

“FOREIGNERS” IN THE ETHNIC HOMELAND AND THE LIMITS OF ETHNICITY

by

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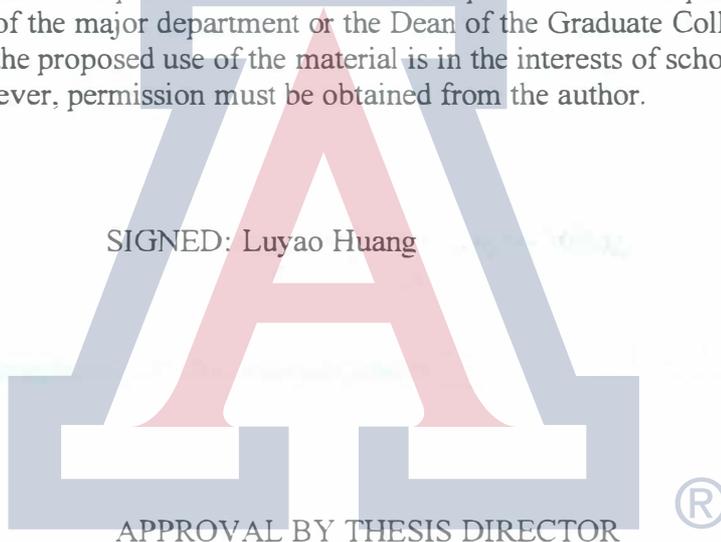
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Abstract

This thesis examines the concept of ethnicity as an analytical category through a multi-layered study of two ethnic minority groups in Japan: Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians. Japanese war orphans are people of Japanese descent who were abandoned in Manchuria by their Japanese families as infants or children at the end of WWII. They often adopted by Chinese families, grew up in China, and then repatriated to Japan since 1970s. Japanese Brazilians are also people of Japanese parentage, who migrated to Brazil in the beginning of 20th century, thrived as positive minorities in Brazil, and then migrated back to Japan since the 1980s. These two minority groups have challenged the dominant ideology of homogeneity in contemporary Japanese society. By examining these people's stories and circumstances, this thesis demonstrates the ambiguity and contingency of the concept of ethnicity. First of all, as a group category, it diminishes the diversity and uniqueness of individuals into collective ethnic terms such as "Japanese," "Chinese," and "Brazilians." Secondly, this concept of ethnicity could not solve the conflicts between the internally and externally defined ethnic identities of both individuals and groups. And thirdly, it has resulted in a loss or confusion of ethnic self consciousness among Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians population due to the disjuncture between their Japanese descent and foreign cultural identity.

Introduction

1. Two Transnational Scenes

“Mom and dad, I’ve come to see you. Your grandsons are very well off in Japan. May your souls rest in peace,” 72-year old Miyazaki Keibun (宮崎慶文), or Yan Qingwen (闫庆文), whispered in front of a tombstone in Tonghui Mausoleum of Beijing on June 27, 2017. Under this gray marble tombstone buried his Chinese adoptive parents. He had fruitlessly sought to find his biological parents in Japan for over 20 years now. Miyazaki Keibun dusted the tombstone, and burned some incense and joss papers as to follow the Chinese traditions of tomb sweeping ceremony. Then, he bailed some water and gently poured it on the tombstone as to follow the Japanese worship customs (Tan 2017). But who is Miyazaki Keibun exactly? Why was he adopted by a Chinese couple? Why did he move to Japan with his grandsons? And why couldn’t he find his Japanese parents?

Well then, let us turn our sights upon a train rolling into the Shibuya station of Tokyo, Japan. Most passengers on this train were Japanese salary men dressed conservatively in suits and Japanese office ladies dressed professionally in skirts and stockings. After the train stopped and as the door opened, three men strolled into a carriage. Two of them were wearing bright, mixed colored shirt and jeans, and another one was dressed in a T-shirt that said “BRAZIL”. While they were continuing their conversation in Portuguese with a loud voice, two Japanese women who were sitting nearby moved their eyes away from these men, looked at each other, and then exchanged one word: “*gaijin* (foreigners)” (Tsuda 2003, ix). Who were these three men? Why did they look like Japanese, yet appear so different compared to other Japanese surrounding them? Why did they talk with each other in Portuguese? And why were they called “*gaijin* (foreigners)?”

These two scenes above are propitious moments for ethnography, especially the

context of the discourse of ethnicity in Japan. The protagonists of these two stories, Miyazaki Keibun and the three men in the Tokyo subway, represent two different minority populations in Japan: Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilian. These two minority groups will be the main focus of this thesis.

The protagonist in the first story, Miyazaki Keibun, is a Japanese war orphan. He is among those thousands of Japanese infants and children who were left behind in Northeast China by their Japanese families during and following the chaotic aftermath of WWII. These infants and children were thus stranded in China, and remained unrepatriated and unacknowledged by Japanese government for decades. The majority of these orphans were adopted by Chinese peasant families, grew up in rural areas, married Chinese spouses, and had children there. Some of them had no idea about their Japanese descent until late in life. Others were aware of their Japanese identity from childhood, and thus suffered from discrimination and persecution as a result of it.

After the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan in 1972, the existences of these orphans finally regained the Japanese government's attention. After that, more than two thousands war orphans went to Japan to find their Japanese kin. Then, after a long period of searching and negotiation, they started to repatriate to their "home". However, most of these orphans lacked of the knowledge of Japanese language and culture as a result of being apart from Japan for decades. These orphans and their families often encountered enormous legal and financial difficulties adjusting to Japanese society. More importantly, they often suffered from ethnic exclusion and discrimination as "Chinese" in Japan. Eventually, these repatriated orphans and their families had become a new ethnic minority group in Japan. Miyazaki Keibun was one member of them.

The year of 2017 marked the 45th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan. On June 22nd, 101 Japanese orphans and their families

from 14 different regions of Japan, including Miyazaki Keibun, formed the largest delegation of recent years and embarked on a "Gratitude Journey" to China. These delegation of Japanese war orphans averaged age 76. Miyazaki who was a part of this said, "For a lot of us, this might be the last time we come back to China, to take a last look at this Chinese land (Tan 2017)."

"I haven't found my home, and quite a number of the orphans have not found their home," Miyazaki continued to express his perplexity to Chen Wang, the vice chairman and secretary-general of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress in the Great Hall of the People. "'Miyazaki' is just a Japanese surname that I gave myself casually. When facing the Japanese, I said that I am authentic Japanese. When I returned to China, I said that I am a Chinese of Japanese descent. But who am I, really (Tan 2017)?" "Who am I," is not just a question which bothered Miyazaki himself, but rather a mystery that puzzled the entire Japanese war orphans group.

On the other hand, the three men in the subway station belong to another newly formed minority group in Japan since 1980s -- Japanese Brazilians or Brazilian *nikkeijin*. After the first group of 781 Japanese peasants set their foot in Brazil in 1908, more than 2 million Japanese ultimately migrated to and then settled in Brazil. After a period of hard work, these people had successfully integrated into Brazilian society and even become seen as a respected "positive minority"¹ there. Since the *nikkeijin* were proud of their Japanese ancestry and cultural heritage, they had maintained a strong self-consciousness of their Japaneseness.

In 1980s, Brazil was hit by a severe economic crisis and simultaneously Japan was suffering from a crippling shortage of unskilled labor. As a result, thousands of second and

¹ "Positive minority" is a term used by Tsuda Takeyuki to define the *Nikkeijin* community in Brazil. This term is similar to "model minority". Usually, the members of "positive minority", or "model minority", are perceived to have a higher socioeconomic status than the majority of the population. Also, they often have higher education level, higher incomes, lower crime rate, and therefore they are respected by the entire society.

third generation Japanese Brazilians began to migrate back to Japan in search of high paying jobs. However, these three men (in the train illustration), as well as many other Japanese Brazilians who returned to Japan, are often conspicuous and out-of-place in public of Japanese society. Although these people look like other Japanese, they speak Portuguese loudly, dress themselves in a strange way, and behave distinctively compared to other Japanese. In addition to their unfamiliarity with Japanese language and culture, they often present strong Brazilian cultural elements. Thus, their appearance always surprises people surrounding them and causes their confusion. As a result, despite their Japanese heritage, they are seen as “foreigners” and have become a new minority group in this country.

Overall, the existence of these two groups is very intriguing, since Japan is widely received as a monoethnic country. Moreover, their stories are fascinating as they both are identified as people of Japanese descent, yet have all become ethnic minorities in their ethnic home country of Japan despite their ancestral ties.

Therefore, in this thesis, I will delineate the birth and transformation of these two minority groups as well as their ethnic identities. Instead of assuming a common ethnic consciousness or a coherent national identity for each of these two populations, I will focus more on their vicissitudes, discrepancies, and collapses of identities by presenting their various understandings of “self” and “Japaneseness.” Through sketching these populations with their histories and cultures, stories and circumstances, I seek to answer the following questions: what are the different terms under which these people were defined ethnically? How and why have these different terms of ethnic identification drawn different conclusions about people’s identities as “Japanese”, “Chinese”, “Brazilians”, and “foreigners?” And what profound effects have these different terms and conclusions had upon these people’s lives? Ultimately, in exploring these two populations’ experiences and identity, I aim to show something new about the concept of ethnicity itself: its boundaries, its limitations, and its

possible solutions in diaspora.

Before proceeding, a brief guide to this thesis might be necessary. This thesis consists of four major parts: the Introduction, Part One -- Japanese War Orphans, Part Two -- Japanese Brazilians, and the Conclusion. The next two sections will provide a literature review of ethnicity in general, and then a discussion about ethnicity in Japan in particular.

Part One focuses on Japanese war orphans and it is composed in four sections. The first section introduces the origins of Japanese war orphans -- why and how these people came to China, and became war orphans. The second section moves on to their repatriation process, as well as a variety of legal and bureaucratic barriers they had to overcome during this process, including the ruptured Sino-Japanese relationship, the reestablishment of their family registry records and domiciles, the difficulties in finding guarantors or receivers to support their life in Japan, and the undesirable assigned places of residence. The third section talks about the enormous difficulties during these orphans' resettlement in Japan, such as cultural and language barriers, exclusions and discriminations in schools and the workplace, insufficient public support, marital problems, intergenerational conflicts, as well as retirement and pension issues. It also investigates the orphans' class-action compensation lawsuits against Japanese government from 2002 to 2007, which addresses the government's irresponsible attitude toward these orphans. The last section analyzes that how these orphans were caught in between the Chinese and Japanese ethnicities and how they formed diverse ethnic consciousness of their own as a result of their ambivalent relationship with two ethnic "homes".

Part Two discusses Japanese Brazilian and it has three sections. The first section begins with a historical background about the migration flux from Japan to Brazil in the early 20th century. Then it investigates that how Japanese Brazilians have become seen as a "positive minority" in Brazil, and how they have maintained a strong ethnic consciousness

towards Japan by emphasizing their racial and cultural difference. Section two talks about the reverse migration flows of Japanese Brazilians in the 1980s. It describes how these people were stigmatized as “negative minorities²” in Japan due to their declining social and cultural status. Section three analyzes that how Japanese Brazilians developed a new transnational identity of themselves, that instead of reaffirming their Japanese ethnicity, they chose to embrace their Brazilianess and redefine themselves as Brazilians in Japan.

The conclusion again goes over the definitions of ethnicity and the different terms of ethnic definition, suggesting the reason that these two minority groups were ethnically rejected and discriminated in Japan. More importantly, the conclusion points out the various ambiguities and contingencies in these terms and definitions. Also it illustrates and explains how these ambiguities and flaws caused the painful self-doubts of ethnicities, and developed diverse, multiple, conflicting ethnic consciousness among these two populations. Yet, before we get into these topics and the ethnic issues in Japan specifically, I would like to introduce and define the concept of “ethnicity” first.

² “Negative minority” is a term used by Tsuda Takeyuki to describe the Nikkeijin community in Japan. In contrast to “positive minority” or “model minority,” the members of “negative minority” are usually perceived to have a lower socioeconomic status than the majority of the population. Also, they are often perceived to have lower education level, lower incomes, higher crime rate, and therefore they are stigmatized and discriminated against in the society.

2. Ethnicity, Race, and Culture

Although contemporary categories of identity are confusing and often contentious, there are three terms that are widely used: race, ethnicity, and nationality. And these three terms classify peoplehood among the immense diversity of human life (Hall 2017, 83; Lie 2001b, 2). As Tsuda (2003) wrote, identity denotes “a conscious awareness of individuals in this world” on the basis of “relationship(s) with some certain sociocultural features or involvement in social groups” (9). Race, ethnicity, and nation, represent three distinct ways of understanding group identification available to individuals as they craft their identity.

Among these three concepts of group identification, race is the most controversial one since it falsely implies that there are distinct groups of genetically similar human populations (Rizova and Stone 2010). Racism is based on the assumption that individuals’ characteristics are somehow associated with hereditary traits which differ systematically between different races (Eriksen 2010, 6). Although objective existence of racial difference has been completely disproved by modern biology and genetics, it is still quite influential over contemporary society. By categorizing people into different racial groups based on their shared genes, ancestry, and physical traits, racial difference has been a tool to justify types of oppression and exploitation such as slavery and imperialism (Rizova and Stone 2010).

As a concept of peoplehood identification, ethnicity has been widely used and contested by anthropologists and sociologists since the latter half of the 20th century. Like the widespread use of the term “culture,” notions of ethnicity in phrases such as “ethnic issues” and “ethnic conflicts” frequently show up on the media. Thus, ethnicity has become a major lens for understanding social and political life in many societies around the world (Eriksen 2010, 1). The word “ethnicity” is frequently linked with minority issues and race relations, but from the perspective of social anthropology, it just “refers to aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves as being culturally distinctive” (Eriksen 2010, 5).

But what is ethnicity exactly? According to Fredrik Barth (1998), a population will be designated as an ethnic group based on the following factors: first of all, the population is “largely biologically self-perpetuating” (i.e. inheritance of descent); second, it shares fundamental cultural values and has united cultural forms; third, it has communication and interaction; and in the end, it has a membership that is identified by both itself and others, and it is distinguishable from other ethnic groups that are also defined by these factors in the same order (10-11). Similarly, J. Milton Yinger (1981) defined “ethnic group” as members of a part of a larger community who shares a common origin and culture, from both the perspectives of themselves and of others, and jointly takes part in activities which the common culture and origin lies in (250). Based on these definitions, the full ethnicity thus requires several elements: self-identification, identification by others, common origin, common culture, and shared activities. The Japanese ethnicity, in particular, requires all these characters with even stricter constraints. In the next few sections, I will demonstrate how Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians missed these requirements and disqualified themselves and therefore became ethnic others in Japan.

According to the presented definitions of ethnicity, Tsuda Takeyuki pointed out that self-identification is the part that is grown internally based on “the individuals’ own subjective perceptions and experiences of the social environment,” while the external identified ethnicity refers to the part that is defined by others according to “standardized cultural norms and social roles.” Nonetheless, discrepancies and conflicts frequently occur between the ethnic characteristics that individuals use to define themselves and the ethnic categories imposed on them by others. As a result, people may experience a scrappy and varying ethnic identity, where one aspect dominates the others or a mix of identities may occur (2003, 9-10).³ Eventually, instead of a monotonous status, ethnicity tends to be

³ Tsuda Takeyuki elaborated two components of the individual’s identity: the self and social

relational and situational. Moreover, since ethnicity is associated with social activities, it is therefore context-dependent. When social contexts where individuals developed their ethnic identity have significantly changed, the former ethnicity of individuals could be challenged, disrupted, or completely replaced as people engaged in relationships with different groups and encountered different cultural categories (Ewing 1990, 251). As a typical and significant change of social environment for individuals, migration then provides a perfect context for the investigation of ethnicity.

For example, Japanese war orphans, who were often treated or persecuted as “Japanese” when they were in China, were unexpectedly discriminated as “Chinese” after they finally repatriated to their home country. Due to what Mayumi Itoh (2010) called “a double tragic ethnic migration”(143), this group eventually presented multiple, conflict, or intertwined ethnic self-identifications. The same kind of ethnic migration was also experienced by Japanese Brazilians. These people were classified as “japonês” by most Brazilians when they were in Brazil. At the same time they persisted in holding strong Japanese ethnic identities by themselves because of their “positive minority” status outside Japan. However, since the cultural basis for ethnic identification has significantly changed, upon returning to Japan Japanese Brazilians suddenly became viewed as more culturally Brazilian and encountered notable ethnic prejudice and discrimination. Consequently, these people distanced their previous transnational ethnic affiliation with the Japanese and became “more Brazilian” in their country of heritage.

On the other hand, since the full ethnicity requires shared fundamental cultural values and united cultural forms based on its definitions, ethnicity is often considered a benign substitute for “race” that is deeply rooted in culture. According to Stuart Hall (2017), “ethnicity” is a perfect term that “references the distinctive area of difference -- the shared

identity. Here I applied his explanations on ethnicity.

languages, traditions, religious beliefs, cultural ideas, customs, and rituals that bind together particular groups -- into which, perhaps, what we currently refer to by the term 'race' should be theoretically subsumed" (83). In this manner, ethnicity seems to be more mutable and situational, while compared to race determination because of its emphasis on cultural roots instead of genetic difference. Hence, ethnicity is popular in the field as "a 'cultural' and thus non-biological alternative to race" as a group membership (Efrid 2010, 807).

But in fact, the relation between race and ethnicity has been proved to be a quite complicated one. In Banton (1983)'s view, race contains a negative meaning of people, while ethnicity is linked with positive group identification. He also claims that ethnicity is generally related to the identification of "us" but racism emphasizes on the grouping of "them (106)". In other words, while race negatively emphasizes exclusion, ethnic identity expresses positive inclusion. Nonetheless, as ethnic ideology often focuses on common descent among the members of the group and ethnicity can exist in various forms, there is no sharp distinction between ethnicity and race, and their confusions of cultural heritage and biological heritability end up the same (Efrid 2010, 806). Consequently, the idea that the discourses of ethnicity and cultural difference would be able to resolve the problems engendered by the discursive operations of race may be overly optimistic, as it turns out (Hall 2017, 99-100). With the following examples of Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians in this thesis, as well as various ethnic prejudices and exclusions they suffered in Japan, I will clearly demonstrate that ethnic divisions can be just as deep-seated and ethnic conflicts can be just as violent as those linked to racial determinations.

Furthermore, even though it is believed that ethnicity can reflect the difference in culture, the relationship between them is mutable and confusing. As Fredrik Barth (1998) claimed, "although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic differences and cultural ones (14)." It follows

that a static relationship between ethnicity and culture in terms of the differences does not really exist. The differences in culture can exceed ethnic boundaries, which are defined according to the “*socially sanctioned* notions” of cultural differences, rather than the primordial ones. Therefore, deep ethnic differences can exist without the related significant cultural differences and cultural variation has nothing to do with ethnic boundaries (Eriksen 2001, 43).

In the end, as Eriksen (2001) concluded, ethnicity occurs *between* groups, rather than *within* groups as ethnicity is the asset of a relationship between two or more groups. In addition, since ethnicity is the production of a lasting and regular communication of cultural differences between two groups, and cultural differences are closely related to social interactions, ethnicity thus should be researched from the perspective of social life, rather than that of symbolic culture (46). Therefore, one can only understand ethnicity through observing and studying various ethnic encounters between different groups of individuals happened in their everyday life, in the case of this thesis, Japanese war orphans, Japanese Brazilians and the majority of Japanese people. In the next several sections, by analyzing the experience of Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians, I will examine how the unique ethnic identities of Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians were formed and transformed through their social interactions and negotiations with the majority of Japanese society as well as themselves; and how the meaning of Japanese ethnicity has been constructed, maintained, and contested in Japan.

3. The Myth of Homogeneity and *Nihonjinron*

Until now we have briefly discussed ethnicity in general, but then let us focus specifically in the country of Japan. Because of the great migrations as well as the transformations they brought, the United States recognizes itself as “an ethnic melting pot” ---- “one that simmers and occasionally boils over but which mostly cooks the different ingredients without completely dissolving them” (Hall 2017, 84). Japan, on the contrary, is widely received as a homogenous country where the people share a common language, culture and traditions. Edwin O. Reischauer and Marius B. Jansen (1995) wrote that “the Japanese today are the most thoroughly unified and culturally homogeneous large bloc of people in the world” (33). This homogeneous ideology is prevalent in today’s Japanese society, even promulgated by the Japanese government. As Terazawa Masako noted, in 1986, Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro declared that “Japan has one ethnicity (*minzoku*), one state (*kokka*), and one language (*genko*),” implying that Japan was a country that maintained national, ethnical, and cultural homogeneity (quoted in Lie 2001b, 1).

The ideology of homogeneity can be found everywhere in Japanese society. It shapes a unique type of identity as *nihonjin* (Japanese people), which thereby influences, if not determines, Japanese people’s thoughts and behaviors. As one of Tsuda’s Japanese informants explained:

Because we live in an ethnically homogeneous society, the Japanese are simply bad at dealing with foreigners they don’t know well and can’t communicate effectively with. We don’t cope well with ethnic diversity and are not used to people who are different, like the *nikkeijin*. We have no way to react and adapt to foreigners in our midst, so we just prefer to stay away.

(Tsuda 2003, 163)

In this way, the ideology of homogeneity significantly impacts the way in which the Japanese majority interacts with Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilian. As Oguma Eiji (2002) demonstrated in his book *The Genealogy of ‘Japanese’ Self-Images*, the myth of the homogeneity was not only “the source of Japanese ethnocentrism, of imperialistic

aggression in the 1930s and 40s and Japanese colonial rule in Korea and Taiwan, of discrimination against the various peoples of Asia,” but also “of the discrimination against minorities and the ostracism of foreign workers” during the postwar period (xxvi-xxvii).

Moreover, the ideology of homogeneity in Japan is articulated in the discourse of Japaneseness, known as *Nihonjinron* (literally, “theories of the Japanese”). *Nihonjinron* is a genre of writing that discusses forms of particularity and notions of uniqueness in Japan of realms ranging from national character, traditions of thought, spirit, aesthetics, social ethics, and cultural identity to biological traits like digestion and cognitive development. But, although *Nihonjinron* is “typically referred to as a ‘discourse,’ it appears to lack the unity or internal coherence to qualify as a single system of knowledge” (Burgess 2007). Generally speaking, *Nihonjinron* are characterized by several major assumptions. First of all, Japanese are a culturally and socially homogeneous people who constitute a racially unified state, which has essentially remained unchanged to this day (Dale 1986). Secondly, the Japanese differs radically from all other known people, and “the Japanese society is more unique than other societies”. Thirdly, group orientation is “the dominant cultural pattern that shapes Japanese behaviors at every turn” (Mouer and Sugimoto 1986, 406). And in the end, the uniqueness of Japaneseness makes its people superior to others.

Contemporary Japanese politicians, ideologists, social scientists, educators, and journalists, have sought to establish the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, defining and re-defining the “pure” Japanese self on the bases of “blood”, culture, language, or other characteristics repeatedly (Weiner 2004, 3). And *Nihonjinron*, or discourses of Japaneseness, provides a multidimensional context for defining Japanese identity. According to Fukuoka Yasunori, a Japanese individual might be viewed as “pure Japanese” only when he or she is Japanese in lineage, culture and nationality (quoted in Oguma 2002, 323). Similarly, Sugimoto Yoshio (1999) argued that the three concepts that *Nihonjinron* tend to use --

nationality, ethnicity and culture, are “interchangeable”. Generally, as Sugimoto wrote, “*Nihonjinron* defines the Japanese in racial terms with *Nihonjin* comprising most members of the Yamato race and excludes, for example, indigenous Ainus and Okinawans as minority groups who are administratively Japanese, but not ‘genuinely’ so”. They possess Japanese nationality and meanwhile, are the sole owners of Japanese ethnic culture. While the debate over the difference between the two concepts of ethnicity and race remained unsolved elsewhere, they are virtually synonymous in Japan (82). And the Japanese term “*nihon minzoku*”, which often translated into English differently as “ethnic group,” “nation,” “people,” and the like, according to the context in which it is used, denotes “not only a biologically characterized racial group but also a cultural defined ethnic one” (Oguma and Stickland 2014, 9; Sugimoto 1999, 82). Furthermore, even though the relationship between ethnic difference and culture difference is not always corresponding in many other places, by assuming that Japanese are the only “authentic producers and consumers of Japanese culture”, *Nihonjinron* facilitate the formation of a “triangular, three-way and tautological equation of nationality, ethnicity, and culture” (Sugimoto 1999, 83).

In addition to Japanese nationality, ethnicity, and culture, Japanese language also occupies an important place in defining Japanese identity. With the conspicuous language barrier between Japanese and the rest of the world, Japanese language becomes an exclusively distinctive attribute that further strengthens the uniqueness of the Japanese. In this manner, although nation, race, ethnicity, culture and language are all related but distinct concepts to most people in the world, they are proved to be functioning as congruent components in the complex of ideology that defined “*nihonjin*” as well as “*nihon minzoku*”. Ultimately, “*nihon minzoku*” appears as a type of identity that is national, racial, ethnical, cultural, as well as linguistic. And it is shared by a group of people who possess Japanese nationality, inherit the descent of Yamato race, consume Japanese ethnic culture, speak the distinctive Japanese

language, and live in their distinctive Japanese way (Reischauer and Jansen 1995, 395-396).

However, since it is difficult to find an English word to express all these connotations possessed by the Japanese term of “*minzoku*,” in the rest of this paper, I will use the English term of “Japanese ethnicity” to refer to “*nihon minzoku*,” signifying a type of ethnic identity that is believed to be distinct from any other type in the world which implies a certain amount of national, racial, cultural and linguistic meanings in Japan.

On the other hand, although *Nihonjinron* writers attempt to compress what it means to be a Japanese into a single, unified, and unchangeable structure, this paradigm of homogeneity is often challenged and critiqued. For example, Michael Weiner (1992) has argued that “despite a master narrative of racial and cultural homogeneity that precludes the existence of minorities, Japan is home to diverse populations” (xvii). Weiner (2004) also pointed out that, no matter how compelling it is, the idea of a homogenous Japan has always been ideological (rather than a fact). And now, this homogenous ideology has clashed in this country -- politically, economically, and socially (3). The divisions of class, gender, and region have provided persuasive cases for diversity and heterogeneity in this country, let alone Japan’s long history of migration and ethnic minority issue.

The principle ethnic minority groups in contemporary Japan include two indigenous groups of Ainu and Okinawans, caste-based Burakumin, Koreans, Chinese, and, of most recent origin, migrant *nikkeijin*. From 1950s to 1970s, Japan’s economic growth mostly depended on women’s entrance into paid work and the domestic migration from rural areas. And many domestic migrant workers, incidentally, were Burakumin, Okinawans and other minorities (Lie 2001b, 9). By 1980s, the growing labor demand in Japan had dried up the domestic sources of low-wage manual and service labor, and thereby initiated the influx of foreign migrant workers, including *nikkeijin* (10).

However, although Japan has a diverse population of migrant labor, including

Koreans, Chinese, Filipinos, Thai, Iranians and Brazilians, Burgess (2007) said that Japan was still “a ‘relatively’ homogenous country in terms of migration and ethnicity” according to the statistics of international migration and foreign residents. For example, the total migrant population in 2005 of Japan was about two millions, which accounted for only 1.6 percent of the country’s population. Nevertheless, this small population of immigrant labors still caused furious national debates in Japan since people were worried that these foreign workers would undermine Japanese uniqueness, cause social disorganization, and destroy social cohesion and order (Lie 2001b,15).

Besides, Japanese government’s tough stance on immigration is also reflected in how many refugees and asylum seekers it has accepted every year. The Refugee Convention was passed in Japan in 1981. However, until 2004, the Japanese government had only admitted 313 refugees from 3,544 applicants (Burgess 2007). In addition, although Japan has received more and more asylum applications in recent years (from 7,586 in 2015 to 5,011 in the first half year of 2016), the Japanese government had only admitted 27 asylum seekers in 2015 and 4 in the first half year of 2016 (Human Right Watch 2017). Furthermore, even though Japanese is a developed country with diverse immigrant population, it has not yet passed any anti-discrimination law for the protection of racial or ethnic minorities (Human Right Watch 2017). In 1995, Japan approved the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). However, the most recent legal ruling on racial and ethnic discriminations in Japan has negated the obligation of local governments to fulfill the requirements of the Convention. As a result, Japan became a country with no legal rule against the racial and ethnic discrimination (Burgess 2007). Moreover, these insufficient legal protections for migrant workers also caused various abuses in the labor market of Japan, including “illegal overtime, unpaid wages, dangerous working conditions, confiscation of passports, prohibitions on having cell phones and staying elsewhere overnight, forced return,

and forced payments to sending agencies in home countries in case the training period does not finish successfully” (Human Right Watch 2017).

Overall, all these realities have suggested that immigration is not welcomed in this country and most people in Japan are not ready to replace their values of homogeneity with multiethnicity yet. But also one cannot deny that there is a growing awareness of the minority populations in Japan. As Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu (2006) wrote, the bold statement issued by the late Prime Minister Obuchi’s Commission that “achieving greater ethnic diversity within Japan has the potential of broadening the scope of the country’s intellectual creativity and enhancing its social vitality and international competitiveness”, indicated an official recognition of the powerful potential of diversity in the future (89). Thus although embracing diversity is tricky and challenging to this country, it might be a change that it inevitable for Japan.

Therefore, it is important for us to investigate the ethnic minority issues in Japan, since they often offer us many insights on the topics of identity, race, ethnicity, migration, group formation, ideology, and the narrative of homogeneity. Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians, as perfect examples of ethnic minority groups in Japan, allow us to see how these ethnic minorities are treated in Japan now, and how Japan might shift as it responds to demographic changes in the future. And by looking closer at these people, we are able to see that what it means to be “foreign” and what it means to be “Japanese.” We could also have a better understanding that how people’s identities are impacted by experiences of inclusion and exclusion, how they are defined by social and cultural distinctions, and more importantly, what their experiences have shown us something new about ethnicity in general.

Part One: Japanese War Orphans

Separated from family and homeland as infants or children, subjected in many cases to ill-treatment and persecution, disenfranchised from postwar Japanese affluence, forced to restart their lives as adults in their culturally alien and sometimes hostile "homeland" of Japan, war orphans embody the incommensurable losses and unequal postwar outcomes among Japanese civilians who experienced the war.

----- Robert Efird (2008, 366)

The English term “war orphans” in this thesis context refers to the people of Japanese parentage who were separated from their families and then stranded in China as infants or children during and following the chaotic conclusion of World War II. Chinese people usually call them as “*riben yigu* 日本遗孤” (war orphans of Japan or war orphans left behind by Japan). While in Japan they are officially identified as “*chūgoku zanryū koji* 中国残留孤儿” (Japanese orphans who remained in China)⁴. Yet this widely used expression were often debated and rejected by some Japanese scholars as well as orphans themselves. They argued that the word “*zanryū* (remain)” implied orphans’ voluntary stay in China, whereas they were in fact forced to settle in Manchuria with their families as a result of Japanese imperialism and then abandoned by the state at the end of war. "They call us ‘*zanryū koji*’, we are absolutely against that." Miyazaki Keibun told the reporter Tan Chang of Southern Weekend Newspaper. "Abandoning us was a state action, while *zanryū* indicated a self-conscious willingness of ourselves. We had indeed, been abandoned. Why does Japanese government deny it?" (Tan 2017)

Besides, “*zanryū*”, as a word of passive voice, indicated a status of “being left behind” (*nokosareta* 残された)” But by whom exactly? Such an expression without any subject, represented the ambiguous Japanese culture of collective responsibility and collective

⁴ Named by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (reorganized as the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare) in 1981, when the government began to organize official missions to search for the orphans.

unconscious. It also reflected the Japanese government's attitude to war as well (Jin 2015). Moreover, the emphasis on the "China" side instead of "Japan" in this expression also aroused dissatisfaction of many Chinese that it not only damaged China's image as a sovereign state but also hurt the feeling of the Chinese people. Therefore they believed these orphans should be called "*nihon zanryū koji* 日本残留孤児" (orphans left behind by Japan) (Liu 2013, 27). However, although the word "*zanryū*" is often under attack, the word "*koji* (orphans)" continued to be used. And it carried powerful political connotations by indicating these orphans were abandoned not only by biological parents, but also by an ancestral nation. On the other hand, as Chan (2011) noted, "*chūgoku kikokusha*" (repatriates from China) is another widely used Japanese expression that initiated by scholar Araragi Shinzo. And the word "*kikokusha*" (repatriates) indicated "a sense of ethnic homogeneity to subtly and powerfully links overseas Japanese and Japanese proper together as an inseparable people". It also invested war orphans with "a higher ranking of Japaneseness by highlighting them as 'war-displaced Japanese (30).'"

Obviously, the terms and conditions under which war orphans have been identified in the post-war period suggest the ways in which the ethnic categories of "Japanese" and "Chinese" are constructed, maintained and contested in these two country, particularly with recourse to "blood" descent and historical suffering. However, the conflicts over the appropriateness of these terms composed just a small part of the controversies concerning the war orphans and their descendants in the past decades, which will be fully investigated in this part of this thesis.

1. Introducing Japanese War Orphans

To understand the orphans' experiences and struggles, we must first know how this situation came to pass. Why did they become orphans and stranded in China for decades? And first of all, why did the Japanese farmers come to Manchuria? In this section, I will provide a historical review of the creation of war orphans since the early 20th century. Basically, the Japanese government started to take over the Manchuria region in the 1900s. After it established a puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932, the government had sent thousands and thousands of Japanese farmers to Manchuria to help manage this new colonial territory. In August 1945, the Soviet Union's army invaded the Manchuria region. Faced with the upcoming defeat in the war, the Japanese government decided to abandon those enormous farmer settlers and their families in Manchuria, including thousands of Japanese infants and children.

1.1. The creation of Manchukuo

It was in 1905 when Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War that Manchuria became part of Japan's sphere of influence. With the Treaty of Portsmouth, Japan replaced Russia and started to take over the southern Manchuria region, including the Russian ports and railways. Over the course of the next forty years, Manchuria gradually became a crucial part of Japan's imperial construction. In the beginning, Japan's scope of activity in this area was restricted to the Kwantung Leased Territory and the railway zone. Then, under the guidance of the Kwantung Army, Japan conducted a series of military conquest activities in Manchuria. On September 18th, 1931, the Kwantung Army detonated a small section of the South Manchuria Railway near Mukden and imputed this incident to Chinese army. This was the so-called Mukden Incident. And by using this incident as a pretext, the Kwantung Army expended its invasion to the entire region of Northeast China.

In March 1932, Japan established an independent state of Manchukuo in Manchuria, which was in fact a Japanese colony dominated by the Kwantung Army. Pu Yi, the last emperor of Qing Dynasty, was declared as the Emperor of this puppet regime. According to Ramon H. Myers, by creating Manchukuo, Japanese government actually intended to create “a regional economic bloc which comprised mines, industries, transportations, communication networks, and services—hospitals, schools, research institutes, and the like”. And this economic bloc would not only enable Japan to sustain itself in the war but also strengthen the country’s capacity to launch war against its enemies (Myers 1996, 136-137).

In addition, the creation of Manchukuo reflected the domestic political economic issue in Japan as well as the changing economic system in the world. In the late nineteenth century, the Meiji government began to encourage fertility so as to speed up this country’s industrialization and militarization process. The government believed that a large population could make possible a massive military, expand domestic markets, and raise tax revenue for the state. Indeed, Japan had developed rapidly in every aspect during that period. However, as Toake Endō (1962) noted, the excessive growth of population burdened the state especially when Japan was undergoing “a great transformation” at that time. Ultimately, the process of modernization and industrialization of the state could not afford enough growth with stability to feed and employ the entire population. As a result, Japan was obsessed by severe overpopulation and food shortage especially in rural areas (64). Thousands of farmers lost their land and were suffering from poverty. Second and third sons in households who were not eligible to inherit land from their parents since the old primogeniture tradition in Japan, were forced to leave their hometown for big cities, or became tenant farmers, or migrate to other countries like Brazil. Japan increasingly felt the pressure of overpopulation and rural poverty by the early twentieth century. People who lost their land or job flooded into the capital (65). It was thus an urgent matter to translocate the excess population for the

long-term stabilization of the national demography. Overseas migration policy, which seemed perfect for both population settlement and agricultural development, became more and more attractive to this country (66).

On the other hand, the changing industrial structure of the world in the twentieth century demanded abundant external resources including metal and oil. As a resource-poor country, Japan was worried that relying too much on the world market might bring the risks of uncertainties to the country. Thus, the idea of gaining resources through territory expansion or establishing a self-sufficient economic bloc, was increasingly discussed among policymakers in Japan (Duus 1996, xv-xvi). Under this circumstance, Manchuria appeared as a perfect resource-rich colonial territory, or *gaichi*, to solve Japan's dilemma.

1.2. The Great Migration Plan to Manchuria

Before migrations to Manchuria became a state policy in 1936, about 5000 (Guan and Zhang 2005, 4) Japanese immigrants had already settled in Manchuria. From 1905 to 1931, about 1500 Japanese farmers migrated to Manchuria. Some of them travelled voluntarily, while some others were recruited by the South Manchuria Railway (5). After the Kwangtung Army took over the entire Northeast China through the Mukden Incident in 1931, the colonial government started to seek more people for border defense and security assurance. Thus, Japanese government initiated a mobilization of the local governments and communities in Japan for a larger number of immigrants. Under the slogans such as “creation of *ōdo rakudo*” (a royal paradise), “*gozoku kyōwa*” (the cooperation of five ethnic groups: Han Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Manchurians, and Mongolians), thousands of farmers were lured by the government's propaganda promising that they could become big landlords and colonial upper class if they immigrated in Manchuria (Itoh 1954, 15). But in fact, these farmers were recruited for a clear military purpose -- forming “a military reserve for Imperial Army

operations” (Young 1998, 406). As a result, these farmers were usually under strict administration of the Kwangtung Army after they finally moved to Manchuria. According to Takao Kinoshita, about fifty percent of them were located near the Soviet border, forty percent were placed in areas where anti-Japanese ambushes often occurred, and the rest were assigned along the railway lines (quoted in Chan 2011, 18).

On August 25th, 1936, the newly established Hirota cabinet enacted a more ambitious migration plan as part of its seven-point state policy: sending one million farm households to Manchuria over next twenty years. According to this plan, the colonial government should send 100,000 households from 1937 to 1941. However, this plan was never fulfilled in its entirety. After the second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, abundant Japanese farmers were conscripted into the army or absorbed by military industries. Therefore, scarce rural labor force in Japan could no longer support the migrations to Manchuria. Consequently, Japanese government decided to use youth people to replace these farmers. More than 5000 young Japanese⁵, aging from 16-19, were recruited to some special training schools and then sent to Manchuria. These young people were called “Manchuria-Mongolia Settlement Youth Volunteer Corps”, which were in fact a back-up support of Kwangtung Army.

Between 1905 and 1945, Japanese government sent about 1000 settlement groups, including more than 220,000 farmer-settlers and their families as “agrarian immigrants” to Manchuria in total. Although these farmer-settlers didn’t collide with Chinese people directly, they became a part of the circle of colonizers by participating in the construction of Manchukuo. Eventually, Japanese civilian population in Manchuria, including these farmer-settlers, youth volunteers, bureaucrats, shopkeepers and company employees, had swelled to 1,550,000 by August 1945 (Itoh 2010, 16-17)

⁵ According to the complaint summary of compensation lawsuits (<http://www.kikokusha.com/images/pdf/summary.pdf>) there were 58,494 youth volunteers in total.

1.3. Soviet Army's Invasion of Manchuria and Kwantung Army's Decision to Abandon the Farmer Settlers

Japan's wartime expansion continued as the Pacific War progressed in the 1940s. However, as Duus said, the expansion of the Japanese empire "proceeded too far and too fast on a relatively limited material base" and therefore, "Japan's hegemony over the huge territory was more of an illusion than reality" (Duus 1996, xiii). Consequently, the Kwantung Army in Manchuria was transferred to support the front lines in the south (Guam and Philippines) as well as back in Japan. And the radical shrinkage of the Kwantung Army left Manchuria as well as the farmer-settlers there completely vulnerable. Taking this opportunity, the Soviet Union's army invaded Japan's puppet state, Manchukuo, at midnight on August 9, 1945. Since Japan no longer had enough time and manpower to repatriate one and half million Japanese civilians (especially those who lived near the Soviet border) back to Japan safely, the Kwantung Army decided to give up Manchuria and turn to defend the state's interests in Korea. Hence, thousands of unprotected Japanese civilians were abandoned to flee and fend for themselves. Without knowing it, these "expendable" farmers became the first line of defense – a "human pillbox", as Louise Young (1998, 406) called it.

By this moment, most farmer-settlers were not aware of Japan's defeat yet. They were simply advised to pack up their possessions with some food and water, and make their way with whatever transport to one of those major cities in the south where they could possibly catch a train. Since most adult men had already been drafted into the army and sent to the front lines, these farmer-settlers were composed mostly of defenseless women, children and the elderly. These people thus became easy targets for attacks by the Soviet Army. In addition, they were often stripped and assaulted by the revengeful local Chinese farmers and bandit militias. Therefore, they had no choice but to escape into the wild mountains and forests and hide. Some elderly who were unable to endure such a long journey chose to end their lives

with collective suicides, while some other were compelled into such mass suicides by Japanese soldiers in fear of humiliation and torment by the Soviet Army.

Without any water, food, shelter, and medical supply, thousands of farmer-settlers died of violence, coldness, disease, starvation, and mass suicides in the winter of 1945. As Itoh put it, “the evacuation journey was literally a hundreds-of-miles death march” and the vanished “royal paradise” had become a “living hell” (Itoh 2010, 20). Those who were lucky enough to finally make their way to one of the cities, immediately found that the railways were not available for ordinary Japanese civilians like them and as a result, they often ended up in refugee camps.

On August 15, 1945, Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration in which the disarmament and retreat of Japanese military force were required. Yet, no words about Japanese ordinary civilians were mentioned in this Declaration. Meanwhile, due to the severe shortage of food, house, and ships and ports in mainland Japan after the war, the government decided to give up the early evacuation of these civilians instead focusing on preserving the polity of Japan.

As a result, more than a third of the farmer-settlers⁶ died in the chaotic aftermath of WWII. And the farmer-settlers, who accounted no more than 14 percent of the entire Japanese population in Manchuria by 1945, constituted 45 percent of the total death toll at the end of war (Young 1998, 411).⁷ In this extraordinary situation, thousands of Japanese infants and children were adopted by rural Chinese families. Some of them became orphans since their parents died from violence or disease. While more of them were actually left, given, abandoned, sold, or entrusted to these local families by their own parents in order to save the lives of these children as well as their own. Overall, this was how these Japanese children

⁶ According to Louise Young (1960), about 785,000 out of the 223,000 people died during this period (411).

⁷ According to Mayumi Itoh (2010), the farmer settlers constituted 17.4 percent of the total Japanese population in Manchuria, and accounted for 45 percent of the total death roll (24).

were separated from their families and homeland, and then eventually became the “war orphans” in Manchuria. Since then, these orphans have experienced many hardships in their lives -- losing their biological parents, living in an enemy foreign country, being bullied as adopted children, and being discriminated against and persecuted because of their Japanese parentage. And it was not until the 1970s these orphans finally set foot on their motherland of Japan again.

2. The Long Journey of Repatriation

After these orphans were left behind in China after the war, there were several times of collective repatriations conducted by Chinese, Soviet, and U.S. governments. However, since most orphans were quite young, most of them missed these opportunities to return to Japan. Moreover, due to the broken relationship between China and Japan, as well as the passive attitude of Japanese government, it was not until the 1970s that these orphans finally regained Japanese government's attention and started to repatriate to their home country. Their repatriations, however, were arduous and full of challenges and difficulties. Before they could permanently return to Japan, they had to reestablish their domiciles, find people who were willing to support their life in Japan, and accept the residence place assigned by the Japanese government that was often undesirable.

2.1. After the War

After the Soviet Army retreated from Manchuria in May 1946, more than 1,256,000 Japanese civilians were repatriated to Japan under the operations of CCP, KMT, U.S. military as well as the Soviet Army (Itoh 2010, 49-53). Except for the 220,000 people who did not survive in the winter of 1945 and perished in Manchuria, there were more than 70,000 Japanese, including farmer-settlers, were still left behind and most of them also died in Manchuria later. Among those who survived, there were approximately 3,000 Japanese infants and children. Considering these orphans as naturalized Chinese, the post-war Japanese government treated them quite passively and indifferently. As one official of the Ministry of Health and Welfare said, "the parents left their children in China of their own will. Why should the government search for the orphans?" (Itoh 2010, 74)

In March 1959, the Ministry of Health and Welfare passed a special regulation concerning those un-repatriated Japanese civilians (*Mikikansha ni kansuru tokubetsu sochihō* 未帰還者に関する特別措置法) by which approximately 13,600 Japanese civilians,

including war orphans, were designated as “wartime dead” and their domiciles and registry records were eliminated.⁸ Considering the declaration of “wartime dead” as the end of its repatriation work, the Ministry renamed the Repatriation Assistance Bureau as the Assistance Bureau (Chan 2011, 26; Efrd 2004, 29; Itoh 2010, 56-57). By doing so, following the previous abandonment they suffered in Manchuria, these poor Japanese civilians, including thousands of war orphans, were again deserted by their home country.

2.2. Delayed repatriation since 1972

In the later half of the twentieth century, great and profound changes have taken place in the world situation. Encouraged by U.S. President Nixon’s visit to China in February 1972, Japanese Minister Tanaka Kakuei visited Beijing seven months later in the same year. During this visit, Tanaka gave up Japan’s “two Chinas” policy and signed a joint communiqué with the PRC on September 29, which marked the normalization of the Sino-Japanese relations. The normalization of relations between China and Japan provided a premise condition for the Japanese war orphans’ repatriation. However, since “the Sino-Japanese relations were intertwined with the U.S.- China- Soviet strategic triangle” and Japan did not wish to get involved in the Sino-Soviet conflict over the “hegemonic clause” issue (Itoh 2010, 73), it was not until August 1978 that China and Japan finally signed The Treaty of Peace and Friendship. And during the period between 1972 and 1978, the orphan issue continued to be neglected by the reluctant Japanese government.

On the other hand, Japanese volunteers, especially the early repatriates and those ordinary civilians who had their family members left in China, began to organize themselves into groups and made great efforts in initiating a series of private searches for the orphans

⁸ See the website of Kikokusha NPO for a complaint summary of compensation lawsuits against the Japanese government. (<http://www.kikokusha.com/images/pdf/summary.pdf>)

since 1973. For example, Yamamoto Jishō, who was a former farmer-settler in Manchuria in 1945 and repatriated to Japan in 1948, established the Japan-China Friendship Bridge Society in June 1973 and conducted sixteen search missions to China between 1974 and 1982 without assistance from the government. At the same time, many orphans in China who were aware of their Japanese identity started to contact the newly established Japanese embassy in Beijing or their families in Japan directly.

These volunteer organizations and their work were widely supported by activists, lawyers, journalists, writers as well as some politicians in Japan. They also created numerous of publications including reports, books as well as journal articles based on their own experience in searching for the orphans. These stories successfully attracted the public's attention and more importantly, facilitated the orphan's return and settlement in Japan (Chan 2011, 55). At the same time, these volunteers and groups kept exerting pressure on the Japanese government to initiate official searches for the orphans. Three years after Japan established diplomatic relations with China, the Ministry of Health and Welfare finally began to organize official kin search tours for the orphans in 1981.

Since 1981, the Ministry of Health and Welfare started to sponsor regular tours for prospective orphans in China to find their kin in Japan.⁹ Although all these tours were conducted under the rigorous surveillance and management of the Japanese government, they relied heavily on volunteer labor even financial resources. These volunteers were responsible for both collecting and interpreting all the orphans' profiles before they were released to the major newspapers and TV programs in Japan. However, due to their unprofessional interpretation and summarization, some important data was omitted, which made it more difficult for the orphans to find their families (Chan 2011, 48).

⁹ See the website of Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare for a list of thirty tours between March 1981 and November 1999, including the number of participants and the rates of identification, which declined significantly in 1990s. (<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/houdou/2005/09/h0930-5e.html>)

2.3. Reestablishing Domiciles

As more and more orphans found their Japanese families, they began to seek permanent repatriation to Japan. However, since most of the orphans were designed as “wartime dead” in 1959, they no longer had their domiciles and registry records kept in Japan. If the orphans who lost their registry wish to return to Japan permanently, they would have to first reestablish their domiciles by themselves, which required a judicial procedure at a local court and the kin’s evidence of their Japanese identities including a blood test result (Itoh 2010, 85).

It is important to note that official designation as a “war orphan” did not automatically entail or confer Japanese citizenship, no matter how compelling the evidence of a person’s Japanese background or birth was.¹⁰ Without proof of parentage in the form of a blood test that unambiguously anchored an individual to a living relative and their family registration (*koseki-sho*), a central constituent of Japanese state memory, the state would not acknowledge that individual as a Japanese citizen (Efrid 2004, 30). According to Chan (2011), *Koseki*, or Japanese household registry, is used to identify those who are Japanese nationals (i.e. who is a Japanese citizen), with the notion of “blood” serving as a critical factor in it. With this *Koseki*, “the traditional family system has been given legal status to incorporate the values of loyalty, obedience and piety, as well as to define the relationship between the individual and the state” (51).

Those orphans who were lucky enough to find their Japanese relatives during their brief visit to Japan, then were able to reestablish their domiciles with a concrete parentage based on a blood test and other evidence. And they were called identified (*mimoto hanmei*)

¹⁰ For example, official Chinese documents specifying Japanese identity, the testimony of neighbors, members of the orphans’ adoptive family, and other orphans, as well as vaccination scars and material possessions that accompanied the orphan when he or she was adopted (Efrid 2004, 31).

orphans. However, identified orphans only constituted a small part of this group. The rest, majority of them eventually became unidentified (*mimoto hanmei*) orphans who were refused to return to Japan permanently by the government. After a long period of protests by these orphans as well the volunteers whom supported them, the Ministry finally agreed to revise its policy and allowed unidentified orphans to repatriate. But still, they had to go through a long legal procedure to establish a new family registry and then regain their citizenship.

2.4. The Guarantor and Receiver System

In 1975, the Ministry of Justice proclaimed that the repatriation of Japanese war orphans would be processed in accordance with the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, implying them to be the same as foreigners or refugees in this country. As a result, these war orphans (both identified and unidentified) were required to find a Japanese guarantor who is willing to sponsor their family to live in Japan, legally and financially. This system, again, transferred the state's responsibility to individual civilians and their family (Chan 2011, 49; Itoh 2010, 108; Robert 2004, 33).

In general, these guarantors are required not only to take the financial responsibility for the orphans' travel cost and living expense, but also to supervise and report their whereabouts, conduct, and any changes in Japan upon requests (Itoh 2010, 103). With these burdensome obligations, the guarantor system became a main obstacle to the orphans' searches for their Japanese families and caused a number of Japanese kin to refuse to sponsor their long-lost relatives. According to Chan (2011), "a number of Japanese war orphans stated that their Japanese kin went to see them at kin-searching meetings out of emotional curiosity but then, due to the heavy responsibilities involved, pretended they did not recognize them" (50).

On one hand, many orphans actually didn't return to Japan alone. Instead, they often

came with a large family, including their spouses, adoptive parents, children, and even grandchildren, which significantly intensified the possible economic pressures in the future. On the other hand, most birthparents of these orphans were really old and in retirement, which made them unqualified to be guarantors. Moreover, since most of these parents had built their own new family after they came back to Japan and had kept their secrets for decades, they often felt ashamed to admit that they had abandoned their children at the end of war and some of them were afraid to reveal this secret.

For example, Nakayama Bunrin, a war orphan who lived in Hiroshima, had neither found the Japanese name given by his biological parents nor been recognized by any Japanese relatives. When he was living in Jiaohe City, Jilin Province of China, he was called Li Wenlin. When he was required to write down his Japanese name while registering for Japanese citizenship, he retained the first name of "Wenlin" given by his adoptive parents and chose the last name of "Nakayama"¹¹ by himself. However, he might be surnamed "Yasuda," he said. An old Japanese lady surnamed Yasuda went to Hiroshima a couple of times to visit him and said that she also lived in Jiaohe City during the war period. She also mentioned several names of the neighbors that he knew. "But she did not want to clarify (that she had blood relations with me). I didn't want to make her embarrassed, either. Since I brought back several members of my family to Japan, I didn't want to burden other people," Nakayama Bunrin said. Also, during the few years after his arrival in Japan, that lady had written to him and called him secretly. She also asked him to call back to her within the appointed time. But then she disappeared, and never contacted him again. There was not any other relatives informed him whether the old lady was still alive or not. "She might have never talked about me to other people. Anyway, it is quite disgraceful to abandon one's own child (Southern Weekly news, 2017)."

¹¹ These two Chinese Characters are the same as the first name of Sun Yat-sen 孙 中山. Also, Sun Yat-sen had used a Japanese name called Nakayama Kikori 中山 樵 in 1897 when he was in Japan.

Besides, most aging siblings of these orphans were also scared away by these heavy duties, or, by a more selfish reason. Due to the custom of family inheritance in Japan, some siblings were afraid that the return of these orphans might cause a decline of their social and economic status, especial the return of those oldest sons in their original families (Liu 2013, 36-37) Furthermore, most siblings had never contacted with their long-lost brothers or sisters after they were separated decades ago. Therefore, some of them were unwilling to serve as guarantors just because of “a natural absence of affection between people who were family in name only” (Efird 2004, 32).

In the end, there were a certain number of Japanese war orphans who failed to find their families in Japan during the searching missions partly because the guarantor system scared people away. And later, these people who didn't find their families, could not repatriate to Japan successfully, again, because they could not meet the requirement of finding a guarantor. In response to this predicament, Japanese government revised this guarantor system in March 1985 and replaced it with a what Itoh called “receiver system.” The receiver system was introduced to help these unidentified orphans who had no guarantors by assigning them with receivers (Itoh 2010, 106-107). Usually, the receivers were those ordinary Japanese civilians who were both capable of and willing to provide advice and assistance whenever these orphans needed. However, these people were also required to accept a fully investigation before they could eventually became a receiver, and such investigations often invaded people's privacy. Consequently, it was extremely difficult to find these receivers. Later in July 1989, Japanese government established a “special receiver system” for those identified orphans who had no guarantor (rejected by their Japanese kin), allowing them to find receivers, too. Although these various systems facilitated the repatriation of these war orphans in some certain circumstances, but ultimately, it was these very systems and policies that made this process more complicated than it supposed to be in

the first place.

With no other way, many volunteers filled the void and became receivers of these orphans. For example, Sugawara Ko-suke, the founder of the “Kanagawa Welfare Associate to Assist the Repatriated from China”, has become the receiver of about 50 orphans and sponsored the domicile establishment for approximately 140 orphans in total (Itoh 2010, 109). Again, these volunteers undertook the tasks of repatriating orphans home, which were supposed to be the responsibility of the government.

But, why exactly was it so hard for these war orphans to become a Japanese citizen again? Why did the Japanese government refuse to simply reestablish the domiciles for these orphans since it was the government’s responsibility to have them falsely designated as “wartime dead?” Why did these orphans have to find themselves guarantors or receivers to return to their ancestral homeland? Japanese nationality, as Linger pointed out, is governed legally by *jus sanguinis*, which means the Japanese citizenship has to be conferred through blood, and all the people who don’t have “Japanese blood” will be classified as foreigners (Linger 2001, 277). Since these orphans’ repatriation began decades after the end of war, only the concrete result of a blood test or Japanese kin’s testimony could unambiguously determine their Japanese nationality. In this way, this principle of *jus sanguinis* indicates a sense of genetic uniqueness and superiority of Japanese race, which is closely related to *Nihonjinron*. And it also presented a type of exclusive ethnic nationalism, which defined the Japanese nation and Japanese citizenship by a shared ethnic ancestry.

2.5. Place of Residence with No Choice

The last major barrier of the repatriation encountered by Japanese war orphans was their place of residence in Japan. Those various restrictions set by Japanese government had delayed or shattered many orphans’ dreams of final repatriation.

Generally, all those orphans who returned to Japan were required to live in the areas assigned by the Japanese government. Those identified orphans who had their kin as their guarantors, had to live in the area where their families lived. If the orphans did not find their Japanese families, or their families refused to receive them, they had the choice to choose a place and the Ministry would negotiate with the local government for them. Once the local government agreed to receive these orphans, then this place would be their residence and the local government would recruit a local receiver for them. However, if the local government rejected them, and the orphans did not wish to change to another place, then their final repatriation would be delayed. Besides, once the orphans accepted the place of residence before they repatriated, whatever the reason was, they could not change it as long as they were still receiving assistance from the state and the local government. They could only choose a place to live by themselves after they became totally economically independent from government aid.

The truth was that, the residence places assigned to those unidentified orphans were usually in the rural areas, since the government did not wish them to be overly concentrated in cities. The orphans, however, often preferred to live in big cities where they could have more jobs opportunities. In 1980s, Asahi Shinbun published a news article, reporting the unrest caused by Japanese war orphans because they were unsatisfied with the government's assignment of residence. This incident changed the overall opinion most Japanese had toward war orphans. In the beginning, the majority Japanese society was holding a sympathetic attitude towards war orphans. After this incident, the society started to view this group with increasing antipathy. (Liu 2013, 37) Overall, the reality these war orphans have faced with is very cruel. After being abandoned by the Japanese government at the end of the war, these orphans were again suffered from a variety of unfair treatments not only during their repatriation process, but also during their resettlement in Japan.

3. A Disillusioned Heaven

After a long journey of repatriation, some Japanese war orphans finally officially returned to their home country while dreaming about a new chapter in their life. However, their struggles and pains didn't end here. As described by an informant of Rob Eford (2010), many Japanese war orphans came back to Japan, thinking that everything about Japan was wonderful and the Japanese government would take care of everything. However, the reality was that the government took care of everything on the kin-seeking tour, but after they regained the residence in Japan, they had to look after everything by their own (823). Eventually, after overcoming a series of legal and bureaucratic barriers in repatriation, Japanese war orphans encountered various difficulties during their resettlement in Japan.

3.1. Struggles of War Orphans

The first major barrier confronted by repatriated orphans in their homeland was the Japanese language. Although the Japanese government had provided these orphans language learning programs after they arrived Japan, they were all just for only a few months which were hardly enough for these middle aged or elderly orphans to master this language. Therefore, these orphans' life became extreme difficult since they would not be able to communicate with other Japanese people. Moreover, the language barrier often resulted in an experience of exclusion in this society. "It only takes one sentence to determine from your accent whether you're Japanese or not," Kanou Kunihiro said, "then people will intuitively shut you out (Xinhua News 2015)." In this way, the Japanese language, as a critical component of Japanese ethnicity, became a predominant characteristic to distinguish "outsiders" from the "insiders".

Then, the second major challenge of these orphans was to find a stable job that could support themselves and their families. Since most of them could not speak Japanese, they had no choice but took some part-time jobs or went to the manufacturing and construction factories

as manual labor, which were often characterized by the 3Ks (*kitsui* demanding, *kiken* dangerous, and *kitani* dirty). Life was difficult, even for those orphans who had a decent job back in China (such as teachers or doctors) since their previous credentials and expertise meant nothing in Japan. Moreover, the orphans often claimed that they were discriminated as Chinese in these work places. For example, Nakai Reiko, who was an elementary school teacher back in China, returned to Japan with her families in 1987. After learning Japanese language for four months, she began to work as a cook. Later, she joined a cleaning company and worked there until she retired. But she said her coworkers always made her do all the work that they did not want to do because she was “Chinese”. And “they told her that she should go back to China if she did not like it” (Itoh 2010, 131).

Eventually, those orphans who failed to be self-sufficient (including orphans who had no jobs or those who had jobs but earned too little to survive) had no choice but to subsist on government welfare, including allowances for living, education, and housing. However, in order to be qualified for these benefits, they must first relinquish their personal possessions to the government, and if they still had other job, their income would be subtracted from these benefits. This caused an ironic situation that they were better off not working at all. Besides, they were all subjected to multiple house-call inspections by social workers every month. Under this rigorous surveillance, they could not “enjoy” their life, not even purchase a small air-condition in the hot summer since it would squander the money of Japanese taxpayers. In addition, these orphans had to report every time when they planned to travel to other places. And for each day they were not at home, their allowance would be deducted (Itoh 2010, 133-136). Languages difficulties, economic hardship, limited freedom, in addition to all these struggles experienced by orphans themselves, their families were also suffered from various forms of discrimination and prejudice in their daily life.

3.2. Struggles of Orphans' Spouses and Offspring

While most Japanese orphans returned to Japan because of a natural desire to one's homeland, their spouses and children did not share the same motivation. Sometimes, husbands and wives would divorce each other as a result of the stressful separation. Sometimes, orphans would return to Japan with part of their families, while the left would remain in China. For those families who came to this new country because of their family ties or a possible better future, the reality confronted them with an array of linguistic, cultural, educational, and personal obstacles which were similar to, or even worse than, the obstacles encountered by orphans themselves.

First, all the spouses, and their children had the same difficulties with Japanese language, that they could not acquire it in such a short time. Particularly, while most orphans and their spouses were qualified to attain a Japanese citizenship and attend to the languages learning program, some orphans' children were not that lucky. If the children were already adults when they came to Japan with their families, they were often not allowed to obtain Japanese nationality, let alone those public assistances that should be given to the orphans' families.

Besides, even orphans themselves were often discriminated against as "Chinese" in Japan, then certainly their families, who did not have a Japanese parentage or a Japanese cultural background or even a Japanese citizenship, would have a much deeper sense of alienation. "My son was discriminated against because of his poor command of the language. He was also paid less than other Japanese workers," said by Nakamura Hiroshi (Xinhua News 2015).

Moreover, when the war orphans and their spouses were having a difficult life in Japan, their children were faced with a more difficult situation and suffering from various forms of exclusion and discrimination. They were more likely to be bullied in school. And

some children thought that it was their parents' faults to bring them into a life like this. Ikeda Yukiko was a ten-year old girl who came to Japan with her mother, who had become an orphan at the end of the war. When she moved to Tokyo with her parents and transferred to a new middle school, she needed to get a new school uniform which was unaffordable for her parents at that time. Later, although the school principal permitted Yukiko to wear her old uniform from the previous school, she was still called as "Chinese" and "germ", and she was even beaten by other children. No one had stepped out to prevent such bullying including her teachers, although they knew clearly what had happened. Yukiko said, "I wondered why I had to live in Japan. I even hated my mother for bringing us to Japan (Itoh 2010, 152)." Due to the miserable life experiences and sometimes intense relationship within their families, some orphans' children eventually dropped out from their schools, became juvenile delinquents or criminals, and some of them even committed suicide (Itoh 2010, 154-155). Then, how did these people respond to this miserable situation?

3.3. Compensation Lawsuits against the Japanese government

After returning to Japan, war orphans and their families had been living under greater pressure, spiritually and materially. Particularly, the orphans were terrified by the fear of their elderly life after retirement. Faced with all these negative experiences and a uncertain future, war orphans, their families, as well as volunteers who care about them, put a lot of efforts to urge the Japanese government to take measures to assist their resettlement and self-sufficiency in Japan. Yet they had little success. After all their attempts to negotiate with Japanese government turned to be in vain, it became a life-or-death matter for this community.

Finally, in December 2002, 629 war orphans conducted a class-action lawsuit in the Tokyo District Court, requiring the Japanese government to pay ¥33 million yen

(US\$300,000) per person, with a total amount of ¥21 billion yen (US\$189 million). In their complaint, the orphans “claimed that they had been deprived of the right to live humanly as ordinary Japanese from their childhood to the present” (Itoh 2010, 177). The orphans also claimed that it was the Japanese government’s fault to send them to China in the first place, and then neglect its duty to secure their return, strand them in a foreign nation for decades, deny their rights to live as human by designating them as “wartime dead”, and fail to provide adequate assistance to ensure their settlement and self-sufficiency after their repatriation.¹² As a result, war orphans encountered a mass of barriers concerning residence, work, medical treatment, language learning, as well as the education of next generations. And unlike those war wounded, war dead, or their families who enjoyed generous and numerous pensions, Japanese government encouraged the orphans to live upon welfare. The government even considered it to be a great favor to the orphans. “They say that we can just go on welfare until we die. Who is welfare for? Welfare is for what kind of people? People who don't have the ability to work. Handicapped people, ill people? ---- those kinds of people. This is how the government has dealt with the war orphans (Efird 2008, 383).”

Stimulated by this lawsuit in Tokyo, the wave of the class-action lawsuit spread to the whole country. Eventually, more than two thousand¹³ orphans from fifteen locales jointed these lawsuits and started their fight that lasted for years (2002-2007). Later, the judgments of these lawsuits were pronounced respectively and their results turned to be quite different from each other. For example, on December 1st, 2006, the District Court of Kobe issued a judgment admitting that the orphans were created by a series of illegal actions of the Japanese government. This ruling also decided that the Japanese government had ignored its legal obligation to promote the repatriation of the orphans as it enforced the guarantor system as

¹² See the complaint summary of compensation lawsuits against the Japanese government on the Kikokusha NPO website. (<http://www.kikokusha.com/images/pdf/summary.pdf>)

¹³ According to Liu Ru (2013), the number of plaintiff was 2212 (45). But according to Mayumi Itoh (2010), it was 2192 (183).

well as any other requirements on the orphans. In addition, it illustrated clearly that according to law, the government has the responsibility to help the orphans to achieve self-sufficiency. However, the government had failed this obligation, since it provided much less aid, compared to the case of North Korean abductions^{14, 15}.

Nonetheless, the Tokyo District Court issued its verdict on January 30th, 2007 and rejected all the orphans' claims. This verdict even claimed that there was no legal causal relationship between the Japanese government's action and the creation of orphans. Instead, it blamed the Soviet Army and the orphans' parents who gave or sold their children to Chinese families. Besides, it insisted that considering the Sino-Japanese relation at that time, it was not the Japanese government's fault to not search for the orphans earlier. Moreover, due to the various objective administrative difficulties to repatriate the orphans, this verdict disagreed that Japanese government had obstructed the repatriation of orphans. Therefore, Japanese government had no legal obligation to pay any compensation or assist their self-sufficiency.¹⁶

Although these verdicts differed from each other and most orphans did not get the justice they had expected for a long time, these lawsuits had successfully attracted the public's attention and forced the government to take measures to help these orphans. Finally, in November 2007, the Japanese government revised the 1994 Law to Assist Japanese Left behind in China and the New Assistance Law started to take effect in 2008. Except for the full pension benefits, the New Assistance Law also provided financial assistance for orphans' daily life, residence, and medical care. Besides, it also required the government to provide

¹⁴ "North Korean abductions" refers to Japanese citizens who were abducted by agents of the North Korean government in the 1970s.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korean_abductions_of_Japanese_citizens)

¹⁵ See the website of Japan Institute of Constitutional Law for the verdict of Kobe court. "中国「残留孤児」訴訟（8）—神戸地裁判決" (http://www.jicl.jp/now/saiban/backnumber/china_8.html)

¹⁶ See the website of Japan Institute of Constitutional Law for the verdict of Tokyo court. "中国「残留孤児」訴訟（10）—東京地裁判決" (http://www.jicl.jp/now/saiban/backnumber/china_10.html)

orphans Japanese language learning program, employment assistance, life consulting, as well as a series of language learning support, career guidance and professional training funds of orphans' offspring. Overall, this new law marked a staged victory in the long-term combat of war orphans.¹⁷

Then, what do these orphans think about their ethnic identity after they were abandoned in Manchuria as infants or children, discriminated in China as “Japanese”, and experienced a variety of unfair treatments as “Chinese” during their repatriation and resettlement in Japan?

¹⁷ See the website of Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare for the Assistant Law for Japanese Left behind in China.
(<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/hokabunya/senbotsusha/seido02/>)
(<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/bunya/engo/seido02/pdf/shiensaku.pdf>)

4. “Who am I?”

“As individuals, we cannot change history or politics. What we can control is our humanity,” said Professor Liang Yunxiang of Peking University (Tan 2017). In their difficult and tortuous life paths, the orphans had spent their whole life trying to seek the answers to those questions such as “What is my name?” “Who are my parents?” “Where is my hometown?” And “who am I?” And as Mayumi Itoh concluded, these orphans’ return to Japan was a fateful “double tragic ethnic migration, which also resulted in the creation of a double family diaspora,” that they were discriminated against as “Chinese” in their country of heritage, just like how their parents and themselves were discriminated against and persecuted as “Japanese” in China (Itoh 2010, 143). In Part Two, we will see how history repeated itself when the Japanese Brazilians in Brazil returned to Japan as “migrant workers”. And in this section, by looking through these orphans’ experiences of being caught in between the Chinese and Japanese ethnicities, I will examine how exactly Chinese and Japanese ethnicities were constructed and contested diversely by these people.

As discussed in the introduction, ethnicity is defined both internally and externally, and discrepancies and conflicts often occurred between the self-determined aspect and the ethnic categories imposed by others. Then, sometimes one aspect dominates over another, and sometimes they integrate together (Linger 2001, 250; Tsuda 2003, 9-10) In the case of war orphans, their self-identified ethnicity was also influenced by their images of these two countries, positive or negative. Some orphans had already been aware of their Japanese identity since they were young, either based on their own memories of childhood, or informed by others. And the unpleasant experiences of being treated as Japanese in China often caused them to distance themselves with their ethnic consciousness toward Japan. For example, Ikeda Sumie, one orphan informant of Robert (2010), explained her feeling as following:

When I went out, other kids would call me “little Japanese! Little Japanese!
(*xiao riben renr, xiao riben renr*)” Everyone around knew I was Japanese...I

was really afraid... When the kids saw those Japanese devils killing and burning (in patriotic movies), they would say “you little Japanese! Overthrow (*dadao*) the Japanese devils!” Some spit in my face... You can forgive them for hating the Japanese, because the Japanese hurt the Chinese, right? But I hadn't done anything bad... I would still say that I was Chinese, not Japanese. Why? Because all the things I saw in those movies were awful things. Japanese did terrible things. I didn't want to be a bad person. So I thought, I'm not Japanese. I'm not that bad.

(Efird 2010, 811-812)

Due to the negative meanings of Japanese ethnicity, as well as the possible prejudice and persecution caused by it in that environment, Ikeda chose to reject her Japanese ethnic identity. Similarly, some orphans chose to hide it. Yan Qingwen learned about his Japanese identity when he was in college, but later he didn't tell his wife and children about it since he didn't want them to bear this burden. It was not until 1994 when a letter sent to Yan Qingwen from the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare inviting him to Japan to look for his relatives, that his secret was finally revealed (Tan 2017). And Nakamura Hiroshi was told that he was a Japanese orphan after he got his first job. “I was shocked, but nothing could be done,” he recalled. He was afraid that his ethnicity would bring trouble, so Nakamura kept his true identity secret for decades of years. He claimed to be Han Chinese and even joined the Communist Party of China (Xinhua News 2015).

On the other hand, when these orphans finally returned to Japan, they thought they could finally be a real Japanese. However, the reality did not turn out that way. The way in which these orphans considered themselves, were not the same as how other Japanese perceived them. Based on a research on forty-four war orphans in Hyōgo ken of Japan, Tong Yan and Asano Shinichi argued that these repatriated orphans often presented multiple, conflict, or intertwined ethnic self-identification (Tong and Asano 2011, 135). The various examples in this research had fully manifested that ethnicity was both relational and situational.

Among these 44 orphans, there were 17 of them defining themselves as Japanese:

- a. I am a real Japanese, with pure Japanese blood running in my body. Before I returned to Japan, I didn't forget about that I am Japanese, not for a single moment.
- b. I knew I am a Japanese since I was a children and I have kept that thought in my mind. My parents were Japanese, I was born in Japan, and I still have my registry in Japan. So I am designated as Japanese, by both Chinese and Japanese government.
- c. No matter how other people thinks about me, I am a real Japanese. I was treated as a Chinese after I returned to Japan. But I can't agree with that. Two Japanese policemen once came to my house and asked me "who are you?" "I am a Japanese," I answered. But later they laughed and said, "A Japanese who cannot speak Japanese." I was really sad. But no matter what they said, I am a one hundred percent Japanese.

(Tong and Asano 2011, 136-37)

Then, only 4 of them considered themselves as Chinese:

- d. In Japan, I don't feel like I am a Japanese, not even for a little bit. I am always being regarded as Chinese. My body might be Japanese, but my heart is one hundred percent Chinese. And I always consider myself as a Chinese.
- e. I am proud of being a Chinese. I have a sense of antipathy toward Japan. I don't want to accommodate myself to Japanese. And I am not interested in becoming one.

(Tong and Asano 2011, 137-38)

Besides, 20 of these orphans developed a more complicated ethnic identity. Some of them felt that they were both Chinese and Japanese, some of them considered that they were neither of them, and some of them regard themselves to be something in between:

- a. Japanese and Chinese, I am both of them. I feel that half of me is Chinese, and half of me is Japanese. When I watch sports games, I will cheer for Japanese team, then the Chinese team, too.
- b. I believed that I am Japanese. But in reality, I am neither a Japanese, nor a Chinese. I don't know who I really am, and I will never find the answer. I feel so regretful (*kuyashi*, 悔しい) This is about my dignity as a human being.
- c. I am not a Chinese or a Japanese... If I am a Chinese, why do I have the Japanese nationality and returned to Japan. If I am a Japanese, why can't I integrate myself into the Japanese society and why am I treated differently?
- d. Now I feel that I am a Chinese *Nikkeijin*. I thought I was Japanese before I came to Japan, but now I became neither of them. I have Japanese blood but I

cannot speak Japanese. And I was deeply influenced by Chinese culture. So I should be a Chinese *Nikkeijin*.

(Tong and Asano 2011, 137)

In the end, there were 3 orphans claimed that were not concerned with what ethnicity they should be. Anyway, from these people's self-identifications of ethnicity, we can clearly see each individual's singularity and capacity, which cannot be easily categorized by our frame of mind. Those particular twists and turns in each person's life paths dramatically shaped their perceptions of new circumstances and lead people into different ends. As Tong Yan and Asano Shinichi (2011) stated, this diversity of ethnicity among orphans was resulted from their unique experience of being regarded as Japanese in China and later as Chinese in Japan, plus their different ages, different residences and different timing of repatriation. And these people's understandings of the Chinese or Japanese ethnicities were not just a simple adaption or assimilation to either of these two countries, but a critical thinking of ethnicity, which indicated certain characteristics of a kind of cross-border identity (135).

On the other hand, as a cultural and social concept, ethnicity is a way in which people reflect their self-consciousness and experiences. And since ethnicity is an often-used category for group identification, it thereby inevitably indicates a sense of collectivity and unification. However, consciousness and experiences are certainly not, collective or uniform. Instead, they belong to each unique individual, who often shows great creativity and diversity within their current groups, just like these orphans. Then, just as how Robert Efrid (2010) asked, what would be lost after all when we used ethnic identifications that diminished the diverse and unique experiences of individuals into categories like "Japanese " or "Chinese (833)?" And if the existence of full ethnicity really requires all these three elements ---- "self-identification, identification by others, and shared activities" (Linger 2001, 250), then how should we define those people ethnically when they miss one or two of them? Now let's keep these questions in mind and keep seeking the answers in the stories of Japanese Brazilians.

Part Two: Japanese Brazilians

In Part One, I investigated the Japanese war orphans' double ethnic migration to Japan, as well as the diverse ethnic identity they had constructed during this process. In Part Two, I will move on to the Japanese Brazilian issue and see how history repeated itself with these new migrants in Japan.

This part begins with a historical review about the migration flux from Japan to Brazil in the twentieth century and the creation of a "positive minority" in Brazil. Then it focuses on the reverse migration flows of Japanese Brazilians in 1980s due to a severe economic crisis in Brazil and a labor shortage of manual workers in Japan. After these Japanese Brazilians returned to Japan, they were usually lack of Japanese linguistic and cultural proficiency. Also, they had experienced a sudden drop in their socioeconomic and cultural status as migrant factory workers. Eventually, these people became a new type of negative minority group in Japan, who were suffered from enormous ethnic exclusions and discriminations. After their previous understanding of Japaneseness as well as their dreams of ethnic commonality were completely disillusioned, Japanese Brazilians started to reconsider and redefine their ethnic identities in their country of heritage.

1. The Origins of Respected “Japonês”

First of all, in order to fully understand Japanese Brazilians’ ethnic experiences in Japan, one must first know their previous ethnic experiences in Brazil. The migration history between Japan and Brazil started in the 1990s. And in the twentieth century, there were two migration waves from Japan to Brazil. The first migration wave occurred in the 1920s and 30s, which was caused by a chronic labor shortage in Brazil and a severe over population issue in Japan. The second wave in the mid-1950s mainly resulted from the poverty and unemployment issue in Japan after it was defeated in WWII. After these Japanese migrants arrived in Brazil, not only they have established a respected “positive minority” in this country, but also they have maintained a strong Japanese identity through their own ethnic assertion and isolation.

1.1. The New Destination: Brazil

As mentioned in Part One, the Meiji Government had been eager to translocate the excess population outside Japan in the late nineteenth century due to the severe overpopulation and rural poverty issue in this country. However, the United States and Japan signed the Gentlemen’s Agreement in 1907 that severely restricted new Japanese immigration. One year later, a similar agreement was concluded between Japan and Canada, too. As a result, the Meiji government as well as those migration companies¹⁸ had to give up North America and started to look for new destinations (Goto 2007, 6).

On the other hand, Brazil was longing for foreign workers because of a chronic labor shortage for coffee plantations. In the beginning, coffee plantations in Brazil were mainly depending on the slaves from Africa, who were no longer available after the abolishment of slavery in Brazil since 1888. Then they turned to immigrants from Europe, especially Italy

¹⁸ In 1894, Japanese government issued “Migration Protection Regulation” which established several private migration companies and allow them to recruit and arrange Japanese emigration (Goto 2007).

and Spain. However, these European immigrants alone could not overcome the severe labor shortage of this country. More importantly, many Brazilian coffee plantations owners were disappointed by these European workers due to their insufficient obedience to poor working environment and delayed wages (Linger 2001, 20). Consequently, these owners were forced to explore other sources of labor supply. This desire then coincided with the need of Japanese migration companies to look for new destinations for their immigrants. In 1894, Japanese special immigration envoy Sho Nemoto arrived in Brazil and successfully aroused Brazil's interest by promoting Japanese immigrants as the “whites of Asia’---- hard working, docile, and adaptable” (Linger 2001, 20). After a period of negotiation and recruitment, a Japanese migration company and the government of São Paulo signed an agreement in 1907, permitting Japanese workers to migrate to Brazil. One year later, the first 781 Japanese immigrants left the port of Kobe and finally arrived this new destination after nearly two months at sea.

Most Japanese immigrants who moved to Brazil between 1907 and 1924 were attracted by advertisements of private migration companies. Dreaming of “the tree of gold (coffee) (Goto 2007),” they left Japan on their own will. After the United States enacted a law that completely terminated Japanese immigration in 1924, the Japanese government decided to sponsor Japanese emigrants who wanted to go to Brazil by providing them travel subsidies and other financial supports (Goto 2007). Besides, the Japanese government enacted an “Overseas Immigration Union Law” in 1927, aiming at promoting Japanese colony plantations all over the world. With these emigration promotion policies and the shift on the United States side, the first high rate of Japanese immigration to Brazil began in 1925 and continued until mid-1930s.

The second wave of Japanese immigration to Brazil started in the mid-1950s. With most major cities destroyed during the war, Japan lost almost eighty percent of its production

capacity (Goto 2007). In order to mitigate the poverty and unemployment issue of the country, Japanese government established the Emigration Bureau in 1955 to promote Japanese emigration overseas. But the second wave of immigration did not last long. Because of the strong recovery and significant economic success of Japan in the mid-1960s, immigrations from Japan to Brazil had decreased remarkably. Between 1953 and 1962, there were about 50,000 Japanese immigrated to Brazil in total (Tsuda 2003, 57). Overall, the estimated population of Japanese Brazilians in Brazil has exceeded 2 million by now, which Japanese Brazilians the biggest Japanese descendants community outside of Japan (McKenzie and Salcedo 2009, 66).

1.2. Becoming Positive Minorities

Most Japanese immigrants to Brazil in early years were poor farmers in rural areas. Lured by some deceptive advertisements, they came to Brazil as contract workers, or “colonos”, while expecting to return to Japan in a few years with a considerable fortune. But in reality, that is not what happened. Soon after they arrived in Brazil, these workers got greatly disappointed when they found themselves merely cheap labor in these coffee plantations. They had to work under harsh working conditions for meager incomes. What’s worse, they could not go back to Japan but strand there for a few more years due to their contracts with both those immigration companies and the plantation owners. Then these Japanese immigrants began to realize that it would not be easy for them to become rich or to go back to Japan in a short time. Since then, these Japanese immigrants started to form their own *nikkeijin* communities. Moreover, they put a particular emphasis on the Japanese language education for their children because they still retained the hope of returning home someday. Japanese immigrants in those early years lived within these *nikkeijin* communities and refused to be assimilated into Brazilian society.

As Japanese militarism and imperialism became more and more prevalent in the

1930s, *nikkeijin* in Brazil were stuck into a difficult situation. As a close ally of the United States, Brazil did not welcome the inflow of new immigrants from its enemy countries including Japan. Moreover, it took some repressive measures against Japanese Brazilians. After the WWII broke out in 1939, the Brazilian government prohibited Japanese language education even closed all the Japanese language schools, forcing the *nikkeijin* to assimilate into Brazilian society. Since the war shattered their dream of the eventual repatriation to Japan, many second generation Japanese Brazilians began seeking every ways to integrate themselves into Brazilian society. After decades of years, most Japanese Brazilians finally succeeded and became the respected well-educated middle classes in big cities of the wealthiest regions of Brazil. Even so, Japanese Brazilians are still ethnically isolated from the mainstream Brazilians.

Although racial identity is widely considered different from ethnic identity, an individual's self-consciousness of ethnic membership is based not only on the experience of cultural differences but also on an awareness of racial distinctiveness based on shared descent (Alonso 1994, 391). This was particularly true in Japanese Brazilian's case. Since Japanese Brazilian's "oriental" appearance was markedly different from the three "founding" races of the Brazilian nation (white, black, Indian), their racial phenotype thus became the most prominent factor that ethnically identified them as "japonês" and clearly distinguished them from other Brazilians. Although many second and third Japanese Brazilians were culturally assimilated, they could not deny, change or hide their Japanese appearance. "japonês", then unlike other cultural constructed ethnic identity, could not be negotiated in this society. But this label of "japonês", as Tsuda (2003) believed, was not a prejudicial reaction with any negative connotation but merely recognition of difference (61). However, by racially essentializing the Japanese Brazilians as "japonês", many Brazilians participated in a discourse of ethnic exclusion, which kept reminding these Japanese Brazilians of their

Japanese descent and ancestral roots.

Besides, although Japanese Brazilians were demographically and politically not a major power in Brazil, they enjoyed a significantly higher socioeconomic status than the majority Brazilian populace, not to mention other minority communities who suffered from poverty, prejudice and discrimination. Therefore, they became the respected “positive minority” in Brazilian society. Except for their socioeconomic success in the post war period, Japanese Brazilians’ higher educational status as well as their affiliations with the preeminent first world nation of Japan also contributed to the formation of this “positive minority”. And the favorable image of Japan as well as Japanese culture in Brazil society enhanced the consciousness of cultural differences among Japanese Brazilians. As a result, most Japanese Brazilians were proud of being a part of this “japonês” minority, and thereby had developed a markedly strong Japanese ethnic identity to distance and differentiate themselves from the negative aspects of Brazilianness.

Furthermore, while Japanese Brazilians were widely perceived in favorable terms such as hardworking, diligent, honest, intelligent and responsible, Tsuda (2003) argued that sometimes they had experienced “positive discrimination”, especially when people tended to interpret their behavior ethnically (73). That meant, whenever a Japanese Brazilian indicated some good traits in a Japanese Brazilian’s life (for example: politeness, cleanliness, high academic achievement, etc.), people would habitually explain it with an ethnic conclusion ----“ Ele é japonês (He is Japanese)”, while ignoring other possible individual or situational determinants. Thus, positive cultural stereotypes were imposed on Japanese Brazilians by the entire society. Under the circumstances, while some Japanese Brazilians chose to further embrace their “Japaneseness” and emphasized their cultural differences to a certain extent, some others were actually “forced” to behave in the “Japanese’ manner even though they did not want to. Based on this phenomenon, Tsuda (2003) further suspected that even those

Japanese Brazilian who did not feel themselves quite “Japanese” in the beginning could eventually develop an ethnic consciousness because they were constantly defined as “japonês” by other Brazilians. This is especially true for the young generations of this group. And just like how Japanese Brazilian could not change or deny their racial attributes, an ethnic identity of “japonês” emerged in “a hegemonic context through external definitions” (74).

More interestingly, Tsuda (2003) observed that there was a tendency in Japanese Brazilians community, especially among young generations, to practice a sort of “symbolic” ethnic Japanese identity (77-84). As Roth (2002) demonstrated, ancestry was one of the crucial elements in the dominant definition of who was Japanese, however, connections between Japanese descent and genuine Japanese were also social, cultural and historical, not natural, and as much had to be actively developed and maintained to survive (27). Therefore, when ethnic differences became useful in their pursuits of economic and political interests, people could choose to persist or renew their ethnic attachments through flexible cultural symbols and ethnic traditions, and then, develop a “symbolic ethnicity”. This phenomenon is especially common “among those who have some choice over whether to identify themselves with an ethnic group and even some latitude over which group to ‘join’”, just like Japanese Brazilian (Linger 2001, 58-59).

Due to the obvious social and cultural privilege of being a “japonês”, it is then understandable why most Japanese Brazilians tend to persist a strong Japanese identity by affirming their ethnic differences, despite the fact that most of them have already well-integrated and acculturated into Brazilian society. Therefore, while more and more Japanese Brazilians lack sufficient “Japanese elements” in their everyday life to maintain such a distinctive Japanese identity, they often find special occasions to display their Japanese culture and to be experienced as “Japanese” for themselves. By consuming traditional Japanese foods and celebrating of traditional festivals once in a while, these Japanese

Brazilians were able to learn and reaffirm their Japaneseness (Linger 2001, 25).

In this manner, the respected minority status of Japanese Brazilians in today's Brazilian society is not because they were ethnically excluded from the mainstream Brazilians, but is caused by a voluntary maintenance through their own ethnic assertion and isolation. Ultimately, unlike other migrant identities, Japanese Brazilians have not experienced such struggles to challenge, resist or subvert those cultural categories and ethnic perceptions imposed on them since they are so favorably construed (Tsuda 2003, 77-84). Overall, most Japanese Brazilians were really proud of being "japonês" in Brazil, and they usually held very positive images and expectations toward their ancestral homeland of Japan. Then, what happened when these people finally migrated back to Japan since the 1980s?

2. When Positive Minorities Migrate

Since the 1980s, thousands of Japanese Brazilians have returned to Japan in response to a severe economic crisis in Brazil and an acute labor shortage in Japan. In the beginning, these migrants believed that they could easily incorporate themselves as part of Japanese society since Japan was their ancestral homeland. However, despite of their Japanese cultural differences in Brazil, these people were perceived as “*gaijin* (foreigners)” in Japan and suffered from a variety of ethnic segregation and discrimination due to their stigmatized migration legacy, their low socioeconomic status as migrant workers, as well as their cultural attributes from the Third World country of Brazil.

2.1. Return Migration Since 1980s

Beginning in the early 1980s, the Brazil economy crashed and suffered from hyperinflation, heavy foreign debt, stagnant or declining economic growth, and increasing unemployment (Tsuda 2003, 84). Although Japanese Brazilians did not suffer as much as other people in Brazil, they were more willing to migrate to pursue a higher income as well as a better future. In contrast, Japanese economy started to boom in the late 1980s and became a miracle in the history of the post-war world economy. Nonetheless, with one of the world's most rapidly aging populations, and increasing younger generations who chose to stay single longer and remain childless, Japan encountered a crippling shortage of workers. In particular, due to a general antipathy to manual labor that was characterized by the 3Ks (*kitsui* demanding, *kiken* dangerous, and *kitani* dirty) among Japanese native workers, the situation was even worse for those small enterprises in the manufacturing, construction, as well as the service industries (Sasaki 2002, 120). Therefore, Japanese employers started to urge the government to modify the immigration policies and to look for more immigrant workers from other places.

As a result, the Japanese government has amended its immigration law in 1990, while

attempting “to maintain the principle of an exclusive immigration policy, which preserved racial homogeneity and Japanese cultural heritage” (Asakura and Murata 2006, 325-26). The revised version of Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act permitted the descendants of Japanese up to the third generation (Nissei and Sansei) as well as their spouses to stay in Japan and take any activities including the unskilled jobs. Their visa was also renewable for every three years to an unlimited number of times (Sasaki 2002, 115-116). Because of their blood ties with Japan, the law showed a clear preference for *nikkeijin* and privileged them over other immigrants because of “their presumed ethnic and cultural proximity (Sasaki 2002, 120).” This means, Japanese government presupposed that the cultural background of these *Nikkeijin* would be similar to the Japanese cultural environment, and therefore it would be great easier for them to integrate into Japanese society. As a result, *Nikkeijin* workers flooded into Japan since 1990s especially from Brazil. In 1988 there were only 4,159 Japanese Brazilians working in Japan (Goto 2007). By 2006, the number had significantly increased to 312,979 despite Japan's prolonged economic depression. And every year, these immigrants have sent almost 2.2 billion dollar of remittances back to Brazil (McKenzie and Salcedo 2014, 67). But, what are their lives look like after these Japanese Brazilians returned to the “homeland” that they had been dreaming about for decades? And how were their ethnic consciousness transformed in Japan?

2.2. Encountering the contemporary discourse of Japaneseness

When migrants resettled into a new society, they frequently encounter a radical change in their ethnic status. As one part of the Japanese society originally, the first generation of Japanese Brazilians migrated and became the “japonês” minority in Brazil. And when this minority group migrated back to their ancestral homelands decades later, instead of being automatically incorporated as a part of the majority of Japanese society again, they

encountered a share discourse of Japaneseness and became a new type of negative ethnic minority in this country because of their alien cultural differences ---- “In Brazil, I’m called ‘japonês’, and here in Japan, I’m called ‘*gaijin*’ (foreigner). I have no home (Roth 2002, 5).”

While there were many reasons why the Japanese Brazilians tend to be stigmatized as negative minorities in Japan and sometimes they vary from individual to individual, most of them could be traced back to *nihonjinron*. In the book *Multiethnic Japan*, John Lie (2001b) discussed the contemporary discourse of Japaneseness from the perspectives of social class, culture, and ethnicity. In this section, I will also focus on the social class and cultural aspects, and examine how Japanese Brazilians became the class, cultural, and eventually ethnic others in the country where the majority of society shared a particular ideology of homogeneity.

2.2.1. Social Class Prejudices

Generally, Japanese Brazilians are subject to notable social class prejudices in Japan because they were perceived as poor, less educated and low class foreign workers. These prejudices were mainly based on their stigmatized migration legacy, their low socioeconomic class as *dekasegi*, a general perception of migrant poverty, as well as their low occupational status as “3K” workers. First of all, they suffer from a social class prejudice because of their migration legacy. As Tsuda (2003) observed, leaving Japan permanently were usually seen as an abnormal or improper thing to do by majority Japanese (106). Instead, one should struggle and endure at home whatever the circumstances, rather than giving up and emigrating aboard (107). Since most the first generation of Japanese Brazilian were poor farmers of the rural areas in Japan, they were seen as low class, poor and uneducated people who had no ability to survive in Japan and abandoned their homeland to get rid of their difficult economic condition. As a result, they had become “Japanese *ochikobore* (social dropouts)” and were “*nihonjin shikaku* (not worthy of being Japanese) (107).”

Besides, the social class prejudice toward Japanese Brazilians is also associated with

their low socioeconomic status as *dekasegi*. Originally, the Japanese word *dekasegi* was used to refer to the poor farmers, particularly those who came from the cold northern regions of Japan, who would temporarily leave their hometown and migrate to warmer, more developed areas as seasonal laborers (Sasaki 2002, 126). This category of *dekasegi* implies quite negative connotations that these low class people could not economically survive in their hometowns so they have to constantly migrate to avoid poverty. Now this category is also applied to Japanese Brazilians, who took advantages of their Japanese descent and fled back to Japan in order to escape economic instability in Brazil. Therefore, although most Japanese Brazilians had fought for decades and finally become the respected well-educated middle classes of Brazil, they were still easily perceived as uneducated, incapable “quitters” of low class who had suffered a long history of poverty and migration.

Moreover, a simplistic preconception about migrant workers in general further exacerbated the social class prejudice toward Japanese Brazilians in Japan, that most migrant workers were less educated, poor, low class people in contrast to the middle class Japanese. According to John Lie (2001b), due to the rapid economic growth and declining economic inequality in the postwar period, an egalitarian social class ideology has developed in this country where people characterized Japan as a “classless society” and naturally perceived themselves to be middle class (28-33). This egalitarian social class ideology had integrated into the contemporary discourse of Japaneseness and therefore became a component of Japanese national identity. Being Japanese had become synonymous with being middle class. This belief in the social class basis for national identity was further confirmed by their common reaction to migrant workers, especially those who came from Third World countries. In Japanese Brazilians’ case, without discerning the disjuncture between their upper or middle class background back home and their lower-class status in Japan, the majority of Japanese society simply perceived them to be poor and therefore of low social class. In other words,

“the rich First World versus poor Third World dichotomy has simply been mapped onto social class differences at the domestic level so that the Japanese are perceived as middle class while immigrant workers are seen as low class” (Tsuda 2003, 113).

Finally, most Japanese Brazilians were unskilled factory workers occupied in manual labor that was characterized by the 3Ks. In Japan, these jobs are assumed to be reserved for the least educated sector in the Japanese populace of the lowest rank of the social hierarchy. Therefore, those who are still stuck in that position are subject to a certain amount of social disdain and disrespect, assuming that they had no ability and refuse to challenge or improve themselves. Japanese Brazilians then, joined other unskilled blue-collar Japanese workers and suffered from the same type of social class prejudice despite their educated middle-class background.

2.2.2. Cultural Rejection and Superiority

Except for various social class prejudices, Japanese Brazilians also became negative minorities in Japan because of their cultural characteristics ----- not only failed to be cultural Japanese but also presented stigmatized Brazilian elements.

First, the majority Japanese “seemed to adhere to an eminently biological definition of Japaneseness” in which “race, language, and culture were interlaced” (Kondo 1986, 76). This means, those who are “racially” Japanese are spontaneously presumed to be “ethnically” and “culturally” Japanese who could speak Japanese language properly and think and act like a Japanese as well. This presupposed correspondence between race, ethnicity and culture, as we discussed in the introduction part, resulted from Japan’s ideology of homogeneity in which all Japanese are seen as the same race, same ethnicity and same cultural norms in thinking and behaviors. Therefore, as Japanese descendants, Japanese Brazilians are expected to be culturally Japanese who retained a considerable amount of Japanese culture from their family.

However, although Japanese Brazilians were called “japonês” who presented

significant Japanese cultural characteristics, these attributes turned out to be insufficient to be accepted as cultural and then ethnical Japanese in Japan, especially for those second and third generations (*nissei* and *sansei*). Moreover, just like how Goffman explained that, when a stranger comes into presence, then, people are likely to anticipate his category and attributes. However, when these attributes actually showed up are incongruous with people's expectations, they could possibly become a stigma or a failure of this person that cause people to alter their estimation and reclassify an individual from one socially anticipated category to another (Goffman 1963, 3). As a result, due to the loss of Japanese culture among the Japanese Brazilians, most Japanese were greatly disillusioned and disappointed as they found out how Brazilian these people had become, and then instinctively classified them as outsiders and cultural foreigners. For example, one Japanese informant once summarized his feelings to Tsuda (1999) as follows:

There's a lot of *iwakan* (sense of incongruity) towards those who have a Japanese face, but are culturally Brazilian. If they have a Japanese face, we interpret this to mean they are Japanese. So we initially approach the *nikkeijin* this way. But then when we they are culturally find different, we say they are foreigners.

(Tsuda 1999, 148)

On the other hand, many Japanese Brazilians claim that they encountered significant ignorance and social distain toward Brazilian culture among Japanese population, and therefore suffered from notable ethnic prejudice because of their Brazilian cultural characteristics. Generally, this ignorance and negative assumptions about Brazilian culture are resulted from a common sense of cultural superiority in Japanese society. In the book *Multiethnic Japan*, John Lie (2001b) discussed the equivalence of the nation-state and national culture, as well as the tradition of ranking civilizations or culture hierarchically in Japan. Since Japanese believed themselves as middle class whereas migrant workers were low class, they assumed themselves to be more cultured and civilized than those foreign workers, including Japanese Brazilian who came from a Third World country (35). When Japanese

people talked about Brazil, they often used words such as “poor,” “backward,” “underdeveloped,” and they would immediately associate it with those negative stereotypes shared by all Third World countries. These negative impressions and assumptions often irritated or offended Japanese Brazilians.

But except for these negative preconceptions about Brazilian culture in general, most Japanese also looked down upon Brazilian culture due to their own observations and evaluations of Brazilian in both work and social life. As most Japanese Brazilians came back to Japan from Brazil as migrant workers, these factories had become an important site of showing their collective cultural traits. Most Japanese workers, however, claimed their Brazilian colleagues to be lazy, slow and irresponsible and individualistic. And outside of these factories, most Japanese also shared an unfavorable opinion toward Japanese Brazilian, describing them as loud, unhygienic, disturbing, dress and behave improperly, and rule breakers who do not speak Japanese language well. All these characteristics were interpreted as products of Brazilian culture (Roth 2002, 61-62; Tsuda 2003, 120-123).

In the end, Japanese Brazilians had experienced a sudden drop in their ethnic as well as cultural status after they returned to Japan. Being the “negative minority”, they had encountered with various negative perceptions and treatments from the majority Japanese society. Besides, in addition to the social class prejudice and cultural superiority mentioned above, Japanese Brazilians had also encountered with many other difficulties in their lives.

2.3. Other Social and Cultural Barriers

First of all, although most Japanese Brazilians who came back to Japan for a better future did get a higher payment, they often end up working in very poor conditions in those small and dirty manufacturing and construction factories. For example, one Japanese Brazilian had described to Daniel Linger once that they were “working in the *kusai*.”

You put the compacted material (in the press), close it, and in ten or fifteen second the press opens automatically. A smell of ammonia hits you in the face, and a lot of heat. Then you take the piece and place it in another tray...anyone who comes there for the first time is terrified because they can see a very white dust in the air...

(Linger 2001, 55)

And as we mentioned before, most Japanese Brazilians were well educated middle class who had quite decent jobs when they were back in Brazil. But after they returned to Japan, most of them had become manual workers who were trapped in small workshops, repeating those simple, boring, and mechanical tasks every day. All these things were different from their expectations of big technological factories and a wealthy modernized First World country. Except for this a huge decline in their socioeconomic statuses, many Japanese Brazilian workers also claim that they had experienced various kinds of discrimination in their workplace.

First of all, most Japanese Brazilians were usually short-term contract workers. Some of them were hired through intermediary employment brokers and thereby could not enjoy accident and health insurance plans or pension plans. In this manner, these Japanese Brazilian workers were put in a distinctly marginal position comparing to other Japanese employees. Living in the separate dormitory, using the separate bathrooms, wearing the different uniforms, and being isolated from group conversations and activities, they became outsiders in their workplaces. Besides, as suggested by Daniel Linger (2001), in these Japanese factories there was a clear and rigid ethnic hierarchy, that the Japanese nationals were the higher authorities who gave orders, whereas the Brazilians were subordinates who could not give their opinions (100). And the ethnic difference often limited the opportunities and restricted the career development of these Brazilians workers (101). Moreover, he also pointed out that Brazilian women often suffered from gender discrimination in these factories, that they were restricted from certain kinds of jobs, received lower payment than male workers, and sometimes they even experienced sexual harassment from their Japanese

co-workers (103). Furthermore, Japanese Brazilians also claimed that they were often assigned to hardest and dirtiest jobs. Their managers always treated them impolitely and unequally like they were kids who did not know things or even as “animals” (Linger 2001, 102, 125; Roth 2002, 77, 81).

On the other hand, many Japanese co-workers felt discontented when they learned that these Nikkeijin workers who had no experience got paid as much as they did. They complained that these foreign workers had received more payment than they deserved. And they also thought that these “foreigners” should follow the same rules as Japanese workers and that “no one should be exempted from the demands of Japanese rules” (Roth 2002, 48-49). Therefore, many Japanese managers often pushed these Japanese Brazilian workers to work faster to achieve production goals, while being unwilling to explain how to operate those machines or safety sensors to them. Consequently, a lot of workplace accidents happened to these Brazilian workers (Roth 2002, 76-81).

In addition to these various forms of workplace discrimination, most Japanese Brazilians also faced the same language barriers in their every life just like Japanese war orphans. Although some Japanese Brazilian had learned Japanese in schools or in families when they were in Brazil, apparently it was not sufficient for them to communicate with other Japanese at will. “They make fun of us when we can’t speak...I’m suffering a lot because I don’t have anyone to talk to,” one Japanese Brazilian man said (Linger 2001, 83). In this way, this language barrier often made them feel isolated or discriminated. Further more, this language barrier also bothered most Japanese Brazilian children as well, since it often caused the same kind of obstacle in their communications with their Japanese classmates, and more importantly, resulted in a deep sense of alienation:

You can have a friendship with the Japanese but not that really intimate friendship...Look, their way of thinking is different, their vision is different. It seems like they’re a friend, they are a sort of friend, but...you just coexisting with them...

(Linger 2001, 72)

Similarly, another Japanese Brazilian girl said,

...sometimes I talk a little with one of the girls...you get more and more tired, you feel a desire to talk, but it's different. You want to have someone close to you, because they practically don't talk, they're very cold...

(Linger 2001, 72)

The Japanese term “*shinyū*”, which means “close friend, good friend or best friend” in English, represents a very important relationship in Japanese school life. People would open their hearts and share their experiences, opinions, and secrets with their *shinyū*. But the language barrier inhibited the establishment of that kind of close relationship between Japanese Brazilians and their classmates. In the end, they were just “coexisting” with each other. Besides, some Japanese Brazilian students were required to take some special language courses to improve their Japanese vocabulary as well as reading and writing skills, for their sake, of course. Moreover, except for these Japanese Brazilian students themselves, Japanese faculties often found that it difficult to communicate with the parents, too. These parents (also Japanese Brazilians) were not good at Japanese as well, but more importantly, they often considered the Japanese school's rules petty (such as forbid the students to grow the hair long and not tie it back), and thus not willing to spend their time on these admonitions. In the end, although most Japanese faculties tried to prevent their students from quitting school, many Japanese Brazilian children would choose to either go back to Brazil for further education, or head straight to the factory floor (Linger 2001, 68).

Overall, Japanese Brazilians have experienced a dramatic change from “positive minority” in Brazil to “negative minority” in Japan and they have encountered with a variety of negative ethnic experiences after they returned to their ethnic home of Japan. Then how did these people respond to this dramatic change of their ethnic status? And how has this change impacted their ethnic identity?

3. Becoming Brazilian Again?

As we discussed in the introduction and sections on war orphans, individual's ethnic identity contained both internally and externally defined parts. When the Japanese Brazilians were in Brazil, they hold a strong self-consciousness of their Japaneseness, which was further reinforced by the outside Brazilian society. However, after they returned to Japan, discrepancies and conflicts started to happen between these two parts. And unlike Japanese war orphans whose situations might differ from individual to individual and thereby developed diverse ethnic consciousness, Tsuda (2003) stated that to most Japanese Brazilians, "return migration to Japan simply causes the dynamic balance between their dual ethnic identities to shift significantly from the Japanese to the Brazilian side (156)."

In Brazil, most Japanese Brazilians were called "japonês" because of their Japanese descent, their Japanese appearance and their Japanese cultural attributes. And they just figured they were Japanese without standards for comparison. However, the cultural basis for ethnic identification of Japanese has significantly changed in these two countries. Based on the Japanese homogeneity ideology, the fully ethnic Japanese identity in Japan was quite different from and much more restricted than that in Brazil. It required not only the Japanese ancestry, but also complete Japanese linguistic and cultural proficiency. Japanese Brazilians, who could not speak Japanese and master Japanese culture, thereby were transformed from the cultural "Japanese" in Brazil to the cultural "Brazilian", and eventually became the foreigners in Japan. For example, one Japanese Brazilian has summarized his experience like follows:

In Brazil, we are considered Japanese because we speak some Japanese, eat Japanese food, and maintain some Japanese customs from our parents. This is Japanese enough for Brazilians, but for the Japanese, it means nothing, we appear quite Brazilian to them and are seen as foreigners.

(Tsuda 2003, 158)

In this way, these Japanese cultural characteristics that Japanese Brazilians had in defining their previous Japanese ethnic consciousness in Brazil were not recognized by other

Japanese people at all. Despite their Japanese descent and significant cultural differences from other Brazilians, they were still viewed as cultural aliens in their home country.

Except for the ethnic marginalization and rejections they experienced from the outside society, many Japanese Brazilians also started to question their presumed cultural commonality with the Japanese by themselves. When they compared themselves with other “real” Japanese, they began to notice the big differences and realize that they were not as Japanese as they thought. On the other hand, Japanese Brazilians were also increasingly aware of their Brazilian distinctiveness in this contrasting sociocultural context of Japan. Those previously acquired Brazilian cultural attributes that most Japanese Brazilian didn’t pay much attention to, suddenly became conspicuous cultural markers in the country of Japan and thereby differentiated them from other Japanese people. How they dress, how they talk, and how they walk, all these daily activities that were seen as common and normal, and had no ethnic meanings in Brazil but became convenient symbols of their Brazilian cultural difference in Japan.

...it was common for the Japanese to stop and stand there looking, whispering among themselves. Observing you like you were an alien. (Daniel asked: But how did they know?) Precisely by your style of dress, by your posture. Brazilians gesture a lot with their hands when they talk, they talk a little louder, laugh loudly...

(Linger 2001, 107)

In this manner, while these cultural behaviors that were not strongly interpreted as something especially Brazilian or ethnic in Brazil, in Japan they were granted specific ethnic meanings and set them apart from other Japanese people. And when Japanese Brazilians practiced these cultural behaviors, they were actually experiencing and affirming their Brazilian ethnic consciousness every day. That is to say, whenever they eat, dress, talk or walk in a Brazilian manner, they would feel that they were less Japanese and more Brazilian.

Moreover, since most Japanese Brazilians speak only halting, limited Japanese language, they did not have much communication with the outside society. And most of them

were isolated and excluded from grouping activities or other social interactions with the majority Japanese people. All these things and experiences had deepened their sense of alienation in this country. As a result, they often turned to their Brazilian companies and formed their own community to seek a sense of safety and belonging. They would gather in a Brazilian restaurant, have some Brazilian food, listen to the Brazilian music, and talk with each other in Portuguese. And according to Tsuda (2003), Japanese Brazilians often find themselves engaging more frequently and actively in traditional Brazilian activities and festivals in Japan than they ever did in Brazil. Therefore, just like how they had practiced a “symbolic” Japanese ethnic identity in Brazil, now they were using these occasional ethnic events to assert their distinctive Brazilian identities in Japan (169).

On the other hand, after returning to Japan, most Japanese Brazilians experienced a sudden drop in their socioeconomic and cultural status, as well as a dramatic transformation from a “positive minority” to a “negative” one. And as members of this negative minority, Japanese Brazilians encountered considerable socioeconomic marginalization as well as ethnic isolation, exclusion, and prejudice. All those ethnic discriminations they had suffered in Japan kept reminding them of their former status as successful and respected minorities in Brazil. Although they had mentally prepared for the low-level jobs and the loss of their occupational status before they came to Japan, the reality was shocking and brutal. When they put on their factory uniform and started to work on the assembly line, they often felt hurt, angry, shame, and insulted. And while the Japanese Brazilians felt proud of being Japanese when they were in Brazil, they often missed their old life in Brazil when they were in Japan.

Ultimately, all these sudden changes and negative experiences resulted in a significant transformation in their ethnic consciousness. Many Japanese Brazilians started to reconsider and redefine their previous ethnic identities. And rather than reaffirming their

Japanese ethnic identity in Japan as they expected previously, they tend to distance their previous transnational ethnic affiliation with the Japanese and strengthen their Brazilian national consciousness. During this process, Japanese Brazilians formed a new type of “diasporic nationalism”, just like the Zainichi (ethnic Koreans in Japan) people in Japan.

“Diaspora”, literally means the scattering of seeds. And in modern sense it refers to a people who live outside of their nation, including “resident aliens, immigrants, ethnonational minorities, or long-term foreign residents who constitute the host nation’s Other because they belong to their homeland not only conceptually but literally” (Lie 2008, 172).

And rather than the one-way journey from one nation to another, the concept of diaspora “makes space for multiple and complex trajectories” that crossed the national borders and resulted in “myriad identities and multifarious networks (Lie 2001a, 356).” Japanese Brazilians----who migrated to Brazil 110 years ago, then returned to Japan as “foreign workers” and finally became the ethnic minority in their home country ---- constitute a new type of diasporic population in this society.

Although “diasporic nationalism” seems to be a paradoxical term since “diasporic” means being outside of the nation, whereas “nationalism” asserts “an isomorphism between a people and a territory,” diaspora is crucial and constitutive of the nation and nationalism (Lie 2008, 170-72). Which means, it is the very diasporic experiences of traveling cross the national borders that cultivate and enhance the nationalism, as individuals are exposed in relationships with different groups of people and thereby forced to recontextualize their ethnicity in a foreign country. Ultimately, the “physical absence from the nation-state enhances its presence in the ethnic consciousness of its citizens (Tsuda 2003, 217).”

In the Japanese Brazilian’s situation, most of them were very proud of being Japanese in Brazil and they were respected because of their Japaneseness. So although Japanese Brazilians had successfully integrated into the Brazilian society, they consciously distanced

and differentiated themselves from the negative aspects of Brazilianness and kept dreaming about a real “homeland” in Japan. However, after they finally returned to their home country, they got greatly disappointed that they were not ethnically welcomed as Japanese descendants as they expected. Thus, it was only after they left Brazil that these Japanese Brazilians started to realize how friendly and comfortable their original home was and how wealthy and happy their previous lives were. All the things they had back in Brazil suddenly became much more favorable than their lives here when they were “foreigners” struggling to fit in their ancestral country.

Furthermore, unlike the usual diasporic population who migrated from their original homeland to a strange country, Japanese Brazilians were migrated from a homeland where they were born back to another homeland where their ancestors came from. Therefore, compared to other diasporic populations, such as Zainichi who were forced to migrate to Japan due to the Japanese imperialism, Japanese Brazilians actually had very positive images and expectations toward their ancestral homeland. Thus after these people experienced various ethnically rejections and exclusions just like many other migrants, they tended to react more negatively against the host country of Japan since they were disappointed and disillusioned by their own experiences.

Therefore, although sometimes prejudice and discrimination toward migrants and *dekasegi* did happen to some Japanese Brazilians, sometimes those negative experiences were simply subjectively perceived as ethnic discriminations by these people. The severe decline in social class status of Japanese Brazilians as foreigners and subservient workers made them quite sensitive and they thereby often rushed into a judgment of ethnic discrimination. So the “cold” nature of Japanese people might just result from language barriers or different rules of social relationship. And those onerous assignments and inequalities in factories might just be because of their status as short-term contracts. But still,

it was difficult for most Japanese Brazilians to understand and accept the huge gap between their beautiful expectations and cruel reality. Consequently, sometimes Japanese Brazilians would consciously choose to interpret their experiences as ethnic discrimination, as an act to comfort and defend themselves.

...(Japanese Brazilians) feel inferior. So they search for some justification for why they can't adapt here in Japan. Therefore, if you say that the Japanese don't accept us simply because they are racist, it become easier to accept oneself. So calling Japanese racist is more a means of self-defense.

(Tsuda 2003, 201)

Over all, no matter objective and subjective, these discriminations they perceived and these cultural and socioeconomic differences they recognized, had resulted in a deep feeling of ethnic disaffection and social alienation among Japanese Brazilians. Their previous understanding of Japaneseness was disillusioned by all these negative experiences of Japanese culture and society they encountered. And all these negative experiences, in turn, highlighted all the positive aspects of their previous lives and brought out their deep national sentiments toward Brazil. As they continued to feel much more Brazilian in Japan than they were before, they started to redefine their ethnic identity, embrace their Brazilianness, and eventually emerged a diasporic Brazilian nationalism.

Conclusion

Overall, these two minority groups that I have discussed, have seriously challenged the dominant Japanese homogenous ideology. First, Japanese war orphans, were a group of people who were abandoned by their parents and ethnic home country at the end of war, survived and grew up in Chinese peasant families, learned Chinese language and culture, and built up their families in China. Then, after they overcame all the legal and financial barriers and finally repatriated back to Japan in their middle or old age, they had already lost their ability to speak the Japanese language and thus were unable to find jobs or to be self-sufficient. Depending on the meager government assistance, this group was totaling isolated, excluded and discriminated in the Japanese society.

Japanese Brazilians, on the other hand, were another minority group in Japan, who migrated to Brazil at the beginning of 20th century, strived and succeeded as positive minorities there, and had maintained and been proud of their Japaneseness for a really long time. After they finally returned to their ethnic homeland of Japan, while dreaming of a what Tsuda (2003) called “ethnic homecoming (201)”, they experienced prejudice due to their low socioeconomic status as *dekasegi*, isolated because they were unfamiliar with Japanese language and culture, and discriminated as foreigners and migrant workers at the bottom of Japanese society. Thus, all these people’s stories and experiences have clearly revealed the multicultural and multiethnic reality in the contemporary Japanese society. They have also proved how the dominant Japanese homogenous ideology could have tragic consequences, resulting in various ethnic divisions and conflicts, as well as social inequity and injustices for its people.

But how and why did it happen exactly? Is it only the Japanese homogenous ideology that we should attribute this to? According to Barth (1969) and Yinger (1981), the membership of an ethnic group requires common origin and culture, self-identification and

external recognition, as well as communication and interaction with other group members. And the Japanese ethnicity defined by Japanese homogenous ideology and *Nihonjinron*, in particular, demands an aggregation of Japanese race (i.e. Yamato race), nationality, ethnic culture, language, and the distinctive Japanese way of thought and behavior. Based on these definitions, Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians, who had nothing in common with the majority Japanese except for their Japanese descent and an ambiguous and shifting self-consciousness, thus failed to meet most of these requirements in the definition of ethnicity in general, let alone the constraints of the definition of Japanese ethnicity in particular. Ultimately, these two groups were characterized as ethnic foreigners in Japanese society.

In that regard, the final judgments of these people's ethnicities seem to be so fixed and well deserved, and leave no room for further negotiations. Then, why was it so difficult for most Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians to understand that they were ethnically rejected and discriminated? Why was it so hard for these people to accept it? Why were they plagued with painful self-doubts about their ethnicities? Why did they develop diverse, multiple, conflicting, or ambiguous ethnic consciousness? And what ethnic group should they belong to if they were not Japanese? In my opinion, all the answers of these questions could be traced to the fundamental ambiguities and flaws of "ethnicity" as an analytical catalog in social science and anthropology field.

First of all, based on its definition, the full ethnicity demands the unanimity between self-identification of the "insiders" and external recognition of the "outsiders." The positions of "insiders" and "outsiders", however, are not static, but relative and exchangeable, depending on which side people are on. If the Japanese ethnicity of the war orphans before they returned to Japan is out of question (since most of them did not know their Japanese identity until right before repatriation), then let's take the previous "Japanese ethnicity" that

Japanese Brazilians claimed in Brazil as an example.

Although it might not fit into the rigorous definition of Japanese ethnicity in Japan, the Japanese identity claimed by Japanese Brazilians in Brazil was still, undoubtedly, a type of “Japanese ethnicity” which was based on their unchangeable Japanese descent, their distinctive Japanese appearance, and their perceived Japanese cultural differences. Although the majority Japanese might consider this type of “Japanese ethnicity” as inaccurate or fictional, it had still irrefutably existed and it was just defined by different groups in a different sociocultural context. At this point, Japanese Brazilians were the “insiders”, whereas the majority Brazilians were “outsiders”. Based on a more loosened definition of ethnic Japanese culture in Brazil, this type of Japanese ethnicity emerged while evolving “not only shared memories, but also a great deal of shared forgetting” (Eriksen’s words, 2010, 111). However, when these people migrated back to Japan, they suddenly became the “outsiders” as they encountered a larger and more dominant ethnic Japanese group -- the majority of Japanese society. With the shift to a vulnerable, subordinate “outsiders” position, their former definition of Japanese ethnicity were thus challenged and shattered.

Also, the existence of and conflicts between the Japanese ethnicity in Brazil and the Japanese ethnicity in Japan also indicated that the cultural heritage and cultural differences, which these ethnicities built on, were not universal but changeable and negotiable, especially when people migrate from one sociocultural context to another. When Japanese Brazilians presented significant Japanese cultural differences compared to majority Brazilians, they were Japanese enough in Brazil. But after they had returned to Japan, these Japanese cultural differences became invisible and other remarkable Brazilian cultural attributes showed up clearly. After all, culture was chimerical and fleeting, and it was just reified, shaped and constructed in the process of defining ethnicities (Eriksen 2001, 46). In the end, based on the different perceptions of cultural differences in different social contexts, the concept of

“Japanese”, as Oguma and Stickland said, is constructed and the boundaries between “Japanese” and “those who were not Japanese” was something that moved (Oguma and Stickland 2014, 3).

In addition, as pointed out by John Lie (2008) when he was examining the ethnic Koreans in Japan, “the individual is neither unitary or homogenous nor stationary and unchanging”, and “temporal transformation is very common (126).” Therefore, even the individual members who belong to the same group could have total different life paths and experiences, and thereby develop diverse ethnic consciousness. Even members who shared most memories and experiences could have divergent understandings of their own identity. After all, ethnicities, as Ardener Edwin (1989) argued, “demand to be viewed from the inside” and “have no imperative relationship with particular ‘objective’ criteria (111).” Moreover, national (or collective) narratives could not decide individuals’ identities. Instead, “people personalize, rather than absorb, such narratives, transforming them into dense, changing, distinctive components of selves (Linger 2001, 18).” Therefore, these kinds of diversity and peculiarity of individuals have inevitably determined that ethnicity is flexible, mutable and negotiable, and thereby often imprecise as a social analytical category. Also, these diversity and peculiarity have proved that ethnicity is a paradoxical concept, for the contradiction between its fundamentally flexible, mutable and negotiable nature, and its collectivity and relative stability as a group identification category. By defining individuals’ ethnic identity, people diminishes the diversity and uniqueness of each individual into these singular and unified ethnic terms.

Moreover, it is not only those imagined and social sanctioned cultural differences as well as the diversity and singularity of individuals that make the concept of ethnicity too ambiguous, more importantly, the disjuncture between culture and descent is also problematic since they often result in individuals’ confusions about their identities. For example, since

their descents and cultural backgrounds were not accordance with each other, Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians could not fit themselves into any kind of ethnic category. They could not define themselves as ethnic Chinese or ethnic Brazilians since they were not real Chinese or Brazilian descendants, nor they could define themselves as ethnic Japanese in Japan since they were unfamiliar with Japanese language and Japanese culture. As a result, some Japanese war orphans became half Chinese and half Japanese, or neither of them, and some Japanese Brazilians became “cultural Brazilian” who does not have Brazilian descent. Ultimately, these people were deprived of the rights to clearly and confidentially claim their ethnicity in their ethnic home country and they have become people with no ethnic home in Japan.

Furthermore, Max Weber has pointed out that ethnicity was in fact “fundamentally a subjective interpretation of descent” or “the belief in the affinity or disaffinity of blood (quoted in Efirid 2010, 807).” In this manner, Robert Efirid argued that although ethnicity might be also identified by various objective associations in terms of culture, language, religious belief, and the like, it seems that the shared descent is the most essential element (Efirid 2010, 807). However, if this argument is correct, then why would Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians, who shared the common descent and blood with majority Japanese, not be ethnically accepted in this country? But if it is not correct, then why does the Zainichi population, who were indistinguishable from majority Japanese in terms of languages, religion, custom or culture, and the only undeniable source of distinction was their Korean ancestry, also, suffer from pervasive prejudice and discrimination in Japanese society?

Hence, ethnicity, I believe, is people’s subjective interpretations of descent or blood. At the same time, it is also supported by various objective criteria that are indispensable, especially culture and language. Particularly, Japanese ethnicity is unique. It is not unique in the ways as demonstrated by the *Nihonjinron*. Rather, it is unique because the line between

ethnic “insiders” and “outsiders” that it has drawn for this country was so clear and steadfast. As Reischauer and Jansen (1995) said, a person was by race (i.e. descent and blood), language, culture, and nation either fully Japanese or not a Japanese at all (396).

In the end, the uniqueness of Japanese ethnicity in Japan further resulted in the *loss of ethnicity* among the Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilian populaces. These orphans and Brazilians’ dreams of ethnic commonality based on their racial and blood ties were completely disillusioned in their ethnic homeland. The difficulties encountered by Japanese war orphans when they were trying to regain their citizenship had proved how essential that race or descent were in the definition of the Japanese, and how proud the Japanese were about the ‘purity’ of their blood. And the prejudices and discrimination these two groups suffered in Japan, on the other hand, had indicated how indispensable the Japanese language and culture were as two ingredients of Japaneseness, and how superior the Japanese felt about their ethnic identity.

On the other hand, John Lie (2008) has claimed that he was “skeptical that ethnicity has a determining impact on one’s sense of self or personal identity,” since “it is a factor ---and it can become the dominant factor for some people at some time ---but only one among many” that determine one’s self. And “self-identification may change dramatically over a life course” (132). But to those war orphans and Japanese Brazilians, ethnicity is certainly a crucial issue that has influenced, if not determined, every aspect in their life.

Although ethnicity has been proved to be fundamentally problematic to be a scientific and analytical category, like Marcus Banks (1996) said, “it is too late to kill it off or pronounce ethnicity dead... The discourse on ethnicity has escaped from the academy and into the field (189).” And it has become a crucial social organization during the development of contemporary societies and nation states, as well as a peoplehood category that is so widely used by people in the world, whether they be anthropologists, social scientists, journalists,

politicians, or ordinary citizens. Then, what should we do when facing this flawed yet irresistible identification of ethnicity?

According to Oguma Eiji (2002), “it is not sufficient to fight against myths by destroying one myth and replacing it with another, as in, for example, criticizing the myth of the homogeneous nation by replacing it with the myth of the mixed nation (389).” Based on this warning, Robert E. Fird (2010) argued that “ethnic diversity could not resolve the internal contradictions of ethnicity itself as well.” Nor can we turn to the ideas of diaspora or hybridity, since they often perpetuate “the very inequalities that we seek to challenge by uncritically retaining the categories in which such distinctions were originally cast.” Therefore, we should move beyond “ethnicity,” and embrace the “irreducible uniqueness of individual experience, and the kinship of all humankind (833).”

Ultimately, Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians in this thesis are merely two examples among the various minority groups in Japan. While suffering from the similar ethnic discriminations in Japan, war orphans, Japanese Brazilians, ethnic Koreans, and Filipina women, these people are creating new meanings of Japanese culture and identity every day in their life. Their existences and experiences have not only contested the definition of “Japanese,” but also blurred the boundary between “Japanese” and “non-Japanese” in contemporary Japan.

As a world-class developed country, Japan’s achievements in economics, science, and technology have attracted people from all over the world. At the same time, the rapidly increasing foreign population with diverse backgrounds has in turn brought about a great impact on Japanese society and culture. Yet, as indicated by these two cases of Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians, Japan still has a hard time accepting these outsiders even when they seem more Japanese than other foreigners. Since the homogeneous ideology has been deeply rooted in Japanese people’s mind, the majority Japanese have lacked the

awareness and ability to coexistence and communicate with foreigners, and they are not ready to replace this homogeneous ideology with multiethnicity.

However, more and more foreign immigrants will flow into this country because of the economic development and population mobility of the world in the future. Thus, Japan will face increasing pressure of dealing with diverse ethnic groups and diverse cultures. In the face of this reality, Japan must correctly understand and start to make changes about the ethnic exclusion and discrimination issue in its country now. Either avoiding this issue or classifying it as problems of “foreigners” will lead to more ethnic conflicts in this country. And although it may not happen any time soon, the reconsideration and redefinition of Japanese identity, as well as the recognition of multiethnicity, will likely become an inevitability in Japan at some point in the future.

In the end, although the stories of these two minority populations in contemporary Japan have left us with a variety of doubts about ethnicity without providing any concrete solution, their experiences and struggles have reminded us that now it is the time for us to see ethnicity differently, as we have entered a new age of globalization. If ethnic identity could be changed by history, culture, and politics, similarly, our knowledge about ethnic identity should also be changed in the current progress of human civilization. With the increasing communications and interactions between nation states and individuals, our previous understanding of ethnicity is no longer suitable and practical in some situation. Frequent global traveling and migration in contemporary world have not only influenced the way in which those migrants define their own identity, but also changed the way in which the host societies see their ethnicities. Therefore, when we are defining ethnicity in nowadays, we should not be confined in the local environment but turn to the broader global context. In that way, Japanese war orphans and Japanese Brazilians might be saved from their current dilemma, and we will have a more peaceful, more harmonious, and more just world.

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