countries, are also inclined to be engaged in economic practices that have to do with global and transnational operations, while some migrants focus on employment that can activate their ethnic resources.

Beyond National: The Global and Ethnic Orientations

Though many foreign workers are hired primarily because they can supply needed labor, international migrants, by choice or assignment, are still more likely to fill roles that their cultural and social capital make them particularly suited for. In both the primary and the secondary labor markets, aside from providing supplemental labor, immigrants are seen to occupy positions that have global orientations or can take advantage of their ethnic or national backgrounds.

The DISCO (2017) survey shows that 39 percent of companies that hire art and social sciences majors and 36 percent of those hiring science majors chose "dealing with businesses that have to do with overseas transactions" as one purpose of hiring international students. My previous study investigating the career experiences of Chinese students and professional migrants in corporate Japan documented that an occupational niche for Chinese migrants had emerged in Japanese firms (Liu-Farrer 2011b). This niche consists of a set of corporate positions that specifically deal with businesses in China. Due to the transnational cultural and social capital they have accumulated, firms prefer to recruit Chinese migrants who have studied in Japan to fill these positions. Given the increasing business investments and interests in Southeast Asian countries, Japanese firms' increasing desire to hire students from Southeast Asian countries surpasses that to hire the Chinese (DISCO 2017).

The global and transnational business sector is also a stratified field and spreads across the segmented labor markets. Graduates from elite Japanese universities have more opportunities to occupy transnational business positions in larger firms. The majority of our informants who do not have elite education backgrounds, however, worked for small and medium-size firms. Moreover, there is an increasing presence of globally mobile young migrants who have higher education

backgrounds but occupy contract or temporary positions. Economic globalization is essentially the manifestation of a neoliberal economic order, and the cornerstone of the neoliberal agenda is flexibility (Harvey 1991; Bourdieu 1998). Many of these young migrants hope to further their careers through building a resume with international work experiences. Additionally, an increasing sector of the labor market, such as e-commerce or online recruiting firms, relies on youthful and flexible global talent for human resources.

Besides the global dimension, immigrants in Japan also demonstrate the traditional engagements in ethnic businesses. Typical ethnic businesses are ethnic restaurants, supermarkets, beauty salons, language schools, and day schools. Ethnic entrepreneurs come from various backgrounds. Some are former students or company employees who chose to start an ethnic business as an alternative means to make a living. There are also family migrants, such as spouses or dependents, who open small businesses as a way to subsidize the household income. For example, a Chinese woman whose husband was employed by a major Japanese company opened a small Chinese restaurant so that she could help pay her children's private school tuition. Owning a restaurant is also the dream of tens of thousands of immigrant chefs in Japan. Many Chinese and Indian Nepalese restaurants in Japan were opened by first-generation immigrants.

Ethnic businesses often rely on coethnic labor forces to survive. Working for ethnic businesses is an option for many students, dependents, and marriage migrants—especially before they acquire adequate linguistic skills to work in other industries. Chinese restaurants hire Chinese students, spouses with a dependent visa, or those married to Japanese nationals as part-time workers. Among our interviewees, several Korean women who married Japanese nationals or came as dependents took up Korean language teaching at ethnic language schools.

In addition, the skilled labor (*ginō*) visa category has become a channel for recruiting coethnic labor for ethnic businesses. Individuals who enter Japan as skilled labor are usually cooks. Until 2013, Chinese cooks composed the largest entry group. Since then, however, cooks from Nepal have surpassed those from China. Almost all of them have paid a hefty fee to come to Japan and work as cooks in the over forty-five hundred Indian Nepalese restaurants in Japan. They are usually paid below the minimal wage (Kharel 2016).

Though distinct, ethnic and global orientations are not opposites and may be increasingly overlapping. There are many transnational immigrant enterprises in Japan. Research shows that the Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs who are working in the transnational field were often former corporate employees of Japanese firms engaged in similar types of business (Liu-Farrer 2007). Out of personal ambition and at times discontent with the organizational practices in the Japanese firm,

these Chinese immigrants employ their business know-how and social networks accumulated in the corporate world as well as their multicultural competencies to start their own businesses in transnational trading, manufacturing, and IT productions. They are ethnic businesses in nature because they often rely on coethnic social resources and labor. There are also other global ethnic businesses. For example, Pakistani immigrants have constructed a global network for the business of trading used Japanese cars (Fukuda 2012). Among our interviewees, one Filipino woman also engaged in this business, auctioning and selling used Japanese cars in the Philippines. Additionally, although entrepreneurship is not widely practiced among Nikkei Brazilians, in towns where many of them live, some opened transnational courier, logistics, or cultural promotion services oriented toward coethnic migrants (Ishi 2009).

There are also immigrants who occupy positions that are at the same time global, ethnic, and in the secondary labor market. These include, first of all, foreign domestic helpers—"servants of globalization" (Parrenas 2001)—who migrate using kinship and employer networks and move between major expatriate hubs. Foreign domestic workers in Japan are usually Filipinas working for the so-called expatriate families—families who are transferred by multinational companies or dispatched by national governments to work in Japan.

In addition, a large number of language instructors in Japan teach in the numerous English conversation schools (*eikaiwa kyōshitsu*) or work as assistant language teachers in Japanese primary and secondary schools. I consider this sector global-ethnic-secondary because English is the de facto global language, but, at the same time, it is ethnic because most of the teachers in this business either are native speakers from English-speaking countries or come from places where English is either the official language or the language of instruction in primary education (e.g., Singapore and the Philippines). Many English instructors in Japan have contracts with specific companies, but a lot of them are part-time teachers who are practically self-employed and teach classes at various educational institutions or language schools. Among native English speakers who have Japanese spouses, this pattern is salient. Their Japanese spouses might be the reason they chose to settle in Japan; meanwhile, being married to a Japanese national secures their legal status, which allows them to be engaged in more flexible and sometimes more lucrative employment. In our sample of interviewees, university-educated Filipino women who married Japanese men have also been exploring the language-teaching opportunity. In addition, teaching English is a popular *arubaito* (part-time job) pursued by international students who are native speakers or who have linguistic capabilities near the level of native English speakers.

Table 3.1 presents the conceptual mapping of immigrants' economic locations along with structural as well as sociocultural orientations in Japan's labor

TABLE 3.1 Immigrants' locations in Japanese labor market*

	PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
	SAMPLE OCCUPATIONS	TYPICAL INCUMBENTS	SAMPLE OCCUPATIONS	TYPICAL INCUMBENTS
National	Regular employees in Japanese or multinational firms	Graduates from Japanese universities; corporate expatriates and intrafirm transferees; engineers and IT professionals recruited overseas	Dispatched IT workers; project-based engineers; convenience store cashiers; factory workers; service-industry workers	Engineers and IT professionals recruited overseas; students; dependents or marriage migrants; entertainers; ethnic Japanese contract workers from South America; technical interns; irregular migrant workers
Global	Employees of global finance, multinational firms, or the overseas segment of Japanese firms	University graduates from Japanese universities; intrafirm transferees; highly skilled workers	Contract-based employees in international marketing and sales	International graduates from universities both inside and outside Japan
Ethnic	Owners of Korean aesthetic salons/Chinese restaurants/ language schools/ethnic stores	Long-term immigrants with cultural and social capital	Wage labor at ethnic businesses	Students; dependents or marriage migrants; undocumented migrant workers
Ethnic + global	Regular employees or owners of Chinese IT dispatching companies/Korean trading firms/Filipino English schools	Professional migrants with cultural and social capital; coethnics with human and cultural capital	Part-time language teachers; domestic helpers	Students; dependents with human capital; Filipinos with social capital

*I wish to thank Karen Shire for suggesting a two-way table to present this conceptual mapping.

market. Immigrants' ability to occupy these different locations is conditioned by the different migration channels through which they are brought into Japan. These varied locations also entail different opportunities and constraints and offer different socioeconomic mobility potential. Moreover, the relative positions and immigrant profiles in each of these economic spheres, as presented in the table, change along with the pace and direction of Japan's economy. They also reflect the interactive process of demand and supply of immigrant labor. Before the 1980s, when the production of Japanese industries was mostly domestic and the export market was in the United States and Europe, the earlier cohorts of Asian immigrants such as the Chinese and Koreans had much less access to the primary labor market. Not only did the old-comers—those who arrived before and during World War II—face more difficulties gaining employment because of social discrimination and structural exclusion, but even those who entered in the 1960s and 1970s faced more competition from Japanese baby boomers and less demand from the corporate Japanese in an economy oriented mainly toward the West. Older generations of Asian immigrants tended to engage in ethnic businesses. For example, Lee, a Korean man who was sent over to work in the Tokyo branch of a Korean corporation in the 1970s, decided to stay in Japan after his assignment was completed. He did not manage to find a job in a Japanese company, and consequently he opened his own travel agency servicing Korean immigrants. Both Japan's desire to internationalize and the shifting economic gravity toward East Asia led to its policies to encourage student immigration and to give Chinese and Korean students opportunities in corporate Japan's primary labor market. Increasing immigration after the mid-1980s also provided human resources with cultural and social competencies to facilitate Japan's globalization process (Liu-Farrer 2011a).

Immigrant Economic Strategies: Niching and Bridging

Immigrants' differentiated economic locations not only reflect their structural positions in the host economy but also are outcomes of their own strategies. Though immigrants are typically needed by the host labor market to provide supplemental labor power, they actively participate in shaping their own economic positions. Two strategies characterize immigrants' economic endeavors: finding occupational or business niches, and bridging the structural gaps. It is important to note that the two strategies overlap to a large extent in economic practices that have transnational and global orientations.

Finding Niches

Niching is a common economic strategy among immigrants in destination countries (Min 1984; Waldinger 1986, 1996; Siu 1987; M. Waters 1999; Sanders, Nee, and Sernau 2002; Waldinger and Lichter 2003; Cranford 2005; Rangaswamy 2007). Immigrants who migrate after reaching adulthood sometimes lack sufficient linguistic or technical skills or the right educational credentials to succeed in the host labor market. They also may be subjected to discrimination and unable to compete with the natives for jobs in the industries that have a sufficient local supply. Immigrants thus find niches in the host labor market by filling jobs that are less desirable to the natives. In many cases, too, they may accept significantly less pay or find positions for which they have a skill advantage over the natives. Their economic well-being and career outcomes are closely tied to their successful niching. In Japan, immigrants also actively seek out these niches either to advance themselves economically or to develop meaningful careers (Liu-Farrer 2011b).

One conventional niche is, of course, supplementing labor power. Nikkei Brazilians, as mentioned in the previous section, are the largest supplemental labor force. Since the primary interest of these immigrants is economic, their strategies usually involve securing access to these jobs and efforts to maximize their earnings. The Nikkei Brazilians, for example, rely on their social networks for information about factory jobs in different parts of Japan. They moved frequently so that they could earn better hourly wages or be allowed to put in more overtime hours.

Aside from supplementing labor, immigrants in Japan are also actively engaged in locating their unique niches that utilize their ethnic and transnational resources. Some niches are transient because they are closely related to social and cultural trends. For example, since the early 2000s, Korean popular culture has found a strong following in Japan. The "Hallyu-boom," as it is called, has given many Korean immigrants opportunities to develop a niche economy. An and his friend Song were two young men studying in Japan. While in Japan, they found that they could ride the Hallyu wave and develop their careers by forming a partnership as K-pop performers. They were thrilled that even though they were yet unknown, some people would pay to see them perform. Both of them liked to sing but never imagined that they would be able to perform commercially. As An joked, "If we were not in Japan, we would just be singing karaoke [in Korea]."

Niche economies like the one revolving around the Hallyu wave are susceptible to fluctuating trends. There are also niches, however, that are of a less fickle nature. Japanese firms, especially small and medium-size ones, increasingly look to international students to replenish their depleted labor force. As a result, as shown in the visa transition statistics by the Ministry of Justice (2018c), small and medium sized firms are the students' main employers. However, international students are

not merely substitutes for their Japanese counterparts. Instead, they are assuming roles or helping to carve niches that regular Japanese students cannot easily fill. Japan strives to globalize. Nevertheless, its education system is still reputed for its largely ineffective foreign language instruction. There has also been the concern that Japanese students are increasingly "inward looking" (*uchimuki*) and not willing to participate in study-abroad programs. In order to expand businesses globally, Japanese companies need people who have linguistic and cultural competencies to assist in cross-border economic transactions.

Sometimes these occupational niches are very particular to immigrants' ethnic or national background, which might be the only reason for their employment. For example, Pak was a Korean student who had previously studied in China. After finishing the language school in Japan, she started looking for a job. Without a university degree from a Japanese institution, it was difficult for her to be competitive in the Japanese job market. She found a position in a small Korean trading company in Tokyo because she was trilingual with proficiency in Korean, Chinese, and Japanese.

Because of the thriving transnational economy between China and Japan beginning in the 1990s, the majority of issued work visas have been granted to bilingual Chinese students for over two decades. Japanese firms are now paying increased attention to other world regions, especially Southeast Asia. According to a commercial survey conducted among Japanese firms in 2015, of the 609 companies that responded, 25 percent of them managed to employ ASEAN students that year, and 76 percent of them planned to hire international students from Southeast Asian countries in the future (DISCO 2015). Given Japanese firms' aspirations to strengthen their presence in Europe, India, North America, and Taiwan, students from these regions are also increasingly able to find occupational niches in the labor market.

These occupational niches are the result of a structural demand, reflecting the globalizing imperatives of Japanese businesses. However, they also stem from immigrants' own agency. Immigrants, especially international students, understand that they can find their niche in the industries that can utilize their transnational cultural capital and thus seek out opportunities in hopes of developing a more fulfilling career (Liu-Farrer 2011b). As a result, whether a company is expanding globally and may potentially need their linguistic and cultural skills has become an important consideration for many international students pondering particular corporate jobs in Japan. While Japanese university graduates tend to aspire to be employed in big firms, some international students are willing to let go of big corporate jobs that promise stability and reputation and instead choose to go on an adventure with less established firms with a global orientation.

Qiqi, a Chinese woman who went to graduate school in Japan, received job offers at major companies when she graduated in 2011. Ultimately, though, she made the decision to enter a smaller manufacturer in environmental technology. Three years later, when I met her in Shanghai, Qiqi was a manager at the company's Chinese branch. She was paid the same amount as a Japanese expatriate and worked on developing the Chinese market. When I remarked how rare it was for a twenty-seven-year-old woman like her to be holding a managerial position at a Japanese company, Qiqi said it was because the company was small. Her main job in China was to see clients and market the company's products to them. She explained how a career in a smaller and more adventurous company like hers had both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the company might decide to enter China aggressively, and a person like her could be given a lot of responsibilities. On the other hand, if the business was not successful, it might retreat from the Chinese market just as quickly. The company was facing a lot of competition in China because the cost of production in Japan was much higher. Therefore, her job entailed a lot of uncertainty. Nonetheless, Qiqi made many positive remarks about her career. She commented that in a company like hers, foreign women had more opportunities. Their linguistic and cultural skills allowed them to overcome the gendered career barriers in Japan. The person that was in charge of their overseas marketing was a naturalized Chinese woman who had been working there for over ten years and had been promoted to a branch leader (*buchō*), overseeing the Chinese mainland and Taiwan sides of the business.

Qiqi's classmate Fu Ming initially made a different decision when she graduated, and accepted an offer from a large retail company that promised a position in the sector that dealt with Chinese and Hong Kong businesses. However, a year later she was still a sales clerk in one of its retail stores. She understood this was the usual practice, and her *dōki*—people who joined the company at the same time she did—were still working at this level. Yet, she decided to quit her job because she did not want to wait indefinitely for a job promotion. Shelving merchandise was not something she could see herself doing. After leaving this company, she joined a small event-coordinating company. When we met, she was the overseas marketing person in charge of exhibitions in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China, and Singapore. She traveled overseas twice a month on average and felt fulfilled in her work life.

In addition, with the large demand for English-language instructors in Japan, many English speakers have found a niche as teachers. It has also become an area many Filipino immigrants are looking to enter. Abundant business opportunities have emerged out of such a niche. For example, Charlie, a Filipino man, taught English at various English conversation schools. Through these schools,

he befriended several Japanese people. After receiving tutoring from Charlie for over three years, one student, an owner of a Japanese company, suggested they establish a business together teaching business English and communications skills in Japanese companies. By the time of our interview, the company had started to turn a profit.

With the increase of foreign residents in Japan as well as Japanese families' desire to expose their children to different cultural and pedagogical environments, there has also been an increasing demand for primary and secondary schools that provide education in English. Some immigrants in Japan respond to the opportunity and become education providers and open international schools that accommodate children from different backgrounds. Jeevarani Angelina is one such educator. Her Little Angels International School started as an English academy for children and an international kindergarten in the early 2000s. In a decade, it had grown to be a full-range international school. The affordable price, in addition to the school's international environment and its attention to special-needs children, has made Little Angels a welcome alternative for not only international families but also Japanese children as well.

Another type of economic niche can be found in the businesses that serve the immigrant community. Japan is a late comer as an immigrant country and is, in many ways, institutionally unprepared for receiving as many foreigners as it does. Aside from ethnic supermarkets, restaurants, and schools, many other businesses that serve immigrants have emerged. Ms. Moon, a Korean woman who married into a Japanese family, ran a driving school for immigrants. According to Ms. Moon, hers was one of the few international driving schools among the 1,432 schools in Japan at that time. Her husband's family had run a driving school for fifty years. As the only son, her husband took over the school. However, it was a "sunset" industry, Ms. Moon explained, because the low fertility rate in Japan had drastically reduced the demand for schools. She decided to market the school's services to immigrants. She advertised in immigrant papers published in different languages and found Nigerian, Bangladesh, and Indian clients. The Great East Japan Earthquake, on March 11, 2011, hit right when the business was taking off. Many immigrants, including her clients, left the country. It nearly destroyed her business. The only reason she survived was because of the trust she had established with her immigrant clients during the crisis. She described the days after the earthquake:

> In front of the office, from the stairs to the outside, people were lining up all the way. Families came together. Because of the earthquake, they were going home, they said, and they wanted to get a refund from us and go home. Indians were the biggest group. It was really tough at the

> time. . . . I couldn't decide whether I wanted to refund them the whole amount or give them half back. I thought if I were to die, I wanted to die a good person. So, I took money out of UFJ [Bank] and decided to give everybody back the money they paid. People were holding their airplane tickets and waiting in line. In any case, I returned all the money. Indians, Bangladeshis, they all came. No Nigerians came, though. Their country was in war and they didn't want to go back because of the earthquake. I paid them over 150,000 each. About 50 people came. Later I ran out of money, and could only pay half. It was hard, but I felt good about myself. Later on, Indians made for the largest number of students we had. They posted on their own websites saying that we refunded them all the money, so if somebody wanted to get a Japanese driver's license they should come to us. So, I learned, if you do good things, you will get good paybacks.

The increasing presence of immigrants with specific needs also gave rise to other ethnic businesses. Thirty years after the student migration from China to Japan began, both the demographic profiles of the Chinese students and their objectives for migration have changed. Currently the Chinese are still the largest group of incoming international students, and the majority of them arrive with the intention to further their education. Since Chinese students can already read and write Chinese characters, they often demand different language programs than students from other world regions who have no prior knowledge of Chinese characters. Moreover, Chinese students increasingly aspire to enter elite universities and graduate programs and therefore need courses that prepare them for the entrance examinations. In response, many language schools and coaching schools emerged specifically to serve Chinese students. These schools, without exception, are run by Chinese immigrants (usually former Chinese students who succeeded in attaining an elite education themselves).

Businesses that cater to Chinese tourists are another example. Enthusiasm for everything Japanese has created a Chinese tourism boom in Japan. As a result, many business opportunities in hospitality have emerged. This particular ethnic business niche has energized veteran immigrants. Whether independently financed or with the backing of mainland Chinese investors, immigrants turn rental properties into AirBnBs and design tours specifically for Chinese visitors. This niche has also expanded to real estate. With more and more Chinese looking to invest in the stagnating housing market in Japan, veteran immigrants set up real estate agencies to help Chinese investors navigate the complicated process of purchasing property in Japan. In the early 2000s the few real estate advertisements in free Chinese newspapers in Japan were mostly for apartment or storefront rentals. By the

mid-2010s, however, dozens of Chinese real estate agencies provided lists of properties for sale. Most of these properties were older apartments in the north and eastern parts of Tokyo.

Bridging the "Structural Holes"

The niche jobs in globalizing firms and the niche ethnic businesses—especially those transnational ones such as the coaching schools or real estate agencies run by Chinese for Chinese—essentially reflect immigrants' strategic positions in Japan's economy. Immigrants who are multilingual and understand Japanese society can bridge Japanese markets with those in other places—especially in their own home country. They have the capacity as entrepreneurs or brokers to be the bridges over the "structural holes" (Burt 1992, 2004).

For Qiqi, introduced above, her advantage was that she could bridge the structural holes between her Japanese employer and Chinese clients as part of the company's transnational expansion. In other words, immigrants' cultural capital allows them to explore opportunities created by the structural holes in the global market. As a consequence of their unique structural position, immigrants who have been employed in Japanese corporations for an extended period of time often see transnational entrepreneurship as a logical step in their career development that allows them to maximize the value of their social capital (Liu-Farrer 2007, 2011a).

John's position in bridging the structural holes allowed him to turn a nearly bankrupt company into a highly profitable one. John was an American who studied Japanese in college and worked for a Japanese company in Japan after he graduated. Half a year later, he was assigned the task of helping to open a company branch in the United States. He did not get along with his boss in the newly opened US branch, however, so he left the company. After applying for different jobs, he was hired by a US company that had already filed for bankruptcy. He was given a three-month contract with the mission to see if there was anything he could do in Japan, including, for example, selling off the office furniture.

At that time, 80 percent of the company's business was to sell products made in the United States, while only 20 percent involved collecting Japanese products that could be sold in the United States and Europe. As a person with proximity to holes in the social structure of the market, John was "at a higher risk of having good ideas" (Burt 2004, 349). In the 1990s Japan dominated the particular industry he was in. But, according to John, Japanese companies focused only on the domestic market. They had largely made no effort to sell their products overseas. John explained that after puttering about in Japan for some time, he "simply realized that selling Japanese products in the US and Europe was a whole lot easier

than selling foreign products in Japan. For the effort it took to turn 2,000 units of sales in Japan into 3,500 units you could build or buy a product [in Japan] that could sell hundreds of thousands of units abroad." With this realization, John went about pushing the Japan branch to change its primary focus. This maneuver proved successful. By the late 1990s, 95 percent of the company's business consisted of buying products in Japan for sales abroad. John managed to revive the company's Japan branch and turn it into a multimillion-dollar business. With the success in Japan, the parent company in the United States had the opportunity to recover and went on to become an industry giant. In the meantime, John elevated his status in the company and, thereby, received greater economic returns for his work.

Another structural hole that immigrants may bridge is the migration industry itself. International migration is a complicated process. Success in migration requires knowledge of the law, legal procedures, and institutional requirements as well as access to social networks and linguistic and cultural skills. Those who have experienced the whole process have the cultural and social capital to bridge the sending and receiving societies. As explained in the previous chapter, there are many "side doors" in Japan's labor import. While the recruitment of highly skilled professionals is often organized by the human resources departments of large companies or several major recruiting firms (Conrad and Meyer-Ohle 2017), the import of labor through side doors is often done by smaller companies and sometimes informal agents. One type of migration industry that has thrived in Japan is international education brokerage. International education in the modern world has become a major service industry (Mazzarol and Hosie 1996; Bennell and Pearce 2003; OECD 2004; Lewis 2011; Findlay, King, and Stam 2017). In Japan, it is also an effective channel of labor migration (Liu-Farrer 2009). The entry of these foreign students into Japan is realized through a range of businesses interested in profiting from this mobility. In the late 1980s and 1990s, they were individuals who ran or had relations with particular language schools and recruited students in their hometowns. They managed to mobilize a large number of student migrants. With the government tightening visa restrictions and several rounds of regulatory efforts, in the 2010s, educational brokerage has developed into a syndicated transnational industry (Liu-Farrer and Tran 2019).

Khang was born in 1986 in Vietnam. In 2009, he arrived in Japan through a scholarship program called Dong Du, which means "Go East" in Vietnamese. After finishing his language training and then obtaining a master's degree, Khang saw opportunities in the study-abroad business. In 2014, Khang became the head of the Tokyo branch of an education consulting firm based in Vietnam. The main business of his firm was to recruit Vietnamese students for language schools in Japan. The agency organizes seminars and workshops in several high schools in

order to recruit students. The targets of his recruitment were high school graduates who did not have hopes of entering elite universities in Vietnam. From 2011 to 2016, the education group that Khang was working for had successfully sent 4,138 Vietnamese students to Japan to study in language schools (Liu-Farrer and Tran 2019).

Social Mobility and Immobility

Although all immigrants strive to better their situations, not everybody is capable of achieving upward socioeconomic mobility. In Japan, a visible gap appears between immigrant groups (Liu-Farrer 2016b). Overall, Chinese and Koreans and immigrants from more developed countries are more likely to hold professional jobs, especially corporate positions related to transnational and global businesses. Filipino migrants—mostly marriage migrants—have been creating an ethnic niche in businesses such as teaching English. In comparison, less corporate employment of Nikkei Brazilians has been documented. Researchers have observed the relatively low self-employment rate of Brazilians (Higuchi 1998; Kajita, Tanno, and Higuchi 2005). The return on human capital is much higher among Chinese immigrants than Nikkei Brazilians (Takenoshita 2006). This discrepancy exists because what immigrants do and are able to achieve economically in Japan is conditioned and reinforced by the circumstances surrounding their migration—the particular legal channels through which they enter Japan and the ways in which the legal institutions and migration industry shape the meanings and purposes of their mobility.

The Conditioned (Im)mobility: Ethnic Japanese from South America

As explained in chapter 2, immigrants from South American countries mostly come with long-term resident visas and enjoy a relatively flexible and unrestricted legal status. The freedom inherent in their legal status, however, does not bring about freedom in the realm of economic practices. Their migration was orchestrated by the close collaboration between travel agencies in Brazil and temporary labor agencies in Japan (Higuchi and Tanno 2003; Sasaki 2013). With few exceptions, they were directly channeled into manual labor jobs in Japan that paid a much higher wage than what they could have earned, even as white-collar workers, in Brazil. Therefore, for the Brazilian immigrants, migration to Japan was for the sake of earning money to pay off debts, buy houses, or start a business back in Brazil (Yamanaka 2000; LeBaron von Baeyer 2015).

Nikkei who enter Japan are likely to find themselves in a factory working on a piece of machinery or a part of an electronic device. Without sufficient linguistic abilities or adequate access to a wide range of information, Brazilian workers' understanding of Japanese society is confined to their immediate social environment. As researchers (e.g., Tsuda 2003; LeBaron von Baeyer 2015) have pointed out, they were often placed side by side with other Brazilians and did not mingle with Japanese workers. Moreover, they were separated from Japanese workers structurally. They were recruited by temp agencies and delivered to companies as just-in-time labor. As a result, they rarely had a chance to become regular employees or ascend through an internal labor market (Higuchi and Tanno 2003).

Currently, manufacturing jobs are still abundant, and this economic niche sustains the livelihood of the Nikkei Brazilian community. However, the aftermath of the Lehman Shock signaled the precarity of this immigrant group's economic location in Japan. When the financial crisis hit in 2008, a large number of Brazilian workers lost their jobs. Tens of thousands eventually took the repatriation allowance from the Japanese government and went back to Brazil, which led to a significant decline in the Brazilian population after 2008. Since 2010, with the implementation of the technical intern system, the position of the Nikkei in the secondary labor market has increasingly been taken up by technical interns whose employment costs factories less than Nikkei workers (Tajima 2010). A document presented at the Second Meeting of the Council of (Brazilian) Citizens in 2014 analyzed the labor market situation for Brazilian citizens and assured the Nikkei community that the market for contract labor in manufacturing was picking up. Yet, it warned the community that they were facing competition from other nationalities such as the Filipinos, who might drive down labor wages.[5] Moreover, due to new labor regulations, manufacturers were less inclined to allow the contract workers to work overtime, which, in turn, negatively impacted their incomes. This reality was presented as a threat for the Nikkei Brazilians. However, because of inadequate education credentials and a lack of marketable skills, Nikkei Brazilians seem less able to pull themselves out of the *dekasegi* (migrant labor) trap in Japan or market themselves in Brazil.

Transnational circular migration has been a pronounced pattern among this group. Migrants who earn money in Japan with the hopes of establishing their own businesses in Brazil often meet failure back home (LeBaron von Baeyer 2015). People hope to resettle in Brazil only to find that sustaining a livelihood is much more difficult there than in Japan. In the end, the comparatively easy and comfortable living conditions in Japan entice many to return. As a result, though geographically mobile inside and outside Japan, Brazilian migrants are largely socioeconomically immobile.

Job insecurity and the lack of Japanese proficiency and general cultural knowledge, compounded with social isolation in a *dekasegi* system, not only freezes adult Brazilians in the unskilled irregular labor market; it also impacts the social mobility of Nikkei children. After conducting his fieldwork in the 1990s, Tsuda (2003) asked, with optimism, whether the children of Nikkei would leave the destiny of *dekasegi* and become socially and economically assimilated into the mainstream society. Sarah LeBaron von Baeyer's (2015) research, conducted mostly after 2010, presented a sobering picture. She showed that the whole *dekasegi* system dominated the lives of Nikkei Brazilians, with families and schools having become derivative of the system. Without meaning to, they collectively turn their children into the next generation of *dekasegi*, a situation I further elaborate on in chapter 7.

Organized Mobility: International Students

Contrasted with the Nikkei Brazilians' flexible residential status, international students have a more restrictive legal framework. Students are expected to be in school and are eligible for only a special work permit that allows them to work twenty-eight hours a week. In order to stay on in Japan legally, international students have to continue their education. Paradoxically, the rigidity of the student visa and the looming threat of its termination press students to proceed through a prescribed channel until they can eventually achieve upward social mobility.

The typical international student journey in Japan starts from a combined study-work experience. The majority of international students in Japan worked part-time jobs to help finance their own education. Aside from their formal education, those part-time jobs provide them an opportunity to improve their linguistic skills as well as to gain a deeper understanding of Japanese society and its work ethic. The jobs, thus, serve as an important stage in their natural progression into the Japanese corporate labor market.

Sooji's experience in such an initial stage is typical. A Korean woman interested in Japan, Sooji arrived in Japan in 1995 at the age of twenty-two to study at a Japanese language academy. A friend put her up. With no Japanese skills and only 50,000 yen in her pocket, Sooji immediately started to look for a part-time job. Since she could not yet speak Japanese, she could not answer job advertisements over the phone. She instead went out looking for recruitment posters. For three weeks, she walked around looking for a job. "I was about to tell myself that this was not going to work, then I saw a poster in a restaurant near 109 [a shopping center in Shibuya] asking for dish washers. I couldn't speak Japanese, but figured out that it was a job advertisement." She went in. An older man slowly explained to her, "This job is very hard [*tottemo tsurai*]. If you really want to do it, come back tomorrow." The next day, she took along a friend who spoke a bit

more Japanese to translate for her. The man told her friend, "The *arubaito* [job] here is very hard. She can try for three days and see. If she can handle it, she is welcome to it." Because Sooji could not speak Japanese, he physically showed her everything she needed to do on the first day. "However hard the work was, [I thought,] I had nowhere to go if I quit, so I kept going." In the end, Sooji worked there for a whole year. After a year, she decided to leave because she wished to do something that required more Japanese. She found a job as a restaurant waitress but did not leave her dish washing job before first introducing a Korean man to be her replacement. "I learned so much from the experience working there," exclaimed Sooji. "My Japanese improved a lot. They taught me a lot. When I had tests, they always said, 'Study!' and would take turns to take care of my tasks."

Although the degree of hardship and the time spent working part-time jobs vary, this kind of experience is common for international students. Through work and school experiences, the student migrants hone linguistic skills and acquire academic credentials and cultural capital (Liu-Farrer 2011a). International students—with their varied experiences of part-time work—are the real "trainees" for Japan's skilled labor market.

One of the five pillars of Fukuda's 300,000 International Students by 2020 Plan is absorbing the international students into Japanese society. The reason students can advance to the employment stage has to do with the well-organized school-to-work transition in Japan (Honda 2004). When students who typically come into the classroom in sweatpants and a T-shirt (or frilly outfits) stride into class attired in black suits and carrying a briefcase, you know the *shūkatsu* (job search) season has started for Japanese university students. Information on career forums and company recruitment events (*setsumeikai*) is posted on the public bulletin boards and circulated through social networks. The campus buzzes with the nervous energy of anticipation. International students, even though some initially do not plan to look for jobs in Japan, are often sucked into this whirlwind of job-hunting activities. This process is such a natural flow that many former students, when asked how they decided to stay on in Japan, tended to say, "Ah, it just happened." In You Jing's words, "After graduating . . . that was in the third year at college, we were . . . my classmates were all busy looking for jobs. I just followed them."

Most international students enter the Japanese labor market because they want to continue living in Japan for at least several more years. This can be attributed to a combination of many reasons: economic motivations—they can finally earn more significant salaries as white-collar workers; a lack of suitable employment opportunities in their home country; a plan to accumulate job experience to advance their career in the future; emotional or personal ties—they may have close friends or may have fallen in love with somebody in Japan; or just

a desire to prolong life in Japan because they enjoy it. Whatever the reasons may be, the school-to-work transition characteristic of the Japanese recruitment process helps place international students into different occupational categories in Japanese firms.

In summary, immigrants' mobility trajectories in Japan vary. Where they end up in the economic sphere depends on how they enter Japan and the legal and institutional frameworks within which they find themselves. The ethnic Japanese from South America and the international students are but two examples of how immigrants' opportunities and mobility potential are conditioned by their migration channels. It is somewhat ironic that a seemingly flexible visa category limits the opportunities for the socioeconomic advancement of the ethnic Japanese South Americans. On the other hand, the visa constraints on students and the organized transition from school to work actually produce a channel for the upward mobility of international students.

Economic activities are an indispensable component of immigrant life. They are but one important reason that immigration takes place to begin with. This chapter maps the diverse patterns of immigrants' labor market engagement. Several characteristics stand out. First, immigrants in Japan occupy diverse roles in the Japanese economy. They provide low-wage casual or disposable labor in the secondary labor market as well as work as highly skilled professionals in global businesses. Among immigrants, there is a demonstrated penchant for entrepreneurship, ranging from small-scale ethnic businesses that cater to other immigrants to transnational trading and production that targets either the domestic market or the international market, if not both.

Second, different national or regional backgrounds have shown uneven potential for socioeconomic mobility. In the process of migration, some successfully move from the secondary labor market to the primary labor market, and some eventually enter or establish transnational businesses. Others, however, stay trapped in the precarious secondary labor market. This chapter argues that this variation has to do with the channels and modes of migration as well as the social and institutional constraints entailed in such patterns of migration. For example, despite possessing a flexible resident status, the ethnic Japanese from South America have much less social mobility than the Chinese and Korean student visa holders because of the ways they are brokered into the Japanese manufacturing sector and the homogeneous social networks in which they are embedded. Students, despite the restrictions of their visa status, manage to achieve upward social mobility because of the narrowly prescribed but institutionally well-defined mobility channel. Through part-time work, the majority of the

Chinese and Korean students have managed to finance their education and thereby obtain both Japanese higher education credentials and useful social and cultural skills. Through organized school-to-work transition, then, they are able to access the primary labor market and attain upward social mobility.

Last, this chapter shows that immigrants are creatively engaged in the Japanese economy. Not only are they needed as supplemental labor, but immigrants in Japan are also forces for bridging the Japanese economy with markets outside the country. Through finding niches and bridging structural holes, immigrants utilize their unique capacity to not only survive and thrive in Japan's economy but also act as the agents of globalization.

4

WEAVING THE WEB OF A LIFE IN JAPAN

One prominent objective of immigration studies, especially those based on settler countries' experiences, is to investigate the long-term incorporation outcomes of immigrants. This research focus lends the impression that immigration is a process where people enter the country, settle down, and gradually form ethnic communities (Castles and Miller 2003). It therefore elides the fact that throughout history most migration has been temporary. In the increasingly interconnected contemporary world, filled with abundant opportunities to move and move yet again, migrants' decisions to stay, return, or leave become even more unpredictable. In Japan, a fabled monoethnic nation, how do migrants make mobility decisions? Chapters 4 and 5 use narratives and biographies I have collected in the nearly twenty years since the early 2000s to unpack the complex reasoning involved in immigrants' decisions to either settle in or leave Japan. It shows that individuals' migratory trajectories are best categorized as pragmatic. Immigrants' mobility decisions are influenced by economic opportunities, emotional states, and life stages. They also constantly negotiate between different forms of mobility—social, economic, and geographic—in the migratory process. Moreover, migration is continuous and contingent. Settling does not necessarily mean a permanent stay; and exit precedes a journey of return. While this chapter focuses on immigrants who have chosen to stay, the next tells the stories of those who have exited Japan.

Uncertain Departures and Contingent Trajectories

One attitude that was common among immigrants in Japan was an uncertainty about the temporal goal or plan for coming to Japan. People generally did not know what to expect of this "nonimmigrant" country. Many people, regardless of their nationality, used the terms "ambiguous" or "unsure" to describe their initial expectations. For the migrants from regions that were economically less developed, Japan was a generic advanced country with a higher standard of living. The desire to leave the home country for a place with better economic prospects was a dominant motive. The ability to leave the home country was what mattered most; choosing a destination was largely a secondary concern. On the other hand, for those from the West or more developed regions, going to Japan was considered a novel experience and an adventure of some sort.

The largest immigrant population in Japan is Chinese. Many Chinese immigrants left China around 1990 because of the "going abroad fever" (*chuguo re*). At that time, leaving the country was more important than the institutional framework and social conditions of the destination. Liu Yun arrived in Japan in 1991 as a language student. She explained, "To put it in a nice sounding way, I [would say that I] wanted to come out to broaden my vision and learn some stuff. But to be honest, at that time it was just popular to go abroad. People left when opportunities emerged. China was poor then, so [everybody] just wanted to leave." She was not sure how her future would unfold in China and thought life would be better overseas. Since the primary urge was to leave the home country, Japan for such immigrants was simply a migration opportunity.

Most Europeans and North Americans in our sample, on the other hand, arrived in Japan primarily because of their interests in the country. However, despite their cultural curiosity, most did not have clear notions regarding the duration of their stay. Dmitri, the Russian engineer who arrived in Japan because he had met a Japanese woman in Moscow, confessed that he "didn't have any plans, [and] thought it would just be a long vacation basically." Neal, a Canadian freelance business consultant, said, "I had been so pro-Japan at the time that I would have stepped over my own mother to get out here." He arrived in Japan on a working holiday visa. Despite his zeal, he was undecided whether he "was committed to Japan for the long term."

Though uncertain about their future in Japan, migrants learn the ropes of living in Japanese society upon arrival. There is a legal path toward settlement in Japan. A student or working holiday visa can be converted to a work visa if one secures a job. Stable employment, in turn, can eventually allow the person to be

eligible to apply for naturalization or permanent residency. This process, however, is sometimes precarious.

Migratory trajectory is first of all contingent on the legal and institutional framework for immigration control (Florida 2005; Smith and King 2012; Mavroudi and Warren 2013; Kōu and Bailey 2014). As explained in chapter 2, Japan's immigration regime is selective and lacks leniency and transparency. It is a stratified system, and individuals have drastically different experiences when facing immigration law. For the scores of people who manage to gain enough points to qualify for the highest rank in the highly skilled professional (*kōdosenmonjinzai*) category, which includes criteria such as the global ranking of the university one graduates from, the number of patents, academic degrees, and age, Japan extends a warm welcome and rolls out the red carpet. They can apply for permanent residency one year after coming to Japan (MOJ 2017c). The other 99.99 percent of immigrants, however, endure a much more complex process. As one informant, Tina, explained, "They do a really good job of trying to make you jump through a lot of hoops." In the course of this "hoop jumping" process, many things can go wrong and one can lose institutional affiliation, such as in the situations of unemployment and divorce, and subsequently his or her legal status. For those who unfortunately lose their legal status, living in Japan is a constant and hopeless struggle, and deportation is an imminent threat.

However, immigration policies do not always work the way they were designed to. For example, favorable policies aiming to woo highly skilled professionals do not always succeed in retaining them. As studies in North America and Europe have indicated, people with higher human capital tend to be more mobile because they are equipped with the necessary resources (Boyle, Halfacree, and Robinson 1998; Massey et al. 1998). Furthermore, they tend to see geographic mobility as a normative practice for enhancing their own professional profiles and a strategy for self-actualization (Kōu and Bailey 2014). On the other hand, due to limited options and the risks involved in moving, undocumented migrants, when possible, might opt to settle (Wampler, Chávez, and Pedraza 2009).

In addition to immigration regimes, immigrants' immediate social environments and perceptions of opportunities and life events also shape their migratory experience. Some, especially students, do not arrive in Japan with the clear intention of staying. They are, however, affected by the frenzy of job fairs and eventually enter the Japanese labor market. Others might decide to stay after finding the love of their life. Still others, who might have hoped to stay, leave because of unpleasant encounters, aborted career plans, or failed relationships. There are also people who are tempted to leave but lack the momentum to do so. For example, George, an American programmer, came to Japan initially to ex-

plore entrepreneurial opportunities with a couple of industry friends. When the plan did not work out as intended, he enrolled in a language school. He ended up staying for eight years before leaving in 2007. I asked him to reflect on his decision to stay in Japan after he finished language school. He pondered,

> I don't think that was a choice. It just happened. In fact, I don't know if you know [this] but there is this guy . . . I met him at a party in 2001. And he said, I think, he said he had been here at the time 21 years. And I said: "How long was it until you stopped thinking you would leave within six months?" Because that's what I thought, right? He said:
>
> "Fourteen years!" [laughing] You just think, you know, "oh this place isn't for me, I'll make some plans to leave" and the next day you look up and more years have passed. So it was kind of the same [for me]. I didn't plan to be here longer than six months. As I said, I wanted to start a company with my friend and then you know, one thing after the other, that didn't happen, that didn't happen, that didn't happen, and you know, six years have passed.

In short, immigrants in Japan often do not have fixed plans about their migratory trajectories. In most cases, their stay in Japan is intended to be temporary. However, it is difficult to predict migratory trajectories based on an individual's intentions. Trajectories are shaped in specific institutional and social contexts and influenced by individuals' experiences as well as desires and needs in different life stages. Although migration is sometimes perceived by migrants as an absence of choice and a natural flow of events, people do make conscious decisions about settling in a foreign country, even a nominally nonimmigrant country like Japan.

The Many Dimensions of Economic Imperatives

On December 2, 2012, at the request of Kapisanan ng Migranteng Pilipino (KMP)/Philippine Center at Maryknoll, I helped host a public symposium titled "Keeping an Eye on the Law: Legal Education Seminar for Migrants in Japan." Consul General Jocelyn Tirol-Ignacio from the Embassy of the Philippines, officials from the Japanese Ministry of Justice, prominent legal scholars and social scientists from universities in the Philippines and Japan, and several legal organizations in Japan participated in the event. The majority of the audience were Filipino—mostly women—migrants. The central topic of discussion was what Filipinos who were married or had been married to Japanese

nationals were required to do under a new legal system that went into effect on July 9, 2012. This new system demanded that all mid- to long-term foreign residents in Japan replace their alien registration card (*gaikokujin tōrokusho*) with a residence card (*zairyū ka-do*) at the immigration office in order to make the management and control of immigrants more efficient. Under the previous Alien Registration Act, foreigners registered with local municipal offices upon arriving in Japan, but the system did not allow the Ministry of Justice to immediately access the information. Immigrants could lose their legal status but still possess an alien registration card. Under the new system, the Ministry of Justice controls the issuance of residence cards. Once the immigrant loses his or her legal status, the local municipal office is immediately notified. The new system also requires the local government to report to the Ministry of Justice any dissolution of marriage between a foreign spouse and a Japanese national, a practice that had not existed before. Once divorced, the foreign spouse can have their visa revoked and they are expected to leave in three months unless they can change their visa status.

The anxiety was palpable in the room. Many women were agitated. The new situation is all the worse for Filipinos because in the Philippines divorce is not a legal option. In the case of international marriages, however, the courts recognize divorces that are initiated by the foreign spouse. If a divorce is initiated by a Filipino national in an international marriage or through legal cosigning—which accounts for 90 percent of total divorces in Japan—the Filipino will not be able to get the certificate to prove that she is single and eligible to remarry. The legal practitioners at the seminar, many working in immigration or marriage law in Japan, advised the mothers in attendance to fight for custody of their children. A person with children fathered by a Japanese national is eligible for long-term resident status.

Those Filipino immigrants who attended the event, many of whom were unhappy in their marriages, professed their desire to stay in Japan and, if possible, to settle permanently. Migration to Japan gave them the means to better not only their own lives but also those of the entire family. This is what mattered the most. Life in Japan was a strategy as well as a reward in itself.

International migration is first of all an economic practice. This logic of migration is taken for granted as a primary motivation for most migration trends. However, the economic imperative manifests in varied forms: for some it is a simple matter of earning differentials between home and host societies, while others perceive migration as a gamble. There are still others for whom Japan's labor demand, institutional framework for entrepreneurship, and pension schemes lead them to stay. Due to such institutional embeddedness, leaving becomes increasingly difficult.

For people in some professions, Japan offers better opportunities than those in the home country. Because of Japan's relatively good pay in the irregular labor market, people can take a chance in a variety of entrepreneurial endeavors. An, the young Korean man who came to Japan hoping to pursue a career in the music industry, wanted to stay because the country is easier for "freeters" to make a living, and it also offers more flexibility for entrepreneurship. His plans for the future were dictated by where it would be easiest for him to live and to enjoy more opportunities. Although he reveled in the attention he got as a K-Pop singer in Japan, he also had other entrepreneurial plans. He majored in fashion marketing and dreamed of starting his own fashion brands in the future. He believed he had a better chance to start a business of his own in Japan than in Korea. "In Korea, you start a company. If it fails, it is really difficult to recover [*tachinaoru*]. You can go looking for a job or do some irregular labor to sustain your living [in Japan]. In Japan, the recovery time can be shorter than Korea. No matter what, I like the social system that allows people to make a living with our own ability." Japan may also present people with the professions they seek. For example, religious freedom is restricted in China. The country has its own state-sanctioned Christian organization, called the National Committee of Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China, and no overseas missionary is allowed to carry out any religious activities within the borders. Xie, a Chinese Protestant minister, gave up the idea of returning to China when he chose to study religion in Japan.

There are also immigrants who hope to make a fortune overseas but never achieve their goal and remain in Japan indefinitely, resembling the sojourners among Paul Siu's (1952) Chinese laundrymen. Siu's classic study of Chinese immigrant sojourners showed that early Chinese immigrants to the United States never intended to become part of American society. They kept their cultural practices, averted assimilation, and organized their lives around plans to return to China. Yet, return migration for one reason or another never occurred. Political regime changes and various personal events prevented them from materializing the dream of returning to their ancestral land as the prosperous prodigal sons. Liao, an IT engineer, was a modern "Chinese laundryman."

Liao thought IT in Japan would be a profitable business and wanted to sweep up some gold in Japan and return to China in one to three years. He set up a small IT dispatching company with some Chinese friends after working for a couple of years as an IT programmer for Japanese companies. To make more money more quickly, they thought to go public and sell stock. Ultimately, however, the venture failed and he lost money. By the time we interviewed him, he had already been in Japan for eight years. He was back working as an employee in a Japanese company. He reflected on his migration process and realized that

the initial goal was never achievable. His consumption went up as soon as his income increased. Shortly after he began making a 500,000 yen monthly salary instead of the initial 200,000 yen salary in the first year, he moved out of the apartment he shared with two friends and rented his own. Later he lost the money, but he was no longer able to go back to the life of sharing an apartment. At the time of our interview, he still entertained the idea of returning to China, but said he did not want to go back as a loser. He analogized his situation with that of a gambler: "It was like going gambling at the casino. Some might stop after they have won some. Others stop after losing. I might be the kind that wants to stop after winning, but after losing, I bet double, wanting to get the money back."

Many immigrants stay in Japan because leaving entails high stakes. It is well documented that skilled migrants who work in Japan complain about Japan (e.g., Tsukazaki 2008; Oishi 2012). There might be various frustrations at work, such as workplace relationships or the absence of a chance of quick career ascension. Nonetheless, many stay because they have anxiety about moving due to great labor market uncertainties in their home countries or elsewhere. Sangmi's narrative captures a common hesitation about leaving Japan due to a concern for labor market opportunities. "Honestly, I thought of going back to Korea for good. Last year,[1] after the [Great East Japan] Earthquake, my family was saying, 'Come back quickly!' But it happened so sudden, and nothing was prepared for my return, so I said, 'Wait one more year, and I will come back next March.' But that wasn't easy. [The] Korean economy isn't doing so good. I thought about it, but thoughts alone were not enough. I was still not able to go back. So, I stayed on, and now I think I have missed the opportunity to go back." Sangmi explained that she initially decided to come to Japan because she wanted to accumulate more skills and gain more experience that she could add to her CV. She did not think a lot about how long she would stay. She took one step at a time, attaining vocational training and eventually finding a job. After being overseas for ten years, she realized that it would now be much more difficult for her to be employed in Korea than in Japan. According to her, in Korea, English skills outweighed experience. Employers would single-mindedly ask her about the English proficiency that she lacked. In Japan, on the other hand, her business experience had more value. Besides, there is an age constraint, especially for women. Sangmi sighed, "Not long ago I was still thinking of going back, but recently, after thinking and thinking about it, I changed my mind." Sangmi was not entirely satisfied with her work in Japan at a small trading firm. However, instead of leaving Japan, she decided to look for a new job in this country. She was also contemplating starting her own business. "Even when it comes to starting your own company, I feel there are more opportunities in Japan, compared to Korea. . . . So, I

planned to go back by the end of this year [at] the latest, but now I want to reconsider." With the change of plan, Sangmi was considering applying for permanent residency, an idea she had not entertained when she first came to Japan.

Many immigrants in Japan, like Sangmi, stay not because they are satisfied with their life but because moving involves too many uncertainties. Most immigrants weigh their options carefully instead of rashly abandoning their life in Japan to return to their home country or to leave for a third country. Usually only those who have opportunities available to them elsewhere or have come to a dead end in Japan will take steps toward leaving the country, a point I return to in the next chapter.

Moreover, for immigrants with fewer economic resources, international migration is a practice that requires heavy financial investment and entails a high opportunity cost. It is also a social signifier of one's worth. Whether one can make it in a foreign country is a sign of success. Therefore, an apparent economic rationale manifests a much deeper cultural logic. As a Chinese immigrant who left his teaching job at an elite Chinese university in 1997 to come to Japan said, "If I returned then, people would have thought that it was because I couldn't stand on my own feet here. Return would mean that I was a loser. So, I tried to stay."

Many people might not fulfill their career, personal, or financial aspirations. Some maintain the discourse of return but continue to stay in Japan because life is not entirely bad here and there is always some hope of improving one's situation. Besides, home becomes increasingly unfamiliar, and going to a third country, an idea that some might entertain, also seems more and more like a fantasy. By serendipity, maybe some particularly appealing opportunities lure them back to their home country or, very rarely, send them to another country. In most circumstances, they wait, staying put in the not ideal but not so terrible either reality that Japan presents.

This tendency of remaining immobile is especially salient after crises. The East Japan Earthquake, on March 11, 2011, shook the immigrant communities. Shortly after the earthquake, many people became anxious about the nuclear fallout. Even with existential crises, the decision to leave is not an easy choice. As one Chinese engineer explains, "Going home, you know, I have no idea where to . . . In Beijing, Shanghai . . . I might make over 10K [RMB a month], but what can you do with 10K? Apartments are sold for 20 or 30K a square meter in Beijing. . . . So, my status would neither be high nor low [*bugao budi, bushang buxia*]. Being overseas for so long, how could I bear such a [middling] situation, right? But if an opportunity occurs, for example, [the company] sending me back as an expat, that would be okay. Unless that happens, I will stay." Economic incentives are not exclusive to migrants from developing countries. The lucrative

pay for language instruction similarly kept many Europeans and North Americans in Japan. Brad, an American, arrived in a small prefectural town in Japan originally to work for a cultural exchange program between his hometown in the United States and the Japanese town. His tenure was for two years. He would not have come to Japan had it not been for his wife's interest in the country. After two years, however, he stayed on. As he explained, "I think one aspect has been the money. I've always been paid quite well. And I have a lifestyle that, I don't know, [I] possibly could have in the States, but again, in the United States, nobody pays you 50 dollars an hour just to open your mouth and speak your language." When he was interviewed in 2011, he was divorced and worked as a cultural consultant, coaching Japanese businessmen to do English presentations. He felt it was a good thing that he was in Japan. "Because if you consider the economic situation in the United States, one, it's pretty difficult to actually find a job and second, the stability—some pillars in the Japanese society definitely create a very long-term success."

What these stories show is that Japan, with its labor shortage, is in fact a place that provides many economic opportunities for immigrants. Not only do immigrants have abundant employment options—if they are not too choosy about where they work—but such employment prospects also encourage them to experiment with entrepreneurship, which is a practice less common among native Japanese, who are more risk averse and concerned with the social status of entrepreneurship.[2] Moreover, once immigrants adapt to the Japanese labor market, the decision to leave becomes tenuous because for them the labor market at home is now unfamiliar. As a consequence, the stakes for leaving rise.

The Strength of Affective Ties

Carlos, the South American man who left his home country because of his discontent with the political environment and chose Japan with no particular reason other than a job opening, is gay. Although his decision to migrate was not influenced by his sexuality, his decision to stay was. In his fifth year, he met his Japanese partner and thereby solidified his decision to stay. When I met him he had been in Japan for fifteen years, had managed to obtain permanent residency, and had bought an apartment in Tokyo.

Though jobs, careers, and economic prospects are compelling motives for staying in Japan, emotions, which may or may not be related to economic rationales for migration, are also important forces affecting an individual's mobility. Emotional ties to the place can be one of the reasons people choose to stay. A positive feeling about Japan that emerges from their initial experience some-

times precedes their active pursuit of economic opportunities in Japan. And then, in the course of making a living, their emotional geography together with their means of livelihood leads to them settling or staying indefinitely. Many immigrants, especially those older cohorts from Europe and the United States in our sample, stayed on in Japan because they married Japanese spouses. Aside from romantic relationships, however, friendships and belonging to a community further provide the emotional support that migrants need and that functions to tie them to the places where they reside.

A friendly and supportive Japanese community provided strong incentive for Tina to continue her stay in Japan. In 1998, Tina arrived to teach English in a small village where she was the only foreigner. Although she could not speak any Japanese, the staff was very accommodating and "went out of their way" to provide her with help. "They would come over after work or whatever, and everyone was really nice." Tina reflected on her experiences and concluded that her starting out in a small town was the reason that she stayed on. She explained: "I think I was lucky I ended up in a small town. I think if I had been sent to Tokyo or a more urban area, I probably would have said 'okay that's enough' after one year and that would have been my experience of Japan. But there weren't a lot of foreigners where I was and despite that I really didn't learn any Japanese at all, but everyone was really nice. And it was kind of like I stood out, so it was easy to get to know people because everyone wanted to come up and say 'hi,' like that, so it wasn't hard to meet other people and [make] new friends. And, so it wasn't really that difficult." Because of her positive experience of living in that rural town for her first two years in Japan, she looked for other jobs and landed another English teaching position at a private company. Frustrated by her inadequate Japanese, especially her illiteracy, she enrolled in a language school after being transferred to the company's Tokyo office, and later entered a professional training school. One thing led to another, and she met her husband and married into a Japanese family. At the time of the interview, she was working as a part-time English teacher and her daughter was entering kindergarten.

Human action is strongly influenced by emotional responses to social relations. For immigrants in Japan who initially feel isolated and marginalized in an unfamiliar cultural and social environment, the experience of individual Japanese people's kindness can lead to the forging of strong emotional ties. Among the people we encountered, many attributed their decision to stay to their relationships with Japanese individuals. Zeng, a Chinese cook, arrived in Japan in 2001 with a skilled labor visa when he was already forty. He ended up in Japan because his master (*shifu*) who trained him in China came to Japan first. Zeng came in a group of six. At the time of the interview (2012), two of them had returned to China. Zeng explained that he had wanted to go back the first day he

arrived because he could not speak the language and was afraid. However, his relationship with his Japanese boss changed his impression and his plan. Not being able to speak Japanese, he initially relied heavily on the Japanese restaurant owners who hired him. He talked about how the owners of one restaurant, a Japanese couple, took care of him, helping him with logistics and taking him to a hospital when he was sick. "This and that [*diandian didi*], whatever I needed in my daily life, they would volunteer to help me," he said. Such kindness and practical assistance eased his anxiety of being in a foreign country and eventually made it possible for him to be comfortable enough to stay on in Japan.

He worked with these people for eight years. When he left for another job, the couple cried. "For eight years, we worked together. I spent more time with them than with my wife." He explained that the only reason he worked at this restaurant for so long, even though he had various opportunities to make a higher salary elsewhere, was because of "the problem of feelings" (*ganqing de wenti*). They maintained regular contact even after he relocated. The couple called or visited him whenever they came to Shinjuku.

In addition to the emotional support provided by the hosts, the existing foreign community in the receiving context also cushions the initial shocks of transition and helps the immigrant ease into an unfamiliar cultural and social environment (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). Neal was not sure what he would encounter in Japan on a working holiday visa. After three or four months of living in Tokyo, he decided he really liked the city because of his positive experiences in the foreigner "bubble." His immediate entry point into Japan was a so-called *gaijin* house, where foreigners could find boarding without going through the hassles of looking for guarantors and paying a deposit and the other initial fees typically required to rent an apartment in Japan. The environment at the guesthouse made the cultural shift easier for Neal. Other foreigners who lived in the guesthouse helped him get his bearings in the strange metropolis when he was still "fresh off the boat." Moreover, he felt emotionally connected. As he explained, "At night I had a place to go to where I could communicate with people." This friendly and easygoing atmosphere made him feel as though he had a home base where he could start his life. It was from this positive experience that he started looking for employment. Luckily, he found a job, and an English-speaking Japanese colleague assisted him in settling into the workplace. Talking about the transition from being uncertain to committing to stay long term, Neal relayed: "I decided I really liked it here. And that's all it came down to. I didn't care about the company or the work itself. I just liked Japan, and as a result, I wanted to stay and find some way to do it, so that led to that and then over time, slowly but surely, I just ended up adopting Japan as my new home."

In summary, the need for emotional connections and for a sense of belonging is a powerful motive in driving people's mobility decisions. We have encountered many Carloses, Tinas, Zengs, and Neals who stay on in Japan because they have found relationships, social groups, or communities that foster positive feelings and cultivate a sense of attachment. Many of them eventually build a life in Japan, multiplying and thickening their personal relationships in this country. Though such emotional ties alone do not necessarily bind people to the place permanently, they do function in easing the transition into a new place and life and provide incentives for people to extend their stay. In the process, the ties with their home countries become tenuous, and their lives gravitate toward the adopted home. Some people, therefore, do settle down and stay permanently.

Transplanted Life

Wampler, Chávez, and Pedraza (2009) found that even undocumented Mexican immigrants want to stay in the United States because of the outcomes of planting roots in the States and cutting ties with the home society. After becoming embedded in religious and ethnic communities in the host society, Mexican immigrants start to perceive the United States as offering more social and economic opportunities than Mexico. Moreover, the militarization of border control has made it more difficult to return and maintain social ties with friends and relatives in the home society. In effect, they transplanted themselves. Perhaps in a much subtler way and at a more gradual pace, immigrants in Japan are also "planting roots" and "cutting ties."

While few people disembark the airplane with the resolution to settle, most immigrants start establishing themselves in Japan with or without consciously recognizing what they are doing. In the process of learning to live in Japan, they learn the language, meet friends and partners, go to school, and find jobs. In other words, bit by bit they construct the foundation of their life (*seikatsu kiban*) in Japan. At the same time, despite their intentions, ties with the home country may weaken. Emotional ties and instrumental imperatives often intertwine in people's mobility decisions. Similar to the findings in the US context (Wampler, Chávez, and Pedraza 2009), the longer that immigrants live in Japan, the less likely it is that they can leave.

Sam, an African American man, first came to Japan in 2000 to shoot a documentary film. He taught English on the side to finance both his stay and the film project. He thought he would return to the United States once he finished the film. In 2003, his father fell ill and Sam went back to California to take care of

him. Four months later, his father died. His widowed mother returned to her hometown in Michigan. Sam found himself alone in California. He had only a small nuclear family in California. Aside from his mother and father he had no other relatives there. After spending three years in Japan, he had more friends and knew more people there than he did in the United States. In addition, he had all his belongings in Japan and still had to finish the editing of the film, so he decided to return to Tokyo. He finished the film in 2005 and then undertook other work in Japan. First, he taught English to children and then was offered a job by a US investment bank. He thought it was "a really good job," so he stayed. When we talked to him in 2012, he was working on another film project. He was telling himself that it might be the last project he would do before leaving Japan. However, his narrative demonstrates that his life had shifted and now revolved around Japan, and leaving seemed increasingly less feasible. In particular, he realized that he had gradually lost his safety net in the United States. As he relayed:

> At first, I was thinking, I don't want to live here for the rest of my life. But looking back, looking at America now and all the problems they are going through and the healthcare situation and stuff. . . . Honestly, I don't think I ever had health insurance in America but here I'm paying for the Japanese Health Insurance and it's great! You don't have to worry if you can go to the clinic or something and you're only paying like 20%.[3] Some places are really cheap. I think the health situation. . . . Although I do hear some Japanese do have some problems . . . but at least they are getting it. But that's what we don't have in the United States so that's one thing I'm thinking well maybe it would be better for me to retire here at least I'll know about the health care instead of going back to the US where we have to buy into these special plans and into these things that will eventually run out. So that's weighing on my mind at the moment.

Tina, introduced above, is also from the United States and had the same concerns. She had frictions with her in-laws and dreaded the prospect of socializing with the Japanese mothers of her daughter's kindergarten friends. She missed the holiday celebrations in the United States and the friendliness of Americans. Yet, returning was difficult. Her husband had studied and worked in the United States for eight years but was not able to renew his work visa after the 9/11 terrorist attack. The experience of legal vulnerability scarred him. He therefore was worried about not being able to sustain the family financially in the United States by giving up his stable job in Japan. After a trip back to the United States, Tina herself realized returning permanently was not realistic because they would not

have access to the social security they enjoyed in Japan. Tina's views of the United States in 2011 were also pessimistic:

> With a horrible unemployment rate in America, and no one has health insurance . . . and if you do have health insurance it's like a million dollars. America's economy is in such a desperate state right now. I am happy to be where I am and have a roof over my head and have a pretty steady job and know that my husband's job seems pretty secure now too. And my daughter gets free health insurance. I don't ever want to be Japanese, and even if I did I don't think anyone would have me as Japanese. But I am content living here right now. I think I am a lot luckier than a lot of my friends back home as far as my current situation is concerned.

In both Sam's and Tina's narratives, the United States is presented as a country with inadequate social security and a precarious labor market. Arguably, to some extent, this pessimistic portrayal of the United States may reflect their shifting perspectives and a means to justify their decision to stay in Japan. On the other hand, their stories show that, Japan, though in many ways institutionally unprepared for immigration, has a social welfare system superior to that in many migrants' home countries. It is also available to foreign residents, making leaving more difficult.

In comparison with Sam's and Tina's rejection of the United States, Oliver's choice to stay reflected a strong attachment to the place where he established himself. Several years before our first interview in 2011, he experienced a period of dispiritedness. He was frustrated with his job and had just broken up with his boyfriend. He contemplated leaving. As he explained, "There was a sense of . . . if I'm going to do it now, it's a good break. And also, I felt like I wanted to be closer to my family." He even searched for jobs and subsequently received an offer in the United States. Nonetheless, he stayed. When asked why, Oliver said, "My life's here. My friends are here. My career is here and yeah . . . so I don't know. I just kind of got hooked, I guess." In 2015 when we interviewed Oliver again, he had obtained permanent residency, bought a piece of land in Tokyo, and built his own house. He also had a steady Japanese boyfriend. The only thing that still troubled him and made him consider leaving was his desire to adopt a child—something not possible for gay couples in Japan.

Sometimes, when one lives in Japan for so long, one not only builds his or her life in Japan and attenuates ties with the home country, but also becomes acculturated into the new society to the degree that it is no longer comfortable to live in the society left behind. Chen Shimian, a Chinese man in his fifties, had been in Japan since the mid-1980s. He believed that he would probably stay in Japan

permanently. His parents were his only ties to China. When his parents died, he would not be going back. When asked why, he answered, "[I am] not used to it [anymore]. I get sick whenever I go back, catching cold, having diarrhea. So, in other words, I don't feel the attraction of going back. Except for my parents, their being there and my wanting to see them, I can't find [any other] reasons to go back." Chen had some old classmates and friends in Shanghai, but the friends that were important to him were in Japan. "My life circle, my work circle, they are all in Japan. I am more myself in Japan. I don't think I will go back, unless for exceptional reasons."

The Good Society Japan, the Global City Tokyo

In the winter of 2015, I stayed in Singapore for three months as a visiting researcher at the National University of Singapore. There I met many migrants in different occupations who had been living in this small city-state for over a decade. Some of them complained about the precarity of staying in Singapore. Similar to Japan, Singapore is strict in managing immigration. One must leave after losing affiliation with an educational institution or a place of employment. The grace period is only one month, even shorter than in Japan. I once asked an administrator from an international school, "What attracts you to stay here, then?" He responded, "Oh, it is so safe and clean here."

The same goes for immigrants in Japan. Regardless of where they came from, foreign residents repeatedly described Japan with terms such as "safe," "clean," "orderly," "good services," and "polite people." Sometimes, they would relate how their parents or relatives reacted to Japan on their visits. Neal described his father's fascination with Japan and said, "You know, he was like 'No one's honking their horns! Everything is clean.' And I took him up to the top of the Mori Building in Roppongi Hills, and he had an opportunity to look out at the city for the first time above ground. He's like, 'I've been everywhere in the world and there's no place like this.' And he is absolutely right," Neal remarked proudly. In a follow-up email, Neal elaborated the reasons for his adulation of Japan. He compared his experience living in Japan with that in his hometown:

> Vancouver, although it's my hometown, frustrates me because every day I feel as though I am getting ripped off. Whether it's the cost of phone service, internet, accommodations, lunch, or the convenience store, I feel like I am being taken advantage of. It's a few paper cuts every day. All small, but they add up. In Japan, every day I find some-

> thing that makes me smile and say "God, I love Japan." Whether it's a good deal, some quirky clash of West and East or some spectacular service, I feel glad in some small way each day. If I get paper cuts in Vancouver, I find pennies in Japan. The fact that there is a strong egalitarian streak in Japan and that I get treated fairly most of the time makes a big difference. Japan is [also] a shame-based society, rather than a guilt-based society as in North America and much of the West. There [are] a large number of benefits to living in a shame society like Japan (orderliness, safety, privacy, lack of social ambiguity, etc.) as well as a number of drawbacks (intense pressure to conform, undue self-sacrifice, lack of innovation, etc.). As a *gaijin*, I get all of the benefits of living in a shame-based society, with very few of the drawbacks. If I had to live in Japan as a Japanese person and [be] wholly bound by the rules, I think I would go nuts. I'd want to live in America. As it stands, most of the rules do not apply to me and I am automatically excused if I do not conform.

In his narrative, Neal, an enthralled lover of the country, presents a romanticized view of Japan that is laced with mid-twentieth-century anthropological discourses (e.g., Ruth Benedict) on its cultural characteristics. Such enthusiasm might have to do with his personality and his sense of well-being in Japan. As a tall white man, as he remarked himself, he felt "special" and "important"—a human desire, he admitted, that affected his perspective. Moreover, while some people consider living as a foreigner—the perpetual state of being an outsider—a frustrating aspect of being an immigrant in Japan, Neal seemed to be unfazed and tried to take advantage of it. He considered himself a beneficiary of the orderly Japanese society especially because he could play the "*gaijin* card" and be exempted from the restrictions and take a "free ride" on the system. In fact, Neal continued to remark that although being a person on the "*soto*" (outside) was a price he had to pay, he had his "*gaijin*" community in Japan where he felt very much "*uchi*" (inside).

Not all people were as infatuated with Japan as Neal, and not all are able or willing to play the "*gaijin* card." The majority of the immigrants in Japan are not white, tall, and male and therefore do not enjoy the same privileges or feel "important" and "special" in this society. Instead, the outsider status for most Asians and people from developing countries means a lack of entitlement. Nonetheless, positive evaluations of Japanese social characteristics echo in all the interviewees' narratives. Almost every immigrant we talked to, regardless of his or her socioeconomic and legal status and country of origin, sees the attraction in the orderliness, cleanliness, services, and safety of Japanese society. These are

among the reasons that they want to continue living in Japan, or rather that they choose not to reside in their home country. This finding is consistent with observations in Europe and North America, where researchers find that concerns with social and environmental problems, the effectiveness of social institutions, and provisions such as welfare, law and order, and health care as well as culture and lifestyle have significant influence on people's decision to emigrate, settle, or return (e.g., Van Dalen and Henkens 2007; Harvey 2008). Therefore, Japan may lure people in for a range of instrumental and cultural reasons. Its ability to keep many of them in the country is, to a great extent, dependent on immigrants' experiences.

Even after the Great East Japan Earthquake, though anxious about the nuclear crisis, most immigrants did not leave, because they believed in the basic engineering of this country. The relative societal composure and orderliness demonstrated after the disasters seemed to have reinforced immigrants' confidence that Japanese society was reliable since people appeared to possess a high degree of discipline and integrity. Although immigrants might feel marginalized and occasionally alienated, they also acknowledge that the social system functions well and thus they respect and try as much as possible to follow the normative practices.

Additionally, for many younger migrants, Tokyo is very attractive. Though people we interviewed in Osaka, Sendai, and Fukuoka often had wonderful things to say about their own adopted towns, Tokyo is still the most popular place for immigrants. At the end of 2018, over 21 percent of foreign residents lived in Tokyo alone. When including Chiba, Saitama, and Kanagawa, the three neighboring prefectures where people working in Tokyo often reside, the Greater Tokyo area has more than 41 percent of the total number of foreign residents in Japan. Excluding the categories of technical interns (285,776), who are channeled into specific regions and enjoy no geographic mobility, and special permanent residents (326,190), who are mostly *Zainichi* Koreans historically concentrated in the Kansai region, we see over half (53 percent) of the mid- to long-term migrants living in the Greater Tokyo area.

As a global city, Tokyo not only provides abundant employment opportunities but also offers an adventurous, charming, and vibrant urban life that is comparable to, if not surpasses, that of other global cities. Moreover, contrary to common perceptions, Tokyo is affordable—a fact many immigrants realize only after they have started living in the city. Imaginings of Tokyo as exorbitantly expensive are but stereotypes carried over from the bubble era. According to Expat.com, a website that caters mostly to those seeking a Western lifestyle, the cost of living in Tokyo is 25 percent and 22 percent lower than New York City and London, respectively.[4] Particularly noteworthy is the relatively cheap rental housing in Tokyo. It is 47.38 percent lower than Singapore, another Asian global city, 50.43 percent

lower than London, and 62.72 percent lower than New York (Numbeo 2018). Our respondents also liked to point out that cheap and healthy meals are available any time of the day. In addition, the efficient, affordable, and extensive public transportation system also impressed all the interviewees. Thus, even though many young immigrants complained about other aspects of their life—such as the lack of social interactions with Japanese people or the irksome Japanese workplace culture—they chose to stay because of the affordability and the excitement of life in Tokyo. As one young Singaporean man explained, in Tokyo he could afford to rent an apartment with his girlfriend, something that was not possible for them in Singapore. He was not satisfied with the company that had recruited him in Singapore, but he changed jobs and remained in Tokyo.[5]

In short, mobility decisions are not simply rational calculations of economic gains and losses. While it is necessary that the act of settling be both financially and legally possible, at the same time, it is the emotional ties and social relationships that bind people to the place and to each other. When it comes to the incorporation of immigrants, in many respects Japan is lacking in its institutional capabilities—a point I elaborate further in the next chapter—but it has a well-functioning social system. It is a place people feel secure in and grow fond of. In addition, as a global city, Tokyo provides abundant opportunities, a vibrant urban atmosphere, and affordable living that makes it an attractive node in the global network of mobility highways.

Stay, but for How Long?

Between 1952 and 2018, over half a million immigrants obtained Japanese citizenship. The majority of them were Korean and Chinese nationals. Of the 540,828 individuals who acquired citizenship since World War II, 365,727 were Korean and 139,042 were Chinese (Ministry of Justice Civil Affairs Bureau 2018). A significant number of the naturalized Koreans were the so-called oldcomers, who entered Japan before or during World War II as colonial subjects. In contrast, the majority of Chinese immigrants who naturalized were newcomers, those who arrived in Japan after 1980.[6] It has been demonstrated that naturalization is often linked to an intention to stay permanently in the host country (Massey and Akresh 2006). This seems to be the case in Japan. In a survey among naturalized citizens in Japan in the late 1990s, the number one reason immigrants provided for naturalization is "to stay on in Japan" (Asakawa 2003). The question then is, how long will people stay?

Dozens of immigrants I have interviewed in the past two decades obtained Japanese nationality. With the exception of a couple of Korean women who married

Japanese men, almost all of them were Chinese newcomers. Among these naturalized Chinese immigrants, only a few acknowledged that their decision to naturalize stemmed from their intention to stay permanently. The majority attribute the decision to a matter of a lack of other options or to some instrumental reasons. The most cited reason is for the convenience of travel. Many people working for Japanese firms had to take overseas business trips. A Chinese passport requires a visa to the majority of the countries in the world, a prerequisite that sometimes prohibits one to travel on short notice. There are also secondary reasons, such as wanting their children to mix in the Japanese social environment. Hoshi, a Chinese man who naturalized in 2001, nine years after he arrived in Japan, explained his motives:

> I didn't think too deeply about this [naturalization]. It was just . . . maybe because of the kid. A half of the reason was for the child. He came when he was 5. At that time, he was going to the elementary school. He didn't get bullied or anything, but [I] thought, [I] could just get him the Japanese nationality. Changing to a Japanese name might be better for the child. There was this idea. Maybe a half [of the reason] was along this line. Aside from that, at that time I thought Japan was good, safe, and also really clean. [I] was, honestly, a bit muddle-headed [*xili hutu*], and didn't think too deeply about it.

However, acquiring citizenship does not necessarily mean that people want to settle in Japan permanently. Immediately after Hoshi explained his "muddle-headed" decision to naturalize, he laughed, "Now I regret it a little bit." A Japanese passport made returning to China more difficult because he would need a visa to stay for a long period. He insisted, however, that he would still return to China one day, even though he was not sure when.

This uncertainty about future mobility is equally related to both a desire to leave one's options open and the perception of what being a Japanese means. Most people, even those who naturalize, do not really see themselves as belonging to Japan, a point I return to in a later chapter. Thus, a preferred status choice is permanent resident. Close to one-third of foreign residents, 759,139 out of the 2.6 million, were permanent residents in 2018. In the case of the Chinese, though there were always a significant number of Chinese newcomers naturalizing, after 1998, many more applied for permanent residency than for Japanese citizenship (figure 4.1). The number of new permanent residents surpassed that of newly naturalized citizens in 1998 among Chinese immigrants for two reasons. First, in Japan, the residency requirement is shorter for naturalization than it is for permanent residency. In order to be eligible for citizenship, one needs to reside continuously in Japan for five years. Permanent residency, on the other hand,

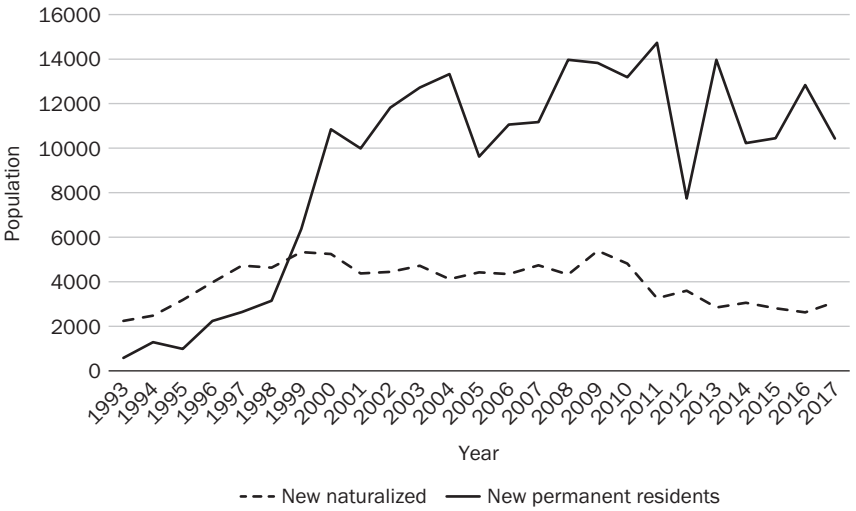

FIGURE 4.1. Numbers of newly naturalized Chinese versus new permanent residents, 1993–2017

Source: Ministry of Justice.

normally requires ten years.[7] Second, the boom of Chinese immigration did not start until 1988, with most of them coming as students (Liu-Farrer 2011a). Thus, 1998 was the year many could finally qualify for permanent residency. The figure, therefore, shows that most Chinese actually waited ten years until they fulfilled the permanent residency requirement even though they could have naturalized five years earlier.

Permanent residency, to a large extent, is seen as a form of legal insurance. Immigrants value this status because it secures their stay in Japan and allows maximal social and legal rights. Furthermore, it does not restrict possibilities for future mobilities.[8] Most Chinese, and almost all immigrants from other national backgrounds, because of the limited imagination of what constitutes a Japanese person, consider nationality a form of personal identity. They thereby resist the notion of naturalization. As a consequence, permanent residency is the only form of secure legal status they aim to obtain in Japan. While making this choice, immigrants also signal a deep sense of uncertainty about their future mobility. If this is not our country, where do we go later?

Mobility is not linear. Settlement is no longer permanent. Japan, as a "nonimmigrant country," is not expected to have actual immigrants. However, there are over a million and a half people in Japan who are either permanent residents or

naturalized citizens. This chapter tries to depict and interpret this reality. It demonstrates that, indeed, most people coming to Japan initially do not intend to stay. However, mobility is a contingent and uncertain process. Trajectories change. People—for instrumental and, more importantly, emotional, social, and lifestyle reasons—moor themselves in Japan. Japan could be merely one among many migration destinations where people find a means for subsistence and romantic relationships and spin the web of life. Japan is also a particular destination. Its physical setting and social engineering make it, for many, a desirable place to live. There are people who even choose to become Japanese citizens. Nonetheless, none of this means stasis. Increased global connectivity has allowed more and more possibilities to move, and to move again. Japan's lack of a national narrative of immigration also makes people less certain about their future trajectory. People stay indefinitely. The question then becomes, how long will people ultimately stay? To stay does not mean not moving again. As the next chapter will show, people do leave, and yet, leaving is equally temporary. Each departure also begins the next journey of return.

5

TO LEAVE, TO RETURN

My story of immigrant Japan is more centered on the experience of settling because the main subjects of my study are people who have stayed. With a few exceptions, most participants lived in Japan at the time of the interviews. People who leave, however, make up the majority of foreigners who have migrated to Japan. As the previous chapter illustrates, to stay requires continuous efforts in finding affiliations and changing one's visa status. Hundreds of thousands of people arrive in Japan every year on visas that grant them the opportunity to stay for durations ranging from six months to three years. Yet only three million in total have remained.[1] Some of them left the country because they chose to; others had to leave because they lost the means to stay on. Wherever I go—China, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam, Germany, or the United States—I meet people who have lived in Japan for a substantial period of time before leaving. In this chapter, I tell their tales.

The insights that build the discussion of this chapter derive from a range of sources. In the summer of 2007, I researched Chinese migrants who returned to China, for which I conducted in-depth interviews with twenty-five returnees in Shanghai and Beijing. In addition, I followed up with some of the Chinese informants who assisted my investigation in the early 2000s and had since departed. Over the past two decades, I have also had chance encounters with former Japan-bound migrants in different countries, resulting in unexpected opportunities to collect more interview data. Finally, to stay or to leave is a topic we have discussed extensively with our informants in Japan when inquiring about their

plans. The prospect of leaving Japan, either to go to a third country or to return to their home country, is an idea lurking in the back of the minds of most immigrants who are currently staying in Japan. As discussed, Japan is not considered an immigrant destination, and many aspects of this country (including its national discourses as well as institutional arrangements) remain uncompromisingly ethno-nationalistic. As a result, at least initially, migrating to Japan means a temporary sojourn. Leaving seems to be a distinct future possibility, if not an imminent decision to make. For some, it is a crutch to lean on when they feel frustrated with aspects of life in Japan or are nostalgic or restless. This chapter, therefore, investigates their thoughts about leaving as well.

The Migration Regime and Precarious Sojourns

Migratory trajectories are contingent on instrumental and emotional conditions. While all immigrants invariably treat Japan as a temporary destination initially, some people stay on when they find stable jobs, establish families, and grow attached to the place. However, not everyone who finds work, falls in love, or marries in Japan remains in this country. The reasons to leave Japan can be simple or complex. The simplest reason for leaving is that the migrant has lost the means—especially the legal status—to stay. Those who fail to find a proper institution, such as a school, a company, or a marriage that gives them the legal ability to remain in Japan, automatically lose their residency status. "Leaving" is a possible outcome when the migration trajectory is riddled with uncertainty. Because of such legal contingency, among the people we interviewed, the possibility of leaving—either to return to the home country or to go to another country—seems, as their narratives suggest, to have always lingered in their minds. One Chinese immigrant talked about his mental preparation whenever he was going through different status transitions. "I was telling myself, 'If I couldn't go on to the college, I would leave. If I couldn't get a job, I would leave.'" He managed to enter a college and later on found a job. When we spoke with him he had stable employment and was prepared to apply for permanent residency. Nevertheless, he still thought leaving was a possible outcome.

Japanese policies dictate who can stay and who cannot. The population that has the least agency in choosing to stay or leave is the technical interns. They are brought in to fulfill particular labor tasks, and there is no potential for their geographic and social mobilities within Japan. Their visas are terminal. Most of them can stay for a maximum of three years.[2] If they want to be in Japan, they have to reenter with a different type of visa.

The exiting of students involves more complicated mechanisms. Between 1984 and 2017, 1,454,963 individuals entered Japan on student visas. Over 12 percent (178,864) of them obtained work-related visas in Japan.[3] Even after taking into consideration that many of the recently arrived students were still in school (324,245 in June 2018), and that some students might have married Japanese nationals or become dependents of other long-term immigrants, it is clear that the majority of the students who entered Japan left sometime after their study period ended. Although these students might have exited for a range of different reasons, a substantial number of them did so because they could not continue to stay. This is because, as explained in chapter 2, international education, especially language education, has been used as a de facto channel for labor import.

As observed, many Chinese students who arrived in the late 1980s to mid-1990s came with the sole purpose of making quick cash instead of pursuing an education (Liu-Farrer 2011a). They devoted their entire time in Japan to working various low-wage jobs to maximize economic gains. Since the visa sponsorship of a school, firm, or spouse is the premise for staying legally in Japan, many become irregular migrants after losing their student status.[4] Losing legal status means exiting sometime in the future, if not immediately. Before 2003, Japan showed a relative laissez-faire attitude toward undocumented migrants. A number of early Chinese students who overstayed their visas worked and lived in Japan for over a decade before finally being deported. The situation changed after 2003 when the Japanese government launched annual campaigns to curb the number of irregular migrants. The police roam the streets and ambush train stations. As an East Asian, I have been stopped by the police three times for an ID check. The newly streamlined immigration control and management system that went into effect on July 9, 2012, has made the situation more precarious for immigrants to stay in Japan irregularly. As a result, almost all the undocumented Chinese people whom I befriended during my research in the early 2000s had left Japan. Some turned themselves in voluntarily to avoid the increasing levels of stress from having to dodge the police. Others were discovered and deported. Most current irregular migrants usually confine their activities to small local areas to minimize the risk of exposure.

Students from Southeast and South Asian countries also see the incomes from part-time jobs as an attractive aspect of an education in Japan. Due to their preoccupation with part-time work, however, as well as the difficulty in mastering the Japanese language—especially as they do not possess the linguistic affinity that Chinese students enjoy—many of them struggle to achieve educational mobility. Most of those who manage to continue their education do so in vocational training schools. In 2015, three-quarters of the Vietnamese students who

completed language education entered vocational schools (Nisshinkyo 2017). Many of the vocational training schools rely on foreign students' tuition to survive, but the education they offer is either not up to standard or not in the right vocation to enable these students to find employment in Japan.

Some students enrolled themselves in vocational training schools just to extend their student visa. Upon his graduation from a language school, Sang, a Vietnamese student, enrolled in a vocational school that specializes in accounting in order to prolong his stay in Japan. After six months, he dropped out of the school. He had no interest in accounting to begin with. Since he had already obtained the student visa, he would just focus on earning money until his visa expired.

Despite plans to leave upon the expiration of their visa, some do not leave immediately. Since around 2014, there has been an increase among Nepalese, Vietnamese, and Sri Lankan students who overstay their visas (MOJ 2017b). Some irregular migrants as well as those who are facing losing their legal status have discovered that a refugee application can be a strategy to prolong their stay. Japan has a notoriously long process of refugee recognition and low status issuance. From 2008 to 2017, out of 56,976 asylum seekers, the Japanese government granted only 229 individuals refugee status (MOJ 2017b). However, according to Japanese law, if the asylum seeker enters Japan with a proper visa, such as a student, technical intern, or tourist visa, the applicant is allowed to work in Japan six months after the date of application. A rejected applicant is eligible to appeal. Most applicants do not wait six months before starting to work. Moreover, it took on average 9.9 months for the first decision, and 23.4 months for the decision on the appealed cases (Komatsu 2018). This lengthy, drawn-out process for asylum seekers grants people the eligibility to work, which effectively creates a loophole for labor migrants to extend their sojourn in Japan.

Eventually, however, these migrants have to leave, even though during the course of staying in Japan some might have changed their mind about the purpose of their migration and developed relationships and attachments to this country. Japan is not known for granting amnesty. Undocumented immigrants, including those who have lived in the country for over a decade, have stable employment, and are married with children born in Japan, are almost always forced to leave when discovered.[5]

The precariousness is not limited to language students who failed to attain educational mobility. As a professor at a graduate school in one of Japan's top private universities, I have over the years been able to observe the job-search process of hundreds of bright, well-educated, and multilingual foreign graduates. While many have successfully embarked on careers in Japan, with a substantial number of them realizing their aspirations by landing positions in elite corpora-

tions or institutions, some have returned to their home country or journeyed to another country. A number of them left because they failed to find satisfactory jobs despite their desire to stay.

Institutional visa sponsorship underscores the precarity of the migration journey. One wrong step—a bad career decision or a failed marriage—could terminate one's legal stay in the country. It should be stressed that this happens not only to migrants from developing countries who require a visa to enter Japan, but also to those from countries with relatively free mobility. In our sample, one Canadian engineer had already lost his visa by the time we interviewed him because, after working in Japan for eight years, he decided to be a freelancer. Although he was still taking on projects, he was in fact staying in Japan without documents. A British engineer whose multinational firm was pulling out of Japan was also facing an expiring visa. He needed to find another job within six months in the same category as his previous jobs. The job market for IT workers was tough after the Lehman Shock, and he was distressed by the fact that he could not even resort to teaching English without leaving the country and reapplying for a visa in a different category.

In addition to the stress of this precarious legal situation, many individuals migrate and strive to survive on their own in a strange foreign land. Sometimes this migratory experience takes an emotional toll and is too much to bear. Amy, a Chinese woman I met in Shanghai in 2007, graduated from a two-year English program in China and worked at a multinational firm for two years before migrating to Japan. She enrolled in a Japanese language program in 1998. At the time she was twenty-three years old. Upon completing the language program, instead of trying to enter the university, she found a job in a small recruiting firm run by Americans. The company, however, closed less than a year after she started the position. Through the introduction of friends, she entered a small Japanese investment company working as an administrative assistant for an American manager. Ultimately the job did not work out because she could not get along with the boss. Through the classified magazine *Japan Towns*, she found her third job in marketing. She recruited students for a for-profit university overseas. Receiving her full salary required meeting a quota and bringing in enough fee-paying students. She felt the company was a scam and quit. After searching for several months, she found her fourth job with a Japanese securities company. She worked in the human resources department, where she recruited and interviewed people, and assisted foreign employees with their visa applications. As a young woman in a typical Japanese company, Amy was the person who answered phones, opened doors, poured tea for everybody, and washed teacups and ashtrays. "All the other women before me did that. You can't really avoid it, can you?" She did what she was expected to do. However, not long into

the job, she found herself having to endure "uncomfortable situations." As she explained: "The manager started asking me out. I said no to dinner at night, but he found excuses asking me out for lunch. Single women always run into this type of thing." She had already changed jobs four times in four years. Since she had not been able to save much money over the years, she also worked as a waitress at an American diner on the weekends. Not only was work stressful, but her life at home was not easy. She was living with a roommate who, out of unrequited love, had been crying at night for a long time. To make the situation worse, a boyfriend Amy had met through church borrowed money from her and disappeared. Through church friends, part of the money was returned, but she was devastated. She recounted her decision to return to China: "I decided to return because I had had enough. The catalyst was that it was enough. I started to have trouble sleeping, waking up at two or three in the morning crying. I thought this was not right. [I] was afraid that I was going to have a nervous breakdown. I was 29. I had nobody to talk to but a roommate that tortured me every day and a boyfriend who robbed me. How could I live such a life." Six years after she left China, she went back, nearly broken. When I talked to her in Shanghai, she had been back for three years, working at a big advertising firm and had just married. She was content with her life. She smiled, "I went a full circle after an eventful journey."

The Compounded Impulses: Career, Emotions, and Identity

The American programmer George, who appeared in the previous chapter, studied and worked in Japan for eight years before leaving in 2007. After asking why he stayed for that long after his initial entrepreneurial plans evaporated, I inquired about his decision to leave Japan in 2007. He was employed in a famous Japanese company then and had just started work on a new project. I was given a lengthy explanation:

> It was going really slow. It wasn't starting. So, I was writing some tools, but I was not really on a team. I wasn't talking to anybody because the team hadn't started yet. There was nothing to do. So, after a year, I was like "OK, I'm here to learn and I'm getting zero conversation at work. This isn't working out." So, then I tried to find a job but it was hard at that time. There was a transition between X2 and X3 [system names]. It was kind of ridiculous. People were like "we're not gonna hire you if you don't have X3 work experience." And I was like "I don't know shit

about X3. How can I? It hasn't started it!" But that's the kind of stupid stuff you get from companies sometimes. . . . And in the end, I was forty-one and I was like. . . . So this industry pays really poorly in Japan, very poorly. And I won't say what I get paid but I will say I tripled my salary going home. *Sanbai*. Not just some per cent, like 10 per cent or 50 per cent. Three Xs. OK, that's a huge difference in salary. . . . So the point is I was making pretty poor money here. And so at some point it was just like "OK I can't do this anymore." It's just like I work all day. I'll never own a house. I'll never have a wife. She won't want some poor husband. I was living like a student at 41. I had a tiny little studio. Sleeping on the floor. I guess sleeping on the floor is kind of normal for some people in Japan. But I remember inviting a girl over once that I met at some event. I invited her right after the party and I don't—I mean I'm just reading into it—but I could basically tell on her face when she saw the place, she was like: "Not interested. This guy is not successful." Right? I mean, you know in some sense it's okay. I doubt that I wanted that kind of girl anyway but at the same time it made me feel bad because my life in America was much more . . . was much higher level I think. That's the way I can put it. It is like a progression. You're in school; you're in the dorms; you move out . . . and you sleep at an apartment with roommates and eventually you might get a place without roommates and at some point you get married. That's the progression. Do you know what I mean? That was the progression in America but when I came to Japan it fell back down to a *gakusē* [student] lifestyle. So that was a big reason why I left. Another big reason was that, um, when you're at a Japanese company you don't feel . . . if you're not fluent (in Japanese), you don't feel like being part of it. You don't. I talk to my teammates, the ones who are sitting close to me, but the ones who are two cubicles away, I rarely talk to. And I don't read the company emails, the newsletters, the news that flow through where you see what's going on . . . no, it's too much work. So you still don't feel like part of anything. So that was another reason to go back. The other one is that at Company G [his previous employer] we had a very strong team spirit, you know. Everybody was working late so we would go out for dinner late at night and then we crunch together because we would work until around 11:30. I don't like crunching but I like the team spirit. But at S-Corp, on my team there was very little team spirit. And we never did anything social once the whole time as a team, never drinking, not anything, no *nomikai*. . . . And actually the project director

> apologized for not being more productive in having any social activities. But the point being, that was another reason why I left. I went home, I would be working with some of my best friends from the States and I would get all those benefits again. Anyway, I don't know if I answered your question.

George's story shows that when legal status is not an issue, the decision to leave can result from complex impulses. First, migration is both an economic project and a personal journey. George was frustrated with the workplace he ended up in. Insufficient economic rewards, his not being able to acquire knowledge and skills on the job, his marginal position in the organization, and workplace social relationships summed up his discontent. Such outcomes of migration are tied to one's sense of personal worth and status—and in George's case, similar to that of many other men, also to his masculinity. What really mattered to George, in the end, was that, because of his corporate experience, he viewed his migration as a failure and as a life-course regression. Second, although migrants' mobility decisions are frequently packaged in a narrative of career choices, the affective aspect of their migration experiences manifests as a compelling driving force. As shown in the previous chapter, emotional ties—be they romantic, familial, or communal—bond people to places. In the absence of these ties, migrants are propelled to look elsewhere for emotional bonds, which, in turn, makes it easier to entertain the idea of leaving.

Corporate Japan's Global Talent Dilemma

Migration is commonly an economic project, and work justifies one's stay in the country. Entering the primary labor market is used as a benchmark of an immigrant's successful economic incorporation. Yet, Japanese firms have not adapted themselves to the changing labor force and have difficulty in retaining foreign employees. Some scholars attribute this failure to firms' human resource management continuing to be organized around a logic of an internal labor market supplied by a predominantly domestic labor force in which employees are hired from the bottom rank and trained to develop a career within the firm (Waldenberger 2016). Although firms recruit so-called "global human resources," what they actually wish is that these foreign employees will be assimilated into Japanese corporate environment and eventually become Japanese corporate men. The skill specificities and career expectations of international migrants have yet to become a factor that has any influence on managerial practices.[6] As a result, many foreign employees find it hard to continue a career in Japanese firms.

Foreign workers are generally frustrated by the slow career progression typical of Japanese firms. *Ishi no ue nimo sannen* (Being on the cold stone for three years) is a proverb many Japanese people use to describe their corporate career experiences. It means that if one perseveres through initial adversity, one will eventually succeed. In the cold stone period, young employees often have very little responsibility. They are asked to do tedious end tasks in order to become familiar with the company's business operations from the bottom up and accumulate company-specific skills. However, such career process and skill formation are unfitting for migrants who do not usually plan to stay in Japan permanently to begin with, and let alone dedicate their careers to one Japanese company. Rather, they often consider each job as a learning experience with hopes of acquiring some transferable human capital to further their career. Moreover, given that in-house careers are built over a long stretch of time, employees' achievements are not immediately rewarded with promotion. Foreign employees are frustrated when their contributions are not given recognition in the form of an economic reward. Mark, a young Australian man who graduated from a Japanese college, enjoyed his work. But he felt there was no opportunity for growth. "No matter how hard I worked, my salary was the same. I increased the sales by 300% and they just patted me on the back: 'Well done, Mark. Well done.' It's like, okay, I'm done. I want to be recognized for my hard work, which is why I looked for something else."

Because they are expected to develop their career within the firm, employees in Japanese firms do not have enough career autonomy. Decisions regarding the placement and rotation of employees are made by department managers and human resources personnel. Employees are asked to fill out questionnaires and list their preferences, but they often have little control over where they will end up. As a consequence, people land in positions that do not fit their skills or preferences and at times the placement decisions seem completely irrational. For example, recruited as "global talent," many foreign employees imagine working positions in which they can utilize their linguistic and cultural skills in global businesses. Though most of those who are in nontechnical professions are placed in overseas sales or marketing departments and some thought is put into matching their linguistic skills with those of the clients or branches they communicate with, there are incidences in which the workplaces they are assigned to do not correspond to their cultural skills. Among our interviewees, one European woman who spoke four European languages was placed in the China team and had to enlist Chinese colleagues' help in communicating with Chinese suppliers. Many firms recruit foreign employees as generic talent. As one human resource manager of a Kansai manufacturer proudly told us, "We don't ask the new recruits about their nationalities. That's the rule. There is no category of nationality

in our personnel data file." While some foreign employees rise to the challenge to meet expectations, others feel handicapped working in environments where some of their skills are rendered insignificant.

Moreover, the insulated internal labor market cultivates a particular set of organizational and cultural practices that are increasingly seen as oppressive. Japanese salarymen instituted a particular model of corporate behavior. In order to "fit in" and demonstrate loyalty, company employees have to be willing to work overtime, resulting in long, unproductive work hours. After-hours drinking is another cultural practice that some foreign employees feel burdened by. The pecking order and gender roles people play at the dinner table irked many foreign employees, especially women. Yet, they also understand that not participating in these gatherings accentuates their outsider status.

In addition, the intraorganizational harmony that sustains the internal labor market suppresses and weakens mechanisms to curb abusive behavior. There are no guidelines about how the informal on-the-job training should be carried out. When employees are subjected to their supervisors' or coworkers' abusive behavior or microaggressions, there are no adequate disciplinary solutions to resolve the conflicts. Human relations play an important role in one's career advancement in an internal labor market because managers are promoted to their position rather than hired from the outside. A new recruit is often hushed, and the offender's behavior is excused. At one focus group with foreign women working in Japanese firms, we asked if they would report instances of harassment to the human resource managers. They all shook their heads. Japanese firms are "*uwasa shakai*" (gossipy worlds), they explained. If they complained, the information would likely circulate back to the offender and cause further retaliation.

In the end, though human resource managers emphasize the equal treatment of foreigners who are employed in the same categories as Japanese employees, practices centering on in-house careers are, in fact, discriminatory. On the one hand, as illustrated above, the high expectations for assimilation naturally penalize the cultures that do not fit, and thereby discriminate against individuals who have different expectations for workplace relations and professional life. Some respondents even believe harassment or microaggressions are deliberate, considering them a built-in selection process to weed out those who are deemed "unfit." On the other hand, as Waldenberger (2016) explains, the continuity of an in-house career pattern is contingent on labor market segmentation. To support the long-term stability of in-house careers, companies employ nonregular (*hiseiki*) workers to absorb business fluctuations as well as staff that have no demands for future careers. In Japanese firms, the traditional career segregation takes place along gender lines. Women are the buffer as well as the sacrifice for

sustaining this system. In the early periods of global talent employment, as I have observed among Chinese immigrants in Japan, foreign workers were also placed in niche positions or in temporary categories, both by employers' design and by employees' desire (Liu-Farrer 2011b). Yet, such niche positions usually do not lead to long-term career progression within the firm (Holbrow and Nagayoshi 2016). As a consequence of such practices, among the corporate leadership there is scarcely any diversity. This homogeneity that lacks both women and foreign managers sends a strong signal to foreign workers that corporate Japan is not a place to build a career. While there is the option to work for non-Japanese firms in Japan, as some informants do, it is not an option that is available or appeals to all. Therefore, many choose to exit the Japanese labor market.

Yu Lin, a Chinese woman, did not search for a job upon graduating from a Japanese university because of the gendered career practices she witnessed while interning at a Japanese city office. Yu Lin recalled that she was given exact instructions by the women office workers, from how to serve tea to what tone to use when writing an email. Most of them worked on administrative tasks. "Just chores," Yu Lin remarked. Over time, these women married and left. The situation repeated itself. "It might have improved in recent years, but gender discrimination is pretty serious in Japan. Girls would not get the chance to work independently or be given a mission." Yu Lin evaluated the situation and felt it would be hard for her as a woman—especially as a foreign woman—to pursue a meaningful career in Japan. So she left. When I interviewed her in 2007, she was working as a human resource manager at a Japanese firm's Shanghai branch. She felt she had made the right decision to return to China especially because some of her friends who remained in Japan had given up their career paths. She attributed this to an environment that "did not encourage them to pursue" their aspirations.

The Missing Emotional Anchor

Mobility, even if ostensibly career related or economically induced, always involves reasons outside of the realm of employment. George left partly because he had not been able to establish a stable romantic relationship in Japan at the age of forty-one. The desire for intimate attachment factored significantly in his decision to leave Japan. As discussed in the previous chapter, emotional ties—either romantic, familial, or communal—bond people to the place. Their absence makes the idea of leaving easier to conceive. George attributed his inability to establish an intimate relationship to his meager income and small apartment, illustrating the intersection of career and personal life.

The role of emotional ties in one's settlement decision shows more saliently in George's narrative of his later decision to leave the United States again. After leaving Japan, George worked for a big high-tech company in California for the next five years, earning several times the income he had earned at Japanese firms. By the time we met for coffee in Tokyo, however, George had quit his job in the United States even though it was very lucrative. He was proud of his experience working for that high-tech company, but his personal life had not progressed as he had hoped and he remained single. Thus, his home country did not make him feel emotionally anchored. So, he decided to hit the road again.

George presented a rare case of a Western man for whom the decision to leave had to do with the failure to secure a romantic relationship in Japan. The opposite is often true. Global migration creates racialized sexual fields in many global cities in Asia. In Asian cities, white males often enjoy a sexual advantage while white women are marginalized (Farrer and Dale 2013). Statistically, as shown in chapter 2, the majority of North American and European migrants in Japan are male, and a substantial number of them stayed because they married Japanese nationals. In comparison, international marriages between Japanese women and men from other Asian developing countries are a fraction of those between Japanese men and Asian women.

Both in Japan and in China, I have encountered younger Chinese men who either wanted to return or had already returned to China because they needed a life partner and sometimes also a supportive social environment. Jing, a young man from Inner Mongolia, explained that he decided to go back to China primarily out of a desire to start a family (*chenggejia*). Jing went to Japan in 1998. After completing his studies, he went on to work in small towns as an engineer for a company that was a famous manufacturer of car parts. He had to work long hours. Due to heavy traffic, the commute consumed hours of his time. He usually left at 7 a.m. and returned at 11 p.m. He earned a decent income, but he did not have a girlfriend nor any time to look for one. In addition, he argued with his neighbor over a parking space. This stressful lifestyle, compounded with the lack of an intimate relationship and a "home," resulted in an intense feeling of loneliness. Before he went to Japan, he had always been surrounded by friends. It was only after he had arrived in Japan that he came to understand how solitude (*gudu*) and loneliness (*jimo*) felt. "It was such an unbearable feeling. . . . Because a person, after all, from the day he is born, needs to communicate with people on a daily basis. Everyday, if there is something unpleasant you can talk to your friends, your loved ones. [But in Japan] I sometimes did not dare to talk. Because if you talked [about unpleasant experiences] with parents, they couldn't help you but they would worry. . . . I thought I had better go back to China." Jing decided to look for opportunities to return to China. He was soon recruited by a

Japanese company that was starting a manufacturing branch in Shanghai. At the time of our conversation in China, he was in an in-between situation. He was considered an employee dispatched by the company in Japan and maintained an engineer visa in Japan, but he was offered a local salary. He was no longer paying into the Japanese social security. Jing was not entirely satisfied with his job in China, but he did not regret his decision to go back. Soon after he returned to China, his friend's wife introduced him to a friend of hers. He had been married for a year when we met. In terms of money, he shrugged, "As long as it is enough to live off of."

Marriages and relationships are often the ties that pull people away, too. While a number of immigrants marry Japanese nationals and stay in Japan, many others enter relationships with other immigrants. Their future mobility, then, becomes dependent on the relationship and family concerns. If one party decides to leave, the other usually follows. One Chinese man had a good professional job at a major Japanese company, but because his wife wanted to stay in academia after she finished a doctoral program, they decided to go back together. We also met an East European woman who married an Australian, and a Korean woman who fell in love with a Chinese Canadian. They, respectively, left for Australia and Canada when their husbands decided to return.

In summary, to leave Japan is a decision driven by compounded motives. Migration is an economic project with affective consequences. Material well-being is a necessary condition, but emotions also drive people's mobility decisions. Corporate Japan is not yet socially and institutionally prepared to receive immigrants. Its rigid career structure and organizational practices frustrate immigrants. Moreover, intimacy is central to one's sense of well-being. Migration is a lonely experiment. The pursuit of an intimate relationship and the need for an emotional anchor are therefore powerful drives in one's mobility decision.

Home Calling

Some immigrants leave Japan because of the call from home, literally and figuratively. In our sample, the pull back to the home country has the strongest impact on younger Chinese migrants. Most of the Chinese migrants born after 1980, called the post-80 generation (*80 hou*) in China, were an only child. These young people receive their parents' and grandparents' total devotion. In 2011 and 2012, I conducted a study for which I interviewed Chinese undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in a second-tier private university in Japan.[7] There I noticed a significant difference between the younger generation of Chinese students and earlier cohorts of student migrants who arrived in Japan in the 1980s

and 1990s and realized that rapid social changes had occurred in China. The early cohorts of students mostly relied on borrowed money or savings to finance their migration (Liu-Farrer 2011a). Having arrived in Japan with only several thousand yen, they immediately started working part-time jobs. Most of the post-80 generation, on the other hand, arrived with their parents paying for the first year of tuition and several months of living expenses. Though students still took on part-time jobs, they did so largely to supplement their living expenses. Unlike the students who arrived earlier, very few students we interviewed remitted money to their parents. In fact, the opposite was true. Family members in China often continued paying at least a portion of the tuition.

The parents willing to provide financial support were not necessarily wealthy. The majority of the parents were school teachers, medical doctors, and state employees. Some might have above-average salaries in China, but not on the level of Japanese incomes. Out of devotion, parents were willing to pay for their children's expenses. Yet, such devotion also functions as an economic and emotional investment. Students must take into consideration the expectation of return in both a financial and a literal sense when making decisions regarding their own futures. Contrary to the common characterization of only children being spoiled "little emperors," increasingly the young Chinese are employing a discourse of filial piety. The parents often hoped their children would return home. Many Chinese students obeyed their parents' wish and returned to China to look for jobs even though they themselves sometimes hoped to stay.

A woman student, Dan Zhou, changed her academic major after entering a Japanese university because of family pressure. She originally chose to study law and aspired to attain a law degree and work for a law firm afterward. Dan Zhou's Japanese professor offered encouragement, telling her that few other foreign students, besides her, were able to keep up with the curriculum. But her parents opposed the plan of her staying in Japan upon graduation. They also worried that a law degree from Japan would make it difficult for her to find a job in China. "They said that my making such a career decision . . . was like . . . marrying out a daughter at the age of 19 when I came abroad and never to return. My mother was crying at home . . . so I agreed." Not liking economics or management, majors of study her father advised her to pursue, she chose Japanese literature.

The family may also possess social connections (or power) in the home country that can help students find employment. Even though they might have considered looking for opportunities in Japan, after evaluating their (in)ability to compete in the Japanese market, the more privileged students did not hesitate to return to China. Wang Sheng, a second-year MA student from Xi'an, liked the lifestyle in Japan and had originally planned to stay after graduation. But he felt

that a degree from the second-tier university where he was studying would not allow him to compete with first-tier university graduates and gain employment in a prestigious firm in Japan. He decided to return to China, where he could immediately enter the company his father was working at. "I could get hired with my eyes closed. . . . And the company will definitely grow in 10 years, and then they will let me be a branch or department head."

The call from home can also be the lure of opportunities in the home country. Most immigrants in Japan come from less developed countries in Asia. However, several of these countries have been experiencing rapid development, tempting those who had left to pursue a better life abroad to now return. On the one hand, economic development in the home country creates a wide range of opportunities. On the other hand, witnessing their old peers riding the rising economic tide and getting more and more prosperous makes many immigrants ponder their mobility choices. Many Chinese migrants returned in the late 1990s and early 2000s because of the temptation of China's economic progress.

Among the early migrants from China, the impulse to leave China had to do with the country's poverty and the belief that one's situation could be improved through emigration. Emigration was so positively valuated that the desire to leave China resulted in a "going abroad fever." Those who could leave tended to have more social and cultural resources. The crossing of borders, however, strips people of their former social status. The resumption of a student life in one's late twenties and thirties and labor-intensive part-time jobs challenge migrants' sense of self-worth. Moreover, the entry into corporate Japan starts from the bottom. These migrants, at the time of their graduating from degree programs, were much older than their Japanese counterparts but had to be treated as entry-level recruits. Their previous work experience was discounted, if not completely ignored. Not surprisingly, therefore, within a short period of time many abandoned these career tracks. Some consciously chose contract employment or small and medium-size firms in order to be able to either have more cash income or assume more significant roles, especially in transnational companies that conduct business in China. Witnessing China's rising, many Chinese immigrants were anxious about missing out on opportunities back home. Taking advantage of their work experiences in Japanese firms, especially their roles in transnational businesses, Chinese immigrants looked for positions as representatives or managers of Japanese firms' China branches. While a small number of them were able to maintain a Japanese salary, most returned as pseudoexpats; they received a comparatively high local salary but were not given expatriate packages (Liu-Farrer 2011a).

Since they had experience working in transnational businesses as well as a comprehension of Japan's needs, some attempted entrepreneurial endeavors.

Among the twenty-five returned people I interviewed in China in 2007, six people—five men and one woman—started their own businesses. Xiao Yan, the woman entrepreneur, was initially sent over by her Japanese employer to start a project, which she had proposed, in China. When the project failed to develop, the company abandoned the plan and called her back. She, in turn, left the company and stayed on in China with the intent of opening her own business because she believed in the potential of that particular project.

In the 2010s, it is the Vietnamese migrants who are tempted by their own country's economic development. Enterprising Vietnamese migrants have been entering the study-abroad industry. The owner of a major Japanese language school in Hanoi that I visited in the winter of 2018 was a former student migrant to Japan. Vietnamese returnees are also important players in facilitating transnational labor mobility. Since Japan faces a severe shortage of care workers, former migrants partnered with Japanese providers and initiated programs to send Vietnamese youth to Japan to be trained to work in care facilities.

In addition to relationships and economic opportunities, another factor pulling people back to the home country is a form of emotional attachment to the place of origin. Alistair Thomson describes this as resembling "homesickness" and as a longing "for people and places" and "ways of life" in the home country as well as "not feeling at home" in the destination country (2005, 118). It is a dynamic that is equally about both the "remembered and imagined home" and life in the "here and now" (224). Many immigrants feel marginalized; they are foreigners in a strange land. Some of them, from the start, considered migration a life trajectory and their stay in Japan a sojourn. They usually look forward to the day their mission—children successfully entering college, the purchase of land in the home country, the retirement of Japanese spouses—will be accomplished. That is partly the reason most immigrants reject the idea of naturalizing. Instead, they pay into the pension system and buy houses in their home country. Whether they will actually return is often unclear. The idea of returning can offer comfort and a narrative for people to rationalize their migration.

There are also those who have culturally adapted and attained gainful employment but, nevertheless, long to return owing to a nagging sense of constraint and nonbelonging, as in the case of Zhang Tian. After spending fifteen years in Japan, Zhang Tian went back to China in 2005 when his son turned two. He worked in the transnational business between Japan and China in a prestigious trading firm and was a valued employee in the company. He emphasized that he adapted very well to Japanese society and never experienced discrimination inside or outside the workplace. Yet, he did not feel entirely at home. When work was not going well, "home" would present itself as a luring retreat (*tuilu*) from his stressful immigrant life. Moreover, after he married and had a child, he

started to worry about his son's education. Zhang Tian thought an elite private education in Japan cost too much. At the same time, he did not want his son to be educated in a public school. He and his wife believed that teachers in public school did not take charge and that the parents of children in public school were irresponsible. They considered China a better option for their son's education. They bought an apartment in Shanghai and started looking for an opportunity to be sent back to China. After much negotiation, he returned to China as a pseudoexpat to manage his company's Shanghai office for reduced pay.

The Globally Mobile

In some countries, the culture of migration is such that people with skills are expected to emigrate for greener pastures. In a globalized labor market, because certain skill sets are valued, there are also abundant opportunities for people to emigrate. Calvin, the thirty-seven-year-old Filipino engineer that appeared in chapter 1, had been laid off by a Japanese electronics company several months before our interview and was living off unemployment. Calvin had earned a degree in electronic engineering in the Philippines and worked for a company that manufactured computer parts. He had arrived in Tokyo eight years ago as the dependent of his wife, Marian. Marian worked in an embassy as a clerk. She initially came to Japan as a tourist to visit her aunt, who was a domestic worker for an embassy employee. During her stay, through the Filipino church community she learned of an opening at an embassy and landed the job. Calvin arrived in Japan the next year. He first worked as a bartender in Ginza for eleven months, and then he found a part-time job on an assembly line packing and cleaning electronic parts. Several months later he realized that one of the products he was assembling had come from his former company in the Philippines. With the director, he discussed his qualifications and applied for a quality engineer position. As he explained, "This is my expertise. I know how to process. I know what's the problem." He was offered the job. Unfortunately, the company ran into major financial troubles and had to downsize. Calvin thought he would be able to keep his job because the factory in the Philippines was still running, but he was unexpectedly let go. For the next several months he went to Hello Work—the official Japanese Employment Agency—regularly, to job hunt. It proved difficult. For his previous position he did not need to use Japanese often because he was communicating with overseas manufacturers. But his lack of Japanese language proficiency presented a major obstacle in finding the next job.

Before coming to Japan, Calvin and his wife had tried to apply for the skilled worker visa to enter Canada. They abandoned that plan when they found the

opportunity to relocate to Japan. After being laid off and experiencing difficulty finding a new position, he again entertained this idea. This time he prepared the necessary documents and submitted the application. He was hoping to receive the results within a year.

Calvin had had other experience abroad before coming to Japan. He had worked in Thailand for eleven months. He found Bangkok much more developed than Manila and explained that he would not mind working there again. But if he succeeded in his immigration application to Canada, he would choose Canada. There he would apply for citizenship and sponsor his brother's visa. His wife Marian had helped several of her siblings and cousins in the Philippines migrate to Japan, where most of them worked as domestic helpers for embassy workers. If the Canadian dream came true, he had an agreement with his wife that, because of the limited resources they would have, each would help one sibling enter the country.

Calvin's family migration strategy is representative of the culture of migration in the Philippines (Asis 2006). People go to countries that offer a "good living." Once the good living turns out to be less satisfying, migrants move again. Calvin's migratory plan also shows that in a globalized economy, certain skill sets allow individuals to be employable globally. In our study, we find that some jobs are less and less place bound. In Singapore in the winter of 2015, I met an Australian business consultant, Justin, who had just relocated after living in Japan for over ten years. He was a communications coach and worked independently. He said during the decade he worked in Japan, the market for English coaching had not sufficiently developed. In Singapore, however, the demand for his services had increased. He pointed out that much of his business had moved online. He offered more classes on the internet than in a physical location. Some of his clients were in the Gulf area. He explained: "Singapore is a good place for me to take care of the entire Eastern Hemisphere."

Similarly, Jason Kim, a Korean investment banker who graduated from a top Japanese university, also perceived his own career as geographically mobile. To our question, "In the future, like when you are fifty or sixty, where do you see yourself living?" He answered, "I am not particular [*kodawatte iru*] about countries. Japan, Korea, America, Australia are all okay. It will depend on in which place I can do my job the best. That would be the basis for my decision."

The River of Many Returns

Leaving Japan does not necessarily mean a permanent resettling back in the home country or relocating elsewhere. One of the reasons immigrants desire

permanent residency status is because it allows them the opportunity to move in either direction. In reality, Japan is not an easy place to leave. Many immigrants, after living in Japan for some time, become accustomed to the social environment and cultural practices and often compare the environment with other places, which leads to a longing to return to Japan. For others, the home they long for might have become estranged, and the greener pastures they fantasize do not always materialize. Japan, then, once again attracts them. Permanent residency therefore functions as a hedge against both the risk and regret of leaving Japan.

When I saw Zhang Tian in 2007 in Shanghai, he was regretting his decision to return. Reflecting on his earlier complaint of "living under another person's roof" and the "rash decision to return," he said: "You see, whichever house you are in, you are under the roof. Roofs are all the same. It is in your own head that this is another person's roof. It is your overthinking, including getting Japanese nationality. Is it really that difficult? It is just a passport. You treat it too seriously. . . . I couldn't stand it anymore [in Japan]. Every time, I would think, 'if this doesn't work out I will go back to China. I don't have to be here suffering in Japan.' Always this kind of mentality. It gets stronger and stronger. . . . You thought of returning as inevitable, something you might as well do when you were still young." His return to China did not turn out to be what he had imagined. Zhang Tian was a northerner. Shanghai was not really his home either. He ran into all sorts of unpleasant experiences. The kinds of services he took for granted in Japan were nowhere to be found in China. His work was no less stressful. The living environment was worse than he experienced when visiting on business. On those occasions he stayed in five-star hotels and got around by taxi. As he put it, "It is a completely different experience of home when you have to fight yourself onto the jam-packed train to work every day." Luckily, his entire family had permanent residency. He was still paying his pension and social security in Japan. According to him, the door was still "half open" and he could potentially return to Japan.

Many Nikkei Brazilians, after leaving Japan, could not find desirable employment in Brazil and continued this circular migration pattern, shuttling between Japan and Brazil hoping to find more suitable opportunities (Sasaki 2013; LeBaron von Baeyer 2015). Roberto left Japan after several years of working on an assembly line. Using the money he saved, he managed to finish college in Brazil and returned as a graduate student. He returned with his wife, who accepted the repatriation money from the Japanese government in 2009 to return to Brazil. Legally she would not have been able to come back to work in Japan within five years after receiving the repatriation package. She came back because she was a spouse to Roberto.

George, the American, also returned to Japan, and that was why I was able to meet with him in 2015. While still looking for his life partner, he thought either Tokyo or Osaka would be the best place to start his business. He decided on Tokyo because he had more like-minded friends in the city than anywhere else. Moreover, Tokyo shaped his lifestyle expectations. While working at the high-tech company in the United States, he had already spent at least several months every year in Japan, working out of the multinational firm's Tokyo office. He missed the twenty-four-hour convenience stores on every street corner, the Starbucks that were open till 4 a.m., efficient public transportation, and the feeling of safety.

Some former trainees and technical interns have also returned. Although there have been reports of egregious labor and human rights violations in Japan's notorious technical training and technical intern system, some have had reasonable experiences and become fond of Japan. A few of them have managed to come back as students or by marrying the partners they fell in love with during their "internship." Sometimes, one's history of being a technical intern brands a person as less desirable as a long-term immigrant. One former Vietnamese trainee obtained only a student visa after several tries. Nonetheless, he ultimately succeeded in coming back to Japan.

If the former migrants themselves do not come back, their children do. Many younger Chinese students in Japan are second-generation Japan migrants. In the interviews with study-abroad agencies in Vietnam, too, we learned that it was often the parents who brought their children in to inquire about educational opportunities in Japan. Some of these parents had studied and worked in Japan themselves. As the administrator from one agency explained, Vietnamese parents wanted their children to go to Japan because they believed their children could receive a good education, which ultimately could grant them good job prospects given the growing presence of Japanese businesses in Vietnam. Moreover, from their own migration experiences, they believed that their children could learn good discipline and manners in Japan.

Mobility as an Institutional, Instrumental, and Intimate Outcome

The Japanese government, like governments all over the world, tries to control the cross-border flows of people with the aim of keeping those desirable human resources in the country and discouraging low-wage laborers from staying. That is the reason that immigration policies in various countries often contain the words "immigration control." Ironically, the effort to control is very costly and

often ineffective. This chapter, together with the previous one, stresses the contingency and fickleness of migratory trajectories. While migration regimes might be somewhat effective, mobility outcomes are by no means determined by selective policies or legal measures. Rather, institutional conditions, instrumental incentives, and emotional states are closely intertwined and often mutually influential in shaping individual mobility directions. Moreover, the significance of these different components changes along with one's life course and experiences. Consequently, neither staying nor leaving indicates a final act. Some respondents—for example, George (who appears in both chapters)—stayed for longer than they initially planned, left when they felt emotionally compelled to, and then returned, because of a range of instrumental considerations, lifestyle expectations, and affective impulses. The reasons for leaving and staying are complicated. Migration might start as an economic project, but it always has immediate affective consequences. Similarly, in order to be sustained, an emotional journey will need a material foundation. The changing significance of these different needs is what drives mobility or settlement decisions.

6

HOME AND BELONGING IN AN ETHNO-NATIONALIST SOCIETY

In an age of global mobility, the ability to move has become an aspiration, a necessity, a signal of self-worth, or, for many, simply a normative practice. With the increase in transnational movement, the boundaries between origin and destination countries are becoming ever more blurred. In a nontraditional immigrant country such as Japan, where a myth of ethnic homogeneity and cultural uniqueness constitutes the national identity (Burgess 2010) and immigration as both a concept and a policy solution to a demographic crisis is shunned (Roberts 2012), settlement and mobility become even more fluid and uncertain. As a result, conceptualizations of home and belonging are becoming increasingly versatile. For immigrants in Japan, what does a narrative of longing for home or belonging express? What does its opposite—the lack of a clearly defined home and belonging—suggest? Moreover, in the absence of a commitment to settling permanently, how do immigrants define belonging and home? And in what ways do they construct relationships with Japanese society?

This chapter engages these questions by analyzing immigrants' narratives. It explores how cultural backgrounds, migration experiences (including multiple mobilities, socioeconomic circumstances, and intimate and social relationships), the discourses of nationhood, and conceptualizations of personhood affect immigrants' perceptions of home, belonging, and relationships with Japan as well as their mobility intentions. I focus on over 150 first-generation immigrants who had been in Japan for an extended period of time. What this chapter tries to understand is how immigrants who have decided to stay negotiate their social positions and emotional geography in a country that lacks

a cultural repertoire and social instruments to support a sense of national belonging.

Home and Belonging in Migration

Both home and belonging are versatile concepts. In different contexts, they mean different things to different people. Let us first look at the notion of home. Blunt and Dowling (2006) extract the meanings of home by reviewing three articles authored by Després (1991), Somerville (1992), and Mallett (2004) and show that in people's discourses, home can refer to a range of things from the material structure of the house to the function it symbolizes, such as "shelter," "family and friends," "abode," "privacy," and "refuge"; to the emotional images it invokes, such as "permanence and continuity," "security and control," "paradise/haven," "roots," and "heart"; to the symbolic representations it expresses, such as "reflection or symbol of self" and "status" (10).

Home is also a deeply politicized concept. In both the imperialist efforts and the anti-imperialist nation-building process, the affective associations of home have been used to instigate patriotic sentiments. The term "homeland" pushes one to imagine home to spatially include the entire territory within the borders of the nation-state (Blunt and Dowling 2006). *Guo jia* in Chinese, *kokka* in Japanese, and *gugga* in Korean all use the combination of the characters "nation" (*guo*, *koku*, *gu*) and "home" (*jia*, *ka*, *ga*) to refer to country. Thus, the construction of the nation-state as a home invites one to create emotional links to it. As a consequence of such political manipulations, homeland or one's "nation-home" becomes an important identifier of who one is and what place one ought to consider home. Experiences of migration and transnationalism further complicate the notion of home. "For many transnational migrants, material and imaginative geographies of home are both multiple and ambiguous, revealing attachments to more than one place and the ways in which home is shaped by memories as well as everyday life in the present" (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 202).

Belonging, too, is a widely used but loosely defined concept. According to psychologists, belonging is "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment. A system can be a relationship or organization, and an environment can be natural or cultural" (Hagerty et al. 1992, 173). Belonging has two important dimensions: (1) valued involvement—the experience of feeling valued, needed, and accepted; (2) fit—the person's perception that his or her characteristics articulate with or complement the system or environment (Kestenberg and Kestenberg 1988; Hagerty et al. 1992).

In human geography, when investigating migrants' emotional geography, the terms "home" and "belonging" are often used interchangeably to indicate migrants' emotional attachment to either the source or the destination country (or to both countries) (Walsh 2005). This seems natural to both researchers and immigrants because home is usually the place that houses one's most intimate relationships and provides shelter and emotional support. It is taken for granted that home provides the basic sense of belonging. With the concept of home enlarging with the nationalist project, however, belonging is increasingly linked to "community" and "nation" and considered "quintessentially about collective identity" (Shaheed 2007, 24).

In social science research on migration, belonging is often linked with citizenship. In these studies, belonging usually refers to national belonging, which is often considered a graduated and multidimensional engagement with the destination society. For example, Brettell (2006) reports that many naturalized immigrants in the United States express a sense of "political belonging." They perceive themselves as an integral part of American society and share a "sense of responsibility as well as of rights" to the country (96). However, this sense of "rights and responsibilities" does not necessarily translate into immigrants' emotional attachment to the destination society, and yet to manifest as a form of "cultural belonging." Different forms of belonging also indicate varying power relationships that different racial groups have with the destination country. In his analysis of multiculturalism discourses in Australia, Hage (2000) differentiates two formulations of national belonging. One is "I belong to the nation" and the other is "This is my nation" (i.e., "The nation belongs to me") (45). He argues that the former implies a sense of passive belonging, meaning "that he or she expects to have the right to benefit from the nation's resources, to 'fit into it' or 'feel at home' within it" (45). The other mode of national belonging, what Hage calls governmental belonging, is "the belief that one has a right over the nation, involves the belief in one's possession of the right to contribute (even if only by having a *legitimate* opinion with regard to the internal and external politics of the nation) to its management such that it remains 'one's home'" (46).

This chapter draws on interview data with specific references to "home" and "belonging." The concepts of home and belonging are not predefined. Rather, we left them open to the respondents' interpretation. What I aim to do in this chapter is use immigrants' narratives of home and belonging to understand their "emotional geography"—to appropriate the phrase of human geography. In other words, I examine different types of relationships with the destination and the source societies. These narratives convey layered and multidimensional belonging and immigrants' varied emotions toward both places of origin and des-

tination. They underscore the centrality of intimacy, social inclusion, and cultural narratives in shaping people's sense of belonging and home.

Narratives of Home and Belonging among Immigrants in Japan

Does Japan give you a feeling of home?
Where do you get a sense of belonging?

In different languages my research assistants and I asked over 150 immigrants variations of these questions for the research projects we conducted between 2010 and 2014. With the exception of several individuals, belonging was apparently not something respondents dwelled on much. When probed, most of them would pause for a moment, as if taking the time to look inward and examine their own feelings. Not surprisingly, individuals' responses varied and were occasionally inconsistent. "Home" and "belonging" not only conjure different images in different contexts but are also linked to different cultural repertoires in different linguistic groups for people from different countries. Moreover, home and belonging, because of their different connotations, are often separate in immigrants' narratives of their relationships with the host society.

"I go home to Japan"

The people we interviewed generally doubted the idea that Japan was becoming an immigrant country. Regardless, many expressed a sense of being at home in Japan. In such narratives, home is associated with everyday life in the present and invokes feelings of security and comfort. Sven, a thirty-one-year-old Swedish man, graduated from a Japanese university and had worked in Japan for several years. When asked which place he felt to be his home, he explained: "I usually say 'I go to Sweden' and 'I go home to Japan.' This is where I have my life. This is where I have my networks. This is where I have my job. Uh . . . I haven't lived in Sweden since high school, so basically my entire time as a . . . you know, grown-up, has been in Japan. To me, Tokyo is my home. Like Japan is my home. Mainly because that's where I have my life." However, this sense of "feeling at home" in Japan is not necessarily translated to a sense of belonging to Japan. For him, belonging also entails acceptance by the party one claims to belong to—people should regard you as one of them. While feeling comfortable in Japan, Sven felt that he could claim a sense of belonging only to the small foreigner circle instead of Japanese society as a whole. This is because it would be "more

also of a question of how comfortable Japanese people are with me, so in that sense I feel that Japanese people usually regard me . . . primarily as a foreigner and secondary as a person, so to speak." In other words, although he feels at home in Japan, Japanese people still treat him as an outsider. This perception prevented Sven from feeling like a member of Japanese society.

Nonetheless, individual criteria for belongingness vary. Some immigrants extend this sense of at-homeness to a sense of belonging. Tang Bin, a Chinese man who arrived in Japan initially as a language student in 1991 and later attained permanent residency, stated: "I do have a sense of belonging here. It is not about [life being] good or bad. It is that I don't feel like a foreigner living in Japan anymore. I do what Japanese people do and won't do what Japanese do not do." Tang Bin, and many other immigrants we talked to, had become so accustomed to the Japanese way of life that they often felt reverse cultural shock or physical discomfort when visiting the country of origin. The younger that one immigrates and the longer that one stays in Japan, the more likely one is to feel distanced from the home country.

Japan, represented in immigrants' narratives of belonging, is a general concept of social environment and cultural practices as well as the specific communities these practices are embedded in. As discussed, in terms of the former, belonging is closely related to the process of acculturation and includes individual tales of growth and the establishment of one's life. Regarding the latter, the sense of belonging is closely tied to a feeling of "membership."

Quite a few interviewees attributed their sense of belonging to Japanese society to their feelings of fitting in with the local community. Yu Jing, a forty-year-old Chinese woman, arrived in Japan from Shanghai as a student at the age of twenty-one, worked, and then married a Japanese man. When asked if she felt a sense of belonging in Japan, she immediately answered yes and then added "in the neighborhood I live." This sense of belonging derived from her perception that her neighbors no longer thought of her as a foreigner. "Sometimes my neighbors forget that I am not a Japanese person when we chat. I feel that I am already part of Japanese society, and completely fit into it." One Chinese woman embraced her bond to the community to the extent that she felt guilty for leaving her friends, colleagues, and neighbors in Sendai after the Great East Japan Earthquake. She relayed: "I felt I was running away from the battleground when everybody was holding out here."

Families and workplaces anchored in Japan also provide people the sense of belonging to the country. Zheng Yu, a Chinese immigrant, while reflecting on the location of his belonging, said, "Primarily my own family. [That is] the most fundamental living cell. It is a cell that supports my entire life. It encompasses all the conditions for me to be here. This is the largest condition—that my family is

here. The second is my workplace." For Lisa, a Filipina who married a Japanese businessman, the idea of home "is . . . it has to be where your family is." And her family was in Japan. Although she bought land and property in the Philippines, she no longer considered it her home. She explained: "A house is definitely different from a home."

Many immigrants also hinge their idea of belonging on whether they play a role in or contribute to society. Several respondents, half-jokingly, claimed a right to belong to Japan because they were taxpayers. Moreover, they enjoyed the social welfare provided by the Japanese government. These social services, such as "covering the costs when you get sick," granted a feeling of being included. As one Chinese man explained, he felt a sense of belonging to Japanese society because he worked in Japan, paid taxes, and also enjoyed the same benefits as Japanese citizens, such as unemployment insurance. He was not excluded from these services even though he was a foreigner.

Homeland Belonging

While a substantial number of people affirmed that they increasingly felt a stronger sense of belonging to Japan, the majority of the participants spoke more assertively about belonging to their countries of origin. For example, among fifty first-generation Chinese immigrants who made specific comments on their sense of belonging, twenty-seven affirmed a sense of belonging to China, thirteen expressed a belonging to Japan, and ten reported that they did not feel they belonged to either country.[1] Moreover, among twenty-three Chinese who ascertain a geographical location of home, twelve stated that their home was in China, nine called Japan home, and two said their home was in both.[2] Except for Lisa and Calvin, all the Filipino immigrants we spoke with considered home to be in the Philippines.

Among those who claimed that they felt they belonged to the homeland were the "sojourner" type, who never intended to stay in Japan. For them, migration is a project, and returning to their country of origin is what they anticipate doing once they complete the job. Often, the longing for home implies a nagging sense of dissatisfaction with their life in Japan. This emotional attachment to the place of origin is as much about the "remembered and imagined home" as it is about their life in the "here and now" (Thomson 2005, 118).

Li De's narrative of belonging embodies this type. He was employed as a cook in a state-owned hotel restaurant in China for many years before being recruited to work in Japan at the age of thirty. By the time of the interview he had already obtained permanent residency. He had lived in Japan for sixteen years and had owned a restaurant for eleven years. Coming to Japan, he explained, was purely

an economic choice. Initially, he did not like Japan and held anti-Japan sentiments. This was, he said, because of "the communist education" he had received. During his stay in Japan, he developed a more positive attitude toward Japan and Japanese people. He found the society harmonious and the people friendly. He said Japan had a well-functioning, nearly perfected society. Yet, he never felt that he himself was a part of it and thought he "had nothing in common with Japanese society." Struggling with the economic recession, post-earthquake anxiety, and social isolation, he was not entirely happy with his life.

Li De could not speak Japanese fluently. When he first arrived, he worked in the kitchen with mostly Chinese cooks. He did not need to use Japanese for several years and knew little about the world outside the kitchen. After he became independent, he managed simple restaurant Japanese but was not able to carry on meaningful conversations. He did not try to learn Japanese, because he had always thought that he would go back to China in a couple of years. He had scarcely any friends in Japan. Even though some of his regular Japanese customers wanted to talk to him, his language proficiency was not adequate to converse casually with them. Neither did he have many Chinese friends. He felt he had little in common with other Chinese in Japan. The relationships tended to be shallow. He would quickly run out of topics to talk about with people from different parts of China.

Li did not think he belonged at all to Japanese society. He said, "This is not my home. . . . I will feel 'this is my home' when I get off the plane in China." He rationalized: "China, like any country, has good and bad times. . . . It is that land that you are attached to [*liulian*]. First of all, it is *luoye guigen* [falling leaves returning to the roots], and secondly [I am] familiar with that land, having feelings [for it]. The older I become, the more sentimental I feel. No matter how poor it becomes, it is my own home." Li's son came to Japan when he was five and was in high school at the time we spoke. According to Li De, his son had completely become "a Japanese person." The son wanted to stay on in Japan. Li decided he would continue his business in Japan until his son graduated from college and became financially independent. He was looking forward to the day when he and his wife could go back to China, his real home.

For many of the Filipinos we interviewed, home is in the Philippines. The Philippine culture of migration (Asis 2006) and hypermobility made the notion of having a home to go back to a comforting thought. Beatrice was a widowed woman in her early sixties who worked for decades as a domestic helper in the Middle East, Hong Kong, Singapore, and finally—after her husband died—Japan. She endured many tragedies but still managed to finance the education of all her children as well as that of the children of her kin with her hard-earned money. She loved Japan and found it to be the most pleasant place she had ever

worked in. Her children were in different countries. One of them, upon graduating from a university in the Philippines, joined her in Japan. The daughter first worked as a domestic helper and then entered a language school with hopes of finding a professional job. Several of her other children, who were in Singapore, Canada, and Manila, had asked her to spend her retirement living with them. She also bought a plot of land and built a house in Manila. Yet, she told her children that she wanted to return to the village she came from: "where my husband 'left' me. That house!" She considered that house as her home because "that's where my kids grew up, and that's also where we parted ways." She wanted to repair the house. As she explained: "That place is really ours. It belongs to us. So that's our home. That's where we'll go home. So, if we can fix it, we can go back there."

Liminal, Hybridized, and Layered Belonging

Among the immigrants who arrived in Japan after the 1980s, the Nikkei Brazilians have attracted the most research attention focused on the issue of belonging (Tsuda 1998, 2003; Roth 2002; LeBaron von Baeyer 2015). These immigrants have provoked interest because their identities cut across ethnic and national boundaries. Being ethnically Japanese, it was assumed they shared a similar cultural heritage, which was the reason they were recruited to supplement the dwindling Japanese menial labor force in the first place. The political package of their migration is ethnic return (Yamanaka 1997; Linger 2001; Roth 2002; Tsuda 2003). However, their status as marginalized migrant workers employed in the periphery of the Japanese labor market, compounded with experiences of ethnic rejection and social exclusion, has reshaped their relationship with Japan—their supposed ethnic homeland (Tsuda 2003). Tsuda (2003) investigated these ethnic Japanese Brazilian migrants in the 1990s and emphasized the liminality of their belonging—a state of being neither Japanese nor Brazilian. On the other hand, LeBaron von Baeyer (2015) conducted anthropological research among ethnic Japanese Brazilians over a decade later, in the early 2010s, and observed that many of these immigrants were transnationally mobile, "engaged in various and varying kinds of cultural bricolage, stitching together patches of difference, as well as aspects of their past and present selves into a single, creolized aggregate of experience" (42). She uses the term "hybridizing belonging" to capture her research subjects' ongoing and concrete exercise of identity shaping.

Many of my subjects' economic practices and family arrangements can be characterized as transnational. Their social and cultural practices were hybridized. However, I have forced interviewees to verbalize their perception of their own positions in Japanese society, their ideas of home, and their relationship

with both home and host countries. Out of habit, immigrants used "home" and "return" flexibly to refer to the place they lived at the time of the interview, their own nuclear family, their parents' home, their hometown, or their country of origin. Despite the flexible employment of these words, the contextualization and meaning of the terms could be deciphered by the interviewers. A few of them spoke of being "in-between" or "in the middle" to convey a sense of not being able to claim belonging to the host society while at the same time feeling that they had lost their footing in the country of origin. Though more often the narratives of home and belonging were expressed through a conscious differentiation of various conceptualizations of "home."

Minhee, a thirty-one-year-old Korean woman, arrived in Japan when she was eighteen and had been in Japan, when we met, for thirteen years. Initially she was a student, then she worked and later married a Korean man. Minhee felt very much at home in Japan. She was on maternity leave at the time of our interview, but she went to a Korean church every week to do volunteer work. According to Minhee, her life was very good. When asked where she thought of as home, she said, "It is Japan. My husband works in Japan. My mother works in Japan. My company and my friends are all in Japan. So, it is Japan right now, I think, because the foundation of my life is here and that is the most important [thing]. Moreover, although I go back to Korea often, whenever I am there, I think of coming back to my home in Japan soon. I can't seem to get used to Korea anymore. [They] don't observe social order. And people are generally way too nosy. When I think of those things, I feel that my heart is so much at peace in Japan." But suddenly, she did a 180-degree turn and said her situation would change soon. She might return to Korea, she explained, because her husband was asked by his family to go back. Following that train of thought she continued to tell us that she did not want to apply for permanent residency or naturalization because Japan was a place she "was passing through" (*toorisugiru kuni*) and it would not become her "second hometown." She relayed: "My foundation of life is in Japan, so it is my home right now. But your homeland [*sokoku*] is 'a thing that lasts a lifetime' [*isshōnomono*], and you can't change that. Wherever you have lived you will eventually go back there. The place I want to go back to is Korea."

Deplaced Belonging

Though migration does not necessarily uproot people from their original home, it inevitably entails a process of detaching and reattaching individuals to places, which complicates their emotional geography. In the course of finding places to belong to, a deplaced notion of home and belonging emerges. In other words, the sense of belonging is no longer attached to a particular geographic

location. In some cases, one either does not have or dispenses with the feeling of belonging.

FAMILY-CENTERED BELONGING

While a family anchored in a place can provide immigrants a sense of belonging to that place, there are also those who detach the concept of family from a particular place. The following conversation is from the interview with Calvin.

> INTERVIEWER: So, okay, where do you feel your home is now? Is it here? Is it the Philippines? When you say you're "going home," where are you referring to?
>
> CALVIN: My concept of home is uh . . . when you have a real house. That's your home. Then, as for now, excuse me . . . our home is that, I have my son, my wife, we live in a place, in a house, that's it.
>
> INTERVIEWER: That's your home now, where your wife and son is?
>
> CALVIN: Yes.
>
> INTERVIEWER: But, in terms of country, is there any place you consider your home now?
>
> CALVIN: Not yet . . .
>
> INTERVIEWER: So what makes a place a home for you?
>
> CALVIN: Ah, there's . . . again, there's the . . . as a family [we] stay together, and eat together, and sleep together . . . so that's the home. That's the ideal of the home. There.

Associating home with the nuclear family and intimate relationships was most common among those who described a deplaced sense of belonging. Their idea of belonging has little to do with the physical location of the home; rather, it is more connected to the people they are with. This is evident in Gang Mina's narrative. Mina is a Korean woman who was cohabiting with her partner. When asked where she felt home was, she answered: "Where my fiancé is. For 4 years now [we] have been together. I feel peaceful with him. Where he is, I have the feeling of home. I don't feel the difference between Korea and Japan. I feel the same. I can live in either place. I am used to the lifestyles in Japan now, I will continue living in Japan." Zhang Weiwei, a Chinese woman, emphatically disassociated home from any geographic location. She specified that she did not feel like a member of either Japanese or Chinese society and was "detached" [*tuoli*] from both. When asked where she felt a sense of belonging and if Tokyo could provide that feeling, she shook her head and said, "No, [I belong] just to my own family." This family-centered deplaced belonging was not a reaction to an unsatisfactory life in the host society. Zhang Weiwei was a successful woman who, after moving to Japan with her husband at the age of twenty-five, managed to

enter a first-tier university and find employment in a big multinational financial firm. Both she and her husband earned enough to live comfortably in Japan. She did not feel the need to leave. She explained: "Japan is much easier. In China you need *guanxi* for everything. It is such a hassle." Nonetheless, "having a home in Japan" does not translate into a sense of belonging to the country itself. Moreover, Zhang unambiguously affirmed her identity as a Chinese. Therefore, the sense of belonging was also disassociated with her national identity. In the gap between the place she attached her identity to and the one where she settled in, she tied her belonging to the small system, her nuclear family.

The absence of a romantic relationship and family, on the other hand, results in some immigrants not feeling any sense of belonging. For instance, Wang Ting, a Chinese woman, expressed a lack of a sense of belonging. Born in 1985, she arrived in Japan before she turned twenty, and went to language school as well as college in Japan. She was culturally competent and felt incorporated into (*rongru*) Japanese society because at work she did what others could not do and was valued for her accomplishments. She felt she was an integral part of her company and was happy about her role. But her professional accomplishments did not give her a sense of belonging in Japan. However, she did not feel she belonged in China or to her natal hometown either, especially since she had been residing outside China for several years and felt it was now difficult to "fit into that life." She could no longer accept many things about Chinese society, including the culture and the way people communicated. Moreover, she did not think of her natal home as her home. She said: "My mom and dad are my mom and dad. They have their own life." She lamented, "I am working here, living here . . . but do I have a sense of belonging? No. I open my eyes every morning to work and close my eyes at night to sleep. Then, on the weekends [I] go out with friends, this one today and that one tomorrow. . . . I come back to my apartment every day feeling secure. But [there is] no sense of belonging." In the end, however, Wang Ting admitted, "It might be because I am not married. If I was married with kids, I might have a sense of belonging." We often heard single immigrants relay this type of narrative involving the absence of belonging caused by a lack of an intimate relationship.

COSMOPOLITAN BELONGING

"I am my own paradise" (*wo ziji shi ziji de letu*) uttered Bai Shicheng, a software engineer. Bai opted out of enrolling in the elite Chinese university that had accepted him. Instead, he came to Japan when he was nineteen. A half year later he successfully entered a top national university in Japan. He was among the elite group of immigrants in our sample. After graduating from the university, he worked first in a global consulting firm and then in a multinational bank. He married three times, twice to Chinese women and once to a Japanese woman.

Since high school, Bai had been an avid student of foreign languages. He spoke five languages fluently and could function in ten, including Thai and Arabic. He was considering applying for Japanese citizenship. He was a frequent traveler, but his Chinese passport hindered international travel. Moreover, he felt he was "punished" by the Chinese passport because people, to his frustration, tended to fit him into a particular stereotype of Chinese. Because of negative depictions of Chinese people in some of the countries he visited, he had encountered unpleasant situations. He did not think nationality—either Chinese or Japanese—was a significant aspect of his identity. Instead, he described himself as "an East Asian person of yellow race" (*dongya de yige huangzhong ren*) because his dispositions and features marked him as an East Asian, but he did not want to be either Chinese or Japanese. He said he cherished his Chinese cultural heritage but disliked what he characterized as the money-grabbing and chaotic aspects of China's contemporary society. At the same time, he thought he understood Japanese society and appreciated people's rule-abiding habits and honest dispositions but felt constrained by its conformist and group-oriented expectations. He found that as a foreigner he had more freedom. Unlike some of his Japanese coworkers who refrained from taking paid vacation in order to show their dedication to work, he took his share every year to travel the world. Reflecting on his over twenty years of living in Japan, Bai remarked:

> I feel . . . Japan gave me an opportunity to live independently. Before, I was under the control of my parents. In Japan, I have had the time to observe the world freely, learn history—learning history allows you to look at the world from a temporal perspective, and learning geography makes you look at the world spatially. [So Japan] has given me a freer environment to seek the reality of the world and to study historical and world events, and also provided me a stable job, giving me opportunity to walk about and know the world. So, I don't feel I have been so much influenced by Japan itself, but then, this is how I feel. One can't help but be influenced by the environment. So in other people's eyes, I have been influenced by Japan, including how I interact with people [and] how I conduct myself.

Such a cosmopolitan belonging—involving a strong anchor in the individual, a global outlook, and an openness toward different cultures—was more common among well-educated immigrants who arrived in Japan at a young age. As chapter 8 will elaborate, it is especially apparent among the many well-adapted 1.5-generation immigrants we interviewed.

To summarize, when questioned about their notion of home and sense of belonging, immigrants in Japan presented various responses. Some affirmed

their sense of "at home-ness" in Japan and at least a partial sense of belonging to the community they lived in. For those immigrants, Japan is a place where they have attained a feeling of comfort and familiarity with the cultural and social customs. It is also where they have physical residences and a means to earn a livelihood. It may also be the place where they have established their family and found membership in a particular community. In other words, Japan provides the possibility of an ontological security (Giddens 1991), a practiced daily routine that provides certainty and familiarity.

For many other immigrants, however, a stronger emphasis is placed on their belonging to the homeland. Japan is simply a place that offers opportunities for them to better not only their own lives but also the lives of family members in the home country. For all sorts of reasons, some are not entirely happy with their life in Japan. Thoughts of an eventual return give them hope and comfort. Moreover, among people of a number of different nationalities, notions of home and belonging are influenced by cultural traditions and nationalistic discourses. In these narratives, the location of "home" and the sense of belonging were predetermined, synonymous to roots, and tied to a primordial identity.

Finally, when caught in between countries, acculturation can make the homeland culture seem increasingly unfamiliar. Furthermore, Japan may not be able to provide an adequate sense of belonging. Thus, a number of immigrants detach their sense of belonging from places and anchor themselves within the walls of their small homes. The lack of an emotional base leaves some single people feeling unhinged and yearning for intimacy. A minority of individuals, on the other hand, feel liberated by the idea that membership is, for them, not a necessity. Belonging is a tale of independence, adventure, and self-fulfillment.

What Affects Belonging or the Lack of It

Belonging is both a psychological state and a cultural narrative. Therefore, belonging is related to psychological mechanisms as well as cultural repertoires. Psychologically, belonging is characterized as "feeling needed, important, integral, valued, respected or feeling in harmony with the group or system" (Mahar, Cobigo, and Stuart 2012, 1030). Moreover, an individual feels belonging when he or she feels like they are fitting in and thinks that "his or her characteristics articulate with or complement with the system or environment" (Hagerty and Patusky 1995, 173). As we will see in the analysis of the conditions that either give or deny immigrants a sense of belonging to the place of origin or the place of residence, these attributes—the desire to be needed and valued as well as to fit in—are important underlying psychological mechanisms. On the other hand,

belonging involves the construction of a particular narrative. People might "feel" a particular emotional relationship with things or places, but how they make sense of these relationships and then give expression to the meaning they assign to them is conditioned by the available vocabulary and narratives. Therefore, when immigrants verbalize their sense of belonging, as they do in interviews, they employ cultural tool kits (Swidler 2001) to express and often justify their emotional geographies.

The Centrality of Intimacy

Since the onset of the twenty-first century, some migration studies have paid attention to the role of intimacy and emotions in people's experiences of mobility and belonging (Walsh 2006; Mai and King 2009). Intimacy and belonging are closely linked. We can see that underneath many immigrants' narratives of belonging—or the absence of belonging—is a longing for intimacy and social inclusion. Here, intimacy is not restricted to love and sexual relationships even though these are significant forms of intimacy. For many people, especially our Chinese, Korean, and Filipino respondents, it extends more broadly to include friendships and collegial relations. Social inclusion, similarly, also speaks to a multitude of social groupings, including company meetings, community events, and other social interaction. These narratives document the emotional geography of immigrants in Japan and at the same time highlight the characteristics and issues of Japan as an immigrant society.

FAMILY, LOVE, AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

While family and children provide immigrants like Zheng Yu the fundamental "living cells" that give them a sense of belonging to Japan, the lack of family and intimate relationships, especially a nuclear home or a stable romantic relationship, makes it extremely difficult for many single migrants to feel attached to either society. Wang Ting's narrative, introduced above, is exemplative. She felt homesick but, paradoxically, could not assign home a geographical location. In our sample, several single young male Chinese immigrants expressed similar sentiments. Accompanying this lack of a sense of belonging is an uncertainty about the direction of one's future mobility. Some contemplate leaving Japan. Others, like George, leave and come back, still searching for their haven.

Among those who married into a Japanese family, however, there is still this longing for a true intimate relationship with their family members. Tina responded with a resonant no when asked whether she felt she belonged to Japanese society, although she was happy with her marriage. Her feeling of exclusion partially had to do with her in-laws' attitude toward her. "I know I told you

about my in-laws, and I do feel like a part of their family. But I really, really wish they would not speak to me so formally. I don't know if they are formal people in general. My mother-in-law does seem to be very polite. But I'm kind of like 'okay, after 4 years of marriage and dating your son for like 5 years, do you have to call me—san? Do you have to like ask everything politely?' I don't know if she is doing that out of respect, or out of distance, so . . ." Intimacy means an openness and closeness to each other.[3] This sense of distance stemming from family and friends' unwanted politeness prevents the cultivation of intimacy and in turn, makes it difficult to truly achieve a sense of membership and an emotional attachment to a place.

SOCIAL INCLUSION: INTIMATE FRIENDSHIP AND COMMUNITY

Zhao Shun, an IT professional, had comfortably settled in Japan and had plans to stay on. But he secretly wished to be sent to an English-speaking country by a Japanese firm and spend some time overseas. When asked why he entertained this dream, he replied, "My life is too settled in Japan. [It's] really good. Nothing worries me here. Everything is so convenient. But, there is this unidentifiable feeling of constraint. [A] feeling [that] this city has no relationship with you. I have the impression that English speakers are more extroverted. Their personality is brighter. If I can't realize my dream, I will send my daughter abroad to cultivate a more outgoing personality."

Like Tina, Zhao Shun expressed a frustration many immigrants feel regarding their social interactions in Japanese society. They cannot immediately recognize the cultural cues that signal the nature of a relationship. Practically every Chinese, Korean, and Filipino we talked to admired the safety, orderliness, and rule-abiding practices found in Japan. Yet, although they praised Japanese people's diligence and politeness, respondents also complained about their coldness and how they guarded their true feelings and privacy. They all had Japanese friends and coworkers they socialized with regularly, but, as they commented, the friendship was usually "cool" and "shallow" because of the lack of intimacy—the "opening your heart to each other" and the "intimate sharing of personal tales." Calvin said with amazement that "after years of working together you know so little about these people's private life!"

Psychological and cognitive theories on intimacy have explained how people form intimate interaction patterns from repeated experiences since childhood. They not only expect those particular patterns of interaction in friendship but also evaluate and judge their friendships according to these patterns. The degree to which a friendship matches these patterns may predict one's satisfaction with the relationship. Women are especially found to be the happiest in friendships that fit such intimate patterns of relating (Fehr 2004). It is obvious that for most

immigrants who arrived in Japan as adults, their relationships with Japanese people did not meet their expectations.

Sun Hee, a Korean woman who had been in Japan for sixteen years and was married to a Japanese man, found Japanese people "kind of scary." As she explained: "They don't disclose their true thoughts [*honnei*]. It is hard to tell whether they are really as kind as they appear to be." She felt the politeness was just a front. Japanese people apologized all the time, she said, but there was no way to know whether they (including her husband) were being sincere. Her children were in kindergarten. She interacted with Japanese mothers regularly, but she felt she could not really establish an intimate relationship with any of them. Sometimes she was at a loss as to whether she had offended somebody because nobody would tell her straightforward. She emphasized that her Korean friends all had similar feelings toward Japanese. "If we are in a good relationship, Koreans will talk about our lives, eat at each other's house and share our time. Japanese mama friends don't do such things. An invisible wall [*kabe*] exists." She related a story of a Korean friend of hers who, due to a sudden illness, missed the farewell party for one of the teachers at the daycare of the friend's daughter. When she went to the daycare the next day, the other mothers, with whom she usually was on friendly terms, pretended nothing had happened and kind of ignored her. Sun Hee and her friend felt irritated.

> It was scary. If it were average Koreans, questions such as "What happened?" "Are you okay?" etc. would be very normal. People would ask why you were absent the day before. There is always a reason why somebody is absent. Don't you think? I think it is terrible that without any communication people's attitude suddenly changed. [Japanese people] don't have a lot of private conversations even if you are friends with them. Koreans also have different personalities, so I assume Japanese [do] too. I can imagine what Koreans will say and do under what circumstances, but after 16 years, I am still at [a] loss about many Japanese people's behaviors.

Immigrants are aware that there are different cultural patterns of social interactions, and many acknowledged that their experiences of such emotional distance might have little to do with their being non-Japanese. They observed that Japanese people were like that with each other too. But this cultural difference in interaction patterns frustrates many first-generation immigrants. According to Zhang Weiwei, they are "not bearing their heart to you," which makes immigrants feel distrusted and unable to build intimate friendships with Japanese people. Some, thus, unable to establish an emotional connection with Japanese society.

It is therefore not surprising that the friends or social groups immigrants feel emotionally bonded with are mostly non-Japanese. In most cases, people form communities with their own ethnic or national groups. Westerners and some Filipinos in Japan have relatively more cross-national social groups and communities organized around religion, industry, or language. Those groups sometimes attract Japanese who have more global experiences and are capable of speaking foreign languages. Tina was an active member of the Association of Foreign Wives of Japanese. She looked forward to every Thursday and every second Saturday night. On Thursdays there would be a playgroup for children under three where she could meet her friends for lunch. Every second Saturday of the month was the chapter's ladies night out. "So, I go out drinking with everybody, that's nice to escape to." Sven, the young Swedish man who felt at home in Japan, when asked if there was any community or part of Japanese society that he felt he especially belonged to, first hesitated and then, laughing a bit awkwardly, relayed: "Well, obviously the foreign community in Japan, especially the Swedish community in Japan. Within the Japanese society, it's hard to say. I mean to a certain degree, I mean now I live in [a neighborhood] in Tokyo. And I guess I partly belong to a community there. I have some friends and . . . but I mean I think that as a foreigner in Japan, you . . . as much as you would like to be a Japanese person, you primarily [at least in the eyes of others], you belong to the group of . . . the foreign group so to speak."

Acculturation and Graduated Belonging

Belonging can be a graduated process. The longer one stays in the country, the more it becomes possible to build various intimate social relationships with people. Over time, one is also more likely to establish a family and feel at home in Japan. Thus, one's sense of belonging to at least a segment of this society grows stronger the longer one's stay is extended. At the same time, a loss of belonging to their place of origin could occur among some people as old cultural practices fade and their intimate social relationships with family and friends in the home country weaken. It is a graduated process because acculturation and building social relations take time.

Language seems to be the most critical condition immigrants talked about when they were asked about their sense of belonging, regardless of their occupation. Sense of belonging has to do with the sense of ease one has with using the language in different situations, such as the friendship circles and company meetings. The cases of several Chinese cooks in our sample are the most illustrative of how language ability affects one's sense of belonging to a society. Unlike the immigrants who spoke Japanese fluently and blamed Japanese people's

avoidance of self-disclosure and a lack of openness for their inability to establish intimate friendship, the cooks blamed themselves and their lack of Japanese language ability.

Cooks, in order to come to Japan, have to have certain qualifications. The ones we interviewed had all worked in the restaurant industry for over ten years before coming to Japan. They usually possessed valuable skills, yet, as Li De's case illustrates, they had limited language training and were confined to the kitchen. Moreover, they also had little incentive to master the language since their initial motivation to migrate was usually economic. Language difficulty made Li De avoid socializing with regular Japanese customers who wanted to converse with him. Additionally, the long work hours and the confines of the kitchen hindered the cooks' ability to have Chinese friends. As a result, they shared a strong sense of social isolation and boredom. They interpreted their stay in Japan as a sacrifice to financially support their family members, especially the children. They expressed a longing to return to China, as falling leaves returning to the roots.

Jane's case, on the other hand, illustrates the gradual coinciding processes of both acculturation and the cultivation of a sense of belonging. Jane, an IT engineer, was recruited to work in Japan immediately after graduating from a Chinese university. She did not speak much Japanese when she arrived. For the first several years, she felt it was difficult to be a part of Japanese society, mostly because of her language inadequacy.

> For the first five years, I felt . . . I was a marginal person. How to put it . . . In the company, even though . . . I was not really treated differently, and around me there were mostly Japanese, but I couldn't have exchanges or communicate with them like I did with ordinary Chinese. So I felt, maybe Japanese society . . . I heard that colleagues in China would visit each other at home, and could banter and chat at work, very emotionally close, so I thought the co-worker relationship in Japan was very shallow. . . . I felt I had no sense of belonging, feeling that I was a guest at other people's house. I wanted to be part of [*rongru*] their circle, but felt I couldn't, and also maybe they were just like that. I felt uncomfortable, [it was] hard to get by [*ting nanguode*].

In order to attain a sense of belonging, Jane worked very hard to learn Japanese and to understand Japanese people's way of thinking, trying hard to "contact" (*jiechu*) them. Gradually, with her Japanese improving little by little, she felt that her relationships with Japanese colleagues also improved. But these relationships never became as intimate as the ones she had with her Chinese colleagues. Moreover, reflecting what Hage (2000) terms a passive form of belongingness, she felt

although she was a part of the company, the company did not belong to her. It was only a place she worked at.

She especially felt marginalized at company meetings. Japanese colleagues freely discussed issues. But as the only Chinese, she had to strain her brain to absorb everything and to contemplate; she then had to search for the appropriate Japanese to express her opinions. It took a lot of effort. Struggling, she asked herself, "Why do I want to go through so much trouble?" With this mentality she often kept quiet during the meetings. In such situations, she could not help feeling she was a marginal person and unable to play her role. According to Jane, three-quarters of the young IT professionals who came with her went back to China. Many of them returned within the first three years because they felt they did not fit in. Or as Jane put it, there was "not [a] feeling [that] this is their own place" (*buxiang zijide difang*).

As her linguistic abilities improved—especially after she enrolled herself in a master's degree program in Japan—her social networks expanded. With the expansion of her social life her sense of belonging also increased. At the university, she had opportunities to be in the company of different Japanese people and individuals from different national backgrounds. She felt that she "started to have a little sense of belonging." This sense of belonging, she rationalized, might have been because she had gotten used to life in Japan and now felt that she could navigate her life easily (*qingche shulu*). She knew where to get what done and how to solve a problem properly when it emerged. With this sense of ease, her feeling of "being a guest at other people's house" dissipated.

Though Jane's narrative about her attaining a sense of belonging focuses on her own acculturation process, in many social environments this is not solely because of immigrants' effort. As reflected in the long-term residents' narratives of their cultural adaptation in Japanese society in Komisarof's (2012) study, immigrants' acculturation process is coupled with Japanese people's conscious adaptation to their presence, making it possible for them to feel belonging.

Status and Belonging

As discussed above, whether one feels valued and appreciated in an environment is an important predictor of one's sense of belonging. In other words, the sense of belonging is related to an individual's perception of his or her own social status and how other people regard the individual in a system, group, or society. Therefore, whether a person feels at home and enjoys a sense of belonging in Japan has a lot to do with the person's perception of how much he or she is valued in Japan.

As I have discussed elsewhere, some Chinese immigrants returned to China because they felt a loss of social status (Liu-Farrer 2011a). Ethnic Japanese Brazilians' changing notions of homeland present an illustrative case. Though entertaining the idea of Japan as an ethnic homeland while they were in Brazil, upon arrival Nikkei Brazilians found themselves confined to the manufacturing sector of the Japanese economy, working as low-wage laborers. Many of them suffered a loss in social status because they were considered middle-class people in Brazil. The nature of their economic position in Japan combined with the lack of cultural competence to fit into Japanese society accentuated their social isolation. As a consequence, they began to redefine their natal homeland, Brazil, as the true homeland (Tsuda 2009b).

In immigrants' narratives, nationality also signals status. As Bai Shicheng's comment on the "punishing" effect of a Chinese passport illustrates, immigrants are concerned that where you are from—an individual's national identity—overshadows a person's status and value. According to him, despite the diversity in the Chinese population, a Chinese person is usually first identified by unfavorable media-produced stereotypes. Living in the same social environment and exposed to the same media, Chinese immigrants become particularly sensitive to these negative portrayals. In turn, they grow self-conscious of their status as Chinese. In my nearly two decades of researching Chinese immigrants in Japan, I have heard again and again people comment on Japanese people's tendency to "bully the weak and fear the strong" (*qi ruan pa ying*). My Chinese respondents often stated that the only way to win Japanese people's respect was to show that you, as an individual, were more capable than them. This perception has also led to comments on how Japanese people swoon over the Americans but sneer at other Asians or nonwhite immigrants because of their history of defeat and worship of power. Such comments were heard much less often among people of other nationalities.

Perceiving their nationality as being considered inferior by the Japanese led some well-educated and successful Chinese immigrants such as Bai Shicheng to trumpet their individualism and cosmopolitan outlook and abandon a nationality-based identity. They feel that their nationalities do not articulate their characteristics. They tend to have a narrative of individual triumph over group stigma. Bai mentioned his early experience of a status change from isolation to inclusion at the university. At the university, as an outsider, he initially spent most of his time alone. But things changed when he went with a group of students to the United States on an internship program. Since he spoke English well, he caught the attention of other Japanese students and became the main communicator. As a result, his relationship with the group changed. He said he learned the lesson that "if you are at the bottom of the social hierarchy and don't have some special

skills to stand out or defeat them, you will be looked down upon, or will never be able to truly socialize with them."

His resistance of embracing a national identity also had to do with his feeling of being unfairly evaluated at the first firm he worked at. Although his Japanese was good, lacking adequate cultural nuances, he could not speak exactly like a native speaker. His colleagues laughed at him and tried to frame his behavior as typical of a Chinese person. According to Bai, they were "pressing him into the image of [a] Chinese . . . who does not follow rules, cares little about social morals, and gets flustered when unexpected things occur." Bai Shicheng resented this and felt it was not an accurate characterization of him. He explained: "Every little incidence had a much deeper background. But they conveniently pigeonholed you into this image." He felt it was a type of bullying (*ijime*). He excused his Japanese coworkers' behavior since they were inexperienced young men who had just started working and had little exposure to foreigners. Nevertheless, these experiences made him eager to excel at work, demonstrate his abilities, and exercise his individualism.

Other Chinese, aware of the "punishing stigma" they may face as Chinese nationals, minimize their "differences" in public and pass as Japanese. Most Chinese immigrants refrain from talking in Chinese or reading Chinese materials in public. According to psychological theories of belonging, "passing" is a strategy that individuals use when they lack a sense of belonging (Hagerty et al. 1992). This desire to conform reflects their sense of "not fitting in." The feeling of not being able to be who they really are plays a significant role in making Chinese think that their life in Japan is "constraining" and even "oppressive."

The Racial Factor

Debito Arudou's book *Embedded Racism* (2015) and the numerous articles he has posted on his well-known website Debit.org lambaste the differential treatments many Japanese establishments accord to the so-called visible minorities. Arudou points out that "Japaneseness" has become such a racialized concept that exclusion is based more on skin color than on one's actual citizenship. While the "Japanese Only" sign would, in theory, bar the entry of all foreigners, the visibly "non-Japanese" people, regardless of their nationality, are often singled out as subjects of exclusion. Chinese and Koreans, however, can evade such differentiation by "passing" as Japanese.

No doubt, at least at present, "Japanese" projects an East Asian racialized image because an overwhelming majority of Japanese people throughout the country's history have participated in this imagining. Though flawed and the cause of many instances of discrimination, this racialized stereotypical image is accepted

by most Japanese and non-Japanese. Thus, race affects people's experiences in Japan, and consequently their sense of belonging and how they relate to Japanese society.

Similar to Sven, the Swedish man, one reason Tina did not feel a sense of belonging to Japan was because she would always stand out. She laughed, "I'm sorry. I'm like almost 6 feet tall. There is no way I'll ever physically fit in. So I probably won't try to fit in." What Tina meant was that her white skin and height would never allow her to physically pass as Japanese. Though this sometimes frustrated her, she also took advantage of this as it gave her a bit more freedom to be herself. To her Japanese husband's horror, she wore her pajamas when she took her daughter to kindergarten. He bought her a jacket to wear, but she said she did not care about her appearance. She was comfortable doing things the way she was used to and did not feel the need to change. As she reasoned, "I don't think I will ever fit in." However, even though Tina was not very concerned about herself, she worried about her biracial daughter: "I don't think anyone will ever accept me, and I don't have a problem with it, but, if you're in an unfortunate situation of straddling two cultures I think it's a lot harder, so."

But one can also benefit from "not being able to fit in." Like Neal, who appeared in chapter 4, Tina occasionally played the "*gaijin* card." She explained how it worked: "You can speak Japanese and write it. And you just pretend you don't know and they don't catch you for it, that's the '*gaijin* card.'" She offered an example. Once she got on a crowded train and some of them ended up entering the green car with reserved seating. They were standing in the aisle. "The little JR lady came and said 'that's an extra 500 yen,' and we all pretended 'What! I didn't know that!' so she kind of let us off the hook but she got the 500 yen from the Japanese gentleman."

"Not being able to fit in" and the "*gaijin* card" are two sides of the same coin. Since immigrants are considered outsiders, people are willing to cut them some slack. While Tina resigned herself to and even took advantage of this status, many others feel frustrated that despite living in Japan for decades, they are still considered a foreigner. Some have spent countless hours learning the language and the culture but are still asked whether they eat *natto* (fermented soybeans) and are complimented for being able to use chopsticks. Jessie, a Canadian Caucasian woman, spoke fluent Japanese; her Chinese Canadian husband, however, did not. But every time they went out, the staff spoke to her husband. "They see me translating, but they can't seem to register that I am the person that speaks Japanese."

Most long-term non-Asian migrants learned to accept their status as *gaijin* (foreigner). Oliver, the aforementioned American translator, explained, "You have to make peace with [it] if you're going to be here." In most circumstances,

according to Oliver, the racism is innocuous. Nevertheless, it inhibits one from feeling a sense of belonging. Oliver had a professional circle in Japan he felt he belonged to, but not to Japanese society as a whole. He wished that Japanese society was more multicultural.

Nonetheless, some immigrants do not mind the lack of cultural and racial diversity. They feel that by distinguishing Japanese from immigrants the society functions well. Further, as cultural and racial outsiders, they believe "foreigners play a role in Japanese society." Some even reveled in the particular status attached to a white person. As Neal remarked in an email, "A primary human driver is the need to feel important. In Japan, I am automatically different/interesting because I am a foreigner. It's easy to feel special. It's not something that is a major driver in and of itself, but I recognize the effect and I appreciate it. I'm also tall." As a white male, Neal savors his *gaijin* status in Japan. Africans and African Americans do not enjoy the same privileges. The racism they feel is far from innocuous. Sam Hopkins, the African American filmmaker and musician, had very different experiences than Neal. He felt, as Chinese immigrants did about their nationality, his skin color "pigeonholed" him "into a certain category, maybe an undesirable foreigner unfortunately." On the trains, even though he kept his legs together to make more space, people still avoided sitting next to him. Sam initially had difficulty finding a teaching position at English conversation schools because he did not fit the image of an ideal foreigner—a Caucasian with white skin and blue eyes. He related, "I swear I got all these Dear Johns like 'Oh, sorry you're overqualified' or 'We don't think you're right for the position' or some [such] excuses. And I'm like why is this happening? The thing is I come from one of the top universities in the United States, you know, why won't they give me a job? The only thing I could think of was it was the color of my skin and I think at that time the English profession was definitely, I mean they definitely wanted the white blue-eyed look. That was the look of a teacher, you know, this [white] foreign guy, so I definitely felt it." He remembered walking down the street in the early 1990s and people would yell out "something like *kurobo* or a derogatory name for black people." Sam explained that he was used to racism in the United States, but it was hard to go to a different country and have that same thing happen to him.

Even though African Americans encounter discrimination in Japan, they do not face the insidious life-threatening institutional racism that is prevalent in the United States. Ben, a six foot seven African American man, loved the liberating feeling of living in Japan as a black man. Like Sam, he sometimes felt people would see him and become "a little fearful." One time on the train, a woman looked at him and fell over—"literally fell over," he laughed. But he attributed this to people not being used to his appearance. According to him, in their mind

it was a question of "'what is he about' as opposite to 'is he suspicious.'" Sitting in a café in Shibuya, he talked about his experiences as an African American man and insisted that I include the following narrative:

> For the first time, I might get dressed with different stereotypes and profiles. That is one type of stress maybe. But, I don't have to worry about police attacking me. I don't have to worry about being profiled by policemen and getting arrested. I haven't been arrested but I have friends who have. I don't know if you followed the Trayvon Martin story a few years ago? It's about a black teenager who wore a hoody and got killed? Get this: For the first time in my life, not only have I put on a hoody and sweatpants at 2 a.m. in the morning and went out to a convenience store, I had no psychological cognition of that happening. Until I got back, I was like "Oh my God. What did I just do?" And that was kind of liberating. Yeah, you are profiled, kind of alienized in one way, but I don't have to worry about getting killed, or harmed, unjustly, you know. I like that a lot about Japan, a whole lot.

In both positive and negative ways, the "foreignness" of all immigrants overwrites all other identities. Being the "foreign other" can be alienating, but for some it is a much less threatening racism when compared with what they might experience in the home country. Depending on the social environment, race and racism may take on different shapes and forms. An "us" and "them" dynamic does exist in Japan, and people, especially those with darker skin, may be subjected to racism. In some instances, however, coming to Japan can be a means to shed racial stereotypes attributed to minorities in the home country. Xavier, a Filipino American, came to Japan as an exchange student, stayed for graduate school, then found employment, and finally started his own business in Japan. One thing about Xavier that left a strong impression on me was his consciousness of his "nonwhiteness." Frequently in our conversations he would make remarks about his skin color. He mentioned that his skin was "not very dark" and maintained that his "lighter skin . . . made him less Filipino looking." He also mentioned how he would feel uncomfortable in a room full of white people. In Japan, however, he was primarily considered as an American, and his social circle consisted of foreigners of various nationalities and ethnicities. He felt much more at ease in the environment he created in Tokyo.

The Power of Cultural Narratives

While rereading the interview transcripts with first-generation immigrants, this time trying to code their narratives on their relationship with Japan and Japanese

people, their notion of home, and their sense of belonging, I was struck by the diversity as well as the ambiguity and inconsistency with which respondents talked about these deeply emotional concepts. Different notions of home are employed flexibly in different narratives of belonging. One Chinese woman, for example, emphasized that home was her homeland in Northeastern China where her grandmother lived; and then, a moment later, she affirmed that Japan was home because it is where her parents and siblings reside.

In *Talk of Love*, Ann Swidler (2001) points out that people's narratives of love and marriage are discursively drawn from various cultural repertoires acquired during the course of growing up. These cultural repertoires can be the dominant discourses of the religious institutions they are members of, the self-help tips from popular psychology books they are exposed to, or the conventional cultural norms that they embrace without further reflection. The migration process of crossing multiple borders—political, social, and cultural—exposes immigrants to more complex and sometimes difficult experiences, requiring their creative use of repertoires to make sense of their life in a different country. In these immigrants' narratives of home and belonging, we see cultural influences of nationalistic discourses and the patriotic education of the home country, cultural nationalistic discourses about Japan, and the different notions of selfhood and identity that are prevalent in the countries they came from.

North Americans and Europeans were much more likely to anchor a notion of home to where they presently resided. The sense of belonging is mapped onto a personal biography. A number of them expressed their sense of belonging to Japan because this was the environment where their current personhood was shaped. Sven arrived in Japan when he was twenty-two, and after eight years he came to feel that Japan was his home. When asked what makes a place his home, he answered that, aside from a sense of comfort and stability, it had to do with the fact that he had grown up in Japan. "From being 22, 23 years old coming to Japan to now being 31, I feel like I've grown up a lot. I've gone from being a young adult or a young student to being a professional here. That's something that's happened here in Japan." These personal biographies involve tales of difficulties and the efforts to overcome them. Neal, the Canadian man, talked about his initial hardship and how he ended up building a strong emotional attachment to Japan because of the hardship he had to go through in settling in this place. "For me, I find that there was something special about struggling through the simplest of transactions. And I think that those memories stand out and they are endearing, to me anyway, because they were struggles. If it was easy, I probably wouldn't have remembered it so much."

Though others employed similar strategies, European and North American immigrants were particularly inclined to draw on individual life-course narra-

tives when talking about home and belonging. Unsurprisingly, they missed family, cultural practices, and the environment in which they grew up. Nonetheless, they emphasized the necessity to leave the natal home to establish their own nuclear family. George, who was looking for a "home" in the world, described this as a necessary life progression. Living at home with one's parents was, he explained, very "un-American in some ways." He referenced the song "No Scrubs" by the 1990s R&B group TLC and sang the lyric: "No, I don't want no scrubs. Scrubs is the guy that can't get no love from me." He explained that a "scrub" is a person that "doesn't have a car" and "lives at home with his mum." He concluded, "In Japan, you could live at home with your mum until you're 40 and it's not considered un-normal. In America, you have to get out at 18 or something is wrong."

While many Americans and Europeans draw on the cultural frameworks of individual biography and life-course progression to account for their sense of belonging, nationalistic discourses occur frequently in Chinese immigrants' narratives. Though not all first-generation Chinese immigrants automatically associate "home" with "homeland" or their natal home, many invoked notions of roots, land, and "a love of country." Abstract terms such as "heart" (*xin*) and "feelings" (*ganqing*) were invariably used to describe China or the natal home, while more mundane words and expressions such as "living" (*shenghuo*) or "living my days" (*guo rizi*) were invoked to characterize life in Japan. This tendency was evident not only among sojourners dissatisfied with life in Japan but also in the accounts of more comfortably settled Chinese. This clinging to a fixed and rooted notion of home can be disassociated from their actual experiences in the destination country and their state of acculturation. Tang Bin, the young Chinese man, claimed a sense of belonging to Japan because of his being accustomed to the way of life in Japan. Nonetheless, he held a fixed notion of where his home is.

> You . . . after all, your home is in China. Your root is in China. So, no matter how well you speak Japanese, even if your Japanese is Level 1, beyond Level 1, even if you took Japanese nationality, you can never become a complete Japanese like them. Chinese talk about "Falling leaves returning to the roots." You have a home pulling you [back, so] you cannot completely dive into [their society]. Chinese is conservative too. However close, you [a Japanese person] cannot become a descendant of the Yellow Emperor [Yan Huang Zi Sun]. The same with the Japanese. Japanese is a nation, Yamato nation. However good your Japanese is, they won't open their heart to you. . . . Even if you don't feel Chinese yourself, in their eyes, you are forever a Chinese.

No doubt, China's nationalistic education impacted Tang Bin's narrative. His comments that Chinese are descendants of the Yellow Emperor and that Japan is the Yamato nation reflect the influence of both China's racial nationalism and Japan's cultural nationalism (Dikötter 1997).

Tang Bin was not alone. Twenty-seven first-generation Chinese offered different variations of the classic Chinese saying: "Falling leaves returning to the roots" to invoke homeland loyalty. Like Tang Bin, other Chinese immigrants' narratives, too, were dotted with references to Japanese nationalistic discourses. In addition to "Yamato nation," "island country" was also frequently used to describe Japan to justify their mobility or identity decision. For example, Yao Qiang, a Chinese entrepreneur who had lived in Japan for over half of his life, said, "At the heart of it, I feel I am a Chinese. I won't give up my Chinese nationality. . . . Japan, I think, is after all an island country. It is not an immigrant country. It is its national character. So you can't ask it to open itself up to welcome all foreigners. It is not America." Chinese by no means monopolized nationalistic discourses. Immigrants from other parts of the world also used "group-oriented mentality," "homogeneous," or "closed society" to describe Japan, reflecting the global influence of nationalistic cultural discourses in the contemporary world we live in. These discourses are used to explain their experiences in Japan and influence on how they perceive their roles in Japanese society and eventually their mobility decisions.

To summarize, immigrants in Japan have expressed a complex sense of belonging. While Japan has become home to some, others either attach their belonging to their homeland or gravitate toward a more localized and deplaced narrative of belonging. Intimate relationships, degrees of acculturation, metacultural narratives, and racial and ethnic characteristics affect immigrants' emotional geography, especially their ability to foster a sense of belonging in Japan. These mechanisms are obviously not mutually exclusive. Rather, they sometimes overlap, and other times are mutually causal. For example, the degree of acculturation has a lot to do with how much immigrants can begin to have meaningful social relationships with Japanese society. Race may also shape patterns of social inclusion. Cultural narratives are often used to justify the "unnamed" sense of constraints and a lack of an intimate relationship. This chapter shows that these conditions shape not only where one feels one belongs but also whether a sense of belonging can be fostered. It suggests, moreover, in what sense immigrants' relationships with Japan might be similar to or different from other receiving contexts. For example, some of the individual conditions, such as the possibilities of intimate relationships, can exist in any context. On the other hand, racism takes on differ-

ent manifestations in the United States and Japan. In particular, the narratives of the social and cultural nature of the country are different in different receiving contexts, influencing varied patterns of belonging.

This book is based on individual narratives, and so the sample is not representative for generating conclusive correlations between demographic characteristics and belonging tendencies. Nevertheless, these different types of causal influences on belonging suggest that patterned differences might exist between different generations of immigrants, and among people with different national, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds. First, though our analysis of individual narratives demonstrates that a variation of emotional geographies may exist among individuals of the same national background, it is also clear that different countries embrace different national narratives and cultivate varied cultural traditions of relationships. European or North American immigrants might feel more compelled to emphasize an individualized personal biography and downplay their attachment to their natal home. Chinese and Korean immigrants, on the other hand, express a more rooted sense of homeland. Second, class matters. Different socioeconomic positions affect one's belonging. People have access to different resources, which may impact the social status they are assigned and the types of relationships they have with Japan. For example, a Brazilian temporary worker in an automobile factory may have a different emotional connection with Japan than a Brazilian professor in a prestigious university. While the Chinese cook Li De held tightly to his dream of "falling leaves returning to the roots," the globe-trotting Bai Shicheng tried to escape the narrow stereotypes of Chinese that he was forced into. Third, race and ethnicity affect immigrants' emotional relationships with Japan. Both the Japan-specific and the globalized racial hierarchy affect the social experiences of individuals with different ethnic backgrounds as well as how they interpret their positions in Japan. Finally, cultural competency is crucial. Educational experience in Japan helps hone linguistic skills and equip immigrants with cultural competencies. That is why, as the next two chapters demonstrate, the problem of cultural adaptation disappears among the 1.5- and second-generation immigrants. However, they need to negotiate between different sets of boundaries for belonging and identity.

7

CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS

Educational Mobilities

With the increase in immigration, there has also been an increase in the children of immigrants.[1] In 2018, over 266,000 children with foreign nationality up to age seventeen lived in Japan (MOJ 2018a). Except for 3,478 who had a student visa, the rest were mostly permanent residents, dependents, and long-term residents. In addition, thirty years after the onset of large-scale migration into Japan, many children of early immigrants, be they Chinese, Nikkei Brazilians, or Filipino, have come of age. Aside from those who have obtained Japanese citizenship through the naturalization of their parents, most have long-term or permanent residency in Japan. Among the 759,139 permanent residents, 16 percent of them, or 119,812, were twenty-two years old or younger. Because Japanese permanent residency, with few exceptions, requires ten years of continuous residency and several years of steady work experience, it is almost certain that those young permanent residents were children of immigrants and obtained permanent residency through their parents.[2]

The reason I use the term "children of immigrants" instead of the commonly adopted labels in migration literature such as "second-generation immigrants" or "1.5-generation immigrants" is because these categories cannot account for the complex makeup of this group. First, there are many children for whom even the concept of children of immigrants is debatable. These are children of international marriages who have one Japanese parent, such as in the case of children born to Japanese Filipino unions. However, the "non-Japanese" side of them—phenotypical, cultural, or merely of partial parentage—factors significantly into their experiences of growing up in Japan. Second, being born in Japan, com-

monly defined as second generation, does not necessarily signal a longer resident experience in Japan than those who arrive later in their life. Transnational child rearing and circular migration are very common household strategies among immigrants in Japan, meaning that their children's individual experiences of mobility also vary greatly (Liu-Farrer 2011a; Celero 2016).

This chapter discusses the education experiences and outcomes of children of full or partial foreign parentage who grew up in Japan. It is difficult to draw conclusions about educational outcomes for immigrant children because there are wide differences among them. This group includes some of the most privileged and disadvantaged individuals and the highest as well as the lowest academic achievers. This chapter highlights some of their education strategies and practices and discusses how migration channels, parents' socioeconomic situations, and cultural backgrounds affect such practices and children's education achievements.

The Immigrant Educational Repertoire

Parents in Japan are preoccupied with their children's education. For immigrant parents, there are many more issues to consider. Where should they send their children: schools in Japan or in their home country? What type of school in Japan should they go to? What linguistic and cultural repertoires should they help their children build? These decisions not only have to do with their visions of their children's future but are also adapted to their own mobility decisions and sometimes their children's education experiences.

The Japanese School

The majority of children from immigrant families spend at least part of their formal schooling in Japanese schools, especially local public ones. For immigrant parents as well as many children, regular Japanese school is a place they appreciate and dread at the same time. The grown-up immigrant children we interviewed described varied experiences in Japanese school. Some recounted fond memories, while others related miserable encounters. Usually, people had a mixture of both.

COPING WITH LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Language is often the first issue immigrant children, especially those who have lived outside Japan during early childhood, have to cope with. Most children we interviewed who arrived in Japan after school age reported receiving special

assistance from the public schools they attended, especially language assistance. For example, Li Jian, the son of a cook, arrived in Hiroshima in June 1995, when he was eight years old. He was finishing second grade in China but had to repeat the grade in Japan, which started in April. His memory of his early experiences was fragmented. He remembered a bunch of children surrounding him and teaching him the Japanese way of writing Chinese characters (*kanji*). The other clear memory was the school principal summoning him to his office, telling him, "You have to study Japanese very hard. If you do well, I will give you a trophy cup." Then, from second grade till finishing sixth grade, the school assigned a teacher who came after school to teach him Japanese. "I was the only one. That teacher was really good. He taught me Japanese. He is a teacher I am indebted to. If it had not been for him, I wouldn't have been the person I am." He did not really need a Japanese teacher after second grade, but the Japanese class persisted till he graduated from elementary school. "I would do my homework and then we chat, for an hour and a half to two hours." In addition, the principal gathered all the foreign children in the school and organized a "community school" every Friday to make them study Japanese together. "Actually, it was not really for teaching Japanese. They just wanted us to do our homework." Li Jian attended that community school until finishing junior high school.

Li Jian was luckier than most immigrant children in terms of the amount and type of education support provided to him. Researchers have pointed out that, in general, children of immigrants in Japan do not receive adequate learning support, which leads to failing in school or not being able to achieve educational mobility, especially among children from migrant workers' families (Miyajima 2002; Sakuma 2006; Zhao 2010). According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Technology (MEXT) guidelines, foreign children in Japanese public schools are entitled to special learning support, such as native language assistance and additional Japanese instruction. However, MEXT defines non-Japanese students who need Japanese language support as "pupils or students who have not mastered everyday conversation, or who can manage everyday conversation, but lack terms necessary for study at grade level, and thus have trouble participating in learning activities, and who require instruction in the Japanese language" (quoted in Tsuneyoshi, Okano, and Boocock 2011, 136). This level, according to many researchers, is not sufficient for immigrant children to thrive in the Japanese academic environment (Tsuneyoshi, Okano, and Boocock 2011). Li Jian had the additional advantage of knowing Chinese characters. For children coming from a non-Chinese background, it takes much longer to get used to this linguistic system.[3] As found in other studies, most of the respondents we interviewed had around one year of language support, sometimes less.

Moreover, the levels of learning assistance vary according to resources in different localities and the number of students with such needs. The majority of the schools that have children with such needs have but one or two students (MEXT 2017).[4] Burgess (2011) points out that schools use their own discretion in determining whether a student needs support. Students who become conversational in Japanese may be removed from the list, regardless of their academic comprehension. Students in his study in Yamagata Prefecture received little support from their school and relied on volunteers and international associations for help. In Hafner's (2012) study, too, informants credited their relative academic success to dedicated individuals. One student emphasized that the school itself did nothing to help her, and stated, "I don't thank my town or my school, I thank my teacher" (37). In addition, there is an imbalance among different levels of schools. Statistics show that students in secondary schools, especially at the high school level, are less supported than children in elementary schools. Many immigrant children, especially those from working-class families and rural backgrounds, arrive in Japan as late as their last year of junior high school. Many students had no language support in the junior high schools they enrolled in, and language remained the biggest hurdle in their academic performance in high school (Zhao 2010).

BULLYING

Most foreign children experience bullying at school, especially during elementary school and junior high school. Two children—an Indian girl and a half-Thai girl, both of whom had darker skin—reported being called *unchi* (poop) by classmates. Immigrant children's foreign-sounding names often were the reason for being picked on. Some forms of bullying were mild, with the children merely being called names and laughed at. Others involved physical aggression. One Chinese woman recalled that shortly after she started school in a small town in Japan, a boy who sat beside her would jab her with a coin. "At that time, I couldn't speak a sentence in Japanese. He jabbed me again and again. I got angry, and said, 'Why are you doing that?' I don't know how I said it then. In any case, I yelled. The teacher came over and said we shouldn't talk during the class. And then, the boy said, it was her. I couldn't understand what he was saying, but . . . I figured he was blaming it on me. I tried hard to gesture to the teacher, 'It was him.' . . . You know, things like this. It happened quite often." In retrospect, the informant could laugh it off, saying it was just boys being obnoxious. "But at that time, it was tough," she said.

Some informants speculated that those bullying experiences might not necessarily have to do with their being foreigners, but then and there, there was a natural association. As a consequence, some children wanted to hide their

foreigner identity and "pass" as Japanese (a point I elaborate on further in the next chapter).

Hara came to Japan at age ten from a northeastern province. Her grandmother was a Japanese war orphan left behind in China after World War II. The family came to Japan because of the repatriation policy. In the school in Nagasaki, there were other Chinese children. Hara tried to speak Chinese with them but was ignored. "Nobody spoke Chinese with me. They were afraid to be seen [doing so] by Japanese kids. They were kids, afraid that others would call them Chinese." After she moved to Fukuoka the next year, she acquired conversational Japanese. Adopting her grandmother's original Japanese family name, she no longer identified herself as Chinese in the school.

Bullying has become such a dreaded phenomenon among migrant families that in order to spare their children such experiences, some families apply for naturalization when their children enter school. Even though Japanese law no longer requires name changes, most adopted Japanese names in order for their children to live as "ordinary Japanese."[5] Not all children were bullied, and not all children who were bullied were bullied because they were foreigners. Many of them could rationally understand that. However, children of immigrants, whether they were born in Japan or not, are made aware of their foreigner, and therefore outsider, status early on. Being foreign becomes a convenient interpretive framework for not only their experiences but also other children's understanding of their differences. It usually takes a young person many years to come to terms with his or her difference—and sometimes it is a lifelong process.

ASSIMILATION PRESSURE

Several Japanese researchers have critiqued the monoculturalism and the assimilatory tendency in Japanese schools (Tsuneyoshi 1996; Ōta 2000). Although Japanese schools focus on egalitarianism and do not differentiate or exclude immigrant children from other Japanese children, Japanese schools are essentially oriented toward cultivating Japanese nationals. In the daily socialization process, immigrant children's own cultural distinctiveness and identity are downplayed and even made invisible (Shimizu and Shimizu 2001). The difficulties caused by their cultural and ethnic differences are normalized as individual problems (Shimizu and Shimizu 2001). This way, immigrant children bear the burden of blending in or passing as Japanese children.

LeMay's (2018) study on Filipino Japanese children highlights the cultural assimilatory power of the Japanese national education system. Filipino Japanese children are the children of international unions, usually with a Filipino mother. Filipino mothers, most of them Christians, wish to bring up their children with a Christian belief. When children are younger, they usually follow their mothers

to church; however, they gradually disappear from the pews as they grow older. From observations of a Catholic church in Japan, LeMay (2018) documents the impact of junior high school on Filipino Japanese children, especially on the organization of their time. Their school life, most notably the state-sanctioned club activities (*bukatsu*), eventually comes to consume all their time. Children who had once accompanied their mothers to religious services gradually stopped attending as they became culturally assimilated into the social life of Japanese schools. As a result, Filipino Japanese children lost a cultural practice that bonded them with their Filipino mothers and that partially defined their cultural heritage.

Most children of immigrants spend their entire formal schooling in Japan. Middle-class immigrant families often follow the model of other middle-class Japanese families, investing time and energy on cram schools (*juku* or *yobikō*) in order to prepare children for the tests of elite middle or high schools. At a weekend Chinese school where I hung out with Chinese parents every Sunday morning, the topic that constantly engaged the interest of the crowd was children's education. There were numerous discussions about different *juku*, the local or national ranking of their children in the specific *juku*, and the characteristics of different middle or high schools. Several children who excelled in their specific *juku* attracted the admiration of the other parents. The Chinese school also arranged events for *juku* teachers or parents whose children had successfully entered elite schools to give talks, and these were always well attended by the parents.

While the majority of immigrant children receive Japanese education in Japan, many families make other education choices. Japanese elementary schools, public and private, often see more children of immigrants than secondary schools do, because many immigrant families, after sending their children to Japanese schools for several years, eventually send their children to foreigner schools or to their home country for education. For some, this decision is due to the unpleasant social experiences the children encounter in Japanese schools; for others, it is an educational strategy that aims to cultivate multicultural and multilingual skills.

Foreigner Schools

The school choice that embodies the uncertain future orientations and complex relationships immigrants have with Japan is the decision to send children to what MEXT terms "foreigner schools" (*gaikokujin gakkō*).[6] Hundreds of foreigner schools have been established that cater to the needs of the respective national communities. Depending on their socioeconomic status as well as their

relationship with Japan, these schools embrace a wide range of missions, from preparing the children to reintegrate to the education system in their home countries, to preserving national cultural and linguistic traditions, to engineering globally oriented individuals. Most of these schools are not recognized by the Japanese government as legally incorporated educational institutions (*gakkō hōjin*) but are accredited overseas. Many are not even considered educational organizations but are registered as Non-for-Profit Organizations (NPOs) or private enterprises. Foreigner schools also differ from each other in terms of the national composition of the student population, ranging from mainly a single national community to a broader international population that usually includes many Japanese students. Tuition fees can vary from 20,000 to 30,000 yen a month (240,000 to 360,000 yen a year) in Brazilian schools, and over 2 million yen a year in international schools run mostly by and for Western expatriates. Different school choices often reflect different future orientations among immigrant families and likely produce divergent outcomes for immigrant children, as shown in the following two examples.

EDUCATION FOR RETURN—BRAZILIAN SCHOOLS

On one end of the spectrum are Brazilian schools, which are the most numerous among non-English-speaking foreigner schools and the least costly. These schools aim at educating Brazilian children and preparing them for higher education in Brazil. According to a 2008 report by the *Japan Times*, which quotes Julieta Yoshimura, the president of the Association of Brazilian Schools in Japan at that time, right before the Lehman Shock, which prompted the repatriation program, there were 110 Brazilian schools in 2008, teaching ten thousand pupils, almost a third of the children between ages five and fourteen with Brazilian nationality in Japan (Kamiya 2008). This was a drastic increase from 1998, when only twelve Brazilian schools existed in Japan, none of them officially accredited by the Brazilian government. The global financial crisis resulted in a huge loss of the Brazilian population in Japan and consequently a reduction in the number of Brazilian schools. In 2013, the number of recognized schools had dropped to forty-five (LeBaron von Baeyer 2015).

The choice to attend Brazilian schools is often a result of Brazilian families and children's inability to cope with the Japanese school system (Minami 2012; LeBaron von Baeyer 2015). In Japanese schools, Brazilian children frequently experienced bullying. Given the frequent moves because of parents' job changes and the dearth of parental assistance, children often struggled academically. Therefore, missing school or skipping school (*futōkō*) is a prevalent phenomenon among Brazilian children (Kojima 2006). According to the aforementioned *Japan Times* report, among 33,000 Brazilian children between the ages of five

and fourteen living in Japan in 2007, only 10,200 were enrolled in public schools. The Brazilian school absorbed an additional 10,000, but there were still more than 10,000 school-age children who were not receiving an education.

Brazilian schools are critiqued as a derivative of the labor system the children's parents are trapped in and serve more as a site for reproducing factory labor than for facilitating educational mobility (LeBaron von Baeyer 2015). As LeBaron von Baeyer (2015) describes in detail, the school where she conducted research designed its academic calendar around Toyota's factory calendar. In accordance with their parents' daily routines, students were picked up and dropped off, going from Brazilian homes to Brazilian schools and hardly having any interaction with non-Brazilian children. They lived in a Brazilian bubble, isolated from the surrounding Japanese society. Brazilian schools were supposed to prepare children for an eventual return to the Brazilian educational system. In reality, due to resource constraints, children were unable to compete with students in Brazil for higher education. Furthermore, they had inadequate Japanese language skills to go on to Japanese universities.[7] Nikkei Brazilian children in Brazilian schools essentially lived in the social world of factory workers, and their social relations were confined to that world. Many Brazilian students began to work part time at the factory during high school, leading many to drop out of school and join their parents on the factory floor (Sugino 2007; Minami 2012; Kanasiro 2014; LeBaron von Baeyer 2015).

EDUCATION FOR SETTLEMENT

While Brazilian schools have been established to educate the children for their return to Brazil, there are also schools that are established because of the maturing of the immigrant community. The Nepalese school Everest is such a school. Everest International School is the first and, at the time of writing, only school of the Nepali community in Japan. It was established in 2013 with sixteen children in kindergarten and elementary school. When I visited the school in the fall of 2015, there were already 120 students up to grade 4, with thirteen teachers and three administrators.

The school was located near Asagaya station on JR Central Line in Tokyo when I visited. It has since moved to a different location. It occupied a small three-story commercial building connected with other businesses on a narrow street of bars and restaurants. The first time I rode my bicycle by it I did not notice it. The name Everest International School was written on a rolled-up shutter that looked like an entrance to a garage. According to the principal Pradip Thata, the establishment of Everest was initiated by the Nepalese business community in response to the desire for long-term settlers to have their children educated in Japan but not in Japanese schools. Before the school was established, Nepalese

immigrants, mostly restaurateurs, sent their children to private boarding schools in Kathmandu for English medium education, even though the majority of them were not from Kathmandu. Children would stay in Japan during vacations to spend time with their parents and sometimes to renew their dependent visas. However, with their parents being far away in a foreign country and their kin in other parts of Nepal, these children were left to their own devices and were not achieving academically. In Nepal, students need a School Leaving Certificate (SLC) upon completing their secondary education before they can continue their study toward higher education. Most children of Nepalese immigrants failed to attain this certificate and eventually returned to Japan to work in restaurants alongside their parents.

At the same time, except for those who married Japanese nationals, Nepalese parents were reluctant to send their children to local Japanese schools. Aside from their own cultural difficulty in dealing with Japanese school life, they were concerned with children losing the Nepalese language as well as hoped to give children an English medium education. Although they usually do not consider going back to Nepal (unless things change dramatically there), they still entertain the idea of flexible back-and-forth mobilities. Everest was the solution to the desire of Nepalese parents to keep their children with them while giving them a Nepalese cultural and linguistic education. Its creation was evidently supported by the community. Over sixty Nepalese immigrants provided loans to open the school.

Everest charges a monthly fee of 40,000 yen. It is registered as an NPO in Japan and accredited by the Nepalese government. It uses an English medium Nepalese curriculum, as most private schools in Nepal do. Except for a couple of children for whom one parent is Nepalese, and two Japanese children placed in the kindergarten to be exposed to English teaching, the rest of the children had both Nepali immigrants as parents. Students live in different parts of Tokyo, with several from outside Tokyo, and commute to the school on public transportation. Everest aims to develop into a full-fledged twelve-year school. Pradip Thata's ambition is for Everest to become a legally incorporated educational institution (*gakkō hōjin*), sending its high school graduates to overseas universities or private universities in Japan with an English medium education. With such a rapid increase in students, the narrow three-story building quickly exceeded its capacity. The small children played in the neighborhood playground, and the older children used the facilities of a nearby Japanese elementary school once a week for athletic exercises. The school was looking for sites of Japanese schools that had been closed because of depopulation (*haikō*).

Unlike Brazilian schools, Everest was not established to prepare Nepalese children for Nepalese higher education, though in theory the students could re-

turn. It offers the SLC, which allows the children to take matriculation examinations in Nepal. But the principal did not think of this as the goal of the school. Instead, it is attuned to immigrant families' long-term settlement in Japan. Thus, Everest also requires Japanese language education because most students would eventually go to Japanese universities and stay on in Japan.

By using English as the medium of instruction, Everest calls itself an international school. "We would like to have more Japanese and international students," the principal stated; but with limited facilities, it was barely able to meet the needs of Nepalese immigrants. There are no clear distinctions between most non-Japanese national schools and international schools. The typical international schools are English medium schools that attract a more varied population of foreign and Japanese students. These schools usually use Western curricula, have more resources, and demand higher tuition fees. While Everest charges 40,000 yen a month, most international schools accredited in the United States, Canada, or UK charge four or five times as much. In the middle are Indian schools. With the growth of the Indian community, several Indian schools have been established. Accredited by the Indian government, Indian schools attract more Japanese students because of their reputation for teaching math. Regardless of the student compositions, as stated on the homepage of the Indian International School in Japan, these schools aim to "finally, but most importantly, provide a home away from home."[8]

There were also children of immigrants from more affluent family backgrounds who are enrolled in schools accredited in North America, Canada, and UK. While some never go to Japanese schools, others try a combination of Japanese schools and international schools in the hope that children will build a multilingual foundation but not be constrained by rigid Japanese pedagogy (Velliaris 2010).

Transnational Education

Yu Zhen moved to Japan from Southern China when he was four years old. His father came to Japan for graduate education, and Yu Zhen was enrolled in a Japanese kindergarten and then a public Japanese school. He lost his Chinese ability by the time he went to elementary school. Living in Kyoto, his parents took him to a weekend Chinese school in Osaka to improve his Chinese, but it was not effective. He resented learning Chinese and "picked up only several words." His parents spoke Chinese with him, but he replied in Japanese. When he entered the middle school, his parents decided that he needed his mother tongue. After much persuasion (*baiban quanshuo*) from his parents, he entered a new private school in his hometown in China. Though initially reluctant to go back, he soon

made friends and adapted to the new school. He had to take many additional classes because his Chinese was practically nonexistent. Since the progress of Japanese curricula in math and English was slower than the Chinese school, he also had to catch up in these areas. "The worst was that I had never had Political Ideology classes [*zhengzhi sixiang ke*]."[9] After two years of makeup classes, his Chinese reading and writing finally caught up with the rest of the class. He even managed to enter a good Chinese high school. After half a year in the high school, he returned to Japan and was enrolled in a private school.

Most children of Chinese immigrants we interviewed were students or recent graduates from Japanese universities. A number of them, especially those who arrived in Japan as young children or were born in Japan, had the experience of returning to China for schooling, from as short as one semester to as long as three or four years. It was always the parents who made the decision to send them back. One reason was the parents' own uncertainty of their future mobility trajectory as well as their perception of Japan's poor economic prospects and its being a nonimmigrant country. Sending children back to China for study was therefore a strategy parents adopted to prepare children for different transnational opportunities.

Another type of transnational education happens out of children's desire to return to their parents' homeland, to learn the language or as a strategy for a future career. Kondo was a naturalized citizen who came to Japan from China when she was already in the fourth grade. Her parents were from Shanghai, and in Japan the family lived in a quiet small town near Tokyo. In comparison, the life in Shanghai that she experienced every time she visited her grandparents was so much more exciting. She convinced her parents that she needed to improve her Chinese. Besides, Chinese universities have separate admissions for foreign nationals. As a Japanese citizen she could enter one of the most competitive universities, whereas in Japan she might just get in one of the second-tier ones. While still aiming at coming back to the labor market in Japan, she left for a university in Shanghai.

Similarly, some Filipino Japanese children went back to the Philippines for part of their education, especially higher education. According to Celero (2016), such educational choices partly resulted from the transnational child-rearing practices in the Filipino community. Many Filipino Japanese children were born to women who had arrived in Japan as entertainers, and grew up in single-parent households because either their mothers were never married or their marriages to Japanese nationals were dissolved. Some children were sent back to the Philippines to be brought up by their kin. With the mothers' remittances, they were able to afford a good education in the home country. Sometimes, this choice was made as an education strategy. Because English is the medium of higher educa-

tion in the Philippines, and the tuition fees for prestigious Filipino universities were a fraction of those in Japan, it is therefore a cost-effective way to accumulate multilingual and multicultural capital.

While the abovementioned children of Chinese immigrants and Filipino Japanese international marriages display a pattern of transnational education by choice, there were children whose transnational education is a result of parents' circular mobility. This is typically among the Brazilian migrants who considered working in Japan as a temporary strategy to accumulate capital. When they feel they have saved enough money for business or family purposes, some move to Brazil after being in Japan for several years; but when the business projects in Brazil do not succeed and the money is drained, they often return to Japanese factories. Along the circular migratory trajectory their children are born and then moved back and forth while in school (LeBaron von Baeyer 2015).

Finally, because of the specific linguistic skills and the curricula in which they are prepared, with varied success, children who attend foreigner schools may continue on to tertiary education in the home country of one of their parents. With the increase in English programs in Japanese universities, some children of immigrants who graduate from schools with English medium education make this choice, while still others opt for universities in third countries, especially in North America, UK, and Australia. Those who go through a linguistic program other than English, such as German, French, or Portuguese, tend to want to continue on to higher education in countries whose media of instruction are in these languages.

Language, Languages

One issue that immigrants have to confront in their child rearing is the question of language, or languages. Immigrant children face multiple challenges. They are expected to master the dominant language of their host society and, preferably, retain the native language(s) of their immigrant parent(s). Most parents hope to bring up children who can function in both, but the reality is often otherwise because the needed effort and resources for bilingual, in some cases multilingual, education are often beyond what the parents can manage. A range of reasons are found to affect immigrant children's host language acquisition and heritage language retention in various receiving contexts, such as the age of arrival (Sakuma 2006 [in Japan]), family environments and parental attitudes (Li 2006 [in Canada]; Tannenbaum and Howie 2010 [in Australia]), peer influences (Luo and Wiseman 2000 [in the United States]), and the availability of native language support.

It is not the purpose of this study to measure the various influences on children's language learning. Rather, children's language practices, especially

those regarding their heritage languages, are used as a prism to examine immigrants' mobility strategies and the range of relationships they establish with Japanese society. First, parents' efforts in cultivating children's heritage language skills reflect immigrant parents' mental preparations regarding their own as well as their children's future mobility. Second, language preparations also reflect parents' self-perception of their own socioeconomic status and the status of their countries of origin in Japanese society. Language study also shows to what degree the parents consider that particular linguistic skill to be an important resource for children's future socioeconomic development. Finally, language is considered a form of cultural heritage from the parent or parents. By emphasizing language skills, a parent ensures that the children acquire that part of their identity.

For example, the decision of Nikkei parents to send their children to Brazilian schools, even though they cost much more than Japanese public schools, indicates their desire for the children to return to Brazil. Some parents view their own *dekasegi* (migrant labor) experience in Japan as a suspended period of life, for the purpose of returning to Brazil eventually. Because they cannot see a future for their children beyond the factory assembly line, they believe their children's long-term future lies in Brazil. In comparison, those who see themselves as settling in Japan usually send their children to Japanese schools (Minami 2012; LeBaron von Baeyer 2015).

This rationality is also reflected in some Chinese parents' decision to persist in their children's Chinese education. Jiang Qin was a forty-seven-year-old woman from Shanghai whose family ran a Chinese restaurant in Tokyo. She sent her daughter to the weekend Chinese school partly because her husband planned to return to Shanghai, complaining it was too tiresome (*tai lei*) living in Japan. She sighed, "It was really his own doing. He was working okay at a company, but he said he didn't want to be put upon by other people [*shou beiren de qi*], so he joined his sister to open a restaurant. But now, he has to be put upon by the cooks. What for?" Jiang Qin enjoyed her life in Tokyo. She spoke fluent Japanese and looked completely Japanese. Because of her husband's misery, she knew the return was inevitable. They had purchased an apartment and paid into the minimum social security in Shanghai. She wanted her daughter to receive a university education in Japan but hoped she would go back to China to work. "We have only one daughter, and of course we want her to be close to us when we are older." For that reason, she made her daughter continue to learn Chinese.

Regardless of their future mobility plans, most immigrant parents consider multilingualism an advantage, and a ticket to a brighter future. However, global inequality directly influences the statuses of different languages, and different heritage languages are therefore given different attention by immigrant parents in Japan. For example, English is a language that is universally emphasized. Par-

ents who are native English speakers try different means to give their children English instruction. There are many so-called returnee English learning programs around Tokyo. These programs gear toward children whose English is at an almost native level and aim to maintain it at that level. More affluent immigrant parents also choose to send their children to English-speaking international schools, especially after the elementary school level.

Chinese is also considered a useful language. The transnational mode of schooling and parents' eagerness to send their children to weekend language schools demonstrate this awareness. When asked, parents at the weekend language school would most likely justify their decision as instrumental, as a way to equip their children with one more skill and thereby a broader career potential. Among ethnic Korean Chinese, the linguistic strategies become more complex. Some parents want to maintain both Korean and Chinese. In Tokyo, there are Korean weekend schools organized by ethnic Korean Chinese parents, who believe that multilingualism is what distinguishes them from other Chinese and lends them an additional advantage (Kim 2018). However, the hierarchy of the languages surfaces when parents must choose one additional language. Although the Chinese weekend school was supposed to be a place where children learned Chinese, there were also English classes taught by Chinese teachers. Parents sent their children there so that they would do well on English tests. Many children at the weekend Chinese school dropped out when they entered the fifth or sixth grade in order to concentrate on preparing for junior high entrance examinations. Some, however, quit the Chinese class but continued with the English one.

Because of the status and utility of different languages, some immigrants, especially those married to Japanese families, are pressured by their social environment (especially Japanese in-laws) to refrain from using the "mother tongue" as a primary language to communicate with their own children. As a result, in public I always witness Thai or Filipino mothers, occasionally with difficulty, use simple Japanese with their "half children." Children might pick up some of their mother's language when visiting their mother's hometowns or in the simple conversation with their mothers when they were smaller. When the children enter Japanese school, they will lose the ability to speak at all in the maternal language. There are also immigrants that worry about children's cultural adaptation to Japanese schools and the possibility of being singled out as the target of bullying. They therefore use Japanese as the primary language with their children, resulting in their children gradually losing their heritage language. Coming to Japan at age five with his Mongolian parents, Batsaikhan lost most of his Mongolian fluency when he became an adult. After being bullied at school and assuming a Japanese name, he stopped talking to his parents in Mongolian. His parents did not insist.

Language is a constitutive element of one's identity. To keep the Chinese cultural heritage is a part of the rationale for Chinese parents to send their children to China or to weekend language schools. Among European immigrants, this tendency is much stronger. Jayden, a Dutch man who married a Japanese woman, raised both children in Japanese and Dutch. He spoke only Dutch with his son and daughter and took them to the Netherlands every summer to spend time with their cousins. He laughed that Dutch was not a very useful language because everybody there spoke English, but it constituted part of who they were.

Immigrants are aware of the global hierarchy of nation-states. Some have also experienced social rejection while living in Japan. Thus, immigrants, especially those from the global south, are self-conscious of their "inferior" national backgrounds and their outsider status. Such a self-consciousness results in ambiguous linguistic practices and an ambivalent relationship with the language they wish their children to learn, as the following case of a Chinese mother shows.

One day, I arrived at the weekend Chinese school early and was sitting in the waiting room. A Shanghai mother brought her son into the waiting room. They sat down to eat their McDonald's breakfast. They were conversing entirely in Japanese, even simple words such as "thank you." They obviously enjoyed their food. I heard "*oishi*" (delicious) several times. Then the word "*Zhongwen*" (Chinese) caught my ear. She said, "Zhongwen, ganbatte ne!"[10] At that time, some other Chinese mothers came in. The woman greeted them and started to chat in Mandarin. When she turned around to face her son, however, Japanese resumed.

At the beginning, I was quite puzzled by my observations of such contradictory phenomena. On the one hand, the Chinese parents did seem to want their children to learn Chinese. Some of the families at the Chinese school lived far away. Accompanying children to the school required both time and effort. One mother mentioned that some of them organized a Chinese class for several children near where she lived, and she was proud that her son could read simple Chinese stories. However, when they talked to their children, they always switched to Japanese. When I asked why there was such a practice, the mothers conveyed a sense of capitulation. It was always that their children did not want to use Chinese with them. A woman from Jilin explained that she and her daughter did not speak Chinese outside. The girl did not want to speak Chinese in front of her friends. In the end, the children had lost the ability and habit to speak Chinese with their parents. This pattern also reflects parents' own self-consciousness, a desire to "pass" as Japanese, or a desire to at least blend in.

One Sunday, as soon as I stepped into the weekend Chinese school, I heard a mother speaking excitedly to other mothers of her embarrassment with her eleven-year-old daughter that morning. "I told her not to speak Chinese in the

public. Today, on the elevator in the station, she started talking to me in Shanghaiese, and loudly too! I said, 'Stop saying Chinese.' Other people were watching us. How uncomfortable! The kids . . . When you want them to speak Chinese, they don't. When you don't want them to speak Chinese, they can't stop!" As will be explored in the next chapter, the nested mechanisms that affect parents' language choices for children and the outcomes of children's language acquisition and retention affect how immigrant children perceive themselves and their relationship with both the place where they currently reside and the place where their parents come from. Moreover, language acquisition becomes an instrument through which immigrant children negotiate and form their identities.

Diverse Education Mobility Outcomes

Veronica was a young Brazilian woman, born in Rio. Her Nikkei father moved to Japan to work in a factory when she was two. At the age of eight, she, together with her mother and her younger sister, joined her father in Shizuoka. Both of her parents worked long hours in the factory. She took care of the household and her younger sister while her parents were away. In the Japanese school she went to, there were a number of foreign children like her, most of them Nikkei Brazilians. Not being able to speak Japanese initially, they were put in a separate program and spent half of their school time in that program learning Japanese language and culture, skipping regular subjects such as social studies and science. That continued on to junior high school. By then, these immigrant children were too far behind in other subjects to follow the regular curriculum and had to stay in the special program. These students knew they had no academic future, because their education had not prepared them to take the exam for regular Japanese high schools. The teacher was also unmotivated, spending the class time chatting and showing students his family pictures. As a result, students in Veronica's class were constantly talking about leaving school and working in the factory. One of Veronica's classmates became pregnant at the age of fourteen, and dropped out of school.

The foreign students and the Japanese students did not get along in her school. There were fights and conflicts. Veronica was not interested in studying, and her grades were poor. Her parents had no time to learn Japanese or to supervise her study, but they were extremely strict, not allowing her to leave the house after school.

Veronica had no friends. Her only interest then was Western pop music, and she developed a liking for the Backstreet Boys when she was in elementary school. When she entered the junior high school, she discovered that they were

speaking English. She started to translate the lyrics into Japanese and Portuguese in order to understand them. Her knowledge of Portuguese allowed her to learn the alphabet and grasp the contents faster. Her mother, although having no time to manage her school life, encouraged her English learning and insisted that she take every level of *Eiken*, the Japanese National English Tests. Knowing that staying in the special program for foreign children would not prepare her for Japanese high school, her mother requested that the school let her join regular Japanese classes so that she would not miss out on the Japanese curriculum. The local junior high school refused. Her parents moved so as to put her in a junior high school that would accept her in the regular program.

Veronica had trouble with bullying as well as the academic work. She wanted to quit to work in the factory. Her parents refused. In the end they made a deal: if she could obtain admission to a high school they would allow her to work in the factory. In order to be able to work in the factory, Veronica spent more time studying. Her performance improved, but her math was poor. The school recommended that she try a high school that was known for accepting foreigners and returnees. At the test, she showed the teachers who interviewed her the *Eiken* test results and the notepads of the three versions of the US pop songs she had translated. The teachers were surprised and accepted her to the school despite her bad marks in math and science. This opportunity changed her life. In high school, she had two very supportive teachers. She had always thought she was not good in anything. For the first time, someone believed in and pushed her. Later, as promised by her parents, she started working in the factory on weekends and school holidays, and found that factory work was tedious and brain numbing.

Veronica started to like school more because of the two teachers. There she also met four friends, one Filipino, one Chinese, one Nikkei Brazilian, and an Australian exchange student. They formed a study group, helping each other out. It was also the first time she had friends who were academically oriented. Her other Nikkei friends usually only "talked about being cool."

In her second year of high school, the dean of her school recommended that she apply to a prestigious private university in Tokyo where English was used as a language of instruction. She again received tremendous support from her teachers. They helped her with all the documents. She went to school earlier in the morning, on weekends, and during vacations, and the teachers stayed for her, helping her with various subjects. Both she and her teachers cried when she was accepted by the university. However, she did not have money for the university. Her parents were reluctant to let her go to Tokyo both because of the living costs and because she would be alone. In the end, she used all the money she had saved from working in the factory and two other jobs during high school and took out

two loans that she was still paying back at the time of the interview. The university life opened her eyes and mind. After graduating from college, she hoped to study abroad. She applied and received a scholarship from the Rotary club in her region and went on to a graduate school in Canada. Her adviser hoped she would continue on to a PhD, but Veronica had to quit. Her parents wanted her to return and she needed money to pay back her loans. She found a job at the Boston Job Fair and returned to Japan to work for an elite Japanese company. At the time of the interview, she had just begun working for an American multinational firm.

Veronica was the most successful child of Nikkei Brazilian immigrants we have ever encountered. However, in contrast, her younger sister did not make it academically. She entered a lower-tier high school. Though her parents pushed her into a local university, she dropped out soon after. When we met Veronica, her twenty-six-year-old sister was a single mother of three children who had never married and did not have a job.

Using 2010 census data, Takaya et al. (2015) show that, at the group level, immigrant children from different national backgrounds fair differently in terms of education outcomes. Children with Korean and Chinese parents who had been in Japan for more than five years had the same high school enrollment and retention rates as Japanese nationals. Children with Brazilian parents and Filipino mothers, though having improved from the last census, lagged behind. It is also as likely for Chinese and Korean children to enter universities as Japanese students, and in fact more likely for Chinese to be in postgraduate programs than even Japanese youth (Takaya et al. 2015). This, on the one hand, might reflect the different degrees of challenges for acquiring Japanese language proficiency. For example, the linguistic affinity between their native languages and Japanese may allow Chinese and Korean children to learn Japanese with less difficulty in school (Kaji 2013; Riordan 2014). On the other hand, these outcomes are related to immigrant parents' socioeconomic conditions in Japan.

Because of the selective immigration regime and the different channels of migration into Japan available to people in different countries, socioeconomic statuses and national/ethnic backgrounds are sometimes highly correlated. Consider the differences between Brazilian and Chinese immigrants. As predominantly brokered migrant labor, Brazilian families are most likely to be blue-collar working class with both parents working (Takaya et al. 2013, 2015). Less than 5 percent of Brazilian families had white-collar fathers (Takaya et al. 2015). In comparison, although Chinese parents had diverse class positions in Japan, there were a substantial number of families where fathers were white-collar workers (33 percent). Moreover, the four censuses taken in 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 show that Chinese parents were more likely to have gone to university and postgraduate programs

than parents of any other nationality, including native Japanese. In 2010, over 40 percent of the surveyed Chinese fathers had a college degree or above, and the percentage reached 45 if other forms of tertiary education were included (Takaya et al. 2015). In contrast, only 9 percent of Brazilian fathers had any form of tertiary education, and less than 6 percent received a university education and above. Moreover, these statistics show a downward trend among Brazilian fathers' education achievement—tertiary educated fathers declined in the decade from around 13 percent in 2000 to 9 percent in 2010 (Takaya et al. 2015). This decline, in fact, might already indicate intergenerational downward education mobility among the children of Brazilian migrants. The census was taken in 2010, two decades after the onset of the large-scale return of the Nikkei from South America. Children who arrived in the 1990s could have married and established families. According to LeBaron von Baeyer (2015), children of Brazilian migrant workers with a truncated education and early participation in factory work also tended to marry and bear children earlier.

Families' socioeconomic status influences children's education outcomes because some parents have more financial resources and cultural competence to devote to children's education.[11] Among immigrants in Japan, an important factor seems to be parents' capacity to be involved in their children's education. Children of Brazilian labor migrants struggle in Japanese schools, not only because of cultural difficulties but also because of a lack of parental involvement and frequent moves with parents' job changes (Sekiguchi 2003; E. Ishikawa 2014). As shown, some parents, frustrated with their own inability to deal with Japanese schools, send their children to Brazilian schools with the hope that they will have better education prospects back in Brazil. However, most Brazilian schools have limited resources and cannot adequately prepare students for the competitive matriculation examinations in Brazil. The majority of the graduates from Brazilian schools were not able to go on to Brazilian universities but instead returned to the shop floor where their parents labor. LeBaron von Baeyer (2015) laments that Brazilian children in Japan had to choose between two national educational systems, and such options led Brazilian children to either factory work or a return to Brazil, reenforcing their position as either unskilled immigrants or temporary migrants.

Varied socioeconomic backgrounds also affect education outcomes within the same national group. Although Chinese children on average do well, they vary along class lines. Kaji's (2007) study in Osaka shows that among students whose families came to Japan as descendants of *zanryū hōjin* (Japanese individuals who remained in China after the war) from the same area in Northeast China, those whose fathers worked as farmers in China were less likely to enter college. Among Chinese immigrants who worked as cooks, regardless of their expecta-

tion toward their children's educational future, many of them had limited cultural and linguistic skills or time to be involved in children's school life. Moreover, because of the conservative gender ideology, they tended to prioritize sons' education over daughters' and thus discouraged girls' education mobility (Zhao 2011).

Besides linguistic backgrounds or socioeconomic status, other individual factors play a role in children's education outcomes. For example, the age at which children immigrate matters immensely in terms of education outcomes. Children who arrive in Japan right before or during junior high school have much lower high school enrollment rates because of the difficulty of learning a new language and following a new curriculum (Kaji 2007; Hafner 2012; Takaya et al. 2015). Among working-class parents, some are also more involved in children's education than others. As in the case of Veronica, Eunice Akemi Ishikawa (2014) observed that the exceptional few Brazilian students who were able to enter universities in Japan all enjoyed strong family support. Liu's (2017) research on Chinese parents' attitudes toward children's education in a small Japanese town also shows that parents' pressure and expectations play an important role in facilitating children's education mobility.

A somewhat counterintuitive finding is presented by Kaji's (2007) study in Osaka. He found that although children who arrived in Japan at an older age had an educational disadvantage, youth who were born in Japan performed less well. He speculated that because second-generation immigrant children acquired Japanese proficiency before entering schools, they gained much more independence in their school life. Parents' inferior Japanese cultural competencies reduced their ability to supervise and exercise control over their children (Kaji 2007). This result requires more study to confirm and understand.

Although individual-level mechanisms influence children's outcomes, structural conditions and receiving contexts cannot be ignored (Levels, Dronkers, and Kraaykamp 2008). As detailed in the previous section, the Japanese education system is not equipped to receive foreign children. Not only is it ideologically oriented toward cultivating monocultural Japanese nationals, as critiqued by many scholars, but the amount of learning support provided by Japanese schools varies greatly. Children like Li Jian, who encountered good principals and helpful teachers, are pushed along to move up in the Japanese system. Those who do not have the same luck suffer. A report shows that the lack of adequate education assistance led to the situation of overdiagnosing Brazilian children as autistic and thereby assigning them to special education (Kanasiro 2014).[12] In addition to being isolated in the social world of factory workers, Brazilian children also had more difficulties envisioning a different future. Many Brazilian students dropped out of school to work in factories because, struggling with

academic difficulties, the factory gate looks much more accessible. Moreover, many cannot resist the immediate temptation of the middle-class consumer goods that factory wages can buy (LeBaron von Baeyer 2015).

Immigrant children's education experiences and outcomes have been one of the most studied topics in migration studies, for good reason. People migrate to pursue a better life or to chase after a dream, and for a better life for their children. Whether this goal is realized or not depends on a variety of conditions, from the particular mode of migration, to receiving contexts, to migrants' own cultural and social resources. Because of the structural demand for immigrant labor, it is common that first-generation migrants do not receive the rewards corresponding to their human capital and experience downward social mobility after crossing borders. Because of their locations in the host country's socioeconomic strata and ethnic hierarchy, the majority end up on the periphery of the host society. Enabling their children to overcome this marginality to achieve upward mobility and to feel at home in the host society not only is an expectation of the parents but also is in the interest of the receiving society. In the modern world, education is considered the key to realizing upward social mobility.

This chapter shows that immigrant parents, regardless of their class and ethnic and cultural backgrounds, share an eagerness to advance their children's education. They strategize among different educational options and choose those they believe can produce better outcomes as well as match their mobility goals. However, the educational outcomes of the children vary widely, across national groups and along class lines. This has to do with the variant cultural, social, and economic resources that can be used to advance children's education. Meanwhile, the easiest educational choice available to them, Japanese public education, falls short in facilitating immigrant children's education mobility.

There are different choices of educational institutions in Japan. Japanese schools and "foreigner schools," as the MEXT nomenclature indicates, largely represent two different national options. The Japanese school is the product of an ethno-nationalist state and is oriented toward cultivating monocultural Japanese nationals. The social world of the school is generally unprepared to accommodate diversity. The learning support falls short in meeting the needs of the immigrant children and is administered inconsistently in different regions and schools. The "foreigner schools," depending on the language used, primarily prepare immigrant children for their home countries' education systems, limiting immigrant children's educational options in Japan. Because they are often strained by resources and made precarious because of the volatility of the migration flows, some foreigner schools fail to prepare children to succeed in the edu-

cation system in their home countries. There is also the option of transnational education. While many immigrant families use transnational educational mobility to maximize the utility of their economic resources and acquire different forms of cultural capital, some transnational educational patterns are a result of parents' circular mobility, as in the case of many Brazilians, or a result of the lack of child care support in the receiving country, as in the case of many Filipino Japanese children. In what ways the education credentials obtained overseas can be converted to labor market advantages in Japan also vary, depending largely on the utility of the language and the global positions of specific educational institutions.

Because Japan is regarded as a nonimmigrant society, its suitability as a place of permanent settlement is constantly questioned by immigrants themselves. The educational choices and the efforts made in language instruction therefore reflect, on the one hand, parents' own uncertain future mobility and consequently a desire to keep options flexible for their own children, and on the other hand, reactions to their children's school experiences. These different education strategies, school experiences, and mobility outcomes shape children's perception of themselves.

8

GROWING UP IN JAPAN

Identity Journeys

Kai, Jessica, and Indira are three children of immigrants who have grown up in Japan.

Kai was a nineteen-year-old student at a vocational training school when we interviewed him in 2010. His grandmother was a Japanese child abandoned in China at the end of the war who returned to Japan in the early 1990s. Kai came to Japan from a small town in Northeastern China in 1996 at the age of five with his parents. Kai's image of China was one word: dirty. After leaving China, he only reluctantly went back with his parents three times to visit relatives. Kai was initially isolated in the Japanese elementary school because he was not able to speak Japanese. "The teacher asked the children to play with me. But, just saying 'play together, play together' was not enough to make other kids play with me. I couldn't quite communicate with them." His Japanese became completely fluent by the third grade, and the entire family also obtained Japanese citizenship during that time. To his dismay, his acquisition of the Japanese language and newly acquired nationality could not erase his Chineseness because children in his school knew him before he naturalized. He resented being called Chinese instead of his real name and got into fights with other children over this.

Kai's family moved to another town while he was in junior high school. He hid his Chinese background. He recalled an instance where he was watching TV with his Japanese friends and news about China came on the air. People on TV were talking in Chinese. "I was the only person that could understand what they were talking about. [The place] was dirty, and [the TV program] was really trashing it. Seeing this, of course I couldn't let people know that I was Chinese. [I]

needed to hide." In order to not expose his Chinese family background, Kai made a point to always socialize outside his home. His parents persisted in speaking Chinese with him and his brother, but his responses were always part in Japanese and part in Chinese—in Chinese because his mother could not understand Japanese that well. There were a few Chinese students in the vocational school he went to. He carefully hid the fact that he spoke Chinese and never let his Chinese background be known. Kai's biggest complex was his not being a real Japanese because he was born in China, unlike his brother, who was born in Japan. He could not find anything appealing about China or Chineseness; he did not like the food his mother made at home. "Always Chinese food, always dumplings . . . I am so tired of it. [She] can't cook Japanese food. The *hanbāgu* [a Japanese hamburger patty cooked in sauce without the bun] she made was not like real *hanbāgu*." Though Kai's parents were considering returning to China in the future, Kai was emphatic that he would live in Japan and marry a Japanese woman.

Jessica was an informant in LeBaron von Baeyer's (2015, 50–59) study. Jessica was born to a Nikkei mother and a non-Nikkei Brazilian father. In 1990 at the age of twelve Jessica migrated to Japan with her parents and two older brothers. Although she had already passed the fifth grade in Brazil, she was placed in a fourth-grade class in Japan in order to give her time to learn Japanese. Jessica looked visibly different from the other children, not only because of her mixed descent but also because of her more developed body. "Kids used to call me *butajiru-jin*, which is a combination of 'pig' and 'Brazilian.' . . . I was embarrassed to be Brazilian, and I really hated it when my Mom spoke to me in Portuguese or kissed me on the cheeks in front of my classmates."(LeBaron von Baeyer 2015, 51). Jessica practiced judo in Brazil. With her mother's encouragement, she joined the school judo club. Judo turned into a tool that Jessica used both to fight bullying and to find a place for herself in Japan. When she first joined the junior high school club, she was asked by the senior girls to wash their training clothes. She refused. When one of the girls grabbed her, she hit back, bloodying the other girl's nose. She was suspended for a week. When questioning Jessica about the fight, the teacher learned of the bullying and put a stop to it. By the second year, students no longer fooled with her because she established her reputation by winning the prefecture championship—the first in her junior high school.

Jessica was quite confused about her own identity at around age fourteen or fifteen, not knowing whether she was Japanese or Brazilian because she did not speak either Japanese or Portuguese perfectly. At the age of nineteen, against her mother's wish for her to go to the university, Jessica chose to work as an interpreter at an international center where she assisted Brazilian workers with

matters ranging from visa concerns and unfair treatment at work to personal problems such as domestic violence and children dropping out of school. Working at the international center allowed Jessica to meet people from many other countries and cultures. Such exposure liberated her from the hard choice between a Japanese and a Brazilian identity and gave her the confidence that "it is normal to be different" (LeBaron von Baeyer 2015, 55).

Jessica had visited Brazil only twice in more than twenty years in Japan. Her family was considering returning to Brazil, but Jessica preferred staying. She explained to LeBaron von Baeyer (2015) that she would return to Brazil one day only if she could work with a company linking Japan and Brazil, and that she would not be comfortable basing herself entirely in Brazil: "I would have to spend a little time there, and then come back [to Japan] a bit. To be, like, a bridge. To work with Japanese people in Brazil and then come to Japan from time to time. Because if not I don't think I could stay. I don't think I could get used to [Brazil]" (56–57).

Reflecting on her identity, Jessica affirmed that she would be considered a "*gaijin*," because that is how other people would see her in Japan due to her appearance, or a "Brazilian," because that is what her parents were. "Even being born, growing up here [in Japan], if it so happens that your parents are Brazilian, you're always going to be Brazilian" (LeBaron von Baeyer 2015, 59).

Let us meet Indira. In 1996, at the age of seven, Indira came to Japan from India with her parents. She initially went to a Japanese elementary school. Although she learned Japanese within the first year, it was not up to the grade level. She had problems reading *Kanji* (Chinese characters). Social studies and science textbooks were also difficult for her. Her parents were worried that her education would suffer and decided to enroll her in an international school. Upon graduating from the international school, she went to the United States for college. After college, she found a job at a multinational Japanese firm.

Indira decided to come back to Japan to work because she considered Japan her home, even though her experience as a child of immigrants in Japan was not all pleasant. She was one of those who remembered being called *unchi* (poop) when she was a kid in the Japanese school, although she did not quite understand what it meant at the time. Looking different, she had also been constantly treated as an outsider, even feeling discriminated against. She recalled,

> Just today, someone said "Nihonjin mina isshoni mierudeshou," as is in, like, "you probably feel all Japanese people look the same." And to me, that's a little bit strange because I grew up here and I don't think all Japanese people look the same, but they assumed that I would feel that

> way. And I mean yeah, day to day I think every day, there's something new. Yeah, and also the police. I'm just walking down the street with my family, they have stopped me a couple of times even though we are not doing anything strange, they have stopped us and there have been other foreigners, European looking as in Caucasian, European Anglo-Saxon looking people and they have not stopped them. And they would stop us and ask us questions in the middle of Tokyo and it's . . . I mean I partially understand because it's hard to tell who's an illegal immigrant and who's not. But at the same time, it's also very rude if they only check people who you know . . . if they don't check everyone and they choose to check us for some reason.

Nonetheless, Japan is the place where Indira grew up. She was used to the cultural practices here. "It's the familiarity, the memories and . . . it's the language that your emotions go with, for example if someone tells you 'Otsukaresama'[1] after you are done with your day, you just feel something that is not expressible in other languages that I know of." It is also the place where her parents are and where she had many friends. "People are a major part of what makes home your home." Moreover, Indira specifically tied her sense of belonging to Yokohama, the place where she grew up. "[The place] is something that was stable in my life for a really long time and [that I] knew so much about. You know, growing up somewhere that makes you feel like you belong there."

When asked how she would describe herself to people, Indira said, "I say that I am Indian, but I grew up in Yokohama." She felt she would never be considered Japanese even if her passport had been Japanese, because "being called Japanese has so much to do with the racial context and I definitely don't think I look Japanese in any way or feel racially Japanese in any way." She was Indian because that was how people viewed her. This imposed Indian identity affected how she went about her life because she automatically became an Indian cultural carrier. "Even if you don't know anything about your country because you didn't grow up there, you kind of have to know because when people ask you 'oh, how do you do this in your country?' or 'how do you do that?', even if you don't know, you kind of have to look it up, because it is expected that you know because you are from India. So, even if you grow up here, even if all of your experiences were in Japan or you know more about Japan than India, you are expected to know a lot [about India] even if you don't."

Indira was considering becoming a Japanese citizen, but "passport and nationality do not necessarily relate to who you are. So, I just see naturalization as a passport and documents and if I do get naturalized . . . traveling and visas to

other countries would be much easier than having an Indian passport." She considered herself a global person who had a global upbringing. She was also flexible about her future plan. "I would definitely want to get married and have a family and have a community and if I can find that here, then that's great. If I can find that somewhere else that's great too."

Kai, Jessica, and Indira were all children of immigrants in Japan. Being from different national and ethnic backgrounds and having grown up in divergent socioeconomic circumstances, they had cultivated specific cultural competencies and had over the years established different relationships with Japanese society. They had also adopted varied strategies to deal with identity questions and to present themselves to others. As a consequence, they entertain different possibilities as well as varied degrees of flexibility for their future mobility. Passing was the main strategy Kai used, and being Japanese was his project. Jessica and Indira are seen as foreigners because of their appearances. However, their perceptions of their positions and future possibilities were different. Jessica saw her role as a bridge between the Japanese and Brazilian cultures but considered Japan the most likely place she would stay (LeBaron von Baeyer 2015). Indira, on the other hand, possessed multicultural competences and international credentials. While calling Japan home, she also saw her future in any place where she could establish a family and a community.

Theories on immigrant children's ethnic identity in the Western countries have suggested a range of social psychological mechanisms underlying the shaping of children's subjectivity.[2] Though complex, researchers emphasize the contingency on context as well as the fluidity of identity formation among immigrant children. From prescribing a dominant ethos (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2002), to conditioning social relationships, to providing social mirrors (Winicott 1971, cited in Suárez-Orozco 2004), social context is basic to identity formation. As a society whose national identity is buttressed by a discourse of blood lineage, cultural impenetrability, and racial homogeneity, Japanese poses itself as a more inaccessible identity than those in traditional immigrant countries such as the United States. At the same time, growing up in Japan, most immigrant children speak fluent Japanese and practice Japanese culture. As a result, children of immigrants usually feel more comfortable in Japanese social environments and have a strong sense of at-homeness in Japan. This chapter, therefore, explores immigrant children's diverse strategies to make sense of their subjectivities and establish their relationships with Japanese society. In particular, it examines how changing environments, especially the different institutional contexts they go through in the course of their growing up, contribute to the shaping of their identities.

Negotiating the Sameness and Differences in Schools

Young people's awareness of their ethnic identities is heightened or blurred, respectively, depending on the degree of dissonance or consonance of the social contexts that are basic to identity formation (Rumbaut 1994). Youth in a social environment where they can mix in are often less self-aware of their ethnicity, but contextual dissonance heightens the salience of ethnicity and of ethnic group boundaries. Children sometimes have lower self-esteem in an environment where their differences are salient, especially when such dissimilarities subject them to negative stereotypes and unpleasant appraisals about one's group of origin. The youth may cope with the psychological pressure produced by such dissonance by seeking to reduce conflict and to "pass" within the relevant social context. An alternative reaction may lead in an opposite direction to the rise and reaffirmation of ethnic solidarity and self-consciousness (Min 1995; Rumbaut 2008). In particular, their education experiences and social encounters in school and outside continually interrupt and remold their understanding of themselves.

Being a Foreign Child in Japanese Schools

As illustrated in the previous chapter, Japanese schools are challenging for immigrant children. The school is a miniature version of the larger societal context characterized by a postcolonial ethnic relationship (especially in regard to Zainichi Koreans), a monoethnic national identity, a myth about their unique culture, and relatively little postwar immigration until recently. Some children, especially during the school years, encounter bullying or isolation because of their dissimilarities, such as non-Japanese names, a lack of native-level Japanese abilities, or different appearances. Different children, depending on their ethnic backgrounds and personalities, adopt different coping strategies.

THE UNIVERSAL PASSING

Most immigrant children in Japanese schools are under strong pressure to conform. One informant explained, "In Japanese schools, there is always the right and wrong [*zehi*]: right answers and wrong answers, right behavior and wrong behavior. Being different is seen as strange and wrong. In order to be right, you behave like a Japanese person." Depending on children's ages at arrival and their cultural competency, they frequently encounter differential treatments and harassment during elementary school and sometimes during junior high school. These early encounters sow the seeds of insecurity, prompting a variety of reactions.

Among those who can phenotypically pass as Japanese, as in Kai's case, "passing" has become a dominant tendency. Individuals adopted racial passing tactics not to be identified as a foreigner. These include assuming a Japanese name, avoiding socializing with other coethnics, and preventing their parents from speaking to them in a foreign language or coming to visit them in school.

Wang Xiaotong,[3] a thirty-year-old naturalized Taiwanese man, admitted that when he was in elementary school he really wanted to become Japanese and to have a Japanese name. "Because of *ijime* [bullying], I wanted to naturalize as soon as possible. I wanted to become Japanese. It is so troublesome [*mendokusai*], and I want to change it—I was always thinking like that" (Wong 2010, 29). In high school, he could finally pass as Japanese. "Everybody thought [I was] Japanese. When people said that, I was 'ha', feeling relieved [*hotto shita*], and was happy [*ureshii*]" (Wong 2010, 31). Because of his desire to pass, he felt most miserable when his dissimilarity was exposed in public, such as moments of self-introduction at the high school graduation and when he started college. He resented being treated as a foreigner so much that he even felt unhappy when the university admissions informed him that as a foreign student he was granted a partial tuition waiver of 300,000 yen, because "all of a sudden, I was reminded that I was a foreigner again" (Wong 2010, 29).

Some parents practiced passing themselves and assisted in disguising their children's foreign roots. As in the case of the Shanghai woman mentioned in the previous chapter, despite her eagerness to make her daughter speak Chinese, she hushed her daughter when she spoke Shanghaiese in public. To prevent his son from becoming the target of bullying, Hoshi, a Chinese immigrant, applied for naturalization and changed their family name to a Japanese one. Older siblings also tried to shelter their younger siblings from potential hostility that could emerge by "exposing" their foreigner status. Kai not only avoided taking his friends to his home but also insisted that his parents not speak Chinese when his younger brother's friends came to visit.

Among Nikkei families who are not mixed, some also practice passing in order to prevent bullying. As LeBaron von Baeyer (2015) describes, neighbors of the Matsuda family did not know that they were not Japanese. Their daughters did not want their parents to participate in their school events because their clothes were different and they stood out too much from other parents. Instead, their grandfather who was relatively fluent in Japanese went to cheer for the girls at sports games or to meet their teachers. When their youngest son was entering high school, the whole family naturalized so that he could be the "real" Japanese. Soon after they naturalized, the son asked his parents, "So now I can tell everyone I'm Japanese?" "You can," his mother replied, "but your friends will ask you

why you're suddenly saying that, and then will you be able to explain?" He decided it would be better not to tell them about naturalizing. After all, it was too troublesome (*mendokusai*) to explain (LeBaron von Baeyer 2015, 165).

Sometimes immigrant children "pass" as Japanese not because they try to be Japanese but because they think they are Japanese. On a Saturday at the weekend Chinese school, as usual, I was sitting in a room together with several mothers chatting. An Jie, the mother of a ten-year-old boy, recounted an incident about her son that tickled her. "Last week, Li *Laoshi* [teacher] asked me, 'What's wrong with your son? I was teaching them Chinese songs in the class and asked them to sing along. Your son refused, and said, I am Japanese, not Chinese. Why should I sing Chinese songs?'" An Jie laughed. "I asked him why he thought he was Japanese, he said, 'I was born in Japan. Of course I am Japanese.'" She asked her son who had told him that, and he said it was his sister, her sixteen-year-old daughter who was in her first year of high school. An Jie told her son that he was Chinese because his mother and father were Chinese and they did not have Japanese nationality. The son could not understand it. The mother said he could apply for Japanese nationality at eighteen. He decided that was what he would do.

Because they grow up in Japan and have absorbed Japanese cultural practices, immigrant children often naturally identify with Japan. As a result, they sometimes feel a sense of dissonance between who they think they are and who their names or passports suggest they are. One woman in Wong's (2010) study verbalized this sense of dissonance and regret: "We were all together in a Japanese school. I was the only Chinese person. However perfect my Japanese was, people could always tell that I was different by my name. I didn't really experience discrimination. Maybe other people [in my situation] would not have minded. But I felt there was something that didn't fit. . . . It would have been so much simpler had I been a Japanese born in Japan. I wish I could just be Yamada Hanako. Being stuck with a name that people had hardly heard of . . . I really resented it" (Wong 2010, 31). Granted, not all children can pass as Japanese, due to their "non-Japanese" looks. However, passing, in the sense of minimizing the appearance of differences and trying to behave as Japanese children do, is practiced to different degrees among children of immigrants, including children of mixed descent, because of the pressure to be similar in order to avoid being targeted for bullying and marginalization. As a result, many children of mixed marriages, though in most countries the tradition is to take the father's family name, tend to use their Japanese parents' Kanji family names while at Japanese schools. It is not uncommon for a child to be "Tanaka Naomi" in the elementary school and junior high and become "Naomi Tomlinson" when she enters an international school or university. Sometimes both names are used depending on whether

they are in the Japanese or non-Japanese social groups during adulthood. Some children of native English speaker parents affect Japanese accents in their English classes in order not to be the center of attention and also not to embarrass their Japanese teachers.

Passing is an ambivalent practice, however, especially for the parents, and therefore their efforts in passing are also inconsistent. While assisting their children in passing to minimize bullying and marginalization, many parents are also reluctant to see their own cultural heritages and ethnic traces being erased in their children. For example, though keeping their Brazilian background mostly hidden and finally obtaining Japanese citizenship, the Matsudas used food and gestures such as kisses on the cheeks in public to signify and instill in their children a sense of Brazilian-ness (LeBaron von Baeyer 2015). Similarly, many Chinese families strive to teach children Chinese. As the mother who hushed her Chinese-speaking daughter in public replied when asked why she sent her child to the weekend Chinese classes, "She is still Chinese, so of course it is important that she has this cultural root."

CONFRONTING DIFFERENCE

Some children have a more accepting attitude toward their cultural and ethnic differences. This behavior, first of all, results from either a supportive and culturally diverse school environment or a high degree of social acceptance. Second, children embrace their differences when such differences correlate with achievements or higher social statuses and become a symbol of pride. Finally, there are those who cannot pass because of distinctive differences, especially appearance. Some of them gravitate toward a reactive identity, while others manage to find social acceptance and thereby overcome their self-consciousness regarding their differences.

Chen Long's first point of arrival was a school in Shizuoka. Although he was the only Chinese student, there were a sizable number of Brazilian children there. During regular Japanese and social studies classes, he was given separate language education with Brazilian children. He never thought to hide his Chinese identity, because of the presence of other foreign children. He remembered his conflicts with Japanese students because of the way he behaved, such as cutting in line, but he did not think it was a big deal. He had fights, but those "were mostly because of individual disagreements and probably had nothing to do with my being Chinese." Gradually, he acquired Japanese skills and entered a good local high school.

The presence of other coethnics matters. For example, Adachi Ward in Tokyo has a sizable Chinese community. Some schools have a number of children from Chinese families. The parents were proactive in making sure that their children

were not targets of bullying. One mother joked that the principal of her child's school was afraid of Chinese parents because they were outspoken and loud. Whenever the principal saw a Chinese parent coming to look for her, she would make an excuse to leave the room.

Social acceptance also makes children accept their own differences. Xue Tong, a Chinese woman who arrived in Japan when she was five, did not feel the urge to pass, because her difference was not a hindrance in her social life. Instead, she had friends who were interested in the Chinese culture she showed them—for example, the language and the songs. It became one of the highlights of her friendship.

Some children gain confidence in their different selves by beating people, sometimes literally (as Jessica did) and other times academically. Many Chinese children are advised and pressured by their parents to excel academically because the parents believe that Japanese people look down on weak individuals and respect the strong ones (*qiruan paying*)—a discourse I heard often among the Chinese in Japan, and a reason they attributed to Japanese society's admiration of everything American and disdain of Chinese and other Asians. I once participated in a casual discussion among Chinese mothers in which one mother talked about a book she had read on bullying, and said: "According to the book, the kids leave the top students alone, treating them as different from the rest of the class. I told my daughter, she needs to be in that position so nobody would bother her." Indeed, those Chinese children who could affirm their Chineseness with a certain pride were often the academic high achievers.

In addition, there are many immigrant children who cannot pass as Japanese because of their looks or cultural distinctions. They are singled out—sometimes teased and bullied, other times adored, and oftentimes a mixture of both. While many try to fit in, they also develop a sense that they are different from the Japanese children and therefore cannot be Japanese.

As explained in the previous chapter, though it is the primary mode of education, Japanese schools are not the only educational option children of immigrants have. Because of the social and cultural concerns, varying experiences of marginalization, the availability of resources, and different household child-rearing arrangements, many immigrant families also choose foreigner schools, such as the Brazilian schools, Korean schools, or the so-called international schools with English medium education. Some children, such as in the cases of Filipino Japanese children (Celero 2016), children born to Pakistani fathers and Japanese mothers (Kudo 2016), also have transnational schooling experiences. These different educational choices provide different social and cultural environments that foster or alter children's senses of self and their identity practices. Those in our sample who positively embrace their differences were often

schooled in foreigner schools instructed either in their heritage languages or in English after going through struggles in Japanese schools. Moreover, identity varies throughout one's life course. From childhood to adulthood, immigrant children experience different environments in which their differences are perceived and valued differently, thereby prompting them to readjust their identities.

Changing Contexts, Multiplying Selves

Changing social environments and how they are seen and treated in different places make children reflect on their identities and change children's understanding of their subjectivities. In most cases, an environment that values individuality and diversity tends to relieve children of the pressure to pass and gives them a positive boost on their ethnic identity. Sometimes, this regained comfort in their difference also makes them recognize and appreciate their Japanese cultural traits. Consider the identity journeys of Lee Eun Jung, Yaxuan, and Sage.

LEE EUN JUNG

Lee Eun Jung, a Korean woman who came to Japan in 1995 at the age of three, used to cry on her way home every day because she was bullied at a Japanese elementary school. She had resented her own Koreanness, especially her Korean name, until she went to the Korean school. Following is an excerpt from an interview conducted in 2011:

> Now there is this hot Korean Wave, but back then they picked on us saying our Kimchi smell was unpleasant. In my school my brother and I were the only Koreans. We were belittled. I am Korean, but I grew up in Japan. My Japanese was as good as Japanese children. If I don't say my name I look the same too. But, at the name-calls, everybody had four-character names and I was the only person with a name "Lee Eun Jung." . . . I really resented this, and every day asked my mom to change my name. I hated my name, and hated myself being a Korean. . . . It was a deep injury. I also fought a lot—there might have been different reasons, but some definitely had to do with me being Korean. I asked my mom to send me to the Korean school. When I was in the fourth grade, I finally went to the Korean school. The first day, the teacher asked me, "What is your name?" I said "Lee Eun Jung"—I was still hating my name then. The teacher turned around and said to the whole class, "Isn't this a beautiful name?" Suddenly, I felt liberated.

Eun Jung grew to be more and more affirmative of her Korean identity. In her social circle in college, she had more Korean friends than non-Korean friends. However, she also recognized her Japanese cultural traits and admitted that "having lived in Japan for so long, I am no longer a pure Korean." In fact, if she had to choose a place to work and live, she would choose Japan. As she put it, "In terms of identity, I will say I am Korean. But I definitely have Japanese habits. Compare me to Koreans who grow up in Korea, I am more like Japanese. I feel it myself. So I am Korean but with half Japanese half Korean habits."

YAXUAN

Yaxuan, born in 1990, immigrated to Japan when she was six, and, through Japanese schools' Sakura Program, she gained perfect fluency by the third grade. By the fifth grade, she said she no longer used Chinese. "I felt being different from the others was embarrassing. I didn't want to be seen as not the same as others. I wanted to be very Japanese . . . thinking other cultures are not preferable. I was brain washed. . . . When my grandmother came to Japan—she can only speak Chinese—walking in the public, she talked to me in Chinese. I told her not to speak so loudly, I would lose face." In junior high school, she was one of the best students in the class and enjoyed her popularity. Nonetheless, she became very monocultural, only interested in things Japanese. In 2005, the year she was graduating from junior high school, there was an anti-Japanese demonstration in China. She watched the news reports on TV every day, feeling ashamed of being Chinese. Her parents were worried about her "narrow worldview" and decided to send her overseas. Asked to choose between China and the United States, she chose to go to the United States, because "seeing China like that on TV, how could I consider going to that chaos?" She went to a private high school located in the American South. A year of studying abroad turned her around 180 degrees. "People saw that I was Asian and asked if I were Chinese. I said I came from Japan. [I thought] it was too complicated to say I was Chinese but grew up in Japan. Some asked me, whether Japan was a province of China. I thought, really? In the US, such a distant country, China had such a big image. Shock, really a shock. During that year I studied in the US, I started to feel the presence of great China, and the concept of a small Japan. . . . [I realized that] Chinese background was important for me." However, Yaxuan had complex feelings about this revelation. On the one hand, she saw the presence of China in US media much more prominently and for the first time felt happy that she was born in China, realizing that her Chinese background was impressive. On the other, she was sad that Japan was overshadowed by China, unless she ran into students who were interested in anime or manga.

"I was half happy half sad. [Japan] is the place where I grew up, so I had a lot of feeling toward it. . . . The ways I think and do things are very Japanese."

SAGE

Sage is my daughter. She was born in 2003 in Japan to a Chinese parent (me) and a white American parent (my husband) and has grown up in Japan. Except for a year between the ages of one and two when she stayed in Shanghai (with her parents), she has lived mostly in Tokyo. She spent four years in a Japanese public daycare with caring teachers and friendly playmates. Her foreignness did not emerge as a hindrance in her social life. In her nursery yearbook, she was identified by her friends as the girl with a lot of cute hairbands. She started to become a foreigner in the public elementary school, especially during the third and fourth grades. "It was nothing really big, but every day something annoying happened. A boy would call you stupid foreigner, or hid your stuff, or stepped on your toes," she recalled. A friend she was close to in the first two years of elementary school was placed in a different class. She ended up spending most of her time in the school library alone. When seen with her parents, she was worried about the spotlight on her foreignness. The class she disliked the most was social studies. "It was all about Japan and 'we the Japanese' [*wareware nihonjin*]. I am not Japanese. Why should I bother to remember all these prefectures!" In retrospect, she felt that she was like "the oil floating on the water" and never really mixed in the social life there.

Sage entered the American School in Japan after spending five and a half years in the Japanese elementary school. A change took place in her behavior shortly after. Not only was she more communicative about her school life, but for the first time she was considering how she would present her individual self instead of worrying about how not to stand out. Not only was being a foreigner of mixed national origins common in her school, but speaking multiple languages was also nothing unusual. Amusing to her mother (me) was that her increased comfort in being a multicultural person boosted her interest in Japanese language and culture as well. In fact, her native Japanese competency became one of her points of pride.

Together with her unprecedented enthusiasm for all things Japanese, from language, to sceneries, to lifestyles, she liked to emphasize her triple cultural origins: Chinese, Japanese, and American. Puzzled, I asked why she had such a change of attitude toward Japan. She thought about it and explained that it was after she went to the American School that she realized how Japanese she was in her school behavior. "No separation of garbage; no student duty to clean up the classroom; and a cashier register for the lunch you eat. You think, wow, this is

really different, so American. The students just sweep their eraser crumbs off the desk and onto the floor!" In other words, the contrasting practices in a different environment allowed her to reflect on her own cultural upbringing, making her aware of the cultural practice that she considered normal. She reflected, "Having been in Japanese schools for so long, Japan is in me, and is already a part of me." What she did not articulate, however, was the fact that the American school she was in provided such a diverse cultural environment in which Japanese cultural practices, instead of being the normative ones, are but one among several modes and a mere different one. This lifting of normalcy also removed its pressure of conforming. Her picking up Japanese culture, as with picking up one music instrument versus another, therefore became a choice, something that marked one's individuality.

In the stories of these three immigrant children, we see how changing cultural and social environments altered how they perceived themselves and the cultural elements constituting who they were. Eun Jung transferred from a Japanese school to a Korean school after failing to pass as Japanese. The new environment allowed her to see her Koreanness as no longer something strange and to be ashamed of but something normal and to be appreciated. She found social acceptance in the coethnic environment that fostered her Korean identity. Yaxuan was successful in passing as Japanese, and her Chinese background was consequently eclipsed in such an identity practice. When arriving in the United States, she realized for the first time that an identity she had been hiding seemed to have more importance than an identity she made efforts to adopt and publicly display. This revelation left her with ambivalent feelings, empowered by the positive recognition of her Chinese background but saddened by the relative lack of attention to Japan—an equally if not more important part of her. In the case of Sage, she refused to identify with Japan because of her experience of exclusion in a Japanese school. The American School in Japan's diverse cultural and social environment made her take stock of her cultural repertoire. She realized that by growing up in Japan, Japan had become an integral part of her. This part of her cultural upbringing was also what distinguished her from other multiply cultured children and what made her a unique individual.

For these three children, however, identities are not a zero-sum game. They did not trade in one identity for another. Instead, their identities became more multiplex. They recognized that the cultural repertoire that constituted who they were and how they behaved was hybrid. In a way, their experiences of different cultural and social environments, instead of removing Japan from them, made them more keenly aware of their Japanese habitus.

Adulthood, Globalization, and Evolving Subjectivities

Kai, the nineteen-year-old man whose story begins this chapter, was among a minority of persistent passers in our sample who felt deeply insecure about their family origins and studiously hid their backgrounds even after reaching adulthood. Though many children of immigrants, especially those who can, still practice a degree of passing after reaching adulthood, such as choosing to speak only Japanese in public or not volunteering information about their backgrounds, most modify and change their self-perceptions in the course of growing up. This is because, while entering young adulthood, they are also entering increasingly complex social and cultural environments. In some such social environments, their particular cultural and ethnic backgrounds are no longer reasons for discrimination and may even become an asset, subject of envy, or advantage for career advancement. They consequently reevaluate their identity practices and, in most cases, grow more positive about their parents' heritage.

One such environment is the university. Students in universities are more likely to encounter different ethnic groups, foreign students, and students from different parts of Japan. As one second-generation Chinese immigrant explained, "There are so many people from different backgrounds. People are usually not surprised by the presence of a Chinese. [Unlike] before, it was rare then. There were only Japanese around." The university is also an environment where more academic importance is placed on foreign languages and intellectual discussions about cultural differences and social justice take place. Having additional cultural repertoires or being able to speak a foreign language can become assets, and sometimes even the envy of peers. All of a sudden, a background that one needs to hide for many years becomes a background that distinguishes oneself.

In the winter of 2015, I was invited by a nationwide university student organization to speak at a panel on multiculturalism. There I introduced the varied identity journeys of immigrant children in Japan. Imagining an audience of Japanese students, I was surprised to find that several students who were present had non-Japanese names. Some of them were of mixed descent, and others were children from immigrant families. Shortly after the talk, I received an email from a Mongolian student, Batsaikhan, who had attended my talk and wanted to invite me to lecture to another group of university students. He expressed, "As a 1.5 generation myself, I felt what you said really resonated with my own experiences." I was curious what his experiences were like. We made an appointment to meet.

It was he who spotted me in the crowd at Kichijoji Station. I would not have identified him because he was indistinguishable from the other Japanese youth

bustling around him, except for a slightly formal jacket that I assumed he put on in order to show his respect for the meeting with a professor—something most Japanese students would also have done. At the age of nineteen, Batsaikhan looked mature.

Batsaikhan was five when his parents migrated to Japan as skilled workers. During elementary school, he was singled out and bullied because of his unusual name. He did not like the Mongolia he saw during the several trips his family took to visit his grandparents. His mother tried to teach him Mongolian but he refused. He did as many other immigrant children did to pass as Japanese. He shortened his Mongolian name and turned it into a Japanese-sounding name when he started junior high school. That was what he went by for the entire secondary school. Gradually, although he understood Mongolian by listening to his parents at home, he was no longer able to speak it fluently, let alone read or write it. Entering the university, however, he started to reflect on his own identity practices. The education he received in the university and the curiosity people had about his background prompted him to reevaluate his attitude toward Mongolia and his efforts in passing as Japanese. He made an effort to learn about the history and culture of Mongolia in case people asked. In the meantime, he became interested in the discussion on multiculturalism and joined the multicultural student organization. He regretted that he had lost almost all his Mongolian language and was thinking of spending some time relearning it. When he wrote me, he used his full, and indeed long, Mongolian name in roman spelling, with Japanese katagana marking its pronunciation in parentheses.

In addition to the culturally diverse environment and a sense of empowerment growing with their increased knowledge of the world, transition into the university itself for many children of immigrants is an opportunity for them to find their positions in Japan and turn their identities into an advantage. Li Wei, the son of a restaurant worker and a housewife who was bullied for being both overweight and Chinese throughout elementary school and junior high school, decided to choose international communications as a major when he was recommended to the national university in his prefecture. “Ever since junior high school, I was thinking, I know Japanese and Chinese, and I am an immigrant that has border crossing experience. These are my characteristics, and I can teach Japanese [to foreigners] and study international relations.” It is also during college that many immigrant children decide to improve their heritage languages and to be functionally bilingual. In a national university of foreign languages, we encountered several 1.5- and second-generation Chinese immigrants who majored in Chinese.

Besides the change of environment from neighborhood schools in a national education system to more complex universities and workplaces in the course of

these individuals' development, the world around them has also been changing and globalizing. The rapid pace of globalization shifts the economic and political power balance and the relative positions between sending and receiving countries. Japan, for most of its modern history, has looked admiringly toward Europe and North America and identified itself with the developed Western countries. Starting in the 1990s, however, it can no longer ignore the economic power of its Asian neighbors. China, for example, was considered a developing third-world country when some of their immigrant parents left the country and the children we interviewed were younger. In the decade or so during which they grew up, China passed Japan to become the second-largest economy and Japan's largest trading partner. Although many tried to hide their Chinese backgrounds during elementary and junior high schools, they realized how valuable their multilingual skills were by the time they entered the labor market in Japan. Moreover, with an emphasis on cultivating global talent, the Japanese government invests in international education. More and more universities have opened international liberal arts programs and English medium education. These places often see a disproportional presence of children of mixed origin or with an immigrant background. Young people with mixed or immigrant backgrounds instinctively understand that these programs are where they fit in. In addition, with Japan's efforts to globalize its labor force, children who had received transnational education and who were educated in foreigner schools also found niches in the Japanese economy.

Japan is also changing socially and culturally, and has had a growing cultural interest in Asia starting in the 1990s. By 2000 there were almost as many Asian tourist destinations introduced as there were European ones in various popular travel magazines (Wong 2010). Multiculturalism discourses and an emphasis on individuality also gained popularity in the 2000s. Many children from Asian countries were keenly aware of such changes when they reached adulthood. The Taiwanese interviewees in Wong's (2010) study expressed their delight in such changes: "Gradually, [Japan] has entered the times when minorities have also become popular [*motehayasareru*]. Going abroad has become such a common thing. Being a little bit different from people around you now is considered stylish [*kakkoii*]" (34). One informant said she was considered "strange" (*hen*) when she was small, but "right now I get envied instead, for being able to speak Chinese, and knowing both Japan and Taiwan" (34). In other words, Japan was changing together with these children of immigrants, becoming more open and receptive toward differences. Some of these cultural trends started before these children reached adulthood, but the enclosed monocultural environment in Japanese schools largely walled such influences out. It was only when they

stepped into the society that they realized that Japan was in fact a more culturally diverse and socially complex environment.

Adulthood also opens up options for making individual identity choices. Wang Xiaotong, the aforementioned young man of Taiwanese parents who tried to pass (Wong 2010), made the decision to apply for Japanese citizenship in college. He also changed his name to a Japanese one. It might be paradoxical, but legalizing his status had the effect of releasing the pressure of passing. As a result, he now sees his immigrant background as a valuable characteristic. Consequently, from a boy who hated self-introduction because of his name, a high school student who delighted in Japanese friends' mistaking him as Japanese, and a young man who felt a sense of loss when getting a foreigner discount on college tuition, Wang Xiaotong was now eager to reveal (*sarakedasu*) the background he tried hard to hide when he was younger. He considered his history of being an immigrant child something that distinguished him:

> After all it is an experience, a tale that other people don't have. This type of background—it might be strange to say it—has its strength, and (can be) completely exposed. Maybe before, I couldn't really let it out. Perhaps I was embarrassed about it, and had complex (about it). But right now, my way of thinking has changed. I won't feel so embarrassed to let it known. Maybe because I can now expose it, I feel more confidence in myself. Before, I was like (hiding it), but from now on, I feel it is something to be cherished (*daijinakigashite*). That (background) is valuable. For example, on the company's entry sheet,[4] there would be questions asking what experiences you have had. I am thinking I should just reveal it. . . . Such experience is something others don't have. It could be something that differentiate you. (Wong 2010, 38)

The social environments surrounding grown-up children of immigrants, however, are not uniformly receptive and welcoming. Some children started to experience the obstacles of being a foreigner after becoming an adult. Xue Tong was a twenty-three-year-old woman and a second-year student in a master's program at an elite private Japanese university. Sailing through the Japanese school system, Xue Tong never imagined that her foreignness would be a burden. Such a disadvantage did not come to her until she entered the university. Like all other Japanese students, Xue Tong looked for a part-time job. She applied for a tutor position at a cram school, confident that with the prestige of her university, she was qualified to tutor elementary school children. She passed the written exams but had trouble at the interview. "They asked, 'Are you Chinese?' I said 'yes.' They immediately said, 'We don't want foreigners.' I thought it was strange. I had

passed the tests, and I could definitely teach elementary school children. I explained to them that I grew up in Japan and went to Japanese schools." They told her that it was not her ability, but as a *juku*, they did not want foreigners. If it were an English communication course, they might accept an American, but they could not hire a foreigner to teach Japanese children. Xue Tong went back to the dorm crying. "For the first time, I discovered that, not being a Japanese would make me face such a big wall." It upset her because she had not realized the difference of nationalities before. "My school classmates never excluded me. Instead, they appreciated me. I never bumped into any walls. After entering the university, after hitting the walls, I suddenly discovered that I was not Japanese. I was made to face the reality of being a Chinese, and feel the pain of bumping into walls."

Nonetheless, children of immigrants who are more educationally prepared learn to deal with these adversities by seeing their own advantages and broader alternatives. Their experiences of bumping into national or racial walls and their inability to identify themselves as Japanese despite their Japanese cultural competencies, both pressure and allow them to look for possibilities in and beyond Japan. After failing to obtain the *juku* job, Xue Tong started to explore "securer" ways to live in Japanese society as, in her own words, a "contradiction"—a person identified as Chinese but who grew up in Japan. She found jobs working as a translator or simultaneous interpreter in international conferences. "I couldn't be a *juku* tutor, then I would do something the Japanese people could not do, I thought." When she graduated from college, however, a bigger wall was waiting for her. She entered the job market right after the Lehman Shock. At one of the final interviews at a financial company, after some casual conversation, the human resources manager asked where her parents were. She replied that they were in China. The manager suddenly changed expression. She was not hired. She speculated that the financial firm wanted people it could trust, and her parents living in China was a risk.

After failing to land a desirable job that year, she was devastated and called her parents in China. "My father's reply immediately relieved my tension. He said, 'If it doesn't work out, you can always go on to the graduate school. You can also find good jobs in China too. You don't need to tie yourself to Japan. . . . Other Japanese people, if not getting jobs, can only hang themselves in Japan [*diaosi zai riben*]. You have choices.' I suddenly felt, 'Yeah, the worst outcome I could always go back to China.' Having this mentality, I felt freed." When Xue Tong entered the job market again after graduate school, the East Japan Earthquake hit. "The first time was human catastrophe, and the second time was natural disaster," she lamented. Nonetheless, she was successful the second time and

was hired by the multinational company she aspired to work for. "I had much less psychological burden the second time as well, because I knew I had options."

In summary, although not all children of immigrants can grow out of the inferiority complex about their ethnic background or give up the passing behavior when they reach adulthood, many immigrant children do. Those who have gone through Japan's national school system and have had difficulty with their identity because of their differences manage to come to terms with their ethnic backgrounds and begin to reevaluate their cultural backgrounds; they even invest in strengthening their heritage languages. With the globalizing economy, they are increasingly aware that their multicultural, multiethnic background is an asset instead of a burden. Consequently, like many skilled first-generation immigrants, they see their roles as bridges between economies and the global arena, and their identity as more hybrid as well as more cosmopolitan.

Between Blood, Cultures, and Nationalities: From National Identity to a Cosmopolitan Self

Nina was born in Japan. She was taken back to China when she was three months old because her grandparents who had come to Japan to help take care of her had to leave. She spent the next three years with them in Northeast China and returned to Japan when she was four. When she was ten, she spent a year in the United States with her aunt because her parents wanted her to learn English. Upon returning to Japan, she was enrolled in a returnee program at a public school. She spent another school year as an exchange student in the United States when she was in high school. When we interviewed her, she was a student at a Japanese national university, majoring in Chinese. Her parents and brother, who was also born in Japan, were living in China because her father had been sent there by the Japanese company he worked for. Nina described an uncertainty about her identity.

> Because my parents are Chinese, so my body is Chinese. [We] changed our nationality when I was in the third grade. I stayed in Japan for so long now, and my education has also been mostly Japanese, so the way I think is not so different from Japanese. So, when I return to China, [people] see me as Japanese, as overseas Chinese. In Japan, [people say] ah, your parents are Chinese, the blood in your body is Chinese, so you are Chinese. So I feel I am a foreigner wherever I go.

INTERVIEWER: How do you see yourself?

NINA: It is so difficult. When I was in the States—US is an immigrant country, isn't it—there were many Indians, Mexicans in my class. People considered me Japanese because I was born and grew up in Japan and had Japanese nationality. So [they thought] I was Japanese.

INTERVIEWER: Did they know you were originally Chinese?

NINA: Yes, they did. [But] they saw themselves as Americans because they were born in the US. They were Mexican American—their parents were Mexican but they themselves were American. . . . They basically think you are what people according to where you are born. So, I think I may be Japanese.

During our interview, Nina shifted between different identifications. When she explained her encounter with prejudice, her Chinese identity reemerged.

> Some Japanese people don't like China or Korea. . . . Many people see me as Japanese—I don't look very Chinese and my Japanese is the same as Japanese people—so they would say bad things about China in front of me. At that moment, I don't know how I should react. I don't know when I should reveal that I am actually Chinese.

INTERVIEWER:You feel you are Chinese even after naturalization?

NINA:In the end [I] am still Chinese.

When we were finishing the interview and asked the question about her identity again, she confessed, "This is a very difficult question. If I could only choose one, I am . . . Japanese. But usually I am thinking of myself as half Japanese half Chinese."

Immigrant children in Japan have a challenging task in answering the question of who they are. Although some try passing as Japanese, it is difficult for them to truly identify themselves as Japanese, as Kai's story shows. In Nina's case, because she was born and raised mostly in Japan, she felt like she was Japanese; but her answer was still tentative. On the other hand, while the majority do primarily identify themselves by the nationality of their parents' countries of origin, it is mostly because Japanese national identity is not readily accessible to them. The jus sanguine tradition and the nationalistic discourses have turned Japanese national identity into a biological and racialized concept, making it difficult for immigrants to identify themselves as Japanese if they are not born to both Japanese parents, unlike the typical jus soli immigrant countries.

At the same time, however, most immigrant children in Japan, especially those who have gone through the national education system, possess a high de-

gree of Japanese cultural competence. Their Japanese language ability is invariably higher than that of their heritage languages if the latter have not already diminished. They often feel more comfortable in a Japanese environment, and Japanese friends constitute their main social circle. Because of this familiarity with the culture and the establishment of their social life in Japan, children of immigrants often have a strong sense of belonging to Japanese society, if not simultaneously entertaining a sense of belonging to both their country of origin and the destination country.

Those who maintain transnational belonging are often children who have retained the linguistic competence of their country of origin or who have experienced more extensive transnational mobility. Because of their parents' transnational movements or parenting strategies, many immigrant children, be they Chinese, Nikkei Brazilians, or Filipino Japanese, whether they were born in Japan or not, have experienced transnational mobility while growing up. Such movements have enhanced a bi-focal outlook on their life and their future possibilities. Many children feel that they are entitled to, and indeed, belong to both Japan and their countries of origin. Such transnational belonging and bicultural competence, paradoxically, have also fostered a detached stance on social and cultural practices in both countries. This is especially salient among Korean and Chinese children. While being dismayed at negative portrayals of Korea and China in Japanese public discourses, immigrant children from Korea and China are equally disapproving of the anti-Japanese sentiments in Korea and China. Yujin's experiences of prejudice and her explanations are typical of such an attitude.

> Once [I] was speaking Korean, and an older gentleman immediately scolded me, saying I was too loud, and asking whether all Koreans were like this. I felt depressed—we were not talking that loud. In any case, some older people would say unpleasant things because we are Koreans. . . . Some Japanese entertainers also used Twitter accusing Fuji TV for showing too many Korean programs. In any case, such opinions remain, because the problems of Dokuto and Comfort Women are still there. But, actually, Koreans, too, have the tendency of being unfriendly toward Japan. On Korean websites, I see comments on Japan, saying Japan is the land of monkeys, etc. It is difficult for me to understand. I feel dismayed when Japanese trashed the Koreans, but I also feel difficult to take it when the Koreans trash Japanese. The reality is often not like that! When Japanese insisted Dokuto being Japanese territory, some Koreans said, "that's why you deserved Earthquake and Tsunami." As a person who experienced all that, I felt that was totally not right. In any

> case, both have misunderstandings—the Koreans do not understand Japan, and the Japanese do not understand Korea. So, I am like standing in the middle. Sometimes I think, how nice if people could all be like me, haha!

People like Yujin, a child of immigrants who understands both Japan and her country of origin, who feels she belongs to both and is comfortable in the cultural environments of both, therefore, have difficulty deciding what they are, based on national identification. Moreover, those who have to take the national identity ascribed to them by others, as Indira's case shows, do not see national identity as representative of who they are. Instead, many immigrant children resort to a split of identification and a self-definition. Most immigrant children we interviewed, while acknowledging a nationality, often gave a resounding "no" to the question "whether your nationality represents who you are," regardless of whether they obtained Japanese citizenship. Instead, labels such as "global person," "international person," or even "the person on Earth," (*chikyūjin*) were suggested as truly representing who they were. As Indira emphasized, "I consider myself like a global person who has a global upbringing. So to me, passport and your nationality do not necessarily relate to who you are."

Born to foreign parents, immigrant children in Japan are surrounded by a complex cultural and social environment and have to continually adjust their relationships to such contexts and modify their subjectivities in the course of doing so. Because nationality is a powerful identification, they also have to negotiate their own identity between Japan—the place where they live and are acculturated to but at times rejected by—and the country or countries where their parents are from and where their passports say they are from. This process of encounters and negotiations enhances their awareness of the limits and freedom of being immigrants in Japan.

Partly because of this perception of Japan being a nonimmigrant society, immigrant parents have a high degree of uncertainty about their own future destination as well as their children's mobility trajectory. Many children, whether born in Japan or not, experience transnational or global mobility in the course of growing up. Moreover, young people tend to experience increasingly complex social environments as they grow up. The globalization process has also altered the valuation of the cultural capital of immigrant children. These complex cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic conditions give rise to varied identity expressions.

This chapter, instead of offering to categorize identity types, provides insights into the strategies children use to maneuver the identity questions in different

contexts. It highlights how monocultural educational institutions produce an oppressive environment and give rise to prevalent passing behavior. It also emphasizes the evolution of identity during exposure to increasingly complex and globalizing social environments. Finally, it points out that children in Japan often have to confront the incongruence and multiplicity of culture, lineage, and belonging when making sense of their subjectivities. In the end, among a group of them, a cosmopolitan self emerges as a response to the limited repertoire of identity choice. In other words, many immigrant children, unwilling to resign to either nationality, choose to become citizens of the world.

Conclusion

REALITIES, CHALLENGES, AND PROMISES OF IMMIGRANT JAPAN

Many societies in the contemporary world are facing demographic crises and need immigrants to supplement their labor force, and yet many of these societies have ambivalent, if not hostile, attitudes toward immigration. Immigrants are seen as a threat to the host society's social order and cultural identity (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004; Sides and Citrin 2007; Card, Dustmann, and Preston 2012). Japan is no different. The country is aging so rapidly that in 2018, over 28 percent of the population was older than sixty-five. A labor shortage is felt in all industries. Farms lay uncultivated. Fishing boats are docked. Chain restaurants close down branches because of a lack of kitchen staff. An aging population needs care, but nursing homes are understaffed.[1] Nevertheless, Japan still avoids coherent immigration policies for fear of social and cultural disruptions.

In March 2016, two months after Prime Minister Abe's "no immigration policies" statement, I was invited to participate in a panel discussion on immigration and refugee issues in Japan. One official from the Ministry of Justice gave a presentation on the immigration control administration in Japan. He listed the possible consequences of immigration that Japanese policy makers were afraid of, from disrupting the social order to losing Japan's cultural characteristics. The top principle of Japan's migration policies is to protect "the public order and good moral standards [*kōjoryōzoku*] and ensure a safe [*anshinanzen*] society." In the conversation I had with him after the presentation, the official lamented the government's lack of action toward the demographic crisis, and added, "If you put *kōjoryōzoku* and *anshinanzen* as the first principles of migration policies, Japan will never become an immigrant country." Well-meaning as he was, his

comments implied that he shared the idea that immigrants were threats to Japan's public order and moral standards, and could potentially jeopardize the safe society Japanese people live in.[2]

In addition to the fear of social disorder, Japan is also afraid of foreign influences on its cherished cultural identity as a consequence of immigration. Rosenbluth, Kage, and Tanaka (2016) found that among people who had a more ethnocentric tendency or who support the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, the fear of cultural dilution, more than economic insecurity, was correlated with their negative attitude toward immigration. Moreover, Japanese government officials and the Japanese public, including some well-meaning activists, also entertain another myth—that the Japanese language and culture are difficult for foreigners to understand. Everywhere I go people tell me how difficult the Japanese language is. When my Japan-born, Japan-educated daughter got a low score on a school test, the teacher offered her explanation, "Japanese is difficult, isn't it (*nihongo ha muzukashi ne*)!" Even the informants who were sympathetic to immigration and refugee protection constantly emphasized that "Japanese was very difficult." This discourse of Japanese being uniquely difficult for all foreigners reinforces the belief that Japanese culture is impenetrable. This, in addition to the general reluctance for Japanese people to use English at work or in daily communications, is believed to be a reason that Japan was not attractive to either high-skilled people or refugees.

Despite such policy hesitations and concerns with immigrants' disruptive influences, however, Japan is already an immigrant country. Nearly three decades after the 1989 Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, immigration has become a reality and immigrants have made themselves part of the social fabric of Japanese society. Indeed, immigrants confront many difficulties caused by Japan's lack of an institutional framework for immigration and a lack of social acceptance of this immigrant reality. At the same time, they have their reasons for migrating to and settling down in Japan. They look for opportunities this country can offer them, and they appreciate the society and culture they are taking part in transforming.

The previous chapters in this book have narrated the motivations immigrants have for moving to Japan, the channels and processes through which they enter the country, the locations they occupy in the Japanese labor market and the economic contributions they provide, how they make decisions to leave or stay, how they construct a sense of belonging within this ethno-nationalist country, how they raise their children, and how the children negotiate and develop their identities. This book uses these individual tales to explore the realities, the promises, and the challenges of Japan as an immigrant country. Meanwhile, beyond the case of Japan, this book illustrates the development of new migration patterns

and new phenomena that need to be examined with a revised understanding of population mobilities and people's relationships with places. This concluding chapter revisits some of the themes laid out in early chapters and their implications both for migration studies broadly and for Japan's own migration policies in particular.

Global Mobilities and Immigration into Japan

Though a fabled monoethnic society, Japan has nonetheless become a country with increasing numbers of immigrants. This reality reflects that, first of all, globalization and demographic changes have diversified migration destinations and mobility trajectories. Migration has become a normative practice in the increasingly globalized world. People cross borders in search of the promise of riches, relative security, or a more desirable lifestyle. On the other hand, a transnational migration infrastructure has increasingly been established and expanded to link more geographic locations. The developments of information technology and cheaper and faster transportation have provided more material possibilities for mobility and wider access to previously inaccessible locations. More legal, institutional, and social channels have opened to allow and encourage cross-border mobilities, and intermediaries have emerged to bridge social and institutional gaps to facilitate migration (Liu-Farrer and Tran 2019). Regardless of whether it is for economic imperatives or humanitarian concerns, more and more countries are involved in global mobility networks.

Japan has emerged as a major immigration destination in Asia amid such a development in global mobility. This is because, first of all, a migration infrastructure has been established to channel people and provide opportunities to meet the individual economic aspirations. Instrumental mobilities are often less about the destination itself than the opportunity to move to better one's life. In most cases, the choice of destination is determined by the accessibility. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, many immigrants ended up in Japan not because they chose Japan but because they were willing, or even aspiring, to leave their home country. The labor brokers or study-abroad agencies, their friends and families, or the institutions they were affiliated with presented them the option to come to Japan. Japan's migration policies, aiming to bring in manpower (while disguised to avoid the appearance of overt labor import), have in fact made border crossing easier for many categories of people. One informant from a study-abroad industry in Vietnam explained that the threshold for studying in Japan was the lowest among all the destination countries that recruit Vietnamese

students, including Korea. Moreover, with labor shortages and a desire to globalize, Japan offers migrants abundant economic opportunities and roomy legal allowances to work in all kinds of capacities. Economic opportunities, including the potential earnings from the secondary labor market, have been an important reason that Japan has attracted a large number of international students from China around the late 1980s and early1990s and from Vietnam in the mid-2010s.

Furthermore, tourism and the globalization of cultural content create new patterns of migration (see, e.g., Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Thorpe 2012). Increasingly, migration is about lifestyle preferences and cultural choices. Japan is therefore also a specific destination for many who are drawn to its traditional and popular cultures. Short-term visits turn into long-term stays, and a semester exchange leads to enrollment in a graduate degree program. For some, as in the case of Stephen, introduced in chapter 1, the migration choice is "Japan or Bust." However, Japan as a particular cultural and lifestyle destination is a somewhat paradoxical choice. People are interested in Japan because of its perceived unique aesthetics, cultural expressions, and social practices. At the same time, the attractive Japanese characteristics and even quirks one appreciates as an outsider or a visitor can be disagreeable to a long-term resident, especially when it comes to how school, work, and one's social life are organized. Japanese firms and schools are especially inflexible in accommodating differences, and thereby frustrate, even drive away, immigrants. Moreover, as a recent immigrant country with a small presence of foreign residents, Japan has yet to adjust its social life to the reality of immigration. As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, the Japanese public in general is still resistant to the idea of immigration and concerned with the possible social and cultural changes that could occur because of the entry of immigrants. Many immigrants we talked to have experienced the xenophobic attitudes and felt very much on the margins of society. Yet, despite this discontent, most immigrants are attracted to Japan because it is a civil, peaceful, and orderly society, full of cultural charm. Immigrants always manage to find kind and helpful Japanese individuals and are highly appreciative of Japanese lifestyles.

Pragmatic Migratory Trajectories

Not being a traditional immigrant country influences how people initially perceive their migration into Japan. In most cases, people arrive with temporary plans. However, as research in different receiving contexts repeatedly confirms, intentions do not predict outcomes. What the migrants' experiences in Japan illustrate is the pragmatism of mobility trajectories. Life is a multidimensional

process. People's mobility decisions are influenced by a wide range of events. In the end, it is the actual and perceived opportunity structure, the cultural adaptive outcomes, social and intimate relationships, and the emotional fulfillment these relationships provide that determine immigrants' migratory trajectories. As a consequence, migrants demonstrate varied mobility patterns—transnational, circulatory and multiple migrations, and, of course, also settlement.

Immigrants' mobility outcomes in Japan are first of all dependent on the legal and institutional framework for immigration control. Japan's immigration regime is selective but also lacks leniency. It courts highly skilled workers and wishes for them to settle.[3] At the same time, it averts the long-term stay of those who contribute manual labor, even though they are equally, and, in some sense, more desperately needed. Japan also adamantly rejects irregular migrants and largely associates them with potential criminal behaviors (Yamamoto 2010, 2013). This hierarchy of desirability introduces many uncertainties into the mobility trajectories. Those who have vested interests in staying to earn a living are often the most susceptible to rejection. On the other hand, the ones who are solicited to stay have more resources and incentives to move on.

Second, immigrants' experiences in Japan show the importance of time for migration trajectories. The relationships between the migrants and the countries of both destination and origin change in the process of migration as well as in one's life course. Migration is a journey and a project. It requires efforts to settle in a new place for however temporary a period it is. In the course of making a living and building a life in the new country, immigrants find the initial unfamiliar and bumpy terrain in the new country increasingly easier to navigate, and the landscape at home that one takes for granted morphs into strangeness and fades into obscurity. One's perspectives of the opportunity structure consequently change. The longer one stays in the destination country, the more likely it is that the foundation of one's life will shift to the acquired environment. The findings from this study show that immigrants who have lived in Japan for several years inevitably shift the center of gravity from their home country to Japan because, in the end, where they live in Japan is the physical world their body occupies and their basic needs are satisfied. This tendency is observed even though almost all informants in this study used digital media and stayed connected to their homeland.

The needs and concerns at different stages of one's life course—another temporal dimension—also influence people's mobility trajectories. Japan can be attractive and repulsive in different stages of the migration process. As a single young person, one might appreciate many quirks in Japan, enjoying them as a form of cultural adventure and life experience. When they earnestly consider their work life and career future, some might decide that the Japanese corporate

environment does not provide what they want, as some female informants' stories introduced in chapter 5 show. A critical juncture of mobility decision making for many is when their children enter school. Concerned with the experiences their children might have in Japanese public schools, some immigrants decide to leave the education system or the country altogether. On the other hand, any life-course event can potentially redirect immigrants toward a new place. Meeting a partner who is going to another country or finding a job that requires relocation will result in geographic mobility, either temporarily or permanently.

Finally, mobility and settlement are instrumental as well as emotional outcomes of a process that involves dynamic interactions between immigrants and their receiving contexts. Some work on migration has indicated what has been called an "emotional turn." Emotional geography, as a subfield of human geography, "attempts to understand emotion—experientially and conceptually—in terms of its socio-spatial mediation and articulation rather than as entirely interiorised subjective mental states" (Bondi, Davidson, and Smith 2007, 3). Emotional geographies are charted in a wide range of research inquiries (see Davidson, Bondi, and Smith 2007). As the stories in this book manifested, emotions are also potent drivers of mobility decisions and forces in altering trajectories, especially when they are tied to human relationships (intimate, familial, or communal). Because of a broken heart after her son died, Ms. Kondo fled the country to marry a man she did not really know (chapter 1). Tina decided to stay in Japan because of the positive feelings she had as an English teacher in a warm and friendly rural village (chapter 4). Loneliness resulting from the lack of an intimate relationship and meaningful social connections pushed George to leave Japan (chapter 5).

Emotions are not an independent motive for mobility but are nearly always mixed in with and result from economic and cultural experiences. For example, George attributed his failure in finding a romantic relationship to his meager income and small apartment—a material condition that made him unattractive. His workplace experience, particularly the feeling of marginalization, in his understanding, reflected the cultural and institutional constraints of Japan as a migrant destination.

As explained in chapters 5 and 6, immigrants are also haunted by nostalgia and homesickness. Immigrants who arrive in Japan as adults and are directly thrown into Japanese workplaces or families often have difficulties in acquiring full linguistic and cultural competencies to feel at ease in the host society. Moreover, being foreigners in a country that embraces an ethno-nationalist narrative, many immigrants feel marginal. Some of them, from the start, considered migration a job and their stay in Japan a sojourn. They usually look forward to the

day their mission can be accomplished—their children have successfully entered college, a piece of land has been purchased in their homestead, or, as in the cases of several women who married Japanese men, their Japanese husbands could retire from work. Whether they will end up returning to home countries remains unclear. Going home often becomes a comforting idea and a narrative they use to make sense of their migration, though not necessarily a real outcome.

Possible National Belonging and Impossible National Identity

The narratives of belonging and identity by immigrants in Japan indicate diverse possibilities of belonging, including that toward Japanese society. At the same time, immigrants have more difficulty in claiming a Japanese identity. This is because belonging is more a subjective evaluation of one's relation toward the place and group, while identity is more a personal narrative, influenced by a range of other competing narratives.

Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013) argues that belonging can be conceived of as "a position in social structure, experienced through identification, embeddedness, connectedness and attachments," and "a combination of individually acquired, interpersonally negotiated and structurally affected knowledge and life-experience" (13). In other words, through examining individual immigrants' sense of belonging, we understand how they navigate through "diverse collective constellations," experience different moments of social inclusion and exclusion in the course of their migration journey, and find attachments to material or immaterial things in the host country.

The narratives of home and belonging in this book show that immigrants carry a multidimensional notion of home, employing this term in different contexts to mean, respectively, a feeling, an abode, a geographic location, and a national body. Moreover, immigrants' senses of belonging are influenced by a range of psychological as well as cultural mechanisms, from intimate relationships to the cultural nationalist discourses. It is clear that immigrants in Japan, despite its image as a nonimmigrant country, are capable of a sense of belonging anchored in practical routines and a certainty of one's material environment and social relationships within this country. However, it is equally clear that people can feel belonging to communities, localities, and institutions nested within Japan without claiming belonging to Japan as a nation.

Among immigrants who express a sense of belonging in Japan, this sentiment is less about an attachment to the nation itself than feeling at home in its environment. It is accomplished by gaining cultural understanding and competen-

cies; a situatedness through attachments to families, organizations, communities, or other specific social constellations; and a membership justified through fulfilling the prescribed conditions or making instrumental contributions, such as paying taxes. Being able to express a sense of belonging in Japan, in fact, conveys immigrants' confidence in their having a structural position in this country. In comparison, those who lack adequate cultural skills, who are excluded from Japanese social space, who have no intimate relationships, or who attain no social attachment to particular groups tend to adhere to a homeland belonging or to convey an absence of belonging.

In addition, we see the narratives of deplaced belonging. Individuals who are culturally competent, structurally well positioned, and emotionally and securely attached do not necessarily want to tie their belonging to any particular place, neither in the host country nor in the home country. We even see, as in the case of Bai Shicheng (chapter 6), a celebration of individualism, freed of collective belonging. Such deplaced, or "un-rooted," belonging can be understood as resulting from increased deterritorialization of social space. Migrants are able to create new social space independent of geographic boundaries where they claim membership and anchor their subjectivities. It is also a manifestation of what Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013) calls "individual biographic navigation." Individuals navigate through the diverse constellations of belonging and make "more or less conscious choices when it comes to the constructions of the self, to new normative orientations, to negotiations and positionings" (22). The pluralization of social life-worlds allows belonging to be tailored to one's "own longings and aspirations, while assigning, defining and attributing different relevance to its diverse dimensions according to one's own needs, desires, ambitions, allegiances and apprehensions" (28). In the case that collectives prove to be too constricting, some individuals opt out of a group-oriented belonging.

Under the diverse expressions of belongingness, however, we see the influences of existing cultural narratives on immigrants' perceptions of their structural positions as well as their subjectivities. People might "feel" a particular emotional relationship with things or places, but how they make sense of and then express it is conditioned by the vocabulary and narratives available to them. Therefore, when immigrants verbalize their sense of belonging, as they do in interviews, they are also employing cultural tool kits (Swidler 1986, 2001) in expressing and often justifying such an emotional geography. Because immigrants are exposed to complex and sometimes contradictory cultural frameworks, their narratives of home and belonging have also become inconsistent and situational. The most prominent cultural tools in immigrants' expressions of belonging are the meta-narratives of nationhood. Not only are Japan's cultural nationalistic discourses used by immigrants as a framework to explain their

experiences and justify their inability to belong to Japan, but the nationalistic discourses from their home countries, such as the immutable roots and the equating of home with homeland, show up in many immigrants' explanations of their belongingness.

However, although the national narratives affect immigrants' ability to claim national belonging, they still can. They can "belong to Japan as a foreigner." What none of them, even children who have grown up in Japan, have the confidence to claim is their Japaneseness. The ethno-nationalist discourses on Japaneseness made this national identity unavailable to them. Japanese has become a racially, historically, and culturally fixed identity; even an identity such as Korean Japanese or Indian Japanese is not perceived as possible. This, as I will further elaborate in the next section, is a challenge an immigrant Japan confronts.

Japan's Future as an Immigrant Society

In an essay, Kelly and White (2006) named five types of people—students, slackers, singles, seniors, and strangers—as agents who could potentially transform Japan, because these people disrupt the normative patterns that characterize the social organization of the family-state. Strangers here denotes immigrants. Earlier studies on different types of immigrants in Japan have revealed the ways in which immigrants are in effect deeply embedded in every institution of Japanese society, challenging it through constant negotiations for social positions and through demands for legal recognitions and cultural acceptance. Indeed, the future of Japan, to a large degree, depends on how it incorporates immigrants, one of the transformative agents. Nonetheless, what kind of immigrant society Japan can become depends also on how it deals with several challenges: the fundamental assumptions about Japanese nationhood—especially the identity markers of Japaneseness—and the increasingly versatile and uncertain global population mobilities. I want to end this book by arguing that these are not insurmountable obstacles. National identities, like individual identities, evolve in changing contexts. Similarly, the diversifying patterns of population movements and the increasingly hostile environments in many traditional immigration destinations might be opportunities for Japan to emerge as an attractive destination.

Changing Identity in a Changing World

According to McCrone (2002), identity markers are "those characteristics that people use to attribute national identity to others and to receive claims and at-

tributions made by others" (308). These markers include "place of birth, ancestry, place of residence, length of residence, upbringing/education, name, accent, physical appearance, dress, behavior and commitment/ contribution to place" (308). In the case of Japan, the nationalist discourses of Japaneseness that emerged in the early twentieth century and became dominant in the postwar era narrowly delimit the criteria of what constitutes Japanese nationals. A Japanese identity is based primarily on the inseparable duo of ancestry and culture. The former focuses on racial purity and uninterrupted lineage, and the latter emphasizes its uniqueness and homogeneity (Dale [1986] 1990; Yoshino 1992; Befu 1993, 2001; Fujitani 1993; Weiner 1994, 2009). The ancestry marker excludes whoever does not have pure Japanese parentage, and the cultural criteria disqualify those who have not been brought up in Japan (Sugimoto 2000).

This book has shown that many of Japan's problems with immigration have to do with Japanese being such a narrow identity concept. This had led to the policy to bring back ethnic Japanese families from Latin American countries. Because the primary purpose of this ethnic return policy is labor import, Nikkei Latin Americans have been brokered into the manufacturing sector as temp workers. It has resulted in their occupational concentration and social isolation, and a sense of alienation from the purported ancestral homeland (Tsuda 2003, 2009a, 2009b). Consequently, their relationship with Japanese society has become uncertain. Nikkei Brazilian children's thwarted social and education mobility, to an extent, has to do with this uncertainty because many parents are still preparing themselves as well as their children for the eventual return to Brazil.

A cultural and racial definition of Japaneseness also sets an emotional hurdle for immigrants to apply for Japanese citizenship. Most immigrants choose permanent residency over naturalization. This is not only because naturalization signals a long-term settlement plan—a mobility decision many immigrants hesitate to make—but also because citizenship is tied to national identity. Most immigrants do not perceive themselves fitting the identity markers of Japaneseness. Among a minority who have naturalized, most stress the utilitarian reasons for doing so, separating this decision from an identity choice. People frequently justified their decisions to naturalize with reasons such as the convenience of business travel, as in the case of most Chinese immigrants. Others also believed a Japanese nationality made entrepreneurial practices easier. Still others, especially those whose appearance fit the racial profile, naturalized in order for their children to be able to pass as Japanese so as to avoid bullying.

Despite their birth and upbringing, the claim of Japanese identity is not readily available to immigrant children either. These strict identity markers make identifying with Japan the nation psychologically impossible for most of them. They have to tackle the incongruence among their cultural competencies, blood

lineages, and social belonging when making sense of their subjectivities. Some resort to the strategy of passing and concealing; others waver between the choices of home and homeland; and still others, unwilling to resign to either nationality, choose to become citizens of the world. Though immigrant children demonstrate creative ways of self-identification, many remain on the periphery of the Japanese social world and struggle with self-doubts and inferiority complexes. This is problematic for Japan. This country is rapidly aging, and immigrant children occupy an increasing share of the youth population. Japan's future national security and economic prosperity will depend on whether these young people of foreign parentage can achieve a sense of ownership and identify themselves with this country.

Without a doubt, Japan has to change its ethno-nationalist discourses of nationhood and acknowledge its diverse social and cultural landscapes. Japan has never been racially homogeneous (Lee 2008). Because of the colonial legacy, migrants have always been a part of the society. With the new stocks of migrants, Japan, like most industrialized countries in the contemporary world, is facing the reality of super-diversification (Meissner and Vertovec 2015). How can such a national identity marker be transformed? One suggestion is to change it in the places where it is the most institutionally and socially enforced—the schools. As detailed in chapters 7 and 8, the most problematic institution is the monocultural national education system. It is an environment where the nationals are shaped. The current Japanese school system, as critiqued by many scholars, is ill prepared to accommodate diversity, and immigrant children's cultural and ethnic differences are often penalized. Not only should multicultural content be introduced earlier and given more importance, but Japan should also consider having multiethnic and multicultural faculty and staff in the school system, not as a token presence but as real actors in education.

At the same time, children of immigrants or children of mixed backgrounds have become increasingly visible in varied representations of Japaneseness. Naomi Osaka's accomplishments as a global tennis player instigate both pride and anxiety in Japanese society. It is imaginable that the emergence of more and more Naomis and the constant challenges their presence poses toward a monoethnic Japanese identity will eventually transform the notion of Japaneseness.

An Attractive Japan amid Changing Patterns of Global Mobility

Another reality that confronts Japan is the increasingly fluid global population mobility. Rapid global population mobility poses two challenges. First, how can Japan attract and retain immigrants, especially the ones it seeks? Second, how is

social integration possible when settlement becomes unpredictable and migration patterns are varied and fluid?

One major goal of Japan's immigration policy is to attract global talent, especially highly skilled professionals. Given the low number of highly skilled migrant professionals currently in Japan, the general impression is that Japan is not the desired destination of these high flyers. Researchers have discussed the reasons why Japan has not been able to attract and retain the best and brightest. The unfavorable institutional frameworks, such as tax codes and the education system, are cited as causes of Japan's failure to keep talent (Tsukazaki 2008; Oishi 2012). Corporate Japan's organizational practices, which lead to gaps in expectations and skill mismatches, are also widely understood as causing international students to avoid Japanese firms (Moriya 2012).

These are legitimate concerns. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, some of the existing policies and institutional practices are obviously problematic. On the other hand, Japan is not so hopeless. The difficulty in retaining immigrants is not a situation Japan alone faces. Individuals have come to see geographic mobility as an integral part of one's career development and a lifestyle practice. For example, an editorial in Europe described the Chinese migrants in Europe as "roam[ing) Europe as a chessboard seeking work prospects" (Smith 2004, cited in Denison and Johanson 2012, 310). With the globalization of the economy and the expansion of a migration infrastructure, immigrants' labor market opportunities have increased. Migration has become not only one of the "capitals" that can be utilized for economic and social advancement (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004) but also a practice that constitutes one's identity (J. Chu 2010) and a form of established culture in many parts of the world (Kandel and Massey 2002; Cohen 2004; Asis 2006; Ali 2007; Horváth 2008; Coates 2018).

Under such circumstances, what a country needs to do to retain and integrate immigrants is a big question. In Japan, what I see is a bundle of contradictions, even in the corporate employment practices. While the flaws of a corporate internal labor market are undeniable, the organized recruitment process allows international students to enter the primary labor market and gain stable employment. In a globalizing labor market where flexible and skill-based labor practices have become the norm, some young people are coming to Japan looking for career opportunities (Hof 2018). Similarly, the lauded aspects of life in Japan, such as the orderliness, convenience, and courteous services, entail a high degree of social control and a disciplining and training process. They are often achieved at the cost of sacrificing one's personal time and suppressing individuality—aspects that are undesirable to most immigrants.

Integration amid increasingly fluid population movements is also a challenging issue. As studies show, migration takes many forms. Aside from transnational

movements, people move seasonally (Gustafson 2002), circularly (Hugo 1982; Skeldon 2012), and multinationally (Paul 2017). These changing migration patterns have created unpredictability for all immigrant-receiving countries. For example, the seasonal migration of Europeans who move from the North to the South of Europe for lifestyle reasons has created foreign enclaves in the host society, and these migrants have made few attempts to integrate themselves into the local communities (Gustafson 2002). Japan has no overarching integration policies but relies on localized multicultural coexistence programs to provide foreign residents linguistic and cultural assistance. These programs are often considered superficial and ineffective, even reifying cultural differences (Aiden 2011; Kibe 2016).

Nonetheless, in Japan, immigrants are often more "invisible" in Japanese social life. On the one hand, it has to do with the relatively small immigrant population. The racial composition of the immigrants, with the majority of them from East Asia, contributes to this invisibility. On the other hand, it is because immigrants are more embedded in Japan's institutions, such as families, workplaces and universities. Immigrants are more aware and willing to absorb Japan's cultural practices. They perceive Japan as having its own established systems, understand their positions as outsiders, and feel the pressure to adapt. In addition, as explained, Japanese culture lures people to Japan. Immigrants appreciate these cultural practices and are willing to conform. Moreover, there is little residential segregation. At least at the time that I was writing this book, there were not many immigrant enclaves in Japan. There are neighborhoods that have a relatively high percentage of immigrants, such as Shin-Ōkubo in Tokyo, or some neighborhoods in Hamamatsu city, but none are genuinely ethnic enclaves. Most socialization in Japan is conducted in mixed public spaces. Immigrants who have lived in Japan for a substantial amount of time therefore have plenty of exposure to and are tuned into the Japanese way of life. One Chinese immigrant expressed alarm when she visited her high school friend who had immigrated to the United States. "She still lived like a Northeastern Chinese in the US. In Japan, we have all changed a lot and are more like the Japanese."

In summary, processes of immigration and integration are challenged by the increasingly unpredictable global mobilities and changing patterns of movements. Japan is not alone in facing this challenge. On the one hand, Japan undoubtedly needs to reform many institutional practices in order to be ready for the cross-border population flows and to be competitive as a hub in the global highway of mobility. On the other hand, the empirical findings in this book show that part of Japan's attraction comes from its particular social and cultural traits. There is no fixed formula for a perfect equilibrium. Much has to depend on social experimentation. It is obvious that Japan cannot keep its front door shut and

hold onto institutions geared solely toward the domestic population. On the other hand, as one informant points out, the last thing Japan wants is to be an "America Jr." America cannot be the model for migration scholars studying Japan either.

What kind of society Japan becomes depends on how it acts at a time when immigration is inevitable for economic sustainability, mobility has become a way of life, and the world is increasingly connected through technologies. This book focuses on depicting the reality of immigration and immigrants' lives in Japan. These individuals' tales illustrate the potential as well as the challenges of Japan as an immigrant country. Some of the challenges are particular to Japan, or ethno-nationalist societies like Japan. However, Japan's transition to an immigrant society also takes place in a global context where policy as well as public opinion regarding immigration is hostile. Anti-immigration becomes the main platform of populist party politics in many major destinations of immigration. In other words, more countries are embracing ethno-nationalism. These developments, however alarming to many observers, are also potentially creating opportunities for Japan because they are shaping a new geography of global migrations and are likely also to redefine the image of an immigrant society as well as the map of attractive destinations of immigration.

Appendix A

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Depicting immigrant mobilities and belonging in Japan is ambitious for a qualitative project. Over the years, with the assistance of multilingual graduate students, and through different channels, I have accumulated hundreds of stories of immigrants from diverse backgrounds; nonetheless, the data neither are the result of probability samples nor represent the distribution of the immigrant population in Japan. For example, I have oversampled Chinese and newcomer Koreans, while interviews with Nikkei Brazilians were relatively fewer. The descriptions and analyses in this book, therefore, aim to describe the diverse migratory journeys and belonging orientations as well as to identify conditions that have affected such tendencies.

Sources of Data

This book uses both primary and secondary data. The main sources of primary data for this book are qualitative interviews and ethnographic fieldwork studies conducted over nearly two decades. To provide a sense of the scope and distribution of migration channels and residential categories, it also uses statistics published by the Japanese government. Secondary data come from a large number of studies, in Japanese as well as English, that have been published on immigrants in Japan, including master's theses and dissertations.

PRIMARY DATA

Three projects conducted between 2010 and 2017 provide the largest portion of narrative data used in this book. The first was a Japan Foundation–funded project

in 2010 and 2011 that focused on Chinese migration into Japan and southeast countries. I collaborated with several Southeast Asian scholars on this project that examined the varied migration patterns out of China and how Chinese immigrants are located in different receiving societies. The second project, titled "Is Japan an Immigrant Country: A Comparative Study of Immigrants' Citizenship Consciousness and Sense of Belonging in Japan and Australia," was funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). Its aim was to understand the characteristics of Japan as an immigrant-receiving country by comparing it with a traditional immigrant society and to investigate what types of relationships immigrants are able to forge in Japan. This research was conducted between 2011 and 2015, after the East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011. The triple disasters fundamentally shook Japanese society and particularly the immigrant community. Existential security became a primary concern. The disasters became an occasion for immigrants to reflect on their lives in Japan and to decide whether to move or stay.

From 2015 to 2017, the other JSPS-funded project, "Beyond Multiculturalism: Organizational Logics and Cultural Practices at Japanese Workplaces," allowed me to investigate skilled migrants' experiences working in Japanese firms as well as Japanese employers' responses to the presence of non-Japanese employees in their organizations. These three projects yielded 229 interviews with immigrants of different nationalities who came from China, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, and countries in Africa, North and South America, Europe, and Oceania. Interviews were conducted with the first-generation migrants as well as children of immigrants. These interviews, though they are not the only source of information, form the backbone for the analysis in this book. The basic data of these interviewees are presented in the next section.

In addition, my research over the past two decades has been indispensable in aiding my understanding of the immigrant experiences in Japan. Since the early 2000s, I have conducted several studies on immigrants, especially Chinese, in Japan starting with my doctoral dissertation. For that project, I focused on student migration—a main channel of migration from China to Japan—and took lengthy ethnographic notes and conducted over one hundred interviews with Chinese immigrants with varied mobility outcomes, including corporate employment, entrepreneurship, international marriage, and undocumented status (Liu-Farrer 2011a). The second project was on Chinese professionals' career mobility (2007–2008), for which I followed skilled Chinese migrants' transnational career trajectories between Japan and China. The twenty-five interviews with people who had left Japan appear in chapter 6. Between 2010 and 2012, I conducted a case study of students who had enrolled in a second-tier private university in Tokyo, in order to understand more recent experiences of student

migration in Japan (Liu-Farrer 2014). These projects enabled me to follow the historical trends and observe changes as well as continuities in the migration process from China to Japan.

My past research thus allowed me to accumulate more data on the Chinese immigrants than on people and communities of other nationalities. Although the Chinese are the largest and most diverse immigrant group in Japan, they count for less than 30 percent of the total foreign residents in Japan. To avoid a skewed perspective, for the "Is Japan an Immigrant Country" project and the one focusing on foreign employees' experiences in Japanese firms, I utilized a multilingual team of research assistants to collect data from Korean newcomers, Filipinos, and Brazilians as well as individuals from other regions to achieve a more diverse sample of immigrants in Japan.

The book also employs public statistics to provide a bird's-eye view of the immigrant situation in Japan. The Ministry of Justice collects statistics on annual border entries and exits and the number of individuals in different resident categories. It documents visa changes from student to various employment statuses and the number of people applying for and obtaining Japanese citizenship. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare collects both vital statistics and data regarding the labor market and international marriages. Other nongovernment organizations such as the Japan Student Service Organization as well as research institutes and private firms are good sources of data for international students' mobility and immigrants' employment situations.

Finally, my life history is a source of information. I am an immigrant who has had multiple migration experiences, as I moved first from China to the United States and then to Japan, and I have worked in a major Japanese university with a large number of international students. I have lived in Japan for almost twenty years, over the course of which I bought a house, gave birth and raised a child, and have become socially embedded in multiple multicultural communities. In the end, I chose to naturalize as a Japanese citizen. These experiences have not only provided intimate insights but also served as important data for my analysis of immigrant life in Japan.

SECONDARY DATA

The past thirty years have seen an expanding literature on immigration policies and different immigrant groups in Japan, written by both Japanese and non-Japanese researchers. This book, to the furthest extent possible, references this existing body of research, especially studies on populations that are less represented in my own original data, including Filipino migrants, ethnic Japanese from South America, and children of immigrants. In particular, the issues of

immigrant children's education and mobilities have engaged vast research efforts by researchers in Japan. Chapter 7 of this book draws on many of these research outputs in the analysis.

As a faculty member in a Japanese graduate school, aside from supervising doctoral dissertations, I have also had the opportunity to work with a number of students on their master's projects on immigration and immigrants in Japan. Some of the cases or findings from these master's theses, especially on the mobility and identity issues of the children of immigrants, are used in this book with the original thesis titles and their authors properly cited.

Informant Profiles

Since this book uses data from different sources, including ethnographic research, in-depth interviews, and focus groups conducted in different periods on different themes, it is difficult to give a comprehensive overview of the informants that constitute the bulk of the data. I adopt two strategies to present the data: the first is to provide the demographic breakdowns of the 229 interviewees at the aggregate level; and the second is to sketch the profiles of the individuals whose names, narratives, and stories appear in the book.

BASIC INFORMATION OF THE INTERVIEWEES

Table A.1 provides the demographic information of the 178 interviewees who entered Japan as adults. In the "Other" categories, people from eighteen countries are represented, including twelve from the United States and five from Brazil.

In addition, we have also interviewed fifty-one children of immigrants, ages ranging from fifteen to thirty-three at the time of interviews. Among them, forty-three had Chinese parents, five had Korean parents, one had Brazilian parents, one had Indian parents, one had Mongolian parents, and one had Chinese/American parents. Among them, twenty-nine were permanent residents, thirteen were naturalized citizens, eight were university students, and two had long-term resident status. Twenty-seven of these children of immigrants were men, and twenty-five were women.

NAMED INFORMANT PROFILES

The names of eighty-two first-generation immigrant informants appear in this book, and an additional eighteen children's stories and narratives are introduced with names. All these names, except my daughter's, are pseudonyms. Most of these informants were from the three waves of data collection, but not exclusively. Some were from earlier data sets and others were from fieldwork other

TABLE A.1 Demographic profile of immigrant newcomers at the time of interview

NATIONAL ORIGIN	TOTAL NUMBER	GENDER		AVERAGE LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN YEARS (LOWEST, HIGHEST)
		FEMALE	MALE	
Chinese	80	36	44	11 (5, 24)
Korean	39	30	9	17 (7, 37)
Filipino	14	11	3	15 (5, 25)
Other	45	14	31	10 (2, 38)

TABLE A.2 Resident statuses of immigrant newcomers

	OTHER	CHINESE	KOREAN	FILIPINO	TOTAL
Business manager	1	2	0	1	4
Engineer	7	13	1	1	22
Instructor	1	0	0	0	1
Professor	1	2	0	0	3
Specialist of Humanities and International Business	20	15	9	1	45
Spouse	5	1	6	2	14
Student	1	0	1	0	2
Dependent	0	1	2	1	4
Religion	0	0	1	0	1
Skilled labor	0	1	0	0	1
Designated worker	0	0	0	3	3
Permanent resident	9	34	16	5	64
Naturalized citizen	0	11	3	0	14
Total	45	80	39	14	178

than in-depth interviews. For their demographic, legal, and occupational information, please refer to Appendix B.

ABOUT REGIONAL EFFECTS

One question that is inevitable about a book on Japan is the regional effect. In what way might immigrants in Tokyo have different experiences from those who entered Japan and lived in other parts of Japan? I have three responses to such a query. First, although most interviewees included in this book were from the Greater Tokyo area at the time of our interviews, including Saitama, Kanagawa, and Chiba, many of them had experienced mobilities within Japan. As is typical of the Japanese native population, international migrants generally also move

from smaller provincial towns to big cities, especially the Tokyo area. Such mobilities are reflected in many narratives in the book. For example, Tina moved from a small town in Japan, where she was an English teacher and was warmly welcomed by the locals, to Tokyo, where she studied, worked, and married. Second, the Greater Tokyo area attracts over 40 percent of the resident foreign nationals. Although a large number of Korean old-comers reside in the Kansai area and most Nikkei Brazilians live and work in manufacturing towns in Shizuoka, Gifu, Aichi, and Mie, nearly half of immigrant newcomers dwell in the Greater Tokyo area. Third, although I cannot make causal statements about regional effects on mobility trajectories or belonging, what this book aims to point out is how an ethno-nationalist society such as Japan produces a particular set of institutional, social, and cultural conditions around immigration. It shows how these conditions interact with individuals' cultural frameworks, emotional states, and life-course demands to impact individuals' mobility and settlement process and their sense of belonging. Although it is beyond the book's capacity to claim, for example, that rural towns are more likely to produce a sense of belonging than cities, it explains, through informants' narratives, how community inclusion and friendly treatment can instill a sense of emotional attachment to a place.

Process of Data Analysis

The main thematic categories of this book, as reflected in the chapter titles, were decided before most of the narrative data were collected. The themes were more or less chronically organized, encompassing different realms of immigrant life. These categories structure the subsequent interviews. These broad thematic categories aside, however, the actual coding of the narrative data was open. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed, and stored in the (many versions of) NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. I used this software mostly for coding purposes. For example, I have many items under the code "belonging" and have then established categories for different orientations of belonging and varied reasons for such different orientations. As a typical qualitative study, my strategy is to exhaust the variations, looking for as many different themes on the same issue as possible.

Appendix B

PROFILES OF INFORMANTS WHOSE NAMES APPEAR IN THE BOOK

TABLE B.1 Individuals who entered Japan during adulthood (18+)

NAME	ORIGIN	AGE	SEX	OCCUPATION (IN JAPAN)	YEARS IN JAPAN	RESIDENT IN JAPAN	RESIDENT STATUS	MARITAL STATUS
Amy	China	30+	F	Company employee	6	No	None	
An	Korea	20+	M	Student/ singer	3	Yes	Student	Single
An Jie	China	45+	F	Company employee	13	Yes	Permanent Resident (PR)	Married
Anh Dung	Vietnam	25+	M	Student	2	Yes	Student	Single
Bai Shicheng	China	40+	M	Company employee	21	Yes	PR	Divorced
Bai Yun	China	20+	F	Student	4	Yes	Student	Single
Beatrice	Philippines	60+	F	Domestic helper	9	Yes	Designated Worker	Widowed
Ben	US	25+	M	Company employee	2	Yes	Specialist of Humanities and International Services (SHIS)	Single
Brad	US	40+	M	English/ cultural consultancy	14	Yes	SHIS	Divorced
Calvin	Philippines	35+	M	Engineer/ unemployed	8	Yes	Dependent	Married
Carlos	Brazil	45+	M	Language instructor	15	Yes	PR	Single

(*Continued*)

TABLE B.1 (*Continued*)

NAME	ORIGIN	AGE	SEX	OCCUPATION (IN JAPAN)	YEARS IN JAPAN	RESIDENT IN JAPAN	RESIDENT STATUS	MARITAL STATUS
Chang	China	40+	M	IT engineer	8	Yes	Engineer	Married
Charlie	Philippines	35+	M	English teacher/ entrepreneur	10	Yes	SHIS	Married
Chen Gang	China	40+	M	School administrator	13	Yes	SHIS	Married
Chen Shimian	China	45+	M	Partner/ consulting firm	17	Yes	Japanese citizen	Married
Dan Zhou	China	20+	F	Student	4	Yes	Student	Single
David	UK	30+	M	English teacher	7.5	Yes	SHIS	Single
Dmitri	Russia	30+	M	IT engineer	5	Yes	Engineer	Single
Evangeline	Philippines	45+	F	Housewife	25	Yes	PR	Married
Fu Ming	China	30+	F	Marketing	7	Yes	SHIS	Single
Gang Mina	Korea	30+	F	Graphic designer	9	Yes	SHIS	Single
George	US	50+	M	Freelancer	10	Yes	Business manager	Single
Helene	US	25+	F	Marketing	5	Yes	SHIS	Married
Heyin	Korea	25+	F	Graphic designer	9	Yes	SHIS	Single
Hoshi	China	45+	M	IT engineer	19	Yes	Japanese citizen	Married
Huang Yan	China	30+	F	Company employee	7	Yes	SHIS	Single
Jane	China	30+	F	Company employee	8	Yes	SHIS	Single
Jason Kim	Korea	25+	M	Company employee	7	Yes	SHIS	Single
Jayden	Netherlands	45+	M	Engineer	15+	Yes	PR	Married
Jiang Qin	China	45+	F	Restaurant owner	18	Yes	PR	Married
Jing	China	30+	M	Company employee	7	No	Engineer	Married
John	US	50+	M	Entrepreneur	15	No	None	Married
Khang	Vietnam	30+	M	Education industry	7	Yes	SHIS	Single
Kim	Korea	55+	M	Owner of travel agency	33	Yes	PR	Married
Lee	Korea	55+	M	Entrepreneur	37	Yes	PR	Married
Lee Soojin	Korea	35+	F	Company employee	10	Yes	SHIS	Single

NAME	ORIGIN	AGE	SEX	OCCUPATION (IN JAPAN)	YEARS IN JAPAN	RESIDENT IN JAPAN	RESIDENT STATUS	MARITAL STATUS
Li De	China	45+	M	Restaurant owner	16	Yes	PR	Married
Liao	China	30+	M	IT engineer	8	Yes	Engineer	Single
Lisa	Philippines	40+	F	Part-time English teacher	15	Yes	PR	Married
Liu Yun	China	40+	F	Company employee	20	Yes	None	Married
Mark	Australia	25+	M	Company employee	7	Yes	SHIS	Single
Masha	Rwanda	20+	F	Company employee	7	Yes	SHIS	Single
Meiyun	China	35+	F	Housewife	0	No	None	Divorced
Minhee	Korea	30+	F	Maternity leave	13	Yes	SHIS	Married
Ms. Kondo	China	40+	F	Spouse	12	Yes	PR	Married
Ms. Moon	Korea	50+	F	Entrepreneur	30	Yes	PR	Married
Ms. Sato	China	45+	F	Part-time care worker	6	Yes	PR	Married
Neal	Canada	30+	M	Consultant	8	Yes	Engineer→ Undocu-mented	Single
Nian	China	45+	M	Construction worker	8	Yes	Undocu-mented	Married
Oliver	US	30+	M	Technical translator	13	Yes	PR	Single
Pak	Korea	35+	F	Company employee	5	Yes	SHIS	Single
Qiqi	China	25+	F	Marketing	4	No	SHIS	Single
Qiu Ye	China	45+	M	IT engineer	19	Yes	PR	Married
Roberto	Brazil	25+	M	Worker/ student	5	Yes	Student	Married
Sam	US	40+	M	English instructor/ filmmaker	11	Yes	SHIS	Single
Sang	Vietnam	20+	M	Student	3	Yes	Student	Single
Sangmi	Korea	35+	F	Company employee	6	Yes	SHIS	Single
Sooji	Korea	35+	F	IT engineer	17	Yes	Spouse	Married
Sun Hee	Korea	40+	F	Company employee/ housewife	16	Yes	PR	Married
Sven	Sweden	30+	M	Company employee	8	Yes	SHIS	Single
Tang Bin	China	25+	M	Company employee	9	Yes	SHIS	Single

(*Continued*)

TABLE B.1 (*Continued*)

NAME	ORIGIN	AGE	SEX	OCCUPATION (IN JAPAN)	YEARS IN JAPAN	RESIDENT IN JAPAN	RESIDENT STATUS	MARITAL STATUS
Thomas	Germany	25+	M	Student	3	Yes	Student	Single
Thorsten	Sweden	25+	M	Marketing	5	Yes	SHIS	Single
Tina	US	30+	F	Part-time English instructor	11	Yes	Spouse	Married
Tom	Australia	45+	M	English teacher/ researcher	Unavail-able	No	None	Married
Wang Sheng	China	20+	M	Student	4	Yes	Student	Single
Wang Ting	China	25+	F	Company employee	7	Yes	SHIS	Single
Xavier	US	25+	M	Entrepreneur	7	Yes	SHIS	Married
Xiao Yan	China	30+	F	Entrepreneur	5	No	None	Married
Xie	China	50+	M	Pastor	25	Yes	PR	Married
Yao Ning	China	30+	F	Real estate agent	9	Yes	SHIS	Married
Yao Qiang	China	45+	M	Entrepreneur	20+	Yes	Japanese citizen	Married
Yu Jing	China	40+	F	Housewife	20	Yes	Japanese citizen	Married
Yu Lin	China	30+	F	Company employee	6	No	None	
Yu Xin	China	20+	F	Student	4	Yes	Student	Single
Zeng	China	50+	M	Cook	11	Yes	Skilled labor	Married
Zhang Tian	China	40+	M	Entrepreneur	15	No	PR	Married
Zhang Weiwei	China	35+	F	Accountant	14	Yes	PR	Married
Zhao Shun	China	25+	M	IT engineer	8	Yes	Engineer	Married
Zheng Yu	China	50+	M	Company employee	25	Yes	PR	Married

Note: All information was current at the time of the interview.

TABLE B.2 Children of immigrants

NAME	ORIGIN	AGE	GENDER	OCCUPATION	YEARS IN JAPAN	RESIDENT STATUS
Batsaikhan	Mongolia	19	M	University student	14	Student
Chen Long	China	22	M	University student	10	PR
Hara	China	21	F	University student	11	Japanese citizen
Indira	India	24	F	Company employee	17	PR
Jessica[a]	Brazil	30+	F	Translator	20	PR
Kai	China	19	M	Vocational school student	14	Japanese citizen
Kondo	China	21	F	University student	11	Japanese citizen
Lee Eun Jung	Korea	21	F	University student	17	PR
Li Jian	China	24	M	Graduate student	16	PR
Li Wei	China	22	M	University student	17	PR
Nina	China	21	F	University student	21	Japanese citizen
Sage	US	15	F	Student	14	PR
Veronica	Brazil	27	F	Company employee	19	PR
Wang Xiaotong[b]	Taiwan	30	M	Company employee	25	Japanese citizen
Xue Tong	China	23	F	Graduate student	19	Student
Ya Xuan	China	21	F	University student	15	PR
Yu Zhen	China	23	M	University student	16	PR
Yujin	Korea	21	F	University student	17	PR

[a]This individual appears in LeBaron von Baeyer's (2015) study.

[b]This individual appears in Wong's (2010) study.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Foreign nationals here refers to legal residents with foreign nationalities, which includes those migrants who entered Japan before and during World War II and have been in the country for several generations, such as Zainichi Koreans. The number does not include anybody who has naturalized as a Japanese citizen or anybody who does not have a legal resident status.

2. The reformed immigration policy in 2012 allows highly skilled professionals to apply for permanent residency after three years of residency in Japan and grants them many other privileges. Since 2017, the regulation has been further relaxed and gives individuals who obtain eighty points or more eligibility for applying for permanent residency after only one year of residency in Japan (MOJ 2017a).

3. Special permanent residency (*tokubetsueijū*) is granted to the family members of former colonial subjects who entered Japan before the end of the war and remained thereafter. A majority were from the Korean Peninsula.

4. This observation is based on the author's personal experience.

5. There is a vast theoretical and empirical literature on immigrant transnationalism, including immigrants' transnational political participation (Kearney 1991; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994; Smith 1994; Goldring 1998; Guarnizo 1998; Kyle 1999; Laguerre 1999; Landolt, Autler, and Baires 1999; Itzigsohn 2000); immigrants' transnational identity (Glick, Schiller, and Fouron 1999; Goldring 1998; Haller and Landolt 2005; Smith 2005); immigrants' transnational entrepreneurship (Kyle 1999; Landolt 2001; Portes, Guarnizo, and Haller 2002; Wong and Ng 2002; Liu-Farrer 2007); transnational religious practices (Levitt 1998; Yang 2002; Liu Farrer 2006); and transnational family and parenthood (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Orellana et al. 2001; Huang and Yeoh 2005; Yeoh, Huang, and Lamb 2005; J. Waters 2010; Hoang and Yeoh 2015).

6. The weak theory approach is proposed by anthropologists who see events and phenomena as open, entangled, connected, and developing. It differs from a strong theory approach, which tends to focus on categorizing, judging, modeling, and delineating boundaries. Where strong theory demands comprehensiveness, exclusivity, and grand claims, weak theory supports partial understandings and multiplicity and allows for both contradictions and inconsistency. For more detailed descriptions and applications, see Sedgwick 1997; Gibson-Graham 2006; Stewart 2008; and Wright 2015.

7. The old-comers can be identified by their resident category—Special Permanent Resident—status.

8. A more detailed methodological explanation is provided in appendix A.

9. In 2015, the categories of "engineer" and "specialist in humanities/international services" were combined.

10. Because they are needed for construction projects for the Olympic Games, construction workers are allowed to extend their stay to five years, or to 2020, whichever comes first. Since 2017, care workers can also come as "technical interns," and they can stay for five years if they pass the licensing exam.

11. The specific migration experiences of technical interns are described in some other works. See, for example, Meng 2014.

1. IMMIGRATING TO JAPAN

1. Those who arrived before the 1980s are mostly the so-called Zainichi, who are the families of the former colonial subjects who entered Japan before and during World War II. Their Japanese nationality was officially revoked by the Japanese government in 1952 after the San Francisco Peace Treaty. They were given the resident category of "Special Permanent Resident" (*Tokubetsu Eijūsha*). In 2018, there were 326,190 Special Permanent Residents in Japan; among them, 292,878 had Korean nationality.

2. This notion is emphasized by many sociologists, such as Zygmunt Bauman (1998, 2), John Urry (2007), and others whose research is tied to the "Mobility Turn."

3. In 2015 there was a slight rise in the number of students who took the matriculation examinations in China. But in major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin and affluent provinces such as Jiangsu, Shandong, and Liaoning, the numbers continued to decline. See Renmin Ribao 2010.

4. Because the last year of high school in China is usually used to drill the students for matriculation exams, more and more students who opt to study abroad can take a leave of absence. The high school graduation exams are usually completed early in the third year.

5. A term for irregularly employed people.

2. MIGRATION CHANNELS AND THE SHAPING OF IMMIGRANT ETHNO-SCAPES

1. Starting in 2012, Taiwanese people were counted separately from the Chinese population, and therefore it saw a slight decline. The number of mainland Chinese immigrants, however, continues to rise.

2. The rapid increase of immigrants from Vietnam started only after 2000, but the number of those with permanent residency was already over 10 percent in 2015. Given that it generally takes at least ten years to be eligible for permanent residency, it is expected that there will be a sudden increase of Vietnamese permanent residents after 2023 because students started to enter Japan in large numbers from 2013 on.

3. Starting in 2015, the categories of engineer and specialist in humanities and international services were combined.

4. The old-comers can be identified by their resident category, Special Permanent Resident (*tokubetsueijū*), status.

5. For a more elaborate account of immigrant regimes, see Kajita 1994; Higuchi 1998; Cornelius et al. 1994.

6. Trainee programs, followed later by the technical intern programs, have functioned as another significant "side door" for the import of low-wage labor. Yet, trainees and technical interns are not able to stay on in Japan, and their presence is largely limited to the confines of the workplace. They do not make up a major category of people that have managed to remain in Japan. Therefore, I do not include trainee programs in the migration channels that shape the profiles of Japan's immigrants.

7. Not all Filipino entertainers were women. Some of them were transgender performers, even though they were of a much smaller number.

8. The statistics from the Ministry of Justice include *Kōgyō* (entertainer) as one category among others for foreigners entering Japan from 1952 to 2005 (MOJ 2019b). The number 1,917,063 was the sum total of individuals who entered Japan with an "Entertainer" visa between 1979 and 2005. This number might include multiple entries by the same individual. I chose 1979 because previous literature on entertainers had mentioned that there had been an increase of Filipino women recruited to work as "entertainers" in various entertainment, especially sex-related, industries in the late 1970s. Komai (1995, 72) considered 1979 as "Japanyuki Year Zero" (cited in Douglass 2000, 93).

9. The human rights abuse of entertainers was globally publicized through the United States' 2004 *Trafficking in Persons Report* (see S/CRS 2004). Amid global criticism, the Japanese government drafted *Japan's Action Plan of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons* (MOFA 2004), and stringent controls over the issuing of entertainment visas became effective in 2006, resulting in a drastic decline of entertainers newly arriving from the Philippines.

10. In 2010, the category of "pre-college student" (*shugakusei*) was abolished. Both language school students and university degree students were combined into one category of "students" (*ryūgakusei*).

11. For details, see MEXT 2008.

12. These numbers are calculated by adding new entries of student visa holders recorded by the Ministry of Justice every year, http://www.moj.go.jp/housei/toukei/toukei_ichiran_nyukan.html. The number of 1.3 million aggregates the new entrants with student visas from 1984 to 2016.

13. Compiled from statistics of annual new entrants of Chinese students.

14. These fourteen categories are nursing care for elderly, building cleaning, farming, fishery, food and beverage production, food service (such as restaurants, cafés, and bars), material fabrication (such as metal casting), industrial machinery production, electronics and electric appliance related, construction, ship building and marine equipment, automobile maintenance, aviation service, and lodging (hotels).

15. Snakehead is a name used in Fujian, China, to refer to those individuals who help people cross borders, most commonly, in the business of human smuggling.

16. See Piper 2003; Nakamatsu 2003; and Oishi 2005. Every year, 90 percent of international marriages registered in Japan have been between a Japanese man and a foreign woman, with a majority of these women being Asian (MHLW 2016). In 2015, among the over 140,000 spouses or dependents in Japan, two-thirds of them (over 94,000) were women.

17. It was a short-lived practice by villages from Yamagata Prefecture in the 1990s because of the marriage squeeze in rural Japan. But this practice proved to be problematic and did not last (Nakamatsu 2003).

18. Please refer to literature by Nakamatsu (2003).

19. Information can be found on http://www.cie-waseda.jp/programlist/index.html, last accessed February 27, 2019.

20. The information can be found on their website, http://www.careerforum.net.

21. Personal communication with human resource managers of Japanese companies in Singapore, September 23, 2015.

22. We encountered Korean migrants who arrived in Japan in the 1970s and were essentially brought in as workers. There was not a category for such employment, so they entered through short-term visas and had to leave the country every six months.

3. WORKING IN JAPAN

1. There is a vast literature and a longitudinal international research project that investigates the meaning of work. See, for example, MOW-International Research Team 1987; Harpaz 2002.

2. Labor abuse by the TITP has been documented by the US State Department's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* (see S/CRS 2004) and Japanese labor activist organizations. For an academic account of trainees and technical training programs, see Kamibayashi 2010.

3. For the different definitions of the two concepts, see JITCO 2019.

4. The plight of technical interns is an important topic of research. However, since they cannot become long-term immigrants, their experiences are not substantially discussed in this book. For the policies and issues regarding technical interns, see Kamibayashi 2010

and Liang 2014. Liang's dissertation also provides an ethnographic account of Chinese technical interns in rural Japan.

5. The meeting was organized by the Brazilian Consulate in Tokyo on January 25, 2014.

4. WEAVING THE WEB OF A LIFE IN JAPAN

1. The interview was conducted in September 2012.

2. According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, Japan reports one of the lowest scores in "Entrepreneurial intentions" and "Entrepreneurship as a good career choice" and the highest for "Fear of failure" among over one hundred economies surveyed (GEM 2018).

3. There are variations in terms of the portions of medical costs borne by individual patients. Regularly employed individuals between the ages of fifteen and seventy-four are usually required to pay 30 percent of the costs for minor treatments.

4. See https://www.expatistan.com/cost-of-living/comparison/new-york-city/tokyo and https://www.expatistan.com/cost-of-living/comparison/london/tokyo respectively, accessed February 27, 2019.

5. I wish to thank Hendrik Meyer-Ohle for this account.

6. This is estimated by calculating the reduction in the number of special permanent resident visas.

7. There are many exceptions. For example, the spouses of Japanese nationals are eligible after three years. Since 2017, highly skilled professionals who have acquired eighty points and above are eligible after only one year.

8. As Erin Chung (2010) explains, Japanese permanent residency is comparable to citizenship, except for voting rights in national elections.

5. TO LEAVE, TO RETURN

1. This number includes registered foreign residents and citizens who have naturalized since 1980.

2. In November 2017, the Japanese government added care work to the technical intern program. For technical interns in care work, the maximum tenure is five years.

3. Statistics are compiled by aggregating annual new entries of individuals on student visas and student-to-employment visa transitions.

4. See Liu-Farrer 2011a for a detailed account of these Chinese students.

5. The most common means to regain legal status is through marrying a Japanese national, but that is not a guaranteed strategy.

6. See, for example, Inoue 2018.

7. Some of the information is published in Liu-Farrer 2014.

6. HOME AND BELONGING IN AN ETHNO-NATIONALIST SOCIETY

1. Language might have affected the results. The strong tendency among the Chinese to consider the homeland as the place to which they belong might be connected to the fact that the Chinese word for belonging, *guishu*, is a combination of the two characters *gui* (return) and *shu* (belong). Given that *gui* is often used in idiomatic combinations such as *luoye guigen* (falling leaves return to the roots), belonging in Chinese often tends to refer to "roots" and one's original home.

2. The question of home is slightly different. We asked, "Where do you think your home [*jia*] is?"

3. Intimacy is widely discussed in philosophy, psychology, and the social sciences but often without a definition. Among several clearly defined concepts, Timmerman (1991) defines intimacy as "a quality of a relationship in which the individuals must have recip-

rocal feelings of trust and emotional closeness toward each other and are able to openly communicate thoughts and feelings with each other. The conditions that must be met for intimacy to occur include reciprocity of trust, emotional closeness, and self-disclosure." (19) Other studies, such as Jamieson (2011), broadly define intimacy as "the quality of close connection between people and the process of building this quality." (1)

7. CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS

1. In immigration literature, those who are born in the immigration destination are called second-generation immigrants. Those who arrive before the age of twelve are referred to as the 1.5 generation. However, in this book I do not intend to use these terms. First of all, the concept of the 1.5 generation is subject to debate. Second, as this chapter shows, the children do not stay put in the immigration destination but rather have diverse trajectories, often experiencing transnational and circular mobilities.

2. The reason I use the arbitrary age of twenty-two is because in immigration literature, the common age that defines the 1.5 generation is twelve and under. Given the ten-year residency requirement, this would mean, theoretically, that those permanent residents under twenty-two arrived in Japan before age twelve. However, this is just an arbitrary number because, as the chapter will show, children of immigrants often have multiple mobilities. Their residence is not always continuous.

3. According to the Foreign Service Institute of the United States, the amount of time required for a native English speaker to be able to function in a foreign language depends on the linguistic group. The most distant for English speakers are Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic, requiring twenty-four hundred to twenty-seven hundred hours of study. Applying the same logic of linguistic distance, an English speaker or a speaker of other European languages would need an equal amount to study Japanese just to be functional in everyday life. Academic proficiency certainly requires more. In a study to attempt to discover how long it takes second-language learners to develop academic English proficiency, Hakuta, Butler, and Witt (2000) conclude that acquiring academic English proficiency takes between four and seven years to develop, whereas oral English proficiency can take from three to five.

4. In 2016, among 7,020 public schools in Japan that had foreign children that needed support, 2,851 of them had only one child and 1,339 had two. Only 1,729 had more than five children with such needs (MEXT 2017).

5. In 1983, the Ministry of Justice made it clear that using names of non-Japanese origin is acceptable.

6. Velliaris (2010) has a detailed categorization of different school systems in Japan, including Japanese national schools, English medium national schools, non-English medium national schools, Japanese international schools, and fully international schools. However, as will be explained in the chapter, the boundaries between the different categories of non-Japanese national schools are porous. Some of the so-called national schools, such as the American School in Japan, have a very diverse student body. The faculty also came from different national backgrounds. Even in non-English medium schools, such as Chinese schools and Brazilian schools, there are children with non-Chinese and Brazilian backgrounds. I therefore opt for the MEXT term "foreigner school."

7. Although in 2004 MEXT decided to accept university applications from students who had finished MEC-certified Brazilian schools in Japan, this approval is largely meaningless. The lack of sufficient Japanese language ability and a different school curriculum make admittance to highly competitive public universities impossible, while private universities, usually expensive, proved an unviable option for many Brazilian families in Japan (Minami 2012).

8. Indian International School in Japan website: http://www.iisjapan.com/mission.aspx.

9. A compulsory course in Chinese schools.

10. It means "Work hard on Chinese." The sentence combines a Chinese word (*Zhongwen*) and a Japanese word (*ganbatte ne*).

11. There is a wealth of literature devoted to investigating the influence of family backgrounds on children's education attainment. See the review by Kao and Thompson (2003).

12. In the article, Kanasiro cites findings from the Nikkei psychologist Kyoko Nakagawa.

8. GROWING UP IN JAPAN

1. This word is used frequently in Japan after completing a task or a day's work. Its literal meaning is "You are tired out," but it is used to express gratitude, appreciation, or a sense of completion.

2. See, for example, Bernal and Knight 1993; Phinney 1991; Porter and Washington 1993; Rumbaut and Portes 2001; Suárez-Orozco 2004.

3. This case is from Huichi Wong (2010). This author gave a name to the informant, who originally did not have a name.

4. An entry sheet is a form used by Japanese companies during recruitment process in which job applicants answer specific questions to introduce themselves and their purposes for applying for the specific jobs.

CONCLUSION

1. According to the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry's 2017 survey, among 2,776 businesses that responded (68.2% response rate), 83.8 percent of hotels and restaurants, 74.1 percent of logistics companies, 70 percent of care facilities, and 67.7 of construction firms reported labor shortages (JCCI 2017).

2. This discourse of migrants' disruptive influence is used to legitimize the Japanese government's wars against irregular migration and undocumented work since 2003. Yamamoto's (2010, 2013) research illustrates that, though there was no real statistical evidence to show that immigrants were more likely to commit crimes than Japanese natives, there was nonetheless a moral panic toward newcomer foreigners. Policymakers, law enforcement, and the media tend to emphasize immigrants' criminal propensity—perceiving their marginalized positions in Japan as motives for risky behavior and fearing that their cultural backgrounds, such as the anti-Japan sentiments in their home country, would breed hatred toward Japanese and cause them to act destructively.

3. The 2017 revision allows highly skilled professionals who have over eighty points to be eligible for permanent residency after being in the country for one year (MOJ 2017a).

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